

**THE POLICE OF FRANCE: AN ACCOUNT
OF THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS
ESTABLISHED IN THAT KINGDOM FOR
THE PREFERVATION OF PEACE, AND THE
PREVENTING OF ROBBERIES**

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The Police of France: An Account of the Laws and Regulations Established in that Kingdom for the Prefervation of Peace, and the Preventing of Robberies by William Mildmay

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WILLIAM MILD MAY

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THE PREFERENCE OF PEACE, AND THE
PREVENTING OF ROBBERIES**

The Police of *France* :
OR,
407 An ACCOUNT of the
LAWS and REGULATIONS
ESTABLISHED
In that KINGDOM,
FOR THE
Preservation of P E A C E,
AND THE
Preventing of R O B B E R I E S.


To which is added,

A particular Description of the POLICE and
GOVERNMENT of the City of PARIS.

Fas est et ab Hoste doceri. Ovid.

L O N D O N :
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MDCCLXIII.

P R E F A C E.

OME time after the peace was concluded by the treaty of Aix la Chapelle, his late Majesty was pleased to recommend to both Houses of Parliament, “ to consider seriously of some effectual provisions “ to suppress those audacious crimes of robbery “ and violence, which were then become frequent, “ especially about the capital.” This was intimated to me, residing at that time at Paris, where observing, that these great evils were happily suppressed, both in the capital, and in all the provinces of France, I thought it my duty, as a subject of England, to contribute my best endeavours to discover what laws and regulations were established in that kingdom, for the better preservation of peace, and the preventing of robberies. And

Accordingly, from the best information I could procure from the laws themselves, and from the practical knowledge of those, whose duty it was to put them in execution, I there composed the following treatise. But as the renewal of war soon after put an end to all our parliamentary proceedings for the redressing the evils above complained of, it became unnecessary to offer these observations to the public, until the restoration of peace, which being now accomplished, it may be presumed, that our Legislature will re-assume the consideration of promoting the internal *police* of this kingdom, and more especially for preventing the robberies and outrages, which begin again to disturb the domestic peace of his Majesty's subjects.

That we may be apprised of the measures enforced in France to attain these salutary ends, I have divided the following narrative into distinct parts, resulting from the several objects of my enquiry, in order ;

First, To offer a general view of the several jurisdictions established in France for the administration of justice.

Next

Next, to give an account of the particular establishment of the *marechaussée* in each province, for the preservation of the peace, and the preventing of robberies in the highways.

And thirdly, to describe the regulations enforced at Paris for the like preservation of the peace, and the preventing of street robberies.

To which I have added a farther account of the *police* in that capital, with regard to the maintenance of their poor; the support of their hospitals; the duty of their magistrates in supplying wood and water; and other necessary provisions; the preventing of fires; the regulating the public companies; and the paving, cleaning and lighting the streets. I was the more induced to enter into this detail, as I was informed, that the making new regulations in some of these articles, had often been under the consideration of our Legislature.

And lastly, I have offered a few remarks on the extent and circumference of London and Paris, the number of their inhabitants, and the necessity of circumscribing the boundaries of each; concluding with an estimate of the expence of the
police

police at Paris, that at the same time that we view the order, which is there preserved, we may be apprised of the cost of maintaining it.

It may be necessary, before I enter into this account, to premise, that I do not offer it with a view of recommending it in every part, and in all respects. I am aware particularly, that the *marechaussée* in the provinces, and the watch-guard at Paris, go under the name of military establishments, and consequently cannot as such be imitated by our administration, under a free and civil constitution of government: yet I am not without hopes, that some observations may be collected from particular parts of their system, which may help to reform the abuses, that are complained of in our own. With regard to myself, I shall be sufficiently rewarded for my pains, should what I now publish conduce in any degree to the service of my country; for as it is my happiness to be a subject of England, I shall equally esteem it a glory to become an useful member to its community.

A General

P A R T I.

A General View of the several Jurisdictions
established in *FRANCE*, for the Admini-
stration of Justice.

IN order the better to distinguish the laws and regulations enforced in France for the preservation of the peace, it will be proper previously to take a general view of the several jurisdictions there established, for the administration of justice throughout the kingdom. To this purpose, let it be observed, that as France, in a geographical view, is divided into several provinces; so with regard to its civil government, it is divided into several circles, called *generalités*, which comprehend in some parts, only one province, in others, two or more, where the provinces are small; and where they are large, two or more *generalités* are comprehended within one province; so that, upon the whole, the kingdom is divided into about thirty of these distinct partitions, which are subdivided into lesser circles, in some parts called *diocesses*, in others *vigueries*, and in others *elections*; and these again into communities, towns and parishes. Over each *generalité* the King appoints an intendant, who resides in the capital city of his department,
under

under whom are a certain number of subdelegates, residing in the several divisions above-mentioned. These *generalités* are again distinguished under two denominations, some being called *païs d'état*, and others *païs d'élections*. The *païs d'état*, which are only few in number, contain those provinces which have been annexed to the crown in latter times, and which having been formerly distinct sovereignties, do still retain, or are supposed to retain, their antient privileges; the chief of which is that of levying their own annual revenues by the *taille réelle*, or tax on their landed estates, and granting the same to the King by the name of a *don gratuit*; whereas the *païs d'élections*, which are more numerous, being the antient patrimonies of the Kings of France, are subject alike to the *taille réelle* and *personelle*, levied according to the arbitrary directions of the intendants, both upon the landed estates and personal properties of all the inhabitants, except the clergy and nobility. They are called the *païs d'élections*, because the lesser districts, into which they are divided, formerly elected their own assessors; but that privilege has long ago been taken away, and the name of it now only remains. From hence we may perceive, that these intendants, as representatives of the King's person in each province, are invested with a kind of sovereign authority, to interpose in whatever may be necessary for his Majesty's service: to which purpose, the office of the intendant is always open, to receive the complaints of public grievances, and to issue out the necessary precepts, for the regulation of the *police*.

I am