

Period VII.
1743 to 1745.

PERIOD THE EIGHTH:

From the Resignation of Sir ROBERT WALPOLE to his Death.

1742—1745.

CHAPTER THE SIXTIETH:

1742.

Exertions and Influence of Walpole.—Negotiations with Pulteney for the Arrangement of a new Administration.—Jealousies and Divisions of Opposition.—Meeting at the Fountain Tavern.—Interference of the Prince of Wales.—Parliamentary Inquiry into the Conduct of the Ex-minister.—Secret Committee. Indemnity Bill.—Passes the Commons.—Rejected by the Lords.—Pulteney created Earl of Bath.—His Unpopularity.—Accusations against him—Examined and refused.

Views of
Walpole.

THE minister, in retiring, had three great objects in view. 1st. To disunite the heterogeneous parties which composed the opposition. 2d. To form an administration on the Whig basis. 3d. To save himself from a public prosecution.

To divide
his oppo-
nents.

If the first point was effected, the others would necessarily follow. To divide the opposition, and weaken a combination which would else have been fatal to him, it became necessary to lure the duke of Argyle and the Tories, to conciliate the prince of Wales, and to detach Pulteney, who then headed the Whigs in opposition, from the Tories. To effect these views, he had recourse to the grand engine of political jealousy. He made
such

such advances to the Tories as inspired them with fallacious hopes and unfounded notions of their own importance*, and filled the Whigs in opposition with apprehensions of being excluded from the spoils. Having succeeded in this attempt, he advised the king to form a Whig administration, and suggested the propriety of applying to Pulteney. One of the greatest difficulties under which he laboured in the course of this political transaction, was to conquer the king's repugnance to Pulteney, which at this period seemed almost insuperable, and to persuade his majesty to commence the negotiation, and acquiesce in Pulteney's expected demand of a peerage. Having at length overcome the king's pertinacious inveteracy, he said to his son Horace, "I have set the king upon him," and at another time, in the farther progress of the king's compliance, he triumphantly said, making at the same time a motion with his hand as if he was locking a door, "I have turned the key of the closet upon him †."

When the negotiation with Pulteney first commenced, neither the documents in my possession, or any oral information, ~~have enabled me to~~ ascertain; but it is probable that indirect overtures had been made some time before the recess.

Negotiation with Pulteney.

Hints had been thrown out to Carteret, from some person in the king's confidence, that proposals would be made to Pulteney, as the leader of the house of commons; but a fortnight elapsed after this communication had been made, before any step was taken. At length a message came from the duke of Newcastle, requesting Pulteney to meet him privately at his secretary, Mr. Stone's, house at Whitehall. Pulteney returned for answer, that in the present juncture he could not comply with this request without giving umbrage to his friends. He was under the necessity of declining a private meeting, but added, that he had no objection to receive his grace publicly at his own house. A few days afterwards, he received a note from the duke of Newcastle, importing, that he and the lord chancellor, having a message from the king, would wait upon him.

The meeting took place in the forenoon, between the duke of Newcastle and the chancellor on one side, and Pulteney and Carteret, whose presence he had desired as his confidential friend, on the other.

First conference with Newcastle.

Newcastle opened the conference by saying, that the king being convinced that Sir Robert Walpole was no longer supported by a majority in the house

* See *Defence of the People*, p. 81.—This pamphlet was written by Ralph, who received his information from Dodington, then in union with the duke of Argyle.

† From lord Orford.

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of commons, had commanded them to offer the places which that minister possessed to Mr. Pulteney, with the power of forming his own administration, on the sole condition that Sir Robert Walpole should not be prosecuted. To this proposal Pulteney replied, that if that condition was to be made the foundation of the treaty, he never would comply with it; "and even," he concluded, "should my inclination induce me to accede to these terms, yet it might not be in my power to fulfil my engagement; the heads of parties being like the heads of snakes, which are carried on by their tails. For my part, he added, I will be no screen; but if the king should be pleased to express a desire to open any treaty, or to hold any conversation with me, I will pay my duty at St. James's, though I have not been at court for many years; but I will not come privately, but publicly and at noon day, in order to prevent all jealousy and suspicion *." Before they parted, some negus was brought in, and the duke of Newcastle drank, "Here is to our happier meeting." Pulteney replied, in a quotation from Shakespear's Julius Cæsar,

"If we do meet again, why we shall smile,

"If not, why then this meeting was well made."

Expectations
of the Tories.

Meanwhile a prodigious ferment appeared throughout the nation. The Tories and Jacobites were equally irritated against the minister, and the popular clamours for reform, were no less violent than discordant. A contemporary author has well described the vehement and contradictory views of the heterogeneous parties which composed the opposition. "Among those who thought themselves the most moderate, no two men agreed upon what was necessary. Some thinking that all security lay in a good place bill, about the degree and extent of which they likewise differed. Some in a pension bill, which others more justly thought would signify nothing. Some in a law for triennial parliaments, which all who did not delight in riot or in the prospect of corruption, thought both dangerous and dubious. Some for annual parliaments, which others thought too frequent. Some for justice on the minister. Others not for sanguinary views. Some for a reduction of the civil list, which others thought unjust to be taken away, having been legally given. Some for the sale of all employments. Others for allowing a few. Some for taking the disposition of them from the crown, which others thought anti-constitutional. Some for allowing them to subsist, but to be

* Bishop Newton.

given

given only to those who were not in parliament, that is, among themselves. Some to allow them to be given for life. Some for making the army independent. Others for no regular troops at all *."

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To oppose this torrent of reform, the necessity of gaining Pulteney became more and more urgent. Though it should be admitted that personal pique and party resentment were among the motives which influenced his opposition, yet he was known to be a friend to the constitution, a sound Whig, and a warm partisan to the protestant establishment, and the largeness of his property would induce him to obstruct all measures which might tend to create confusion, or perplex government.

The only method to conciliate him was, in appearance, to submit entirely to his demands, to prevail on him to make as few changes as possible, to introduce few obnoxious persons, and to trust the safety of Walpole to future exigencies.

This scheme was managed with so much address, that Pulteney, in forming an administration, the great outlines of which were traced by Walpole, conceived that he was dictating his own terms. It was particularly owing to his influence that Newcastle retained his situation of secretary of state, and that Harrington, who was compelled to make way for Carteret, obtained the presidentship of the council; many of his most confidential friends were also continued in their posts.

Walpole's influence.

Soon after the first conference with Newcastle, the king sent Pulteney a private message, requesting that if he did not chuse to place himself at the head of the treasury, he would let lord Wilmington slide into it, in which Pulteney acquiesced. Carteret, who coveted that post, expressing dissatisfaction at the arrangement, Pulteney declared that he would break his own resolution, and take the place himself, if Carteret would not consent to the appointment of Wilmington. "You," he added, "must be secretary of state, as the fittest person to direct foreign affairs †."

In the course of a few days another conference was held at the same place, by the same persons. Newcastle said, that he was now commissioned by the king to make the former offers, without insisting on the condition of not prosecuting the minister; and he added, that the king only requested that, if any prosecution was commenced against Sir Robert Walpole, he would not inflame it, though he might not chuse to oppose it. Pulteney replied, that he was not a man of blood; that in all his expressions importing a resolution to

Pulteney's second conference.

* *English Dictionary*, p. 69.

† From the bishop of Salisbury.

pursue

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purſue the miniſter to deſtruction, he meant only the deſtruction of his power, but not of his perſon. He could not undertake to ſay what was proper to be done; he muſt take the advice of his friends; though he was free to own, that according to his opinion ſome parliamentary cenſure at leaſt ought to be inflicted for ſo many years of mal-adminiſtration. Newcastle * then obſerved, “the king truſts you will not diſtreſs the government by making too many changes in the miſt of a ſeſſion of parliament, and that you and your friends will be ſatisfied with the removal of Sir Robert Walpole and a few others.” Pulteney replied, that he was far from deſiring to perplex government, or to make too many changes at once, which would throw all things into confuſion, he did not inſiſt on a total change; and he had no objection to the duke of Newcastle or the lord chancellor, but what he inſiſted upon, he added, was an alteration of meaſures as well as men: He only required that ſome obnoxious perſons ſhould be diſmiſſed; that the main forts of government ſhould be delivered into the hands of his party; a majority in the cabinet council, the nomination of a ſecretary of ſtate for Scotland, and of the boards of treaſury and admiralty. After ſome reſiſtance, theſe points being finally agreed to, Newcastle ſuppoſed that in arranging the new adminiſtration, he would place himſelf at the head of the treaſury, and declared that it was the earneſt and repeated deſire of the king. “As the diſpoſition of places is in my hands,” replied Pulteney, “I will accept none myſelf; I have ſo repeatedly declared my reſolution on that head, and I will not now contradict myſelf:” He then named the earl of Wilmiſton firſt lord of the treaſury; Sandys chancellor of the exchequer; Carteret ſecretary of ſtate; Sir John Ruſſell, Gibbon, and Waller, lords of the treaſury; a new board of admiralty, including Sir John Hynde Cotton; and the marquis of Tweedale ſecretary of ſtate for Scotland. For himſelf he demanded only a peerage, and a ſeat in the cabinet. Before they parted, Pulteney declared that he was under ſuch engagements with the duke of Argyll, that he muſt acquaint him with all which had paſſed; and added, that he ſhould not oblige him to ſecrecy, but leave him at liberty to inform lord Cheſterfield or lord Cobham, or any of his friends. Newcastle did not conſent to this without unwillingneſs, and the meeting ended †.

* Biſhop Newton.
† The account of this negotiation with Pulteney, and the ſubſequent tranſactions, are principally derived from the *Correſpondence*, Period VII.—From Communications by the biſhop of Salisbury.—*Life of biſhop Newton*.

who has related the ſubſequent tranſactions from the authority of Pulteney, though not without ſome ſlight errors, which I have been enabled to rectify from notes and information kindly ſupplied by the biſhop of Salisbury.

These negotiations created great jealousies, and excited the resentment of those who were not admitted to the conferences. Two parties, at a very early period of this business, were forming against the arrangements made by Pulteney, consisting of the great body of the Tories, headed by Argyle, which party was joined by the Jacobites, and the other composed of those Whigs who were not likely to be comprised in the new arrangements. Chesterfield was disappointed that he was not made secretary of state; Waller was irritated at not being chancellor of the exchequer, and thought the situation of a lord of the treasury beneath his acceptance. Cobham, though restored to a regiment, and appointed a member of the cabinet, aspired to a far greater share of power; and the Grenvilles, Lyttleton, Pitt, and Dodington, were highly dissatisfied that they had no share in the new administration.

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Jealousies.

In the midst of this growing dissatisfaction, a great point was gained by conciliating the prince of Wales. The arrangement with Pulteney was made without the knowledge of the prince, to whom it was not communicated before the 2d of February. He received the information with due respect *, and appeared satisfied with the result. On the 6th he granted a private audience to Sir Robert Walpole, and promised his protection against any attacks upon his life or fortune.

Prince of
Wales con-
ciliated.

While the posts remained unfilled, and the members of the opposition conceived hopes that an arrangement might take place in their favour, the great body continued apparently united; but the moment that suspicions began to be formed of a separate negotiation, and that the places of secretary of state, and chancellor of the exchequer, were disposed of, without the general concurrence, murmurs and discontents succeeded, and a schism, which Percival † calls, "the death of the late opposition," took place on the 11th of February, when the meeting was held at the Fountain Tavern.

It consisted of not less than three hundred members of both houses of parliament. The duke of Argyle, as we are informed by a person who was present ‡, and took an active share on the side of Pulteney, expatiated, with great solemnity of speech and gesture, on the dangerous situation to which the country had been reduced by the late administration of Sir Robert Walpole, and on the glorious and steady opposition which had been made to his measures; he said, "happily, at length honest endeavours and the just spirit of the people have brought us in sight of the long wished for heaven, and as all parties have contributed to forward this important

Meeting at
the Fountain
Tavern.

Feb. 11.

Speech of
Argyle.

* Sir Robert Walpole to the duke of Devonshire, Feb. 2. 1742. Correspondence.

† Afterwards earl of Egmont, author of

Faction Detected, one of the best political pamphlets ever written. See p. 41.

‡ Lord Percival.—*Faction Detected*.

Period VIII. point, it is just that all denominations of men should receive an equal reward of their virtue. If a proper use is made of this fortunate conjuncture, this reward may be obtained. We have a right to expect the total rout of all those who formed any part of the ministerial junto; and such a measure would make room for all."

After sarcastically observing, in allusion to Pulteney, that a grain of honesty was worth a cart load of gold *, he proceeded: "But have we not much reason to fear that this use will not be made of the happy opportunity; that a few men, without any communication of their proceedings to this assembly, have arrogated to themselves the exclusive right of nomination, and from their manner we have sufficient cause to apprehend that they do not intend the general advantage. They have now been eight days engaged in this business, and if we are to judge from the few offices they have already bestowed, they may justly be accused of not acting with that vigour which the whole people have a right to expect. The choice of those already preferred cannot but supply great matter of jealousy; for as this choice has principally fallen upon the Whigs, it is an ill omen to the Tories: If they are not to be provided for, the happy effects of the coalition will be destroyed; and the odious distinction of party will be again revived, to the great prejudice of the nation. It is therefore highly necessary to continue closely united, and to persevere with the same vehemence as ever, till the Tories obtain justice, and the administration is founded upon the broad bottom of both parties."

Pulteney's
reply.

To these accusations Pulteney retorted with no less bitterness: He lamented the severe treatment which he and his co-adjutors had incurred in return for their services, and for their share in driving the late minister from the helm, to be thus held forth and publicly charged in the face of the world, with things of which no man durst venture to accuse them in private; to be loaded with unjust suspicions and imaginary crimes, which though without foundation, would be easily believed in the present temper of the nation. "We deserve," he added, "a very different usage for the integrity with which we have hitherto proceeded, and by which we are determined to proceed. In answer to the imputation, that we have taken the management of the negotiation into our hands, let us reply, that overtures having been made to us, it was our duty, (as it would have been the duty of every man, to whom such overtures had been made,) to employ all our abilities, and endeavours to form a happy settlement, after the long divisions with which this

* Bishops Newton.

country has been so long unhappily rent, and which could not longer subsist without ruining the interest of the nation abroad, and incurring the danger of fatal disturbances at home. The superficial vulgar might indeed conceive that it would have been more equitable to refer the settlement to the decision of the whole party, but surely no man of tolerable understanding and experience can cherish an idea so impracticable and absurd. Government is not yet reduced to surrender at discretion, especially to an enemy who has declared publicly that they would give no quarter; government neither can, will, nor ought to be taken by storm; and it behoves gentlemen to consider the inevitable consequences of such an attempt. The great points in agitation were, to change the minister, and change the measures; the one is already effected, and we will engage to perform the other.

“As to the distribution of employments, there is neither justice, decency, duty, or moderation, in dictating to the king, how to dispose of every preferment in the state. His majesty has shewed a disposition to comply with the desires of his people in the most effectual manner; he has already supplied the principal ministerial posts with men, who have hitherto enjoyed the confidence of the people, and cannot yet have forfeited their good opinion, because, though nominated, they have none of them yet done any single act of office. As to the changes already made, they are as numerous as the importance of the matter, and the nature of the thing can possibly admit so soon, and it would have been more to the credit of the party, if their patience had extended a little longer than the few days, that have passed since the time of their adjournment. As to the partial distribution of employments to the Whigs, as far as our interest shall hereafter extend, we will use it faithfully to the king and our country, by recommending such persons, whose principles have been misrepresented, and who are true to his family, let their appellations be what they will. But it must be a work of some time, to remove suspicions inculcated long, and long credited, with regard to a denomination of men, who have formerly been thought not heartily attached to the interest of the prince upon the throne; some instances of this intention, have been already given in the late removals, and there will be many more, but it must depend upon the prudent conduct of the Tories themselves, wholly to abolish these unhappy distinctions of party.” He concluded by requesting them to consider how false a step they had already made, and that this passionate and groundless division, would infallibly give new courage to the party they had just subdued; that it discovered a weak-

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Increasing
discontents.

Composed by
the prince.

ness, of which advantage would be certainly taken ; that it must inevitably lessen the power of those who were employed, and, if persisted in, would in a great measure prevent the success of their views, both for the public and their friends *.

When the contest was in reality for power, and only in appearance for the public good, it is not to be supposed that arguments on either side drawn from prudential, disinterested, and patriotic motives, could have the smallest weight. The parties separated with the same virulence as they had met, and only waited for an open rupture, until all the places were disposed of; each flattering himself that he might be included in the proposed arrangement †.

The resentment of the disaffected patriots was still farther aggravated, by the formation of the new treasury board ‡, announced on the 16th of February, in which only one Tory was included.

With a view to allay these jealousies, the prince of Wales proposed a meeting to be held in his presence, of the chief leaders of the former opposition, particularly Argyle, Chesterfield, Cobham, Gower, and Bathurst. Pulteney came, accompanied by Scarborough, prepared to oppose or to conciliate. Violent accusations were severally levelled against him; it was urged that the change of administration ought to be total; that the intended alterations were not sufficient; too many of the late minister's friends would remain in power; Sir Robert Walpole would still act behind the curtain, and direct the whole machine of government §. Pulteney replied, that these accusations were groundless; for even upon a supposition that the ex-minister should still continue to be a greater personal favourite with the king than any of them, or than all of them together, yet it would not be in his power to distress them, provided they remained united among themselves. "Nothing," he added, "but our own dissensions can hurt us; we have the staff in our own hands, and the changes now to be made, will enable us to effect farther alterations at the end of the session. I have stipulated that the duke of Argyle, lord

* Faction Detected, p. 42.

