The Works Of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford

In Five Volumes

Walpole, Horace

London, 1798

Detection of a late Forgery, called Testament Politique du Chevalier Robert Walpoole

DETECTION of a late FORGERY

CALLED

Teſtament Politique du Chevalier Robert Walpoole*.

Ergo age, chare pater, cervici imponere noſtræ:
Ipſe ſubibo humeris, nec me labor iſte gravabit. ÆNEID. II.

THOUGH nothing is leſs worth while in general than to refute ſilly books and printed lies, both becauſe they periſh of themſelves, and becauſe the evil grows faſter than the remedy can follow it; yet there are ſome forgeries which it may be neceſſary to expoſe, leſt malice and ill-deſigning men ſhould treaſure them up, preſerve them from merited oblivion, and conſign them to poſterity, like baſe metals, which become reverenced for the heads with which they have been ſtamped, or valued for their antiquity, which beſtows a kind of authenticity on them, when no other cotemporary memorials exiſt.

I have juſt turned over a ſpurious production called Teſtament politique du chevalier Walpoole, comte d'Orford, coined the Lord knows where, and ſaid to be ſtamped in that mint of forgeries, Holland. If the editor has floundered in the very orthography of my father's name, he has at leaſt improved his ſpelling in the title, if he was the author, as he ſeems to intimate he was,

* The *Teſtament Politique du Chevalier Robert Walpoole* meeting with the contempt and oblivion it deſerved, and never being tranſlated into Engliſh, Mr. Walpole found all public detection of it needleſs, and never publiſhed this anſwer, but left it to appear with the reſt of his poſthumous works.

of a wretched rhapfody called A hiftory of fir Robert Walpole's adminiftration, printed three or four years ago. I think there were two or three volumes of that work, I forget exactly how many: but I know in the title-page of every one he called fir Robert Walpole earl of Oxford: fo competent a biographer was he of a man whofe very title he confounded! He is more correct now by a whole letter. I fhall give inftances hereafter that he does not improve very faft, even in the eafy and trifling accuracy of titles.

The author's firft piece was a wretched compilation from newfpapers, pamphlets and magazines, full of blunders and yet void of facts. But peace be with the dead! I haften to bury its fucceffor along with it.

It muft furprife every man who has a grain of fenfe, that the prefent work in queftion fhould firft appear in French. This ill omen, attendant on its birth, never belies itfelf. All the ideas are as foreign as the language. No account is given how the original, fuppofing it had ever been compofed in Englifh, which it was not, came into poffeffion of the editor. Did the fuppofed author leave no children, no relations, no friends to whom he communicated or entrufted his work? No child, no relation, no friend ever heard, before or fince fir Robert Walpole's death, of fuch a performance. The editor will perhaps urge that the fuppofed author (fir Robert himfelf) never communicated his work to any perfon connected with him; and, had he written it, he would have been in the right. He was too tender a parent, too amiable a friend, to give his family and friends the mortification of hearing him contradict with his laft breath every virtuous, every rational principle which had fo uniformly governed his whole conduct. Their firft care after his death would have been to burn a writing, that, while it difgraced his heart, would have proved that his underftanding was decayed: an event, that in the melancholy hours of his deceafe was never fuperadded to the grief of his family and his friends. The ftrength of his abilities, the foundnefs of his judgment, the fortitude of his temper, his calmnefs, his pleafantries, his patience, his humanity, were never more illuftrious than in the laft fcene of his life. His patriotifm, his love of his country, his attachment to the royal family on the throne, dignified and occupied moft of the moments of his laft hours. I could give proofs and atteftations of all—but it is not in anfwer to an impoftor that I fhall deign to proftitute fuch venerable materials.

Should the editor affume an air of honeft roguery, and plead that he had ftolen the original MS., I promife him he need not fear any profecution from the family: they will never claim what they know they never had any title to poffefs.

