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**The Works Of the late Right Honorable Henry St. John,
Lord Viscount Bolingbroke**

In Five Volumes, complete.

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THE OCCASIONAL WRITER.

NUMBER II.

To the fame.

Most Noble SIR,

I THINK myself obliged in honor to let the world know, that you have treated all my propofals to write in your fervice with a contempt unufual from one in your ftation; for I have feen the times when every little poultry prostitute of his pen found countenance and encouragement. Thefe wretches are fure of both, whenever there are any bad meafures to be juftified, or any bold ftrokes to be given; and the croaking of thefe ravens has always, in my imagination, boded fome mischief or other to the commonwealth.

FOR this reafon, I took upon me the character of a moft infamous libeller, in my firft addrefs to you, that I might be able to make a furer judgment of our prefent condition, and know better what expectations to entertain; fo that I own I am moft agreeably difappointed in not receiving any letter or meffage

message from you. I own, that instead of biting you, I am fairly bit myself.

SOME malicious refiners may pretend, perhaps, that an address of such a nature, made in so public a manner, could meet with no other treatment, even from a minister who was willing to accept the proposal. Malice, I say, may refine thus, and endeavor to depreciate a virtuous action, which cannot be denied, by supposing such motives to it as cannot be proved. The practice is too common, and especially where men are divided into parties, where public disputes create and nourish private animosities, and where perpetual feuds irritate the natural malignity of the heart. But far be it from me to judge with so little charity; I am willing to believe, sir, that you declined the offers made you, not on account of the public address, by which they were conveyed, but because you disdained to support a virtuous administration by a venal pen.

WHEN I meet a man with loaded pistols in his pocket, or a dagger under his cloak, I suspect that he is going upon no very honorable designs. Housebreakers and coiners have been detected, by having their tools found about them. Informers, spies, and hireling scribblers are the tools of an evil statesman; and when I see all such discouraged, and none of them about a minister, I think myself obliged to suppose that his designs are honorable, and his measures directed to the public good.

I TAKE this opportunity therefore of begging your pardon for the trial I presumed to make. The liberty indeed was great; but since it has turned so vastly to your honor, I hope to be the more easily forgiven. Shall I own it, sir? my hopes go still farther; you disdained me under the feigned character which I assumed; from the same principle of honor, from the

same consciousness of merit, you will, nay, you must afford me some share of your esteem, when I appear, as I intend to do for the future, under my own. These papers shall breathe nothing but zeal to promote the honor of his majesty, the security of our present happy establishment, and in one word, the good of our country. The same spirit, which animates you and me, shall animate them: and I cannot doubt of your approbation, when I co-operate with you to these purposes, which were certainly the sole inducements you had to enter into business; as it is manifest that you continue at the head of affairs for no other reasons.

THE truth is, however, (for I think it becoming a friendship, which is likely to grow as intimate as ours, that I should disguise nothing from you) two things have lately happened, which gave some little shock to my good opinion of you. The first is an unwillingness you manifested, that the true state of the national debts should be known by the nation; and the severe censure you passed on such persons, as were desirous to give their countrymen a fair account of their condition in a part so essential, that our being a nation, or not a nation, depends almost entirely, in this crisis, on our running or not running farther into debt. The other is the publication of a pamphlet supposed to be written by your direction, which is evidently designed to keep us no less in the dark as to all our affairs abroad.

As to the first, that matter has been taken up already; and will, I doubt not, in all places, and in all manners, be so thoroughly sifted, that we shall no longer be at a loss, either as to the revenue, and the real charges upon it, or as to the whole management of it. In which examination, sir, let me advise you, as a friend, to act an ingenuous part, that suspi-
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cions may not increase, and that I may not be obliged to write to you in a stile, to which I shall turn my pen with reluctance.

As to the latter, I hope, it will be likewise examined; and if I was able to take such a task on myself, I should, I am persuaded, in doing so, but make a second trial of you to your glory, and knit the bands of our friendship the closer, by answering a pamphlet of so pernicious consequence, and writ with so ill a design. But I know my own unfitness to inform, to instruct, and to rouse our countrymen, some from their lethargy, and some from their golden dreams. I may toll the alarm-bell, but persons of greater strength and skill must be called upon to raise it, and to ring it out in the ears of the nation.