† To this meeting at the Fountain Tavern, his usual wit and satire, in his ode against the Sir Charles Hanbury Williams alludes, with earl of Bath, called The Statesman.

"Then enlarge on his cunning and wit:

"Say, how he harangu'd at the Fountain;

"Say, how the old patriots were bit,

"And a mouse was produc'd by a mountain."

‡ Lord Wilmington, Sandys, Sir John Rushout, Philip Gibbon, and George Compton.

§ Bishop Newton, p. 31.

Cobham,

Cobham, lord Gower, the marquis of Tweedale, the earl of Winchelsea, lord Carteret, and myself, shall be members of the cabinet council, and we shall form to great a majority, that the whole power will be in our hands. We shall besides command the whole boards of treasury and admiralty, and have the appointment of several other considerable places. What then have we to fear? Should we attempt a total change at this period, disorder and confusion must ensue. By the pledges we possess at present, we have ample security for future regulations, and with such a power in our hands, we may command any future alterations."

The prince declared himself satisfied with these reasons; and it was unanimously agreed, they should all go to court together. Thus the authority of the prince, and the expectations of the Tories, that Sir John Hynde Cotton would, according to promise, be appointed one of the lords of the admiralty, prevented an open rupture.

On the 7th the prince, whose establishment had been increased to £, 100,000 a year, and who was farther gratified with a promise of seats at the admiralty board for lord Baltimore and lord Archibald Hamilton, paid his personal respects to the king, and on the 18th, the whole party* who had formed the opposition to the late minister, made their appearance at court. This event was hailed by the Tories as the beginning of a new æra: "Upon this memorable day," observes the author of the *Defence of the People*, "his majesty for the first time appeared to be the king of ALL HIS PEOPLE, and had the happiness and glory to see himself in the midst of a more illustrious circle than had ever surrounded any of our sovereigns since queen Elizabeth began to narrow the bottom of government, by persecuting the Puritans †."

On the same day the two houses met, and the writs for the members appointed to the new board of treasury were issued. The Tories and disaffected Whigs did not, however, yet venture to begin a new opposition. Argyle accepted the office of master-general of the ordnance, and a regiment of horse of which he had been dispossessed. No opposition was made to the motion on the 22d for ordering that a million should be taken from the sinking fund, towards raising a supply, a mode of proceeding for which they had reprobated Walpole with unabating virulence. When the house resolved itself into a committee of supply, Philips, a violent Tory member, moved to defer the committee for the purpose of taking into consideration

Parliamentary proceedings.

* *Defence of the People.*

† *Ibid.* p. 71.

Period VIII. the state of the nation, but he was only feebly supported : Sir Watkin Williams Wynne, no less vehement on the same side of the question, was the only member who spoke in favour of the motion, and it was dropped without a division †

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At length the new board of admiralty was declared †, and Sir John Hynde Cotton was not included. As all the places were now disposed of, and all expectations were annihilated, the Tories and disaffected Whigs openly appeared in battle array against the new ministry. The duke of Argyle, disgusted that the marquis of Tweeddale was appointed secretary of state for Scotland, and dissatisfied that a large body of his needy descendants were not provided for, resigned. The prince of Wales soon withdrew his support, and his most confidential servants, particularly Pitt and Lyttleton, violently opposed the new administration.

New opposition.

In this situation of parties, the Tories and disaffected Whigs opposed the re-election of the members who had accepted the places at the board of admiralty. Lord Baltimore was opposed in Surry by the duke of Bedford; Dr. Lee was thrown out at Breachley, by the interest of the duke of Bridgewater; lord Limerick, who was to have been appointed secretary at war, in the place of Sir William Yonge, could not venture to vacate his seat for Tavistock, on the certainty of not being re-chosen, as it was a borough belonging to the duke of Bedford. He obtained a reversion of the place of king's remembrancer in Ireland; and Sir William Yonge, the adherent of Sir Robert Walpole, was permitted to continue secretary at war.

Motion against lord Orford.

Orford had now succeeded in dividing opposition, and forming an administration on a Whig basis. The firm phalanx of opposition was disunited; Pulteney was duped and deceived by those with whom he had negotiated, and deserted even by those whom he had promoted. While he was confined by the sickness and death of his daughter, the other leaders of the opposition in the house of commons, being eager to prove that they could carry a measure without his assistance, lord Limerick moved, on the 9th of March, for a secret committee, for inquiring into the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, during the last twenty years. Winchelsea and Carteret, whom Pulteney had particularly favoured, intimated to his friends, without his authority, that it would be agreeable to him if they would not attend; accordingly, the motion being made during his absence, while Sandys

Rejected.

Chandler.

† The earl of Winchelsea, John Cockburne,

lord Archibald Hamilton, lord Baltimore, Philip Cavendish, Dr. Lee, John M. Trevor.

was

was gone to Worcester to be elected, was lost by a majority of only 2, 244 against 242.

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Pulteney remonstrates with the king.

Pulteney, in several audiences, urged repeatedly to the king, that the Tories were by no means Jacobites, and to use them as Jacobites, was the ready way to make them so; that two-thirds of the nation were Tories, and several of them men of large estates. He even ventured to ask the king why he made himself only the head of a party, when he might be king of the whole nation! He himself, he added, was a Whig, his most intimate friends were Whigs. He was of opinion, that the trunk of the tree in the government should be formed of Whigs, but that the Tories might be inoculated or engrafted upon it. The Tories were not masters of calculation, or proficient in the knowledge of languages, and therefore could not nor did not expect the first situations under government: that by countering a few places at court on some of the most considerable, by constituting others lord lieutenants of the counties, and by distributing some other marks of royal favour, he would disarm the whole party, and prevent their uniting in opposition to government. By this conduct, the king might abolish all distinctions of parties, and the remainder of his reign might be peaceable and glorious*. But Pulteney was now talking in vain; all his remonstrances were ineffectual; he was no longer the soul of a great party, and he had no longer that personal credit and power which he had enjoyed from that situation.

Decline of his credit.

The third great object which Orford had to effect, was his own security, which the temper of parliament, and the popular outcry against him, rendered extremely difficult. But the support of the king, the opposition of the house of peers, the goodness of his cause, and the steady zeal of his friends, finally prevailed: the good sense of the nation was not long to be deluded by vague accusations of pretended patriots.

Parliamentary inquiry into Walpole's conduct.

It is fortunate, however, for the honour of Sir Robert Walpole, that the inquiry into his administration took place; as the ordeal which he underwent on this occasion, was such as could have been passed by few ministers, who had, during so long a period, directed the helm of government in a great commercial country, divided into parties, and torn by factions.

The motion of lord Limerick to institute an inquiry into the conduct of Sir Robert Walpole, during the last twenty years, had been thrown out, and the loss of the question had been principally owing to the absence of Pulteney, and to the intimation that he was averse to it. With a

Motion for a secret committee.

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view to contradict these reports, which he considered as injurious to his reputation, as if he was desirous of checking an inquiry, lord Limerick, at his request, made a second motion to appoint a secret committee of inquiry into the conduct of the earl of Orford, during the last ten years of his being first commissioner of the treasury, and chancellor and under treasurer of his majesty's exchequer.

It will be unnecessary to enter into a detail of the arguments which were urged on both sides, as well on this as on the former occasion, in which the late minister was as vigorously attacked and ably defended, and in which his third son, Horace Walpole, testified his filial affection, by an animated and manly speech against the motion.

It is sufficient to observe, that to accuse a minister of any specific acts of mal-administration, is the privilege of our well-regulated constitution, which no one but a friend to a despotic government, could wish to be removed; but to constitute a *general* inquiry into the conduct of a minister for so long a term as ten years, founded on popular clamours and vague suspicions, without particularizing any act of guilt, and especially for measures which had been legally sanctioned by parliament, seemed as unjust as it was unconstitutional. It required all the powers of Pulteney, who is said to have still preserved "a miraculous influence in the house of commons *," and all the eloquence of Pitt, who eminently distinguished himself in both these debates, to palliate or justify such a flagrant abuse of parliamentary interference; and it demanded all the accumulated weight of the Tories and disaffected Whigs, to carry it through the house, by a majority of only seven, 252 against 245.

Committee
appointed.

The motion having passed, a committee of secrecy, consisting of twenty-one members, was appointed, and empowered to examine, in the most solemn manner, such persons as they thought proper on the subject matter of their inquiry. Of the twenty-one members † appointed by ballot, all except two were the uniform opponents of the late minister. The disaffected Whigs accused the Tories of having acted falsely in permitting the introduction of Sir Henry Lydal and Talbot, with a view to perplex the business, while the Tories on their side accused Sandys of being rather a spy than an associate, and of rather embarrassing than forwarding the business ‡.

* Defence of the People, or Answer to Faction Detected.

† Sir John St. Aubin, Samuel Sandys, Sir John Rushout, George Compton, lord Quarendon, William Noel, Sir John Barnard, lord Limerick, lord Cornbury, Nicholas Fazakerly,

Henry Furness, lord Granard, Cholmondeley Turner, Edmund Waller, William Pitt, Thomas Prowse, William Bowles, Edward Hooper, Sir John Strange, Sir Henry Lydal, and John Talbot. Chandler.

‡ Defence of the People, p. 109.

The earl of Orford, however, seems to have formed a more judicious opinion of this circumstance. For being congratulated that two of his friends were appointed members of the secret committee, he replied, "They will become so zealous for the honour of the committee, that they will no longer pay sufficient regard to *mine* *."

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Armed with such extensive powers, the committee of secrecy commenced their operations, by choosing lord Limerick chairman. They applied with indefatigable diligence to the inspection of the treasury books and papers, they examined many persons who were supposed to have been the private agents of Sir Robert Walpole, in his schemes of corruption, bribery, and dilapidation of the public revenue.

Their proceedings.

The expectations of the nation were raised to the greatest height; the measures of the minister who had been held forth as a public delinquent, as having squandered and appropriated the public money, were brought before a tribunal, consisting of persons who were both willing and able to trace his misconduct, and discover his enormities. It was naturally expected that in so long an administration, big with difficulties, and teeming with internal troubles, numerous instances of corrupt influence and notorious malversation would have been discovered; and that his opponents had some foundation for the crimes which they had laid to his charge. But it soon appeared that they had advanced accusations which they could not prove; and that the charges urged with such confidence in the forcible language of Pitt, could not be authenticated. "I fear not to declare," observed that eminent orator, with all the baneful spirit of party, "that I expect, in consequence of such inquiry, to find, that our treasure has been exhausted, not to humble our enemies, or to obviate domestic insurrections, not to support our allies, or to suppress our factions; but for purposes which no man who loves his country can think of without indignation, the purchase of votes, the bribing of boroughs, the enriching of hirelings, the multiplying of dependents, and the corruption of parliaments †."

The want of sufficient proofs, drawn from authentic papers and voluntary evidence, reduced the committee to so great dilemma, that for the purpose of proving those enormities, which they deemed had been committed, they had recourse to a very extraordinary and unprecedented proposition. For the discoveries which they were able to make were inconsiderable, when compared with the atrociousness of the charges, and they attributed

* From lord Orford.

† Chandler's Debates.

Period VIII. the inefficacy of their inquiries to the arts and obstinacy of the ex-minister's
 1742 to 1745. friends and dependents.

It is an established maxim in all governments, that secret service money must always be employed for the public advantage, and the disposal of that money is, in limited governments like our's, always confided to the king, under the direction and controul of his ministers, who are responsible to parliament. Among the ministers, the first lord of the treasury, as having the chief direction of the finances, is principally entrusted with the distribution.

With a view to prove Sir Robert Walpole guilty of abusing or mismanaging this part of the public revenue, they examined some of the inferior agents who must always be employed in that species of negotiation. The sum of £.95,000, had passed through the hands of Paxton, solicitor to the treasury. Being called upon to give an account of that money, he was first examined about £.500, which had been paid to one Boteler in 1735, for the purpose of carrying his election for the borough of Wendover. Paxton being repeatedly asked if he had advanced any money on that account, repeatedly refused to answer that question, as it might tend to accuse himself. For this species of contumacy, he was committed to Newgate, by an order of the house. Gwyn Vaughan being examined by the committee, in regard to a practice with which the late minister was charged, of obliging a possessor of a place to pay a certain sum from the profits, to a person recommended by government, followed the example of Paxton, and declined making any reply, as it might affect himself.

Scrope, secretary to the treasury, and member of the house of commons, being next examined in regard to the disposal of £.1,052,211, which had, within the term of ten years, been traced into his and Sir Robert Walpole's hands, declined taking the oath of discovery, avowing that he could not, consistently with his conscience, take a general oath, while particular queries might arise, which he was determined not to answer, and he added, that he could reply to no interrogation, concerning secret service money, without the permission of the king. On being again examined, he acquainted the committee, "that he had consulted the ablest lawyers and divines, and that they had made his scruples stronger; that he did not do it to obstruct the committee, but he could not, as an honest man, and with a safe conscience, take the oath. That he had laid his case before the king, and was authorised to say, that the disposal of money, issued for secret service, by the nature of it, requires the utmost secrecy, and is accountable to his majesty only; and therefore his majesty could not permit him to disclose any thing on the subject. That he hoped he should not incur the displeasure of the committee,

for

for if the oath was confined, he was ready to be examined. Upon this answer, he was no further pressed *."

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Several others in the same manner refusing to answer, the committee were perplexed, and confounded between their strong inclination to convict, and the impossibility of effecting their purpose by the common mode of legal or parliamentary proceeding.

They therefore published their celebrated report †, and moved in the house of commons, for a bill, "to indemnify such persons, as should upon examination, make discoveries, touching the disposition of offices, or any payment or agreement in respect thereof, or concerning other matters belonging to the conduct of Robert earl of Orford ‡."

Bill of indemnity.

Many words are not required to shew the fatal tendency of a bill, calculated to suborn witnesses, to multiply accusations, to encourage villains to accuse a person who was innocent, or at least, should be deemed innocent until he was proved guilty, to bribe men to give evidence to save their own lives and estates; a bill in which the inquiry was uncertain, and the indemnity as uncertain as the discovery which the witnesses might make. For it did not lay down any specific object of which the earl of Orford was supposed guilty, it did not offer the payment of a certain sum of money, or the pardon of any particular crime; but the persons who gave evidence were to be indemnified for *all* the sums which they might lose, and receive a pardon for *all* the crimes which they might disclose, in giving evidence against the earl of Orford. It was holding up the ex-minister as a public felon, and converting the house of commons into a tribunal of blood §.

Although the passing of this inquisition bill casts a severe reflection on the house of commons, yet it affords some consolation, that it was not carried without a considerable struggle, and by a majority of only twelve, 228 against 216.

Passes the commons.

The debates in the house of commons, on this important occasion, have

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 543. Chandler.

† See the next chapter.

‡ Tindal, vol. 20, p. 544.

§ The words of the bill are a sufficient justification of these censures, "That all persons who shall truly and faithfully disclose and discover, to the best of their knowledge, remembrance, and belief, all such matters and things, as they shall be examined unto, touching or concerning the said inquiry and relative thereunto, shall be, and are thereby indemnified and

discharged, of and from all forfeitures, penalties, punishments, disabilities, and incapacities which they shall or may incur, or become subject to, for or by reason or means of any matter or thing, which they shall so truly and faithfully discover and make known, touching or concerning the said inquiry, and relative thereunto; viz. of all matters relating to the conduct of the earl of Orford, for ten years last past."

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never been given to the public ; but those which took place when it was discussed in the house of peers are recorded in the contemporary publications. The reader may indulge his curiosity, in the perusal of this debate, which affords a striking instance of the baneful influence of party spirit *.

He will be shocked at the insinuation of Bathurst, as calculated for the meridian of despotism, "*that the introduction of new methods of prosecution is the natural consequence of new schemes of villany, and new schemes of evasion.*" But he will turn with horror from the malignant comparison of Chesterfield, who endeavoured to prove, that *such an indemnity was not a new thing in our constitution, because rewards were daily offered to highwaymen and murderers, for the discovery of their accomplices.*

He will read, however, with pleasure, the manly remark of lord chancellor Hardwicke, " that names will not change the nature of the things to which they are applied." " The bill is calculated," he said, " to make a defence impossible, to deprive innocence of its guard, and to let loose oppression and perjury upon the world. It is a bill to dazzle the wicked with a prospect of security, and to incite them to purchase an indemnity for one crime, by the perpetration of another. It is a bill to confound the notions of right and wrong, to violate the essence of our constitution, and to leave us without any certain security for our property, or rule for our actions †."

Rejected by
the lords.

