AD1689: The City of London, in gratitude for the Care his Majesty took of their Liberties, paid all Honour and Respect to him; and Sir Thomas Pilkington being continu’d Lord-Mayor for the Year 1690, in the Name of the City, invited the King and Queen, the Prince and Princess of Denmark, and both Houses of Parliament, to Dinner at Guildhall, on the Lord-Mayor’s Day, October 29; when their Majesties, attended by their Royal Highnesses, and a numerous Train of Nobility and Gentry, went first to a Balcony prepar’d for them at the Angel in Cheapside to see the Show, which, for the great number of Livery men, the full Appearance of the Militia and Artillery Company, the rich Adornments of the Pageants, and the splendid and good Order of the whole Proceeding, out-did all that had been seen before upon that occasion; and what deserv’d to be particularly mention’d, says a Reverend Historian, was a Royal Regiment of Volunteer Horse, made up of the chief Citizens, who being gallantly mounted and richly accoutred, were led by the Earl of Monmouth, now Earl of Peterborough, and attended their Majesties from Whitehall. Among these Troopers, who were for the most part Dissenters, was Daniel Foe, at that time a Hosier in Freeman’s Yard, Cornhill; the same who afterwards was Pillory’d for writing an ironical Invective against the Church, and did after that list in the Service of Mr Robert Harley, and those Brethren of his, who past the Schism and Occasional Bills, broke the Confederacy, and made a shameful and ruinous Peace with France.

AD1701: …What the Gentleman of Kent said in their Petition, that they spoke the Voice of the People, was certainly true, and the [Tory] Party was further sensible of it by a bold Attempt of Daniel Foe, who was at that Time a zealous Revolutioner and Dissenter, but became afterwards a Tool to this Speaker, when to our Grief and Terror he became a Minister of State, Foe drew up a Paper entitul’d, A Memorial from the Gentlemen, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Counties of --- in Behalf of themselves, and many Thousands of the good People of England. He inclos’d this Paper in a Letter to the Speaker Harley charging and commanding his future Patron in the Name of 200,000 English Men, to deliver it to the House of Commons. Foe who was naturally of a daring dauntless Temper infus’d enough of his Spirit into his Memorial, which charg’d the House with illegal and unwarrantable Practices in Sixteen Particulars, wherein he doubtless had Help from Men of more Brains, tho’ not so much Assurance. [this extract is followed by a reprint of Legion’s Memorial]

AD1703: … While the Conformity Bill was depending, Daniel Foe, who tack’d de to his Name, after he had stood in the Pillory, publish’d the smartest of all his Venomous Libels, entitled, The Shortest Way with the Dissenters; wherein, having rail’d at them by way of Irony, he endeavours to impose so much on High-Church, as to betray them into a Discovery of their Sentiments to be agreeable to his own, as he pretended in that Pamphlet; which past for some Time as the genuine Work of a rank Tory, and met with Applause in our two Famous Universities. A Bookseller now Living, having
an Order from a Fellow of a College in Cambridge for a Parcel of Books, just at the Time of publishing this Shortest Way, put up one of them in the Bundle, not doubting that it would be welcome to his Customers; who accordingly thank’d him for packing so excellent a Treatise up with the rest, it being next to the Sacred Bible, and Holy Comments, the best Book he ever saw; but understanding afterwards it was written by a Rank Independant, he rail’d at it as much as he had extoll’d it, and forbad his Bookseller to send him any more Pamphlets without particular Order.

