

the common rights of mankind. But, it seems, there are yet Priests remaining, in this part of the world as well as others, who would gladly support any system of civil tyranny, provided they may be permitted to have their share of that ecclesiastical dominion, which is so grateful to the imagination of aspiring Churchmen.

AMONG other curious particulars in your extraordinary sermon, you have been pleased, Sir, to speak of the Nonconformists, in terms of which a divine of any candour or moderation would have been ashamed. The establishment of the Church of England, and the rise of the Dissenters, is thus described by your figurative pen.

‘ The VINE WHICH THE LORD HAD  
 ‘ PLANTED, had no sooner taken root in  
 ‘ the land, but an EVIL WEED sprung up  
 ‘ under its shade, and interwove itself in  
 ‘ its branches; checking the growth, and  
 ‘ BLAST-

‘ **BLASTING THE FRUIT** of the tree which  
 ‘ supported it.’ And in another place, you  
 thus characterize the Dissenters: ‘ From  
 ‘ the **AFFECTED GRAVITY** of their deport-  
 ‘ ment, the **GLOOMY CAST** of their coun-  
 ‘ tenance, and their pretences to a more  
 ‘ pure form of divine worship than that  
 ‘ established in the church, they acquired  
 ‘ the name of **PURITANS**; a **TURBULENT**  
 ‘ **SECT**, whose very principles were full of  
 ‘ **RANCOUR** and **VIOLENCE.**’ But p. 22,  
 your ardent affection for the memory of the  
**ROYAL MARTYR** carries you still farther.  
 You observe, that “this day of public fast-  
 “ing and humiliation,” the 30th of Ja-  
 nuary, ‘ will fill us with a just abhorrence  
 ‘ of the principles and practices of those  
 ‘ **BLOODY-MINDED MEN**, who, under the  
 ‘ **SANCTIFIED PRETENCE** of promoting the  
 ‘ honour of God, committed **EVERY CRU-**  
 ‘ **ELTY** which their own **SULLEN RELI-**  
 ‘ **GIOUS**

‘ **GIIOUS MALICE, OR THE INSTIGATION OF  
THE DEVIL, could inspire.**’

IT is not necessary to enter here into any particular vindication of the conduct of the Puritans. Nothing is more certain, than that great numbers of them were men of distinguished piety, and of the most exemplary manners. And whatever their imperfections might be, the cruel oppression which they underwent, from the crown and from the bishops, will fully justify their joining with those members of the established church, who were solicitous to preserve the rights of Englishmen, in opposing the arbitrary government of Charles the First. The Nonconformists were treated with great cruelty by the influence and authority of the prelates of the church of England; who were not content with persecuting them at home in the most rigorous manner, but, in 1637, obtained  
a pro-

a proclamation from your BEST OF PRINCES, to deprive them even of the miserable refuge of flying to other countries, where they might enjoy the liberty of worshipping God in that manner which their consciences approved.

WITH respect to what you have advanced relative to the Scottish Presbyterian Clergy, I must observe, that I think it not worth while to enter into any inquiry into their conduct, or to attempt any vindication of it. I know of no order of clergy, by whom any considerable degree of power has been possessed, who have not grossly abused it. I have the strongest aversion to ecclesiastical, as well as to civil tyranny, whatever form it may assume. And if men must be oppressed by Priests, it is of little consequence whether they are styled Presbyters or Bishops. I think, however, that if we were to attempt a parallel between the

Pope

Pope and some Bishops of the Church of England, in the same manner as you have done between his Holiness and the Scottish Presbyterian clergy, the English prelates would not appear in a much more advantageous point of view, than their reverend Scottish brethren; if, without offence to you, I may venture so to term them. It is at least certain, that the powers assumed by the English Bishops, after the Reformation, were very far from being consistent with Protestant principles; and that their conduct towards those who dissented from them, was in a very high degree cruel, oppressive, and unjust.

You talk much, Sir, of the importance of religion to civil society; and I am as much convinced as you can be, that a firm belief of the great truths of religion, has the strongest tendency to render the conduct of men more virtuous and amiable in  
all

all the various relations of human life. But I am exceedingly mistaken, if such sermons as that with which you lately favoured the house of commons, will in any degree promote the cause of piety and virtue. The regard, which I feel for the interests of religion, makes me the more concerned when I see it disgraced by those who pretend to be its ministers; which must be the case, when they are employed, like you, in propagating sentiments equally false and absurd, and in the highest degree injurious to the rights of the community. Religion, naturally venerable, becomes the scoff of the ignorant and superficial, who are not an inconsiderable number, when they see its established teachers supporting the most pernicious opinions, if they are likely to contribute to their advancement, or to recommend them to those who have the power of appointment to ecclesiastical and to civil dignities. Real Religion is undoubt-

doubtedly calculated to promote the happiness of society, and of every individual whose conduct is regulated by its precepts. But, gracious Heaven! what accumulated injury and dishonour has religion sustained, by the practices of temporizing and ambitious priests!