It reflects the highest honour on the house of lords, that the bill was rejected by a much larger majority than even the place and pension bills ‡, which affords a sufficient answer to those who confidently assert that its rejection was wholly owing to the influence of the crown, in consequence of a compromise with Pulteney, and that the prosecution was only a collusion. I can trace no signs of such a compromise ; I observe the secret committee eager to prove the minister culpable. I observe Sandys, and the members of the new administration, as violent in their unqualified assertions of his guilt, as the Tories and disaffected Whigs, who were excluded by the arrangement of Pulteney. If I compare the 109 peers, who voted against the bill, with the 57 who voted for it, I find the same proportion of men of property, independence, and probity in the one, as in the other list ; and on an impartial review of the subject, I cannot consider their rejection of this bill, in any other light than as an act of justice, which did not construe suspicion into a

* Gentleman's and London Magazines.—
Lords' Debates.

† Lords' Debates, vol. 8. p. 167.

‡ Place Bill, - 81 against 52 majority 29.
Pension Bill, 76 - - 46 - - 30.
Indemnity Bill, 109 - 57 - - 52.
Lords' Debates.

proof of guilt, which set bounds to party spirit and Jacobite prosecution; and I look up with reverence to that branch of our constitution, which more than once has saved this country from the overgrown prerogative of the crown, and from the violence of popular frenzy.

The rejection of the indemnity bill by the house of peers, was received with such dissatisfaction by the inveterate enemies of the ex-minister, that lord Strange moved in the house of commons, "That the lords refusing to concur with the commons of Great Britain, in an indemnification necessary to the effectual carrying on the inquiry, now depending in parliament, was an obstruction to justice, and might prove fatal to the liberties of this nation *." This violent motion was opposed, not only by the friends of the late minister, but even by Pulteney, and the new members of the administration, and by some of the Tories, who declared, that although they wished the bill had passed, yet they could not agree to a resolution which would create a breach between the two houses: it was accordingly thrown out by a majority of 52.

The day on which parliament was prorogued, Pulteney was called to the house of peers, by the title of earl of Bath.

Walpole had now the pleasure, if it be any pleasure to a great mind, to see the celebrated commoner, who had driven him from the helm, as much exposed to obloquy, as he himself had ever been in the plenitude of his power and unpopularity. He saw him lampooned in ballads replete with wit, reviled both by ministerial and opposition writers, his influence sunk so low, that he, who for a few days possessed the whole authority of the crown, was now unable to command for a friend a cornetcy of dragoons, or a lieutenantancy of the navy †. In fact, the credit of Pulteney was so much reduced, that on his remonstrating to the duke of Newcastle, that the king had broken his promise of appointing Sir John Hynde Cotton one of the lords

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Pulteney created earl of Bath.

His unpopularity.

* Tindal, vol. 20, p. 546. Chandler.

† To this decline of his influence, Sir Charles H. Williams alludes in one of his satirical ballads:

"Great earl of Bath, your reign is o'er;
The Tories trust your word no more,
The Whigs no longer fear ye;
Your gates are seldom now unbarr'd,
No crowds of coaches fill your yard,
And scarce a soul comes near ye.

"Few now aspire at your good graces,
Scarce any sue to you for places,

Or come with their petition,
To tell how well they have deserv'd,
How long, how steadily they starv'd

For you in opposition:

"Expect to see that tribe no more,
Since all mankind perceive that pow'r
Is lodg'd in other hands.

Sooner to Carteret now they'll go,
Or ev'n (though that's excessive low)
To Wilmington and Sands."

Williams's Poems, p. 45.

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Unjustly ac-
cused.

of the admiralty; Newcastle replied, that his majesty had another shop to go to, alluding to the duke of Argyle, who had deserted Pulteney, and joined those who opposed the new administration *.

He saw him reviled, persecuted, and loaded with such improbable accusations, as receiving a peerage and an estate in London from the crown, for screening the minister from public vengeance.

I think it a duty, and feel a satisfaction in being able to rescue the name of Pulteney from indiscriminate censure, and to prove, from the most unequivocal facts, that he has been unjustly accused of acting from base and fordid motives.

§ In regard to the peerage, he had never concealed his intention of procuring that dignity, for he had been frequently heard to say to his friends, "When I have turned out Sir Robert Walpole, I will retire into that hospital of invalids, the house of peers." But it is no less true, that he had repeatedly declined the honour under his administration. He who had driven out Walpole, who had declined the office of prime minister, who had made lord Wilmington first lord of the treasury, and filled the boards of treasury and admiralty, might easily have claimed for himself a peerage, without terms. The truth is, that Pulteney delayed accepting the title, until he had obtained the privy seal for the earl of Gower, who was obnoxious to the ministry; while lord Hervey, who held that distinguished office, was supported with all the influence of the king. In fact, he was so mortified by repeated instances of ill treatment, as to meditate a renewal of his opposition. He is even said to have received his new dignity with disgust, and to have trampled the patent of peerage under his feet †.

The second accusation against Pulteney, that for the purpose of screening the minister from public vengeance, he received from the crown a grant of a considerable estate in Piccadilly, is also no less unfounded. For this very accusation had been advanced in 1731, and was then amply refuted by Pulteney himself ‡. He shewed that the estate in question was a family estate

of

* From the bishop of Salisbury.

† From lord Orford.

‡ It is thus stated by the author of a review of Mr. Pulteney's conduct:

"Pulteney hoped that by giving up all lucrative employments, and barely accepting a title, he had silenced obloquy and removed suspicion. But the avarice of his temper was so well and universally understood, that it was vulgarly supposed he had accepted large sums

for making the compromise between the crown and the leaders of the opposition; this was indeed looked upon to be equally an idle or groundless surmise; however, it is very certain that a great part of Piccadilly, which produced a very large income, and which till that time, had belonged to the crown, became all of a sudden the property of Mr. Pulteney." To this imputation, Pulteney himself replied:

"It is true, indeed, that this gentleman hath

of about £.1,200 or £.1,300 a year, held by a lease of ninety-nine years from the crown, and that he purchased the perpetuity at a fair price.

This statement of the transaction does not however solely rest on Pulteney's own assertion; it is confirmed by the act of parliament itself, which passed on the 14th of February in 1729, and also from a letter* from the duke of Montagu to Sir Robert Walpole, requesting him to obtain from George the Second, the permission of purchasing certain estates in reversion; as a foundation for the grant, he observes, that his late majesty, George the First, had, *in the 8th year of his reign, granted to Mr. Pulteney the inheritance of several lands and tenements in St. James's, in reversion of above 99 years then in being.*

It is but justice to the memory of Pulteney, who has been so much calumniated for this part of his political conduct, to add his own apology, as given by himself, in a letter, written to bishop Newton†. “In every thing I did, when the change was made, I know I acted honestly, I am sure I acted disinterestedly, and if I did not do what the world may call wisely, it was the fault of a few friends who betrayed me, of the court that meant to weaken me, and of many others who too hastily mistrusted me, and turned their backs upon me. But time (as I always thought it would) has cleared up all these points; and I have the satisfaction to imagine that the king now wishes he had given into my schemes; the friends who betrayed me are sensible of, and sorry for their folly; and they who opposed me, though some of them have since got power into their own hands, are sensible how mean a figure they make with it, and how unequal they are to the posts they have. Certain it is, that no one can be so capable of writing history, as he who has been principally concerned in the great transactions; and

a very large estate, which hath been in his family for many generations. Some part of his estate was held by a lease from the crown, of which there was a term of ninety-nine years to come, after a term that was then in being. His grandfather left his estate in trustees, to be sold for the purchase of other lands of inheritance. Upon this occasion, he applied to the crown to buy off the inheritance, not as a favour, but as a fair purchaser, and was at the expence of an act of parliament to obtain it. He paid more than Sir Isaac Newton, or any other calculator, computes the value of such a purchase to be; for it cost him altogether, with charges, a year's purchase to make it inher-

ance: and I believe nobody will pretend to argue that an inheritance, after a term of above an hundred years to come, is worth one year's purchase, nor would this gentleman have given one single shilling for it, if it had not been to get his estate out of trustees hands.

“This is the fact; and what was the value of the estate thus purchased? Not above twelve or thirteen hundred pounds a year; which is but a small part of this gentleman's estate, even according to your own calculation; most of which was land of inheritance before.”

* Walpole Papers.

† August 15, 1745. Life of Bishop Newton.

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if ever it should be necessary to inform the world (which I believe it will not) of the history of the late change, no one can to be sure do it, or at least furnish materials for doing it, so well as myself, for I may truly say, *Pars magna fui*; and I do not apprehend, nor can recollect one single fact, no not one circumstance in the whole affair, that it can be necessary to suppress or disguise. If avarice, ambition, or the desire of power had influenced me, why did I not take (and no one can deny but I might have had) the greatest post in the kingdom. But I contented myself with the honest pride of having subdued the great author of corruption, retired with a peerage, which I had three times at different periods of my life refused; and left the government to be conducted by those who had more inclination than I had to be concerned in it. I should have been happy, if I could have united an administration capable of carrying on the government with ability, œconomy, and honour."

A friend of Pulteney has also given a full explanation of his conduct, and stated the insuperable difficulties which he had to encounter from the discordant views of that heterogeneous opposition, which, with all his influence and abilities, he could not unite in sentiment, though he had succeeded in uniting them for the purpose of forming a consistent plan of attack.

"Like an opposition in parliament, carried on against an overgrown minister, all sorts of parties and connexions, all sorts of disagreeing and contradictory interests, join against him, at first, as a common enemy, and tolerable unanimity is preserved amongst them, so long as the fate of this parliamentary war continues in suspense. But when once they have driven him from the wall, and think themselves sure of victory, the jealousies and suspicions, which while the contest depended had been stifled, break out, every one, who shared in the fatigue, expects to share in the spoils, separate interests counteract each other, separate negotiations are set on foot, till at last, by untimely and unnecessary division, they lose the fruits of their victory, and the object of the common resentment is able to make terms for himself *."

* To this passage the author subjoined a note: "The true history of the transaction here alluded to, may possibly, some time or other appear; though as yet, we are persuaded, the world knows very little of it." Letter to two Great Men, 1760, p. 35. This excellent pamphlet was written by Dr. Douglas, now bishop of Salisbury, who in explanation, assured me that it was the intention of lord Bath, to have arranged, from his own recol-

lection and papers, a history of the events which accompanied and followed the resignation of Sir Robert Walpole. That he afterwards changed his mind, and said he would leave this task to Dr. Douglas, who should draw up an account after his death, and pointed to several papers which would be of use to him. From a knowledge of these facts, the public naturally formed the highest expectations, and bishop Newton justly observes,

"As

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-FIRST:

1742.

Examination of the Report of the Secret Committee.—Heads of Accusation urged against Sir Robert Walpole.—Undue Influence in Elections.—Grants of fraudulent Contracts.—Peculation, and Profusion in the Expenditure of the Money for Secret Service.—His private Fortune, pecuniary Acquirements, and the State of his Affairs at his Death.

THE charges against the ex-minister, which result from the report of the secret committee, may be reduced to three principal heads:

1. Undue influence in elections:
2. Granting fraudulent contracts:
3. Peculation, and profusion in the expenditure of secret service money.

Regun Saturday, November 7, and finished Friday, November 13.

The first charge, of undue influence in elections, is confined principally to the offer of a place of collector of the port of Weymouth to the mayor, if he would use his influence in obtaining the nomination of a returning officer; the promise of a living to the brother-in-law of the mayor for the same purpose; the removal of some revenue officers, who refused to give their votes for the ministerial candidate; and the distribution of some trifling sums for borough prosecutions and suits. Such petty abuses of power, which were swelled in the report * into almost capital charges, were so much below the dignity

The first charge examined

* "The contest is plain and visible; it is: Whether the commons shall retain the third state in their own hands, whilst this whole dispute is carried on at the expence of the people; but, on the other side of the minister,

out of the money granted, to support and secure the constitutional independency of the three branches of the legislature.

"This method of corruption is as sure, and therefore your committee apprehend, as criminal

"As Dr. Pearce had some knowledge of these and other transactions, so Dr. Douglas, by conversing several years almost daily with lord Bath, had frequent opportunities of informing himself of the truth of many particulars, and having collected sufficient materials for the purpose, is well qualified to draw the just character, and to complete the history of his noble patron, a debt which he owes to his memory, and it is hoped will one time or other fully discharge,

so that conformably to the rule, in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established."

On the death, however, of lord Bath, general Pulteney destroyed all his papers, and the world has to regret that the learned prelate was, by this unfortunate circumstance, prevented from accomplishing a design, for which he alone could be sufficiently qualified.

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Second
charge.

dignity of the house, as to throw ridicule on their proceedings, and to excite the contempt of the public.

The second charge, of granting fraudulent contracts, is reduced to a *single* contract, given to Peter Burrell and John Bristow, two members of the house of commons, for furnishing money at Jamaica, towards the payment of the British troops; into which a friend of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams was admitted by his recommendation, and by which the contractors gained £. 14. 3s. 2½d. per cent *. But even admitting the truth of the statement, the bargain, when first made, could not be unfavourable to the public: because, as appears upon the report, Burrell would not, on account of the risk, accept the whole contract, but admitted Bristow as his partner, and even offered a part of his share to his brothers, and two other gentlemen; all of whom declined for the same reason.

Third charge.

The next charge, that of peculation, and extravagance in the expenditure of the public money, is of a far more serious nature.

In order to affix the stigma of peculation on Sir Robert Walpole, it was necessary to shew, that the sums employed for secret service during the last ten years of his administration, were much greater than the sums expended on the same occasion, during an equal number of years, in any of the preceding reigns;

minimal a way of subverting the constitution as by an armed force, it is a crime productive of a total destruction of the very being of this government, and is so high and unnatural, that nothing but the powers of parliament can reach it; and as it can never meet with parliamentary animadversion, but when it is unsuccessful, it must seek for its security in the extent and efficacy of the mischief it produces; and therefore your committee apprehend it is the more necessary for your consideration, while its want of success yet leaves an opportunity to preserve and maintain your independence for the future." Report of the Committee of Secrecy, p. 24.

* "Your committee have been obliged to dwell the longer upon this contract, because the whole behaviour of the earl of Orford, who had the sole direction of it, seems so extraordinary, that they fear this part of the report would want credit, if they had not descended into the most minute parts of it.

"Here they find a contract entered into upon the good faith of the proposers only, with an ignorance of the value of the exchange, whether real or affected does not appear to your committee; and that defect so far from being endeavoured to be supplied by admitting proposals, or information from any other

channels, that it seemed a determined point to shut it out, even where it seemed to obtrude itself upon him from the very offices subject to his inspection.

"But as if this injury to the troops and injustice to the nation had been too little, he rendered this contract more advantageous to the contractors, than their most sanguine expectation originally suggested to them.

"For though by the terms of the contract, the public was only to advance £. 27,000 in money, yet we find the further sum of £. 42,000, advanced to them before the arrival of the troops in America.

"And your committee observe, that the shares of the profits of this contract were dealt out to the deputy of the pay office, and to a friend of the paymaster of the marines, at the request of the said paymaster, without any advance of money, or trouble on their part; and it is very remarkable, that these shares were confined to the sums issued from their respective offices.

"And here your committee must observe, from the whole course of this proceeding, that neither the interest of the soldier, or the public, seemed to have been the object of the earl of Orford's attention." Report of the Committee of Secrecy, p. 13.

and in making this comparative statement, the committee appear to realise the axiom, that "he who proves too much proves nothing." "The issuing," observes the committee, "such an immense part of the money, given for the support of the civil government, to these particular uses, during a time of profound tranquillity till the late rupture with Spain, greatly alarmed your committee, and put them upon examining what sums had been issued for the same services, in a period for the like number of years. And your committee beg leave to represent to you, that exorbitant as this sum may seem, they would have suppressed this part of their report, if by the comparison they had entered upon, they could any ways have reconciled their silence upon this head, to their duty in this house and the nation; and your committee hope, that the period they have pitched upon, will evince the truth of this intention, as it comprehends a general and most expensive war abroad, a demise of the crown, the happy establishment of the present royal family upon the throne, and an open and dangerous rebellion at home; in short, every event that can happen to justify extraordinary expences in carrying on the business of government. And it is not easy to express the surprise of your committee, when they found by the account laid before them, which is annexed, (N^o 11) that from the 1st day of August 1707, to the 1st day of August 1717, there was issued under the aforesaid heads, no more than the sum of £.337,960. 4s. 5½d."

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The statement brought forward with such affected candour and moderation, is partial and inaccurate.

The partiality will appear from commencing the inquiry into the expenditure in 1707. For the adoption of this year, there seems no particular reason, excepting, that had they begun with the years immediately preceding, the secret service money would have been considerably larger. For in 1707, the union with Scotland was effected; and it is a well known fact, that large sums * of money were remitted, in 1705 and 1706, to Scotland, for the purpose of purchasing the consent, or silencing the opposition of the refractory natives, who vehemently resisted the establishment of the union.

Another proof of partiality is no less evident from closing their comparative statement with August 1717; at the time when the large pension granted to the abbot du Bois, the complicated negotiations for the

* At one draft £.20,000 was sent to the Scottish treasury for that purpose. Smollett, vol. 2. p. 93.

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quadruple alliance, and the necessity of corrupting the senate of Sweden, on the death of Charles the Twelfth, and many domestic particulars, which rendered the expences of Sunderland's administration peculiarly heavy, must have increased the total amount of secret service money, during the years which immediately followed 1717.