No fatisfaction being given to the public of the means by which the fuppofed original came into the hands of the editor, the moft difinterefted and indifferent reader will conclude that no fuch fatisfaction could be given. I fhall go farther, and prove inconteftably that fir Robert Walpole was not the author of a fingle line of this fictitious trumpery. Thefe proofs fhall be produced after a few remarks: but firft, the editor is hereby called upon to produce the original MS. in fir Robert Walpole's own hand. From the time that he retired from bufinefs, he kept no fecretary. If he had occafion to have even a letter tranfcribed, he made ufe of no hand but that of his two youngeft children, lady Mary Churchill, and the author of thefe fheets, who both refided conftantly in the houfe with him from the time of his retirement to his death. They, and his other furviving fon fir Edward Walpole, who was with his father almoft daily in London, and much with him in the country, never heard of their father's compofing a fingle line after his retreat; and all three declare folemnly the prefent work to be a grofs impofition.

Prefixed to the work are fome abfurd letters, as unlike the ftyle and manner of fir Robert Walpole, as they are repugnant to his undeviating principles. His family cannot even guefs to whom by far the greater part of them are pretended to be addreffed. They are ftuffed with maxims and reflections, or common-place obfervations, which whoever knew fir Robert Walpole knows he never ufed. He wrote few letters, fcarce any but on neceffary bufinefs, and none like authors and effayifts.

The very firft paffage, which fets out with a prophecy, is fo ridiculous, that, had he written it, the prophecy would never have been accomplifhed, nor would he have correfponded with a man filly enough to make it. "*You foretold,*" fays fir Robert, "*that if ever I was chofen for Lynn, I fhould become minifter.*" We beg to know of the editor, what connection there was between a feat for Lynn, and an appointment to the miniftry—Could fir Robert Walpole come into parliament for no other borough in the kingdom? And how was this prophecy fulfilled? By his being of the council to prince George of Denmark, as lord high admiral. I do not know what are called *minifters*

at

at Paris or at Amſterdam, but no Engliſhman ever called a commiſſioner of the admiralty a miniſter.

The reflections in the next letter are unfortunately out of their place. When a *queen* was on the throne, a queen who at that time had no conteſts with her ſubjects, and a queen to whom Mr. Walpole had then no acceſs (for his poſt gave him none); is it probable, he ſhould have ſaid, *What prudence is neceſſary to pleaſe a king irritated at the privileges of his ſubjects!* At the beginning of the ſame letter, a vain-glorious lie is put into the mouth of the ſame perſon. He ſays he was no ſooner called to the prince's council than he attained a ſingular aſcendant there. Nothing was leſs true. The prince, who was inclined to the Tories, and whoſe confidence was engroſſed by a brother of the duke of Marlborough, never had the leaſt partiality to Mr. Walpole. The perſon who firſt diſtinguiſhed his abilities and protected him, was the lord treaſurer Godolphin, who is not mentioned, though ſir Robert Walpole ſolely aſcribed to him his promotion. It was his pride to the end of his life; he loved lord Godolphin more than any man he ever knew; and a gratitude that flouriſhed in its full vigour for forty years afterwards, was not likely to be ſilent in the firſt overflowing of its ſenſibility.

The ſilly anecdote in a ſubſequent letter of madame Maintenon and Forbin is of a piece with the reſt. I refer to madame Maintenon's own letter, to have it decided, whether a female pique about a ceremonial between her and king James's queen occaſioned the defeat of Forbin's enterpriſe. Thoſe good ladies, who governed their bigoted huſbands, were not likely to quarrel when the cauſe of enthuſiaſm was in queſtion. Queen Mary paid ample homage to queen Maintenon: both ruined the affairs of their reſpective monarchs, and both hoped to have their ambition pardoned by extending the yoke of popery. Mary's ſpirit drove her weaker huſband on the laſt extremities. The Maintenon, more timid, more patient, more artful, had more difficulties to encounter. She had a bigot to make, and the ſelf-ſufficience of her huſband to ſubdue, and his paſſion for glory to lull aſleep. She did ruin his glory, but not by deſign; and ſhe dreaded him too much to counter-work his plans intentionally. Nothing could have raiſed her intereſt with him like reſtoring king James—nothing could have raiſed her own glory ſo high—and I believe nobody thinks, that, however inſenſible to *his* fame, ſhe was indifferent to her own. Her piety was a farce, and only a ſupplement to her ambition: and though,

though, if ſhe and Cromwell wore a maſk till it fitted them, certainly neither were *born* enthuſiaſts.

A following letter undertakes a vain and extravagant attempt to make Mr. Walpole paſs for a Jacobite by principle. Thank God that cauſe is reduced to piteous extremities, when it flies to ſir Robert Walpole's grave for countenance! Many good proteſtants have been ſaid to declare themſelves papiſts on their death-bed. This is the firſt inſtance of a champion of liberty being called to depoſe in the cauſe of Jacobitiſm, two-and-twenty years after his deceaſe.

