



An Argument Shewing, that a Standing Army is inconsistent with a Free Government, and absolutely destructive to the Constitution of the English Monarchy

BY
JOHN TRENCHARD
with
WALTER MOYLE

LONDON;
Printed in the Year 1697.

John Trenchard (1662-1723), English writer and Commonwealth man, belonged to the same Dorset family as the Secretary of State Sir John Trenchard.

Trenchard was educated at Trinity College, Dublin. As he inherited considerable wealth, Trenchard was able to devote the greater part of his life to writing on political subjects, his approach being that of a Whig and an opponent of the High Church party. His works include *A Short History of Standing Armies in England* 1698 and 1731 and *The Natural History of Superstition* 1709. Along with Thomas Gordon he published *The Independent Whig*, a weekly periodical. From 1720 to 1723, Trenchard, again with Thomas Gordon, wrote a series of 144 essays entitled [Cato's Letters](#), condemning corruption and lack of morality within the British political system and warning against tyranny. The essays were published as *Essays on Liberty, Civil and Religious*, first in the *London Journal* and then in the *British Journal*. These essays became a cornerstone of the Commonwealth men tradition. From 1722 until his death in 1723 Trenchard was also a member of Parliament from Taunton.

When I consider what a dismal scene of blood and desolation hath appeared upon the theatre of Europe during the growth and progress of the French power, I cannot sufficiently applaud and admire our thrice happy situation, by which we have long enjoyed an uninterrupted course of peace and prosperity, whilst our neighboring nations have been miserably harassed by perpetual war: For lying open to continual invasion, they can never enjoy quiet and security, nor take a sound sleep, but, Hercules like, with clubs in

their hands: So that these halcyon days which we enjoy amidst such an universal hurricane, must be solely attributed to our tutelar god Neptune, who with a guard of winged coursers so strongly intrenches us, that we may be said to be *media insuperabiles unda*, and not unfitly compared to the earth, which stands fixed and immoveable, and never to be shaken but by an internal convulsion. And as nature has been thus liberal to us in our situation, so the luxuriance of our soil makes it productive of numerous commodities fit for trade and commerce: And as this trade renders us masters of the silver and gold of the east and west without our toiling in the mine, so it breeds us multitudes of able-bodied and skillful seamen to defend the treasures they bring home, that even luxury itself which has been the bane and destruction of most countries where it has been predominant, may in some measure be esteemed our preservation, by breeding up a race of men among us, whose manner of life will never suffer them to be debauched, or enervated with ease or idleness. But we have one thing more to boast of besides all these felicities, and that is, of being freemen and not slaves in this unhappy age, when an universal deluge of tyranny has overspread the face of the whole earth; so that this is the ark out of which if the dove be sent forth, she will find no resting place till her return.

Our Constitution is a limited mixed monarchy, where the king enjoys all the prerogatives necessary to the support of his dignity, and protection of his people, and is only abridged from the power of injuring his own subjects: In short, the man is loose, and the beast only bound; and our government may truly be called an empire of laws, and not of men for every man has the same right to what he can acquire by his labor and industry, as the king hath to his crown, and the meanest subject hath his remedy against him in his courts at Westminster: No Man can be imprisoned, unless he has transgressed a law of his own making, nor be tried but by his own neighbors; so that we enjoy a liberty scarce known to the ancient Greeks, and Romans.

And less the extraordinary power intrusted in the crown should lean towards arbitrary government, or the tumultuary licentiousness of the people should incline towards a democracy, the wisdom of our ancestors hath instituted a middle state, viz. of nobility whose interest is to trim this boat of our Commonwealth, and to screen the people against the insults of the prince, and the prince against the popularity of the Commons, since if either extreme prevail so far as to oppress the other, they are sure to be overwhelmed in

their ruin. And the meeting of these three states in Parliament is what we call our government: for without all their consents no law can be made, nor a penny of money levied upon the subjects; so that the king's necessities do often oblige him to summon this court, which is the grand inquest of the kingdom, where the people speak boldly their grievances, and call to account overgrown criminals, who are above the reach of ordinary justice: so that the excellence of this government consists in the due balance of the several constituent parts of it, for if either one of them should be too hard for the other two, there is an actual dissolution of the Constitution; but whilst we can continue in our present condition, we may without vanity reckon ourselves the happiest people in the world.

But as there is no degree of human happiness but is accompanied with some defects, and the strongest constitutions are most liable to certain diseases; so the very excellence of our government betrays it to some inconvenience, the wheels and motions of it being so curious and delicate that it is often out of order, and therefore we ought to apply our utmost endeavors to rectify and preserve it: and I am afraid it is more owing to the accident of our situation, than to our own wisdom, integrity or courage, that it has yet a being; when we see most nations in Europe overrun with oppression and slavery, where the lives, estates and liberties of the people are subject to the lawless fancy and ambition of the prince, and the rapine and indolence of his officers; where the nobility, that were formerly the bold assertors of their countries liberty, and now only the ensigns and ornaments of the tyranny, and the people beasts of burden, and barely kept alive to support the luxury and prodigality of their masters.