Another proof of partiality appears from confining their statement to only one term; for had they acted on the common principles of justice, they ought to have compared the secret expenditure, from 1731 to 1741, with that of several terms of ten years, from the restoration to the year 1731. Had they only selected the ten first years of queen Anne, from 1702 to 1712, or the first ten years of George the First, from 1714 to 1724, the average amount of the sums expended in secret service would have been considerably swelled; and perhaps to as large, if not to a larger amount, than those disbursed on the same occasion from 1731 to 1741. Had they only consulted and compared their own account of the three years, from August 1717 to August 1720, they might have found that during that period the expenditure for secret service, special service, and to reimburse expences, amounted to £.228,000; but they purposely omitted this just and candid method of proceeding, because Sir Robert Walpole was at that time in opposition, and had no share in the distribution. Had they carefully consulted the treasury books for the four succeeding years, they would have found £.458,000 was expended on the same account*. Had they carried their comparative statement still farther, they would have found that, in 1725, the year in which the Hanover treaty was concluded, the secret service money, expended between the 1st of May and the 4th of March, amounted to £.218,132†. But such an inquiry was not conformable to their views; which were, to diminish the amount of the sums expended before the year 1731, that those disbursed during the last ten years of Walpole's administration might appear enormously large.

In the second place, the statement of the committee is not a full and exact account of *all* the sums employed in secret service money from 1707 to 1717. For half of the term specified in the comparative statement, was a time of war, when an extraordinary ‡ allowance of £.10,000 per annum is granted for procuring secret intelligence, and 2½ per cent. deducted from the pay of all the foreign forces in the service of Great Britain, which, in

* Note in Sir Robert Walpole's handwriting, at the end of an abstract of the civil list, made in 1725.

† An account of bounties, secret services, and other payments in the nature of secret

service, made between the 1st of May 1725, and the 4th of March following. In the Oxford Papers.

‡ *Faction Detected*, p. 140.

five years, amounted to £. 178,802. 14 s. was principally employed for the same purpose *. It follows, therefore, that no just medium of comparison can be drawn from the money employed for secret service, in time of war and in time of peace; because in time of peace expences of this nature have no established provision, whereas in time of war extraordinary allowances are appropriated for that purpose.

In addition to these extraordinary allowances, must likewise be joined a part of the civil list debt of £. 500,000, which was paid by parliament in 1713, and of £. 400,000, which the queen owed at her demise.

I have no particular documents which enable me to prove *unquestionably*, that *all* the sums expended for secret service, during the three first years of George the First, ending in August 1717, are not specified. But I have reason to assert, with full confidence, that it was so; for it is more than probable, that part of the debt of £. 800,000 on the civil list, which was paid off in 1720 and 1721, was contracted before August 1717. For that a part of the debt contracted by the civil list, was always supposed to have been expended in secret service money, is proved from the motion made by Pulteney in the house of commons, in 1725, on the proposal to pay the debt on the civil list, to address the king for an account of all monies which had been issued and paid to any person or persons, on account, for the privy purse, *secret service*, pensions, bounties, or any sum or sums of money to any person or persons *without account*, from March 25, 1721, to March 21, 1725.

From these remarks the fallacy of the observation will sufficiently appear, "that the sums expended on these services during the last ten years, amount to *near five times as much* as was expended in the ten years ending in August 1717; and that the two remarkable years, 1733 and 1734, amount to £. 312,128. 19 s. 7 d. being *considerably more* than the *total* of the whole ten years, from 1707 to 1717."

Nor can the injustice of the committee be sufficiently reprobated for selecting, as a matter of animadversion, what ought to have been a subject of praise; the two remarkable years, 1733 and 1734, in which commenced those complicated negotiations, that succeeded the death of Augustus king of Poland, when the sum of £. 312,128. 19 s. 7 d. for secret service, which they malignantly held forth to public censure, was well expended for procuring that secret intelligence, and for gaining those ministers abroad,

Period VIII. which prevented a war with France and Spain, that would have added
 1742 to 1745. several millions to the national debt.

Having thus endeavoured to shew that the conduct of the committee in comparing the secret expenditure, during the last ten years of Sir Robert Walpole's administration, with the ten years from 1707 to 1717, was partial and fallacious, I shall next examine the account itself; and shall endeavour to prove that their statement was equally unjust. The report classes secret expenditure under two principal heads. The first relates to the secret service money, of which the destination was not, and could not be specified, because it was expended for the secret purposes of government. It amounts to little more than the half, or £.786,355. 17s. 4d. The second comprises that money, the distribution of which is specified; and which is divided into special service, amounting to £.272,504. 0s. 8d. and to reimburse expences, amounting to £.205,390. 17s. 10d. They likewise added other articles, £.66,000 for the secretaries of state, £.68,800 upon account to the solicitor of the treasury, and £.50,077. 18s. to authors and printers. These totals, with a few other small articles, amount to £.1,440,128, which is stated to be the expence of the civil government in secret service money, during the space of ten years.

But although the report then continues by endeavouring to prove, that the money, issued under the three heads of secret service, special service, and to reimburse expences, was understood to mean one and the same thing; and though they shew that, according to the forms and accounts of the treasury, they are usually comprised under the same head; "yet who does not perceive a very wide difference between secret services, and the other two articles of special service, and the reimbursement of expences, although it is probable, that some part of the money, under these two heads, has been really applied that way? Yet very great sums must have been issued under these titles, to purposes very different from those which ought to have given so much alarm to the public *." And it is to be observed, that till the passing of Burke's bill, all treasury pensions were charged to the secret service.

As to the other three articles, viz. That of the solicitor of the treasury, that of the allowance of £.3,000 per annum to each of the secretaries of state, and that of the money issued to authors and printers, it is impossible, with any candour, to bring them into the charge of the secret service.

The first sum, to the solicitor, is given always upon account, viz. for crown prosecutions, and other necessary, obvious, and warrantable purposes of

* Faction Detected.

government, of which the committee themselves were so well aware, that they deducted that sum from the grand total.

The second sum, which regards the secretaries of state, stands justly exceptionable in this comparison, because it was made a distinct article from that of secret service in all times, and is particularly specified as such in the statement of the annual expenditure before the revolution, being not included in the annual sum of £.89,968. 8s. 2½d. to which the annual average of the sums employed in secret service then amounted."

In regard to the charge that £.50,077. 18s. was paid to authors and printers of newspapers, such as *Free Britons*, *Daily Courants*, *Corncutter's Journals*, *Gazetteers*, and other political papers, between February 10, 1731, and February 10, 1741, it may be sufficient to observe, with the author of "*Faction Detected*," that is a matter rather to be laughed at, than considered seriously *. The gross amount of £.50,077. 18s. seems a large sum, but if divided by ten, the number of years, is reduced to only £.5,007. 15s. 9d. per annum, a sum too trifling to deserve notice.

If this reasoning is just, and these calculations accurate, we must deduct from £.1,453,400, the sum of £.662,781, or the total employed in special service, and to reimburse expences, together with the three articles for the secretaries of state, the solicitor of the treasury, and the authors and printers; and the remainder, £.790,619, will be the whole disbursement for secret service from 1731 to 1741. This total, upon a medium of ten years, is only £.79,061. 18s. per annum; a much less sum than was expended on the same occasion, during a similar term of years before the revolution †. And even if the sums for special service, and to reimburse expences, should be included, the amount will then be £.1,264,250 disbursed in ten years, or £.126,425 per annum, which certainly cannot be considered as an unreasonable sum for keeping the nation in tranquillity at home, and peace abroad, during a period of very intricate negotiation, conciliating foreign courts, and procuring intelligence, in bounties, pensions during plague, reimbursement of expences, extraordinaries to foreign ministers, presents and contingencies at home; and if due consideration be had to the difference of times of war and peace, to the increase in the value of money, and to the difficulty of procuring exact intelligence, this sum will not appear comparatively larger than the secret service money expended in the reigns of William, Anne, and George the First. It is rather an object of wonder how so much could be effected with this money; for no minister since Walsingham, ever procured such extensive and accurate intelligence as Sir Robert Walpole.

* *Faction Detected*, p. 137.

† *Ibid.* p. 134.

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1742 to 1745.

On reviewing these observations, we may venture to draw these conclusions : That no dependence can be had on the statement of the report ; it being unjust, partial, and fallacious ; that it fully vindicates the character of the minister from any charge of peculation, because it shews, that notwithstanding his unpopularity, and the eagerness with which his enemies endeavoured to criminate him, no guilt could be proved. The members of the committee, except two, were enemies to Sir Robert Walpole, they were inflamed by party, and goaded by personal antipathy ; and therefore some apology may be made for them, if under the impression of such sentiments, they gave erroneous statements. But what apology can be made for those compilers of our history, who, either ignorant of the true state of the question, or wishing to mislead the reader, have exaggerated even the accounts in the report, and do not blush to fill the pages of history by asserting, that the enormous sum of £. 1,453,400 was employed in secret service money, when even the report makes a different statement, and when the fallacy of such a statement is unquestionably proved by the author of *Faction Detected*, which excellent performance they ought to have studied before they made such unqualified assertions.

There yet remains one article, too important to be omitted, which proves the malignity or ignorance of the committee.

" We find, moreover, that two days before he resigned, viz. Feb. 9th, £. 17,461 was paid into his hands by virtue of three warrants, signed but the same day, which were pawned with the bank officer, in order to raise the sum before they had passed through the usual forms of the exchequer, and till money came into that office, on account of the civil list, to redeem them."

This statement carries an appearance of great ignorance in the committee, of the circumstances attending issues of money from the exchequer, or it is an artful colouring of a very common transaction, in order to aggravate the supposed misconduct of Sir Robert Walpole, for the purpose of misleading the judgment of the public.

The commissioners of the treasury, at all times, have been in the practice of signing orders for the issue of money from the exchequer, as well out of the supplies, as out of the civil list, previous to the actual receipt at the exchequer, of the several heads of revenue, out of which, such orders are thereafter to be discharged*.

This usage is perfectly correct, and really necessary, because it enables the

* For the answer to this article, I am indebted to Edward Roberts, esquire, deputy to the clerk of the pells.

payment to be made to the party immediately after the future, or next receipt at the exchequer, which payment, but for this practice, must necessarily meet with great delay, from the time unavoidably to be taken up in drawing orders at the exchequer, and transmitting them for signatures and entry at the treasury.

Monies are very frequently wanted for pressing services, which require immediate payment, and various means have been devised for that purpose, long before the revenue, out of which those services are bound to be discharged, has found its way into the receipt of exchequer.

The legislature annually enables the minister to anticipate, by exchequer bills, the issues intended to be made out of the land and malt taxes, and the surplus of the consolidated fund.

As the civil list arises from a weekly produce, comparatively small, it must sometimes happen that urgent and unforeseen demands, will unavoidably compel the minister, or the creditor, to anticipate the sum required, by private means, until it can be regularly discharged, by due course, from the exchequer.

I take for granted that from the 8th to the 10th of February, 1741-2, there was, as has often happened, but little money remaining in the exchequer, applicable to the uses of the civil government, and that the sum of £.17,461, was immediately wanted, by Sir Robert Walpole, for services which his majesty must certainly have approved of, because he signed three separate warrants for the issue, as he was entitled by his prerogative to do, and he must also have given Sir Robert receipts to their amount.

These warrants are said to have been *pawned* to the bank officer, in order to raise the sum before they had passed through the usual forms, and till money came into that office, on account of the civil list, to redeem them. And here lies the whole gist of this charge.

Not to dwell on the ill-natured expression of pawned, so evidently introduced to heighten the accusation, or on the good nature of the bank officer, who certainly had no power nor means to accommodate the parties, without the specific and express directions of his superiors, the bank directors then in waiting; what is the fact but simply this? that a sum of money required for his majesty's service on the 9th of February, and certain of being paid at the exchequer on the 11th, was advanced by the bank of England on the undeniable security of the king's sign manual, the warrant of the commissioners of the treasury, and an exchequer order; the first and last of these instruments having been regularly countersigned by the commissioners of the treasury also.

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Nor could any apprehensions be entertained that after the minister's removal the payment could be stopped by those who were to succeed him, they having the power of confirming such issues as their predecessors had directed, but not of annulling them.

Although these sums were procured from the bank, they might have been advanced by a banker, or any other persons to whom Mr. Scrope or Mr. Stanhope might have thought proper to apply; the transaction being most undoubtedly a private accommodation, and in no respect of an official or public nature.

Sir Robert Walpole himself undertook to draw up an answer to the report of the secret committee, and made some progress in the work, but he relinquished the business on a conviction, that the answer must be either materially defective, or he must have related many things highly improper to be exposed to the public*. Among the Walpole papers is a rough draught in his own hand writing, which appears to have been the commencement of this vindication. It states in a very perspicuous manner the mode of issuing and receiving money at the exchequer, and proves undeniably that a minister could never appropriate to his own use any part of the secret service money, as the rules and forms which constitute the law of the exchequer, render it almost impossible to defraud or misapply any part of the public treasure. Although this document is incomplete, yet it appears too curious a paper to be withheld from the public: it is therefore inserted in the Correspondence.

Vindication
of Walpole
from the
charge of
peculation.

Before I close this review of the report, it will not be improper to make a few observations on the rumours industriously circulated, that Sir Robert Walpole gained enormous riches from the plunder of the public.

The current opinion of his vast wealth was, in some degree, sanctioned by his profuse style of living, and the large sums which he expended at Houghton, in buildings and purchases, which could not amount to less than £.200,000, and to which it was said the income of his estate, and the known salary of his visible employments were manifestly inadequate †.

This

* Enough, from Sir Robert Walpole.

† The confidence and rancour with which these charges were brought forward and supported, will appear from the following extracts, written at different periods.

"With what face can he say that the minister's estate is no way exorbitant, when every body knows he has amassed immense riches, not in the service of the crown, but by jobs, secret service, the sale of honours, places, pen-

sions, and bargains, made in more places than Exchange Alley, by which thousands of families have been reduced to beggary."—*Examiner*, in answer to the *Free Briton*, July 1, 1751, p. 27.

"That he is the master of the national treasure is evident from his profusion, profusion to which no fund but the exchequer can be sufficient, and of which the income of his estate, and the known salaries of his visible employments,

This heinous charge will be best answered by a plain statement of his private property, pecuniary acquirements, and the situation of his affairs at his death.

Chapter 61.

1742.

His private fortune.

In the first chapter of these Memoirs, I have shewn, from undoubted documents, that his family estate, to which he succeeded in 1700, amounted to £. 2,169 a year, and that it had been relieved from embarrassments by his wife's fortune. His generous temper, and liberality in promoting the Hanover succession, appear to have involved him in his early days in some difficulties, from which he was afterwards relieved by the emoluments of the offices which he held under the Whig administration in the reign of queen Anne, and while paymaster general of the forces, in the reign of George the First. But he greatly augmented his fortune by disposing of South Sea stock. He was, however, principally indebted for this acquisition to his own sagacity, and to the judgment and intelligence of his agents, Jacombe and Gibson; for he was so far from being entrusted with the secrets of the managers, that he was execrated by them for having uniformly opposed the project, and favoured the proposal of the bank. His good fortune, however, was still greater than his own discernment or the intelligence of

employments, are not equal to the tenth part. His conduct has, indeed, in this respect, been such, that he seems to have thought his triumph not complete, unless he shewed how little he regarded detection, and how much he despised the resentment of the nation. For this reason he has pleased himself with erecting palaces and extending parks, planting gardens in places to which the very earth was to be transported in carriages, and embracing cascades and fountains whose water was only to be obtained by aqueducts and machines, and imitating the extravagance of oriental monarchs, at the expence of a free people, whom he has at once impoverished and betrayed." Pulteney's speech for his removal, 1741-2.—Gentleman's Magazine for 1743. p. 175.

1740-1.—"Some people refine so much as to think Sir Robert will be glad to make himself sure of his great fortune, and quit, if he can have terms that can secure." "But if this wonderful thing (the resignation) should be brought about, Sir Robert will still be behind the curtain, with an immense estate, and make it very uneasy to any minister."—Duchess of Marlborough's Opinions, p. 109. On this subject the editor justly observes, "The vast wealth of Sir Robert Walpole was, I remember, the cry of the day; and it seemed as if

he had purchased most of the county of Norfolk, and possessed one-half, at least, of the stock of the bank of England. He himself said, in a familiar way, "People call me rich, but my brother will cut up better."

"Taken up near Arlington-street, a small memorandum book (supposed to be lost by a gentleman who is packing up his awls) consisting of several articles, particularly the following ones:—Settled on my eldest son, upon his marriage, £. 7,000 per annum. Item—Expended on my house in N——, and in pictures £. 150,000. Item—On plate and jewels, very proper for concealment, in case of an im——t, £. 160,000. Item—In house-keeping, for six years past, at a moderate computation, £. 150,000. Item—Remitted at several times, within these twelve months last past, to the banks of Amsterdam, Venice, and Genoa, £. 400,000; with many other particulars, too tedious here to relate. If the gentleman who lost it, will please to apply himself to Caleb D'Anvers, of Gray's Inn, Esq.; the said memorandum book shall be restored gratis."—Advertisement in the Craftsman of November 28, 1730.

"Sir Robert is gone to day to his country-seat, loaded with the spoils and the hatred of the public," Chesterfield's Letters to his Son.

