

NON-FICTION

Daniel Defoe

An Answer to a Question that Nobody thinks Of

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A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

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AN ANSWER

TO A

QUESTION

That Nobody thinks of,

VIZ.

But what if the QUEEN should die?

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AN ANSWER

TO A QUESTION, &c.

THAT we are to have a peace, or that the peace is made, what sort of peace, or how it has been brought about; these are questions the world begins to have done with, they have been so much, so often, and to so little purpose banded about, and tossed like a shuttlecock, from one party to another; the parties themselves begin to want breath to rail and throw scandal. Roper and Ridpath, like two Tom T-men, have thrown night-dirt at one another so long, and groped into so many Jakes's up to their elbows to find it, that they stink now in the nostrils of their own party. They are become perfectly nauseous to read; the nation is surfeited of them, and the people begin to be tired with ill-using one another. Would any tolerable face appear upon things, we might expect the people would be inclined to be easy; and were the eyes of some great men open, they may see this was the opportunity they never had before, to make the nation easy, and themselves safe. The main thing which agitates the minds of men now, is the protestant succession and the pretender. Much pains have been taken on both sides to amuse the world about this remaining dispute; one side to make us believe it is safe, and the other to convince us it is in danger. Neither side hath been able to expatiate upon the part they affirm. Those who say the protestant succession is secure, have not yet shown us any step taken, since these new transactions, for its particular security. Those who say it is in danger, have not so clearly determined, even among themselves, from what particular head of public management that danger chiefly proceeds. Both these uncertainties serve to perplex us, and to leave the thing more undetermined than consists with the public ease of the people's minds. To contribute something to that ease, and bring those whose place it is to consider of ways to make the people easy in this case, this work is made public. Possibly, the question propounded may not meet with a categorical answer. But this is certain, it shall show you more directly what is the chief question which the substance of things before us is like to turn upon; and to which all our questions seem to tend. Were the great difficulty of the succession brought to a narrow compass, though we might spend fewer words about it, we should sooner come to a direct answer. Before I come to the great and chief question upon which this affair so much seems to turn, it seems needful to put the previous question upon which so much debate has been among us, and let that be examined. This previous question is this: Is there any real danger of the protestant succession? Is there any danger that the pretender shall be brought in upon us? Is there any danger of popery and tyranny, by restoring the son, as they call him, of abdicated King James? This is the previous question, as we may now call it. It is well known that there are some people among us, who are so

far from allowing that there is any such danger as the said question mentions, that they will have it to be a token of disaffection to the government to put the question, and are for loading whoever shall offer to start such a question, with characters and party-marks odious to good men, such as incendiary, promoter of discontents, raiser of faction, divider of the people, and the like: names which the writer of these sheets, at the same time, both contemns and abhors. He cannot see that he is any enemy to the queen, in inquiring as diligently as possible, whether there are any attempts to depose her, or dangerous prospects of bringing in the hated rival of her glory and dominion. It is so far from that, that it is apparently the duty of every true subject of her majesty, to inquire seriously, whether the public peace, the queen's safety, her throne, or her person, is in any danger from the wicked design of her, and her people's enemies. Wherefore, and for the joint concern every protestant Briton has in this thing, I shall make no difficulty, plainly and seriously to state, and to answer this previous question, viz., Whether there is any danger of the protestant succession from the present measures, and from the present people concerned? I am not ignorant of what has been said by some, to prove that the present ministry cannot be suspected of having any view to the pretender in any of their measures. The best reason which I have seen given upon that subject, is, that it is not their interest; and that as we have not found them fools that are blind to their own interest; that either do not understand, or pursue it. This we find handled sundry ways, by sundry authors, and very much insisted upon as a foundation for us to build upon. We shall give our thoughts upon it with plainness, and without fear or favour. Good manners require we should speak of the ministry with all due regard to their character and persons. This, a tract designed to inquire seriously of a weighty and essential, not a trifling thing, which requires but a trifling examination; nor shall it be handled here with satire and scurrility. We approve neither of the flatteries of one side, nor the insultings of the other. We shall readily and most willingly join with those who are of opinion that it is not the interest of the ministry to be for the pretender, and that the ministry are not blind to, or careless of, their own interest; and consequently, that the ministry cannot be for the pretender. This I hope may be called a direct answer. When I say "cannot," I must not be understood potentially, that they have no moral capacity; but they cannot without such inconsistencies, contradictions, and improbable things happening in, which render it highly irrational so much as to suppose it of them. To shut the door against any possibility of cavil, it may be needful also to take it with us as we go, what we mean by the words "be for" the pretender; and this can be no otherwise understood, than to have a design, however remote, and upon whatever views, to bring him in to possess the throne of these kingdoms. The matter then being laid down thus, as sincerely and plainly as possible, we come to the question point-blank, and think it our duty to say with the greatest sincerity, that we do not believe the ministry are in any kind, or with any prospect, near or remote, acting for or with a design or view to bring in the pretender. Having granted this, we must, however, to prevent any breaking in, by way of cavil on one hand, or triumph on the other, subjoin immediately, that we do not in the least grant by this that the protestant succession is in no danger, even from several of the measures now taken in the world. It is far from any reflection upon the ministry to say that, however they may act upon a right sincere principle for the protestant succession in all they do, which, as above, we profess to believe, yet that many of the tools they make use of are of another make, and have no edge to cut any other way; no thoughts to move them towards any other end; no other centre, which they can have any tendency to; that the pretender's interest is the magnet which draws them by its secret influence to point to him as their pole; that they have their aim at his establishment here, and own it to be their aim; and as they are not shy to profess it among themselves, so their conduct in many things makes it sufficiently public. This is not meant as any reflection upon the ministry for making use of such men: the late ministry did the same, and every ministry will, and must employ men sometimes, not as they always join with them in their politic principles, but as either the men are found useful in their several employments, or as the ministry may be under other circumstances, which makes it necessary to them to employ them. Nor, as the Review well enough observed, does it follow that because the ministry have employed or joined with jacobites in the public affairs, that therefore they must have done it with a jacobite principle. But let the ministry employ these men by what necessity, or upon what occasion they will, though it may not follow that the ministry are therefore for the pretender, yet it does not also follow that there is no danger of the protestant succession from the employing those sort of people: For, what if the queen should die?

