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**Letters,|| On The|| Spirit of Patriotism:|| On The|| Idea of a
Patriot King:|| And|| On the State of Parties,|| At the
Accession of|| King George the First**

Bolingbroke, Henry St. John

London, 1749

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THE following papers were written several years ago, at the request, and for the sake of some particular friends, without any design of ever making them public. How they come to be made so at this time, it may be proper to give an account.----The original draughts were entrusted to a man, on whom the author thought he might intirely depend, after he had exacted from him, and taken his promise, that they should never go into

any hands, except those of five or six Persons, who were then named to him. In this confidence the author rested securely for some years; and tho he was not without suspicion, that they had been communicated to more persons than he intended they should be, yet he was kept, by repeated assurances, even from suspecting that any copies had gone into hands unknown to him. But this man was no sooner dead, than he received information that an entire edition of 1500 copies of these papers had been printed; that this very man had corrected the press, and that he had left them in the hands of the printer, to be kept with great secrecy, till further order. The honest printer kept his word with him better than he kept his with his friend: so that the whole edition came at last into the hands of the author,
except

except some few copies which this person had taken out of the heap, and carried away. These are, doubtless, the copies which have been handed about, not very privately, since his death. The rest were all destroyed in one common fire as soon as they were given up, except a copy or two, which have never been since out of the author's own hands. By these copies it appeared, that the man who had been guilty of this breach of trust, had taken upon him further to divide the subject, and to alter and to omit passages, according to the suggestions of his own fancy.

What aggravates this proceeding extremely is, that the author had told him on several occasions, among other reasons why he would not consent to the publication of these papers, that they had been writ

in too much heat and hurry for the public eye, tho they might be trusted to a few particular friends. He added, more than once, that some things required to be softened, others perhaps to be strengthened, and the whole most certainly to be corrected; even if they were to remain, as he then imagined they would, in the hands of a few friends only. This has been done since, that there might be one copy at least more conformable to the author's intentions than those which had gone abroad, or even than his original manuscripts.

There is scarce a man in the world more detached from it, at this hour, than the author of these papers, or more indifferent to the censure of most people in it, having nothing to expect, nor any thing to fear from them. He might, therefore,
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in his way of life, and in his disposition of mind, either not have known that scraps and fragments of these papers had been employed to swell a monthly magazine, and that the same honourable employment of them was to be continued; or, knowing it, he might have despised and neglected it. But some of his friends thought that it was too much to suffer this breach of trust, and the licentious advantage taken of it, to make him appear the author of writings, which were become more properly the writings of others than his, considering how they had been garbled, and in what manner they were published. The editor therefore, who has in his hands the genuine copy which the author reserved to himself, after revising and correcting the originals, resolved to publish it; since it was become impossible to hinder such as

were not genuine from being retailed monthly or weekly to the world. Neither the author nor he would give offence wantonly to the living: but the author neither can, nor ought, on any account, to neglect what truth, honour, and the justice due to his own character require. Neither the author nor he affect to accuse ministers after their death, as the Egyptians formerly accused even their kings. There is the less reason to do so, since the former may be, and are accused, without scruple, tho without success for the most part, during their lives. The anecdotes here related were true, and the reflections made upon them were just, many years ago. The former would not have been related, if he who related them had not known them to be true; nor the latter have been made, if he who made them

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them had not thought them just: and if they were true and just then, they must be true and just now, and always. The author therefore scorns to disown them: and the editor thinks that he has no excuse to make for publishing them.

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