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1742 to 1745.

his agents, for he narrowly escaped being a great sufferer in the last subscription, by the precipitate fall of the stock. Some orders which he had sent from Houghton, by Sir Harry Bedingfield, together with a list of his friends who wished to be subscribers, came too late to be executed; and the delay prevented his participating in the general calamity*.

This addition so considerably increased his revenue, as sufficiently to account for his expence in building, improving, and purchasing at Houghton, which he commenced in the following year, as well as for the acquisition of that noble collection of pictures which cost him £.40,000, and which sold for nearly double the original price†.

During his continuance in office, he provided for his family by lucrative offices for life‡. Thus he was enabled to expend his private fortune, considerably

Jacombe to Walpole, Aug. 27, 1720.
Orford Papers.

Walpole was not only himself a considerable gainer by disposing of his property in the South Sea stock, but he was also the cause that the earl of Pembroke derived the same advantage. That nobleman having requested his advice, as a person well versed in affairs of finance, whether he should sell out a large sum, or wait till another opportunity? Walpole answered, "I will only acquaint you with what I have done myself, I have just sold out at £.1,000 per cent. and I am fully satisfied." The earl of Pembroke said nothing, and retired. Some years afterwards there arrived at Houghton, a fine bronze cast of the celebrated statue of the Gladiator at Rome, it was a pre-

sent from lord Pembroke, as a testimony of gratitude for this advice, which he had followed, and by which he had secured a very large part of his property.

Mrs. Walpole, however, did not pay so much regard to the opinion of her husband, for she was so much infected with the general frenzy, that in opposition to his repeated advice, she retained a sum of money, which she possessed in her own right, in the South Sea funds, and suffered, by her obstinacy, in common with the other losers. These anecdotes were communicated by lord Orford.

† The dearest picture in his collection, the "Doctors," by Guido, did not cost more than £.610.

‡ Places of trust and profit held by Sir Robert Walpole.

June, 1705. One of the council to the lord high Admiral.

1708. Secretary at war.

Jan. 21, 1710. Treasurer to the navy.

Oct. 5, 1714. Paymaster of the forces.

Oct. 11, 1715. First lord commissioner of the treasury, chancellor, and under treasurer of the exchequer.

June 11, 1720. Paymaster of the forces.

April 3, 1721. First lord commissioner of the treasury.

May 29, 1723. Secretary of state, during the king's absence.

May 7, 1740. Joint ranger of Richmond park.

Place held by or for the family of Sir Robert Walpole.
Collector of the port of London, by Henry Hare and Robert Mann, during the lives of Robert Walpole, junior, and E. Walpole, junior, Esquires, sons of Sir Robert Walpole. The reversion of this place was granted on the 28th June 1726, and came into possession in 1731. It was held by deed of trust, at the disposal of Sir Robert Walpole

2,000 per Annum.
April 5,

considerably increased by the rise of landed property *, and his ministerial emoluments, in that profuse style of living which incurred such unqualified censure.

These details of the estate and property of Sir Robert Walpole. cannot be deemed superfluous, when it is considered that he has been represented as a needy adventurer; that he was accused of having squandered and appropriated the public money; an accusation which was advanced without proof, believed without conviction, and is still credited by many who take rumours for facts, and give unlimited faith to the rancorous assertions of party.

April 5, 1721	Robert Walpole, junior, clerk of the pells	—	£. 3,000 per Annum.
July 21, 1725.	Robert lord Walpole, ranger of Richmond Park.		
Nov. 17, 1727.	E. Walpole, clerk of the pleas in the court of exchequer	—	400
	— secretary to the treasury.		
	— to the duke of Devonshire, as lord lieutenant.		
Feb. 4, 1737.	H. Walpole, junior, usher of the receipt of the exchequer	—	2,000
Nov. 9, 1738.	— comptroller of the great roll	—	500
Nov. 1, 1738	— clerk or keeper of the foreign estreats	—	7,000
May 9, 1739.	Robert lord Walpole, auditor of the exchequer	—	
	Edward Walpole, clerk of the pells, on the surrender of Robert lord Walpole.		

The fortune of Edward Walpole was only £.6,000, which he never received; that of his son Horace £.4,000, which was not paid till 40 years after the death of his father. The late lord Orford also assured me, that he never received more than £.200 from his father.

- The rental of his family estate, which in 1700 amounted to £.2,160 a year, could not be less at his resignation than between 4 and £.5,000 a year.

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1742 to 1745.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-SECOND:

1743—1745.

Renewal of the parliamentary Attack on Lord Orford—Defeated.—Consulted by the King.—His Influence in ministerial Arrangements.—Exerts himself for the Continuance of Hanoverian Troops in the British Pay.—His Speech in the House of Lords.—Goes to Houghton.—Returns to London at the King's Request.—Illness.—Death.

Orford re-
tires to
Houghton.

THE indemnity bill being rejected, the ex-minister retired to Houghton, and did not return to London till the next session of parliament, in the public business of which he took no active share.

Returns to
London.

Soon after his return to London, he experienced the inveteracy of those opponents who had not been gratified with places in the new arrangements.

Motion
against him
revived.

Waller revived the motion for appointing a committee to inquire into the conduct of Robert earl of Orford, during the last ten years, of his being first commissioner of the treasury, and chancellor and under treasurer of the exchequer. He was seconded by Sir Watkin Williams Wynne. Although it is said that a debate took place on the subject, I cannot find any account of it in the periodical publications of the times, which plainly indicates that the clamours which had been raised against the ex-minister no longer engaged the popular attention. A contemporary historian only observes on this occasion, "This motion was plainly calculated to render the opposers of it odious; but the aim was in a great measure lost. The sum of the inquiry into the earl's domestic management, had fallen far short of the public expectation, and the parliament was possessed of all the papers that could give the necessary lights for an inquiry into his foreign conduct. The motion, therefore, was treated as tending to divert the attention of the house from the great affairs of government, and upon a division, was rejected by 253 against 186*."

Dec. 1.

Rejected.

Orford's re-
fections.

The ex-minister seems to have felt these repeated aggressions with offended sensibility, and just indignation. In a fragment which formed part of an intended vindication of his conduct with respect to the charge of peculation, he thus animadverts on this unrelenting spirit :

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 607. Journals.

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"What then shall be said of these wicked outcries and clamours, which have so long filled and distracted the nation, of public robbers, plunderers of the public, ministers enriching themselves with the spoils of the people, and all that infamous weight of calumny, detraction, and defamation, with which the patriots have loaded the servants of the crown, have inflamed the minds of the populace, and for which we are told the nation are in the highest expectation of obtaining national justice. I think offenders of this sort, if any such there be, are proper objects of parliamentary justice, but if none such are to be found, what curse is not due to the authors of these detestable practices! And I think the vengeance of the people ought to be satisfied either upon the delinquents, if any crimes can be proved, or upon the inventors of such scandalous reports, who have so vilely imposed upon, and deluded the people. This is common justice; but to that height of impudence are some men now come, as avowedly to declare it is necessary that even injustice should be done, to answer the unjust expectations which they themselves have raised in the kingdom *."

Consulted by
the king.

The king had, from long experience, conceived so high an opinion of Walpole's zeal and judgment, that he consulted him in matters of great emergency. It does not appear that any personal conferences took place, but his advice was sometimes communicated by the duke of Devonshire, and lord Cholmondeley, sometimes by colonel Selwyn †, and Ranby surgeon to the household. The letters which he wrote on these occasions were always returned by the king, who was scrupulously delicate in never retaining any papers of such a nature, from apprehensions that ill consequences might result from their future discovery. He was led to adopt this practice in consequence of finding, among the papers of George the First, some letters from Sunderland, that betrayed political secrets which ought never to have been revealed ‡.

Another mode of communication was through the king's confidential page of the back stairs, who used to meet the earl of Orford at the house of Mr. Fowle, in Golden-square, who had married his niece, and whom he had made commissioner of the excise. This meeting took place in the evening, sometimes as late as midnight. The earl of Orford used to come first; the daughters were previously ordered to retire, and the servants were

* Correspondence.

† Colonel John Selwyn, aid de camp to the duke of Marlborough, colonel of the third regiment of foot, groom of the bedchamber to George the Second, treasurer to queen Caro-

line, and afterwards treasurer to his present majesty George the Third, when prince of Wales.

‡ From lord Orford.

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sent from home under various pretences. The young ladies were instigated by curiosity to watch at the top of the stairs. The house door was opened by Mr. Fowle himself, a chair was admitted into the hall, and a little man came out, and went up stairs into the drawing-room, where he remained some time with the earl of Orford, and went away in the same mysterious manner *. This man was probably Livry the king's confidential page, the same who more than once paid similar visits to the earl of Bath †.

By means of this intercourse, he induced the king to raise Pelham to the head of the treasury, and to exclude the earl of Bath.

Assists in the
promotion of
Pelham.

Wilmington being in a declining state of health on the king's departure for Hanover in 1743, it was expected that his death would happen before his return; and it was feared a contest would take place between the two parties in the cabinet, for the first seat at the treasury board. Orford well knew that Carteret, who was to accompany the king abroad, would further the views of lord Bath, or attempt to place himself in that station. He, therefore, earnestly exhorted Pelham, who had always proved himself his steadfast friend, to apply for it before the vacancy. Pelham for some time declined taking that step, and was not prevailed on till after repeated importunities, and probably insinuations from the earl of Orford, that his solicitation alone was necessary to insure success. Pelham at length applied, and obtained a positive promise from the king.

Struggle in
the cabinet

While this business was in agitation, a counter intrigue took place.

Lord Bath had from experience seen his error in supposing that he could direct public measures without holding an ostensible place. He felt that he was a cabinet counsellor without influence, and that few of those who owed their appointments or continuance in office to him, shewed any gratitude or deference to their benefactor. He had declined succeeding Sir Robert Walpole in 1742, because he had so repeatedly declared, both in parliament and in political publications, that he never would accept any place. But he was now induced to admit that a resolution thrown out in the ardour of debate, or advanced in party pamphlets, might be broken without subjecting himself to the charge of inconsistency; yet he did not adopt this resolution without some struggle.

All the members of the treasury board entreated lord Bath to place himself at their head, when the vacancy should happen, as the only measure which could prevent the ruin of their party. But their representations were ineffectual; he refused to make any application before the death of Wilming-

* Family Anecdote.

† From the bishop of Salisbury.

ton. On that event, which happened on the 2d of July, they renewed their solicitations, and at length overcame his reluctance. Lord Bath announced to Carteret, the united wishes of the whole treasury board, expressed his acquiescence, and requested the place. Sir John Rushout sent his own valet de chambre, John George, express to Germany with the dispatch *. The messenger was detained six weeks at Hanau, where the king was engaged in negotiating the treaty of Worms. At length no other answer was returned, than that the king's determination would be signified by the duke of Newcastle.

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About the same time that this intimation was brought, a messenger came from lord Carteret, announcing the appointment of Pelham to the vacant place at the head of the treasury. This intelligence so greatly surprised the duke of Newcastle, that in a letter to the lord chancellor, who was then in the country, he expresses himself with marks of no less astonishment than satisfaction; boasts of the victory over Carteret, extols the king's firmness, but acknowledges his inability to ascertain the causes of this fortunate event †.

Pelham first
lord of the
treasury.
August 23.

The mystery of this transaction was so impenetrable to both parties, that while Newcastle appeared to be at a loss by what means the influence of Carteret had been defeated, lord Bath suspected that he was betrayed by Carteret. But it is more than probable, that before the return of Rushout's messenger, the king had consulted the earl of Orford, who strongly dissuaded the acceptance of his rival's offer, and enforced the king's adherence to his promise in favour of Pelham.

Another strong proof of the king's personal consideration for the fallen minister, appeared in December. When lord Gower resigned the privy seal, Sir John Rushout again pressed lord Bath to come into office by accepting that place. He thought that he had prevailed on him, and desired lord Carteret to mention it to the king. But lord Bath, instead of applying for it himself, in an audience warmly recommended the earl of Carlisle ‡, who thought himself so secure of success, that he received the compliments of his friends. The king, however, declined this request, and instantly nominated lord Cholmondeley, the son-in-law to the earl of Orford.

Lord Chol-
mondeley
privy seal.

The ascendancy of his interest, and the decline of Bath's credit, became daily more manifest. When Rushout was made treasurer of the navy, his place at the treasury board was filled by Henry Fox, the inalienable ad-

Other
changes.

* From the bishop of Salisbury, communicated by Sir John Rushout.

† August 1743. Hardwicke Papers.

‡ From the bishop of Salisbury.

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Popular dis-
contents.

herent of Orford; and when Sandys was created a peer, and made cofferer of the household, Pelham united in himself the offices of first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer.

When Orford arrived in London, before the opening of the session, he found the nation in an alarming ferment, and the most inveterate divisions in the cabinet between the parties of Carteret and Newcastle. George the Second was extremely unpopular. His partiality to the electorate, and rumours of his preferring the Hanoverian to the British forces, occasioned clamours no less general and vehement, than those excited against William for favouring the Dutch. The toast of "no Hanoverian king," was not unfrequently given in large companies; and the very name of a Hanoverian became a term of disgrace and obloquy. The popular outcry, that England was involved in a war with France, for the support of German measures, opposite to her real interests, was now as violent against Carteret, as the complaints which had been urged against Walpole for tameness and pusillanimity, and base submission to the dictates of France.

Outcry
against Ha-
nover troops.

Not only the members in opposition decried the king's partiality, and opposed the continuance of the Hanoverian troops in British pay, but the leading members of the cabinet displayed equal repugnance. Newcastle was violent on this head, and after enforcing the necessity of their dismissal, stigmatised them by the appellation of a "body of troops, whose views have directed our motions, and whose fears have checked our victories *."

In the midst of these popular clamours and ministerial invectives, the king returned from the continent, and Carteret found a large majority of the cabinet determined to oppose the continuance of the Hanoverian troops. Notwithstanding the indignity to the king, and chagrin to himself, which must result from this determination, he was compelled to acquiesce. The question was therefore abandoned, and the cabinet engaged in forming other expedients.

Exertions of
Orford.

The arrival of Orford at this juncture, gave a new aspect to the transactions of the ministry. He wholly disapproved the conduct of the war, which had made England the principal instead of an auxiliary on the continent; he had reprobated the military proceedings in Flanders, which he properly ascribed to the fervour of Newcastle, eager for continental victories, and the subservience of Carteret to the king's views. But the evil could not now be remedied. He deprecated therefore so gross an insult to the king, without

* The duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke, November 7, 1743. Hardwicke Papers.

benefit

benefit to the nation. He was aware that if these troops were discharged, others must be substituted, which in the actual state of Europe could not easily be found, and if found would not be attended with less expence. He instantly remonstrated with Pelham and the other members of the cabinet, over whom he retained any influence, against the dereliction of the measure, exposed the pusillanimity of yielding to popular outcry and exaggerated rumours; and he offered to frame the question in such a manner as should render it palatable, and facilitate its adoption.

He never laboured any point during his own administration with more zeal; he employed that personal credit and fascinating influence which he possessed in so eminent a degree over his friends. At his request, a dinner was arranged at Sir Charles Hanbury Williams's, where he met those members of the cabinet, and a few leading men of both houses, who were averse to the measure. He enforced, with so much energy, the necessity of renewing the question, notwithstanding the occurrences of the campaign, that he finally brought them over to his opinion. In fact, it was *solely* owing to his exertions, that the measure was not abandoned. He did not himself support it by his eloquence in the house of peers, but his brother Horace defended it in the commons with great ability and strength of argument; at the same time, he accompanied his defence with so many farcastic allusions to the weakness and subserviency of the cabinet, as to demonstrate that he acted from no impulse, but that internal conviction which flowed from his own experience and his brother's suggestions*.

The earl of Orford, after his resignation, had seldom appeared in the house of lords, and seldom spoke, having observed to his brother Horace, that he had left his tongue in the house of commons. On one occasion, however, he shewed that he still retained his former powers of eloquence. He had given ministers repeated information of the hostile designs of France, to invade this country in support of the Pretender; but his intelligence had been disregarded and ridiculed as the effusions of discontent, and the remains of those apprehensions of Jacobitism, which had been considered by his enemies as artifices to keep the nation in continual suspense and alarm. It appeared, however, that his intelligence was well founded.

On the 18th of February the king sent a message to both houses, acquainting them that he had received undoubted information, that the eldest son of the Pretender to his crown was arrived at Paris, who, in concert with some of his disaffected subjects, was preparing to make an invasion,

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Hanover
troops con-
tinued.

King's mes-
sage.

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and was to be supported by the French fleet then in the channel; and adding, that he did not doubt their concurrence in proper measures to defeat the design. Accordingly, both houses joined in an address, expressing the warmest zeal and unanimity, and signifying that they would, at the hazard of their lives and fortunes, support his right and title to the kingdom in opposition to, and defiance of the Pretender and his adherents, and all other enemies*.

Papers communicated.

On the 28th of February, Newcastle, by order of the king, laid before the house of lords, some letters and papers containing farther intelligence concerning the intended invasion from France; he concluded by observing, that their lordships having already expressed, in the address of last week, their indignation at so daring and insolent an attempt, and their resolution to support his majesty against the Pretender and his adherents, he did not think it possible to find words more expressive of zeal and duty, than were chosen on that occasion, and with which the king was so much satisfied, that he had been pleased to declare his confidence in their vigour and unanimity†.

