Septennial Parliaments

VINDICATED.

Humbly Addreſſed to his Excellency

THE EARL OF *HERTFORD*.

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TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

THE EARL OF *HERTFORD*.

MY LORD,

YOUR Excellency's extenſive Connexions in this Kingdom, and that univerſal Confidence which is placed in you here, raiſing you above the influence of Party, not to mention my long perſonal Knowledge of your aſſiduous Attention to the united Intereſts of both Kingdoms, induce me to take the liberty of addreſſing my Sentiments to your Excellency upon the Subject of Septennial Parliaments; and of aſſuring you that I am, with the higheſt and moſt perfect Regard,

MY LORD,

YOUR EXCELLENCY'S MOST DUTIFUL,

AND MOST OBEDIENT

HUMBLE SERVANT,

DUBLIN,
Jan. 25, 1766.

ALEX. MC. AULAY.

Septennial Parliaments VINDICATED.

I HAVE inſerted my Name in the Title-Page, to exempt me from the Trouble of replying to anonymous Writers: Declamatory Men, I ſhall always treat with the ſame Neglect. I find an Author of that Claſs hath, under the Maſk of Patriotiſm, lately publiſhed a Pamphlet of evil Tendency; alarming many well-meaning People with apprehenſions of Dangers, which have no other Exiſtence than in the Author's over-heated Imagination: It may, perhaps, be doubted whether they exiſt there. Conſidered as a Declamation, it is by no means a deſpicable Performance: But the argumentative Part of the Work, if any Thing in it deſerves that Name, is unworthy of Notice.

THE

THE Word, PEOPLE, in this Eſſay, generally ſignifies all under the Degree of Nobility: But it ſometimes is meant to exclude the Repreſentatives of the People, in Parliament. I hope, this little Ambiguity will be thought allowable; Repreſentatives not being very conſiderable, when compared with Conſtituents as a Body.

THIS being premiſed, I ſhall now proceed to the Subject.

IN every mixt Government, like ours, the weight of Conſtituents hath always been, and ever muſt be, proportioned to the Duration of Parliaments. An Election approaching muſt, from the Nature of Man, give Electors more Influence than one at a Diſtance, on thoſe who intend to be Candidates.

ANTIENTLY, when moſt of the Lands in *England* were in the Hands of the King and Lords, annual Parliaments were found Neceſſary to preſerve a due Share of Power in the People. Afterwards, when the Property of the Crown was diminiſhed; the Nobility aliening, and the landed Intereſt of the Commons growing

growing conſiderable; in Conſequence of a Method found out in the Reign of *Henry* VII. to alien entailed Eſtates; it became neceſſary to lengthen Parliaments, in order to ballance the Weight of the People; and *Henry* VIII. then aſſumed a Power of proroguing them at his Pleaſure.

I HAVE not met with more than one Seſſion in a Parliament, until the Reign of *Edward* IV. In that Reign, Parliaments were ſometimes continued for a ſecond Seſſion; by the joint Authority of the King and Parliament: But, until the Reign of *Henry* VIII. I cannot find a ſingle Inſtance, where a Parliament was continued beyond one Seſſion, by the ſole Authority of the Crown.

THIS Uſurpation of *Henry* VIII. was ſubmitted to, for about a Century and a half; from the peculiar Circumſtances of the Times: But its dangerous Tendency having at length become alarming; triennial Parliaments were introduced into *England*, recently after the Revolution; and continued for about twenty Years, until the Acceſſion

of

of our ſecond Deliverer. At that Time, Numbers of the *Britiſh* Conſtituents happening to be infatuated by the Nonſenſe of Jacobitiſm, it was found adviſeable to prolong the then Parliament in *Great-Britain*, and to eſtabliſh ſeptennial Parliaments in that Kingdom; which have ever ſince been adhered to, there; as the true Medium to guard againſt Democracy on the one Hand, and Ariſtocracy on the other.

WHAT is there, then, to diſtinguiſh us from *Great-Britain*, in this Reſpect? Can our Laws, impowering the Government and Council, here, to certify Bills, be urged as a Reaſon why our Parliaments ought to be of longer Duration than theirs? Or can it be aſſerted that our People are ſuperior to theirs in Weight and Influence; and that we therefore require longer Parliaments than they do, in order to diminiſh the Weight of our People, for the Purpoſe of preſerving the like Ballance of Power here, as is preſerved there, in the three Eſtates of the Realm; or that ſeptennial Elections would induce greater Expence among

among us, in proportion to our Fortunes, than is occaſioned by ſuch Elections in *Great-Britain*; where the Temptations to Exceſs in the Expence of Elections are much ſtronger? Surely Aſſertions ſo evidently repugnant to Truth, will not be uttered.

