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Travels into several remote nations of the world

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Chap. V. The Author at his Master's Command informs him of the State of England. The Causes of War among the Princes of Europe. The Author begins to explain the English Constitution.

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C H A P. V.

The Author at his Master's Command informs him of the State of England. The Causes of War among the Princes of Europe. The Author begins to explain the English Constitution.

THE Reader may please to observe, that the following Extract of many Conversations I had with my Master, contains a Summary of the most material Points, of which were discoursed at several times for above two Years; his Honour often desiring fuller Satisfaction as I farther improved in the *Houyhnhnm* Tongue. I laid before him, as well as I could, the whole State of *Europe*; I discoursed of Trade and

and Manufactures, of Arts and Sciences; and the Answers I gave to all the Questions he made, as they arose upon several Subjects, were a Fund of Conversation not to be exhausted. But I shall here only set down the Substance of what passed between us concerning my own Country, reducing it into Order as well as I can, without any Regard to Time or other Circumstances, while I strictly adhere to Truth. My only Concern is, that I shall hardly be able to do Justice to my Master's Arguments and Expressions, which must needs suffer by my want of Capacity, as well as by a Translation into our barbarous *English*.

IN Obedience therefore to his Honour's Commands, I related to him the *Revolution* under the Prince of *Orange*, the long War with *France* entered into by the said Prince, and renewed by his Successor the present Queen, wherein the greatest Powers of *Christendom* were

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engaged, and which still continued: I computed at his Request, that about a Million of *Taboos* might have been killed in the whole Progress of it, and perhaps a hundred or more Cities taken, and thrice as many Ships burnt or sunk.

He asked me what were the usual Causes or Motives that made one Country go to War with another. I answered they were innumerable, but I should only mention a few of the chief. Sometimes the Ambition of Princes, who never think they have Land or People enough to govern: Sometimes the Corruption of Ministers, who engage their Master in a War, in order to stifle or divert the Clamor of the Subjects against their evil Administration. Difference in Opinions hath cost many Millions of Lives: For instance, whether *Flesh* be *Bread*, or *Bread* be *Flesh*; whether the Juice of a certain *Berry* be *Blood* or *Wine*; whether *Whistling* be

be a Vice or a Virtue; whether it be better to *kiss a Post*, or throw it into the Fire; what is the best Colour for a Coat, whether *black, white, red* or *gray*; and whether it should be *long* or *short, narrow* or *wide, dirty* or *clean*, with many more. Neither are any Wars so furious and bloody, or of so long Continuance, as those occasioned by Difference in Opinion, especially if it be in things indifferent.

SOMETIMES the Quarrel between two Princes is to decide which of them shall dispossess a third of his Dominions, where neither of them pretend to any Right. Sometimes one Prince quarrelleth with another, for fear the other should quarrel with him. Sometimes a War is entered upon, because the Enemy is too *strong*, and sometimes because he is too *weak*. Sometimes our Neighbours *want* the *things* which we *have*, or *have* the things which we *want*; and we both fight, till they

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take ours or give us theirs. It is a very justifiable Cause of War to invade a Country after the People have been wasted by Famine, destroyed by Pestilence, or embroiled by Factions among themselves. It is justifiable to enter into War against our nearest Ally, when one of his Towns lies convenient for us, or a Territory of Land, that would render our Dominions round and compleat. If a Prince sends Forces into a Nation, where the People are poor and ignorant, he may lawfully put half of them to death, and make Slaves of the rest, in order to civilize and reduce them from their barbarous way of Living. It is a very kingly, honourable, and frequent Practice, when one Prince desires the Assistance of another to secure him against an Invasion, that the Assistant, when he hath driven out the Invader, should seize on the Dominions himself, and kill, imprison or banish the Prince he came to relieve. Alliance by Blood or Marriage, is a frequent

frequent Cause of War between Princes, and the nearer the Kindred is, the greater is their Disposition to quarrel: *Poor* Nations are *hungry*, and *rich* Nations are *proud*, and Pride and Hunger will ever be at variance. For those Reasons, the Trade of a *Soldier* is held the most honourable of all others: Because a *Soldier* is a *Tahoo* hired to kill in cold Blood as many of his own Species, who have never offended him, as possibly he can.

THERE are likewise another kind of Princes in *Europe*, not able to make War by themselves, who hire out their Troops to richer Nations, for so much a Day to each Man; of which they keep three fourths to themselves, and it is the best Part of their Maintenance; such are those in many *Northern* Parts of *Europe*.

WHAT you have told me, (said my Master) upon the Subject of War, does indeed

indeed discover most admirably the Effects of that Reason you pretend to: However, it is happy that the *Shame* is greater than the *Danger*; and that Nature hath left you utterly incapable of doing much Mischief.

