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### **The Works Of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford**

In Five Volumes

**Walpole, Horace**

**London, 1798**

The World, No.VIII.

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## The W O R L D.

By ADAM FITZ-ADAM.

NUMB. VIII. *Thursday, February 22, 1753.**Date obolum Belifario.*

A Philosopher, as I am, who contemplates the world with serious reflection, will be struck with nothing in it more than its vicissitudes. If he has lived any time, he must have had ample opportunities of exercising his meditation on the vanity of all sublunary conditions. The change of empires, the fall of ministers, the exaltation of obscure persons, are the continual incidents of human comedy. I remember that one of the first passages in history which made an impression upon me in my youth, was the fate of Dionysius, who, from being monarch of Sicily, was reduced to teach school at Corinth. Though his tyranny was the cause of his ruin (if it can be called ruin to be deprived of the power of oppression, and to be taught to know one's self), I could not help feeling that sort of superstitious pity which attends royalty in distress. Who ever perused the stories of Edward the second, Richard the second, or Charles the first, but forgot their excesses, and sighed for their catastrophe? In this free-spirited island there are not more hands ready to punish tyrants, than eyes to weep their fall. It is a common case: we are Romans in resisting oppression, very women in lamenting oppressors!



If (and I think it cannot be contested) there is generosity in these sensations, ought we not doubly to feel such emotions, in cases where regal virtue is become the sport of fortune? This island ought to be as much the harbour of afflicted majesty, as it has been the scourge of offending majesty. And while every throne of arbitrary power is an asylum for the martyrs of so bad a cause, Britain ought to shelter such princes as have been victims for liberty—whenever so great a curiosity is seen, as a prince contending on the honest side.

How must I blush then for my countrymen, when I mention a monarch, an unhappy monarch! now actually suffered to languish for debt in one of the common prisons of this city!—a monarch, whose courage raised him to a throne, not by a succession of ambitious bloody acts, but by the voluntary election of an injured people, who had the common right of mankind to freedom, and the uncommon resolution of determining to be free! This prince is THEODORE king of Corsica! a man, whose claim to royalty is as indisputable as the most ancient titles to any monarchy can pretend to be; that is, the choice of his subjects: the only kind of title allowed in the excellent *gothic* constitutions, from whence we derive our own; the same kind of title which endears the present royal family to Englishmen; and the only kind of title against which, perhaps, no objection can lie.

This prince (on whose history I shall not at present enlarge), after having bravely exposed his life and crown in defence of the rights of his subjects, miscarried, as Cato and other patriot heroes did before him. For many years he struggled with fortune, and left no means untried, which indefatigable policy or sollicitation of succours could attempt, to recover his crown. At last, when he had discharged his duty to his subjects and himself, he chose this country for his retirement—not to indulge a voluptuous inglorious ease, but to enjoy the participation of those blessings which he had so vainly endeavoured to fix to his Corsicans. Here for some months he bore with more philosophic dignity the loss of his crown, than Charles the fifth, Casimir of Poland, or any of those visionaries, who wantonly resigned theirs to partake the sluggish indolence, and at length the disquiets, of a cloister. THEODORE, though resigned to his fortunes, had none of that contemptible apathy, which almost lifted our James the second to the supreme honour of monkish faintness. It is recorded of that prince, that talking to his

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courtiers



courtiers at St. Germain, he wished for a speedy peace between France and Great Britain; "for then," said he, "we shall get English horses easily."

The veracity of an historian obliges me not to disguise the bad situation of his Corsican majesty's revenue, which has reduced him to be a prisoner for debt in the King's-Bench: and so cruelly has Fortune exercised her rigours upon him, that last session of parliament he was examined before a committee of the house of commons, on the hardships to which the prisoners in that gaol had been subject. Yet let not ill-nature make sport with these misfortunes! His majesty had nothing to blush at, nothing to palliate, in the recapitulation of his distresses. The debts on his civil list were owing to no misapplication, no improvidence of his own, no corruption of his ministers, no indulgence to favourites or mistresses. His diet was philosophic, his palace humble, his robes decent: yet his butcher, his landlady, and his taylor could not continue to supply an establishment, which had no demesnes to support it, no taxes to maintain it, no excises, no lotteries to provide funds for its deficiencies and emergencies.