And if we enquire how these unhappy nations have lost that precious jewel *liberty*, and we as yet preserved it, we shall find their miseries and our happiness proceed from this, that their necessities or indiscretion have permitted a standing army to be kept amongst them, and our situation rather than our prudence, hath as yet defended us from it, otherwise we had long since lost what is the most valuable thing under heaven: For, as I said before, our Constitution depending upon a due balance between King, Lords and Commons, and that balance depending upon the mutual occasions and necessities they have of one another; if this cement be once broke, there is an annual dissolution of the government. Now this balance can never be preserved but by an union of the natural and artificial strength of the

kingdom, that is, by making the militia to consist of the same persons as have the property; or otherwise the government is violent and against nature, and cannot possibly continue, but the Constitution must either break the army, or the army will destroy the Constitution: for it is universally true, that wherever the militia is, there is or will be the government in a short time; and therefore the institutors of this Gothick balance (which was established in all parts of Europe) made the militia to consist of the same parts as the government, where the king was general, the Lords by virtue of their castles and honors, the great commanders and the freeholders by their tenures the body of the army; so that it was next to impossible for an army thus constituted to act to the disadvantage of the Constitution, unless we could suppose them to be felons de se. And here I will venture to assert that upon no other foundation than this, can any nation long preserve its freedom, unless some very particular accidents contribute to it; and I hope I shall make it appear, that no nation ever preserved its liberty, that maintained an army otherwise constituted within the seat of their government: and let us flatter ourselves as much as we please, what happened yesterday, will come to pass again; and the same causes will produce like effects in all ages.

And here I can't avoid taking notice of some gentlemen who a few years since were the pretended patriots of their country, who had nothing in their mouths but the sacred name of liberty, who in the late reigns could hardly afford the king the prerogative that was due to him, and which was absolutely necessary to put in motion this machine of our government, and to make the springs and wheels of it act naturally, and perform their function: I say, these gentlemen that could not with patience hear of the king's ordinary guards, can now discourse familiarly of twenty thousand men to be maintained in times of peace; and the odious excuse they give for this infamous apostacy is: That if they should not gratify the court in this modest request, another party may be caressed who will grant this, or anything else which is asked, and then they say matters will be much worse as if arbitrary government was a different thing in their hands, from what it is in others, or that the lineaments and features of tyranny would become graceful and lovely when they are its *Valet de Chambres*. But let them not deceive themselves, for if they think to make their court this way, they will quickly find themselves outflattered by the party they fear, who have been long the darlings of arbitrary power, and whose principles as well as practices teach them to be

enemies to all the legal rights, and just liberties of their native country; and so these wretched bunglers will be made use of only to bring together the materials of tyranny, and then must give place to more expert architects to finish the building.

And tho we are secure from any attempts of this kind during the reign of a prince who hath reduced us from a captivity equal to what Moses redeemed the people of Israel from; A prince whose life is so necessary to the preservation of Europe, that both Protestant and Popish princes have forgot their ancient maxims, and laid aside their innate animosities, and made it their common interest to choose him their patron and protector: A prince in whom we know no vices but what have been esteemed virtues in others, viz., his undeserved clemency to his enemies, and his exposing too much that life upon which depends not only our safety, but the liberties of all Europe, and the Protestant religion through the world: I say, was this most excellent prince to be immortal (as his great and glorious actions) we ought in common prudence to abandon all thoughts of self-preservation, and wholly to rely on his care and conduct. But since no virtue nor pitch of glory will exempt him from paying the common debt to nature, but death hath a sythe which cuts off the most noble lives; we ought not to intrust any power with him, which we don't think proper to be continued to his successors: and doubtless our great benefactor will not regret this, or anything else that can reasonably be demanded in order to complete that deliverance so far advanced by his invincible courage and conduct for to let us, like Moses, within view of the promised Land, with a *ne plus ultra*, is the greatest of all human infelicities, and such that always take our case to be, whilst a standing army must be kept up to prey upon our entrails, and which must in the hands of an ill prince (which we have the misfortune frequently to meet with) infallibly destroy our Constitution. And this is so evident and important a truth, that no legislator ever founded a free government, but avoided this *Caribdis*, as a rock against which his Commonwealth must certainly be shipwrecked, as the Israelites, Athenians, Corinthians, Archaians, Lacedemonians, Thebans, Samnites, and Romans; none of which nations whilst they kept their liberty were ever known to maintain any soldiers in constant pay within their cities, or ever suffered any of their subject to make war their profession well knowing that the sword and sovereignty will march hand in hand, and therefore they trained their own citizens and the territories about them perpetually in arms, and their

whole Commonwealths by this means became so many several formed militias: A general exercise of the best of their people in the use of arms, was the only bulwark of their liberties; this was reckoned the surest way to preserve them both at home and abroad, the people being secured thereby as well against the domestic affronts of any of their own citizens, as against the foreign invasions of ambitious and unruly neighbors. Their arms were never lodged in the hands of any who had not an Interest in preserving the public peace, who sought *pro aris & focis*, and thought themselves, sufficiently paid by repelling invaders, that they might with freedom return to their own affairs. In those days there was no difference between the citizen, the soldier, and the husbandman, for all promiscuously took arms when the publick safety required it, and afterwards laid them down with more alacrity than they took them up: So that we find amongst the Romans the best and bravest of their generals came from the plough, contentedly returning when the work was over, and never demanded their triumphs till they had laid down their commands, and reduced themselves to the state of private men. Nor do we find that this famous Commonwealth ever permitted a deposition of their arms in any other hands, till their Empire increasing, necessity constrained them to erect a constant stipendiary soldiery abroad in foreign parts, either for the holding or winning of provinces: Then luxury increasing with dominion, the strict rule and discipline of freedom soon abated, and forces were kept up at home, which soon proved of such dangerous consequence, that the people were forced to make a law to employ them at a convenient distance; which was, that if any general marched over the river Rubicon, he should be declared a publick enemy : and in the passage of that river this following inscription was erected *Imperator sive miles, sive Tyannus armatus quisquis sistito, vexillumq; armaq; deponiso, nec citra hunc amnem trajicito*: and this made Cesar when he had presumed to pass this river, to think of nothing but pressing on to the total oppression of the Empire, which he shortly after obtained.

