

**RECOLLECTIONS AND
REFLECTIONS, PERSONAL AND
POLITICAL: AS CONNECTED WITH
PUBLIC AFFAIRS, DURING THE
REIGN OF GEORGE III, VOL. II**

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Recollections and reflections, personal and political: as connected with public affairs, during the reign of George III, Vol. II by John Nicholls

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JOHN NICHOLLS

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RECOLLECTIONS
AND
REFLECTIONS,
PERSONAL AND POLITICAL,
AS CONNECTED WITH
Public Affairs,
DURING THE
REIGN OF GEORGE III.

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MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN THE FIFTEENTH,
SIXTEENTH, AND EIGHTEENTH PARLIAMENTS
OF GREAT BRITAIN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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RECOLLECTIONS,

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WHEN I determined to offer to the public my Recollections of the principal circumstances which had occurred during the reign of George III., it was my intention to preserve materials for the use of some future historian ; but in stating the facts, and my reflections on the same, I have often found it difficult to make myself fully understood, in consequence of my having confined myself to the period of the reign of George III. ; many of the events of that reign being attributable to circumstances which had occurred during the preceding reign. I have therefore determined to carry back my Recollections and Reflections to the latter

years of Sir Robert Walpole's administration.

Frederick Prince of Wales married the Princess Augusta of Saxe Gotha, in April, 1736. His father had assigned to him, out of the Civil List, 50,000*l.* a year, in addition to the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall, which amounted to about 15,000*l.* a year more. Although the Prince accepted this appanage on his marriage, yet he soon found that this income would be inadequate to the maintenance of his household, in the manner in which he wished to live. His father, while Prince of Wales, had received 100,000*l.* a year from George I., in addition to the revenues of the duchy of Cornwall. Prince Frederick thought himself entitled to the same allowance; and, with the assistance of the opposition, he endeavoured to compel the King to make him an additional grant, out of the Civil List, of 50,000*l.* a year. The motion failed in the House of Commons, although much exertion seems to have been made in support of his demand; two hundred and four members having voted for the address to

the King, while only two hundred and thirty-four could be brought to vote against it: and we are told by Mr. Dodington (who, on this occasion, resisted all applications from the Prince), that forty-five members of the opposition declined giving any vote on the subject. A similar motion in the House of Lords was equally unsuccessful. Frederick Prince of Wales had never possessed in any great degree the affection either of the King or of the Queen; but hostilities having been declared by this measure, the Prince put himself openly at the head of the opposition; and in Feb. 1742, Sir Robert Walpole was obliged to resign the office of prime minister. In my former Recollections and Reflections, I have declined giving the character of Sir Robert Walpole. Those who have transmitted to us his character have, for the most part, been his enemies; and we are perhaps, from this circumstance, led to think less favourably of him than he deserves. The great object of his administration was to preserve the Brunswick Family on the throne; and by that means to protect us from the establishment of popery

and despotism. The means which he employed were to maintain peace abroad, and to increase the power of the Whig party by the influence of corruption at home. His efforts succeeded ; and although the bigotry of the Stuarts certainly contributed to facilitate the views of Sir Robert Walpole, yet I think we are indebted to him for having preserved to us the Brunswick dynasty. Perhaps I may be thought to have expressed myself too strongly. I speak from what I have heard from old men in the early part of my life. To preserve the Protestant religion was the first wish of the nation. But if people could have been convinced that the Protestant religion was secure, there certainly was much partiality to the Stuart family. As the race of the Stuarts is extinct, and all remembrance of them is now lost, there can be no impropriety in stating this opinion as a historian. Sir Robert Walpole certainly was not a great statesman, and his system gradually diminished the energetic character of the British nation. But he was loyal and useful to that Brunswick family which he served. About the year 1737 great complaints were brought

forward by the merchants, both in Jamaica and at home, respecting the violences committed by the Spanish *Guarda Costas* on such British ships as approached the coast of Spanish America. The English claimed the right of cutting logwood on the Spanish territories adjoining the bay of Honduras. They founded this claim on an article of *uti possidetis* in a treaty made with the Court of Spain in 1672. The English admitted that the Spaniards were the proprietors of the soil; but they contended that the inhabitants of Jamaica had been accustomed to cut logwood in the country antecedently to the treaty of 1672; and this assertion was probably well founded; for when the bucaniers of Jamaica were restrained from practising piracy, they betook themselves to cutting logwood on the Spanish territory. But what would an English gentleman say of a right claimed by the inhabitants of an adjoining town to pilfer his woods, because they had always been in the practice of it? Would he admit that such a usage gave a right of possession? on this usage, coupled with the clause of *uti possidetis* in the treaty, the English grounded their right.