The ministry, it is hoped, are established in the interest of their queen and country; and therefore it has been argued, that supposing the ministry had the pretender in their eye, yet that it is irrational to suggest that they can have any such view during the life of her present majesty. Nay, even those professed jacobites, who we spoke of just now, cannot be so ungrateful to think of deposing the queen, who has been so bountiful, so kind, so exceeding good to them, as in several cases to suffer them to be brought into the management of her own affairs, when by their character they might have been thought dangerous, even to her person; thus winning and engaging them by her bounty, and the confidence that has been placed in them, not to attempt anything to her prejudice, without the most monstrous ingratitude, without flying in the face of all that sense of honour and obligation, which it is possible for men of common sense to entertain. And it can hardly be thought that even papists themselves, under the highest possessions of their religious zeal, can conquer the native aversions they must have to such abominable ingratitude, or to think of bringing in the pretender upon this protestant nation, even while the queen shall be on the throne. But though this may, and some doubt that also, tie up their hands during the queen's life, yet they themselves give us but small reason to expect

anything from them afterward, and it will be hard to find anybody to vouch for them then. These very jacobites, papists, and professed enemies to the revolution, may be supposed upon these pretensions to be quiet, and offer no violence to the present establishment while her majesty has the possession, and while that life lasts, to which they are so much indebted for her royal goodness and clemency. But what would they do if the queen should die?

Come we next to the French king. We are told, that not the French king only, but even the whole French nation, are wonderfully forward to acknowledge the obligation they are under to the justice and favour which they have received from her majesty, in the putting an end to the war; a war which lay heavy upon them, and threatened the very name of the French nation with ruin, and much more threatened the glory of the French court, and of their great monarch, with an entire overthrow, a total eclipse. A war which, by their own confession, it was impossible for them long to have supported the expenses of, and which, by the great superiority of the allies, became dreadful to them, and that every campaign more than the other; a war which they were in such pain to see the end of, that they tried all the powers and courts in Christendom, who were the least neutral, to engage a mediation in order to a treaty, and all in vain; and a war which, if her majesty had not inclined to put an end to, must have ended perhaps to the disadvantage and confusion of both France and Spain, if not of all Christendom. The obligations the French are under for the bringing this war to so just and honourable a conclusion are not at all concealed. Nay, the French themselves have not been backward to make them public. The declarations made by the French king of his sincerity in the overtures made for a general peace, the protestations of his being resolved to enter into an entire confidence, and a league offensive and defensive with the queen's majesty for the preservation of the peace of Christendom, his recognition of her majesty's just right to the crown, his entering into articles to preserve the union, acknowledging the ninth electorate in favour of the house of Hanover, and joining in the great affair of the protestant succession. As these all convince the world of the necessity his affairs were reduced to, and the great advantages accruing to him by a peace, so they seem to be so many arguments against our fears of the French entering into any engagements against the crown of Britain, much less any against the possession of the queen during her life. Not that the honour and sincerity of the king of France is a foundation fit for her majesty or her people to have any dependence upon; and the fraction of former treaties by that court, when the glory of that monarch, or his particular views of things has dictated such opportunity to him as he thought fit to close with, are due cautions to us all not to have any dependence of that kind. But the state of his affairs, and the condition the war has reduced him to, may give us some ground to think ourselves safe on that side. He knows what power he has taken off from his enemies in making peace with her majesty; he knows very well with what loss he sits down, how his affairs are weakened, and what need he has to take breath after so terrible a war; besides the flame such an action would kindle again in Europe; how it would animate this whole British nation against him, in such a manner, and endanger bringing in a new war, and perhaps a new confederacy upon him so violently, and that before he would be in a condition to match them, that no one can reasonably suppose the French king will run the hazard of it. And these things may tend to make some people easier than ordinary in the affair of the succession, believing that the French king stands in too much need of the favour of the queen of Great Britain, whose power it well behoves him to keep in friendship with him, and whose nation he will be very cautious of provoking a third time, as he has already done twice, to his fatal experience. All these things, we say, may seem pretty well to assure us that nothing is to be feared on that side so long as her majesty lives to sit upon the British throne. But all leaves our grand question unanswered; and though we may argue strongly for the French king's conduct while the present reign continues, yet few will say, What he will do if the queen should die?

