

this very day I think no fault was ever found with it, unless it was that of being too long delayed. If it was so necessary for supporting the balance of power in Europe, as has been insisted on in this debate, to preserve entire the dominions of the house of Austria, surely it was not our business to insist upon a partition of them in favor of any of the princes of the empire. But if we had, could we have expected that the house of Austria would have agreed to any such partition, even for the acquisition of our guarantee? The King of Prussia had, it is true, a claim upon some lordships in Silesia; but that claim was absolutely denied by the court of Vienna, and was not at that time so much insisted on by the late King of Prussia. Nay, if he had lived till this time, I believe it would not now have been insisted on; for he acceded to that guarantee without any reservation of that claim; therefore I must look upon this as an objection which has since arisen from an accident that could not then be foreseen or provided against.

I must therefore think, sir, that our guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction, or our manner of doing it, cannot now be objected to, nor any person censured by Parliament for advising that measure. In regard to the refusal of the cabinet to assist the house of Austria, though it was prudent and right in us to enter into that guarantee, we were not therefore obliged to enter into every broil the house of Austria might afterward lead themselves into. And therefore we were not in honor obliged to take any share in the war which the Emperor brought upon himself in the year 1733; nor were we in interest obliged to take a share in that war as long as neither side attempted to push their conquests farther than was consistent with the balance of power in Europe, which was a case that did not happen. For the power of the house

of Austria was not diminished by the event of that war, because they got Tuscany, Parma, and Placentia in lieu of Naples and Sicily; nor was the power of France much increased, because Lorraine was a province she had taken and kept possession of during every war in which she had been engaged.

As to the disputes with Spain, they had not then reached such a height as to make it necessary for us to come to an open rupture. We had then reason to hope that all differences would be accommodated in an amicable manner; and while we have any such hopes it can never be prudent for us to engage ourselves in war, especially with Spain, where we have always had a very beneficial commerce. These hopes, it is true, sir, at last proved abortive; but I never heard it was a crime to hope for the best. This sort of hope was the cause of the late Convention. If Spain had performed her part of that preliminary treaty, I am sure it would not have been wrong in us to have hoped for a friendly accommodation, and for that end to have waited nine or ten months longer, in which time the plenipotentiaries were, by the treaty, to have adjusted all the differences subsisting between the two nations. But the failure of Spain in performing what had been agreed to by this preliminary put an end to all our hopes, and then, and not till then, it became prudent to enter into hostilities, which were commenced as soon as possible after the expiration of the term limited for the payment of the £95,000.

Strong and virulent censures have been cast on me for having commenced the war without a single ally; and this deficiency has been ascribed to the multifarious treaties in which I have bewildered myself. But although the authors of this imputation are well apprised that all these treaties have been

submitted to and approved by Parliament, yet they are now brought forward as crimes, without appealing to the judgment of Parliament, and without proving or declaring that all or any of them were advised by me. A supposed sole minister is to be condemned and punished as the author of all; and what adds to the enormity is that an attempt was made to convict him uncharged and unheard, without taking into consideration the most arduous crisis which ever occurred in the annals of Europe. Sweden corrupted by France; Denmark tempted and wavering; the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel almost gained; the King of Prussia, the Emperor, and the Tsarina, with whom alliances had been negotiating, dead; the Austrian dominions claimed by Spain and Bavaria; the Elector of Saxony hesitating whether he should accede to the general confederacy planned by France; the court of Vienna irresolute and indecisive. In this critical juncture, if France enters into engagements with Prussia, and if the Queen of Hungary hesitates and listens to France, are all or any of those events to be imputed to English counsels? And if to English counsels, why are they to be attributed to one man?

I now come, sir, to the second head, the conduct of domestic affairs. And here a most heinous charge is made, that the nation has been burdened with unnecessary expenses for the sole purpose of preventing the discharge of our debts and the abolition of taxes. But this attack is more to the dishonor of the whole cabinet council than to me. If there is any ground for this imputation, it is a charge upon King, Lords, and Commons, as corrupted or imposed upon. And they have no proof of these allegations, but affect to substantiate them by common fame and public notoriety!

No expense has been incurred but what has been approved of and provided for by Parliament. The public treasure

has been duly applied to the uses to which it was appropriated by Parliament, and regular accounts have been annually laid before Parliament, of every article of expense. If by foreign accidents, by the disputes of foreign states among themselves, or by their designs against us, the nation has often been put to an extraordinary expense, that expense cannot be said to have been unnecessary; because, if by saving it we had exposed the balance of power to danger, or ourselves to an attack, it would have cost, perhaps, a hundred times that sum before we could recover from that danger or repel that attack.

