A History of the Revenue

from the Revolution to the present time, comprehending the ~~progressive~~ origine & Progress ~~State~~ of the Debts & Taxes, the first ~~an~~ establishment ~~account~~ of the Funds & Great Trading Companys ~~from their first Establishment~~, with the Annual Grants & Appropriations, & the net Receipts & Issues of Public Money.

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propose, & the People to pay them, but after the Accession of William & Mary the Revenue put on a new face, a certain Sum under the name of Civil List is apply'd by Parliament for the Support of the Honour & Dignity of the Throne, & given for the life of the Possessor, while all the other expences of Government are kept distinct & annualy provided for; to effect this we shall find a Committee of Supply voting the necessary Sums, & a Committee of Ways & Means settling the Manner in which these Sums are to be rais'd, & the Money strictly appropriated to the particular service it was intended for; it must however be confess'd that for some Years after this great change these Committees were not so regularly held

as they are at present, which will necessarily produce little inaccuracys in the beginning of this History.

We shall in the following pages trace the enormous debt the Nation labours under from its first beginning, & the consequential increase of grievous Taxes, from a few simple Impositions that subsisted at the Period we set out from, with the establishment, progress, & present state of the various Funds & great trading Companys, all which affecting the Nation strongly & growing more serious from day to day, we ought (in order to find a proper remedy) carefully to explore this intricate system, & the new face attending it in every Session; the task is arduous, & perhaps impossible to be made perfect, but the sole attempting it will in some measure

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In the preceeding treatice on the various Taxes and Impositions from the Conquest to the glorious Æra we now enter upon, all the accounts of any authenticity have been collected; but as the Royal State and the whole expence of Government was supported out of the Demesnes of the Crown (once very considerable) and the Taxes levied upon the People, of these last no particular account of Expenditure appeared, the Supplies granted being seldom appropriated to particular services, so that till now it has been sufficient to specify the Taxes, with the reasons inducing the Crown to propose, and the People to pay them; but after the Accession of King William and Queen Mary, the Revenue

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The materials we must work upon, are the Histories of the time, Journals, Debates, Political Pamplets, Manuscript Collections; whatever we think fit to collect out of these shall be digested according to the following Plan.

1. We premise at the beginning of every Parliament the state of the Nation, situation of Parties, Names & Characters of those employed in Government.

2. The State of Parties their different Views &c. in the House of Commons at the beginning & end of each Session.

3. The History of the Supply, this comprehends the manner in which Money Bills passed, if opposed, by what majority carried, & how relished by the City & Nation.

These are the general heads, the particular sections consist in stating

1. The total of the Supply Voted for the Year.

2. The Different Taxes imposed towards raising the said Supply.

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4. An Abstract of the Supplies, another of the Provisions with their Surpluses or Deficiences.

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7. The general State of the whole public Revenue both with regard to Receipts and Issues for the Year.

Lastly we propose giving States of the Debts and Taxes subsisting at the Accession of every Prince, the Funds allotted for paying interest, likewise the additional Debts contracted during the former Reign with the additions and alterations made in the Taxes in the course of that period.

If sufficient materials are found for the execution of this Plan, it will not only convey ~~[illegible]~~ the History of His Revenue, but also point out the errors of past administrations, shew where injudicious burthens have been laid upon the necessary materials of Manufacture, &c. and thus lead to the necessary ~~alterations that perhaps the timpu of the Ministry may not permit him to effect himself in point of fact immediate consequence~~ alterations that might be made for the salvation of Kingdom ~~& of so delicate a nature~~ but which from their delicacy ~~of~~ consequence may perhaps from the natural propensity of the People to discontent, never be put into execution.