Hoc Ithacus velit, & magno mercentur Atridæ.

Walpole, whoſe hero was king William, who ſuffered impriſonment under Anne for his devotion to the Hanover ſucceſſion, who rejected with ſcorn the offers of Harley, who contributed ſo much to the overthrow of Bolinbroke, the exile of Atterbury, and the deſtruction of the arms and councils of the Jacobites, is made to *doubt*, during the whig-miniſtry of queen Anne, (p. 24, vol. i.) whether the timid flight and abdication of king James left the nation at liberty to chooſe their ſovereign—And did not Hampden doubt whether he had a right to oppoſe the arbitrary impoſition of ſhip-money? But be it ſo. While living, let us withſtand every encroachment of prerogative—and when we are dead, let Jeſuits, if they pleaſe, make our wills and recant for us. I am glad they have ſo little elſe to do: it is more harmleſs than ſtabbing kings.

Amidſt all the lies the fictitious author has hazarded, he obſerves one caution; which is, giving no dates to his letters. My father was remarkably attentive to this circumſtance—but it expoſes an impoſtor to detection. However, the ſeeds of falſehood ſeldom produce a crop of truth. Here is an inſtance, in p. 27: Mr. Walpole, after the death of the queen—he who, when only a counſellor of the admiralty, had vaunted himſelf a miniſter, is now grown ſo modeſt as to call himſelf only an apprentice in parliament. He had ſitten there before the death of king William, and through all the reign of queen Anne, till driven thence by violence. He was a principal actor there in the new reign—and yet pretends to find great difficulty in preventing ſir William Windham from being chairman of the committee of ways and means: ſir William Windham, who, ſays the writer, boaſts openly of his oppoſition to the houſe of Hanover. That this blemiſh in the life of ſo able a man as ſir W. Windham ſhould here be recalled, is not ſurpriſing. It is well known from the conſequences of lord Bolinbroke's letter to that gentleman, how thoroughly he renounced his former miſtaken prejudices; and it does much more honour to his memory to have abjured them, than it can do hurt to have entertained them.

In the next letter Mr. Walpole acquaints the unknown lord his friend, that he is appointed paymaſter of the forces, of guards and garriſons, and of Chelſea-hoſpital. His friend muſt have been very ignorant, not to have known that the laſt article followed the firſt of courſe. It is juſt what an accurate Frenchman would have detailed, and what an Engliſhman would not.

Such truths are only ridiculous. The next lie is ſerious. Mr. Walpole is made to ſay, "Il faut que je faſſe les informations neceſſaires pour trouver des coupables. J'eſpere que j'y parviendrai; car vous ſçavez que dans les revolutions il faut en trouver pour alimenter le reſſentiment du peuple, et celui du parti qui prend le deſſus. Le ſang du juſte, dût-il couler, ces ſortes d'injuſtices deviennent legitimes par la conſtitution de notre gouvernement."—What! did ſir Robert Walpole feel, or dare to write, theſe ſhocking words! tantumque nefas patrio excidit ore!—words that never iſſued from the mouth of a Ravaillac! Was there ever a political aſſaſſin who did not believe, or at leaſt affect to believe, that conſcience guided his frantic arm? Was there a murderer in the Ligue, or in the maſſacre of Paris, that avowed to ſhed the blood of the *juſt?* Catherine of Medicis, Philip II. or Charles IX. who muſqueted his own ſubjects as they ſwam the Seine to eſcape his fury, were ſcarce capable of daring to breathe ſuch deteſtable maxims. Oh! my father, moſt humane of men, is this the teſtament you bequeathed to your children? What inſtant of your moſt amiable life was ſtained with blood? In the height of their reſentment and rage, what ſingle man of your enemies ever reproached you with cruelty? Did they tax you with imaginary crimes, and forget ſo foul a ſtain? How did this black letter eſcape their penetration? Did you not pardon Bolinbroke in ſpite of the remonſtrances and oppoſition of your friends? Did you hunt for criminals?—Nay, when did you not pardon your enemies? the moſt inveterate of them! At what moment could you not have ſaid with fervent innocence, Forgive us our treſpaſſes as we forgive thoſe that treſpaſs againſt us! What brighter teſtimony have I of your preſent felicity, than the mildneſs and gentleneſs of your

your whole life!—Go, impoſtor, rake the annals of ſcandal, and produce a paſſage that reproaches that honourable name with blood-thirſtineſs. Conſult ſurviving Jacobites, whom he diſcovered, and left unpuniſhed—aſk them if he had occaſion to hunt for criminals! I could ſay more: but let thoſe periſh in oblivion whom his indulgence abandoned to it.