ONE would think, the Example of *Great-Britain* ſhould be deciſive, in this Caſe. We, as a Nation, may properly be conſidered in a State of Infancy. Our Nativity, as a ſettled Country of Liberty, cannot be dated higher than the Revolution; perhaps, not quite ſo high. We have no Experience of our own, that can be much relied on, in any conſtitutional Matter.

WHAT then are we to do upon Occaſions of this Kind? Should not we (the Sons of *Britain*) have recourſe to the Experience and Example of our Parent-Country? Should we not, upon every Occaſion, entertain the higheſt Sentiments of Honour and filial Reverence for her Example?

THE Example of *Great-Britain*, in this Particular, does not reſt merely up-

on its own Authority; but is ſupported by the ſtrongeſt Reaſons.

THE Houſe of Commons are the general Inquiſitors of the Realm. Inquiring into and redreſſing Grievances, hath been always conſidered as a principal Part of their Truſt. How this Truſt was diſcharged in unlimited Parliaments is well known. Leaders and their Followers were the Authors of Grievances; and never at a Loſs, for a large Majority in ſuch Parliaments.

SOME good Laws were made in the worſt Parliaments. Good Laws, which did not interfere with the Schemes of deſigning Leaders, were as likely to paſs in an unlimited as in a limited Parliament: But an effectual Inquiry into any Grievance, was hardly ever known in the former.

IT will not be denied that ſome Leaders, in former Times, relying on their Strength in an unlimited Parliament, purſued Meaſures of private Intereſt, inconſiſtent with Public Good, injurious to the Crown, and hurtful to the Nation----Screening their Creatures, in

Frauds

Frauds and Oppreſſions innumerable---corrupting the Morals of the People, by promoting Luxury, Venality and Proſtitution---deceiving their Sovereign, and embezzling the National Treaſure, in Penſions to their Favourites and Dependants, that might have been employed in ſtrengthening the Crown and enriching the Kingdom, by nouriſhing and improving our Infant-Manufactures ----ſacrificing the Common Good of King and People to their own Avarice and Ambition----and all this, without Puniſhment; nay, without the leaſt Check or Controul.

IF it ſhould be our Misfortune to fall again into the Hands of ſuch Leaders; where could Redreſs be found, or ſuch capital Offenders be brought to Juſtice? Where, but in a ſhort Parliament?

CHECKING the various Evils of Party, would be a neceſſary Conſequence of ſeptennial Parliaments. Heads of Parties have preſerved their Influence, by a prudent Diſtribution of Places among the Partizans: And when Places fell ſhort, in anſwering Demands; they

ſupplied the Deficiency with Penſions. Hence it came to paſs, that Places of the moſt important Public Truſt have been often conferred, without much Regard to Propriety or Decency; and Penſions frequently granted, without the leaſt Pretence to public Merit.

ANOTHER well known Evil of Party, worſe if poſſible than the former, was, that it clogged and embarraſſed, often ruled Government. A Viceroy, indeed, ſometimes attempted to act independant of Party, and to conſult the general Good: But the Undertaker generally found Means to convince him of his Miſtake.

REFORMING our Popiſh Natives, would be another happy Effect of ſeptennial Parliaments.

IT can not be doubted, that his Majeſty's Proteſtant Subjects would univerſally and moſt heartily concur in every Meaſure (Perſecution excepted) wherein they ſaw any Tendency to reclaim the Natives of this Kingdom from Popery, Barbariſm and Beggary; to make two Millions of miſerable People (now aliened

aliened from their natural Sovereign and attached to a foreign Juriſdiction) good Subjects and happy Men; adding a large Fund of Wealth and Strength to the *Britiſh* Empire. I hope to be able to ſhew, that theſe would be the certain Effects of ſeptennial Parliaments.

IN Conſequence of the Laws made to prevent the Growth of Popery, almoſt all the Popiſh Landlords of *Ireland* have conformed: But nothing has yet been done, that hath had any Effect upon the Popiſh Tenants. The Charter-Schools, indeed, have had conſiderable Effect in checking the Growth of Popery among the loweſt of the People: And yet Popery, upon the whole, is, without doubt, daily gaining Ground throughout the Kingdom.

THIS may, in a great Meaſure, be accounted for, by the propenſity of the Popiſh Natives to Marriage, the Marriages of Proteſtants with Papiſts, the Migrations of Proteſtants to *America*, the recruiting of the Army by *Iriſh* Proteſtants, and the unwearied Aſſiduity both of the Popiſh Clergy and Laity in gaining

gaining Proſelytes. It may, perhaps, be partly owing to ſome ſecret Arts, hid from Public View: But whatever be the Cauſe, the Effect is certain.