Other things remain to be canvassed by no means foreign to the present business, but not less worthy of ~~the~~ attention ~~[illegible]~~; such as the number of Inhabitants, the productions, the proportions of Taxes in each County, how far the particular parts are susceptible of improvements in Agriculture, Manufactures, Trade &c. to what amount particular bodies of Men are affected by particular Taxes, also an exact account of the Numbers of the Poor & the proper means of providing for them, the safest remedys to prevent depopulation by the present Custom of destroying the lesser Hamlets, the enlarging the freedom of Ports to encrease Population, extend our Commerce, & augment the numbers of our Seamen; to know this is the true essential

business of a Kingdom, & a work of this nature in the least satisfactory must be compil'd from the joint Labours of many different People.

Anno. 1. William & Mary

Parl. 1. Sess. 1.

We have in the former part of this Work stated the National Debts & Forces as they existed upon the 5th of Novr. 1688. the day King William landed; let us now take a view of the internal situation of the Country at this period.

The Tyrannical conduct of King James, & the strong convulsion that produced the Revolution raised great variety of opposite and irreconcilable humours in the Nation; these existed equaly in the Convention Parliament.

Whigs and Tories made the great Devisions, the last were again distinguished into Conformists and Nonconformists; the violence of party branded

the Nonconformists indiscriminately with the names of Jacobites and Republicans.

The King was no sooner proclaimed than he began to settle his Privy Council and nominate his Ministers and other Great Officers; His choice fell on such Whigs and Tories as he had the best opinion of those he had been most obliged to, and whom the People he confided in had recommended; He supposed by employing Whigs and Tories and bestowing favours on the heads of each Party, he should attach both to himself or from their mutual fears of each other keep them in a state of dependance on him; nor did this idea seem void of foundation, for the moderate Tories were desirous of remaining at Court provided they could do it without disavowing their principles, for which purpose they attached themselves to the Queen; the King therefore expected by her interest to lead the Tories, while he depended on his own weight with the other party, but soon found that the Servants of the Crown can never separate their Allegiance from Him who

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wear it, and that in permitting them to serve two Masters there can be no tye on them but what they may owne or deny at pleasure, and that in such a case they raise their own importance by the diminution of their Masters; besides by admitting into his Councils Men of avowed enmity, he not only introduced divisions but in some measure authorized the discord that during his whole reign gave him so much disturbance.

With regard to the distribution of power, both parties appeared equally favoured in the Secretaries of State, to which Offices the Earl of Nottingham and Lord Shrewsbury were appointed, the first a high prerogative Man who had strenuously opposed the Abdicating Vote; the other one of the Lords the most instrumental in bringing about the Revolution.

The former had retired from Court in the Reign of King James, and though a Privy Councellour never attended; he acknowledged wishing well to the Revolution, yet opposed the new settlement with violence, and used to say that though he would

not

not make a King, he could obey him when made better than those that did.

The latter was bred a Papist but had changed his Religion upon thorough enquiry and conviction, a man of great honour and probity, remarkable for the sweetness of his temper, correct judgement and learning, though silent and reserved, and more in his princes favour than any other Minister.

Savile Lord Halifax was made Privy Seal and Speaker of the House of Lords; he had been also zealous in promoting the Revolution, but his former conduct on the Exclusion Bill, the opinion given in relation to the Quo warrantos, and his great alacrity in procuring the surrender of Charters, were things still fresh in every one's memory; besides it was foreseen that from his abilities, boldness, and great ambition, that it would be difficult to serve with him in any tolerable degree of equality.

Lord Danby was made President of the Council, he had accomplished the King's marriage with

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the Queen, and had shewn much zeal for the Revolution which attoned for his former notions of Passive obedience; his character and experience made him highly fit for this high Office, though he was not entirely pleased, having set his heart upon the Treasurer's staff: many of his old enemies would have wished to revive his impeachment as he was still thought to lean greatly to the prerogative.

It is remarkable that notwithstanding Nottingham, Halifax, and Danby were feared and hated by the rest of the Ministry, they were equally at variance among themselves and stood upon seperate bottoms; Nottingham

had the support of the Tories, Halifax the King's confidence & opinion, & Danby shared in both.