Nay, we may even mention the pretender himself, if he has any about him whose councils are fit to be depended upon, and can direct him to make a wise and prudent judgment of his own affairs; if he acts by any scope of policy, and can take his measures with any foresight; most easy is it for them to see that it must be in vain for him to think of making any attempt in Britain during the life of the queen, or to expect to depose her majesty, and set himself up. The French power, upon which he has already in vain depended, as it has not hitherto been able to serve him, or his father, but that their exile has continued now above twenty-four years, so much less can he be able to assist him now, while he has been brought as it were to kneel to the British court to put an end for him to this cruel destructive war; the reason is just spoken to, viz., that this would be to rekindle that flame which he has gotten so lately quenched, and which cost him so much art, so much management, so much submission to the allies, to endeavour the quenching of before. To attack the queen of Great Britain now in behalf of the pretender, would not only be in the highest degree ungrateful, perfidious, and dishonourable, but would for ever make the British court, as well as the whole nation, his violent and implacable enemies; but would also involve him again in a new war with all Europe, who would very gladly fall in again with Britain to pull down more effectually the French power, which has so long been a terror to its neighbours; so that the pretender can expect no help from the king of France. As to what the pope, the Spaniard, and a few petty popish powers, who might pretend upon a religious prospect to assist him, and with whose aid, and the assistance of his party here, he may think fit to hazard an attempt here for the crown, it is evident, and his own friends will agree in it, that while the queen lives, it is nonsense, and ridiculous for them to attempt it; that it would immediately arm the whole nation against them, as one man; and in human probability it would, like as his supposed father was served at the revolution, be the ruin of his whole interest, and blow him at once quite out of the nation. I believe that there are very

few who alarm themselves much with the fears of the pretender, from the apprehension of his own strength from abroad, or from his own party and friends at home here, were they once sure that he should receive no assistance from the king of France. If then the king of France cannot be reasonably supposed either to be inclined, or be in a condition to appear for him, or act in his behalf, during the life of the queen, neither can the pretender, say some, unless he is resolved to ruin all his friends, and at last to ruin himself, make any attempt of that kind during her majesty's life. But what if the queen should die?

Having then viewed the several points of the nation's compass whence our danger of jacobite plots and projects against the protestant succession may be expected to come, let us now inquire a little of the state of the nation, that we make a right estimate of our condition, and may know what to trust to in cases of difficulty, as they lie before us. In doing this, as well to avoid giving offence to the people now in power, as to the entering into the quarrels which engage the present contending parties in this divided nation, we shall allow, however some may think fit to question it, the main debate; and grant this for the present as a fundamental, viz., That we are in no danger of the pretender during this queen's reign, or during this ministry's administration under her majesty; and avoiding all contention of that kind, shall allow our condition to be safe in every article as we go along, for so long as the queen lives, referring the observation of things in every head to those who can answer the main question in our title, viz., But what if the queen should die?