The House of Commons, after the Author, and the Design of the Book were discover’d, order’d it to be burnt by the Hands of the Common Hangman, and the Author to be prosecuted; which was done with the Severity so natural to High-Church, when uppermost. Foe was fin’d Two Hundred Marks, and put in the Pillory; which he richly deserv’d afterwards, when he scribbled for the People that put him there. The Earl of Nottingham sent to, if he did not go to him at Newgate, to offer him Tory Mercy, if he wou’d discover who set him on to write his Shortest Way: but all who knew Foe, knew he needed no setting on to put such a Trick on a Party, of whose Understandings, as well as Principles, he had no good Opinion; though he afterwards became their Tool, and drudg’d for them in the worst Work they ever took in Hand, the breaking of the Confederacy, and restoring France to a Condition of becoming dangerous to the Liberties of Europe; but ’till he enter’d into the Service of Mr Harley, he had been honest in his Principles, whatever his Morals were: And he now pleaded for himself, That he gave High-Church but their own Language, at least the Sense of their own Expressions, when he said, “If it should be objected that this renewing Fire and Faggot would be Cruelty, and accounted barbarous, he answer’d, ’tis Cruelty to kill a Snake, or a Toad, in cold Blood; but the Poison of their Nature makes it a Charity to our Neighbours to destroy those Creatures; not for any Personal Injury receiv’d, but for the Prevention, and that as Toads and Vipers are noxious to the Body, and poison the sensitive Life, so the Dissenters poison the Soul, corrupt our Posterity, ensnare our Children, destroy the Vitals of our Happiness, and contaminate the whole Mass, and therefore they are to be rooted out of this Nation, &c.” He ask’d if this was worse than the Tory Parsons hanging out bloody Colours, and Banners of Defiance; and shew’d them what many of their Sermons and Pamphlets, as well as their common Conversation tended to. And it may be demanded, what did the Address of the Convocation tend to, when they told the Queen, We promise our selves, that whatever might be wanting to restore the Church to its due Rights and Privileges, her Majesty would have the Glory of doing it. What Rights and Privileges had High-Church lost since the Revolution, but Persecution, but the Power of Domineering over Dissenters, and Gaoling and Beggarring them, as was done in the Reign of King Charles and King James? The Moderation of her Majesty’s Answer was very exemplary, had they been in any Disposition to imitate it; Your Concurrence in this dutiful Address, is a good Presage of your Union in all other Matters, which is very desirable for my Service, and the Good of the Church. Dr Aldrich, Dean of Christ-Church, was Prolocutor of this Convocation, standing in opposition to the Seraphick Dr Beveridge, who was put up by the Bishops Party in the Lower-House, whose Behaviour towards the Upper, was much the same, as that of the two last Assemblies. But I leave the Ornament of their History to their own Historians.
... It will not be improper to take Notice, that in order to prepare the Way for this astonishing Change in the Ministry, the Harleians set up a weekly Libel, call’d the Examiner. The common Drudge for it was one Oldesworth, an obscure Person; but Messrs St John, Swift, and Prior, were Fellow Labourers in supporting it. Arthur Maynwaring, Esq; Auditor of the Imprest, and Member of several Parliaments for Preston in Lancashire, was in the strictest Confidence with the Duke of Marlborough, the Earl of Godolphin, the Earl of Sunderland, and the late Ministry. Tho’ he was not a Privy-Counsellor, his Ability, for Counsel, exceeded many that were; and few of the deepest Secrets of State were kept from him. I have myself known the Duke of Marlborough, and the Earl of Sunderland, to have been with him one after another, the same Morning, and to have Conference about the intended Change, which he discover’d the soonest of any one of them, and often told them, They should not flatter themselves with an Imagination, that the Queen would hearken to Reason, and not shift her Hands, nor break the Parliament; for she would hearken to Mrs Abigail, and Mr Harley, have a new Ministry, a new Parliament, and a Peace. Mr Maynwaring was not only a Man of Business, well-skill’d in Politics, and Figures; but a Man of Wit and Eloquence, and the most exact Critick of his Time. He had a very mean Opinion not only of Mr St John’s Honesty, but of his Capacity, where a solid Understanding was necessary; and, with very great Indignation, observ’d how he suffer’d the best Men in the Nation to be belied, and vilify’d in his Libel.