In all such cases there will be a variety of opinions. I happened to be one of those who thought all these expenses necessary, and I had the good fortune to have the majority of both houses of Parliament on my side. But this, it seems, proceeded from bribery and corruption. Sir, if any one instance had been mentioned, if it had been shown that I ever offered a reward to any member of either House, or ever threatened to deprive any member of his office or employment, in order to influence his vote in Parliament, there might have been some ground for this charge. But when it is so generally laid I do not know what I can say to it unless it be to deny it as generally and as positively as it has been asserted. And, thank God! till some proof be offered, I have the laws of the land as well as the laws of charity in my favor.

Some members of both Houses have, it is true, been removed from their employments under the Crown; but were they ever told, either by me or by any other of his Majesty's servants, that it was for opposing the measures of the administration in Parliament? They were removed because his Majesty did not think fit to continue them longer in his service. His Majesty had a right so to do; and I know no one that has a right to ask him, "What doest thou?" If his

Majesty had a mind that the favors of the Crown should circulate, would not this of itself be a good reason for removing any of his servants? Would not this reason be approved of by the whole nation, except those who happen to be the present possessors? I cannot, therefore, see how this can be imputed as a crime, or how any of the King's ministers can be blamed for his doing what the public has no concern in; for if the public be well and faithfully served it has no business to ask by whom.

As to the particular charge urged against me, I mean that of the army debentures, I am surprised, sir, to hear anything relating to this affair charged upon me. Whatever blame may attach to this affair, it must be placed to the account of those that were in power when I was, as they call it, the country gentleman. It was by them this affair was introduced and conducted, and I came in only to pay off those public securities which their management had reduced to a great discount; and consequently to redeem our public credit from that reproach which they had brought upon it. The discount at which these army debentures were negotiated was a strong and prevalent reason with Parliament to apply the sinking fund first to the payment of those debentures; but the sinking fund could not be applied to that purpose till it began to produce something considerable, which was not till the year 1727. That the sinking fund was then to receive a great addition was a fact publicly known in 1726; and if some people were sufficiently quick-sighted to foresee that the Parliament would probably make this use of it, and cunning enough to make the most of their own foresight, could I help it, or could they be blamed for doing so? But I defy my most inveterate enemy to prove that I had any hand in bringing these debentures to a discount, or that I had any share in the profits by buying them up.

In reply to those who confidently assert that the national

debt is not decreased since 1727, and that the sinking fund has not been applied to the discharge of the public burdens, I can with truth declare that a part of the debt has been paid off; and the landed interest has been very much eased with respect to that most unequal and grievous burden, the land tax. I say so, sir, because upon examination it will appear that within these sixteen or seventeen years no less than £8,000,000 of our debt has been actually discharged by the due application of the sinking fund; and at least £7,000,000 has been taken from that fund and applied to the ease of the land tax. For if it had not been applied to the current service, we must have supplied that service by increasing the land tax; and as the sinking fund was originally designed for paying off our debts and easing us of our taxes, the application of it in case of the land tax was certainly as proper and necessary a use as could be made. And I little thought that giving relief to landed gentlemen would have been brought against me as a crime.

I shall now advert to the third topic of accusation: the conduct of the war. I have already stated in what manner and under what circumstances hostilities commenced; and as I am neither general nor admiral — as I have nothing to do either with our navy or army — I am sure that I am not answerable for the prosecution of it. But were I to answer for everything no fault could, I think, be found with my conduct in the prosecution of the war. It has from the beginning been carried on with as much vigor and as great care of our trade as was consistent with our safety at home and with the circumstances we were in at the beginning of the war. If our attacks upon the enemy were too long delayed, or if they have not been so vigorous or so frequent as they ought to have been, those only are to blame who have for many years been haranguing against standing armies; for, without a sufficient number of regular

troops in proportion to the numbers kept up by our neighbors, I am sure we can neither defend ourselves nor offend our enemies. On the supposed miscarriages of the war, so unfairly stated and so unjustly imputed to me, I could, with great ease, frame an incontrovertible defence. But as I have trespassed so long on the time of the House I shall not weaken the effect of that forcible exculpation so generously and disinterestedly advanced by the right honorable gentleman who so meritoriously presides at the admiralty.

If my whole administration is to be scrutinized and arraigned, why are the most favorable parts to be omitted? If facts are to be accumulated on one side, why not on the other? And why may not I be permitted to speak in my own favor? Was I not called by the voice of the King and the nation to remedy the fatal effects of the South Sea project and to support declining credit? Was I not placed at the head of the treasury when the revenues were in the greatest confusion? Is credit revived, and does it now flourish? Is it not at an incredible height, and if so, to whom must that circumstance be attributed? Has not tranquillity been preserved both at home and abroad, notwithstanding a most unreasonable and violent opposition? Has the true interest of the nation been pursued, or has trade flourished? Have gentlemen produced one instance of this exorbitant power; of the influence which I extend to all parts of the nation; of the tyranny with which I oppress those who oppose, and the liberality with which I reward those who support me? But having first invested me with a kind of mock dignity, and styled me a prime minister, they impute to me an unpardonable abuse of that chimerical authority which they only have created and conferred.

