

A
REVIEW
OF THE
STATE
OF THE
BRITISH NATION.

VOL. VI.

LONDON:
Printed in the Year. MDCCIX.^a
(Price 2d.)

^a MDCCIX.] MDDCIX.

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PREFACE.

I Am come now to the Conclusion of the Sixth Volume of this Work; tho' like a teeming Woman, I have thought every Volume should be the last — Where it will end now, and when, God only knows, and Time only will discover; *as for me*, I know nothing of it.

This particular Paper, tho' written at the End of the Work, carries the Title of the Preface, more because it is placed by the Bookseller at the Frontispiece, than that it is any thing of an Introduction to the Volume; for it is really written at the Close of the Whole, and its Subject very particular.

We have had a most distracting turbulent Time for the last two Months of this Year, occasion'd by the Prosecution and Defence of a *High-Flying* Clergyman,¹ who has undertaken, *in the Teeth* of the very Parliament, *as well as of the Nation*, to justify and defend the exploded ridiculous Doctrine of *Non-Resistance*.

This Defence has been carry'd on with all possible Heat, Fury, and Violence among the Party; and a strong Conjunction of *Papist, Jacobite, and High-Church* mad Men has appear'd in it, which has made them seem very formidable to the World — Rabbles, Tumults, plundering Houses, demolishing Meeting-houses, insulting Gentlemen in the Streets, and honest Men in their Dwellings, has been the necessary Appendices of this Affair. And, *after all I must own*, tho' the Man has been condemn'd, his Principles censur'd, and his Sermon burnt; yet it has not been without most fatal Consequences over the whole Nation, as it revived the Heats, Feuds and Animosities which were among us, and which by the blessed Example and Exhortation of her Majesty, began to be laid asleep in the Nation.

I have been endeavouring to shew you the Mischief of these Tumults, the bloody Design of the Persons that have rais'd them, and how they have differed from all that went before them. I have given you Instances of their most villainous Designs; such as rifling the Bank, demolishing all the Meeting-houses, and murdering the Ministers, all which they openly profess'd to be their Design; *God deliver this Nation from the pernicious Effects of the present Fermentation, which we are now generally in on all sides*.

I have however faithfully discharg'd what I thought my self oblig'd to, as a Debt to Peace, and in Duty to the present Constitution, *to speak plainly* in these Cases, whatever Risque I run, and at whatever Hazard these Truths are to be told: I have not been afraid to bear my Testimony, as some call it, to the Liberties of *Britain*, against the reviving Mischiefs of Tyranny, and have in the midst of all your Mobbs and Rabbles openly declared *Non Resistance* to be damn'd by Parliament, and *English (now British)* Liberty to be built upon the Foundation of the Claim of Right,² and of the Revolution; of which the Prot-

estant Succession, *which sets by the more immediate Heirs*, is the great Exemplification; The Great King *William* was the Re-edifyer of the Building; the Collective Body of the People were the great and happy Original; and the Union is the Top-stone.

I am none of those that boast of their Adventures, and love to tell long Stories of the Dangers they run — I am not always to be frighted with threatening Letters and Shams of Assassination; I ever thought those People that talk so much of killing Folks, never do it — Tho' I am none of those you call fighting Fellows, yet I am none of those that are afraid to see themselves die, and I may, I hope, *without being tax'd with Vanity*, profess not to practise *Non-Resistance*.

I have by me about 15 Letters, from Gentlemen of more Anger than Honour, who have faithfully promis'd me to come and kill me by such and such a Day; nay, and some have descended to tell the very Manner, yet not one of them has been so good as his Word: Once I had the Misfortune to come into a Room, where five Gentlemen had been killing me a Quarter of an Hour, *in their Way* — and yet to the Reproach of their villainous Design, as well as their Courage, durst not all together own it to a poor naked single Man, that gave them Opportunity enough, and whom they had too much in their Power.

In short, I here give my Testimony from my own Experience, and I note it for the Instruction of the *Five Assassins above*, that their Cause is villainous, and that makes the Party cowardly; a Man that has any Honour in him, is really put to more Difficulty how to speak, than how to act; in the Case of Murthers and Assassination, *he is streightned*, between the Extremes of shewing too much Courage, or too much Fear.

Should I tell the World the repeated Cautions given me by Friends, not to appear, not to walk the Streets, not to show my self — *Letters sent me*, to bid me remember Sir *Edmund-Bury Godfrey*, *John Tutchin*,³ and the like; I must talk my self up for a mad Man that dares go abroad — Should I let you know, how I have been three Times beset, and Way laid for the Mischief design'd, but that still I live, you would wonder what I mean.

For my part, I firmly believe, the Villains that insulted honest *Sutherland's* House,⁴ robb'd and frighted his Wife, and with naked Swords bully'd the poor Woman, threatning that they would murder her Husband whenever they met him; knew well enough he was not at home, and never will meet him when he is.

Wherefore, my brief Resolution is this; 1. While I live, they may be assur'd, I shall never desist doing my Duty, in exposing the Doctrines that oppose GOD and the Revolution; such as Passive-Submission to Tyrants, and Non-Resistance in Cases of Oppression; if the Gentlemen, being at a Loss for Ar-

guments, are resolv'd *to better their Cause* by Violence and Blood, I leave the Issue to GOD's Providence, and must do as well with them as I can.

As to Defence, I have had some Thoughts to stay at Home in the Night, and by Day to wear a Piece of Armour on my Back. The *first*, because I am perswaded these Murtherers will not do their Work by *Day light*; and the *second*, because I firmly believe, they will never attempt it so fairly, TO MY FACE, as to give Occasion of Armour any where else.

I confess, there may be some Reasons for me to apprehend this wicked Party, and therefore as I thank GOD, I am without a disturbing Fear, so I am not perfectly secure, or without Caution. The Reasons are as these.