WE are grown more easy, nay, more willing than ever, to be imposed upon; and we do more than half the work of those who find their account in deluding us. Almost every man considers himself as a single person; those few, who extend their considerations farther, seldom or never carry them beyond the narrow system of a family, or a party. And thus it happens, that private interest is become the criterion, by which judgments are formed upon public affairs. The man, whoever he be, who is at any time in fashion, has nothing to do but to hold out that purse, which the more he empties it, the surer he is to fill. After which let him declaim imperiously, and assert boldly, without regarding proof, or condescending to argue; let one of his tools write a pamphlet in much the same strain, and the work is done, the opinion of mankind is settled, the crowd repeats what the orator has said, and the author writ; the clamor is echoed back on all sides, and these echoes, the reverse of all others, strengthen by repetition.

tion. Thus the corrupt lead the blind, and the blind lead one another; the still voice of reason is drowned in popular clamor, and truth is overwhelmed by prejudice.

THIS is a true account of what happens frequently; it is so far from being a description drawn from imagination, that I could give several instances, and perhaps shall have occasion to quote some, of such gross impositions on the common sense of mankind, offered in this manner, and offered with success, as no one would be bold enough to attempt putting on the weakest man in Britain in private conversation.

THERE are therefore, GOD knows, but too many reasons for him to despond, who entertains a thought of prevailing on the generality of people, to lay aside their prejudices, to check their passions, and to consider the state of the nation in a due extent, and in a true light; and yet such is our condition, such a crisis are we in, that if we do not take and execute this resolution now, it may very probably be out of our power to do it hereafter to any good purpose.

IN our senate we hear of great dangers, which we have to apprehend from abroad; and if we believe what is said in a foreign * state, we are exposed to very great ones at home. I am willing to hope, that both one and the other are magnified; but they may grow to be such in reality as they are represented to be, if we do not take more than ordinary care; first, to weigh in a just balance each of the many evils which threaten the nation; and secondly, if we do not penetrate into every one of the causes, which have combined to bring them upon us. Should we fail in the first point, we may increase our dangers from abroad; by over-rating those at home,

*Vide Letter from Stockholm.

and by applying ourselves solely to prevent the latter. But I believe no one thinks us disposed to run into this extreme; we are much more likely to run into the other, and to increase our dangers at home, by over-rating those which we apprehend from abroad. Should we fail in the second point, and neglect to penetrate into all the causes which combine to bring our present distress upon us, palliative remedies alone will be applied, in the use of which we may very probably expire after a tedious languor, but from which we cannot expect a radical cure.

CONVINCED therefore, that if we neglect the present moment, if every man does not think and write, and speak and act for his country at this time, according to his best talents, and according to the opportunities which he has of exerting them, we shall soon be in every sense a ruined nation.

I CONFESS, that I am impatient, however low my hopes of success run, till some abler pen accepts the invitation, which "the enquirer into the reasons of the conduct of Great Britain" gives to every member of this community, till an enquiry is made, according to the right which he is pleased to allow, into our present state, and into the measures, which have led to it. But then this enquiry must be made upon better principles, and with an honest view than he has, who made this, which lies before me: the person, who accepts his invitation, should be one who would blush to follow his example; for he acts the part of an apologist, where he professes to act that of an impartial enquirer: he seems very zealous for the success of the cause which he pleads, and very indifferent what means he employs to procure this success; many things are disguised, many are concealed, and hardly any are represented in their natural and proper light. Fallacy, sophism, and a
puerile

puerile declamation, swell the elaborate treatise; but there was a design perhaps, as well as habit, in such a manner of writing upon this occasion, since a bad cause must be defended by such means; and, therefore, by such pens as would disgrace and weaken a good one; since it may possibly appear, upon a fair examination, that the cause he is retained in is none of the best.