Nor, as I said before, did any nation deviate from these rules but they lost their liberty and of this kind there are infinite examples, out of which I shall give a few in several ages, which are most known, and occur to every ones reading.

The first example I shall give is of *Pisitratu*s, who artificially prevailing with the Athenians to allow him fifty guards for the defense of his person, he so

improved that number, that he seized upon the castle and government, destroyed the Commonwealth, and made himself tyrant of Athens.

The Corinthians being in apprehension of their enemies, made a decree for four hundred men to be kept to defend their city, and gave *Tymophanes* the command over them, who overturned their government, cut off all the principal citizens, and proclaimed himself king of Corinth.

Agathocles being the captain general of the Syracusians, got such an interest in the army, that he cut all the senators to pieces, and the richest of the people, and made himself their king.

The Romans for fear of the *Teutones and Cimbri*, who like vast inundations threatened their Empire, chose *Marius*, their general, and, contrary to the constitution of their government, continues him, five years in his command, which gave him such opportunity to insinuate, and gain an interest in their army, that he oppressed their liberty: and to this were owing all the miseries, massacres, and ruins which that city suffered under him and *Sylla*, who made the best blood in the world run like water in the streets of Rome, and turned the whole city into a shambles of the nobility, gentry and people.

The same thing enabled *Cesar* totally to overthrow that famous commonwealth for the prolongation of his commission in Gaul gave him an opportunity to debauch his army, and then upon a pretended disgust he marched to drive out the senators, seized the treasury, fought their forces, and made himself perpetual dictator.

Olivarotto di Fermo desired leave of his fellow citizens, that he might be admitted into their town with a hundred horse of his companions which being granted, he put to the sword all the principal citizens, and proclaimed himself their prince.

Francis Sforza being general of the Milanese, usurped upon them, and made himself Duke of Milan.

After *Christiern* the second king of Denmark had conquered Sweden, he invited all the senators and nobility to a magnificent entertainment, where

after he had treated them highly for two days, he most barbarously butchered them. None escaped this massacre but the brave *Gustavus Ericson*, who was then a prisoner; but he afterwards escaping through a thousand difficulties, by his good fortune, courage and conduct, drove the Danes out of Sweden, and restored the Swedes to their ancient kingdom. Nothing then was thought too great for their generous deliverer, every mouth was full of his praises, and by the universal voice of the people he was chosen their king; and to consummate the last testimony of their gratitude, they trusted him with an army: but they soon found their mistake, for it cost them their liberty and having granted that *unum magnum*, it was too late to dispute anything else: His successors having been pleased to take all the rest, and now they remain the miserable examples of too credulous generosity.

The story of Denmark is so generally known, and so well related by a late excellent author, that it would be impertinence in me to repeat it; only this I will observe, that if the king had not had an army at his command, the nobles had never delivered up their government.

Our countryman *Oliver Cromwell* turned out that Parliament under which he served, and who had got immortal honor through the whole world by their great actions; and this he effected by the assistance of an army, which must be allowed to have had as much virtue, sobriety, and publick spirit, as hath been known in the world since amongst that sort of men.

The last instance I shall give, is of a French colony, as I remember in the West-Indies, who having war with the neighboring Indians, and being tired in their march with the extremity of heat, made their slaves carry their arms, who taking that opportunity fell upon them, and cut them to pieces: a just punishment for their folly. And this will always be the fate of those that trust their arms out of their own hands: for it is a ridiculous imagination to conceive men will be servants, when they can be masters. And as Mr. Harrington judiciously observes, Whatever nation suffers their servants to carry their arms, their servants will make them hold their trenchers.

Some people object, that the Republics of Venice and Holland are instances to disprove my assertion, who both keep great armies, and yet have not lost their liberty. I answer, that neither keep any standing forces within the Seats

of their government, that is, within the City of Venice, Venice, or the great towns of the United Provinces; but they defend these by their own burghers, and quarter their mercenaries in their conquered countries, viz. the Venetians in Greece, and the Continent of Italy, and the Dutch in Brabant and Flanders; and the situation of these states makes their armies, so posted, not dangerous to them; for the Venetians cannot be attacked without a fleet, nor the Dutch be conquered by their own forces, their country being so full of strong towns, fortified both by art and nature, and defended by their own citizens, that it would be a fruitless attempt for their own armies to invade them; for if they should march against any of their cities, 'tis but shutting up their gates, and the design is spoiled.

But if we admit that an army might be consistent with freedom in a commonwealth, yet it is otherwise in a free monarchy; for in the former 'tis wholly in the disposal of the people, who nominate, appoint, discard, and punish the generals and officers as they think fit, and 'tis certain death to make any attempt upon their liberties; whereas in the latter, the King is perpetual general, may model the army as he pleases, and it will be called high-treason to oppose him.