There were several Persons said to be the Author of the First Examiner, as Mr Prior, Dr Swift, Dr Atterbury; but Mr Maynwaring was inclin’d to think, Mr Prior and Mr St John had the greatest Hand in it; and us’d to express the utmost Abhorrence of Prior’s Ingratitude, who had been rais’d by the Whigs from being a Drawer at a Tavern, to be a Commissioner of Trade, and a Member of Parliament. He got into the House of Commons by the Interest of the Earl of Dorset, and had not sate there a Year, before he deserted the Party that had preferr’d him. As for Dr Swift he would hardly ever deign to name him: He assur’d me more than once, that the Doctor offer’d his Service to the Earl of Godolphin, and would, for a Pension, have written as much Falshood and Scandal against the new Ministers, as he did afterwards against the Old, if there had been Occasion for it: But their Characters were such, that he might have rioted in Satyr, and not have offended the Truth. Mr Maynwaring told me, The Earl of Godolphin had the last Contempt for Pamphlets, and always despis’d the Press. He added, I have often blam’d it in him, and now he feels the Effects of it, when his exalted Reputation is levell’d with Infamy, in the odious Comparisons, made by the Examiner and his Brethren, of his Administration with his Successors. He never doubted Mr St John’s being a main Promoter of that detestable Libel. ’Twas not long after the publishing it, that a Letter came out, directed to the Author, containing Instructions how he should behave himself, which Mr Maynwaring doubted not was written by Mr St John, and he could not suffer so much Insolence to pass without Animadversion. The Author of a Paper, call’d the Whig Examiner, undertook it by Direction from him, if he was not himself that Author: there is one Passage in it which touches Mr Steele, afterwards Sir Richard, who then publish’d the Tatler, and had given Offence to the Tories, by some smart Strokes against Mr Harley, and the other Leaders of that Faction. Mr Steele was wont to stile himself the Censor of Great-Britain; upon which the Letter-Writer said, He resembled the famous Censor of Rome in nothing but espousing the Cause of the Vanquish’d. To this Mr Maynwaring reply’d, ’Tis just the same, as if one should say, in regard to he many obscure Truths, and secret Histories that are brought to Light in his Letter, that the Author of these
new Revelations resembles the ancient Author of the Revelations in nothing but venturing his Head; besides that there would be no Ground for such a Resemblance, would not a Man be laugh’d at by every common Reader, should he thus mistake one St John for another, and apply that to St John the Evangelist, which relates to St John the Baptist? It seems this Man had had very great Obligations to the Duke of Marlborough, by whose Procurement he obtain’d the Post of Secretary at War, and had a double Salary allowed him; yet, notwithstanding this, and other valuable Favours, did Mr St John, in that Letter, treat their Graces the Duke and Dutchess of Marlborough, as Plagues, Furies, &c.

I hope these Anecdotes will not be reckon’d an impertinent Digression; since they explain Persons and Things, which are the chief Subject of our History.

About Michaelmas, 1710, Mr Maynwaring sent to speak with me, at the desire of Sir Samuel Garth; he began with Complaints of the Villainy and Insolence of the Examiner, saying, It did a World of Mischief; he wish’d I would set up a Paper as an Antidote to that Poison; adding, I will assist you in it, not only with my Advice, but with my Pen; which he did in a very ample Manner. He said, he question’d not but Matthew Prior had a Hand in it as well as St John; and that Dr Swift made that Paper a Canal to convey his Malice and Resentment into the World, my Lord Godolphin having rejected his mercenary Offer to write for the old Ministry before the Change. He told me, De Foe had great Obligations to the Lord-Treasurer Godolphin, when he began to turn his Reviews against his generous Benefactor; and wrote his Lordship a Letter, that he did it in compliance with the Madness of the Times; and seem’d to fall in with those who clamour’d against his Administration, only that he might get a Hearing in his Favour: Nay, this base Wretch took Money at the same time of the Lord Godolphin, who paid him half a Year’s Pension after he wrote against him, and of Mr R Harley, who sent him to Scotland as a Spy, when the Treaty of Union was on foot, and kept him in Pay ever after, as a Man whose Conscience was exactly of a Size with his own.

[Pages 518-9]

AD1713: … I have often observ’d, that this Ministry had little Regard to what themselves or others said for or against a thing, if they thought it would serve their Purpose at the Instant to assert or deny. At the same time that this was said of the Trade to Portugal, and the Duties of 1703, Signor Bruciado, the Portugueze Minister at London, represented to the Court in a Memorial, That in Case any Breach was made in the Treaty concluded in 1703, whereby the Duties on French Wines were stipulated to be at least one Third higher than on those of Portugal, the King his Master would renew the Prohibition of the Woollen Manufactures and Products of Britain. Which not only alarm’d the Portugal Merchants, but all Persons concern’d in the Woollen Manufactures all over England: And nothing can give us a better Idea of the Strength and Temper of this Minister’s way of arguing, than by comparing Sir William Wyndham’s Speech with Signor Bruciado’s Memorial, and General Stanhope’s Answer to it. “That the Affair now in question was not a Party Business, neither did it concern the late or present Ministry, but the whole English Nation; and therefore for his own Part he would freely speak his Thoughts about it with the utmost Impartiality. That the Peace being made, it was now preposterous to speak any thing
for or against it; but as no Treaty could bind the Commons of Great-Britain to make any Act or Deed against their own Interest, the only Point to be consider’d was, whether a Free Trade with France would be advantageous or not; and that in order to clear that important Matter, it was necessary to consult the Merchants and Manufacturers, who had presented several Petitions and Representations about it.”