IF you, Sir, could have the confidence to entertain the members of the house of commons, who, you might reasonably suppose, were not utterly ignorant of the History of their own Country, with such a false representation of one of the clearest periods in the English annals; what ideas must you be supposed to communicate to the young gentlemen of the university of Oxford, should it ever happen, that, in consideration of your salary as King's Professor of Modern History, you should attempt to give them any instructions upon this subject! How much is it to be regretted, that any who are to be trained up  
to

to the liberal professions, should, at a time of life when wrong impressions are easily admitted, be under the direction of a man of your servile and ignoble principles!

At the close of your sermon, you take occasion to pay a compliment to his present majesty of a very extraordinary kind. You observe, that “the BRIGHT RESEMBLANCE of those PRINCELY VIRTUES, which adorned the ROYAL MARTYR, now shines forth in the person of our gracious Sovereign.” How unhappy must it be for the people of this country, if there be any just foundation for your comparison! That Charles the First, was a tyrant, and an oppressor of his people, is an undoubted fact. Yet to this prince, whose arbitrary conduct gave the justest occasion to his subjects to take up arms against him, you have compared, and seemingly by way of compliment, King GEORGE  
the



the Third! But, in fact, it is hardly possible to suppose any thing more dishonourable of his present majesty, than that he should be an imitator of such an example, or that he should approve such iniquitous principles of government as are contained in your sermon.

IN truth, Sir, you must have formed an admirable opinion of the present court and ministry, as well as of the house of commons, to suppose, that a defence of the most bare-faced tyranny would recommend you to their notice and favour. But however strong your aspirations after a mitre may be, it is possible, that your late inimitable sermon may not procure one. Your character, as an avowed advocate for despotism, may be so strongly marked, that no minister of state may chuse to hazard his credit by so shameful a promotion. You may, perhaps, have carried the matter

too

too far ; so that, notwithstanding the present system of politics, your veneration for the tyrants of the house of Stuart, may possibly not advance your promotion under the government of a prince of the house of Hanover.

BUT should it on the contrary happen, that those who are entrusted with the reins of government, should be so regardless of their reputation with the people, that, from their affection to your political system, they should nominate you to a bishopric ; that circumstance alone would be one of the strongest presumptions, that they are solicitous to enslave the people of this country, and therefore ready to promote those men, whose principles will the best qualify them to be the tools of lawless power. But whether you are to continue in your present station, or ascend to a higher dignity, you have an unquestionable right to

rank yourself with the most famous assertors of the divine right of kings to injure and oppress their subjects; with the **SIBTHORPS** and the **MANWARINGS** of former ages.

WERE the matter in dispute between us an ordinary subject of controversy, or could I bring myself to imagine, that your labouring to propagate at this period such despotic principles of government, could possibly proceed from good motives, I should think an apology necessary for the freedom that I have taken. You are possessed of some degree of learning and abilities, which, when joined with your rank in a learned and antient university, seem naturally entitled to respect; and if that learning, and those abilities, were worthily employed, they would probably obtain it. But when learning or abilities are employed in the cause of despotism, they are intitled  
only

only to the contempt and detestation of mankind. And, in reality, I know no class of men less worthy of regard, than those pretending to be the ministers of religion, who, instead of employing themselves in promoting the practice of piety and virtue, shew themselves ready to sacrifice, not only their own characters, but the most important rights of that country to which they are a disgrace, in order to gratify their own pride, avarice, or ambition.

I am, Sir,

Your, &c!

Feb. 28.

1772.



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AN  
EXAMINATION  
INTO THE  
NATURE AND EVIDENCE  
OF THE  
CHARGES

BROUGHT AGAINST

LORD WILLIAM RUSSEL,

AND

ALGERNON SYDNEY,

BY

SIR JOHN DALRYMPLE, BART.