FOR your Mouths lying flat with your Faces, you can hardly bite each other to any purpose, unless by Consent. Then as to the Claws upon your Feet before and behind, they are so short and tender that one of our *Yahoos* would drive a dozen of yours before him. And therefore in recounting the Numbers of those who have been killed in Battle, I cannot but think that you have *said the thing that is not*,

I COULD not forbear shaking my Head, and smiling a little at his Ignorance. And being no Stranger to the Art of War, I gave him a Description of Cannons, Culverins, Muskets, Carabines, Pistols, Bullets, Powder, Swords, Bayonets,

Bayonets, Sieges, Retreats, Attacks, Undermines, Countermines, Bombardments, Sea-fights; Ships sunk with a thousand Men, twenty Thousand killed on each Side; dying Groans, Limbs flying in the Air, Smoak, Noise, Confusion, trampling to death under Horses Feet; Flight, Pursuit, Victory; Fields strewed with Carcases left for Food to Dogs, and Wolves, and Birds of Prey; Plundering, Stripping, Ravishing, Burning, and Destroying. And to set forth the Valour of my own dear Countrymen, I assured him, that I had seen them blow up a hundred Enemies at once in a Siege, and as many in a Ship, and beheld the dead Bodies come down in pieces from the Clouds, to the great Diversion of the Spectators.

I was going on to more particulars, when my Master commanded me Silence. He said, whoever understood the Nature of *Yahoos* might easily believe it possible for so vile an Animal, to

to be capable of every Action I had named, if their Strength and Cunning equalled their Malice. But as my Discourse had increased his Abhorrence of the whole Species, so he found he gave him a Disturbance in his Mind, to which he was wholly a Stranger before. He thought his Ears being used to such abominable Words, might by Degrees admit them with less Detestation. That although he hated the *Taboos* of this Country, yet he no more blamed them for their odious Qualities, than he did a *Gnnayb* (a Bird of Prey) for its Cruelty, or a sharp Stone for cutting my Hoof. But when a Creature pretending to Reason, could be capable of such Enormities, he dreaded lest the Corruption of that Faculty might be worse than Brutality it self. He seemed therefore confident, that instead of Reason, we were only possessed of some Quality fitted to increase our natural Vices; as the Reflection from a troubled Stream returns the Image of an
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ill-shapen Body, not only *larger*, but more *distorted*.

He added, That he had heard too much upon the subject of War, both in this, and some former Discourses. There was another point which a little perplexed him at present. I had informed him, that some of our Crew left their Country on account of being ruined by *Law*; that I had already explained the meaning of the Word; but he was at a loss how it should come to pass, that the *Law* which was intended for *every* Man's preservation, should be any Man's ruin. Therefore he desired to be farther satisfied what I meant by *Law*, and what sort of Dispensers thereof it could be by whose practices the Property of any Person could be lost, instead of being preserved. He added, he saw not what great occasion there could be for this thing called *Law*, since all the Intentions and Purposes of it may be fully answered by

by following the Dictates of *Nature* and *Reason*, which are sufficient Guides for a reasonable Animal, as we pretended to be, in shewing us what we ought to do, and what to avoid.

I ASSURED his Honour, that *Law* was a Science wherein I had not much conversed, having little more Knowledge of it than what I had obtained by employing Advocates, in vain, upon some Injustices that had been done me, and by conversing with some others who by the same method had first lost their Substance, and then left their own Country under the mortification of such Disappointments, however I would give him all the Satisfaction I was able.

I SAID, That those who made profession of this Science were exceedingly multiplied, being almost equal to the Caterpillars in number; that they were of divers Degrees, Distinctions, and Denominations. The numerousness of those

those that dedicated themselves to this Profession were such that the fair and justifiable Advantage and Income of the Profession was not sufficient for the decent and handsome Maintenance of multitudes of those who followed it. Hence it came to pass that it was found needful to supply that by Artifice and Cunning, which could not be procured by just and honest methods: The better to bring which about, very many Men among us were bred up from their Youth in the Art of proving by Words multiplied for the purpose that *white* is *black*, and *black* is *white*, according as they are paid. The greatness of these Mens Assurance and the Boldness of their Pretensions gained upon the Opinion of the Vulgar, whom in a manner they made Slaves of, and got into their hands much the larger Share of the practice of their Profession. These Practitioners were by Men of discernment called *Pettifoggers*, (that is, *Confounders*, or rather, *Destroyers of Right*.)

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as it was my ill hap, as well as the misfortune of my suffering Acquaintance, to be engaged only with this species of the Profession. I desired his Honour to understand the description I had to give, and the ruin I had complained of, to relate to these Sectaries only, and how and by what means the Misfortunes we met with were brought upon us by the management of these Men, might be more easily conceived by explaining to him their method of proceeding, which could not be better done than by giving him an Example.