And tho some princes, as the family of the Medices, Lewis the XI, and others laid the foundation of their tyrannies without the immediate assistance of an army, yet they all found an army necessary to establish them; or otherwise a little experience in the people of the change of their condition, would have made them disgorge in a day that ill-gotten power they had been acquiring for an Age.

This subject is so self-evident, that I am almost ashamed to prove it: for if we look through the world, we shall find in no country, liberty and an army stand together; so that to know whether a people are free or slaves, it is necessary only to ask, whether there is an army kept amongst them? and the solution of that preliminary question resolves the doubt: as we see in China, India, Tartary, Persia, Ethiopia, Turkey, Morocco, Moscovy, Austria, France, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, Tuscany, and all the little Principalities of Germany and Italy, where the people live in the most abandoned slavery and in countries where no armies are kept within the seat of their government, the people are free, as Poland, Biscay, Switzerland, the Grisons, Venice, Holland, Genoa, Ragusa, Algeria, Tunis, Hamborg, Lubeck, all the free

towns in Germany, and England and Scotland before the late Reigns. This Truth is so obvious, that the most barefaced advocates for an army do not directly deny it, but qualify the matter by telling us, that a number not exceeding fifteen or twenty thousand men are a handful to so populous a nation as this: Now I think that Number will bring as certain ruin upon us, as if they were as many millions, and I will give my reasons for it.

It's the misfortune of all countries, that they sometimes lie under an unhappy necessity to defend themselves by arms against the ambition of their governors, and to fight for what is their own; for if a prince will rule us with a rod of iron, and invade our laws and liberties, and neither be prevailed upon by our miseries, supplications, or tears, we have no power upon earth to appeal to, and therefore must patiently submit to our bondage, or stand upon our own defense; which if we are enabled to do, we shall never be put upon it, but our swords may grow truly in our hands: for that nation is surest to live in peace, that is most capable of making war; and a man that hath a sword by his side, shall have least occasion to make use of it. Now I say, if the king hath twenty thousand men beforehand with us, or much less than half that number, the people can make no effort to defend their liberties, without the assistance of a foreign power, which is a remedy most commonly as bad as the disease and if we have not a power within ourselves to defend our laws, we are no government.

For England being a small country, few strong towns in it, and those in the king's hands, the nobility disarmed by the destruction of tenures, and the militia not to be raised but by the king's command, there can be no force levied in any part of England, but must be destroyed in its infancy by a few regiments: For what will three or four thousand naked and unarmed men signify against as many troops of mercenary soldiers? What if they should come into the field, and say you must choose these and these men your representatives; where is your choice? What if they should say, Parliaments are seditious and factious assemblies, and therefore ought to be abolished; What is become of our freedom? Or if they should encompass the Parliament-House, and threaten if they do not surrender up their government, they will put them to the sword; What is become of the old English Constitution? These things may be, and have been done in several parts of the world. What is it that causeth the tyranny of the Turks at this day,

but servants in arms? What is it that preserved the glorious Commonwealth of Rome, but swords in the hands of its citizens?

And if besides this, we consider the great prerogatives of the crown, and the vast interest the king has and may acquire by the distribution of so many profitable offices of the household, of the revenue, of state, of law, of religion, and the navy, together with the assistance of a powerful party, who have been always the fast and consist friends to arbitrary power whose only quarrel to his present majesty, was that he has knocked off the chains and fetters they thought they had locked fast upon us; a party, who hath once engaged us in a unhappy quarrel amongst ourselves (the consequences which I dread to name) and since in a tedious and chargeable war, at the vast expense of blood and treasure, to avoid that captivity they had prepared for us: I say, if any one considers this, he will be convinced that we have enough to do to guard ourselves against the power of the court, without having an army thrown into the scale against us: and we have found oftner than once by too fatal experience the truth of this; for if we look back to the late reigns, we shall see this nation brought to the brink of destruction, and breathing out the last gasp of their liberty; and it is more owing to our good fortune, than to any effort we were able to make, that we escaped the fatal blow.

And I believe no man will deny, but if Charles the First had had five thousand men beforehand with us, the people had never struck a stroke for their Liberties; or if the late King James would have been contented with arbitrary power without bringing in Popery, but he and his black guard would have bound his hand and foot before this time: But when their ill-contrived oppression came home to their own doors, they quickly showed the world how different a thing it was to flatter themselves, and to make other people suffer, and so we came by our deliverance; and tho the late king had the nobility, gentry, clergy, people, and his own army against him, and we had a very wise and courageous prince nearly related to the crown, and backed by a powerful state, for our protector, yet we account this revolution next to a miracle.

I will add here, that most of the nations I instanced before were enslaved by small armies: Oliver Cromwell left behind him but 17,000 men; and the Duke

of Monmouth, who was the darling of the people, was suppressed with two thousand; nay, Cesar seized Rome itself with five thousand, and fought the Battle of Pharsalia, where the fate of the world was decided, with twenty two thousand; and most of the revolutions of the Roman and Ottoman Empires since were caused by the Pretorian Bands, and the Court-Janizaries; the former of which never exceeded eight, nor the latter twelve thousand men: And if no greater numbers could make such disturbances in those vast empires, what will double the force do with us? And they themselves confess it, when they argue for an army; for they tell us we may be surprised with ten or fifteen thousand men from France, and having no regular force to oppose them, they will overrun the kingdom. Now if so small a force can oppose the king, the militia, with the united power of the nobility, gentry and commons, what will an equal power do against the people, when supported by the royal authority, and a never-failing interest that will attend it, except when it acts for the publick good?