First of all, it may be noticed, that the present safety of this nation, whether we respect liberty, religion, property, or public safety and prosperity, depends upon this one fundamental, viz., that alluding reverently to that text of Scripture, we are all built upon the foundation of the late revolution, established law and right being the chief corner-stone. By this it is that her majesty is made our queen, the entail of the crown being reserved in the remainder to her majesty in the act of settlement made at the filling up the vacant throne, and by all those subsequent acts which her majesty's title was confirmed by, during the life of the late king. This revolution is that upon which the liberties and religion of this nation were rebuilt after the conflagration that was made of them in the calamitous times of King Charles II., and King James II., and from hence to the love of liberty which is found almost to be naturally placed in the hearts of true Britons; and upon the view whereof they have acted all along in the late war, and in all their transactions at home has obtained the title of a "revolution principle." Noting this then, as above, that her majesty is our queen by virtue of the revolution, and that during her reign that establishment alone must be the foundation of all her administration, this must effectually secure us against any apprehension that the persons acting under her majesty can act in behalf of the pretender during her majesty's life; for that they must immediately overthrow the throne, turn the queen out of it, and renounce the revolution, upon which her majesty's possession is established: as the revolution, therefore, is the base upon which the throne of her majesty is established, so her majesty, and all that act under her, are obliged to act upon the foot of the said revolution, even *will* they, *nil* they, or else they sink immediately out of rightful power to act at all; her majesty's title would fall to the ground, their own commissions would from that hour be void; they must declare their royal mistress and benefactress a subject to the pretender, and all her pretences of rightful possession injurious, and an usurpation. These things being so plain, that he that runs may read them, seem to stop all our mouths from so much as any suggestion that anybody can attempt to bring in the pretender upon us during the life of her present majesty. But what if the queen should die?

Subsequent to the revolution, many essential things are formed by our parliaments and government for the public good, on the foundation of which much of the present peace of the nation is founded; and while the said revolution-foundation stands fast, there is good ground to believe those essential points shall be preserved. If then we are satisfied that the revolution principle shall subsist as long as the queen lives, then for so long we may have good ground to believe we shall enjoy all those advantages and benefits which we received from the said revolution. But still, when we look back upon those dear privileges, the obtaining of which has cost so much money, and the maintaining of which has cost so much blood, we must with a deep sigh reflect upon the precarious circumstances of the nation, whose best privileges hang uncertain upon the nice and tender thread of royal mortality, and say we are happy while these last, and these may last while her majesty shall live. But what if the queen should die?

Let us descend to some other particulars of those blessings which we do enjoy purely as the effect of the revolution, and examine in what posture we stand with respect to them, and what assurance we have of their continuance: and first, as to TOLERATION. This was the greatest and first blessing the nation felt after the immediate settlement of the crown, which was established by virtue of the revolution engagement, mentioned in the Prince of Orange's declaration. The design of this law, as it was to give liberty for the worship of God to such dissenters as could not conform to the Church of England, and to give ease to tender consciences, so as by the law itself is expressed; it was to ease the minds of their majesties' subjects, and to give general quiet to the nation, whose peace had been frequently disturbed by the violence of persecution. We have seen frequent assurances given of the inviolable preservation of this toleration by her majesty from the throne in her speeches to the parliament; and during her majesty's reign, we have great reason to hope the quiet of the poor people shall not be broken by either repealing that law, or invading the intent

and meaning of it while in force; and there are a great many reasons to hope that the present ministry are so far convinced of the necessity of the said toleration, in order to preserve the peace, and the common neighbourhood of people, that they can have no thought of breaking in upon it, or any way making the people who enjoy it, uneasy. Nay, the rather we believe this, because the ferment such a breach would put the whole nation into is not the safest condition the government can be in upon any account; and as the ministry cannot be supposed to desire to give uneasiness and provocation to the commons, but rather to keep them easy and quiet, and prevent the enemies of the present management from having any handle to take hold of to foment distractions and disturbances among the people, it cannot be thought that they will push at the toleration, so as to deprive the people of so considerable a thing. But after the present happy establishment shall have received such a fatal blow as that will be of the queen's death, and when popish pretenders, and French influences, shall prevail, it may well be expected then, that not toleration of dissenters only, but even of the whole protestant religion, may be in danger to be lost; so that, however secure we are of the free enjoyment of liberty of religion during the queen's life, we may be very well allowed to ask this question with respect to, not toleration only, but the Church of England also, viz., what will become of them, if the queen should die?