IF this should appear, I am apt to believe, that those, who set him at work, will not be much concerned; they could not look on this pamphlet as any thing better than a momentary expedient to mislead and inflame. If it has that effect, if it serves to keep up the delusion till all the jobs, which are to be done, are done; the ends, which they proposed to themselves, are perhaps answered. But if this nation should awaken to a sense of their true interest, and if the British spirit should once more revive amongst us, it might very well happen that these persons would have made a faulty reckoning; for surely, after having exercised the justice of the nation, by censuring in one parliament a treaty of peace, which has been approved in another, it will not be thought strange, if we punish, at one time or another, those who have negotiated us out of peace and tranquility, into war and confusion, altho the wisdom of the nation should think fit to support, for the present, the measures of these ministers.

THE enquirer supposes the whole face of affairs in Europe to have received the great alteration which he is so much surprised at, within the space of the last year; but I cannot agree with him, that the turn has been so sudden as he represents it. "The calm hardly to be paralleled by any past prospect," as this great master of stile expresses himself by a figure of Hibernian rhetoric, was accompanied, as calms frequently are, by
many

many signs of an approaching storm; which signs did not escape the observation of the failors, and even passengers in our vessel, tho they escaped that of our able pilots, who were, it seems, all that while in a most serene security. The particular evils, which we apprehend at present, were known to our ministers above a year ago, if it be true, as the enquirer affirms, that the treaty of Hanover, and negotiations in consequence of it, are "the steps, which the court of Great Britain thought fit to take as soon as possible, after the danger we were in appeared evident beyond all contradiction." But before the particular danger appeared, the general danger was evident enough. When the treaty of Vienna was made, our ship struck; but we had been sailing among rocks and shoals long before, ever since we quitted our port, and launched out to sea, on the wise errand of convoying other people safe to theirs.

HE therefore, who is desirous to make the enquiry proposed, in such a manner as may be of real use to the public, must take up things much higher than this partial writer was instructed to do. Many things happened during the congress of Cambray, which deserve to be explained; and there are treaties both previous and subsequent to the quadruple alliance, which deserve to be commented upon.

NAY, there seems to be a necessity of going farther back than this reign, or even than this century, if we design to be thoroughly acquainted with the original of our present distress. When we have taken a general survey of the conduct of Britain, with relation to the affairs of Europe, for about two hundred years, we shall come much better prepared to discover our true point of interest; and by observing how we have departed from it, we shall learn how to return to it.

THIS

THIS part I will venture to undertake; and what I shall say upon it, may serve at least as an introduction to that work, which, I hope, will be performed by some abler hand.

THE foundations of the grandeur of France, and those of the grandeur of the house of Austria, were laid very near at the same period. FERDINAND and ISABELLA began the latter; and in CHARLES the fifth their grandson, and almost immediate successor, it was carried up to that exorbitant height, which made Europe tremble under his reign, under that of his son, and upon some occasions even later. The progress which France made was not so rapid, but was perhaps as sure; she shared with her rival the spoils of the house of Burgundy, by the address and vigor of LEWIS the eleventh, who not only extended the bounds, and strengthened the frontier of that close compact body, whose very figure is an addition to the force of it, but assured it's inward tranquility better, and rendered that monarchy more formidable than it had been in the time of his predecessors, when the authority of the prince was less.

THE forming of two such powers, in Europe, made it the interest of all other princes and states, to keep as much as possible a balance between them. And here began that principle of English policy to be established, which, however true and wise in itself, has hardly ever been truly and wisely pursued.

WE should take things rather too high, if we went up to the reign of king HENRY the seventh, tho even there some observations are to be made, which have relation to our present subject.

FREQUENT and important occasions of acting on this principle presented themselves in the time of HENRY the eighth. Some he took, some he neglected, and some he managed ill; for to say the truth, the whole conduct of this prince was a continued course of extravagance, violence, and levity: his vices glared through the best actions of his life. He exercised the tyranny, and practised the bloody precepts of the church of Rome, even while he was delivering us from the papal yoke. His deliberations for peace or war seemed often to have a mixture of humor in them; and his own passions, as well as WOLSEY's, made him hold the balance of Europe, if he did hold it, with an uneven hand.

THE reformation, which began in his time in Germany, and which was completed by EDWARD the sixth, and by queen ELIZABETH, in England, gave occasion to a new division of interests; and made it of the utmost importance to the welfare of this nation, not only to preserve a balance between the two great powers of Europe, but to support the protestant cause against them both. The first of these was to be done by throwing as much as the occasion might require of our weight, sometimes into one, and sometimes into the other of these scales; but the latter could be effected by nothing less than a constant adherence to that side which was for a long time the weakest, and which, I doubt, is so still.