'TILL within theſe few Years, there was ſcarce a Maſs-Houſe to be ſeen in the Northern Counties of *Ulſter*: Now, Maſs-Houſes are ſpreading over moſt Parts of that Country. Convents, till of late, were hid in Corners: Now they are openly avowed in the very Metropolis. From the Revolution till a few Years ago, Maſs-Houſes were little Hutts, in remote and obſcure Places: Now they are ſumptuous Buildings, in the moſt public and conſpicuous Situations; as if erected, to brave the Laws and claim Eſtabliſhment.

IN the laſt Reign, there was little Attention given in *Ireland* to County-Intereſts, by the generality of our Landlords; and, in the preſent Reign, there will, in all probability, be leſs; if Parliaments remain unlimited. Where is the Uſe of Voices, which have ſcarce any Chance of living to vote at an Election in the next Reign? But under ſeptennial

nial Parliaments, every Landlord would be ſolicitous to increaſe his Influence in County-Elections.

FROM *Ulſter*, ſwarms of Proteſtants go to *America*, not ſufficiently encouraged to ſettle in the great Paſture-Countries of the other three Provinces. If ſeptennial Parliaments were eſtabliſhed here; the Gentlemen of the three Southern Provinces, vying with each other for Numbers of Freeholders to ſtrengthen their County-Intereſts, would gladly invite all the Redundancies of Northern Proteſtants: And it is not to be doubted that theſe would, with equal Gladneſs, accept of the Invitation.

HERE, it may not be improper to obſerve, that the leſſening of our Exports ariſing from Paſture is, by no Means, a neceſſary Conſequence of converting our Paſture-Grounds into Tillage. Theſe Exports might, by proper Huſbandry, continue the ſame, perhaps increaſe, tho' all the Lands in this Kingdom were under Tillage. Good Huſbandry unites Tillage with Paſture, and renders them ſubſervient to each other:

In

In ſo much that Land under Tillage, in the Countries of *England* where Huſbandry is well underſtood, feeds at leaſt as much Cattle as the ſame Quantity of Land in *Ireland*, of equal Quality and ſolely dedicated to Paſture.

THE North of *Ireland*, in many Parts, is ſo crowded; that young People who incline to marry and ſettle, are often diſcouraged from purſuing that laudable Intention by the Difficulty they meet with in getting Farms, or even Houſes to live in; the Farms and Houſes of the Parents being generally too ſmall, to bear a Diviſion. This is the principal Cauſe of the Migrations to *America*. The young People are under a kind of Neceſſity to leave this Kingdom, in order to procure Settlements elſewhere: And the Parents frequently chuſe to go with them.

THE Attempts to eſtabliſh Proteſtant Colonies from *Ulſter*, in the Paſture-Countries of the other three Provinces, have hitherto been generally unſucceſsful. The Cauſe of this, is well known. The Colonies hitherto attempted,

ed, were generally too ſmall, to ſtand their Ground againſt the Natives. But ſeptennial Parliaments would induce the Gentlemen of thoſe Parts, to tranſplant Northern Proteſtants in ſuch Numbers, as would render them quite ſecure from all Moleſtation. This would quickly ſpread the Linen Manufacture throughout the Kingdom; and ſoon raiſe us from Poverty to Affluence.

THE Wretchedneſs of the low People, in the Paſture-Countries of *Munſter* and *Connaught*, is really deplorable. The Hovels they live in, would ſcarce be thought fit for Swine, in a manufacturing Country. Their Cloathing is Rags, utterly inſufficient to protect them from the Injuries of the Weather: Indeed, many of them are half-naked. Hunger, Cold, Naſtineſs, Diſtreſs, Famine and Slavery, painted in every Feature of their wretched Viſages. What Feelings muſt every Man have, who hath any Degree of Humanity in his Frame; when he thinks on ſuch Numbers of his Countrymen and Fellow-Subjects, living in ſuch Miſery? But,

how muſt theſe Feelings be aggravated, when he conſiders that thoſe miſerable Wretches are formed by Nature, a moſt amiable People?

IT can not be doubted, that the Wretchedneſs of thoſe People would be remedied by ſeptennial Parliaments. I never heard that any other Remedy was ever propoſed; and I am apt to think that no other, or, at leaſt, none ſo effectual, can be found. Septennial Parliaments would undoubtedly bring Colonies of Northern Proteſtants, to mix with them. Theſe Colonies could not fail to introduce Manufactures, Tillage, Induſtry and Proteſtantiſm. And theſe Changes would ſoon render thoſe Wretches, comfortable and happy.

POPERY at preſent abounds, not only in the Paſture-Countries, but alſo in the principal Tillage-Counties of this Kingdom; *Kildare*, *Kilkenny*, *Wexford*, *Meath* and *Louth*. It is univerſally known that Proteſtants are inconſiderable, in point of Number, throughout *Leinſter*, *Munſter* and *Connaught*; as well in the Tillage as Paſture-Countries

tries of theſe Provinces: And many know that Papiſts, even in *Ulſter*, far out-number Proteſtants. It may, perhaps, ſeem incredible to Perſons unacquainted with the Northern Parts of this Kingdom, that there are large populous Diſtricts in the moſt Proteſtant Counties of the North, containing many more Papiſts than Proteſtants.