From toleration in England, come we to the constitution of religious affairs in Scotland; and here we have different views from what the case in England affords us; the powerful interest of jacobitism, if it may be said to be formidable anywhere, is so there. The enemies of the revolution are all the implacable enemies of the church establishment there: nay, many thousands are the declared enemies of the revolution, and of the queen's being upon the throne, from a mere implacable aversion to the presbyterian kirk, which is erected and established by that very revolution which has set the queen upon the throne. The union, which has yet farther established that presbyterian kirk, is for that reason the aversion of the same people, as it is the aversion of the jacobites, by being a farther confirmation of the Hanover succession, and a farther fixing the queen upon the throne. Now, as it is sure, that as before, while the queen lives, and the revolution influence carries its usual force in the kingdoms now united, the presbyterian kirk must and will remain, and all the little encroachments which have been made upon the kirk, as it may be observed, though they have created uneasiness enough, yet they still seem to suppose that the establishment itself cannot be overthrown. The union and the revolution settlement remain in Scotland, and must remain, as is said; while the queen lives we can have no apprehensions of them; the reasons are given above; and as we said before, we are to take them for granted in this discourse, to avoid other cavils. While then the revolution and the union are to be the foundation of the administration in Scotland, the presbyterian established church government there must also remain as the only legal kirk constitution, and so long we can entertain no fears of anything on that account. But what if the queen should die?

From such religious concerns as effect presbyterians, and other sectaries, or dissenters, as we call them, let us take a look at the remote danger of the Church of England. We have had a great deal of distraction in the time of the late ministry about the danger of the church; and as it appears by the memorial of the church of England, published in those times, and reprinted since; by the sermons of Dr. Sacheverell, and the eminent speeches at his trial, that danger was more especially suggested to come from the increase of dissenters here, the ministry of the whigs, and the establishing presbyterianism in the north of Britain. These things being in a great measure now overthrown by the late change of the ministry, and the new methods taken in the management of the public affairs, the people, who were then supposed to aim at overthrowing the ministry of those whigs, are pleased to assure us of the safety and flourishing condition of the church now more than ever; while the other party, taking up the like cry of the danger of the church, tells us, that now a real visible appearance of danger to the church is before us; and that not only to the church of England as such, but even to the whole interest and safety of the protestant religion in Britain; that this danger is imminent and unavoidable, from the great growth and increase of popery, and professed jacobitism in the nation. This indeed they give but too great demonstrations of from the spreading of popish agents among us, whose professed employment it is to amuse and impose upon the poor country people, as well in matters of jacobitism as of religion, and the great successes these emissaries of Satan have obtained in several parts of Britain, but especially in the north. Now, though we cannot but acknowledge but that much of this alarm is justly grounded, and that the endeavours of popish and jacobite agents and emissaries in divers parts of Britain are too apparently successful, yet as wise men could never see into the reality of such danger, as was by some people pretended to be impending over the church in the time of the late ministry, so neither can we allow that popery is so evidently at the door at this time, as that we should be apprehensive of having the church of England immediately transversed, and the protestant religion in Britain: and one great reason for this opinion is, that her majesty, who is a zealous professor of the protestant religion, and has been bred up in the bosom of the church of England, is so rooted in principle, and has declared from her very infancy such horror and aversion to popery, that it cannot enter into any true protestant thoughts to apprehend anything of that kind, while her majesty lives. But, Lord have mercy upon us! What if the queen should die?

From religious matters, come we next to consider civil interest, liberties, privileges, properties; the great article that in the late revolution went always coupled in the nation's negative with that of religion, as if they were woven together, and was always cried upon by the mob in one breath, viz., No popery, no slavery. The first of these concerns our civil interest; such as the public credit, by the occasions of a long and expensive war, and to prevent levying severe taxes