But to restore equality to the Whigs scale they had the whole Treasury except Lord Godolphin & all the Admiralty, ~~were in~~ ~~Menaces [illegible] of that party~~ & we find in most of the other promotions they enjoyed an Elder Brother's portion.

The Commissioners of the Treasury were Mordaunt Earl of Monmouth, Lord Delamere, Lord Godolphin & Mr. Hambden also Chancellor of the Exchequer, which last Office Burnet falsely gives to Lord Delamere; Tindal adds Sir Henry Capel.

Earl Monmouth known better by the Name of Lord Mordaunt was the first of the English Nobility that went over

to the Prince of Orange, He was a very warm Man, talked much with singular Ideas, not of sound judgement, but brave and generous, his thoughts were not digested and his secrets too easily known. He gave away the inferior places freely, but bestowed them entirely on men of Republican principles.

As for Delamere afterwards Lord Warrington He is said to have sold every thing in his power, which soon sate him at variance with Earl Monmouth.
Lord Godolphin had been in the Treasury with Lord Essex in 1679. made first Commissioner when Lord Danby was turned out in 1684. was again in Commission with the Popish Lords Bellasyse and Dover in 1686. He was the most silent, modest Man ever bred in a Court, He was Virtuous and Religious, He had great method and dispatch in business, great temper, and no personal Enemies, though

immoderately fond of gaming; He was the person of the whole Board in whom the King placed the greatest confidence.

Herbert afterwards Earl of Torington was put at the head of the Admiralty, He had by refusing to Vote for the repeal of the Test Act in last Reign, lost his places to the amount of £4000. a-year, when He went over to Holland; He had a good understanding, was an able sea officer, but proud and haughty.

The department of the Law does not properly come within our plan, it will therefore be sufficient to observe that the Great Seal was put into Commission with a view in all probability to bestow it upon Mr. Somers Solicitor General whenever a proper opportunity offered, for He was the Lawyer whom the King confided in, and who was principally

consulted in the promotions made in that profession.

Court offices are also foreign to our present purpose, the King's personal favour lay between Sidney afterwards Lord Romney and Bentinck whom He created Earl of Portland; the first was a man of a gentle temper, but too fond of pleasure for a man of business; He had however the secret correspondence and the conduct of the Prince of Orange's affairs with the party in England, that brought on the Revolution, He was made Gentleman of the Bed chamber, afterwards Secretary of State &c.

Bentinck was the person in whom the King placed the most cordial Friendship for the first ten Years of his Reign, He served him with great fidelity, but was never agreable to the Nation which was in

great measure owing to the enormous Crown Grants the King heaped upon him.

There remains yet one great personage who kept indeed at present behind the Curtain but was however thought to be the principal adviser in most of these arrangements, we mean Lord Sunderland; He is represented by Burnet as a man of clear and ready apprehension, quick decision and great superiority in business, too warm in imagination and violent passions; fond of his own opinions and very free in his language both of things and persons; He frequently changed sides, with little regard either to the religious rights, or liberty of his Country; He was very expensive and therefore forced to lay upon the Court; He had the Art of insinuating himself strongly into his

Prince's confidence; but he had so often changed his party, that want of firmness brought him into contempt, even with those that admired his abilities, besides he had many Enemies from his contemptuous Method of treating every one who differed from him in opinion.

With regard to the present plan, we have supposed him to have had some share in; however wisely drawn, it had not the desired effect, though some great Men among the Tories were employed, yet they were few in Number compared with those left out whom they had it not in their power to satisfy, and the Whigs (tho' possessed of all the Court Employments, and the ballance greatly in their favour with regard to Offices of business) were by no means satisfied and seemed

resolved to brook no partnership whatever.