This was also urg’d by Mr Smith, late Speaker, who made a Motion for adjourning the Debate, and taking the Papers before them into Consideration; but the Question being put, it was carried in the Negative by a Majority of 252 against 130.

Good God! That the entire Well-being of England should have so little Weight in the Balance against the Prevalence of Party in the Support of such a Ministry! Those in the Country Interest despairing of doing any Good, by staying in the House any longer, went out, and left the Minister’s Creatures and Adherents to vote as they pleas’d: So a Bill was order’d to be brought in, to make effectual the Eighth and Ninth Articles of the Treaty of Commerce with France, which would effectually have destroy’d the most beneficial Commerce of this Kingdom.

As bad as the Peace was, the Populace had been so well prepar’d for it by the Inferior Clergy, and other Instruments made use of by the Ministers, that when it was proclaim’d, it was, as the Annalist observes, receiv’d with the loudest Acclamations of the giddy People, who fondly expected great Benefits by it; but it was not long before the Eyes of the Generality were open’d; and the Treaties of Peace and Commerce being print’d and publish’d, the latter rais’d such a Clamour, as rous’d the Genius of England, which by some powerful Inchantment seem’d to have been plung’d into a profound Lethargy. Hereupon many worthy Patriots, Mr Robert Walpole, General Stanhope, &c. exerted themselves, and published several excellent Pieces, that shew’d the Advantage of the Trade with Italy, Spain, and Portugal, to which Nations we constantly exported more than we imported from them, and brought the Balance in Money; whereas a Trade with France would be destructive of our Home Manufactures, and of our Commerce with other Nations. The East-India Company resolv’d to petition against the French-Trade Bill, but were prevented by a Vote in their Favour. However, the Turkey Company, the Italian, Spanish and Portuguese Merchants, the Weavers of London, and the Woollen Manufacturers of all Parts and Quarters of the Kingdom, petition’d against it; and let the Reader judge whether they, or Sir William Wyndham and Mr Benson, Chancellor of the Exchequer, knew best what was for the Interest of England in respect to its Commerce. I make use of the Annalist in the following Paragraph, not but I was well acquainted with the Particulars he relates. I copy him, only to avoid the Charge of Partiality.

“To stem this Torrent, those at the Helm thought fit to encourage the publishing of a weekly Paper, entituled, Mercator, or Commerce Retriev’d; which was generally father’d upon Arthur Moore, Chief Manager of the Treaty, assisted by Dr D’avenant; but the latter solemnly disown’d it; and it was soon after discover’d to be the Productions of an Ambodextrous mercenary Scribler Daniel Foe, employ’d by that very Statesman, the Earl of Oxford, who when Secretary of State had caus’d him to be pillory’d for a Whig-Libel, but who, nevertheless, for this dirty Work, allow’d him a considerable weekly Salary.”

The Author here is only out in saying the Earl of Oxford was Secretary when Foe stood in the Pillory, for it was the Earl of Nottingham, who was then in that
Office; Foe, as well as the Lord-Treasurer, had been a rank Presbyterian, or
Independant, and having pass’d thro’ Bankruptcy, as a Hosier, was ready to engage in
any Drudgery that he cou’d get something by: Mr Harley’s Genius was so near akin
to Foe’s, that he cou’d not but take him into his Confidence as soon as he got
Acquaintance with him; and tho’ he never had been a Merchant, otherwise than
peddling a little to Portugal, and was for some Years Secretary, as he stil’d himself, to
the Tile-Kilns and Brick-Kilns at Tilbury; he was ador’d and caress’d by that mighty
Statesman, who gave him, as that Mercenary said himself, to the Value of L1000 in
one Year: Foe’s Business was only to puzzle the Cause by mercantile Cant and bold
Sophistry; which several eminent Merchants and others being appriz’d of, they desir’d
Mr Henry Martin, Bailiff of Southwark, an ingenious judicious Man, to publish a
Paper call’d the British Merchant, which came out twice a Week; wherein, with plain
Reason, and uncontested Matters of Fact, he expos’d the Fallacies, Blunders,
Inconsistencies and Ignorance of the Hireling Mercator, insomuch, that at length, the
Thoughts of true Englishmen about Commerce, which, at first, were represented to be
the Efforts of Discontent and Faction, as was hinted in the Queen’s Speech, appear’d
to be the universal Sense of all Traders.