IN HIS

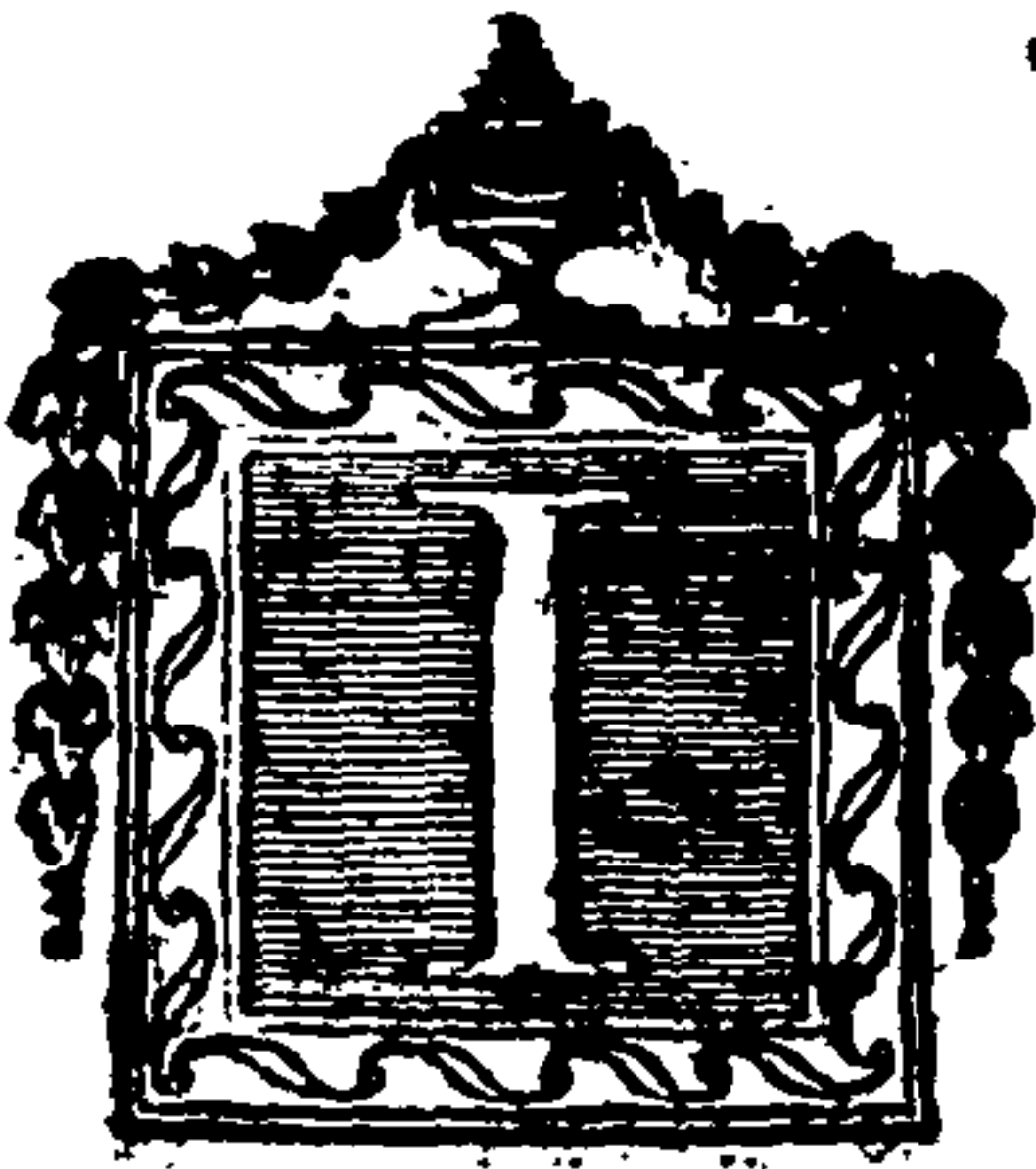
MEMOIRS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

[FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE YEAR 1773.]



A N

EXAMINATION, &c.



I must naturally give extreme pain to every generous mind, to discover that those persons, whose memory we have been accustomed to reverence, as distinguished above the ordinary rank of men, for their public spirit, heroic virtue, or incorruptible integrity, have not in fact been such excellent and exalted characters



as we had conceived them to be; but, on the contrary, that in those actions, which wore the mask of virtue and of patriotism, they were chiefly actuated by sordid and unworthy motives. That affection and esteem, which we entertain for eminent and uncommon virtue, though exhibited in characters not contemporary with ourselves, and of whom we have no knowledge but from the pages of history, occasion us to interest ourselves in whatever relates to them, and to feel painful sensations at any discoveries, whether real or pretended, that have a tendency to lessen our veneration of them.

It is now generally known, that a discovery of this kind has been supposed to be made, relative to Lord WILLIAM RUSSEL, and ALGERNON SYDNEY, in the late publication of papers in the second volume of Sir John Dalrymple's Memoirs.

It

It would, however, be an injustice to the memory of these celebrated men, to form an hasty judgment upon this subject. It should at least be thoroughly and accurately investigated. **RUSSEL** and **SYDNEY** were condemned in their own time, without law, and without justice: let not posterity condemn them, but on the fullest evidence, and after the most impartial examination.

**THE** papers, on which the charges against **Lord RUSSEL** and **Mr. SYDNEY** are grounded, we are informed by Sir John Dalrymple, are to be found in the **DEPOT DES AFFAIRES ETRANGERES** at Versailles, and were written by **Monf. Barillon**, ambassador from the court of France to that of England, in the reign of Charles the Second. And these charges against them are, that **Lord RUSSEL** intrigued with the court of Versailles, and that **ALGERNON SYDNEY** took  
 money

money from it. But, in truth, it is rather an unfavourable circumstance, that such charges against men, hitherto considered as great and illustrious, should be solely founded on papers, which only one man in Great Britain has had an opportunity of seeing or examining; and of the authenticity of which, or the exactness of the transcriptions from them, we have no certain evidence<sup>1</sup>.