IT is certain, that the Strength of Popery in *Ireland* lies in the Tenantry; comprehending Manufacturers; who are generally Farmers, in ſome Degree. And it can not be doubted, that Landlords in general, under ſeptennial Parliaments, would refuſe letting their Lands to Papiſts; if Proteſtant Tenants could any where, by any Means, be found. Even Gentlemen of ſmall Fortunes, who could have no Thoughts of being Candidates for Counties, would nevertheleſs find it their Intereſt to be aſſiduous in enlarging the Number of their Proteſtant Tenants; in order to be more ſerviceable to County-Candidates, who are uſually Men of ſome

Influence and Power, capable of rewarding the Services of their Friends. Hence, the Popiſh Tenants throughout the Kingdom would, in general, be laid under a Neceſſity of conforming. Few of them would loſe, or even run the Riſque of loſing their Farms, for the Sake of Religion: Few of them would chuſe to be ſet adrift, without knowing where to go; without any Proſpect of getting Farms or Habitations elſewhere. It cannot be doubted, that moſt of them would chuſe to conform, rather than ſtarve. This feigned, extorted Conformity might, after their frequenting the Service of our Church for ſome length of Time, become Sincere in many of them. At all Events, they would loſe much of their Bigotry and Virulence againſt our Religion: And Landlords, for their own Sakes, would take Care to have the Children educated Proteſtants; to the End that the Conformity of the Parents might anſwer the Purpoſe.

POPISH Landlords, in general, have already conformed; as is before obſerved: And it is not to be doubted, that

that many of them are ſincere: Yet it will not be denied, that moſt of them were at firſt induced by the Popery-Laws (or, in other Words, by temporal Intereſt) to inquire into the Principles of the Proteſtant Religion: But, if temporal Intereſt hath been the remote Occaſion, tho' not the immediate Cauſe of converting the Landlords; it cannot be doubted that temporal Intereſt would have a much ſtronger and more immediate Effect upon the Tenants. In ſhort, I take it to be perfectly clear, that ſeptennial Parliaments would have a moſt powerful and ſpeedy Effect, in making this Kingdom a Proteſtant Country throughout.

WHAT a ſaving of Manufacturers and Huſbandmen would thence accrue to *Britain*; by enlarging the Fund for recruiting their Armies? It would give them double Strength, by leſſening the Force of their natural Enemies abroad (who now recruit ſome of their beſt Troops by *Iriſh* Papiſts) and by enabling *Britain*, in Times of War, to draw from hence the Army hitherto neceſſary

ceſſary to be kept on Foot here, to ſecure the Kingdom from diſaffected Subjects.

I NEVER heard the Proportion which Papiſts, in point of Number, bear to Proteſtants in this Kingdom, eſtimated at leſs than five (many think it ten) to one. The Inference is, that for every *Iriſh* Subject the Crown hath now to rely on, it would, by the Converſion of our Papiſts, have at leaſt ſix; perhaps, more than ten. On the loweſt Computation, more than two Millions of our People, (now, in Effect, Aliens) would then be rivetted to the Parent-Country, and embarked in one common Intereſt with her.

GREAT national Evils ariſe from a Set of Men, common in *Ireland*, who are both Landlords and Tenants, obtaining Leaſes of conſiderable Tracts of Land from Gentlemen of Fortune, at moderate Rents; for the Purpoſe of letting them in ſmall Holdings, at Rack-Rents, to Under-Tenants. This amphibious Species of Men are, in general, extremely detrimental to the com-

mon

mon Good. They uſually let their Lands to the higheſt Bidder, without much Regard to the Value; by which Means, Lands in the populous Parts of this Kingdom (where there are not Farms ſufficient to anſwer the Demand) are frequently let at ſuch Rents as the Tenants are ſcarce able to pay. This totally prevents all Improvements in Huſbandry. It is not to be expected that a Tenant who can ſcarce pay his Rent, will be able to lay out Money in Improvements; or that any Tenant would be at the Expence of Improving his Farm, who lives under continual Apprehenſions of being reduced to the Neceſſity of leaving it.

SEPTENNIAL Parliaments would ſoon put an End to this great Evil. Gentlemen would then diſcard theſe underling-Landlords, and let their Lands to Proteſtant Farmers, immediate Occupiers of the Ground, at reaſonable Rents; to the End that the Tenants might, by improving their Farms, become Freeholders capable of voting. This would, by Degrees, introduce a

ſubſtantial

ſubſtantial, Proteſtant Yeomanry throughout the Kingdom; occupying Farms well improved.