The duplicity which, in p. 34, the miniſter is made to brag of, is almoſt a virtue compared to what went before. But falſehood was as diſſonant from his nature as cruelty. His frankneſs often hurt himſelf. But this is no place for his panegyric—ſuffice it to confute calumnies.

The next letter grows comic from its improbability. It is addreſſed to my lord T. K.; and Œdipus, if he can, may find out who is meant by thoſe letters. It deſires the lord to truſt his ſon to Mr. Walpole, who will promote him; but his lordſhip is requeſted to adviſe his ſon not to talk jacobitiſm too openly. How conſonant to this is the ardour for diſcovering criminals! Intemperate Jacobites were exactly the ſubjects that ſuch a miniſter would have voluntarily recommended to the new prince on the throne! How well the author is acquainted with the man and the times he repreſents!

Follows a letter to my lord S. D. D. which promiſes another from my lord M. O. The latter may be my lord Matthew Onſlow, or any other peer that never exiſted. The former, we are informed by a curious note, was my lord Sunderland, who betrayed king James; and ſo I dare ſwear the author intended it. Unluckily, the earl of Sunderland who was miniſter to king James died Sept. 28, 1702: and it was his ſon who was miniſter to king George the firſt. This blunder I place ſolely to the editor, though there is no doubt but he was the author too.

In the next piece is a miſtake, which could not be made by ſir Robert Walpole: he calls the earl of Oxford my lord Harley. No Engliſhman could have made the miſtake; as lord Harley was the title of the ſon, not of the father, who was created earl at the firſt ſtep, and never was lord Harley. So afterwards Bolinbroke is ſometimes called earl of Bolinbroke and ſometimes viſcount. *Comte* and *vicomte* are eaſily confounded by a foreigner; but what reſemblance in ſound is there between *earl* and *viſcount*?

In p. 46, is ſuch a recapitulation of the crimes of queen Anne's miniſters, as ſurely did not reduce the miniſters to *hunt* for criminals.

Next comes a droll puniſhment intended to be inflicted on the earl of Oxford, in caſe he ſhould eſcape the ſentence of the law. The king, ſays his ſuppoſed miniſter, will certainly forbid him the court:—a dreadful puniſhment in the eyes of a foreigner, but not conſidered in England with equal horror. Lord Oxford had thruſt himſelf amidſt the crowd on the king's acceſſion, to kiſs his hand; but was not noticed. Severe treatment, no doubt, *before his trial.* I queſtion if he would have felt it ſo ſenſibly afterwards. However, Mr. Walpole was certainly not very ſanguinary by nature, if he contented himſelf with baniſhing ſo great a rival from St. James's. At the bottom of p. 50, the editor accuſes himſelf of ſtealing this letter from himſelf: nobody will diſpute his right to the property of it.

A letter to my lady P. T. promiſes favour to Mr. A. which, ſays the editor, means Mr. Prior. The Jacobites and perſons who dabble in treaſon make uſe of falſe names and falſe initials; but what occaſion had a powerful miniſter for ſuch reſerve? When he engaged to ſerve a priſoner, why diſguiſe his name to that priſoner's friend? How ſagacious was the editor in penetrating a needleſs myſtery of his own making! In the ſame letter is an inſtance of the author's groſs ignorance of the Engliſh conſtitution; Mr. Walpole is made to call himſelf one of Prior's judges. Is there an Engliſhman who does not know that judicature is not of the competence of the houſe of commons? Mr. Walpole was chairman of the committee of ſecrecy which examined Prior. Was it poſſible that Mr. Walpole could call himſelf one of Prior's judges, and ſay he had pronounced ſentence on him? With equal truth might a witneſs at the Old Bailey call himſelf lord mayor.