But we are told this army is not designed to be made a part of our Constitution, but to be kept only for a little time, till the circumstances of Europe will better permit us to be without them. But I would know of these gentlemen, when they think that time will be? Will it be during the life of King James, or after his death? Shall we have less to fear from the youth and vigor of the pretended Prince of Wales, than now from an unhappy man sinking under the load of age and misfortunes? Or will France be more capable of offending us just after this tedious and consumptive war, than hereafter when it has had a breathing time to repair the calamities it has suffered by it? No: we can never disband our army with so much safety as at this time; and this is well known by these conspirators against their country, who are satisfied that a continuation of them now, is an establishment of them forever: for whilst the circumstances of Europe stand in the present posture, the argument will be equal to continue them; if the state of Europe should alter to the advantage of France, the reason will grow stronger, and we shall be told we must increase our number: but if there should be such a turn of affairs in the world, that we were no longer in apprehension of the French power, they may be kept up without our assistance; nay, the very discontents they may create shall be made an argument for the continuing of them. But, if they should be kept from oppressing the people, in a little time they will grow habitual to us, and almost become a part of our Constitution,

and by degrees we shall be brought to believe them not only not dangerous, but necessary; for everybody sees, but few understand, and those few will never be able to persuade the multitude that there is any danger in those men they have lived quietly with for some years, especially when the disbanding them will (as they will be made believe) cost them more money out of their own pockets to maintain a militia, and of this we have had already an unhappy experience. For Charles the Second being connived at in keeping a few guards (which were the first ever known to an English King besides his Pensioners, and his Beef-eaters) he sensibly increased their number, till he left a body of men to his successor great enough to tell the Parliament, he would be no longer bound by the laws he had sworn to; and under the shelter and protection of these he raised an army; that had put a period to our government, if a complication of causes (which may never happen again) had not presented the Prince of Orange with a conjuncture to assert his own and the nation's rights. And tho we have so lately escaped this precipice, yet habit has made soldiers so familiar to us, that some will pretend to be zealous for liberty, speak of it as a hardship to his present majesty, to refuse him as many men as his predecessors, not considering that the raising them then was a violation of our laws, and that his government is built upon the destruction of theirs, and can no more stand upon the same rubbish, than the kingdom of heaven be founded in unrighteousness.

But the conspirators say, we need be in no apprehensions of slavery whilst we keep the power of the purse in our own hands: which is very true; but they do not tell us that he has the power of raising money, to whom no one dares refuse it.

Arma tenenti
Omnia dat quie justa negat.

For 'tis as certain that an army will raise money, as that money will raise an army; but if this course be too desperate, 'tis but shutting up the Exchequer, and disobliging a few tally-jobbers (who have bought them for fifty per cent discount) and there will be near three millions a year ready cut and dried for them: and whoever doubts whether such a method as this is practicable, let him look back to the reign of Charles the Second. And I am afraid the officers

of the exchequer have not much reason to value themselves for their payments in this reign; at least the purchasers of the annuities are of that opinion and would be apt to entertain some unreasonable suspicions, if they had not greater security from his majesty's virtue than the justice of such ministers. But if we could suppose (whatever is the fate of other countries) that our courtiers design nothing but the publick good, yet we ought not to hazard such unusual virtue, by leading it into temptation, which is part of our daily duty to pray against. But I am afraid we don't live in an age of miracles, especially of that sort; our heroes are made of a coarser alloy, and have too much dross mixed with their constitutions for such refined principles: for in the little experience I have had in the world, I have observed most men to do as much mischief as lay in their power, and therefore am for dealing with them as we do with children and mad men, that is, take away all weapons by which they may do either themselves or others an injury: As I think the sheep in Boccacine made a prudent address to Apollo, when they desired, that for the future wolves might have no teeth.

When all other arguments fail, they call to their Assistance the old tyrant necessity, and tell us the power of France is so great, that let the consequence of an army be what it will, we cannot be without one; and if we must be slaves, we had better be so to a Protestant prince than a king. Now I am of Mr. Johnson's opinion, that the putting an epithet upon tyranny is a false heraldry; for Protestant and Popish are both alike; and if I must be a Slave, it is very indifferent to me who is my master, and therefore I shall never consent to be ruled by an army, which is the worst that the most barbarous conquest can impose upon me; which notwithstanding we have little reason to fear whilst we keep the seas well guarded.

It is certain there is no country so situated for naval power as England. The sea is our element, our seamen have as much hardy bravery, and our ships are as numerous, and built of as good materials as any in the world: Such a force well applied and managed is able to give laws to the universe; and if we keep a competent part of it well armed in times of peace, it is the most ridiculous thing in nature to believe any prince will have thoughts of invading us, unless he proposes to be superior to us in naval power: For the preparations necessary for such an undertaking will alarm all Europe, give both to us and our confederates time to arm, and put ourselves in a posture of defense. And whoever considers that the Prince of Orange with six

hundred ships brought but fourteen thousand Men, and the mighty Spanish Armada (then the terror of the world) embarked but eighteen thousand, he will be assured that no invasion can be so sudden upon us, but we shall have time to get ready our whole fleet, bring some forces from Scotland and Ireland, and prepared our own militia if there shall be occasion for it; especially in times of peace, when we shall have the liberty of all ports of France, and shall or may have intelligence from every one of them.