WITHOUT, however, making at present any farther remarks on the genuineness

<sup>1</sup> It does not appear, from Sir John Dalrymple's own account of the matter, that the letters, inserted in his second volume, were copied by himself from the originals. He speaks only of having taken NOTES at Versailles. He says in his preface, 'From comparing  
' the NOTES which I took in France, with the CO-  
'PIES OF THE PAPERS sent me from thence, I find,  
' in some instances, a difference in the dates between  
' us, owing, probably, to my oversight; but in all  
' other respects the COPIES agree with the NOTES.'

of these papers, or the degree of credit which may be due to them, I shall examine into the nature of the charges against Lord RUSSEL and Mr. SYDNEY, which are founded on them, on the supposition that they are authentic, and fairly published. And, perhaps, even in this view, the transactions in which they are represented to have been concerned, will, upon a fair examination, appear more defensible than may have been apprehended.

THE charge against Lord RUSSEL, of INTRIGUING WITH THE FRENCH COURT, is chiefly founded on a memorial of Barillon, dated the 14th of March, 1678. And, in order to enable the reader to form a more accurate judgment upon the subject, it will be proper to recite the words of Barillon, as translated and published by Sir John Dalrymple. ‘ Mr. de Rouvigny,’ says he, ‘ has seen lord Russel and lord Hollis,  
‘ who

' who were fully satisfied with the assu-  
 ' rance he gave them, that the King (i. e.  
 ' of France) is convinced it is not his in-  
 ' terest to make the King of England ab-  
 ' solute master in his kingdom; and that  
 ' his majesty (i. e. of France) would con-  
 ' tribute his endeavours to bring about  
 ' the dissolution of this parliament, as soon  
 ' as the time should appear favourable.  
 ' Lord Russel told him, he would engage  
 ' lord Shaftesbury in this affair, and that  
 ' he should be the only man to whom he  
 ' would speak of it explicitly; and that  
 ' they would work underhand to hinder  
 ' an augmentation of the sum, which has  
 ' been offered for carrying on the war;  
 ' and would cause to be added to the offer  
 ' of the million sterling, such disagreeable  
 ' conditions to the king of England, as  
 ' they hoped would rather make him wish  
 ' to re-unite himself with France than to  
 ' con-

‘ consent to them. He gave Mr. de Rou-  
 ‘ vigny to understand, that he suspected  
 ‘ your majesty approved of the king of  
 ‘ England’s declaring war against you, only  
 ‘ to give him an opportunity of obtaining  
 ‘ money, and under a promise that, as  
 ‘ soon as he had got the money, he would  
 ‘ conclude a peace. Mr. de Rouvigny told  
 ‘ him, that to shew him clearly the con-  
 ‘ trary, I was ready to distribute a con-  
 ‘ siderable sum in the parliament, to pre-  
 ‘ vail with it to refuse any money for the  
 ‘ war, and solicited him to name the per-  
 ‘ sons who might be gained. Lord Ruffel  
 ‘ replied, that “ he should be very sorry  
 ‘ to have any commerce with persons ca-  
 ‘ pable of being gained with money :” but  
 ‘ he appeared pleased to see by this proposal,  
 ‘ that there is NO PRIVATE UNDERSTAND-  
 ‘ ING between your majesty and the king  
 ‘ of England, TO HURT THEIR CONSTI-  
 ‘ TUTION:

‘**RUSSION**: He told Mr. de Rouvigny, that  
 ‘ he and all his friends wanted nothing  
 ‘ farther than the dissolution of parliament;  
 ‘ that they knew “ it could only come  
 ‘ from the help of France;” that since he  
 ‘ assured them it was the design of your  
 ‘ majesty to assist in it, they would trust  
 ‘ him, and would do all in their power  
 ‘ to oblige the king of England to ask your  
 ‘ friendship once more, and by this means  
 ‘ put your majesty in a state to contribute  
 ‘ to your satisfaction: This he assured him  
 ‘ would be lord Shaftesbury’s sentiments,  
 ‘ who was one of these days to see Mr.  
 ‘ de Rouvigny at lord Russel’s.’ It is  
 added, that ‘ **LORD RUSSEL** told Mr. de  
 ‘ Rouvigny, that he had taken the reso-  
 ‘ lution to support the affair against the  
 ‘ treasurer (lord Danby), and even attack  
 ‘ the duke of York, and all the Catholics.’<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Dalrymple’s Memoirs, vol. II, p. 132, 133.

ADMITTING the whole of this relation to be true, it does not appear, that lord RUSSEL had any private views to answer by his negotiation with the French minister, or that he promoted any measures which he considered as detrimental to the interests of his country. In his conversation with de Rouvigny<sup>3</sup>, he intimated his suspicions, that the French king intended to assist the king of England in enslaving his subjects; and that the war which was talked of, was only a concerted

<sup>3</sup> From a passage in a Letter quoted in the "Secret History of Europe," (Part I. p. 203.) it appears, that there was a great intimacy between lord RUSSEL and de Rouvigny; and the former might possibly consider much of what he said to the latter, as spoken in the confidence of friendship. Lord RUSSEL might also converse with him the more freely, because De Rouvigny was considered as a firm Protestant. Vid. Burnet's Hist. of his own Times, vol. I. p. 366. edit. folio, 1724.

scheme



scheme between them, in order to afford Charles a pretence of raising troops, which might afterwards be employed against his people. RUSSEL and his colleagues were extremely solicitous to prevent this; and were willing even to promote some of Lewis's views, if by that means they might detach him from any connexions with Charles, which were unfavourable to the national liberties. But it may not be improper here, in order to throw some light upon the subject, to make a few observations on the situation and character of lord RUSSEL, on the state of public affairs at that time, and on the connexions then subsisting between the French court and that of England.