In ſome ſubſequent letters is much diſcourſe on Mr. Walpole's reſignation, without a ſingle hint at the open, known, avowed cauſe of it—the breach between the king and prince—a circumſtance which Mr. Walpole never diſguiſed, though it ſeems the editor-author never heard of it;—ſo difficult is it to forge a work that can ſtand the very firſt inſpection! In the ſame letter Mr. Edgcumbe is called Edgcumbe eſquire. Country fellows ſay, 'ſquire Edgcumbe; gazetteers, Edgcumbe eſquire; but what gentleman ever uſed either term?

 Then

Then follows a declaration of the court againſt Mr. Walpole; the moſt abſurd piece of ſtuff that can be imagined, and too ridiculous for even a newſpaper. I ſcarce think it was forged even by the party-writers of the time.

Another letter, p. 82, begins with this beautiful conceit, *I acquaint you that I am no longer any thing; for what is a miniſter when he is not a miniſter?* It puts one in mind of the blunder which the old editions beſtowed on Shakeſpear:

Cæſar did never wrong, but with juſt cauſe.

In the ſame letter is a term, of which I beg the editor to give us the original in Engliſh. It is *ex-miniſtre*—a gallicifm, to which we have no word that correſponds; conſequently the French is the original.—But enough of theſe detections; you can no longer doubt that the work is a clumſy impoſture. I will take notice but of two paſſages more in the letters, and leave them to the obloquy they deſerve.

In the negotiations with the court of France, ſir Robert and his brother Horace write ſeveral letters to one another, in which they both mention lord Harrington as embaſſador in Spain. Theſe letters, though without date, muſt have been written before March 11, 1727, becauſe Mr. Stanhope did not quit Madrid till that day, and it was not till Nov. 29, N. S. that he was created lord Harrington. I ſhould be glad to ſee the original letters.

The other article is the penſion of an hundred thouſand livres granted by king George I. to the Pretender. The editor confeſſes that he can diſcover no trace of its having been ever granted, but in this letter. If he had not put it into that letter himſelf, he would not have found it even there.

The Oppoſition to ſir Robert Walpole accuſed him of being penſioner to the Pretender. It ſeems they did not know that the reverſe was true! What humiliation for the houſe of Stuart to be charged with ſtooping to accept between four and five thouſand pounds a year from their ſucceſsful antagoniſt! But I believe they were as innocent of it as ſir Robert Walpole was of the facts with which the forger of his teſtament has endeavoured to load him. The hiſtorians of Amſterdam and the will-makers of Paris are not in much vogue. This performance will not raiſe their reputation. There was an age when nobody diſputed whatever forgeries were fabricated in convents. But great changes have happened ſince the donation of Conſtantine could paſs uncontroverted: and it required more addreſs than modern monks poſſeſs, and more ignorance than the preſent age is bleſſed with, to ſupport and endure palpable forgeries. Learned men have laid down rules for examining internal and external evidence; that is, with much ſolemnity they have furniſhed common ſenſe with terms, and thought they taught it to uſe its own lights. But when common ſenſe is not reſtrained by power and prejudice, it can make its way without the aſſiſtance of thoſe grave midwives, the Learned, who deſtroy at leaſt as many children as they ſave.

I will now make a few remarks on the work itſelf, and they ſhall be but few; for when letters which ſir Robert Walpole is ſuppoſed to have written in his life, are proved fictitious, the work to which they are an introduction, and which now firſt appears ſo long after his death, is likely to meet with little credit.

In page 4, ſir Robert Walpole is made to complain of being abandoned by his friends. This is for once an undeſerved ſatire on mankind. No fallen miniſter ever experienced ſuch firm attachment from his friends as he did. His firſt levee after his fall was ſo crowded, that thoſe of the new miniſters became a proverb for their emptineſs. He remained the oracle of his party during his three ſurviving years: and for the ſix weeks of his laſt illneſs, his houſe and his door were extraordinarily frequented by all ranks of men. Both then and before he was conſulted by the king and duke of Cumberland, and different miniſters—But I muſt ſtop; I am not writing his hiſtory, but confuting falſehoods.

I muſt obſerve that the firſt volume tends to decry commerce; the ſecond adviſes the Engliſh to mind little or nothing elſe. Are theſe contradictions like the good ſenſe of ſir Robert Walpole, or the nonſenſe of an impoſtor?