A RIGHT to frequent Parliaments is aſſerted in the ſtrongeſt Manner, by the Declaration of Rights made at the Revolution. An *Engliſh* Act, made in the Firſt Year of the Reign of King *William* and Queen *Mary*, declares and enacts, That all the Rights aſſerted in that Declaration are the true, antient and indubitable Rights of that Kingdom: But it was never controverted that the Law of Parliaments is, in all Reſpects, the ſame in both Kingdoms; ſo far as it hath not been altered by Act of Parliament: Nor was it ever alledged, that there is any Act which alters the Law of *Ireland*, in this Particular. Will either Kingdom contradict the Declaration of conſtitutional Rights, made at the Grand Æra of Liberty?

IT hath, indeed, been ſaid, on former Occaſions of this Kind, that *frequent Parliaments*, in the Declaration of Rights and in the Law confirming it, mean *frequent Seſſions*. But this was a Quibble,

a Quibble, invented by ſome Proſtitutes of the long Robe, ſoon after the Revolution; and hath been always treated with the Contempt it deſerves. If this Liberty is to be taken in expounding Laws; to ſubſtitute one Word for another, at the Pleaſure of the Expounder; it would be vain to make Laws. In common Language, and in the parliamentary Stile throughout, a *Parliament* and a *Seſſion* are as diſtinct as any two Things can be.

I PRESUME, then, I am well warranted to ſay, that in aſking ſhort Parliaments, we aſk no more than *Britain* hath declared our indubitable Right. I hope none of us will ever be inclined to contradict the Senſe of that Country, in any Thing; more eſpecially in a Matter of this Conſequence, wherein they have declared their Senſe, on ſo great and ſolemn an Occaſion.

WHEN it is conſidered, that the People of *Ireland* think they have a clear, indubitable Right to frequent Parliaments; and yet have had but two Parliaments in about half a Century

(from 1714 to 1761) it can not be expected that they ſhould be quite free from Murmur and Diſcontent: Nor is it to be expected, that the Generality of People can ever entertain a due Reverence for the Authority of Human Laws, who think they ſee the fundamental Laws of their Country perpetually and injuriouſly violated by their Superiors, in a continual Prolongation of Parliaments. Such a Thought can not but weaken their Sentiments of Juſtice, and, in ſome Degree, relax that Spirit of Obedience and Submiſſion to the higher Powers, which the Chriſtian Religion teaches. This muſt naturally tend to diſpoſe them to Tumult; which often breaks out, among People ſo diſpoſed, on very ſlight Occaſions; perhaps, on Grievances merely imaginary, and in their Nature frivolous, ſuppoſing them to be real.

IT now remains to take ſome Notice of the Objections to ſeptennial Parliaments. And here I cannot but obſerve, that altho' ſeveral Pamphlets have been publiſhed ſince the Death of

of his late Majeſty, in favour of ſhort Parliaments; not a ſingle Argument, that I have ever heard of, hath yet made its Appearance in Public, on the other Side. This is unaccountable, conſidering the Importance of the Queſtion; if the Advocates for unlimited Parliaments have any Thing to advance, in Support of their Opinion, which is capable of bearing the Light. But although they have hitherto had the Prudence to conceal their Reaſons from public View, and diſplay them only in private Converſations, to captivate and delude the Unwary; many of their Arguments, ſuch as they are, have fallen in my way. I ſhall mention ſuch of them as ſeem to deſerve any Degree of Notice.

IT is ſaid, *that a Term of fourteen Years here, is equivalent to Seven in* Great-Britain; *becauſe they give the ſame Number of Seſſions.* But this, with a little Attention, will appear clearly fallacious. Suppoſing we had but one Seſſion in ſeven Years; muſt we then have a forty-nine-Years-Parliament?

It is the ſhortneſs or length of Interval between Elections, that increaſes or diminiſhes the Weight of Electors; and is therefore the only Thing to be regarded, in fixing a due Medium for preſerving the conſtitutional Ballance.

IT is further objected, *that the Influence of the Peerage, in the Houſe of Commons, would be much increaſed by ſhort Parliaments; more than one third of the Commons, as is alledged, being indebted to the Friendſhip of Lords, for their Seats in that Houſe; and it being evident that theſe Commoners would, in general, be more inclined to be obſequious to their Lords, in a ſhort Parliament than in a long one.* But this, in my Opinion, affords a ſtrong Argument on the other Side: For, if the Influence of Lords in Elections of the Commons, be ſo extenſive as is alledged in the Objection; the great increaſe of popular Weight, which muſt be the Conſequence of a ſeptennial Limitation, would render it neceſſary for many of theſe Lords to concur in popular Meaſures; in order to preſerve their Influence in popular Boroughs

Boroughs and Counties. And any additional Weight that ſuch Lords as are abſolute Proprietors of Boroughs (if any ſuch there be) might acquire from a ſeptennial Limitation, would be greatly over-ballanced, by the large Increaſe of Weight which would thence accrue to the People.