But they tell us such a wind may happen as may be favorable to our enemy, and keep us within our own ports; which I say, as France lies to England, is almost impossible: for if we lie about Falmouth, or the Land's end, no fleet from Brest or the ocean can escape us without a miracle; and if the designed be to invade us from any ports in the Channel, a very few ships (which may safely lie at anchor) will certainly prevent it: nor is it to be conceived that that cautious prince will be a vast expense for the contingency of such a critical wind, or will send an army into a country where their retreat is certainly cut off, when the failing in any part of his design will bring a new war upon him, which lately cost a third part of his people, a great many large countries and strong towns, with all the honor he had heaped up by his former victories, to get rid of.

And here I must confess, that the misapplication of our naval force (which is our known strength) for these last eight years, is the strongest, as it is the most usual argument against me: which unriddles a mystery I did not understand before, tho I never was so foolish as to believe all the errors of that kind were the effects of chance or ignorance, or that losing so many opportunities of destroying the French fleet had not some extraordinary, the occult cause; and yet, notwithstanding the restless attempt of our enemies, and the paltry politicks of our own wretched St— n, this fleet triumphantly defended us, so that our enemies in eight years war could not get one opportunity of invading our country.

It's objected, that the officers of our fleet may be corrupted, or that a storm may arise which may destroy it all at once, and therefore we ought to have two strings to our bow. By which I perceive all their fears lie one way, and that they do not care if they precipitate us into inevitable ruin at home, to prevent a distant possibility of it from France. But I think this phantom too may be laid by a well-trained militia, and then all their bugbears will vanish.

This word can be no sooner out, but there is a volley of small shot let fly at me: What! must we trust our safety to an undisciplined mob, who never dreamed of fighting when they undertook the service; who are not inured to the fatigue of a camp, or ever saw the face of an enemy? And then they magnify mercenary troops, as if there was an intrinsic virtue in a red coat, or that a raggamuffin from robbing of henroosts, in two campaigns could be cudgeled into a hero. Tho I must confess the conduct of the court in industriously enervating this force, does in some measure justify their objections; For the detestable policies of the last reigns were with the utmost art and application to disarm the people, and make the militia useless, to countenance a standing army in order to bring in popery and slavery; and if any methods were proposed to make it more serviceable, the court would never suffer them to be debated; and such officers as were more zealous in exercising their companies than others, were reprimanded, as if they designed to raise a Rebellion. And now the worthy patriots of this reign are taking advantage of the traitorous neglect and infamous policies of the last. But why may not a militia be made useful? Why may not the nobility, gentry, and free-holders of England be trusted with the defense of their own lives, estates and liberties, without having guardians and keepers assigned them? And why may they not defend them with as much vigor and courage as mercenaries who have nothing to lose, nor any other tie to engage their fidelity, than the inconsiderable pay of six-pence a day, which they may have from the conqueror?

Why may not the Laws for shooting in crossbows be changed into firelocks, and a competent number of them be kept in every parish for the young men to exercise with on holidays, and rewards offered to the most expert, to stir up their emulation?

Why may not the whole militia of England be reduced to fifty thousand, and a third part of those kept by turns in constant exercise?

Why may not a man be listed in the militia till he be discharged by his master, as well as in the army till he be discharged by his captain? And why may not the same horse he always sent forth, unless it can be made appear he is dead or maimed ?

Why may not the private soldiers of the army, when they are dispersed in the several parts of the kingdom, be sent to the militia? And why may not the inferior officers the army in some proportion command them?

I say, these and other like things may be done, and some of them are done in our own plantations, and the Islands of Jersey and Guernsey, as also in Poland, Switzerland, and the country of the Grisons which are nations much less considerable than England, have as formidable neighbors, no sea nor fleet to defend them, nothing but a militia to defend upon, and yet no one dares attack them: And we have seen as great performances done formerly by the apprentices of London, and in the late war by the Vandois in Savoy, the Miquelets in Catalonia, and the militia in Ireland, as can be paralleled in history: And so it would be with us, if the court would give their hearty assistance in promoting this design; if the king would appear in person at the head of them, and give rewards and honor to such as deserve them, we should quickly see the young nobility and gentry appear magnificent in arms and equipage, show a generous emulation in outvying one another in military exercises, and place a noble ambition in making themselves serviceable to their country as anciently the Achaians and Thebans from being the most contemptible Nations in Greece, by the Conduct of Pelopidas, Eparminondas, and Philopemen, came to have the disciplined troops and most excellent soldiers in the world.

They object, that such a militia as this is a standing army, and will be as dangerous, and much more chargeable. I answer;

That there can be no danger from an army where the nobility and chief gentry of England are the commanders, and the body of it made up of the freeholders, their sons and servants; unless we can conceive that the nobility and gentry will join in an unnatural design to make void their own titles to their estates and liberties: and if they could entertain so ridiculous a proposition, they would never be obeyed by the soldiers, who will have a respect to those that send them forth and pay them, and to whom they must return again when their time is expired. For if I send a man, I will as surely choose one which shall fight for me, as a mercenary officer will choose one that shall fight against me; and the late governments are witnesses to the truth of this, who debauched the militia more than ever I hope to see it again, and yet durst never rely upon them to assist their arbitrary designs; as we

may remember in the Duke of Monmouth's invasion, their officers durst not bring them near his army for fear of a revolt. Nay, the Pensioner-Parliament themselves turned short upon the Court, when they expected them to give the finishing stroke to our Ruin.