Speech of Orford.

At the conclusion of his speech, the house ordered counsel to be heard in a private cause, when Orford rose from his seat, and with no less animation than dignity, observed, that he had made a resolution of never troubling the house, and that it was not without a very uncommon degree of grief he found it now indispensably necessary to break that resolution, so necessary, that he could not, in his opinion, continue silent without a crime.

"I sincerely wish," he said, "that my former apprehensions concerning France and the Pretender, for which I have been so often and so severely ridiculed, had not been so often and so fully verified. But I could not easily have believed, that it could ever have been necessary for me to speak on an occasion like this; that it could ever have fallen to my lot to remind your lordships of the respect due to the person of our sovereign; I could not easily have believed, nor could I have imagined, that the common forms of decency could have been violated in this august assembly. It is with the greatest emotion and surprise that I see such a neglect of duty. My knowledge of your lordships, will not suffer me to term it by any harsher name than that of forgetfulness; but such forgetfulness I have never known in my long acquaintance with parliamentary proceedings.

"When his majesty has communicated to your lordships intelligence of the highest importance, is he to receive no answer from the house? Is his intimation to be passed over without ceremony and without regard?

* Debrett's Parliamentary Debates from 1743 to 1745, vol. 1, p. 172.

† Debrett.

Such behaviour must doubtless arise from inconsiderateness, for the least reflection will show that it is not easy to treat our sovereign with less respect. A little recollection, my lords, will soon convince you, that when his majesty's care and penetration have been employed for the security of the public happiness, when, as he promised, he has endeavoured to obtain a more exact account of the pernicious designs of France; when he has made some further discoveries of them, and has shewn his regard for our counsels, by imparting them to us; can we be so undutiful, so indecent, as not to return an address of thanks? If we do not, how will it appear that we have received them? For this reason, if for no other, the noble duke ought, in my humble opinion, to have made some motion for that purpose. And certainly, my lords, our language is not so barren that we cannot find words to express our duty on every occasion, and testify our acknowledgments for every instance of regard shown us by our sovereign; and although an address may appear to some a repetition of that which has been lately presented, yet I cannot think it an unreasonable or a superfluous repetition.

"As such treatment, my lords, has never been deserved by his majesty, so it has never before been practised. And sure, my lords, if his hereditary council should select, for such an instance of disrespect, a time of distraction and confusion; a time when the greatest power in Europe is setting up a Pretender to his throne, and when only the winds have hindered an attempt to invade his dominions; it may give our enemies occasion to imagine and report, that we have lost all veneration for the person of our sovereign.

"I have, indeed, particular reason to express my astonishment and my uneasiness on this occasion; I feel my breast fired with the warmest gratitude to a gracious and royal master, whom I have so long served; my heart overflows with zeal for his honour, and ardour for the lasting security of his illustrious house. But, my lords, the danger is common, and an invasion equally involves all our happiness, all our hopes, and all our fortunes.

"It cannot be thought consistent with the wisdom of your lordships, to be employed in determining private property, when so weighty an affair as the security of the whole kingdom demands your attention; when it is not known but at this instant the enemy has set foot on our coasts, is ravaging our country with fire and sword, and threatening us with no less than extirpation or servitude.

"If you neglect the public security, if you suffer the declared enemies of your name to proceed in their designs without resistance, where will be your dignities, your honours, and your liberties? You will then boast no more of the high prerogatives of your house, your freedom of speech, and

the assistance of the Pelhams, through both houses, the favourite measure of prosecuting the war with vigour in Flanders. Ever since the resignation of Walpole, who had cemented the bond of union which kept the heterogeneous parts together, and gave strength to the executive government, the administration had been weak and disjointed. There was no one person whose ascendancy in the closet, influence in parliament, and pre-eminence of talents, enabled him to take a decided lead in the cabinet. Great divisions had taken place, and given rise to a long series of cabals, between Newcastle and Carteret, which if not suppressed or moderated, threatened ruin both to the domestic and foreign affairs. These feuds had arisen to a height so alarming, as to necessitate the removal of one of the contending parties.

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Tends in the
cabinet.

Carteret, who on the recent death of his mother, had succeeded to the earldom of Granville, was strenuously supported by the king, but the party of Newcastle preponderated both in the cabinet and in parliament. It became a great object of both parties to secure the interest of lord Orford, as well from the consideration paid to his advice by the king, as from the number of members in both houses whom he directed or influenced. In conformity with this view, Newcastle observes, in a letter to the chancellor; "It is necessary to find means of satisfying lord Orford, and a certain number of his friends; for without this last, we have no ground to stand on, and shall, I fear, be obliged to shew in a few months that we have not strength enough to support the king's affairs, though he should put them into our hands *."

Struggle between New-
castle and
Carteret.

Carteret adopted, as he thought, a surer method, which was to employ the influence of the king. By his majesty's command, lord Cholmondeley wrote to his father-in-law. He informed him that the king, after many gracious expressions and acknowledgments of his service, in regard to the question for the continuance of the Hanover forces, requested his attendance a week or ten days before the meeting of parliament. The long experience, he said, of his zeal and attachment, the knowledge of his consummate judgment in domestic affairs, the consciousness of the great weight of his opinion and influence over so many members in both houses of parliament, induced the king to require his advice and concurrence in subjects of the highest importance, at this critical juncture.

Orford sent
for by the
king.

The answer was couched in the most respectful terms of duty and zeal. After saying, that as the care and study of his life, while he had the honour to serve the king, had been directed to deserve his favour and good opinion, so he should still, in a private capacity, persevere in his endeavours to merit the

His answer.

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continuance of his majesty's grace and goodness, the only reward he had now to ask for all past or future services. He expressed his intention of obeying the king's commands by setting out for London, as soon as his health would permit. He hoped to arrive there before the meeting of parliament was settled, and the business finally adjusted, till which time, he could be of no use in recommending the measures to such persons as paid any regard to his opinion. With respect to the conduct of affairs, he declined entering into any previous consultation, and yet ventured, with his usual frankness, to give a decided disapprobation to the system of continental politics which had been recently pursued. He observed, "I am heartily sorry to see the king's affairs reduced to such extremities. It has been a long time easy to foresee the unavoidable, and almost unfurmountable difficulties that would attend the present system of politics. I wish to God it was as easy to show the way out of them. But be assured, that I will in every thing, to the utmost of my power, consult and contribute to the honour, interest, and safety of the king and kingdom *." In reply, lord Cholmondeley expressed the king's cordiality and satisfaction, and enforced the necessity of his immediate appearance, if it could be done without injury to his health.

Arrival in
London.

In this situation of affairs he was requested by Pelham, and advised by his brother Horace, who suggested that it was a manoeuvre of Carteret, to delay his journey, as on his arrival he would be embarrassed between the choice of two contending parties, and might not be able to act without offending the king. Yet although the state of his health was fully sufficient to justify his continuance in the country, he thought it his duty to obey the summons of the king; and left Houghton on the 19th of November. On his arrival in London, he found the whole arrangement finally settled, without any occasion for his concurrence. The Pelhams had formed a coalition with the prince's friends, the Tories and opposition Whigs, which was ludicrously called the *Broad Bottom*. Granville had been compelled to resign, but carried with him the regret of the king, and strong assurances of future favour. Harrington succeeded him as secretary of state.

Illness.

But the smiles or frowns of sovereigns, the petty intrigues of courts, the bickerings of discordant politics, and the arrangement of a new administration were no longer objects of Orford's attention.

Sufferings.

He had long been afflicted with the stone. The journey from Houghton, which he employed four days in performing, aggravated the symptoms, and brought on such excruciating torments, that the description of his sufferings, during the last day's journey, which was only twenty miles, filled Ranby †

* The earl of Orford to lord Cholmondeley, November 17, 1744. Correspondence.

† Ranby's Narrative.

himself with horror. Not finding the expected relief from regular medical assistance, he had recourse to Dr. Jurin, who administered a powerful solvent, which, contrary to the advice of his friends, the patient repeatedly took in large quantities. The medicine dissolved the stone, but the violence of its operation lacerated the bladder, and occasioned the most excruciating agonies. His only relief was opium, and from an apprehension of returning pain, he took such large and repeated doses, that for six weeks he was almost in a constant state of stupefaction, except for two or three hours in the afternoon, when he seemed to rouse from his lethargy, and converse with his usual vivacity and cheerfulness.

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A few days before he died, he gave an instance that his judgment was found and unimpaired. The duke of Cumberland having ineffectually remonstrated with the king, against a marriage with the princess of Denmark, who was deformed, sent his governor, Mr. Poyntz, to consult the earl of Orford, on the best methods which he could adopt to avoid the match. After a moment's reflection, Orford advised him to give his consent to the marriage, on condition of receiving an ample and immediate establishment, "and believe me," he added, "when I say, that the match will be no longer pressed." The duke followed his advice, and the event happened as the dying statesman had foretold *.

Consulted by
the duke of
Cumberland.

He bore his sufferings with unexampled fortitude and resignation.

Fortitude.

Ranby, his surgeon, who published a narrative of his last illness, thus expresses himself: "When I recollect his resigned behaviour, under the most excruciating pains, the magnanimous sentiments which filled his soul, when on the eve, seemingly, of dissolution, and call to mind the exalted expressions that were continually flowing from him at this severe time of trial; however extraordinary his natural talents, or acquired abilities were; however he had distinguished himself by his eloquence in the senate, or by his singular judgment and depth of penetration in counsels; this incomparable constancy and astonishing presence of mind, must raise in my opinion as sublime ideas of him, as any act of his life besides, however good and popular; and reflect a renown on his name, equal to that which consecrates the memory of the remarkable ages of antiquity."

He expired † on the 18th of March 1745, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. His remains were interred in the parish church at Houghton, without monument or inscription:

Death.

"So peaceful rests without a stone, a name

"Which once had "honours," titles, wealth, and fame

* From lord Orford.

is given in the genealogical table, chap.

† An account of his family and descendants

† Pope.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-THIRD.

Principles of Walpole's Administration.—Pacific System.—Finance.—Commerce.—Public Character.

THE portrait of a Minister is to be traced from the history of his whole administration. Candour therefore requires that we should not judge by the selection of detached parts, but combine the whole in a connective series, and referring his conduct to one grand principle of action, judge of it as critics do of an epic poem, by comprehending, in one point of view, the beginning, the middle, and the end.

General principle.

Did the administration of Walpole present any uniform principle, which may be traced in every part, and gave combination and consistency to the whole?—Yes.—And that principle was THE LOVE OF PEACE.

Preventive measures.

The great leading features of this pacific system, are thus delineated by himself:

“ To prevent a war, and to take the proper steps, that may not only keep us out of the war, but enable us to contribute towards restoring the public tranquillity, is no less desirable, and a conduct no less justifiable, than to carry on and support a war we are unhappily engaged in. If then *paries cum proximus ardet*, it is as advisable to look after ourselves, and to prevent the flames reaching our houses, as it would be to extinguish a fire already kindled; and if to prevent, and by proper care to avoid a cold or a fever, be easier, safer, and wiser, than to cure the distemper, I may venture to maintain, that measures tending to prevent a war, or that are preparatory to the carrying it on, if it becomes unavoidable, are as justifiable and as reasonable, if necessary, as the same measures would be in case of an actual war *.”

This same system is also fully developed by Horace Walpole.

“ This salutary plan of *preventive and defensive measures*, has been the fundamental rule of all his late and present majesty's counsels; the rudder, by which their actions have been steadily and constantly steered, with respect to the conduct of foreign princes and states: Ever cautious not to plunge their

faithful subjects rashly into a ruinous war, and equally prepared and resolved to protect their just rights against all attempts whatsoever, should they be obliged to take up arms for that purpose.

Upon this principle it may be, and indeed has been necessary to make, at different times, defensive alliances in conjunction with, or in opposition to the same powers, as the different dispositions and behaviour of those powers might tend to the benefit or disadvantage of this nation: And this seeming change of conduct will appear not to have arisen from inconstancy of temper, or of views on our part, but from the variation of views and intentions on the part of others *."

This preventive system was incessantly reprobated by his adversaries, and assailed with all the weapons of eloquence and wit. He was accused of extreme folly, in laying down a system, prudent for a petty state, but very improper for a country which had so great a sway, and ought to take the lead in Europe. It was stigmatized as a servile submission to the influence and interests of France. His love of peace was characterized as a temporising system of expedients, a dereliction of national honour, and a pacific obstinacy. He was derided for fitting out provisional fleets and pacific armaments, which plunged the nation into the same expence as an active war, while they produced nothing but Spithead exhibitions, and Hyde Park reviews.

Objections of his opponents.

Allowing, however, the full effect of these objections, and making no abatements for the prejudices of party, and the jealousy of political rivalry, few words are necessary to shew the beneficial consequences which resulted from the general tenor of his administration. The protestant succession was established, the Jacobite faction suppressed; the government acquired energy on a constitutional basis; and by the prevention of foreign war, domestic tranquillity was secured. Under the calm stability of such a government, public credit flourished, commerce increased, manufactures were improved, and agriculture ameliorated.

Effects of this pacific system.

The strongest objection which has been urged against the minister, is that the general tendency of his foreign measures was calculated to aggrandize the house of Bourbon, and depress the house of Austria. In examining this topic, it is necessary to consider the motives which induced him to adopt this line of conduct. He was fully aware that France was the only power which could effectually assist the Pretender; he constantly predicted, and the prediction was verified by the event, that whenever there was a war with France, the British crown would be fought for on British ground.

French alliance.

* The Interest of Great Britain steadily pursued, p. 24.

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By maintaining amity with France, during so long a period, he broke and dispirited the disaffected party at home, and diminished the danger of an invasion, by increasing the friends, and reducing the enemies of the new family on the throne.

An act of policy, however, attendant on this alliance, which none of our historians seem sufficiently to have appreciated, and which shewed great address and prudence in the ministers, was, their unceasing attention to prevent the French from improving their fleet, or exercising their seamen. *The care of the sea England took upon herself*; and Fleury was accused by the French, of having been cajoled by Walpole to sacrifice the marine.

Conduct towards the Emperor.

If any part of Walpole's conduct stands peculiarly exposed to censure, it is his refusal to assist the house of Austria, when exposed without an ally to the united efforts of France, Spain, and Sardinia.

As there is scarcely any vice without its concomitant virtue, so there is no virtue without an alloy. His well known desire of peace, exposed him to be overreached by those with whom he was treating, and who availed themselves of his extreme unwillingness to engage in hostilities. In fact, the minister did not always appreciate the just maxim, "that the discovery of vehement wishes generally frustrates their attainment; that too much impatience to conclude a treaty, gives an adversary great advantage; that a sort of courage belongs to negotiation, as well as to operations in the field; and that a negotiator must seem willing to hazard all, if he wishes to secure any material object *."

Nothing can justify the desertion of the Emperor, but the internal situation of the country, the fear of exciting discontents at the eve of a general election, and the full conviction that the Pretender would, in case of a rupture, receive assistance from France, and attempt an invasion. Nor can it be deemed an improbable supposition, that spirited resolutions, if adopted in 1733, would have alarmed Fleury, inclined to pacific measures, and fearful of a rupture with England, when the French navy was almost annihilated, would have compelled France to guaranty the pragmatic sanction, and thus have averted the danger, which the house of Austria incurred on the death of Charles the Sixth, of an irretrievable depression.

But peace is so desirable for a commercial country, that much praise must be due to the minister even for erring, if he erred, in preserving so great a blessing. And who shall presume to censure a conduct which conferred inestimable advantages, while it exposed to uncertain evils; which by the

* Burke's Thoughts on a Regicide Peace.

increase of trade and manufactures, the necessary consequences of a stable and tranquil government at home, gave to this country the sinews of war, and enabled the greatest war minister * whom this country ever produced, to make those vast and glorious efforts which terminated in the depression of the house of Bourbon.

The opposers of Sir Robert Walpole invariably and constantly asserted, that his administration was founded on the open and manifest sacrifice of the British glory and interest abroad, to those foreign dominions, in which it was even a condition in the act of settlement, that we should have no concern, and which was acknowledged by the ministers themselves to be the touchstone of all our negotiations at every court of Europe †. But it must be allowed, even by those who so peremptorily advanced this assertion, that never was the union of Hanover with Great Britain more conducive to the real interests of this country, if its *general effects*, notwithstanding some occasional deviations, contributed to preserve us in peace abroad. Hanoverian influence.

In fact, though it cannot be denied, that German prejudices and partial interests occasionally interfered with the great concerns of England, yet it is no less true, that no minister ever made so many, and such powerful remonstrances against petty Germanic schemes. He took all proper opportunities of inculcating just notions of dignity and credit. He had even the courage to observe to George the Second, that the welfare of his dominions both at home and abroad, and the felicity of Europe, depended on his being a great king, rather than a considerable elector.

He also laboured incessantly to mitigate the effects of the rooted inveteracy between the houses of Brunswick and Brandenburg. Finding the king vehement in a resolution to commence hostilities with the king of Prussia, either for enrolling troops on the territories of Hanover, or for some inconsiderable acquisition in Germany; he represented the danger and ill policy of the attempt. "Will your majesty," he said, "engage in an enterprise which must prove no less disgraceful than disadvantageous? Is not the inequality of forces so great, that Hanover will be no more than a breakfast to the Prussian army?"