With equal truth, and equal abſurdity, the ſuppoſed author, page 10, is made to harangue againſt the adopted royal family. To ſtate ſuch paſſages, is to refute them. In page 12, is a ſimilar argument in favour of popery. How low is each cauſe ſunk when ſir Robert Walpole is borrowed for their miſſionary!

I paſs

I paſs over witticiſms, ſtrained alluſions, jargon of modern philoſophy, ſophiſticated ſyſtems, and blundering ideas of commerce and government. I wiſh they who approve this work may conduct themſelves by its maxims.

Page 23, the ferocity of the Engliſh is attributed to the uſe of coal-fires. The author ſays, we were not ſo melancholy and ſavage before we adopted that uſage. This piece of hiſtory and philoſophy is not the leaſt diverting folly in the book.

In the next letter but one is an invective againſt liberty. Eraſe the name of ſir Robert Walpole from the title-page, and ſubſtitute that of father Peters, confeſſor of James II. and the work would really have an air of probability.

The note to page 33, in which the editor explains the form of paſſing bills, is, like all the reſt, full of miſtakes; but theſe he is ſo good as to take to his own account; and therefore I leave him in poſſeſſion. In another note, page 35, he informs us, that if a king of England declares war on a perſonal account, he wages it at his own private expence. This is new to us Engliſh.

Then follows a deduction of the hiſtory of England, the tendency of which is to deny Magna Charta. If thoſe worthy labourers the teſtament-makers of this age had exiſted ſeventeen hundred years ago, I ſuppoſe they would have made Julius Cæſar leave behind him an invective againſt uſurpation. They ſcorn the leaſt grain of probability, and yet expect credit!

The reign of Henry IV. by whom I am ſo charitable as to believe the author meant Henry V. is ſaid to have been a continued ſeries of victories over France. I do not know whom he means, when he ſays Henry VIII. governed his parliaments by maintaining them in all their prerogatives. It was a very gentle way of guarding their privileges, by threatening their heads if they denied him a ſubſidy.

Elizabeth's haughty tone is forgotten, and James I. figures next as a monarch of ſpirit. Such hiſtory is worthy of ſuch ſyſtems!

Cromwell is called by this vulgar writer a brewer's ſon. The partiſans of hereditary

hereditary right are in the wrong to falſify and depreciate his birth. When ſo many royal lines produce ſo many fools, they ſhould not remind the world that it ought to ſeek for great princes wherever they can be found. Cromwell was not ſo great a tyrant as Henry VIII. or James II. or Louis XIV. and he was a much abler prince. The firſt was a bubble abroad, the ſecond a fool at home and abroad, the third a deſtroyer of mankind. England never made a greater figure than under Cromwell; and though the duke of Marlborough and Mr. Pitt extended farther the glory of our arms, we ſtill enjoy Jamaica, which was not raviſhed from us by contemptible treaties, as the fruits have been of the ſucceſſes obtained by thoſe other great men.

The conqueſts made by Mr. Pitt are not mentioned by me improperly. They were the true ſource of half the blunders before me. The author preaches againſt them in every page of his work. Unfortunately he forgot that when ſir Robert Walpole died, there was no queſtion of conqueſt. He remained in power a very ſhort time after the beginning of the war in 1741. Admiral Vernon had taken Porto Bello, and miſcarried before Carthagena. The ſucceeding miniſters were no heroes. Lord Granville talked very big, but achieved nothing; and was removed before ſir Robert's death. The duke of Newcaſtle, Mr. Pelham, and lord Hardwick were of no heroic mould, and accordingly did nothing. An invaſion had been apprehended under marſhal Saxe, which, though it miſcarried, left the nation alarmed at the views of France and the Jacobites. Sir Robert Walpole, for the laſt year of his life, had nothing in his thoughts but the dangers to which the crown would ſoon be expoſed: often and often did he repeat, "*Within a twelvemonth this crown will be fought for on Engliſh ground.*" His words were prophetic. The rebellion broke out in three months after his death; yet is he made to talk as if he condemned the meaſures of Mr. Pitt, and had lived to ſee Martinico, Guadaloupe, Quebec, Louiſbourg, the Havannah, conquered, the fleets of France and Spain deſtroyed, and both Indies at the mercy of Great Britain. Alas! his laſt hours were gilded with no ſuch pleaſing viſions! He felt all that patriot melancholy which would have caſt a gloom over his fainting ſoul, if he had lived to ſee the treaty of Utrecht renewed. Turn to pp. 68 and 72. Les profits de ces grandes conquêtes n'equivalent donc pas les frais qu'elles entrainent, ſays the ſuppoſed miniſter, who had been dead 14 or 15 years before they were made. In the very next page we are aſked, Comment la nation Angloiſe oſe-t-elle publier que la France touche au moment de ſa decadence?

decadence? Was that the language of 1742, 43, 44, and the beginning of 45; or of 1758, 59, and 60?