1. That truly Assassination and Murther is something more suitable to the *Highb-Flying Cause*, and has been more in Use among their Party, than in other Cases, and with other People — 'Tis the Cause of Tyranny, and Tyranny always leads to Blood; Oppression goes hand-in-hand with Violence; and he that would invade my Liberty, will invade my Life, as he has Opportunity; and had their Rabble got a little more Head, we might have come again into the laudable Practice of cutting of Throats, and cold Blood Murthers — And by the same Rule, their Downfall being so apparent, this desperate Cure may be thought needful to their desperate Cause.

But I cannot see, why they should be so exasperated *at the poor Review*, a sorry despis'd Author, to use the Words *of one of their Party*, who no Body gives heed to.

Well, Gentlemen, then let your Anger be pointed at some more significant Animal, that is more capable to wound you, and do not own this Author to be so considerable as to engage your Resentment, lest you prove the unanswerable Force of what he says by the Concern you are at to suppress him — What will the World say to this Way of Dealing? You should first answer the Argument, that's the best Way of murdering the Author; to kill him first, is to own you could not answer him; if your Doctrine of *Non-Resistance* will subsist, if it will uphold it self, you have Advantage enough; Writing against it will be of no Force, even the *House of Commons* must fall before it, *for Truth will prevail*. But if not, if this Author, and All that open their Mouths against it, were to be sacrific'd by your impious Hands, *Truth* would never want Champions to defend it against this absurd Error — And killing the *Review* would be like cutting off the Monster's Head, when a Hundred rise up in the Room of it.

Upon these Accounts I go on perfectly easie; as to the present Threats I daily meet with from this cowardly and abominable Party — If I am attack'd by Multitude, I must fall, *as Abner fell before wicked Men*⁵ — If I am fairly and honourably attacked, I hope, I shall fairly RESIST; for I shall never practise the Notion I condemn, and every honest Man ought to go prepar'd for a Villain.

This, tho' it is irksome to me to say, and no Man that fights loves to talk of it; yet I thought it proper for me to let you all see, that I have my Share of this *High-Church* Mob — And that whatever may happen to me, the World may know whence it comes.

I might, and ought indeed to speak a Word or two to three Gentlemen, besides those mention'd before, who have been pleas'd personally to threaten my Life — with Abundance of Preambles and Justification of themselves about it — What I shall say to them is — I shall demonstrate my being perfectly unconcern'd at the Matter, by refusing the Advice given me, even by their own Friends *of binding them to the Peace*; it seems a little unnatural to me, and what I shall never practise, to go to Law with a Man for beating me, much less for threatenng me — And least of all, when the Persons are such harmless Creatures as these — Wherefore, all the Answer I shall give them is this, with the utmost Contempt of their Folly —

*The Cur that barks is not the Cur that bites.*⁶

These Things regard particular Men, and I know, the Persons will understand me when they read it — I assure you, it is in Courtesie to them that I bury their Folly by concealing their Names.

Upon the Whole, as I am going on in what I esteem my Duty, and for the publick Good, I firmly believe, it will not please GOD to deliver me up to this bloody and ungodly Party; and therefore I go on freely in what is before me, and shall still go on to detect and expose a vicious Clergy, and a bigotted Race of the People, in order to reclaim and reform them, or to open the Eyes of the good People of *Britain*, that they may not be impos'd upon by them; and whether in this Work I meet with Punishment or Praise, Safety or Hazard, Life or Death,

TE DEUM LAUDAMUS.

Your Humble Servant,

D. F.

¹ *the Prosecution ... of a High-Flying Clergy-man*. Dr Henry Sacheverell (1674-1724), Fellow of Magdalen and (from May 1709) chaplain to St Saviour's, Southwark, preached before the Lord Mayor on 5 November 1709 on the text 'In Perils of False Brethren'. For his reflections in this sermon Sacheverell was tried for seditious libel on 27 February 1710 and pronounced guilty in the Lords on 20 March by a majority of 69 to 52. Demonstrations in Sacheverell's support broke out on Wednesday, 1 March 1710. In 1713 Sacheverell was preferred to St Andrew's, Holborn.

² *Claim of Right*. The Scottish equivalent of the English Bill of Rights (1689). In April 1689 the Scottish Parliament declaring that James VII had been deposed, that no Catholic could succeed to the throne and that prelacy was a grievance (thus preparing for the establishment of Presbyterianism).

³ *Sir Edmund-Bury Godfrey, John Tutchin*: The magistrate Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey

(1621-78) was found murdered on Primrose Hill in London after receiving testimony from Titus Oates concerning an alleged Popish Plot to murder Charles II. Catholic assassins were popularly judged responsible. John Tutchin (1660-1707), the Whig author of the *Observer*, was severely beaten up in 1707, dying from his wounds. For Defoe's generous obituary on Tutchin see the *Review*, 20 November 1707 (volume 4).

⁴ *bonest Sutherland's House*: Not identified.

⁵ *as Abner fell before wicked Men*: Abner was the commander of Saul's army against David. After coming to agreement with David he was killed by Joab, David's commander in chief. See 2 Samuel 3.

⁶ *The Cur that barks is not the Cur that bites*: 'A cowardly cur barks more fiercely than it bites'. The phrase is found in *De Rebus Gestis Alexandri Magni* by the Roman historian Quintus Curtius Rufus (fl. 60-70AD), who writes: Adicit deinde, quod apud Bactrianos vulgo usurpabant, canem timidum vehementius latrare quam mordere altissimaque flumina minimo sono labi (VII, 4, 13: 'Then he added a proverb in common use among the Bactriani, that a timid dog barks more violently than it bites, and that the deepest rivers flow with the least sound').

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