for the carrying on the war, such as would be grievous to trade, oppressive to the poor, and difficult to be paid. The parliament, for the ease of the subjects, thought fit, rather to lay funds of interest to raise money upon, by way of loan, establishing those interests, payable as annuities and annual payments, for the benefit of those who advanced their money for the public service. And to make these things current, that the public credit might be sacred, and the people be made free to advance their money, all possible assurances of parliament have been given, that the payments of interests and annuities shall be kept punctually, and exactly according to the acts of parliament, that no misapplications of the money shall be made, or converting the money received upon one to make good the deficiency of the other; and hitherto the injunctions of that kind have been exactly observed, and the payments punctually made, which we call the credit of the nation. At the first of the late change, when the new ministry began to act, the fright the people were put in upon the suggestion of some, that all the parliamentary funds should be wiped off with a sponge, was very considerable; and the credit of those funds sunk exceedingly with but the bare apprehension of such a blow, the sums being infinitely great, and the number of indigent families being incredibly many, whose whole substance lay in those securities, and whose bread depended upon those interests being punctually paid; but wiser men saw quickly there was no ground for those fears; that the new ministry stood upon a foot that could no more be supported without the public credit than those that went before them; that especially while they were under a necessity of borrowing farther sums, they behaved to secure the punctual paying of the old; and by making the people entirely easy, not only take from them the apprehensions they were under of losing what they lent already, but make them forward and willing to advance more to this purpose, they not only endeavoured to give the people all satisfaction that their money was safe, and that the funds laid by the parliament in the former ministry should be kept sacred, and the payments punctually made, but took care to obtain parliamentary securities, by real funds to be settled for the payment of those debts contracted by the former ministry, and for which no provision was made before. This was the establishment of a fund for payment of the interests of the navy debt, ordnance, victualling, transport, &c., to the value of seven or eight millions, which is the substance of what we now call the South-sea stock. By this means the public credit, which it was suggested would receive such a blow at the Change as that it should never recover again, and that it would be impossible for the new ministry to raise any needful sums of money for the carrying on the war, or for the public occasions, recovered itself so as that the government hath ever since found it easy to borrow whatever sums they thought fit to demand, in the same manner as before. Now that these loans are safe, no man that weighs the circumstances of the ministry and government, and the circumstances of the people, can doubt; the first being in a constant necessity of supporting the public credit for the carrying on the public affairs, on any sudden emergency that may happen, and being liable to the resentment of parliament, if any open infraction should be made upon the funds, which touches so nearly the honour of the parliaments, and the interest of most of the best families in the nation. While this is the case, we think it is not rational to believe that any ministry will venture to attack parliamentary credit, in such a manner; and this will eminently be the case as long as her majesty sits on the throne. Nor can a thing so barefacedly tyrannical and arbitrary, and, above all, dishonourable and unjust, be suggested as possible to be attempted in the reign of so just and conscientious a prince; so that we may be very willing to allow that there is not the least danger of the public faith being broken, the public credit lost, the public funds stopped, or the money being misapplied. No cheat, no sponge, while her majesty lives. But, alas for us! What if the queen should die?

From this piece of civil right, come we to those things we call liberties and privileges. These may indeed be joined in some respects; but as we are engaged in speaking particularly to such points, wherein our present dangers do or do not appear, it is proper to mention them apart. Privileges may be distinguished here from liberties, as they respect affairs of trade, corporations, parliaments, and legislature, &c. Liberty, as they respect laws, establishments, declared right, and such like. As to the first, from the revolution to this time, they have not only been confirmed, which we had before, but many privileges added to the people, some of which are essential to the well-being of the kingdom. All the *quo warrantos* against corporation privileges, the high commission court against the church's privileges extending prerogative in detriment of the subject's natural right, and many such things, which were fatal to the privileges of this protestant nation, were laid aside, and received their just condemnation in the revolution; and not so only, but the privileges obtained since the revolution by consent of parliament, are very considerable; such as the toleration to this part of Britain, and the establishment of the church of Scotland; for the north part; in matters of religion; such as the triennial election of parliaments; in civil affairs, such as the several corporations granted upon really useful foundations in trade; as the bank company, &c., and such like. These and many more, which may be named, and which these are named only as heads of, are secured to us by law; and those laws yet again made sure to us by the honour and veracity of her majesty, and as long as her majesty's life is spared to these nations, we have great reason to believe we shall rather increase than lose our privileges. But what if the queen should die?

Our LIBERTIES, which come next in order, may be summed up in what we call legal, and native right; or such as by the natural consequence of a free nation, and a just government; or such as by mutual assent and consent of sovereign and subject, are become the legal right of the latter. These, needless to be enumerated here, are summed up into one; or are expressly enacted by statute law, and thereby become fundamental to the constitution. These receive no wound, but one of these two ways, either by open infraction and contempt of right, or by dispensing arbitrary power; both of

which, by the many assurances from the throne, by the constant jealousies of parliaments, and the full liberty they have more of late than ever taken to examine into, and censure breaches of the laws, we are very well assured shall not be attempted in her majesty's time: nay, on the contrary, the superiority, and influence of parliaments over and upon the management of public matters, nay, even their influence upon the royal majesty of the sovereign, has been such, and has in such a manner insensibly increased of late, that the like has never been known or practised in this nation for some ages before. We see her majesty declines extending her prerogative, either to the detriment of her subjects, in cases civil or religious, and wherein it might be so extended; nay, when even the parliament have desired her to extend it: so that we have a great satisfaction in the safety of our established liberties, and that no tyrannical, arbitrary invasions of right shall be made during her majesty's reign. But what if the queen should die?