This is an abfolute proof of the forgery. Here is another: In page 144, the author fays, En Angleterre on n'a pas gratis l'air même qu'on y refpire. This means the tax on windows—which was not laid till after fir Robert's death. The groffnefs of thefe blunders made me run through the reft of the work very curforily. I did not want to know fo filly an author's ideas, but to fhow that they were not my father's. The work is below criticifm; but the author deferved to be burnt in the hand for an impoftor, and that I have done for him. It is unneceffary to fpecify more of his ignorance, and even on points on which it was impoffible for the moft trifling Englifh minifter to miftake; as in p. 214, where he thinks the houfe of commons has *folely* the right of propofing bills, and the lords of approving and rejecting; not knowing that both houfes have both rights in common. In the note to this clumfy blunder, it is faid that the king confirms a bill by touching it with his fceptre, an ornament which the king of England *never* ufes but at his coronation. I only mention thefe inaccuracies for foreigners. For them too I muft take notice of another piece of ignorance, of which a minifter of this country could not be guilty. The author, p. 219, talks of *governors of provinces*. We have no fuch thing, except that fhadow, lords lieutenants. I fuppofe the author meant the latter, becaufe he is fpeaking of elections of members of parliament, and fays, to fecure a parliament, the court appoints fuch governors of provinces as it can confide in. I repeat it to foreigners, we have no governors of provinces. Lords lieutenants have no power in elections but by their perfonal intereft, if they happen to have any. Sheriffs, mayors, and fuch like, are the returning officers, and are annual. The author may take his choice of what he pretends to have meant.

But of all his blunders, none is more ftriking than the following, p. 223. La nation Britannique croit-elle avoir fecoué le joug, pour être parvenue à rendre le parlement triennial? I call this a moft ftriking blunder, though not a more capital anachronifm than what he had faid on our conquefts, but becaufe fo immediately relative to fir Robert Walpole. During his whole adminiftration, the Oppofition to him contended for triennial parliaments, which had been fuperfeded ever fince the year 1716, when feptennial parliaments were eftablifhed.

eftablifhed. The latter were maintained by fir Robert Walpole, continued to exift to his death, and do continue to this very moment, February 1767.

Here is another inftance of the fame ftamp. Sir Robert Walpole is made to call the number of members in the houfe of commons 513—The real number is 558, by the addition of the 45 Scotch members, on the Union in queen Anne's reign. I think 518 balloted on the queftion of examining into the conduct of the earl of Orford, after he had quitted the adminiftration and was created a peer in 1742. Is it very likely that between that æra and his death in 1745 he fhould forget a number fo memorable to himfelf, and re-collect only what had been the number fifty years before?—So much for volume the firft!

The fecond fhall give me and the reader very little trouble. It is as dull, as uninformed, confufed, and contradictory as the firft; and entirely founded on events fubfequent to the death of fir Robert Walpole; though the author, a little more upon his guard, takes care to afcribe a prophetic fpirit to the minifter, by making him forefee exactly the defertion of Auftria to France, the affairs of Portugal, and the enterprifes of the king of Pruffia. My father had fagacity and penetration, but certainly did not forefee the exact hiftory of twenty years. The genuine author was however fo hurt at our conquefts, that they put him off his guard. In p. 77, he fays, Il faudra bien du tems pour que l'impreffion favorable que la nation a donnée d'elle puiffe s'effacer. But of all the improprieties that he has put into the mouth of fir Robert Walpole, nothing exceeds his making him quote Corneille. Sir Robert Walpole could not fpeak a word of French, did read letters of bufinefs in that language with difficulty, was converfant with no French authors, and moft affuredly had never read one of their poets. He had little efteem for thofe of his own country, and I dare aver had not even feen all the pieces of Pope that were publifhed in his own time. He had very little leifure; and, when he had, did not beftow it on reading.