We have now finished part of our intended plan for the Year, explained the different Views of Parties, and the different Channels from which the Court favour was directed, the best authorities have been taken for the Characters of the Principal Actors, and a thorough knowledge of the State of parties at the Revolution will greatly assist us in the History of several succeeding Sessions, we have treated this Subject with more prolixity, than will be necessary to do hereafter; we now come to the essential part of our plan, the History of the Supply which shall be as amply treated as the scanty materials during the first Years of this Reign will permit.

We have in a former part of this Work given exact States of the National Debts & Taxes as they existed the 5th of Nov. 1688. on the day King William landed; likewise the annual Revenue & expence of the Crown in the last Reign; nothing appears more plain than the Idea that all such Revenue granted to the Late King ceas'd upon the Vacancy of the Throne, both the Prince of Orange & the Convention seem to have understood it in this light; for we find this assembly advised his Highness to set forth a declaration for continuing the collection of the old Revenue by their Authority, which he did accordingly, & therefore received it by courtesy & not as matter of right.

Upon King James's going away £69,138 14. remained in the Exchequer which with the

growing produce of the Taxes made the entire Fund for supporting two Armies, answering the demands of the States, reducing Ireland, and forming preparations for War already determined; it became therefore necessary for the New Government to provide for its own establishment by procuring an immediate resettlement of the Revenue, and other Aids adequate to the Necessities of the State.

But however reasonable this appears, it was attended with great difficulties, the King was desirous of holding the Revenue upon the same terms his Predecessors had done; but the Whig part of his Ministry had so strongly opposed this very point in the late Reign to be able to take so opposite a part in their first setting out, the Measure was necessary but the supporting some appearance of

consistency in their conduct was not less so.

Besides the Nation had not for some time heard of additional Aids, and an unpopular measure could not be safely taken by a Government founded upon Popularity.

The first thirteen days after the Accession were employed in forming the Bill for turning the Convention into a Parliament, which received the Royal Assent Feb. the 24th.

We find upon the 26th. an ackward attempt was made for vesting the Revenue in their Majesties in the same Manner King James had enjoyed it; this does not appear in the printed Journals; but we find by the Manuscript one's a question was debated on the said 26th whether the Revenue was expired on the Vacancy of the Throne, or whether it was devolved on their Majesties, and it was

carried by one Vote to be expired.

The Commons came next to the resolution of standing by the King with their lives and fortunes in supporting His Alliances abroad, the reduction of Ireland &c. part of this Vote appears singular at present, because the Alliances hinted at, were as yet unknown to the House.

In the next place Sir Robert Hall Auditor of the Exchequer was directed to bring in States of the several Annual Branches of the Revenue towards enabling the House to form some Judgement of the intended settlement on His Majesty, and in the mean time they resolved for the present on an Aid of 66,666 19s 1. per Month for six Months the whole not to exceed £420,000.

March 1st Sir Richard Howard in compliance

with the order of the House laid before them a paper called a Computation &c. this was stated in a very loose Manner, no explanation is made of the produce of the Customs and Excise whether Gross or Net, three Farms are joined in one Article, another Farm goes with the Seizures, the 4½. Barbadoes duty, also the Hearth Money, Post Office and small Branches are not exactly stated, by which method He brings the whole Revenue to a slender sum.

The life Revenue is stated at about 1,500,964.3.4¾

The Taxes granted for a term of Years 415,473.6.10¾

Total 1,916,437.9.5½

In stating this at the end of the last Reign, we have observed that Davenant fixes King James Revenue at £2,001,655.

A Pamplet of the Year 1712. entitled a view of the Taxes Funds &c. calls it £2,200,000.

Hutchinson's Treatise upon the Funds in 1717. and 1746. goes upon this last calculation, which is in a manner admitted by his Antagonist Mr. Brookshanks of the Treasury.

We cannot finish this Article without observing that the small branches are stated at about £26,350 15 5. whereas by the Abstract laid before the Brook House Committee in 1669. they amounted to £57,000.