BOTH these principles were pursued by queen ELIZABETH, with the greatest wisdom, and with the greatest success. To illustrate this fully, it would be necessary to run through the annals of her glorious reign. But a few general observations will suffice for our present purpose. When she came to the crown, the nation was divided between two powerful parties, exasperated by religious zeal; Ireland was papist, Scotland was

under the immediate influence of France, and the queen of that kingdom, married to the dauphin of France, disputed her title to the crown of England. In short, the surest support she had amidst all these difficulties, besides the firmness of her mind, and the penetration of her understanding, was in PHILIP the second, whom she disobliged by refusing to make him her husband; and who could not fail of being, on many accounts, as he proved to be, her most implacable and dangerous enemy. She kept measures for a while with him, nay, perhaps, with the court of Rome, and soon settled her government, and established her power: her own kingdom was the first and principal object of her care; and she judged very wisely, that, in order to be considerable abroad, she must begin by making herself so at home. Her revenue was administered with the utmost frugality, industry was encouraged, manufactures improved, and commerce extended: she was far from neglecting foreign alliances, but her negotiations were conducted with great art and little expence, and the engagements she took were always necessary, seldom chargeable. She supported the protestant cause in France, with good offices, with loans of money; and upon some pressing occasions with troops. But she never depended on the gratitude of HENRY the fourth, and was neither surpris'd nor unprepared when he made returns very unworthy of the obligations he had to her. The Dutch could not have sustained their revolt from Spain, nor have formed their commonwealth, without her assistance. She helped them powerfully, but she exacted cautionary towns from them, as a security for her reimbursement, whenever they should be in a condition to pay; and in the mean time as a check, to keep them under the influence and direction of England. By such methods as these, her own country grew rich and flourishing, while she not only preserved a balance of power abroad, but contributed extremely to reduce Spain from being the terror
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of Europe, to that low state, into which it fell under the successors of king Philip the second.

THE reign of king JAMES the first, is not to be read without a mixture of indignation and contempt. He came to the crown with great advantages; but a bad head, and a worse heart, hindered him from improving any of them. He lost the opportunity of uniting the two kingdoms; he suffered his revenue to be ill administered; his ministers were notoriously corrupt, and he himself very profuse.

INSTEAD of asswaging, he fomented disputes by his pedantry; established such principles of government, and raised such a spirit in the clergy, as could hardly fail to produce the terrible effects which followed in the reign of his son.

SUCH a management of domestic affairs would have put it out of his power, if it had been his inclination to act a wiser part in foreign affairs: but he had no such inclination. Twelve years he suffered himself to be amused with the Spanish match; he countenanced at least the popish, and he absolutely neglected the protestant interest, both in France and Germany. Instead of helping the dispositions, which appeared, to take the imperial crown out of the house of Austria, he favored the cause of that family, and abandoned his own children to the resentment of the emperor and the popish league. When the thirty years war began in 1618, the liberty of Germany, and the whole protestant interest, were in the utmost peril. The sole measures, which he took for the support of either, consisted in simple embassies, ridiculous letters, and languid negotiations. Queen ELIZABETH defeated the ambitious designs of the Spanish branch of the Austrian family; king JAMES favored those of the German branch of the same family.

OVER the succeeding reign, and all that followed, to the restoration of king CHARLES the second, let us draw a veil.

DURING this time the decay of the Spanish monarchy increased apace, the liberties of Germany were asserted, and the power of the emperor bounded by the treaties of Westphalia; but another power, that of France, began to rise very fast on the foundations laid long ago. RICHELIEU and MAZARINE had given that crown a great superiority in the affairs of Europe, and the prince who wore it, resolved to maintain and augment this superiority, at the expence of all his neighbours.

The attack which LEWIS the fourteenth made upon the Low Countries in 1667, shewed, both in the manner of it, and in the pretence taken for it, what Europe had to expect from this prince. On this occasion the triple alliance was made; and happy had it been, if the same principles of policy had continued to prevail. But the king who sat on our throne, with better sense and more courage than his grandfather, was at least as unfit as he to defend the liberties of Europe, and perhaps more unfit to defend the protestant interest.