LORD RUSSEL was the eldest surviving son of William Earl of Bedford, and of course heir to the title and estate of that nobleman. He was not more distinguished  
by

by his noble birth, than by his many amiable qualities, and the excellency of his character. He was a dutiful son, an affectionate husband, and a tender parent; generally beloved and esteemed for his benevolence, integrity, and honour; and indeed his personal virtues were acknowledged even by his enemies. His noble birth, and the amiableness of his character, together with his zeal for the cause of public freedom, placed him at the head of the Whig interest in the house of commons; and, in this capacity, he discovered the most extreme sollicitude for the religion and liberties of his country, at a time when they were exposed to attacks of the most dangerous and alarming nature.

AT this period, it is an undoubted fact, that king Charles II. was engaged in schemes and practices equally dishonourable to himself, and destructive to the na-

tion. His designs against the Protestant religion, and the liberties of the people, appeared sufficiently manifest even to those who were no enemies to the royal authority. This is evident from a conversation between him and Sir William Temple; wherein Sir William laboured to convince the king of the impracticability of establishing in England the same religion or government as in France \*. But, indeed, we have sufficient evidence of Charles's iniquitous designs and intrigues, even from Sir John Dabrymple himself, who acknowledges, that from the year 1667 to the year 1677, a period of ten years, " King Charles, the duke of York, and their ministers, formed connexions with France

\* Temple's Memoirs, part II. p. 31. edit. 8vo. 1693. Evidence of Charles's dangerous designs against his subjects, and intrigues with the court of France, may be seen in the " Secret History of Europe," part I. c. 59, 93, &c. 8vo. 1712.

“ of the most dangerous nature to the  
 “ religion and liberties of the subject.”

It appears that Charles, with a view of obtaining large sums from Lewis XIV. to gratify his passions, infamously agreed to assemble no parliament for three years; and, in order to induce Lewis to comply with his terms, represented to him, that he would thereby “ put it out of the power  
 “ of England ever to hurt him,” and might remain in the most glorious state that any king of France had been in for many ages; and that he took great pains to convince the French monarch, what advantages he might derive FROM HAVING ENGLAND ALWAYS DEPENDENT ON HIM’.

ON the 2d of September, 1674, Rouvigny writes, that Charles “ had agreed either to prorogue his parliament till April, 1675, in consideration of 500,000 crowns,

’ Dalrymple, vol. II. p. 237, 238.

or if he convened it in November, to dissolve it in case it should refuse to give him money, in consideration of which he was to have a pension of 100,000*l.* from France, Charles afterwards chose the first of these alternatives, got his money, and France was enabled to carry on the war a year without any fear of an English parliament<sup>6</sup>.

AMONG other evidences of Charles's agreements to assemble, prorogue, or dissolve his parliaments, at the pleasure of the French king, is the following passage in one of Barillon's letters to Lewis XIV.

“ You promised me in the year 1679, to  
 “ CONSENT that the parliament should as-  
 “ semble, when the king of England be-  
 “ lieved it necessary for HIS OWN IN-  
 “ TERESTS, provided that then the subsidies  
 “ should cease.” A treaty was also entered

<sup>6</sup> Dalrymple, vol. II. p. 99.

into between Charles and Lewis, by which the former agreed to reconcile himself to the church of Rome, and to declare himself a Catholic; and, on his doing this, the French king was to pay Charles 200,000*l.* and to assist him with troops and money, in case of his subjects **REBEL-  
LING AGAINST HIS MEASURES.**

ON the 12th of July, 1677, Courtin, another French minister, writes, that he had offered Charles a pension of 500,000 crowns, to prorogue or dissolve his parliament, together with the assistance of Lewis's forces, **TO MAINTAIN CHARLES'S AUTHORITY;** or, in other words, to render him absolute. The words respecting this last offer are these: “ Sa majesté ét ant toujours  
 “ préste employer toutes ses forces pour  
 “ la confirmation, & pour l'augmentation  
 “ de son autorité, il feroit toujours le  
 “ maitre de ses sujets, & ne dependroit ja-

“ mais d’eux”.—‘ His majesty (i. e. Lewis)  
 ‘ being always ready to employ all his  
 ‘ forces for the confirmation and AUGMEN-  
 ‘ TATION of his (i. e. Charles’s) authority,  
 ‘ he will always be MASTER of his  
 ‘ subjects, and will never depend upon  
 ‘ them.’ But it appears, that Charles  
 wanted 300,000 crowns more. The  
 sum was at last fixed at two millions of  
 livres.