If they are really persuaded that the army is annually estab-

lished by me, that I have the sole disposal of posts and honors, that I employ this power in the destruction of liberty and the diminution of commerce, let me awaken them from their delusion. Let me expose to their view the real condition of the public weal. Let me show them that the Crown has made no encroachments, that all supplies have been granted by Parliament, that all questions have been debated with the same freedom as before the fatal period in which my counsels are said to have gained the ascendancy; an ascendancy from which they deduce the loss of trade, the approach of slavery, the preponderance of prerogative, and the extension of influence. But I am far from believing that they feel those apprehensions which they so earnestly labor to communicate to others; and I have too high an opinion of their sagacity not to conclude that, even in their own judgment, they are complaining of grievances that they do not suffer, and promoting rather their private interest than that of the public.

What is this unbounded sole power which is imputed to me? How has it discovered itself, or how has it been proved?

What have been the effects of the corruption, ambition, and avarice with which I am so abundantly charged?

Have I ever been suspected of being corrupted? A strange phenomenon, a corrupter himself not corrupt! Is ambition imputed to me? Why then do I still continue a commoner? I, who refused a white staff and a peerage. I had, indeed, like to have forgotten the little ornament about my shoulders [the garter], which gentlemen have so repeatedly mentioned in terms of sarcastic obloquy. But surely, though this may be regarded with envy or indignation in another place, it cannot be supposed to raise any resentment in this House, where many may be pleased to see those honors which their ancestors have worn, restored again to the Commons.

Have I given any symptoms of an avaricious disposition? Have I obtained any grants from the Crown since I have been placed at the head of the treasury? Has my conduct been different from that which others in the same station would have followed? Have I acted wrong in giving the place of auditor to my son and in providing for my own family? I trust that their advancement will not be imputed to me as a crime unless it shall be proved that I placed them in offices of trust and responsibility for which they were unfit.

But while I unequivocally deny that I am sole and prime minister, and that to my influence and direction all the measures of the government must be attributed, yet I will not shrink from the responsibility which attaches to the post I have the honor to hold; and should, during the long period in which I have sat upon this bench, any one step taken by government be proved to be either disgraceful or disadvantageous to the nation, I am ready to hold myself accountable.

To conclude, sir, though I shall always be proud of the honor of any trust or confidence from his Majesty, yet I shall always be ready to remove from his councils and presence when he thinks fit; and therefore I should think myself very little concerned in the event of the present question if it were not for the encroachment that will thereby be made upon the prerogatives of the Crown. But I must think that an address to his Majesty to remove one of his servants, without so much as alleging any particular crime against him, is one of the greatest encroachments that was ever made upon the prerogatives of the Crown. And therefore, for the sake of my master, without any regard for my own, I hope all those that have a due regard for our constitution and for the rights and prerogatives of the Crown, without which our constitution cannot be preserved, will be against this motion.

## WILLIAM PULTENEY

**W**ILLIAM PULTENEY, an English politician of the Whig stripe, who flourished in the reigns of Queen Anne and the first two Georges, was born in 1684, and died in 1764. He was a man of considerable education and ability, a good classic, and possessed of a keen and incisive eloquence, and much vivacity of manner. He entered parliament in 1705 as Whig member for Hedon, in Yorkshire, and took a conspicuous part first in support and in defence of Sir Robert Walpole, and latterly as leader of the opposition in Parliament that denounced him. On the accession of George I, he became secretary of war and was made a privy councilor; but when Walpole became prime minister and made no post for his defender, Pulteney, though he was offered a peerage, went over to the opposition and wrote several bitter pamphlets against Walpole. Besides his authorship of various political pasquinades, he was Bolingbroke's chief assistant in contributing to a periodical of the time known as "The Craftsman." When Walpole retired in 1741, Pulteney was the actual framer of the new cabinet, although the Earl of Wilmington was its nominal head. Very soon after this event he was made Earl of Bath, but his transference to the House of Lords practically destroyed his political influence. He spoke but seldom in Parliament after this, but devoted himself mainly to literary pursuits, enjoying great popularity in literary circles until his death in London, July 7, 1764. Pulteney was a brilliant orator, possessing great versatility, and was witty and direct in argument, but as a politician suffered himself to be swayed by the spirit of faction rather than by true patriotic sentiment. There is a good story related of Walpole, when both he and Pulteney were relegated to the House of Lords, the former as Earl of Orford and the latter as Earl of Bath. Walpole, meeting in the Upper House for the first time his quondam friend, facetiously exclaimed: "Here we are, my lord, the two most insignificant fellows in England!"

### ON A MOTION FOR REDUCING THE ARMY

**S**IR,—We have heard a great deal about Parliamentary armies, and about an army continued from year to year. I have always been, sir, and always shall be, against a standing army of any kind. To me it is a terrible thing, whether under that of Parliamentary or any other designation. A standing army is still a standing army, whatever name it be called by. They are a body of men distinct from the body of the people; they are governed by different laws; and blind obedience and an entire submission to the