If we compare the uniform conduct of Walpole with the uniform conduct of opposition, we shall find that he struggled with all his might for the preservation of the credit, quiet, and happiness of the nation. They contended for such proceedings as had a tendency to involve the country in all the misfortunes of foreign and domestic war.

William Pitt, earl of Chatham.

† Case of the Hanover Forces.

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While they were declaring that the nation was impoverished, the trade ruined, the people loaded with insupportable burthens, and all farther resources totally cut off, they were clamouring for foreign aggression, which would have required additional supplies, and increased the national embarrassments. And when their unceasing efforts had plunged the nation into a war, the public soon discovered the falsity of that assertion, so confidently thrown out for a number of years by Bolingbroke, and re-echoed by the members of opposition, that the preventive and temporising measures of Sir Robert Walpole had been attended with as much expence as an active war. For the war, which commenced in 1739, and terminated with the peace of Aix la Chapelle in 1749, added thirty millions to the national debt; and one year of the German war cost more than all the preventive measures and *pacific obstinacy* of Sir Robert Walpole during his whole administration.

Finance.

As an able minister of finance, his merit has been generally acknowledged, not only by his friends and admirers, but even by several of his most violent opponents. No one can suspect Pitt of paying a tribute of applause to his memory from mean and adulatory motives; yet even he observed, in the house of commons, that Sir Robert Walpole was a very able minister. Perceiving several members laugh, he added, "The more I reflect on my conduct, the more I blame myself for opposing the excise bill," and concluded by saying, with his usual energy; "Let those who are ashamed to confess their errors laugh out. Can it be deemed adulation to praise a minister who is no more?" The whole house seemed abashed, and became silent*.

It is unnecessary to urge any other proof of his abilities for finance, than that confidence which, throughout his whole administration, monied men and the nation placed in the government; and that nothing created greater alarm among them, than the apprehensions that he would either rapidly pay off the national debt, or reduce the interest. This fact is an answer to those speculative reasoners, who not adverting to the temper of the times, and judging of past transactions by present circumstances, indiscriminately censure the minister for not discharging the whole public burthens, for alienating the sinking fund, and for opposing Sir John Barnard's plan to reduce the interest of the national debt.

His financial operations have been already so amply discussed in the course

* Communicated by Dr. Symonds, professor of modern languages in the university of Cambridge, who was in the gallery of the house of commons at the time.

of these memoirs *, that it is needless to enlarge on particular topics. The improvement, however, in the mode of borrowing by means of exchequer bills, which I have omitted to mention, deserves particular notice. The custom was to borrow a large sum, the interest of which continued to accrue till the whole sum advanced on bills was paid off, though in the interval considerable portions of the money had been paid into the exchequer. Walpole made a reform in 1723, by which the bills were regularly taken up as the money came in, and by this means saved an enormous charge of interest to government †.

Parfimony of the public money was one of his chief characteristics. In corroboration of this fact, many instances occur in the course of this work, and display him resisting expenditure, even in opposition to the wishes of the king. To this part of his conduct, the duke of Newcastle bore testimony, at the time when he was censuring his measures in other respects with the greatest asperity. "As this is a demand of money," he says, in a letter to lord Hardwicke, "we shall find Sir Robert more difficult to comply than upon former occasions ‡."

Public economy.

The improvement of the British trade under his auspices, is generally acknowledged. Dean Tucker calls him, "the best commercial minister this country ever produced §;" and it was justly said of him, that he found the book of rates the worst, and left it the best in Europe.

Commercial improvements.

The eloquence of Sir Robert Walpole was plain, perspicuous, forcible, and manly, not courting, yet not always avoiding metaphorical, ornamental, and classical allusions; though addressed to the reason more than to the feelings, yet on some occasions it was highly animated and impassioned. No debater was ever more happy in quickness of apprehension, sharpness of reply, and in turning the arguments of his assailants against themselves.

Eloquence.

The tone of his voice was pleasing and melodious; his pronunciation distinct and audible, though he never entirely lost the provincial accent. His style, though by no means elegant, often deficient in taste, and sometimes bordering on vulgarity, was highly nervous and animated, persuasive and plausible.

The force of his speeches resulted rather from the general weight, energy,

* See the chapters on excise, sinking fund, and reduction of interest.

† A short history of exchequer bills, which I found among the Orford papers, corrected

by Sir Robert Walpole, will best elucidate this transaction. Correspondence.

‡ August 19, 1741. Hardwicke papers.

§ Tucker against Locke, p. 222.

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and arrangement of the whole, than from the splendour of particular parts. He possessed what Horace calls *lucidus ordo*, a luminous arrangement of the most complicated subjects; and a power of communicating his information to others who were ignorant of the topics on which he treated. Even calculation in his mouth was rendered not uninteresting.

Persons distinguished for judgment and abilities, have concurred in paying the tribute of applause to his oratorical talents. Speaker Onslow commends his speech on the peerage bill, as a remarkable effort of natural eloquence and genius *. Lord Cornbury and the duke of Argyle praised, in similar terms, his speech when he relinquished the excise scheme; and Pitt extolled the Philippic against Sir William Wyndham on the secession, as one of the finest speeches he had ever heard †.

A proof of his ready eloquence, recorded by bishop Pearce, is given in this volume ‡, to which I am enabled to add another. During an important debate in the house of commons, he observed that a member of opposition who sat near him, had a written speech concealed in his hat, and obtained a general knowledge of the contents from occasional glimpses. At the moment when the member was about to speak, he rose, and began by observing, were I a member in opposition, I would make use of these arguments. He then recapitulated the speech which he had just cast his eyes over, and adding, I will now reply to these observations, he refuted the arguments in an able and masterly manner §. ¶

It was his custom to note down the heads of the leading expressions in the speeches of opposition, either for his own use, if he himself spoke, or for the use of Sir William Yonge, if absent at the beginning of the debate, who often, through the medium of these memorandums ||, answered those arguments which he had not heard. As to himself, he generally spoke extempore, and without notes, except on points where figures and calculations were necessary. In some instances of great magnitude and delicacy, he put down previously, general heads of the arguments which he intended to adopt. Some of these minutes are preserved among the Orford and Walpole Papers, and I have availed myself of them in the course of this work.

Nor was his eloquence confined to the debates in parliament. As chan-

* Speaker Onslow's Remarks, Correspondence, Period IV.

† From the late earl of Hardwicke.

‡ Chapter 7.

§ From lord Orford.

|| Among the Orford and Walpole Papers,

some of these parliamentary memorandums are preserved. They serve to establish one truth, which has been much questioned and controverted; that the debates which were given in the papers and periodical publications, were, upon the whole, not unfaithful. See Preface.

cellor of the exchequer, he was called on to decide in a cause of great difficulty and importance, between Nash and the East India company. The barons being divided, it was his province, as chancellor, to make the decision; and after a long trial, in which six of the most able lawyers pleaded on each side for nineteen hours, he summed up the whole, and in a speech of an hour and a half, gave his opinion and sentence with as great skill, strength, eloquence, and clearness, "as if he had been bred to the law, and had practised no other business all his life*."

He gave to the public several political pamphlets, which, at the time, were much read. His style in these writings was popular, perspicuous, and familiar; not affecting ambitious ornament, or subtilty of argument. He must have written with great ease and correctness, since "The Consideration concerning the Public Funds," one of the most difficult and complicated of his works, was printed from the rough draught in his own hand writing†. I find many instances of his having revised, corrected, and made additions to numerous political pamphlets, particularly to those written by lord Hervey; a proof that he paid more attention to that mode of controversy than is usually imagined‡.

Publications.

He had a ready and tenacious memory. He was remarkable for method and

* Lord Hervey to Horace Walpole, November 18-29, 1735. Correspondence.

† Orford Papers.

‡ It is extremely difficult to give an exact catalogue of his political writings. The list published by his son in the Royal and Noble Authors is both defective and inaccurate, as the late earl candidly acknowledged. I shall here give as accurate a list as it has been in my power to obtain, marking those with a † which I have not been able to procure.

† The Sovereign's Answer to a Gloucestershire Address.

A Letter to a Friend concerning the Public Debts, particularly that of the Navy, 1710.

A State of the Thirty-five Millions mentioned in a Report of the House of Commons, 1710.

The two last articles are comprised in a publication, called The Debts of the Nation Stated and Considered, in four Letters, which is printed in Southern's Tracts. The two other letters, namely, An Estimate of the Debts of her Majesty's Navy, and A Brief Account of the Debts provided for by the South Sea Act,

1712, have likewise been ascribed to Sir Robert Walpole, but as it appears to me, without sufficient foundation.

Four letters to a Friend in North Britain, upon the publishing the Trial of Dr. Sacheverel, 1710.

† A Pamphlet on the Vote of the House of Commons, with relation to the Allies not furnishing their Quota.

A short History of the Parliament, 1713. A new edition of this pamphlet, from party motives, was given by Almon in 1763, under the title of "A Short History of that Parliament which committed Sir Robert Walpole to the Tower, expelled him the House of Commons, and approved of the infamous Peace of Utrecht. It was preceded by an advertisement, which speaks of Sir Robert Walpole as a minister who had faithfully served the crown five and twenty years.

Thoughts of a Member of the Lower House, in relation to a Project for restraining and limiting the Power of the Crown in the further Creation of Peers, 1719.

† The South Sea Scheme considered, 1720. Some

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Dispatch of
business.

and dispatch in transacting business. Chesterfield, who did not love him, pays an eulogium to this quality: "The hurry and confusion of the duke of Newcastle, do not proceed from his business, but from his want of method in it. Sir Robert Walpole, who had ten times the business to do, was never seen in a hurry, because he always did it with method *." And lord Hervey characterises him by observing, that "he did every thing with the same ease and tranquillity as if he was doing nothing †."

In 1723, he united the office of secretary of state to his other employments, and in addition to the internal government of the kingdom, the whole correspondence on foreign affairs devolved on him. During the illness of Sir William Strickland, which rendered him incapable of occupation, Walpole transacted all the business of secretary at war, although it was the middle of a session of parliament.

It is most remarkable, that notwithstanding his extensive correspondence, he seems seldom to have employed a secretary. I have never found one letter which was not wholly written in his own hand; and I am fully convinced, that all the copies in the Hardwicke Collection, were taken from originals in his own writing.

It is also no less remarkable, that he was in the habit of transcribing whole letters, that he constantly noted the substance of the foreign correspondence, and made numerous extracts from the dispatches of foreign ministers, which would lead a person not acquainted with his multifarious occupations, to conjecture that he studied nothing but foreign affairs, while he was petulantly reproached by those who witnessed the invariable attention which he paid to the internal government of the country, for his ignorance of foreign transactions. The Orford and Walpole Papers abound with numerous extracts and memorandums, which prove his indefatigable exertions.

When the validity of the patent of collector of the customs, which he had secured for the benefit of his family, was disputed, all the briefs for

* Some Considerations concerning the Public Revenues, and the Annual Supplies granted by Parliament, occasioned by a late Pamphlet, intitled, An Enquiry into the Conduct of our Domestic Affairs, from the Year 1721 to Christmas 1733. 1735.

The late earl of Orford enumerates among his father's works, a letter from a foreign minister in England, to M. Pettekum, 1710. I have reason to think this pamphlet was not

written by Sir Robert Walpole, as it is a vindication of the Tories. Probably he might have written an answer. On mentioning this circumstance to the earl of Orford, he candidly acknowledged that he might have been mistaken. See Royal and Noble Authors, Article, Earl of Orford.

* Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son, Letter 309.

† October 31, 1735. Correspondence,

his counsel were drawn up by himself*. Murray, who was employed as counsel, in behalf of Madame la Neve, whose cause Orford warmly supported in the house of lords, said of him, that he never met with any man with a clearer head and more perspicuous method of arranging his ideas †.

The great principle on which Walpole conducted himself, seems to have been his favourite motto, *quieta non movere*, not to disturb things at rest. He rightly judged, from the temper of man, ever inclined to speculation, that too frequent innovations would beget a proneness to change, and expose the country to great and certain dangers. An instance of his adherence to this principle, is recorded by one of his contemporaries. Soon after the excise scheme, Sir William Keith, who had been deputy governor of Virginia, came over with a plan of an American tax. Sir Robert Walpole being asked by lord Chesterfield what he thought of Sir William's project, replied, "I have old England set against me, and do you think I will have new England likewise ‡." But although he followed in general this true and wise principle, yet he by no means seems to have deserved the censure passed upon him in common with the other ministers: "That if any political system" "was invariably adhered to during the reign of George the Second, the pur-
"port of it appears to have been to leave things as they were, or to check
"any attempt which might be made to innovation, or even to inquiry §." His whole system was a system of gradual improvement: it is only necessary to cast a superficial glance over the regulations in commerce, finance, and jurisprudence, which took place during his administration, to be convinced of this truth.

Dislike of innovation.

The fate of Sir Robert Walpole's character as a minister has been extremely singular. While he was in power, he was reviled with unceasing obloquy, and his whole conduct arraigned as a mass of corruption and political depravity. But he himself lived to see the propriety of his preventive measures acknowledged by the public. As time softened the asperities of personal animosity, and as the spirit of party subsided, there was scarcely one of his opponents who did not publicly or privately retract their unqualified censures, and pay a due tribute to the wisdom of the general principles which guided his administration. Impartial posterity has done still greater justice to the memory of a statesman, who, whatever might have been his public or private defects, maintained his country in tranquillity for a longer period, than had been experienced since the reign of James the First.

* Enough.

† From the earl of Orford.

‡ From the late earl of Hardwicke, com-

municated by lord Chesterfield. Hardwicke Papers.

§ Sinclair, vol. 2. p. 24.

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1742, to 1745.

Character by
Burke.

I shall close this sketch of Walpole's public character in the words of a celebrated writer, who alone seems to have fairly appreciated his merits and scanned his defects.

“ He was an honourable man, and a sound Whig. He was not, as the Jacobites and discontented Whigs of his own time have represented him, and as ill informed people still represent him, a prodigal and corrupt minister. They charged him, in their libels and seditious conversations, as having first reduced corruption to a system. Such was their cant. But he was far from governing by corruption. He governed by party attachments. The charge of systematic corruption is less applicable to him, perhaps, than to any minister who ever served the crown for so great a length of time. He gained over very few from the opposition. Without being a genius of the first class, he was an intelligent, prudent, and safe minister. He loved peace; and he helped to communicate the same disposition to nations at least as warlike and restless as that in which he had the chief direction of affairs. Though he served a master who was fond of martial fame, he kept all the establishments very low. The land tax continued at two shillings in the pound for the greater part of his administration. The other impositions were moderate. The profound repose, the equal liberty, the firm protection of just laws, during the long period of his power, were the principal causes of that prosperity which took such rapid strides towards perfection; and which furnished to this nation, ability to acquire the military glory which it has since obtained, as well as to bear the burthens, the cause and consequence of that warlike reputation. With many virtues, public and private, he had his faults; but his faults were superficial. A careless, coarse, and over familiar style of discourse, without sufficient regard to persons or occasions, and an almost total want of political decorum, were the errors by which he was most hurt in the public opinion, and those through which his enemies obtained the greatest advantage over him. But justice must be done. The prudence, steadiness, and vigilance of that man, joined to the greatest possible lenity in his character and his politics, preserved the crown to this royal family; and with it, their laws and liberties to this country *.”

Burke's Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, p. 63.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-FOURTH.

*Private Character of Sir Robert Walpole.—Person.—Disposition.—Manners.—
Social Qualities,—Neglect of Men of Letters.—Conduct in Parliament.*

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE was tall and well proportioned, and in his youth and opening manhood so comely, that at the time of his marriage he and his wife were called the *handsome couple*, and among the knights who walked in procession at the installation of the garter, in 1725, he was, next to the duke of Grafton and lord Townshend, most distinguished for his appearance. As he advanced in years he became extremely corpulent and unwieldy. His countenance does not seem to have been remarkable for strong traits. The features were regular; when he spoke, and particularly when he smiled, his physiognomy was pleasing, benign, and enlightened: his eye was full of spirit and fire, and his brow prominent and manly. Person.

His style of dress was usually plain and simple; a circumstance which was not overlooked by the Craftsmen, who thus hold him up to ridicule: "There entered a man dressed in a *plain habit*, with a purse of gold in his hand. He threw himself forward into the room in a bluff ruffianly manner, a smile, or rather a sneer upon his countenance *." His address was so frank and open, his conversation so pleasing, and his manner so fascinating, that those who lived with him in habits of intimacy adored him, those who saw him occasionally loved him, and even his most bitter opponents could not hate him. One of these did not hesitate to say of him, "Never was a man in private life more beloved: And his enemies allow no man did ever in private life deserve it more. He was humane and grateful, and a generous friend to all who he did not think would abuse that friendship. This character naturally procured that attachment to his person, which has been falsely attributed solely to a corrupt influence and to private interest; but this shewed itself at a time when these principles were very faint in their operation, and when his ruin seemed inevitable †." Dress.
Address.

* No. 16.

† Faction Detected, p. 62.

