

LETTERS

ON THE

Spirit of PATRIOTISM,

&c. &c.

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LETTERS

ON THE

SPIRIT of PATRIOTISM :

ON THE

IDEA OF A PATRIOT KING:

AND ON THE

STATE OF PARTIES,

AT THE

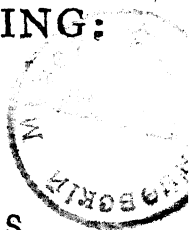
Accession of KING GEORGE the First.

A NEW EDITION.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND,

MDCCLXXXIII.



TO

EDMUND BURKE, Esq.

SIR,

I SHALL make no apology for dedicating to you a new edition of THE SPIRIT OF PATRIOTISM, AND THE IDEA OF A PATRIOT KING; a composition of Lord Bolingbroke, which he seems to have laboured with great art, and on which he has bestowed that polish, and those nice and finishing strokes, which he had neglected to give to his other works.

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The Author had no common views when he set down to this work. He speaks of it with more than paternal fondness. Full of the glorious effects which the reign of a Patriot King would produce, and willing to imagine himself the happy instrument to form so noble a character ; in the conclusion of his book, he breaks out into the following pathetic, and, as he hoped, prophetic expressions ! “ Those who live
“ to see such happy days, and to
“ act in so glorious a scene, will,
“ perhaps, call to mind with some
“ tenderness of sentiment, the
“ man who contributed his mite
“ to carry on so great a work, and
“ who desired life for nothing so
“ much,

“ much as to see a *King of Great*
 “ *Britain, the most popular man in*
 “ *his country, and a Patriot King*
 “ *at the head of an united people.*”

Amongst those who lay claim to the generous title of Patriot, how few are there who know any thing of the true spirit of Patriotism? The name of a Patriot, it is true, they are willing to assume, for the same reason, that they would put on a rich and splendid robe ; the one gives an ornament to the person, and the other adds a lustre to the character ; but both are easily laid aside, when either pleasure or interest, ambition or conveniency demands.

Your character, Sir, has ever been so inestimable in private and public life, as to give the nation the strongest assurances of your persisting to deserve the glorious name of Patriot. Blest with the copious and commanding eloquence, and all the various abilities of a Bolingbroke, your conduct has been, and, I doubt not, ever will be, more steady and uniform than his. In advanced age, he lamented the consequences of passions, which he had indulged in early and middle life, and, from his closet, hoped to make atonement, by his excellent political writings, for his former unsteady and excentric conduct. Your advances to the Temple of Honour,

Honour, were not sudden and irregular, but gradual and progressive. There is, therefore, no reason to fear your being precipitated from that eminence by the impetuous gusts of passion, or the violent storms of ambition.

Permit me to congratulate you on the choice which the free citizens of Bristol have made of you for a Representative. They intended to confer a favour on you, but, in the opinion of the public, they have done honour to themselves. Those only are fit to represent the Sons of Freedom who are incapable of mean arts to attain that honour. You did not flatter your Constituents by

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promising more than you purposed to perform ; you honestly laid before them the plan of your intended conduct. A British Senator, like you, will not flatter either Prince or People : he only is a true friend to both, who supports, to the utmost of his power, the prerogative of the crown, and the rights of the people, as they are fixed by the laws of the land.

I am, SIR,

Your most obedient,

Humble Servant,

Nov. 29, 1774.

THOMAS DAVIES.

THE

T H E
P U B L I S H E R
T O T H E
R E A D E R.

Whatever may have been the decision of the public, concerning the philosophical works of Lord Bolingbroke, it is universally agreed, that his political writings contain a perfect system of practical politics ; written with an energy of stile, and a strength of reasoning, not to be found in the Essays of our most celebrated writers upon Government.

Besides these qualifications requisite in an Author, who presumes to dictate in matters of which every man thinks himself a competent judge, Lord Bolingbroke

broke has enlivened his subject with a brilliancy of wit, and a poignancy of raillery, which gives an embellishment to his stile, and a relish to his argument, and serves to take off that dryness incidental to logical deduction.