To the last part of the objection, That this militia will be more chargeable than an army; I answer, That since (as I suppose) no man proposes wholly to lay them aside; if we add the extraordinary experience of maintaining twenty thousand men to the ordinary charge of the militia, it is much more than sufficient to make the latter useful. But if this objection were true, it ought not to enter into competition with the preservation of our laws and liberties; for it is better to give a third part of my estate, if it were necessary, than to have all taken from me.

And tho it should be granted, that a militia is not as serviceable as an army kept to constant discipline, yet I believe these gentlemen themselves will confess, that sixty thousand of them trained as before, are as good as twenty thousand of their standing troops, which is the question; for its impossible to have them both useful at the same time, they being as incompatible as broad and clipt money, never current together; and therefore the Court must depend wholly upon a militia, or else they will not depend upon them at all. And this by the way may silence that objection, that we must keep our army till the militia be disciplined; for that will never be done whilst the Court has an army: and the same objection will be made seven years hence as now; so that a small army can be of no use to us, but to make our fleet neglected, to hinder the militia from being trained, and enslave us at home; for they are too few to defend us against an Invasion, and too many for the people to oppose.

I dare speak with the greater assurance upon this subject, having the authority of as great men as the world hath produced for my justification. Machiavelli spends several chapters to prove, that no prince or state ought to suffer any of their subjects to make war their profession, and that no nation can be secure with any other forces than a settled militia. My Lord Bacon in several places bears his testimony against a standing army, and particularly he tells us, that a mercenary army is first to invade a country, but a militia to defend it; because the first have estates to get, and the latter to protect. Mr.

Harrington hath founded his whole *Oceana* upon a trained militia; and I have lately read a French book, called a *History of the Politicks of France*, which says, *Enfin si on veut ruiner Les Anglois il suffit de les obliger a tener des Troupes sur pied* Nay, I believe no Author ever treated of a free government, that did not express his abhorrence of an army; for (as my Lord Bacon says) whoever does use them, tho he may spread his feathers for a time, he will mew them soon after; and raise them with what design you please, yet, like the West India dogs in Boccaline, in a little time they will certainly turn sheep-biters.

Perhaps it will be said, that the artillery of the world is changed since some of these wrote, and war is; become more a mystery, and therefore more experience is necessary to make good soldiers. But wherein does this mystery consist? not in exercising a company, and obeying a few words of command; these are mercenaries that the dullest noddle will comprehend in a few weeks. Nay, I have heard that the modern exercise is much shorter and easier than the ancient. But the great Improvements in war are in regular encampments, fortification, gunnery, skillful engineering, &c. These are arts not to be learned without much labor, and experience, and are as much gained in the closet as in the field; and I suppose no man will say, that the keeping standing forces is necessary to make a good engineer.

As to actual experience in war, that is not essential either to a standing army or a militia, as such; but the former may be without it, and the latter gain it according as they have opportunities of action. 'Tis true at present the army hath been trained up in a long war, and hath gained great Knowledge: but these men will not be long when they are disbanded, they will be still in England; and if the Parliament does give them a gratuity suitable to the service they have done their country, they will be ready to resume their arms whenever occasion offers.

But I desire to know of these patriots how comes an army necessary to our preservation now, and never since the conquest before? Did ever the prevailing party in the wars of York and Lancaster attempt to keep up a standing army to support themselves? No: they had more sense than to sacrifice their own liberty, and more honor than to enslave their country, the more easily to carry on their own liberty. Were not the Spaniards as powerful, as good soldiers, and as much our enemies, as the French are now? Was

not Flanders as near us as France? and the Popish interest in Queen Elizabeth's time as strong is the Jacobite is now? and yet that most excellent Princess never dreamed of a standing Army, but thought her surest empire was to reign in the hearts of her subjects, which the following story sufficiently testifies. When the Duke of Alanson came over to England, and for some time had admired the riches of the city, the conduct of her government, and the magnificence of her Court, he asked her amidst so much splendor where were her guards? which question she resolved a few days after as she took him in her coach through the city, when pointing to the people (who received her in crowds with repeated acclamations) These, said she, my Lord, are my guards; These have their hands, their hearts, and their purses always ready at my command: and these were guards indeed, who defended her through a long and successful reign of forty four years against all the machinations of Rome, the power of Spain, a disputed title, and the perpetual conspiracies of her own Popish subjects; a security the Roman Emperors could not boast of with their Pretorian Bands, and their Eastern and Western Armies.

