

But civil Dissentions arose, which immediately were followed by the Tyranny of a single Person, as this was by the Subversion of the regal Government; for the Nobles deposed this Prince, and chose Tarquin. Struggles about Prerogative and Liberty, ever did, and ever will, conclude in Tyranny, at last, infallibly of one Person.

At this Time, the Romans were very much engaged in Wars with neighbouring States; but, upon the least Interval of Peace, the Quarrels between the Nobles and the Plebeians would revive.

Certain Magistrates, chosen yearly, called Tribunes—By these Tribunes the People were grossly imposed upon, to serve the Turns of ambitious Men, and to commit Excesses. One of the most frequent Subjects of their Differences, was the conquered Lands, which the Commons would fain have divided, and to lay all Mens Rights and Privileges upon the same Level. The Tribunes went so far in the Name of the Commons, as to accuse and fine the Consuls themselves.

They demanded the Consulship should lie in common to the Pretensions of any Roman whatsoever. The greatest Employments were, by Laws, forcibly enacted by the Commons, made free to the People. A Law was enacted, that the Plebiscita, or a Vote of the House of Commons, should be of universal Obligation. The People did as they pleased, confirm or disannul the Senatus Consulta.

Appius Claudius brought in a Custom of admitting to the Senate, the Sons of Freed-Men, or of such who had not been Slaves; by which, and succeeding Alterations of the like Nature, that great Council degenerated into a most corrupt and factious Body of Men, divided against itself, and its Authority despised.

The Union of Pompey and Cæsar, for pulling down the Nobles, was the Cause of the Civil War, which ended in the Tyranny of the latter, both of them having used all Endeavours and Occasions, for sinking the Authority of the Patricians, wherein they expected best to find their own Account. The entire Subversion of the Roman Constitution, was altogether owing to those Measures which had broke the Balance, whereof the Ambition of particular Men, was but an Effect and Consequence. The People were now bent upon single and despotic Slavery—else how could such a Profligate, as Anthony, or a Boy of Eighteen, like Octavius, ever dare to dream of giving the Law to such an Empire, and People? Wherein the latter succeeded, and entailed the vilest Tyranny, that Heaven, in its Anger, ever inflicted on a corrupt and poisoned People.

THAT there appears a kind of Resemblance in some of the collated Passages, and, that other Extracts, of the like Colour and Complexion, might be adduced, I admit; but there is too, such a Discrepancy, that I can't acknowledge, Mac has been in the least obliged to the DEAN: For, is it possible, that MAC, as sagacious as the Florentine, and much more ingenious, could have complimented the Athenians on their Institution of the Ostracism, if he intended to adopt the Sentiments of the DEAN, who says, in so many Words, that the Effect of it was the Banishment of every great Man? Could he have applied to OCTAVIUS and ANTHONY, what the DEAN said of POMPEY and CÆSAR? Could the DEAN's Metaphor, Two Stars of such Magnitude, have been rejected? Would he have dodged backwards and forwards, sometimes taking a Scrap here, and then a Scrap there, flying from Rome to Athens, and, in a Trice, from Athens to Rome? It is objected, indeed, by malevolent and envious Critics, that these Circumstances are owing to mere Ignorance, Want of Taste, and a little low Craft, to conceal his Thefts—That MAC's smattering Reading, or blundering Genius, appears in many Respects, and they give it as an Instance, that in one of his Pieces he applied to OCTAVIUS and ANTHONY, "That the one could not bear an Equal, nor the other a Superior," what was said of POMPEY and CÆSAR—that he has borrowed some of his Wit too from the DEAN, and they quote from SWIFT's "Essay on the Fates of Clergymen," what CORUSODES says,—I never make a Jest myself, nor ever laugh at another Man's; as a Proof, that MAC's dull Fellow, who said the same Thing, owed his Existence to CORUSODES. But to all such Stuff, and more of the same kind, I answer, once for all, that MAC is a most learned, most sagacious, most ingenious, most witty, and candid Person. I can, with equal Truth, declare too, that he is a Man of Modesty, and thence infer, the Impossibility of his pilfering from SWIFT, an Author in every Body's Hands, by which he would expose himself to certain Detection, and give a fair Opening for Attacks on his Character; for which, as well as for all other Mens, he seems to entertain the most tender Solitude—the most delicate Feelings.

AND here I can't but remark, that these eager Cavillers, intent upon fixing their Charge, have not adverted to Passages in MAC's inestimable Pieces, which are indubitably Original. Witness that beautiful and sublime Stroke—"Thanks to human Infirmity! The Rattle of the Snake gives Warning of it's Approach, and the Hand that happens to be bit, slays the Viper in his Fury, and makes Use of the Fat for an Antidote to the Poison."—Who, but such a Genius, of an Head so penetrating, and an Heart so tuned to Gratitude, would have discovered and acknowledged the Obligation due to human Infirmity, so cunningly investigated from the Rattles of a Snake, and the Invention of an Antidote to the Poison, in the Fat of that venomous Animal?—A Fanatic would have offered his Thanks in a different Manner, and canted about Providence; but the liberal MAC, unriden by Priest or Parson, Preacher or Teacher, is free from all the Prejudices of Fanaticism and Superstition.—When addressing "the deep Enthusiasts, but shallow Politicians of Boston," (*Antitibes per pulchra!*) he rebukes them for not knowing, that "neither Heaven nor Earth admits of Two equal Powers." Who but must admire a Sagacity, that is able to point out the universal Monarch upon Earth, hitherto undiscovered by any other Mortal? But I forbear to quote the whole of this striking Passage, lest some weak People, more scrupulous than

The Consequence of which Innovation, was a violent Struggle between the Nobles and the Commons, which ended in deposing of Servius Tullius, the Introduction (which is always the Case) of the Tyranny of a single Person, the Election of Tarquin, and the Abolition of the regal Government.

Whilst they had an Enemy at their Back, and were constantly engaged in defending, or enlarging their Territories, the People submitted to the Authority of the Consuls; but, upon every Interval of Peace, they renewed their Claims.

They obtained Tribunes, who, to aggrandize themselves, were constantly leading them on to Violence and Outrage. They insisted upon the Division of the conquered Lands to be put into their Hands. They wanted a Law to level all Mens Rights and Privileges. They assumed a Power of accusing and fining the Consuls themselves.

They demanded the Consulship, and laid open to themselves all Offices of State. They enacted, that the Plebiscita, or a Vote of the Commons, should be of universal Obligation, and assumed a Power of confirming, or disannulling a Decree of the Senate.

The Sons of Freed-Men, or even of such who had been Slaves, were admitted, by the Influence of Appius Claudius, into the Senate; a Practice, which must ever bring any superior Branch of Legislature, into Contempt with the People, who will never easily submit to the Direction of those, who are newly raised from the Dregs of the People.

These several Powers, in the Hands of the People, gave Encouragement to every bold, popular, and aspiring Man, to throw his Weight into the heavier Scale, and to sink the Privileges of the Patricians, in order to have no Check in his Designs, upon independent Power. To these Causes, and to these Motives, the Encroachments of the People and the Ambition of Particulars, was owing the Subversion of the Roman Common-Wealth, the Introduction of an arbitrary Power, and the most heavy Tyranny that ever fell upon a brave, but corrupt People. It is the Temper of the Times, that gives designing Men Opportunities, which their own Consequence could never bring about. The profligate Anthony, and Octavius, a Boy of Eighteen, undertook to enslave a great People.

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