KING CHARLES the second joined his councils and his arms to those of France; and when he could not openly assist, he privately abetted the usurpations of that crown. He might, by conforming to the desires of his people, who were in his and their true interest, have had the immortal honor of preserving a balance of power in Europe; but he chose the eternal infamy of helping to destroy this balance; and not content to be the ally of a prince, whose enemy he ought to have been, he condescended to be his instrument, and even his pensioner. This conduct, which took so much strength from that side, which was already too weak, and which added so much to that

that which was already too strong, established the absolute superiority of France, and left Spain, Germany, Italy, and the Seventeen provinces, nay and Britain too, in consequence, at her mercy.

THIS terrible face of things did not mend on the accession of king JAMES the second to the throne. Whatever his politics were, religion would have got the better of them. Bigotry must have cemented a close union between him and the king of France, who was alone able and willing to assist him in the work he had undertaken at home. But the greatness of our danger, as it sometimes happens, saved us; and in saving us, saved all Europe. The revolution in our government caused a total change in our conduct. A prince, who had been long at the head of a weak but resolute opposition to France, mounted our throne; and the principles of maintaining a balance between the great powers of Europe, and of supporting the protestant interest, came once more into fashion in this kingdom, after having been for near a century, either neglected, or acted against.

THE body of the nation resumed these principles with warmth, and has supported them ever since with unparalleled spirit and vigor. But let it be said without offence, since it may be said with truth, and since it is necessary that it should be said upon this occasion, we have not pursued them with as much wisdom as zeal. If we have erred in our politics since the revolution, it is sure we have erred on the right side. But errors on the right side are errors still, and may, in time, prove as fatal as errors on the other; and are, in one respect at least, more dangerous, as they are less attended to at first, or guarded against.

BETWEEN

BETWEEN all extremes there is a certain middle point, which men of genius perceive, and to which men of honor adhere in private and in public life.

THUS avarice and prodigality are at an immense distance; but there is a space marked out by virtue between them, where frugality and generosity reside together. Thus again, to abandon those, whom it is our interest to support, is an excess of folly; and to support the interests of other people, to the ruin of our own, is an excess of folly likewise. But there are lines described by prudence, between these two excesses, within which our common interests meet, and may proceed together.

IT would be an invidious as well as tedious task, to go through all the instances, which might be produced; wherein we have, under pretence of preserving a balance of power in Europe, gratified the passions of particular men, and served the turns of private interest, till we have rendered that principle, in a reasonable pursuit of which our safety and our glory consist, the occasion of real danger to the interest, and of reproach to the wisdom of our nation. A few of these instances will suffice to deduce the progress of our mistaken policy, to evince the truth of what has been advanced in general, and to fix the application of the whole to the present conjuncture; wherein I apprehend, that we are about to pay the price not only of late errors, but a long series of errors.

THE war, which began in 1688, was no doubt a very necessary war. It was necessary to extinguish the rebellion in Scotland; it was necessary to reduce Ireland; it was necessary to assert the new establishment of our government. These were our immediate interests; but we had remote interests likewise

likewise concerned, which were of themselves sufficient to engage us to enter, at least as allies and friends, into the war. The empire was in danger by the taking of Philipsburgh, and other enterprizes of the French; and Holland lay once more open to their invasions, by the seizing of Bonne. In the course of this war, Ireland was reduced; all the efforts against the government in England and Scotland were defeated; and, by the peace, France acknowledged king WILLIAM.

As unfortunate as we had been on the Rhine and in Flanders, every thing, which the French had taken in the course of the war from our allies, was restored at Ryfwic; and Luxembourg, which France had usurped before the war, was likewise given up. Thus far all was well. The points, which England contended for, were carried; and our allies recovered by treaty more than they had lost by war.

IF a common guaranty of this treaty had been entered into as soon as those powers acceded who refused to sign when England and Holland did, the tranquility of Europe would have been better secured than it was at this time, or at the peace of Nimeghen; at least England would have engaged, as far as it became her to do, even upon the principle of maintaining the balance of power, and no farther.