As it is evident, that Charles II. was engaged in the most dangerous projects to overturn the religion and constitution of his country, it must be admitted, that his subjects had a right to oppose him, and to endeavour to counter-act his designs. And on this ground we may venture to vindicate the conduct of Lord RUSSEL. That it is in general a very dangerous practice, for subjects to enter into such

<sup>7</sup> Dalrymple, p. 111, 112.

connexions with foreign princes, or foreign ministers, must be readily allowed; but there may be extraordinary circumstances in which it may be justified. And this appears to have been the case in the reign of Charles the Second. He intrigued with France to enslave his People; and could it be criminal in them to intrigue with the same court, in order to defeat his designs?

It must not be expected, that in extraordinary conjunctures, there will be an invariable adherence to the ordinary rules of law, or of conduct. When the liberties of a nation are at stake, the safety of the people should be the supreme law. If RUSSEL and SYDNEY were of opinion, that by intriguing with the court of France, they might prevent Charles from enslaving England, they might be no more criminal than those who intrigued

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with.



with the Prince of Orange against James II. and thereby brought about the Revolution : and the latter have been universally applauded by the friends of freedom. And though the views of France, whilst its government is absolute and monarchical, may, in general, naturally be considered as hostile to England ; yet, in certain situations, whatever little reason there may be to depend much upon her friendship, it may be allowable and prudential to practise a degree of art, to render her schemes the less mischievous to us.

It is manifest, that Barillon himself considered the leaders of the popular party, with whom he held these intrigues, as solicitous for the preservation of the liberties of their country. In one of his letters, as published by sir John Dalrymple, he represents the duke of Buckingham, lord Shaftesbury, lord RUSSEL, and

and lord Hollis, as extremely urgent with him to prevail with the French king, not to suffer Charles under the pretence of an **IMAGINARY WAR**, to find means to enslave his subjects<sup>8</sup>. And in another letter, dated October 10, 1678, Barillon, speaking of the members of the English parliament who seemed disposed to have some connexion with the French court, says, “They are **ALL IN THE SAME MIND**,  
 “ of opposing strongly any designs the king  
 “ of England might have to keep up  
 “ the army, either with a view to make  
 “ war, or **CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT**.”

THE popular party considered the war, which appeared to be intended against France, as nothing but a scheme to raise troops to enslave the kingdom; and they considered lord Danby, whose removal from the office of high-treasurer they were

<sup>8</sup> Dalrymple, p. 136, 137, 138. <sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 140. 141.

solicitous to procure, as active in this dangerous design;<sup>10</sup> because, notwithstanding the zeal which he now pretended against France, it was proved in the house of commons, that he had been an agent for Charles, to obtain for that unprincipled monarch, a scandalous pension from the French court<sup>11</sup>.

SIR John Dalrymple says, the popular party “wished to pull down lord Danby, “for the same reason for which every

<sup>10</sup> It was a clause in one of the articles of impeachment against Danby, that he had endeavoured “to “introduce an arbitrary and tyrannical way of government; and the better to effect this his purpose, he “did design the raising of an army upon pretence of “a war against the French king, and then to continue the same as a standing army within this kingdom.” Vid. the Journals of the House of Commons, Dec. 21, 1678.

<sup>11</sup> Vid. Torbuck's Parliamentary Debates, vol. I. p. 239.

“ oppo-

“opposition wishes to pull down every  
 “minister”<sup>12</sup>.” But this is an assertion  
 thrown out at random, and evidently with  
 no other view than to place the popular  
 party in an unfavourable light. For it is  
 an undoubted fact, that they had the  
 most substantial reasons for opposing lord  
 Danby. He had not only been concerned  
 in carrying on some of Charles’s infamous  
 intrigues with France, and been very busy  
 in corrupting the representatives of the  
 people, but had also been the great pro-  
 moter of a new and dangerous project, of  
 imposing a test upon the members of both  
 houses; which was intended to keep all  
 men out of parliament, excepting those  
 who were attached to the absurd and fla-  
 vish principles of passive obedience and  
 non-resistance<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Memoirs of Great Britain, vol. II. p. 129.

<sup>13</sup> Vid. Burnet’s History of his own Times, vol. I.  
 p. 382, 383, 384.

As to the other object, which the popular party are represented as having in view, namely, the dissolution of the parliament, they were desirous of procuring this, because they hoped, that if the people were favoured with a new election of their representatives, they would chuse men less under the influence of the court than many of the present, and more disposed to attend to the real interests of the nation. The observation which lord RUSSEL is said to have made, in the memorial of Barillon which I have before quoted, that he and his friends knew a dissolution of parliament “could only come “from the help of France,” seems to have been grounded on the knowledge which they had, of Charles’s private agreements to prorogue or dissolve his parliament at the pleasure of the French monarch. And even in this conversation with Barillon, the

the uprightnes of Lord RUSSEL's intentions appears, from his declarations of unwillingness "to have any commerce with persons capable of being gained with money."