This fecond volume is chiefly compofed of a tedious difcuffion of the various interefts of the European powers, mifunderftood and mifapplied, and teeming with anachronifms. For inftance, p. 96, the author fays, after every war we pay dearly to the landgrave of Heffe for the ravages committed in his country. This has undoubtedly been the caſe ſince my father's death, but when was it ſo in his life-time?

I am weary of tracking ſo miſerable a writer, but I cannot help laughing at one particular chapter, which begins p. 179 and continues to the end of 229. Would one believe that theſe fifty dull pages ſhould be put into the mouth of ſir Robert Walpole, and be a diſſertation on the conſtitution of Poland? How exactly the author knew the miniſter! and how perfectly was ſir Robert acquainted with that country! How important muſt he have thought it to his country to examine ſo barbarous, ſo confuſed, and ſo inſignificant a ſyſtem! Les Towavizs, ſays he, forment d'aſſez bonnes troupes. Sir Robert Walpole certainly knew much of the Towavizs; about as much as he did of Gentoos, who now compoſe ſo intereſting a part of our literature. In a note at the end of this wonderful chapter, it is ſuggeſted that ſir Robert borrowed moſt of his ideas from the Jus Polonicum. Whether that work was publiſhed in my father's time or not, I know not. I never ſaw it myſelf, who have dabbled in dull books, which he never did. Had this chapter been aſcribed to lord Granville, who with all his wit, and fire, and talents, condeſcended to read, or condeſcended to pretend to read, the bad Latin of German civilians, it would not have been out of character. Sir Robert Walpole would as ſoon have read The divine legation as the Jus Polonicum.

I have done with this impoſture, and will add but few words.

Sir Robert Walpole did not leave a ſheet of paper of his compoſition behind him, as all his family know. They had earneſtly wiſhed, and at times reſpectfully preſſed him to give ſome account of his own adminiſtration; but neither his health nor inclination permitted it. He reſigned his places in February 1742, and was engaged by the ſecret committee till June of that year, when he went into the country for about three months. He was in town all the ſucceeding winter, as he was thoſe of 1743 and 44, ſitting at home, receiving conſtant viſits from his friends and party, conſulted by miniſters, and ſometimes attending parliament. He paſſed the two ſummers of 1743 and 44 at Houghton, the only time in which he had any leiſure: in thoſe ſummers I was not two whole months abſent from him, and do declare he never attempted to write any thing but neceſſary letters. In one of thoſe ſummers, I forget which, deſirous of amuſing him, which his ill health required, I propofed to read to him. He faid, What will you read? I anfwered, as moft young men would to a ftatefman, Hiftory, fir. No child, faid he, I know that cannot be true.—Judge if he was likely to write hiftory, or a teftament politique.

I fhould have faid, that in the winter of 1743 he was much engaged in allaying the heats raifed by the partiality of the late king to the troops of Hanover, and was the fole author of compofing thofe animofities. In the winter of 1744, he was ftill more warmly and zealoufly employed in alarming the nation on the intended invafion under marfhal Saxe; he went to the houfe of lords, and exerted his former fpirit and eloquence with fuch diftinction, that the late prince of Wales, who was prefent, was ftruck, and fignified to him his pardon of all that had paffed between them while my father was minifter—as if he had never been effentially ferviceable to the houfe of Hanover before! His health at that time declined greatly; and he could no longer go abroad from the inconvenience of ftones in his bladder. In this melancholy ftate, during the fummer of 1744, he read the works of Dr. Sydenham, whom he much efteemed; and Dr. Jurin's Treatife on Mrs. Stephens's medicine for diffolving the ftone being put into his hands, he found a refemblance in it to the opinions of Sydenham. This determined him to try Jurin's preparation. He was brought to town with great difficulty, took Jurin's medicine, and was killed by it in March 1745.

This folemn account of the conclufion of fo refpectable a life was not due to fo grovelling an author as he who wrote The teftament politique; but it was due to truth, to the public, and to the beft of fathers. He wants no monument that fuch weak hands as mine can raife; but while they have motion, they fhall defend his memory againft forgeries. Calumnies I heed not: but he fhall not be made to calumniate himfelf, while there is fenfibility in the foul of

His affectionate fon

HORACE WALPOLE.

February 16, 1767.

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