My Neighbour, said I, I will suppose, has a mind to my *Cow*, he hires one of these Advocates to prove that he ought to have my *Cow* from me. I must then hire another of them to defend my Right, it being against all rules of *Law* that any Man should be allowed to speak for himself. Now in this case, I who am the right Owner lie under two great Disadvantages. First, my Advocate, being as I
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said before practised almost from his Cradle in defending Falshood, is quite out of his Element when he would argue for Right, which as an Office unnatural he attempts with great Awkwardness, if not with an Ill-will. The second Disadvantage is that my Advocate must proceed with great Caution; for, since the Maintenance of so many depend on the keeping up of Business, should he proceed too summarily, if he does not incur the Displeasure of his Superiors, he is sure to gain the Ill-will and Hatred of his Brethren, as being by them esteemed one that would lessen the Practice of the Law. This being the Case, I have but two Methods to preserve my *Cow*. The first is, to gain over my Adversary's Advocate with a double Fee; from the Manner and Design of whose Education before mentioned it is easy to expect he will be induced to drop his Client, and let the Balance fall to my Side. The second Way is for my Advocate not to

Vol. II.

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insist on the Justice of my Cause, by allowing the *Cow* to belong to my Adversary; and this if it be dexterously and skilfully done will go a great Way towards obtaining a favourable Verdict, it having been found, from a careful Observation of Issues and Events, that the wrong Side, under the Management of such Practitioners, has the fairer Chance for success, and this more especially if it happens, as it did in mine and my Friend's Case, and may have done since, that the Person appointed to decide all Controversies of Propriety as well as for the Tryal of Criminals, who should be taken out of the most knowing and wise of his Profession, is by the Recommendation of a great Favourite, or Court-Mistress chosen out of the Sect before mentioned, and so, having been under a strange Bias all his Life against Equity and fair dealing, lies as it were under a fatal Necessity of favouring, shifting, double dealing and oppression, and besides through Age,

Age, Infirmary, and Distempers grown lazy, unactive, and inattentive, and thereby almost incapacitated from doing any thing becoming the Nature of his Employment, and the Duty of his Office. In such Cases, the Decisions and Determinations of Men so bred, and so qualified, may with Reason be expected on the wrong Side of the Cause, since those who can take Harangue and Noise, (if pursued with Warmth, and drawn out into a Length,) for reasoning, are not much to be wondered at, if they infer the Weight of the Argument from the Heaviness of the Pleading.

It is a Maxim among these Men, That whatever has been done before may legally be done again: And therefore they take special Care to record all the Decisions formerly made, even those which have through Ignorance or Corruption contradicted the Rules of common Justice, and the general Reason

son of Mankind. These, under the Name of *Precedents*, they produce as Authorities, and thereby endeavour to justify the most iniquitous Opinions; and they are so lucky in this Practice, that it rarely fails of Decrees answerable to their Intent and Expectation.

IN pleading, they studiously avoid entring into the *Merits* of the Cause; but are loud, violent and tedious in dwelling upon all *Circumstances* which are not to the Purpose. For Instance, in the Case already mentioned; they never desire to know what Claim or Title my Adversary had to my Cow, but whether the said Cow were red or black, her Horns long or short; whether the Field I graze her in be round or square, whether she was milked at home or abroad, what Diseases she is subject to, and the like; after which they consult *Precedents*, adjourn the Cause, from time to time,

and in ten, twenty, or thirty Years, come to an Issue.

It is likewise to be observed, that this Society hath a peculiar Cant and Jargon of their own, that no other Mortal can understand, and wherein all their Laws are written, which they take special Care to multiply; whereby they have gone near to confound the very Essence of Truth and Falshood, of Right and Wrong; so that it may take thirty Years to decide whether the Field, left me by my Ancestors for six Generations, belongs to me or to a Stranger three hundred Miles off.

IN the Tryal of Persons accused for Crimes against the State, the Method is much more short and commendable: For if those in Power, who know well how to chuse Instruments fit for their Purpose, take care to recommend and promote out of this Clan a proper Person,

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son, his Method of Education and Practice makes it easy to him, when his Patron's Disposition is understood, without Difficulty or Study either to condemn or acquit the Criminal, and at the same time strictly preserve all due Forms of Law.

HERE my Master interposing said it was a Pity, that Creatures endowed with such prodigious Abilities of Mind as these Advocates by the Description I gave of them must certainly be, were not rather encouraged to be Instructors of others in Wisdom and Knowledge. In answer to which I assured his Honour that the Business and Study of their own Calling and Profession so took up all their Thoughts and engrossed all their Time, that they minded nothing else, and that therefore, in all points out of their own Trade, many of them were of so great Ignorance and Stupidity, that it was hard to pick out of any Profession a Generation of

Men

Men more despicable in common Conversation, or who were so much looked upon as avowed Enemies to all Knowledge and Learning, being equally disposed to pervert the general reason of Mankind in every other subject of Discourse, as in that of their own calling.