WHATSOEVER may be the sentiments of those, who would judge of these transactions by the rules of strict and rigid law, it is certain, that when a prince is known to be labouring to over-turn the liberties of his country, it is just to take every method to counteract him. It cannot reasonably be thought criminal to intrigue with foreign princes against him, when it is undoubtedly justifiable to do more. In such a case, it would be just, it would be meritorious, to take up arms against the Tyrant; and to convince him of the iniquity of his conduct by the Sword; which, when every other resource fails, ought to be the Logic of Subjects, as well as of Kings.

ON these principles, I apprehend, the conduct of Lord RUSSEL may justly be defended, although the measures he adopted might not effectuate the end at which he aimed. It is the rectitude of his intentions only that is contended for; and notwithstanding all that has been published by Sir John Dalrymple, there is still reason to venerate the memory of Lord RUSSEL, as that of an illustrious Patriot, who, with the most upright and disinterested views, laboured to support the free constitution of his country; and who met that violent death, to which he was unjustly sentenced, with an heroic intrepidity worthy of the cause in which he suffered.

It was believed, after Lord RUSSEL's condemnation, that nothing would have contributed so much to the saving his life, as his making a declaration in favour of the

the

the doctrines of passive-obedience and non-resistance: and endeavours were used to bring him to such a declaration, but without effect. Upon which it is observed by Dr. Birch, that ‘the firmness of lord RUSSEL, in refusing the only means of purchasing his life from an exasperated court, by the least retraction of an opinion, of which his conscience was thoroughly persuaded, is the strongest proof of that integrity and virtue, which gave him so much weight and influence in his own time, and have endeared him to posterity’<sup>14</sup>.

MUCH of what has been said relative to lord RUSSEL’s intriguing with the French court, may also be applied to ALGERNON SYDNEY, and equally urged in his justification. But MR. SYDNEY is likewise charged with taking money from

<sup>14</sup> Life of Archbishop Tillotson, p. 121.



the court of France. However, before I enter into an inquiry concerning this accusation, I shall previously attempt some delineation of his character.

**ALGERNON SYDNEY** was the second surviving son of Robert earl of Leicester. His mother was eldest daughter of Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland. But he was rendered more illustrious by his personal qualities, than by the nobility of his birth. In his youth he had fought with great gallantry against the rebels in Ireland; and he afterwards distinguished himself in the civil wars in England, in opposition to the tyranny of king Charles the First. He was a man of fine genius, studious and learned, and of elevated sentiments; and ever animated by a generous ardour in defence of the liberties of his country, and the common rights of mankind.

· **ONE** of the most remarkable features in **SYDNEY's** character, was a nobleness and dignity of soul, which appeared so strongly in his actions, and in his writings, as to render it impossible for us to believe, but upon the fullest and most certain evidence, that any temptation could prevail on him to act in a dishonourable or unworthy manner. His high spirit appears even in his letters to his father, the earl of Leicester; who sometimes censured him for imprudence, in avowing his sentiments with an openness and freedom that were manifestly prejudicial to him. But he had a soul above disguise, and superior to the little arts of interested men.

IN a letter to one of his friends in England, written when he was in exile, are the following expressions: ‘ Whilſt I live,  
 ‘ I will endeavour to preſerve my liberty;  
 ‘ or, at leaſt, not conſent to the deſtroying  
 Vol. II. R ‘ it.

‘ it. I hope I shall die in the same prin-  
 ‘ ciples in which I have lived, and I will  
 ‘ live no longer than they can preserve me.  
 ‘ I have in my life been guilty of many  
 ‘ follies; but, as I think, of no meannesses.  
 ‘ I will not blot and defile that which is  
 ‘ past, by endeavouring to provide for the  
 ‘ future. I have ever had in my mind,  
 ‘ that when God should cast me into such  
 ‘ a condition, as that I cannot save my life,  
 ‘ but by doing an indecent thing, he shews  
 ‘ me the time is come wherein I should  
 ‘ resign it.’

SHALL we hastily believe of the man  
 capable of these sentiments, and the general  
 tenor of whose life appears to have corre-  
 sponded with them, that he could be pre-  
 vailed on to take money from the court of  
 France for an unworthy purpose? and when  
 the inflexibility of his spirit, in matters in  
 which he believed himself to be right,  
 would

would not suffer him meanly to supplicate even his own father for money, or in the least to recede from his principles, when reduced to the greatest straits, and in a foreign country <sup>15</sup>.

BUT I proceed more particularly to the evidence of the charge against him. It is supported by nothing but the mere assertions of the French minister, Barillon, who, in his account of money paid to English pensioners, as published by Sir John Dalrymple, has set down two several sums, of five hundred guineas each, as paid to Mr. SYDNEY; and in one of his letters to Lewis XIVth is the following passage.

‘ Mr. SYDNEY has been of great use to me  
 ‘ on many occasions. He is a man who  
 ‘ was in the first wars, and who is natu-  
 ‘ rally an enemy to the court. He has for

<sup>15</sup> Vid. his Letters to the Earl of Leicester, inserted in the 4to edition of his Works.