IT is further objected, *That ſeptennial Parliaments would make ſuch a Change in our Conſtitution, as might be attended with many unforeſeen Evils—That Innovations of this Kind ſhould be adopted with the utmoſt Caution—That this Change would abridge the Power of the Houſe, by conſtraining them to act according to the Opinions of their Conſtituents, who are incompetent Judges of public Affairs, and uſually miſled by deſigning, factious Men—And that theſe Changes might throw us into Democracy.*

HOW can any Man, with any Degree of Knowledge, either in the Laws or Hiſtory of *England*, entertain the leaſt Doubt that unlimited Parliaments are a manifeſt Innovation; and that a proper Limitation would reſtore, not change

change the Conſtitution? But ſuppoſing this, an Innovation; the Argument proves too much. It might, with equal Strength, have been urged againſt the Reformation.

IF ſeptennial Parliaments, in *Great-Britain*, had any Tendency to Democracy; could ſuch Danger have eſcaped Obſervation there, for ſuch a length of Time? Would not the leaſt Apprehenſion of ſo arbitrary, ſo deteſtable a Form of Government, have alarmed a People ſo jealous of their Liberties, into ſome Attempt for ſecuring their Freedom? But if ſeptennial Parliaments have no ſuch Tendency there; what Reaſon hath been or can be given, to imagine they would have any ſuch Tendency here?

IT muſt be allowed, that Perſons of Knowledge in Trade and Manufactures may be defective in Knowledge of many other Matters; and that ſuch Perſons may, in a particular City or County, be ſometimes deluded for a while by a deſigning, factious Man, a *Mock-Patriot* or MOUNTEBANK-QUACK IN POLITICKS: But it is ſcarce poſſible that any ſuch Deluſion

Deluſion can ever become the general, permanent Senſe of the Inhabitants, even of that particular City or County; much leſs can it ever become the general Voice of the Nation. The general Senſe of ſuch a Nation as this, in Matters concerning her internal Intereſt, may ſafely be relied on. If Human Nature can admit of Infallibility, it is there to be found.

IT is further objected, *That this Limitation would abridge Prerogative.* For my Part, I am under a particular Tie, as a Servant of the Crown, to ſupport Prerogative: And indeed it cannot be denied that any Abridgement of Prerogative, in theſe modern Times, ought to be admitted with Caution. But is it to be thence inferred, that we may not ſafely follow the Example of *Great-Britain*, in any Abridgement of Prerogative, ſhe has thought fit to introduce; or that our following her Example can, in any Degree, impair the conſtitutional Ballance. But the Truth is, that this Limitation, inſtead of abridging Prerogative, would in reality enlarge it.

THE

THE *Engliſh* Act of 4th *Edward* III. enacts, That a Parliament ſhall be holden every Year once, or oftener, if need be. This was made a Law of *Ireland* in the 10th of *Henry* VII. as all the other *Engliſh* Acts then were (the local only excepted) and I never heard of any Law that repealed it. If it be not repealed, we have a clear Right to annual Parliaments. The Conſequence is, that a ſeptennial Law would enlarge the Power of the Crown, by enabling it to prolong Parliaments in *Ireland* for ſeven Years; which, as the Law now ſtands, if the Act of *Edward* III. continues in Force in this Kingdom, cannot legally be prolonged for more than one.

PERHAPS half-thinking Men, as ſuch have done on ſome former Occaſions, may attempt to vilify this antient Statute of *Edward* III. on account of its Antiquity: But ſuch men ought to be informed, that Antiquity is venerable; the Wiſdom of our Anceſtors, in Matters of Civil Policy, highly reſpectable; and that length of Time cannot ſanctify an Uſurpation. Were it otherwiſe

wiſe, MAGNA CHARTA could not have ſurvived.

IT is further objected, *That we have hitherto done well, under long Parliaments.* Suppoſing this juſt; doth it follow that we would not have done better under ſhort ones?

BESIDES, Times and Meaſures are daily changing: And theſe Changes may render this additional Weight, on the Side of the People, more neceſſary now, to preſerve the Ballance, than it was formerly.