BUT, instead of taking this step, we took another, which proved fatal in it's consequences. The death of CHARLES the second, king of Spain, without children, was then in prospect. The pretensions of France were known, and it's power had been lately felt. Whenever the case should happen, a war seemed to be unavoidable. But this war must have been made by France alone, for the conquest of the Spanish monarchy; which, as powerful as we then thought her, and as insolent as she

really was, she would not have engaged in lightly. Neither could she have supported it, if she had, since even with Spain on her side, she could not have supported the last, if the mines of Peru had not been unaccountably left open to her.

ON the apprehension, however, of such a war, and on the specious pretence of preserving a balance of power in Europe, the partition treaties were made; that is, without the knowledge of the king of Spain, we disposed of his inheritance; without the consent of the emperor, and in concert with his adverse party, we settled the rights contested between the house of Austria and Bourbon; and we engaged to make this partition good by arms.

I DO not enter into the reasons for and against this treaty, which may be drawn from the particular stipulations contained in it, but content myself to observe, in general, what impolitic measures we were at this period betrayed into, by an over-weening desire to preserve the balance of power; and how much reason we have to be always on our guard against errors of this kind, since a prince, whom genius and experience had rendered the greatest man of his age, was not exempt from them, but drew both England and Holland fatally into them.

WHENEVER this balance is in real danger by the exorbitant growth of one power, or by the union of more, other princes and states will be alarmed of course. All of them ought, and most of them will take measures for their common security. But the wise councils amongst them will, upon every such occasion, proportion their measures, and the engagements they enter into, not according to the nature of the danger considered generally, but according to the immediate or remote relation, which it has to each of them; and according to the
strength,

strength, situation, or any other circumstance, which may be peculiar to each of them.

To do otherwise, would be to lose sight of our own particular interest in the pursuit of a common interest. It would be nothing better than setting up for the DON QUIXOTES of the world, and engage to fight the battles of all mankind. The state, which keeps it's own particular interest constantly in view, has no invariable rule to go by; and this rule will direct and limit all it's proceedings in foreign affairs; so that such a state will frequently take no share, and frequently a small share in the disputes of it's neighbours, and will never exert it's whole strength, but when it's whole is at stake. But a state, who neglects to do this, has no rule at all to go by, and must fight to negotiate, and negotiate to fight again, as long as it is a state; because, as long as it is a state, there will be disputes among it's neighbours, and some of these will prevail at one time, and some at another, in the perpetual flux and reflux of human affairs.

IF the kings of France and Spain, and the emperor, had made an agreement amongst themselves, about the succession to the dominions of Spain, consistent with the common interest of Europe, and considering the partiality which the court of Spain had, at that time, for the house of Austria, there was little room to fear, that such an agreement would have been too favorable to the house of Bourbon. If any such partition had been made, I say, no objection would have remained, either as to the right or manner of making it, and we might have escaped a war. If these princes had done nothing of this kind, we might have been engaged upon the king of Spain's death, as I said before, in a defensive war, for preserving the dominions of our old allies, and the liberties of

Europe, against the usurpations of our antient enemy. But instead of waiting to be auxiliaries in a defensive war, we put ourselves under a necessity of being principals in an offensive one; and by affecting to secure the balance of power, when we had neither call nor right to meddle, we reduced our affairs to this absurd alternative, that we must either make an offensive war as principals, against the emperor and Spain, in order to conquer for France, which was equally impolitic and unjust, or against France and Spain, in order to conquer for the emperor, under the greatest disadvantages possible; which happened to be the case.

THE partition treaties forced the king of Spain to make a will in favor of the house of Bourbon; and the Spaniards threw themselves into the arms of France, to prevent the dismemberment of their monarchy.

THUS was the balance of power lost by our meddling where we had nothing to do, even before it could have been in danger, if we had not meddled at all. We lost it, and the emperor knew that we must restore it for our own sakes, which could be done no otherwise than by conquering for him; and this he left us to do the best we could. While we fought his battles, he lent us the Austrian title, the person of his son, the present emperor, and little else. We neglected every thing, and sacrificed every thing in the prosecution of this quarrel. But the imperial councils were so far from neglecting any thing, or sacrificing any thing to it, that they seemed wholly taken up for some years in settling the affairs of Hungary to their satisfaction; and they sacrificed to an idle refinement in politics the greatest opportunity which we ever had, or must ever hope to have; I mean that of destroying the naval force of
France,

France, by the taking of Toulon. This they deliberately and almost avowedly hindered.