A nation so generous, so renowned for the efforts it has always made in the common cause of liberty, can only want to be reminded of this distressed king, to grant him its protection and compassion. If political reasons forbid the open espousal of his cause, pity commands the assistance which private fortunes can lend him. I do not mean at present that our gallant youth should offer themselves as volunteers in his service, nor do I expect to have a small fleet fitted out at the expence of particular persons to convey him and his hopes to Corsica. The intention of this paper is merely to warm the benevolence of my countrymen in behalf of this royal captive. I cannot think it would be beneath the dignity of majesty to accept such a supply as might be offered to him by that honorary (and to this country peculiar) method of raising a free gift, a benefit play. The method is worthy of the Grecian age, nor would Asiatic monarchs have blushed to receive a tribute from the united efforts of genius and art. Let it be said, that the same humane and polite age raised a monument to Shakespeare, a fortune for Milton's \* grand-daughter, and a subsidy for a captive king, by dramatic performances! I have no doubt but the munificent managers of our theatres will gladly contribute

\* Comus was acted at Drury-lane, April 5, 1750, for the benefit of Mrs. Foster, Milton's only surviving descendant.



their parts. The incomparable actor who so exquisitely touches the passions and distresses of self-dethroned Lear (a play which from some similitude of circumstances I should recommend for the benefit) will, I dare to say, willingly exert his irresistible talents in behalf of fallen majesty, and be a competitor with Louis le Grand for the fame which results from the protection of exiled kings. How glorious will it be for him to have the King's-Bench as renowned for Garrick's generosity to king THEODORE, as the Savoy is for Edward the third's treatment of king John of France!

In the mean time, not to confine this opportunity of benevolence to so narrow a sphere as the theatre, I must acquaint my readers, that a subscription for a subsidy for the use of his Corsican majesty is opened at Tully's head in Pall-mall, where all the generous and the fair are desired to pay their contributions to Robert Doddsley, who is appointed high-treasurer and grand-librarian of the island of Corsica for life—posts, which, give me leave to say, Mr. Doddsley would have disdained to accept under any monarch of arbitrary principles:

A bookseller of Rome, while Rome surviv'd,  
Would not have been lord treas'rer to a king.

I am under some apprehensions that the intended subscription will not be so universal as for the honour of my country I wish it. I foresee that the partisans of indefeasible hereditary right will withhold their contributions. The number of them is indeed small and inconsiderable; yet as it becomes my character, as a citizen of the world, to neglect nothing for the amendment of the principles and morals of my fellow-creatures, I shall recommend one short argument to their consideration; I think I may say, to their conviction. Let them but consider, that though THEODORE had such a flaw (in their estimation) in his title, as to have been elected by the whole body of the people, who had thrown off the yoke of their old tyrants; yet as the Genoese had been the sovereigns of Corsica, these gentlemen of monarchic principles will be obliged, if they condemn king THEODORE'S cause, to allow divine hereditary right in a republic; a problem in politics which I leave to be solved by the disciples of the exploded \* sir Robert Filmer:—at the same

\* Author of the Patriarchal Scheme, refuted by Mr. Locke.



time declaring by my censorial authority all persons Jacobites, who neglect to bring in their free gift for the use of his majesty of Corsica: and I particularly charge and command all lovers of the glorious and immortal memory of king William to see my orders duly executed; and I recommend to them to set an example of liberality in behalf of the popular monarch whose cause I have espoused, and whose deliverance, I hope, I have not attempted in vain.

*N. B.* Two pieces of king THEODORE's coin\*, struck during his reign, are in the hands of the high-treasurer aforesaid, and will be shown by the proper officer of the exchequer of Corsica, during the time the subscription continues open at Tully's head above mentioned. They are very great curiosities, and not to be met with in the most celebrated collections in this kingdom.

\* These coins are rudely executed on copper. The legend round the reverse seems to have been, RE PER IL BONO PUBLICO. The other piece is the half of this.