SUPPOSE moſt Commoners of large Fortune and extenſive Connexions, called to the Houſe of Lords by Advice of ambitious Leaders——A Number of uſeleſs Places, invented by the ſame Leaders; all to ſtrengthen themſelves—— The national Treaſure, ſquandered in a boundleſs profuſion of Penſions; by the ſame Leaders, for the ſame End——Corruption, univerſal——The HOUSE, the Property of one or two Men——What would, what muſt follow? Every Queſtion, every diſputed Election, the whole

Buſineſs of the Commons, even Money-Grants, would all be ſettled by a Junto ——Majeſty itſelf inſulted; the Viceroy dictated to, by the ſame Junto——One, at leaſt, of the three Eſtates of the Realm, extinct——But one Houſe of Parliament remaining——The Name, the Form, the Shadow of the other Houſe, perhaps, preſerved; the Subſtance gone ——The Houſe (called the Houſe of Commons) compoſed of Men, not choſen by the People, but by the Junto—— Packed Sheriffs——Packed Grand Juries ——Packed Petty-Juries——Public Juſtice perverted——Abuſes innumerable— Redreſs impracticable——The Nation groaning under the complicated Evils of Oligarchy and Ariſtocracy combined—— What Man's Property would then be ſafe? Is it not wiſe to guard againſt ſuch Evils? But how are they to be prevented, or how remedied, otherwiſe than by a limitation of Parliaments?

IT is further objected, *That ſeptennial Parliaments would render conſtant Reſidence of a Viceroy neceſſary in this Kingdom.*

Kingdom. And I cannot but admit that the Diminution, perhaps Extinction of the Power of Leaders, which would ſoon follow the Introduction of ſeptennial Parliaments, might render it neceſſary, or, at leaſt, adviſeable, for the Viceroy to make this Kingdom his ſettled Place of Reſidence: But this is ſo far from being a Reaſon againſt ſeptennial Parliaments, that it is, in my Opinion, a ſtrong Argument in their Favour.

IT is not eaſy to conceive how a Viceroy, in the Hurry of a Seſſion, can acquire much Knowledge of this Country, from a few Winter-Months-Reſidence in *Dublin*; eſpecially, when it is conſidered, that thoſe he may happen to depend on there, may poſſibly have an Intereſt in deceiving him: And yet Viceroys have always been the Perſons principally relied on, in *Great-Britain*, for Intelligence concerning this Kingdom. But if *Ireland* were the Viceroy's ſettled Place of Reſidence, he might then, at his Leiſure, learn with certainty the true State of our Trade, Manufactures and

Agriculture; and might alſo acquire ſome competent Knowledge in the real State of Popery throughout the Kingdom. He might then become an Eye-Witneſs of the extreme Wretchedneſs of the low People, throughout the greateſt Part of this Kingdom; and be enabled, from his own perſonal Knowledge, to repreſent many important Facts to his Majeſty and the *Britiſh* Adminiſtration, relative to this Kingdom, which might otherwiſe ſeem to them incredible.

IT was never doubted, that the King and Adminiſtration deſire to make us a rich and flouriſhing Nation: Nor can it be denied, that the more they know of us, the better they can accompliſh this great End: Nor is it to be conceived that the People of *Great-Britain* in general, can be void of Good Will towards their own Offspring. Even abſtracting from the Ties of Nature; they cannot but be inclined, for their own Sakes, to promote the Wealth of this Kingdom.

IF the Viceroy this Kingdom is now bleſſed with, were ſettled here in a continued

tinued Courſe of Reſidence, what Advantages to the Nation, what additional Strength to the Crown, by improving a Country of ſuch Extent, with ſuch Room for Improvement—A Country where the Religion of more than five ſixths of its Inhabitants (tho' endowed by Nature with every amiable Quality) renders them diſagreeable to the reſt of their Fellow-Subjects; and uſeleſs, I might ſay noxious to their King and Country in Times of War: Many of them, Paracide-like, exerting their native Valour, to deſtroy the Country which gave it Birth; adding ſuch unnatural Force to the Arms of our inveterate Enemy, as was known, in a late War, to turn the Scale in the deciſive Battle ——A Country, where Men in Power have been known, from Timidty or ſome baſer Motive, to cheriſh even Popery itſelf, and diſcountenance Meaſures adapted to ſubdue it——A Country, not half-peopled nor half-employed; ſcarcely half-civilized——What National Advantages, what additional Force to the Arms

of

of *Britain*, what new Strength to the *Britiſh* Empire, muſt accrue from the continued Reſidence of ſuch a Viceroy in ſuch a Country?

IT will ſcarce be denied, that our Advances in national Improvements have been inconſiderable, compared with what our Country is capable of; and that this Iſland (altho' a peculiar Favourite of Nature) has hitherto added but little to the Wealth and Strength of *Britain*; compared with what it would have done, in a State of full Improvement. Yet I readily admit, what hath been often obſerved, that *Ireland*, even in this defective State, is one of the brighteſt Jewels in the Crown.