In like manner for our properties, our estates, inheritance, lands, goods, lives, liberties, &c. These are effectually secured by laws of the land, and the sovereign in this country, having no right, but by law, to any part of the subject's estate, causes that estate to be called PROPERTY. The kings and queens of Britain are monarchs limited to act by the laws. When they cease to rule by law, the constitution is broken, and they become tyrants, and arbitrary, despotic invaders of right. This is declared by the revolution, wherein the rights of the subject are openly, not set down only, but claimed, demanded as what justice required should be granted to them, and as what the sovereign, as aforesaid, has no right, no pretence, no just authority to take, or detain from him. This is the great capital and fundamental article of Magna Charta, and the foundation upon which all the laws subsequent and consequential to Magna Charta have been made. [*No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or be disseized of his freehold, or liberties, or free customs, or be outlawed, or exiled, or otherwise destroyed; nor we will not pass upon him, nor condemn him, but by lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.* Magna Charta, cap. xxix.] The words are plain and direct; and as to the subject we are now upon, they require no comment, no explication. Whatever they do, as to pleading in law the proof of the subject's right to the free possession of his own property, is also the less needful to enlarge upon here, because it is acknowledged in full and express terms by the sovereign, as well in practice, as in expression. Her majesty, adhering strictly to this, as a rule, has from the beginning of her reign made it her golden rule, to govern according to law. Nor, while the establishment of the crown itself is built upon the legal constitution of this nation, can it be otherwise here: that prince that governs here and not by law, may be said rather to oppress than to govern; rather to overrule, than to rule over his people. Now it cannot without great and unjustifiable violence to her majesty's just government, be suggested, that we are in any danger of oppression during the righteous administration of her majesty's reign. The queen raises no money without act of parliament, keeps up no standing army in time of peace, disseizes no man of his property or estate; but every man sits in safety under his own vine, and his fig-tree; and we doubt not but we shall do as long as her majesty lives. But what if the queen should die?

Possibly cavils may rise in the mouths of those whose conduct this nice question may seem to affect, that this is a question unfit to be asked, and questionless such people will have much to say upon that subject; as that it is a factious question, a question needless to be answered, and impertinent therefore to be asked; that it is a question which respects things remote, and serves only to fill the heads of the people with fears and jealousies; that it is a question to which no direct answer can be given, and which suggests strange surmises, and amuses people about they know not what, and is of no use, but to make people uneasy without cause.

As there is no objection, which is material enough to make, but is material enough to answer, so this, although there is nothing of substance in it, may introduce something in its answer of substance enough to consider: it is therefore most necessary to convince the considering reader of the usefulness and necessity of putting this question; and then likewise the usefulness and necessity of putting this question NOW at this time; and if it appear to be both a needful question itself, and a seasonable question, as to time, the rest of the cavils against it will deserve the less regard. That it is a needful question, seems justified more abundantly from a very great example, to wit, the practice of the whole nation, in settling the succession of the crown. This I take to be nothing else but this: the queen having no issue of her body, and the pretender to the crown being expelled by law, included in his father's disastrous flight and abdication; when the parliament came to consider of the state of the nation, as to government as it now stands; that King William being lately dead, and her majesty with universal joy of her people, being received as queen, the safety, and the lasting happiness of the nation is so far secured. But what if the queen should die?

The introduction to all the acts of parliaments for settling the crown, implies thus much, and speaks directly this language, viz., to make the nation safe and easy in case the queen should die: nor are any of these acts of parliament impeached of faction, or impertinences; much less of needless blaming the people, and filling their heads with fears and jealousies. If this example of the parliament is not enough justifying to this inquiry, the well known truth, upon which that example of parliament is grounded, is sufficient to justify it, viz., that we all know the queen must die. None say this with more concern and regret than those who are forwardest to put this question, as being of the opinion above said, that, we are effectually secured against the pretender, and against all the terrifying consequences of the Frenchified governors, during her majesty's life. But this is evident, the queen is mortal, though crowned with all that flattering