But, indeed, the intrinsic value of these works, chiefly consists in the great variety of admirable and judicious observations upon our Historical Transactions and State Revolutions; which form, altogether, an excellent and rational commentary upon the constitution of this kingdom.

He that would apply proper remedies to the mischiefs flowing from accidental breaches in our happy establishment, and which derive their origin from the violent prejudices of party, and the blind rage of faction; from the weakness and wickedness of ministers, from the corruption of parliaments, and the incroachment of prerogative, must seek for them in these volumes.

Boling-

Bolingbroke was no speculative writer, who by ransacking the records of musty books, forms fine spun schemes of Utopian Government in his closet. No ; he was a vigorous agent, and skilful conductor, in the most difficult and trying emergencies of the state. He tells us no more than what he knew, and advises nothing but what he put in practice himself.

He was well apprized that his writings would be examined with the most piercing and jealous eye, and with the most inquisitorial and malevolent spirit ; he, therefore, composed his Essays with a design to form a lasting and regular plan of political ratiocination, which might, at all times, be serviceable to his country ; and prove a warning and a lesson, in his own age, to those who equally dreaded and admired his abilities.

It is a common, though, perhaps, useless piece of curiosity, to enter into a discussion of which is the best composition

tion of a great writer, amongst many others almost equally good.

An ingenious gentleman who has lately favoured the public with some curious anecdotes relating to Lord Bolingbroke, asserts, in very positive terms, that his letter to Sir William Wyndham, is his great master piece.

It cannot be denied that this is a very elaborate performance, and contains a very artful, as well as spirited vindication of Bolingbroke's conduct, in the most critical part of his life. But however meritorious this letter may be, when considered in a certain view, and as an absolute detection of the folly and absurdity of jacobitical and high tory principles: it cannot be deemed a work altogether so useful and interesting to the community, as Treatises written with a design to point out essential errors in government, to rectify the mistakes and blunders of ministers, and to expose, in proper colours, their corrupt and iniquitous

tous proceedings : to recover our lost constitution, by bringing it back to first principles, and to fix it on a durable basis, by proving the necessity of the independency of one branch of the legislature on the other : it is plain then this tract cannot, from the inferiority of the subject, be justly compared either to *Oldcastle's Remarks on the History of England* ; the *Dissertation on Parties*, or *The Idea of a Patriot King*.

Dr. Goldsmith, in his short, but elegant, life of Lord Bolingbroke, has indeed observed, that in his inimitable work of the *Dissertation on Parties*, this great writer had summoned up the whole vigour of his mind, and designed it as a parting blow to Walpole and his adherents.

Dr. Hunter, in his sketch of the philosophical character of Lord Bolingbroke, bestows great and just encomiums on his *Political Works*, but after some reasonable deductions from the merit of his notions respecting the sacred writings, he

he seems to give the preference, on the whole, to his *Letters on the Study and Use of History*.

Lord Chesterfield, in a letter to his son, Mr. Stanhope, extols to the skies, *The Spirit of Patriotism, and the Idea of a Patriot King*; this work he recommends as a perfect model of style, and frankly confesses, that he was unacquainted with the extent and power of the English language, till he read that book.

From these several opinions of ingenious and eminent authors, we may reasonably conclude, that the political writings of Bolingbroke, are the powerful efforts of a great genius, long exercised in business; that they are not only remarkable for vigour of stile, but valuable for their usefulness to society. It is evident, that they are the deliberate and mature thoughts of a man, who had surveyed, with accuracy the several forms of ancient and modern government, and preferred that of his own country

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country to them all. And, lastly, that he laboured with ardour and sincerity to establish the constitution of this kingdom, on the best and firmest foundation ; the equal maintenance of the legal prerogative of the crown, and the just rights and privileges of the people.

November, 1774.

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P. S.