IF ever people were called upon to think of their own immediate interests, we were so at this time. Whether we could then have put an end to the expensive war we were engaged in for the house of Austria, in a manner consistent with the public interest of Europe, I am not able to determine. Certain it is in fact, that far from entertaining any such thoughts, we redoubled our spirit and our efforts in the prosecution of the war. As we acquired new allies, we enlarged our engagements; and as we obtained new victories, we extended our views. The grand alliance formed by king WILLIAM, for restoring a balance of power in Europe, proposed no other objects than sufficient barriers, security to trade, and reasonable satisfaction to the house of Austria*. These were thought, by that great prince, all the points necessary to be contended for. But, instead of confining ourselves to so narrow a plan, we judged that the balance of power could not be effectually restored, unless we wrested the whole Spanish monarchy from the house of Bourbon, to give it to the house of Austria. For this prize we fought, and fought with as little regard to all other interests, as if we had defended our own altars, and our own houses.

MUST we not acknowledge, upon this occasion, sir, the shortness of human foresight? The very measure, which we pursued at so great expence of blood and treasure (because nothing less could secure the balance of power in Europe, and even the trade of this kingdom, and the protestant succession, against the invasions of France and the pretender) that very

* Vide G. Al. Art. 8.

IF we had succeeded in our attempts to set the crown of Spain on the head of the present emperor, and his brother the emperor JOSEPH had lived, would our danger from the union of these two brothers not have been at least as great as that which is apprehended from the union of the present emperor, and of the present king of Spain, rivals almost from their cradles, and by a long course of opposition, such inveterate enemies, that they could hardly be kept, as the enquirer assures us, "within the bounds of common decency towards one another, by all the address of two powerful mediators in a public treaty?" Might not the same address, that threw these enemies into one another's arms, (for it will appear they did not run thither so unaccountably) and united them in designs destructive to the commerce and rights of other nations, have succeeded equally well between the two brothers, especially since, in this case, there would have been but half the work to do? The union would have been formed to our hands, and our address could only have been shewn, in giving such proper provocations, as might have inspired the designs.

Would CHARLES have been less favorable to the trade of his brother's subjects, at any place in the Austrian dominions, than PHILIP shews himself to the trade of the subjects of CHARLES? Would JOSEPH not have concurred to assist his brother to regain Gibraltar, and the island of Minorca, at least, as zealously as we can suppose that CHARLES concurs to assist PHILIP, either by good offices, or, if you please, to have it so, by force of arms? Would not a league between the two brothers have been as much a popish league as that which we are so much alarmed at, between the surviving brother
and

and the present king of Spain? Would not the first have made use of the pretender, as the latter is said to do, and as every prince or state, with whom we happen to be at variance, may be provoked to do? In short, I may safely challenge the author of the enquiry, as great a casuist as he is, to shew any difference between the two cases which I have compared together, except this, that we might have been exposed to great dangers from that settlement of Europe, which we fought to bring about, than we are, or can probably be exposed to, from that which we were so solicitous to prevent. But the case is still stronger than I have put it. For even after the death of the emperor JOSEPH, his present imperial majesty continued his claim to the whole Spanish monarchy; and you, and I, and many of us, continued to support his claim, and opposed with all our force the negotiations of peace, which were begun upon a different principle. Happily we failed of success. The many, who remonstrated, "That we were hastening apace to make him a power too great and too formidable; and that we should find in him, at last, the enemy we then dreaded only in another," prevailed. Had they not, in what a condition should we have been at this time? Would the emperor have been more grateful, or less powerful, with the crown of Spain and the Indies, added to so many others? If the union between him and the king of Spain is so formidable to us, how much more reason should we have had to apprehend the consequences to our trade, and in the end, to our liberties and our religion themselves, if these divided powers had been united in the same ungrateful person, as it is the mode at present to call the emperor?