EVILS attending popoular Elections, (Animoſities, Idleneſs, Drunkenneſs, Expence, &c.) are urged as a deciſive Argument againſt ſeptennial Parliaments. But if the Argument, drawn from Evils of this Kind, hath ſuch irreſiſtible Force againſt a general Election once in ſeven Years; it muſt have conſiderable Weight againſt the preſent Syſtem of Parliaments

in

in this Kingdom: For, in a Period of two hundred and twenty-four Years, from the Commencement of the Practice of Prorogation until the Diſſolution of our laſt Parliament (excluding the nineteen Years of *Cromwell*'s Uſurpation and the Civil War) we have had not leſs than nineteen Parliaments; which, upon an Average, gave a general Election once in about eleven Years. And ſuppoſing we were never to have more than one general Election in a Reign; even that would ſtill be liable, in ſome Degree, to the Objection of Evils attending Elections; the Diſproportion between the Length of a Reign, upon an Average ſince the Conqueſt, and a Period of ſeven Years, being but as about three to one. Hence, one would think that this Argument, if it proves any Thing, proves too much. If any thing can be inferred from it, the true Inference ſeems to be, that popular Elections ought to be aboliſhed.

POPULAR Elections are the Baſis, the very Eſſence of Liberty. Liberty never

never did, nor ever can ſubſiſt, in any Country, without them. Evils attending theſe Elections are inconſiderable, compared with the Miſeries of arbitrary Power.

IT muſt be admitted, that diſputed Elections (which hitherto, upon general Elections, have not been very conſiderable in point of Number) have ſometimes occaſioned Animoſities. But it is a Fact of Notoriety, that Elections conteſted with the utmoſt Vigour have been often conducted without much Animoſity, when Men of Senſe and Temper were the Competitors. Men of another Caſt can never paſs through Life, without Animoſities ariſing from numberleſs other Cauſes: But ſuch Men are ſeldom any great Objects of Pity.

DISPUTED Elections, no doubt, promote Idleneſs and Drunkenneſs in ſome Degree: Yet I am well informed, the Exports of our Staple-Manufacture increaſed as uſual, in the Year of the laſt general Election.

MANY greater Occaſions of Idleneſs, and more frequent Occaſions of Drunk-

Drunkenneſs, are paſſed over without much Obſervation——Unlawful Horſe-Races, Cock-Fights, Hurling-Matches, Fairs, ſuperſtitious Holidays, &c.

THE Expence of frequent Elections hath, in the neighbouring Kingdom, been Matter of Complaint in ſome private Families; but not an Object of Public Attention. There is little expended in that Manner, but in the Produce of the Country; and it is all expended at Home 'Tis true, when this Expence grows exceſſive, it becomes a Vice; and, like other expenſive Vices too prevalent among Gentlemen of Fortune, it may, in ſome Degree, contribute to impair their Eſtates, and perhaps reduce ſome of them to the Neceſſity of ſelling: But a Circulation of landed Property is, by no Means, repugnant to the Policy of a trading Nation.

SOME Evils, no doubt, there are, attending popular Elections: But the moſt perfect Syſtem, the wiſeſt Inſtitution that ever was, or ever can be fram-

ed, muſt, from the Vices and Infirmities of human Nature, be liable to this Objection. Religion itſelf ſometimes degenerates into Superſtition and Enthuſiaſm; and Libertines have urged theſe, as an Argument againſt it. But the true Queſtion, in all Caſes of this Kind, is, whether the Advantages or Diſadvantages preponderate.

WHATEVER Arts may be practiſed in Private, for the Purpoſes of Deception; I can ſcarce think that any Man will ſtand forth in Public and deny, that the national Advantages which would undoubtedly accrue from ſeptennial Parliaments, far out-weigh all the Diſadvantages that can poſſibly be apprehended from the Frequency of Elections; and that all the Evils which the warmeſt Imaginations ever did or can, with any Colour, impute to ſeptennial Elections, aggravated to the utmoſt, are quite inconſiderable, when compared with thoſe which neceſſarily reſult from unlimited Parliaments, and evidently

appear

appear to be utterly irremediable, otherwiſe than by a proper Limitation.

IN a Word; if conſtitutional Freedom, Redreſs of Grievances, Public Oeconomy, Induſtry, Huſbandry, Manufactures, Wealth, Population, Subordination, Loyalty and Proteſtantiſm be national Benefits; and if Oligarchy, Faction, Oppreſſion, capital Offenders ſuperior to controul, univerſal Corruption, open Contempt of the Laws, Lawgivers and Courts of Juſtice, endleſs Miſapplication of Public Money, Penſions boundleſs, Proſtitution ſhameleſs, Grievances innumerable without Redreſs, Sloth, Idleneſs, Beggary, Barbariſm, Devaſtation, Diſcontent, Tumult, Diſaffection and Popery be national Evils; the Bill now depending, intended for a ſeptennial Limitation of Parliaments in this Kingdom, ought to paſs into a Law.

FINIS.