*As a SUPPLEMENT to the foregoing Paper, the following Particulars will not be improper.*

**T**HEODORE ANTONY BARON NEWHOFF, more remarkable for being the only one of his profession [of adventurers] who ever obtained a crown, than for acquiring that of Corfica, was born at Metz about the year 1696, and after a variety of intrigues, scrapes, and escapes, in many parts of Europe, and after having attained and lost a throne, returned in 1748-9 to England, where he had been before about the year 1737. I saw him soon after his last arrival: he was a comely middle-sized man, very reserved, and affecting much dignity, which he acted in the lowest ebb of his fortunes, and coupled with the lowest shifts of his industry: an instance of the former appeared during his last residence at Florence, where being reduced to extreme poverty, some English gentlemen made a collection for and carried to him. Being apprised of their coming, and having only one chamber in a little miserable lodging, he squeezed his bed to one side, and placed a chair under the canopy, where he sat to receive the charity.

Being involved here in former and new debts, he for some time received benefactions from the earl of Granville, the countess of Yarmouth, and others, and after being arrested, some merchants in the city promoted a subscription for him; but he played so many tricks, and counterfeited so many bonds and debts, that they withdrew their money. He behaved with little more honour when the preceding paper was published for his benefit. Fifty pounds were raised by it and sent to his prison: he pretended to be much disappointed at not receiving more: his debts, he said, amounted to £.1500. He sent in a few days to Mr. Doddsley, the publisher of *The World*, to desire the subscription might be opened again; which being denied, he sent a lawyer to Mr. Doddsley to threaten to prosecute him for the paper, which he pretended had done him great hurt, and prevented several contributions.—

“Precibusque minas Regaliter addit.” OVID.

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In May 1756, this extraordinary event happened: THEODORE, a man who had actually *reigned*, was reduced to take the benefit of the act of insolvency, and printed the following petition in the Public Advertiser:

“ *An Address to the Nobility and Gentry of Great-Britain, in the Behalf of*  
THEODORE BARON DE NEWHOFF:

THE baron through a long imprisonment being reduced to very great extremities, his case is earnestly recommended for a contribution to be raised, to enable him to return to his own country, having obtained his liberty by the late act of parliament. In the late war in Italy the baron gave manifest proofs of his affection for England; and as the motives of his coming here are so well known, it is hoped all true friends to freedom will be excited to assist a brave though unfortunate man, who wishes to have an opportunity of testifying his gratitude to the British nation.

Those who are pleased to contribute on this occasion, are desired to deposit their benefactions in the hands of sir Charles Aſgyll, alderman, and company, bankers in Lombard-street, or with messieurs Campbell and Coutts, bankers in the Strand.”

THEODORE however remained in the liberties of the Fleet till December 1756, when taking a chair, for which he had not money to pay, he went to the Portuguese minister's in Audley-street; but not finding him at home, the baron prevailed on the chairmen to carry him to a taylor's in Chapel-street, Soho, who having formerly known him, and pitying his distress, harboured him in his house. THEODORE fell ill there the next day, and, dying in a few days, was buried in the church-yard of saint Anne in that parish.

A strong peculiarity of circumstances accompanied him to the last: his manner of obtaining his liberty was not so extraordinary as what attended *it*. Going to Guild-hall to demand the benefit of the act, he was asked, “What effects he had?” He answered, “Nothing but the kingdom of Corsica.” It was accordingly registered for the benefit of his creditors.

So singular a destiny was thought worthy of a memorial, that might point out the chief adventures and even the place of interment of this remarkable personage,



personage. The author of this memoir erected a marble near his grave, with a crown, taken from one of his coins, and with this inscription:

Near this PLACE is interred

Theodore King of Corfica,

Who died in this PARISH, December 11, 1756,

Immediately after leaving the King's-Bench-Prison

By the Benefit of the Act of Insolvency;

In Consequence of which HE Registered

His Kingdom of Corfica

For the USE of his CREDITORS.

The GRAVE, great Teacher, to a Level brings  
 Heroes and Beggars, Galley-slaves and Kings.  
 But THEODORE this Moral learn'd, ere dead;  
 FATE pour'd its Lessons on his *living* Head,  
 Bestow'd a KINGDOM, and deny'd him BREAD.

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