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Richard Thomas



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Omnia mala Exempla bonis Initiis orta sunt.

Sallust.

SIR,



IN Popular and in Mixt Governments, Men have always been more watchful and sollicitous for the Publick Weal, than in Absolute and Unlimited Monarchies. Their Interest engages their Attention: And consequently where the People have a Share in the Supreme Power, it is natural for them to be jealous of their Superiors usurping upon their Rights. And, if a Free People happen (through a well or ill grounded Jealousy) to be instigated to take up Arms in Defence of their Liberties, the Intemperateness of their Zeal, with the Want of Unanimity in their Counsels, perpetually exposes them to become the Property of their Designing Leaders; who, to carry on some private Scheme of their own, frequently hurry the Multitude beyond their first Intentions; and prompt them on to such Extravagances, as effectually destroy their Privileges, by those very Measures, by which they proposed to establish them.

THE Transactions, which the *Thirtieth of January* Annually calls to Mind, sufficiently justify my Observation. The PEOPLE professedly took up Arms for no other Reason, but to defend their LIBERTIES, which they thought were invaded: And when, upon their Success, They might easily have obliged the KING to grant them a full Security against any future Attempts to their Prejudice; then did the Dexterity of their CHIEFS triumph in making the Bulk of the Nation act in direct Contradiction to their own Interests.

Peace only is the Interest of a People; War the Advantage of a Few: And though it may sometimes be necessary to have Recourse to Arms to protect the Publick Liberty; yet will the People, if they are Wise, sheath their Swords upon the first fair Offers of Satisfaction, and a Reasonable Security for the Time to come. Had the People no Dangers to apprehend, but from the Persons against whom they fight; it might, perhaps be Right in POLITICS to push their Advantages, so as to carve out for themselves a greater Portion of LIBERTY than they might in Strictness be entitled to, before the Contest began. But the Military Chiefs of their own Party, flushed with Success are the Enemies

whom they have most Reason to fear. It is with Reluctancy, that Men, used to Arms, quit their Profession: And the same Victories which secure the People against their open Adversaries, frequently raise their Captains (by the Credit they hereby obtain with the Soldiery) to such a Degree of Power, as actually enables Them to exercise a more absolute TYRANNY, than the POWERS they first resisted were supposed to have even projected. Such was the Issue of the CIVIL WARS in our MOTHER COUNTRY: And such does History shew us to have been the Fate of every People, who have needlessly entrusted their Liberties to the Discretion of a Military Power.

ALL my Readers will readily assent to the Truth of what I have observed in Respect to the Multitude; since every one will be apt, to except himself out of the Number. I shall therefore farther observe, That even the HEADS OF PARTIES, and the Men, who pretend to a superior Knowledge in Politicks, are as liable to the forementioned Failing as the meanest of the People. And indeed, all the Errors of the People are justly to be charged upon their Leaders, whose Authority carries the Vulgar (often designedly) into Mistakes, which they would otherwise avoid; And it was to such rash, aspiring Patriots, that our jealous GRANDFATHERS owed all the Misfortunes and Miseries of their Times.

MEN naturally pass from one Desire to Another: At first they only wish to be SECURE; That Effected, they endeavour to grow POWERFUL: And the Means generally chosen for their Defence, are such as render them FORMIDABLE. This Point gained, They are zealous to retort upon the AGGRESSOR the Injury which they part from Themselves. Thus after the Liberties of the PEOPLE were by a Series of Victories rescued from the Danger which was supposed to threaten them; the LEADER, actuated by Revenge (with an Apprehension of their own Ruin, if a Peace was concluded) still prosecuted the War, utterly to extirpate that REGAL POWER, which at first endeavoured to crush their Authority; and which if ever Restored, would be as able, as it was desirous to extinguish all their Hopes. The Success is well known: The LEADER of the PEOPLE, who were only versed in the Arts of

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