courtiers can bring together, to make her appear great, glorious, famous, or what you please; yet the queen, yea, the queen herself, is *mortal*, and *MUST* die. It is true, kings and queens are called gods; but this respects their sacred power: nothing supposing an immortality attending their persons, for they all die like other men, and their dust knows no distinction in the grave. Since then it is most certain that the queen must die, and our safety and happiness in this nation depends so much upon the stability of our liberties, religion, and aforesaid dependencies after her majesty's life shall end, it cannot be a question offensive to any who has any concern in the public good, to inquire into what shall be the state of our condition, or the posture of our affairs, when the queen shall die; but this is not all neither. As the queen is mortal, and we are assured she must die, so we are none of us certain as to be able to know when, or how soon, that disaster may happen; at what time, or in what manner. This then, as it may be remote, and not a long time; God of his infinite mercy grant it may be long first, and not before this difficult question we are upon be effectually and satisfactorily answered to the nation; so on the other side, it may be near; none of us know how near, the fatal blow may befall us soon, and sooner far than we may be ready; for to-day it may come, while the cavilling reader is objecting against our putting this question, and calling it unreasonable and needless; while the word is in thy very mouth, mayest thou hear the fatal, melancholy news, the queen is dead. News that must one time or other be heard; the word will certainly come some time or other, to be spoken in the present sense, and to be sure in the time they are spoken in. How can any one then say, that it is improper to ask what shall be our case, what shall we do, or what shall be done with us, if the queen should die?

But we have another melancholy incident, which attends the queen's mortality, and which makes this question more than ordinarily seasonable to be asked at this time; and that is, that not only the queen is mortal, and she must die, and the time uncertain; so that she may die, even to-day, before to-morrow, or in a very little space of time: but her life is, under God's providence, at the mercy of papists and jacobites' people; who, the one by their principles, and the other by the circumstances of their party, are more than ordinarily to be apprehended for their bloody designs against her majesty, and against the whole nation. Nay, there seems more reason to be apprehensive of the dangerous attempts of these desperate people, at this time, than ever, even from the very reasons which are given all along in this work, for our being safe in our privileges, our religious and civil rights, during her majesty's life. It would be mispending your time to prove that the papists and jacobite parties in this nation, however they may, as we have said, be under ties and obligations of honour, interest, and gratitude, &c., not to make attempt upon us during the queen's life; yet that they are more encouraged at this time than ever they were to hope and believe, that when the queen shall die, their turn stands next. This, we say, we believe is lost labour to speak of: the said people, the popish and tory party, will freely own and oppose it. They all take their obligations to the queen to end with her majesty's life. The French king, however in honour and gratitude he may think himself bound not to encourage the pretender to insult her majesty's dominions, while the queen, with whom he personally is engaged by treaty, shall remain alive, will think himself fully at liberty from those obligations when the queen shall die. If we are not misinformed of the French affairs, and of the notions they have in France of these things, they are generally no otherwise understood than that the king of France is engaged by the peace now in view, not to disturb her majesty's possession during her reign and her life; but that then the pretender's right is to be received everywhere. The pretender himself, howsoever, as above said, he may despair of his success in attempting to take possession during the queen's life, will not fail to assume new hopes at her majesty's death: so much then of the hopes of popery and French power; so much of the interest of the pretender depending upon the single thread of life of a mortal person; and we being well assured that they look upon her majesty only as the incumbent in a living, or tenant for life in an estate, what is more natural, than in this case for us to apprehend danger to the life of the queen; especially to such people, who are known not to make much consciences of murdering princes, with whom the king-killing doctrine is so universally received, and who were so often detected of villanous practices and plots against the life of Queen Elizabeth, her majesty's famous predecessor, and that upon the same foundation, viz., the queen of Scots being the popish pretender to the crown; what can we expect from the same party, and men acting from the same principles, but the same practices? It is known that the queen, by course of nature, may live many years, and these people have many reasons to be impatient of so much delay. They know that many accidents may intervene to make the circumstances of the nation, at the time of the queen's death, less favourable to their interests than they are now; they may have fewer friends, as well in power, as out of power, by length of time, and the like: these, and such as these considerations may excite villanous and murderous practices against the precious life of our sovereign (God protect her majesty from them); but while all these considerations so naturally offer themselves to us, it seems most rational, needful, seasonable, and just, that we should be asking and answering this great question, What if the queen should die?

Thus far we have only asked the question itself, and showed our reasons, or endeavoured to justify the reasonableness of the inquiry. It follows that we make some brief essay as an answer to the question. This may be done many ways; but the design of this tract is rather to put the question into your thought, than to put an answer into your mouths. The several answers which may be given to this important question may not be proper for a public print; and some may not be fit so much as to be spoken. The question is not without its uses, whether it be answered or no, if the nation be sufficiently awakened but to ask the question among themselves; they will be brought by thinking of the

thing to answer it one to another in a short space. The people of Britain want only to be showed what imminent danger they are in, in case of the queen's decease: how much their safety and felicity depend upon the life of her majesty, and what a state of confusion, distress, and all sorts of dreadful calamities they will fall into at her majesty's death, if something be not done to settle them before her death; and if they are not during her majesty's life secured from the power of France, and the danger of the pretender.

END OF "WHAT IF THE QUEEN SHOULD DIE?"