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 Thomas Mortimer  
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# EVERY MAN HIS OWN BROKER.

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## CHAP. I.

Explanation of the Nature of the PUBLIC FUNDS,  
 commonly called the STOCKS.



AT a period of time when the credit of Great Britain is at the highest degree of reputation, and her securities for the loan of money are esteemed the best in Europe, not only by her own subjects, but likewise by

B 3 all

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## 2            E V E R Y   M A N

all unprejudiced foreigners; a full explanation of the nature of these securities merits the attention of all strangers, as well as of the natives of England, on whom Providence has bestowed any portion of wealth, that is not employed in commerce, or laid out in landed estates; for where will they find so safe a repository for their money, and on such advantageous terms as the public funds of England afford? Higher interest may indeed be obtained, but then the security is not quite so good.

A company or society of merchants trading to any part of the world, may suffer losses of various kinds, so as to lessen the value of the principal sum advanced them, and to oblige them to lower their dividends; while, on the other hand, private securities are still more hazardous: so that it necessarily follows, that the government securities being the safest, are the most advantageous

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## HIS OWN BROKER. 3

tageous to lay out money in. But for want of rightly understanding these securities, great numbers of persons, especially in the remote parts of the kingdom, lose the opportunities of engaging in them, and often lend their money, to their great loss and disappointment, on private securities.

Besides the utility of being conversant in the nature of the funds, it will afford a secret satisfaction to the public in general, to see by what easy methods a free government raises the large (but necessary) annual supplies, for carrying on a heavy and extensive war, in comparison of those grievous and oppressive measures taken in despotic governments, on the same emergencies.

Surely the breast of every Englishman must glow with rapture and admiration, when he considers, that while the unhappy subjects of the other powers engaged in the present war are quite ex-

B 4                      hausted,

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## 4            E V E R Y   M A N

hausted, and thousands of them totally ruined, by the demands made on them by their arbitrary monarchs, he is voluntarily contributing towards defraying the public expences of his country, in a manner that is so far from being a burden to him, that, on the contrary, he is serving himself at the same time, by lending his money on parliamentary security; and on conditions, that though they are not quite so profitable as some others, are yet insured by the credit of the nation, which exceeds all other security whatever.

The present GOVERNMENT FUNDS are,  
Three per Cent. Bank reduced Annuities.  
Three per Cent. consolidated ditto.

Three per Cent. ditto, 1726.

————— ditto, 1751.

Three  $\frac{1}{2}$  per Cent. ditto, 1756.

Three  $\frac{1}{2}$  per Cent. ditto, 1758.

Four per Cent. ditto, 1760.

Three per Cent. Subscription, 1761.

Long Annuities, ————— ditto.

Lottery Tickets.

These

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These are what business is daily transacting in, and are extracted from one of the printed lists published by a broker, which printed lists are to be had daily, (about one o'clock in the afternoon) at any of the brokers offices near the Exchange; and at some of them may be seen stuck up at the windows. I chuse to distinguish the above, from all the other funds that are inserted in these lists, or printed in the public news-papers, under the general name of stocks, that the public may be acquainted with the difference betwixt the funds of particular societies, and those of the government.

The word Stock, in its proper signification, means, that capital in merchandise, or money, which a certain number of proprietors have agreed to make the foundation for carrying on an united commerce, to the equal interest and advantage of each party concerned, in

B 5                      propos

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## 6 EVERY MAN

proportion to the sum or share contributed by each.

A number of merchants uniting, and applying to the government for an exclusive charter, to prevent others from engaging in the same commerce, and for a power to raise money by an open subscription, in order to form their STOCK, or CAPITAL, are generally denominated COMPANIES.

A conjunction of three or four persons, who jointly contribute different or equal sums, towards forming a general STOCK to trade with, is called a COPARTNERSHIP; but the sum of money, or the value of the merchandises they begin trade with, is still properly called their STOCK; and so is the CAPITAL with which any single man carries on his particular business.

From this definition of the word it follows, that the application of it to the  
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## HIS OWN BROKER. 7

lift of government securities, here inserted, is highly improper, as they are absolutely public DEBTS, and not Stocks, for they are all aids granted by parliament to the government, to enable it to defray the public expences at sundry times, and on sundry occasions; and have been borrowed of the public on the different conditions contained in the several acts of parliament by which they were raised; one of which conditions is, that they shall be redeemable by parliament, or, in other words, that the parliament reserve a power of paying off these sums borrowed of the public. However, in all this there is not the least shadow of STOCK or CAPITAL; but what amply supplies the place of it is, NATIONAL CREDIT, on the strength of which the NATIONAL DEBT has been contracted; and so long as the government can keep this CREDIT in reputation, which it will always be able to do, while it can find ways and means of paying the  
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## 8            E V E R Y   M A N

the annual interest of this debt, in the same punctual manner that it is paid at present, so long will NATIONAL CREDIT supply the place of STOCK to the government; and will be a better security for money than a share in the STOCK of any company whatever, for reasons which I shall give in their proper place: but whether this NATIONAL CREDIT, which is able to engender such large NATIONAL DEBTS, is advantageous or not, to England in general, is a question in politics too nice for us to decide, and foreign to our subject.

The STOCK or CAPITAL of our public companies, has been raised by authority of parliament; and by the same authority has been confined to a certain sum; so that as soon as the sum allowed to be raised was completed, the number of proprietors was ascertained and completed also, and no person whatever could afterwards be admitted on the same footing;  
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## HIS OWN BROKER. 9

but as every proprietor had a power reserved to him, his heirs and executors, of transferring or assigning over his right in the said Stock, to whom he thought proper—this laid the foundation of opening transfer-books ; and of appointing particular days and hours, for transferring, assigning over, and accepting ; or, in other words, for selling and buying of Stock.

Every original share of a trading company's Stock must greatly increase in value, in proportion to the advantages arising from the commerce they are engaged in ; and such is the nature of trade in general, that it either considerably increases, or falls into decline ; and nothing can be a greater proof of a company's trade being in a flourishing condition, than when their credit is remarkably good, and the original shares in their Stock will sell at a considerable premium.

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## 10      E V E R Y   M A N

This, for instance, has always been and still is, the case of EAST INDIA STOCK in particular, not to instance any other. The present price of a share of 100*l.* in the company's stock is 134*l.* The reason of this advance on what cost the original proprietor only 100*l.* is, that the company, by the profits they have made in trade, are enabled to pay 6*l. per annum* interest or dividend for each 100*l.* share.

But then it is uncertain how long they may continue to make so large an annual dividend, especially in time of war ; for several circumstances may occur (though it is not likely they should) that may molest their trade in their settlements, and diminish their profits ; while, however, there is even a possibility of this, the premium must be precarious ; and though it is a great advance on the price given by the original proprietor, yet for a person who has money to lay out at present, it  
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