Upon the Whole there is some reason to suspect that Sir Robert and the Treasury were rather backward in giving the information demanded by the House, and yet such concealments are always unworthy of the dignity of Government, and we may with safety affirm that whenever the Crown permits Ministers to deviate from the real principles of truth and honour, the Prince though perhaps a Gainer by it in

the present minute, will sooner or later have reason to repent it; for the person who once banishes the nice scruples of honour for his Prince's interest, will most certainly make free with them to serve his own, though at the expence of his Master.

To return to the business of the House, The same day that the Auditor of the Exchequer was directed to bring in the accounts before mentioned, a message came from the King agreeing to the total abolition of the Hearth Money, and while this pleasing concession was still fresh in every man's memory, His Majesty called upon both Houses to make good the Treaty with the States, to reimburse their expences in the late Expedition, and to support them to the utmost against the power that threatened them.

Accordingly 600,000. was voted by the Commons.
~~This was the sum desired by the Dutch~~
~~was Voted~~ as a full satisfaction to the States General, which Grant however did not procure any thanks from the Throne; two reasons perhaps occasioned this silence; 1st. the sum was £6,500. short of the Dutch demand; 2d there had been some hints thrown out concerning the return of the Foreign Troops, for by a resolution of the 21st. of February the King was desired to bestow a donative on those forces which came over with him, and were now returning into Foreign service; be this as it will the services performed by the Dutch were great, and it did not suit the dignity of the Nation to cavel at £6,000. while upon the other hand Grants of any kind from the People certainly deserve the thanks of the Sovereign.

The business of the Revenue went on though slowly, the House called for an Account

of the public Taxes during the two preceeding Reigns; these were accordingly laid before them, and it appeared that the expenditure on a medium of three Years amounted in King Charles's time to £1,399,363.2.9. & in K. James's to £1,699,363.2.9. the difference owing to the expence of the Army being £600,000. in the one Reign, and only £300,000. in the other.

The House entered into a long discussion of the different Articles, and at last Voted £1,200,000. as the Constant necessary charge for the support of the Crown in time of Peace, (which was the identical Sum fixed upon by the Convention at the Restoration)

They next proceeded to appropriate the said Revenue to the different Services, by which it appeared that the Sum condescended upon would by no means prove sufficient to answer the purposes of Government, the Services were as follow.

For a Summer & Winter Guard in time of Peace consisting of 3. third Rates, 25. fourths 6. fifths 4. fire Ships, 6. Yachts, and 2. Ketches with the complement of 7,040. Men ..... £306,080.

For Ordnance Stores ..... 22,600.

For the Ordnary of the Navy ..... 130,000.

For the Ordnary of the Ordnance .... 14,250.

For Guards and Garrisons (the word forces used by the Committee having been rejected on the Report by a Great Majority) ..... 200,000.

For the Civil List ..... 600,000.

In all .... 1,336,940.

The House had before this come to the unanimous Resolution that the late King's Revenue should be continued to Midsummer 1689. which was afterwards further continued to the Christmas following and in the Act repealing the Hearth Money they directed it to be paid with the Arrears to the 25th of March 1689.

In their other proceedings on the Revenue the House acted with great oeconomy and deliberation, the new taxes granted were immediately saddled with the Debt due to the Dutch and King Charles's servants.

They examined in the same cautious manner the estimates laid before them for the Fleet and Army intended to reduce Ireland; the expence of the Land forces was calculated for 12. Months, which they reduced to 6. certain and voted the remainder only in case the War continued so long, which appears very singular, as they were on the point of addressing the King to declare War against France; they also diminished the sum asked for the Navy above £400,000.

The Court impatient at the slowness of their proceedings endeavoured to quicken them by a message on the 20th. of June putting them in mind at the same time that the current charge would

much exceed the provisions; that by the year's accounts laid before them they might perceive that the service of the Fleet and Land Forces had absorbed almost the whole Revenue; this produced no other effect than an ordinary Vote of thanks, so that upon the 12th. of July following they received another message from the King desiring them to put an end to their proceedings on the raising of money till their next Meeting, with assurances that what had been given should be applied to their satisfaction.