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AD1713: … Mr Hezekiah Bedford being now try’d and convicted for publishing a
Book concerning Hereditary Right, a Reverend and Able Divine informs us in a Letter
publish’d and address’d to the Bishop of Carlisle, that he had form’d more than
ordinary Indignation at the hearing from an Eye-witness, it was presented to the
Queen by a Gentleman who had not taken the Oaths to her, and who at that Time
would not have gone to the Chapel with her, and by Principle could never pray for
her; and yet that Gentleman, upon and after the Publication of that Book, had
frequent Accesses to the Royal Closet, and by his own Application and Interest
obtain’d a hasty Discharge of a great Part of the Penalty inflicted by Law on the
Nonjuring Priest who convey’d the Copy of it to the Press, and corrected the Sheets.

The Friends to the House of Hanover bestirred themselves so much to find out
the Persons concern’d in the Publishing it, that the Ministers were oblig’d to order
Richard Smith the Bookseller to be apprehended; and he confessing that Bedford, the
Nonjuror above-mentioned, brought the Copy to the Printer, he was also taken up, and
own’d impudently enough, that it was true. Upon which, for Form’s sake, he was
bound over to appear at the Court of Queen’s-Bench. A faint Prosecution was also
carried on against him, who had render’d himself as Criminal as the Author or
Authors, by putting it to, and taking Care of it at the Press, though he was not capable
of writing it, as bad as it was written. He was fin’d One thousand Marks, to remain in
Prison ’till it was paid, and for the Term of three Years. He was also to find Five
Thousand Pounds Security for his good Behaviour during Life, and to be brought into
all the Courts of Westminster-Hall, with a Paper affixed to his Head, denoting his
Offence. But after Sentence was pass’d, an Order was produc’d from the Government,
countersign’d by a Secretary of State, it is no matter which of them, directing the
Judges of the Queen’s-Bench to supersede the ignominious Part of the Punishment by
reason of the Sacred Function of the Criminal. The Jargon! Is Treason to one’s
Country a less Crime than destroying a Bastard-Child, for which a Shropshire Vicar
was hang’d some Years before, not three Years after Paul, another Vicar, was hang’d
also at Tyburn for Rebellion. What is the Function to a Man that is a Disgrace to it?
The Truth is, the Ministers, two of whom car’d no more for the Function than they did for a Pedagogue’s, were not willing to give any Discouragement to the Rebellious Spirit then in the highest Ferment among the Nonjuring and Jacobite Priesthood. This Proceeding, said that eminent Lawyer Mr Lochmere, could bear no other Construction than as a Licence and Protection to Men in Holy Orders to propagate their Destructive Positions with Impunity, and the Character of the Person, which ought, in Justice, to have aggravated his Guilt, and heighten’d his Punishment, became his Indemnity against the Reproach of it, even by the Authority of the Government itself, against which that Treatise was levell’d. This Indulgence appear’d the more glaring, considering what Severities were at the same time exercis’d against those Persons who had Courage enough to assert the Interest of their Country, and of the Protestant Succession. Particularly Mr George Ridpath, who wrote the Observator and Flying-Post, and was forc’d to fly out of England to avoid the mortal Effects of Mr St John’s Resentment and Cruelty; no body doubting but that if he had staid, and had been put into the Pillory, as was intended, he would have been murder’d, as his printer Hurt would have been, when he was pillory’d for printing some Jests on the Dutchess of Shrewsbury and others, had he been kept a Minute longer. Several Fellows in Bolingbroke’s Livery were among the Rabble that assaulted Hurt. But Foe, the Bankrupt Hosier, and Apostatiz’d Independant and Republican, who was then in the Earl of Oxford’s Pay, as he said himself to me and many more, and knowing it would not displease him, had written several Pamphlets, which seem’d to favour the Pretender’s Interest, whom, to my Knowledge, he look’d upon as a despicable Impostor, ’till the Treasurer took him into his Protection: Foe, I say, and have already said, had a Pardon under the Great-Seal, which was publickly declar’d, as if to encourage the like Labours in others to wean People from their Fondness of the Protestant Succession; but that was not in their Power, and its taking Effect, was, Thanks be to Almighty God, nearer than even their Guilt and their Fears made them imagine.