Were not the French as powerful in Charles the Second and King James his time, as they are after this long and destructive war, and a less alliance to oppose them? Any yet we then thought a much less army than is now contended for, a most insupportable grievance; insomuch that in Charles the Second's Reign the grand-jury presented them, and the Pensioners Parliament voted them to be nuisance, sent Sir Jos. W— son to the Tower for saying, the King might keep guards for the defense of his person, and addressed to have them, disbanded. And now our apostates would make their Court by doing what the worst Parliament ever England saw could not think of without horror and confusion. They say the king of France was in league with our late kings, so he is with us; and he would have broke it then, if he had thought it safe, and for his interest as much as now. But they say we have more disaffected persons to join with him; which I must deny, for I believe no king of England in any ages had deservedly more interest than the present; and if during such an expensive war, in which we have consumed so much blood and treasure, paid such vast and unequal taxes, lost so many thousand ships and bore a shock by recoinning our money, which would have torn up another nation from its foundation, and reduced it to its ancient chaos, when most countries would have sunk under the

misfortune, and repined at their deliverance (as men in sickness commonly quarrel with their dearest friends) I say, if at that time he had so great and universal an interest, there can be no doubt but in times of peace, when the people reap the fruits of that courage and conduct he hath shown in their defense, he will be the most beloved and glorious prince that ever filled the English throne.

I will make one assertion more, and then conclude this discourse, viz. That the most likely way of restoring King James, is maintaining a standing army to keep him out.

For the king's safety stands upon a rock whilst it depends upon the solid foundation of the affections of the people, which is never to be shaken till 'tis as evident as the sun in the firmament, that there is a formed design to overthrow our laws, and liberties; but if we keep a standing army, all depends upon the uncertain and capricious humors of the soldiery, which in all ages have produced more violent and sudden revolutions, than every have been known in unarmed government: For there is such a chain of Dependence amongst them, that if two or three of the chief officers should be disobliged, or have intrigues with Jacobite mistresses; or if the King of France could once again buy his pensions into the Court or army, or offer a better market to some that are in already, we shall have another rehearsal revolution, and the people be only idle spectators of their own ruin. And whosoever considers the composition of an army, and doubts this, let him look back to the Roman Empire, where he will find out of twenty six Emperors, sixteen deposed and murdered by their own armies; nay, half the history of the world is made up of examples of this kind: but we need not go any farther than our own country, where we have but twice kept armies in times of peace, and both times they turned out their own masters. The first under Cromwell, expelled that Parliament under which they had fought successfully for many years; afterwards under General Monk they destroyed the government they before set up, and brought back Charles the Second and he afterwards disbanded them lest they might have turned him out again. These other instance is fresh in every one's memory, how King James's army joined with the Prince of Orange, now our rightful and lawful king. And what could have been expected otherwise from men of dissolute and debauched principles, who call themselves soldiers of fortune? who make murder their profession, and enquire no farther into the justice of the cause, than how they shall be

paid; who must be false rapacious and cruel in their own defense. For having no other profession or subsistence to depend upon, they are forced to stir up the ambition of princes, and engage them in perpetual quarrels, that they may share of the spoils they make. Such men, like some sort of ravenous fish, fare best in a storm; and therefore we may reasonably suppose they will be better pleased with the tyrannical government of the late King, than the mild and gracious administration of this present majesty, who came over to England to rescue us from oppression, and he has done it, and triumphs in it in spite of his Enemies.

In this discourse I have purposely omitted speaking of the lesser inconveniences attending a standing army, (such as frequent quarrels, murders and robberies; the destruction of all the game in the country; the quartering upon publick, and sometimes private houses; the influencing elections of Parliament by an artificial distribution of quarters the rendering so many men useless to labor, and almost propagation, together with a much greater destruction of them, by taking them from a laborious way of living to a loose idle life; and before this, the insolence of the officers, and the debaucheries that are committed both by them and their soldiers in all the towns they come in, to the ruin of multitudes of women, dishonor of the families, and ill example to others; and a numerous train of mischiefs besides, almost endless to enumerate. These are trivial as well as particular grievances in respect to those I have treated about, which strike at the heart's-blood of our Constitution, and therefore I thought these not considerable enough to bear a part in a discourse of this nature: Besides they often procure their own remedy, working miracles, and making some men see that were born blind, and impregnable against all the artillery of reason; for experience is the only mistress of fools: A wise man will know a pike will bite when he sees his teeth, which another will not make discovery of but by the loss of a finger.

What I have said here against standing armies, I would be understood of such as are the instruments of tyranny and their country's ruin, and therefore I need make no apology to our own which was raised by the consent of the Parliament in this just and necessary war, and next under God and our great and glorious deliverer, have by their bravery and conduct preserved our liberties, and the Protestant religion through Europe. For if in future reigns any designs should be leveled against our laws, we may be assured these

men would be discarded, and others promoted in their rooms who are fit for such arbitrary purposes.

Nor do I think it reasonable that our army should be ruined by that peace, which by their courage and fidelity they have procured for their country; and I doubt not but the generosity and gratitude of the Parliament will give them a donative equal to their commissions, which, when the foreigners are paid and sent home, will amount to no extraordinary sum; at most 'tis but supposing the war to have six months longer continuance, which is an easy composition for the charge of keeping them. But if there are any gentlemen amongst them who think we can no otherwise express our gratitude, but by signing the sealing our own ruin, I hope we shall disappoint their expectations, and not give the world occasion to tell so foolish a story of us, as they we turned to grass one of the most powerful monarchs in the world for breaking our laws, that we have maintained an eight years war at the expense of forty millions of money, and the blood of three hundred thousand men, to justify the glorious actions we have done; that by it we preserved all Europe besides, and lost our own Liberties; at least I hope it shall not be said we consented to it.