‘ some time been suspected of being gained  
 ‘ by lord Sunderland; but he always ap-  
 ‘ peared to me to have the SAME SENTI-  
 ‘ MENTS, and NOT TO HAVE CHANGED  
 ‘ MAXIMS. He has a great deal of credit  
 ‘ among the Independents, and is also  
 ‘ intimate with those who are the most  
 ‘ opposite to the court in parliament. He  
 ‘ was elected for this present one. I gave  
 ‘ him only what your majesty permitted  
 ‘ me. He would willingly have had  
 ‘ more, and if a new gratification was  
 ‘ given him, it would be easy to engage  
 ‘ him entirely. However, he is very  
 ‘ favourably disposed to what your ma-  
 ‘ jesty may desire; and is not willing that  
 ‘ England and the States-general should  
 ‘ make a league<sup>16</sup>. He is upon bad  
 ‘ terms

<sup>16</sup> The words in the French, relative to the gra-  
 tification said to be given to SYDNEY, and his averse-  
 ness

terms with his brother, who is in Hol-  
 land, and laughs at the court's making  
 use of him as a negociator. I believe he  
 is a man who would be very useful, if  
 the affairs of England should be brought  
 to extremities \*7.

It is observable, that in Barillon's dis-  
 patches, there is but a very slender account  
 of any services received from SYDNEY, for  
 which the money is pretended to have  
 been paid to him; his assistance in the  
 prosecution of the earl of Danby being the

means to England's entering into a league with Holland,  
 are as follow: ' Je ne lui ai donné que ce que votre  
 Majesté m' a permit. Il auroit bien voulu avoir  
 d'avantage, & si on lui faisoit quelque gratification  
 nouvelle, il seroit aisé de l'engager entierement.  
 Cependant il est dans des dispositions fort favorables  
 pour ce que votre Majesté peut desirer, & ne  
 voudroit pas que l'Angleterre & les Etats Géné-  
 raux fissent une ligue.'

\*7 Dalrymple, vol. II. p. 261, 262.

only thing particularly mentioned. However, admitting these papers to be genuine, and the facts contained in them to be true, it does not appear, that he was engaged in any transactions unfavourable to the liberties of his country. Nor is there the least evidence that Barillon considered him as a man capable of any thing of this kind: on the contrary, in the passage that has been just quoted, the French minister declares, that Mr. SYDNEY “always appeared to him to have the same sentiments, and not to have changed maxims.”

IN another letter, he represents Mr. SYDNEY as conversing with him under the character, and agreeably to the principles, of a steady Republican<sup>18</sup>. And in a letter, dated Dec. 5, 1680, Barillon expresses himself in the following terms: ‘The sieur ALGERNON SYDNEY is a man

<sup>18</sup> Vid. Dalrymple, vol. II. p. 313.

‘ of great views, and very high designs,  
 ‘ which tend to the establishment of a re-  
 ‘ public. He is in the party of the Inde-  
 ‘ pendants, and other sectaries; and this  
 ‘ party were masters during the late trou-  
 ‘ bles. They are not at present very power-  
 ‘ ful in parliament, but they are strong in  
 ‘ London; and it is through the intrigues  
 ‘ of the sieur ALGERNON SYDNEY, that  
 ‘ one of the two sheriffs, named Bethel,  
 ‘ has been elected <sup>19</sup>.’

If these papers are considered as genuine,  
 there are many who may think it some-  
 what extraordinary, that SYDNEY should  
 have been so averse to an alliance with  
 Holland, as he is represented in a passage  
 lately quoted. But it should be remem-  
 bered, that the views and sentiments  
 of men were, in many respects, extremely  
 different in that age, from what they are at

<sup>19</sup> Dalrymple, p. 287.



present. SYDNEY, and others of the popular party, were apprehensive that the union with the prince of Orange might be of dangerous consequences to England. They thought, that the prince of Orange might re-unite in his person the power of the states-general, and of England together; and they considered it as a kind of fundamental principle, that the house of Stuart and the house of Orange were inseparably united, and that their common interest would engage them to augment their power both in England and in Holland<sup>20</sup>. It is well known, that similar jealousies, of the ambitious designs of the house of Orange, had been before entertained by the famous De Wit, and others of the more zealous Republicans in Holland.

SUPPOSING the money mentioned in Barillon's papers to have been really paid

<sup>20</sup> Vid. Dalrymple, p. 129, 313.

to SYDNEY, we have no proof that it was received by him for his own use<sup>21</sup>. But, in truth, we have no evidence that it was ever received by him at all. No man would think it just in his own case, that he should be condemned, either in his life-time or afterwards, upon the mere assertion of another that money had been paid to him, without the least proof of its being received, or any collateral evidence to support the assertion.

<sup>21</sup> If the testimony of Lord Howard could be relied on, (which it evidently cannot, from the known profligacy of his character) it would appear, that Mr. SYDNEY sometimes made use of money to advance the scheme of exciting an effectual opposition to the government. Lord Howard swore at Mr. SYDNEY's trial, that he was "with Col. SYDNEY, and saw him "put about sixty guineas in his pocket, which, he "said, were for Aaron Smith." It is represented in the trial, that this Aaron Smith was sent into Scotland, to excite some of the leading men there to join with the English malcontents.

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