IF DON CARLOS should marry the eldest arch-duchess, if the emperor should die without issue male, if the king of France should die without issue male, if the prince of Asturias should

should die without issue male, and the princes of the blood in France and Spain should not support the validity of the renunciations, all which is within the bounds of possibility, "Don CARLOS may be at once emperor, king of France, and king of Spain; and have the vast strength and riches of all these powers united and centered in him." This terrible object stares our speculative enquirer in the face, and disturbs his head. It disturbs, very probably, those excellent heads, who set him a scribbling, who can see so far into futurity at present; and who, not very long ago, were unable to discern the nearest and most probable events. Let us consider now, what consequence of this kind might have happened, if, for securing a balance of power in Europe, the present emperor had been likewise king of Spain. If then the king of France, instead of marrying the daughter of STANISLAUS, had married the eldest daughter of the emperor, which surely had been within the bounds of possibility, there would remain but one chance at this time, viz. the emperor having a son, to save us from the combination of such a power, as would in reality form what we commonly, tho improperly, call universal monarchy; since there would be nothing else, which could hinder LEWIS the fifteenth, from being king of France, of Spain, and of the West-Indies, master of all the Austrian dominions, and, by consequence, emperor. The truth I would inculcate by what I have said is this, that as the partition treaty threw too much weight into the scale of Bourbon, to the destruction of the balance of power in Europe; so the necessary consequence of the war we made to restore this balance must have been, if we had succeeded according to our desires, to destroy it again, by throwing too much weight into the scale of Austria. This has been proved by the event, and the enquirer demonstrates it, or he demonstrates nothing.

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As far, therefore, as we have brought this deduction, that is, to the end of the last war, it is manifest that the notion of preserving a balance of power in Europe has, for the reasons touched upon above, and which every man will extend in his own thoughts, proved to us like an ignis fatuus; in the pursuit of which we have been led from difficulty to difficulty, and from danger to danger,

If we enquire, whether the treaties of Utrecht and Baden did afford us an opportunity of correcting our errors, and of profiting by our experience, it will be found that they did; since all the points, which had been in contest were then settled, and this settlement acquiesced in by all the parties to the war, except the emperor, who kept up still his claim against PHILIP the fifth.

BUT the keeping up this claim could not have endangered the public tranquility. He was unable to attack Spain for want of a maritime force, or even Sicily, which was covered besides by the guaranty of the neutrality of Italy; and this neutrality served likewise to hinder Spain from attacking him. There might have been a war of the pen, and there could have been no other between them.

AT the worst, if the king of Spain had invaded any part of Italy, the guarantees of the neutrality might easily have prevented such an attempt; and in so doing they would have observed the treaties, and kept the peace, far from breaking either one or the other.

IN such a state of foreign affairs, we had certainly an opportunity of looking carefully after our own. The king of Spain had no pretence to ask for any alteration in the settle-

ment so lately established with his own consent; and the emperor could not have complained of his majesty for observing treaties, which he would not have made, but which he found made; nor for refusing to enter into a new war on this account.

WHETHER we improved this opportunity, or not, what our present condition is, and by what steps we have been reduced to it, I leave to the enquiry of some person more capable than myself. Let it suffice, that I have endeavored to remove some delusions, which have affected even men of the best understandings, and the best intentions; and to prepare the minds of my countrymen to consider, at this critical point of time, what our national interest really is, without being biased in their judgments by what they may have thought of it on any former occasions.

I am,

Most noble SIR,

Your honor's

most devoted servant,

February 3,
1726-7.

THE OCCASIONAL WRITER.

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

JUST after I had sent these sheets to the press, a paper, intitled, "A letter to the Occasional Writer," was brought to me. I have read this stiff pedantic piece, with more attention than it deserves, tho I read it cursorily; and notwithstanding the pains which the author takes to pass for you, I am ready to acquit you of the scandal. You would certainly have writ better, and your pen at least would not have appeared so near a-kin to that of the Craftsman Extraordinary.

WHO this author supposes the Occasional Writer to be, I cannot guess. Such a wretch as he describes is, I believe, to be found no where, nor even such an image of guilt and misery any where, except in the horrors of his own mind. I shall therefore, with a decent contempt for this scurrilous scribbler, and without any concern about his imaginary correspondent, continue these inoffensive letters, in great tranquility and sedateness, as often as occasion invites me, or as I find myself in the humor.

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