Period VII. Good temper and equanimity were his leading characteristics, and the placability imprinted on his countenance was not belied by his conduct. **1740 to 1745.** Of this disposition, his generous rival, Pulteney, thought so highly, that in a conversation with Johnson, he said, "Sir Robert was of a temper so calm and equal, and so hard to be provoked, that he was very sure he never felt the bitterest invectives against him for half an hour *."

Temper.

Affability. His deportment was manly and decisive, yet affable and condescending; he was easy of access; his manner of bestowing a favour heightened the obligation; and his manner of declining was so gracious that few persons went out of his company discontented.

Gaiety.

Among those parts of his convivial character which have attracted attention, his laugh is noticed for singular gaiety and heartiness. His son familiarly observed to me, "It would have done you good to hear him laugh." Sir Charles Hanbury Williams says of him that he "*laugh'd the heart's laugh.*" Nicholas Hardinge elegantly noticed its peculiarity, "*proprioque vincit seria risu.*"

Conversation.

His conversation was sprightly, animated, and facetious, yet occasionally coarse and vulgar, and too often licentious to an unpardonable degree.

Manners.

In company with women he assumed an air of gallantry, which even in his younger days was ill-suited to his manner and character, but in his latter years was totally incompatible with his age and figure. He affected in his conversation with the sex a trifling levity; but his gaiety was rough and boisterous, his wit too often coarse and licentious.

If we may believe lord Chesterfield, who knew him well, but whose pen was dipped in gall when he drew his character, "His prevailing weakness was to be thought to have a polite and happy turn to gallantry, of which he had undoubtedly less than any man living; it was his favourite and frequent subject of conversation; which proved, to those who had any penetration, that it was his prevailing weakness, and they applied to it with success †." Pulteney also said of him, "A writer who would tell him of his success in his amours, would gain his confidence in a higher degree than one who commended the conduct of his administration ‡." To this foible:

* Hawkins's Life of Johnson, p. 314.

† Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son, l. 97.

‡ A proper Reply to a late Scurrilous Libel, p. 8.

also a poetaster, after speaking of him under the name of Sir Robert Brass, alludes,— Chapter 64.

“ Nay, to divert the sneering town,
 “ Is next a general lover grown,
 “ Affects to talk of his amours,
 “ And boasts of having ruin’d scores,
 “ While all who hear him bite the lip,
 “ And scarce with pain their laughter keep

This foible he shared in common with many able men, and particularly with cardinal Richelieu, who piqued himself more on being a man of gallantry than on being a great minister. It is some consolation for persons of inferior abilities, that men of superior talents are not exempt from the infirmities of human nature, and it is no uncommon circumstance, to prefer flattery on those points in which we wish to excel, to just praise for those in which we are known to excel.

He is justly blamed for a want of political decorum, and for deriding public spirit, to which Pope alludes,— Unreservedness.

“ Would he oblige me ! let me only find,
 “ He does not think me, what he thinks mankind.”

Although it is not possible to justify him, yet this part of his conduct has been greatly exaggerated. The political axiom generally attributed to him, that *all men have their price*, and which has been so often repeated in verse and prose, was perverted by leaving out the word *those*. Flowery oratory he despised; he ascribed to the interested views of themselves or their relatives, the declarations of pretended patriots, of whom he said, “ *All those men have their price*,” and in the event, many of them justified his observation†. No man was more ready to honour and do justice to sincerity and consistency. He always mentioned his friend the duke of Devonshire in terms of the highest affection and respect, and even applauded the uniform conduct of one of his constant opponents. “ I will not say,” he observed, “ who is corrupt, but I will say who is not, and that is Shippen.”

His own conduct sufficiently belied the axiom erroneously imputed to him. Consistency.

* Sir Robert Brass. A Poem.

† From lord Oxford and the late lord John Cavendish.

him.

Period VIII. him. He was consistent and uniform, never deviating in one single in-
 1742 to 1745. stance from his attachment to the protestant succession. He was neither
 awed by menaces or swayed by corruption; he held one line of conduct with
 unabating perseverance, and terminated his political career with the same sen-
 timents of loyalty which distinguished his outset.

Profusion.

He was naturally liberal, and even prodigal. His buildings at Houghton were more magnificent than suited his circumstances, and drew on him great obloquy. He felt the impropriety of this expenditure, and on seeing his brother's house at Wolterton, expressed his wishes that he had contented himself with a similar structure*. The following anecdote also shews that he regretted his profusion: Sitting by Sir John Hynde Cotton, during the reign of queen Anne, and in allusion to a sumptuous house which was then building by Harley; he observed, that to construct a great house was a high act of imprudence in any minister. Afterwards, when he had pulled down the family mansion at Houghton, and raised a magnificent edifice, being reminded of that observation by Sir John Hynde Cotton, he readily acknowledged its justness and truth, but added, "Your recollection is too late, I wish you had reminded me of it before I began building, it might then have been of service to me †."

Hospitality.

His style of living was consonant to the magnificence of his mansion. He had usually two annual meetings at Houghton, the one in the spring, to which were invited only the most select friends and the leading members of the cabinet, continued about three weeks. The second was in autumn, towards the commencement of the shooting season. It continued six weeks or two months, and was called the congress. At this time Houghton was filled with company from all parts. He kept a public table, to which all gentlemen in the county found a ready admission.

The expences of these meetings have been computed at £. 3,000. Nothing could be more ill-judged than the enormous profusion, except the company for which it was made. The mixed multitude consisted of his friends in both houses, and of their friends. The noise and uproar, the waste and confusion were prodigious. The best friends of Sir Robert Walpole in vain remonstrated against this scene of riot and misrule. As the minister himself was fond of mirth and jollity, the conviviality of their meetings was too frequently carried to excess, and lord Townshend, whose dignity of deportment and decorum of character revolted against these

* From lord Walpole.

† From the late Sir John Hynde Cotton.

scenes, which he called the Bacchanalian orgies of Houghton, not unfrequently quitted Rainham during their continuance. But notwithstanding these censures, and the impropriety of such conduct, it undoubtedly gained and preserved to the minister numerous adherents, who applauded a mode of living so analogous to the spirit of ancient hospitality.

This profusion would have been highly disgraceful had it been attended with a rapacious disposition. On the contrary, he gave many instances of carelessness and disregard of his private fortune. He expended £. 14,000 in building a new lodge in Richmond park *, and when the king, on the death of Bothmar, in 1738, offered him the house in Downing-street, he refused it as his own property, but accepted it as an appendage to the office of chancellor of the exchequer †.

Disinterestedness.

He was, from his early youth, fond of the diversions of the field, and retained this taste till prevented by the infirmities of age. He was accustomed to hunt in Richmond park with a pack of beagles. On receiving a packet of letters he usually opened that from his game-keeper first; and he was fond of sitting for his picture in his sporting dress. He was, like chancellor Oxeusticn, a sound sleeper, and used to say, "that he put off his cares with his cloaths."

Love of field sports.

His social qualities were generally acknowledged. He was animated and lively in conversation, and in the moment of festivity realised the fine eulogium which Pope has given of him,—

Social qualities.

"Seen him, I have, but in his happier hour
 "Of social pleasure, ill-exchang'd for power,
 "Seen him, uncumber'd with the venal tribe,
 "Smile without art, and win without a bribe."

Epilogue to the Satires.

To the virtues of Sir Robert Walpole I feel regret in not being able to add that he was the patron of letters and the friend of science. But he unquestionably does not deserve that honourable appellation, and in this instance his rank in the Temple of Fame is far inferior to that of Halifax, Orford, and Bolingbroke. It is a matter of wonder that a minister who had received a learned education, and was no indifferent scholar, should have paid such little attention to the muses. Nor can it be denied, that this

Neglect of men of letters.

* From lord Orford.

† From lord Walpole.

neglect

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neglect of men of letters, was highly disadvantageous to his administration, and exposed him to great obloquy. The persons employed in justifying his measures, and repelling the attacks of the opposition, were by no means equal to the task of combating Pulteney, Bolingbroke and Chesterfield, those Goliaths of opposition; and the political pamphlets written in his defence, are far inferior in humour, argument, and style, to the publications of his adversaries.

Pope has ably satirized the herd of political writers employed by the minister, first in the epilogue to the Satires, and in the Dunciad,—

“ Next plung’d a feeble, ~~but~~ a desperate pack,
 “ With each a sickly brother at his back :
 “ Sons of a day ! just buoyant on the flood,
 “ These number’d with the puppies in the mud,
 “ Ask ye their names ? I could as soon disclose,
 “ The names of these blind puppies as of those.
 “ Fast by, like Niobe, (her children gone)
 “ Sits mother Osborne, stupify’d to stone !
 “ And monumental brass this record bears,
 “ These are,— ah, no, these were the gazetteers !”

But that he did not wholly neglect literary merit, appears from the grateful strains of the author of the Night Thoughts, for whom he procured a pension from George the First, and which was increased at his suggestion by George the Second, to £. 200 a year, at that time no inconsiderable reward.

At this the muse shall kindle, and aspire :
 My breast, O Walpole, glows with grateful fire,
 The streams of royal bounty, turn’d by thee;
 Refresh the dry remains of poetry.
 My fortune shews, when arts are Walpole’s care,
 What slender worth forbids us to despair :
 Be this thy partial smile from censure free ;
 ’Twas meant for merit, though it fell on me *.

The truth is, Sir Robert Walpole did not delight in letters, and always considered poets as not men of business. He was often heard to say, that

Young’s Infalment, addressed to Sir Robert Walpole.

they

they were fitter for speculation than for action, that they trusted to theory, rather than to experience, and were guided by principles inadmissible in practical life. His opinion was confirmed by the experience of his own time. Prior made but an indifferent negotiator; his friend Steele was wholly incapable of application, and Addison a miserable secretary of state. He was so fully impressed with these notions, that when he made Congreve commissioner of the customs, he said, "You will find he has no head for business."

Low persons were employed by government, and profusely paid, some of whom not unfrequently propagated in private conversation, and even in public clubs, disadvantageous reports of the minister, and declared that high rewards induced them to write against their real sentiments. Several known disseminators of infidelity, were engaged to defend his measures. Many warm remonstrances were frequently made by the minister's friends against employing such low mercenaries, but usually disregarded. Some of these insignificant writers had frequent access to him. Their delusive and encouraging accounts of persons and things, were too often more credited, than the sincere and free intimations of those who were more capable of giving accurate information. But this seems an error too common in ministers: they prefer favourable accounts to disingenuous truth, and readily believe what they wish to be true.

It is a natural curiosity to inquire into the behaviour and occupations of a minister retired from business, and divested of that power which he had long enjoyed. Those who admired his talents, while he swayed senates and governed kingdoms, contemplate him, "in their mind's eye," enjoying his retreat with dignity, and passing his leisure hours with calmness and complacency. Yet nothing in general is more unsatisfactory than such an inquiry, or more illusive than such a preconceived opinion. The well-known saying, that "no man is a hero to his valet de chambre," may be applied with strict justice to this case. Sir Robert Walpole experienced the truth of the observation, that a fallen minister is like a professed beauty, who has lost her charms, and to whom the recollection of past conquests, but poorly compensates for present neglect.

Conduct in retirement.

Though he had not forgotten his classical attainments, he had little taste for literary occupations. He once expressed his regret on this subject to Fox, who was reading in the library at Houghton. "I wish," he said, "I took as much delight in reading as you do, it would be the means of alleviating many tedious hours in my present retirement; but to my misfortune I derive

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no pleasure from such pursuits."—On another occasion, he said to his son Horace, who, with a view to amuse him, was preparing to read some historical performance, "O! do not read history, for that I know must be false*."

His principal amusement consisted in planting, observing the growth of his former plantations, and in seeing his son Horace arrange the fine collection of pictures at Houghton. He had a good taste for painting, and his observations on the style of the respective masters were usually judicious.

A letter which he wrote from Houghton to general Churchill, in 1743, was much admired, as indicating a love of retirement, and contempt of past grandeur. Yet this letter strikes me in a contrary light; it proves that he was weary of that repose which he affected to praise; and that he did not, as much as he professed, taste the charms of the inanimate world. The trite observation, that the beeches do not deceive, proves either that he regretted the times that were past, or that with all his penetration, he had not, when in power, made a just estimate of the deceitfulness and treachery of dependents and courtiers†. Houghton had been either the temporary place of retirement from public business, or the scene of friendly intercourse and convivial jollity, and neglect rendered it comparatively a solitude. He saw and felt this desertion with greater sensibility than became his good sense; but in the

* From lord Orford.

† Earl of Orford to general Churchill,—
Houghton, June 24th 1743.

Dear Charles,

• • • • •
This place affords no news, no subject of entertainment, or amusement, for fine men of wit and pleasure about town, understand not the language, and taste not the pleasure of the inanimate world. My flatterers here are all mutes. The oaks, the beeches, the chestnuts, seem to contend which best shall please the lord of the manor. They cannot deceive, they will not lie. I in sincerity admire them, and have as many beauties about me as fill up all my hours of dawning, and no disgrace attends me from 67 years of age. Within doors we come a little nearer to real life, and admire, upon the almost speaking canvases, all the airs and graces which the proudest ladies can boast. With these I am satisfied, as they gratify me with all I wish, and all I want, and expect nothing in return, which I cannot give.

If these, dear Charles, are any temptations, I heartily invite you to come and partake of them. Shifting the scene has sometimes its recommendation, and from country fare, you may possibly return with a better appetite to the more delicate entertainments of a court life.

Since I wrote the above, we have been surprised with the good news* from abroad. Too much cannot be said of it. It is truly matter of infinite joy, because of infinite consequence.

I am, dear Charles,

Your's most affectionately, Orford.

This letter is here printed from a copy kindly communicated by lord Calthorpe, who found it among his family papers. His lordship's grandfather, Sir Henry Gough, baronet, was neighbour to Sir Robert Walpole, at Chelsea, and was in habits of intimacy with him. It is printed in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1743, with many errors, which are rectified in this copy. An elegant imitation of this letter in Latin verse is given in the correspondence.

‡ The battle of Dettingen.

calm

calm and solitude of total retirement, such disagreeable reflections occur often and sink deep. The season of natural gaiety was irrecoverably past he laboured under a painful distemper; the ill-assorted marriage of his eldest son, and embarrassed situation of his own affairs preyed on his mind, and increased his dejection.

This state of mind was natural. Every circumstance must have appeared uninteresting to a man, who from the twenty-third year of his age, had been uniformly engaged in scenes of political exertion, who, from the commencement of his parliamentary career, had passed a life of unremitting activity, and made a conspicuous figure in the senate, and in the cabinet.

To him who had directed the helm of government in England, and whose decisions affected the interests of Europe in general, all speculative opinions must have appeared dull. To him who had drawn all his knowledge and experience from practice, all theory must have appeared trifling or erroneous. He who had fathomed the secrets of all the cabinets of Europe, must have considered history as a tissue of fables, and have smiled at the folly of those writers, who affected to penetrate into state affairs, and account for all the motives of action. He who had long been the dispenser of honours and wealth, must have perceived a wide difference between the cold expressions of duty and friendship, and the warm effusions of that homage which self-interest and hope inspire in those who court or expect favours. He must have been divested of human passions, had he not experienced some mortification in finding, that he had been indebted to his situation for much of that obsequious regard which he had fondly thought was paid to his personal qualities.

I shall conclude this sketch of his private character, with a portrait, drawn from the life, by his friend Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, in an epistle to Henry Fox.

But ORFORD's self, I've seen, whilst I have read,
 Laugh the heart's laugh, and nod the approving head.
 Pardon, great shade, if dutious on thy hearse,
 I hang my grateful tributary verse.
 If I who follow'd thro' thy various day,
 Thy glorious zenith, and thy bright decay;
 Now strew thy tomb with flowers, and o'er thy urn,
 With England, Liberty, and Envy, mourn.
 His soul was great, and dar'd not but do well;
 His noble pride still urg'd him to excel,

Above

Period VIII.

1742 to 1745.

Above the thirst of gold—if in his heart
 Ambition govern'd, av'rice had no part.
 A genius to explore untrodden ways,
 Where prudence sees no track, nor ever strays ;
 Which books and schools in vain attempt to teach,
 And which laborious art can never reach.
 Falshood and flattery, and the tricks of court,
 He left to statesmen of a meaner sort :
 Their cloaks and smiles were offer'd him in vain :
 His acts were justice, which he dar'd maintain,
 His words were truth, that held them in disdain.
 Open to friends, but e'en to foes sincere,
 Alike remote from jealousy and fear ;
 Tho' Envy's howl, tho' Faction's hiss he heard,
 Tho' senates frown'd ; tho' death itself appeared ;
 Calmly he view'd them ; conscious that his ends
 Were right, and truth and innocence his friends.
 Thus was he form'd to govern, and to please ;
 Familiar greatness, dignity with ease,
 Compos'd his frame, admir'd in every state,
 In private amiable, in public great ;
 Gentle in power, but daring in disgrace ;
 His love was liberty, his wish was peace.
 Such was the man that smil'd upon my lays ;
 And what can heighten thought or genius raise,
 Like praise from him whom all mankind must praise ?
 Whose knowledge, courage, temper, all surpris'd,
 Whom many lov'd, few hated, none despis'd.

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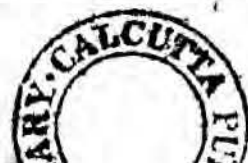
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