They continued after this sitting till the 20th. of August employed chiefly in party matters relative to the Church &c.

The Act for payment of the States and the debt due to Charles II. Servants received the Royal Assent on that day, and then both Houses were in the King's name by the Privy Seal desired to adjourn themselves till the 20th. of September.

Thus ended this Session by no means to the liking of the Court, which the King did not conceal by choosing to dismiss them in silence owing no doubt to the slow

proceedings

proceedings of the Commons on the Money Bills, which as some Authors observe was more the effect of discontent in the Whigs than any opposition in the Tories who were generally silent; that the former were the active men is certain, but their cautious proceedings in a business of such consequence was Constitutional, highly meritorious, and suitable to the duty as well as dignity which the Representatives of a Free people ought to exert and maintain, and happy had it been for this Nation if Succeeding Parliaments had followed in this particular the wise example set them by this first Session of King William's Reign

We shall now proceed to the supply of this session which will come within a small compass owing to the irregular proceedings of the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means as was before mentioned.

The supply amounted this session to about
This was proposed to be raised by

C.3. 1. An Act granting a present Aid to their Majesties

C.13. 2. ~~An~~ a Poll Tax.

C.14. 3. ~~An~~ an Act granting their Majesties all the Revenues except Hearth Money subsisting the 5th of November 1688.

C.20. 4. ~~An~~ a Land tax.

C.24. 5. An Act granting an Additional Excise

C.28. 6. An Act appropriating Certain Duties for paying the States General

By the 1st. was imposed a monthly assessment of 60, £20.19.1. for 6. Months with a clause of Loan for £300,000. to be borrowed at ~~Six~~ per Cent encreased afterwards to Seven. by the Poll tax Act.

By the 2d. a Poll tax Act was Granted with an addition upon People of Quality, Offices, and Moneyed Estates, with a clause of Loan for £300,000. at Seven per Cent.

By the 3d. all the Royal Revenues subsisting upon the 5th. of Nov. 1688. except Hearth Money were granted to the 25th. of December 1689.

By the 4th. ~~4d.~~ a one shilling in the pound Land tax passed with a clause of Loan not exceeding £300,000.

By the 5th. an Additional Excise was laid upon Beer, Ale, Cyder for 3. Years from the 24th. of July 1689. without any specific sum mentioned.

By the 6th a part of the Duties upon Tobacco and Sugar that formed the Seventh Branch of the old Revenue was mortgaged for 3. Years for payment of 60,000L due to Charles II. servants; by the same Act the 6th and 8th Branches of the Old Revenue containing the Duties upon Wine and Vinegar, French Linnen, Brandys &c. with the additional Excise of the 5th Money Act of this Session were all mortgaged for the payment of the Dutch Bill of 600,000L.

Here then begins the first anticipation of the Revenue though without interest.

Besides these Acts two other Bills passed the Commons that were lost by disputes between the two Houses.

The 1st was a Supplement made to the Poll tax, which meeting with some alterations in the House of Lords, and the Commons disagreeing, the Bill was droped; by this Trades People

worth £500. and upwards were to be taxed like Gentlemen; there was also a clause for taxing the Fees of Court and Chancery by Commissioners.

The other Bill was for charging and collecting the Duties upon Coffee Tea &c. to this the Lords added a clause for a drawback upon Exportation that was rejected by the other House.

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Sum under the name of Civil List was applyd by Parliament for the support of the Honour & Dignity of the Throne, & given for the life of the Possessor, while all the other expences of Government were kept distinct & annualy provided for; to effect this a Committee of Supply was appointed to vote the necessary Sums, & a Committee of Ways & Means to direct the mode of levying these Sums, & the Money strictly appropriated to the particular services it was intended for; it must however be confessd that for some Years after this great change these Committees were not so regularly held as they are at present, which produce inaccuracys in the materials from where we draw this History.

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