engaged to run down the minister, lived to repent of their conduct, and do justice to the man whom they had ſo pertinaciously vilified.

In order to encourage commerce and improve the reve­nue, Sir Robert projected a ſcheme for an extenſion of the exciſe, as the only means of putting a stop to the frauds of merchants and illicit traders. This was another ground of clamour to the orators within, and the wits without, doors; and while the opposition repreſented it as a meaſure big with public miſchief, Swift and Pope occasionally alluded to it as an oppression calculated to deprive private life of all its com­forts. The minister was therefore obliged to abandon the ſcheme ; but in a ſucceeding administration it was partly carried into execution, at the express solicitation of the principal persons concerned in that article of trade which it was suggested would be most affected by it; and afterwards the most popular minister that ever directed the councils of this country declared in full ſenate, that if a time ſhould ever arrive which was likely to render the project feasible, he would himſelf recommend an extension of the exciſe laws as a meaſure of the greatest advantage to commerce, to the revenue, and to the general interests of the kingdom.

In 1742 the opposition prevailed; and Sir Robert being no longer able to carry a majority in the houſe of commons, resigned all his places, and fled for shelter behind the throne. He was ſoon afterwards created earl of Orford ; and the king, in consideration of his long and faithful ſervices, grant­ed him a pension of 4000 l. *per annum.* The remainder of his life he ſpent in tranquillity and retirement, and died, 1745, in the 71st year of his age.

He has been ſeverely, and not unjustly, cenſured for that ſystem of corruption by which he almost avowed that he governed the nation; but the objects which he had in view are now acknowledged to have been in a high degree praise- worthy. Johnſon, who in the earlier part of his life had joined the other wits in writing against his meaſures, after­wards honoured his memory for the placability of his tem­per, and for keeping this country in peace for ſo many years; and Mr Burke has lately@@\* declared, that his only defect as a minister was the want of ſufficient firmneſs to treat with contempt that popular clamour, which, by his yielding to it, hurried the nation into an expenſive and unjust war. But his rancorous proſecution of Atterbury bishop of Rochester (see Atterbury), by a bill of pains and penalties, may be considered as ſomething worſe than a defect : it was a fault for which no apology can be made ; becauſe, whether that prelate was innocent or guilty, of his guilt no legal proof ever appeared. In that instance the conduct of the minister was the more extraordinary, that on other occasions he choſe to gain over the dissaffected by mildneſs and beneficence, even when he had ſufficient proofs of their guilt. Or this the following anecdote, communicated by lord North to Dr Johnſon, is a ſufficient proof. Sir Robert having got into his hands ſome treaſonable papers of his inveterate enemy Shippen, sent for him, and burnt them before his eyes. Some time afterwards, while Shippen was taking the oaths to the government in the houſe of commons, Sir Robert, who stood next to him, and knew his principles to be the same as ever, ſmiled ; upon which Shippen, who had obſerved him, ſaid “ Egad, Robin, that’s hardly fair.”

To whatever objections his ministerial conduct may be liable, in his private character he is universally allowed to have had amiable and benevolent qualities. That he was a tender parent, a kind master, a beneficent patron, a firm friend, an agreeable companion, are points that have been seldom disputed ; and ſo calm and equal was his temper, that Pulteney, his great rival and opponent, ſaid, he was sure that Sir Robert Walpole never felt the bitterest invectives against him for half an hour.

About the end of queen Anne’s reign, and the begin­ning of George I.’s, he wrote the following pamphlets. 1. The Sovereign’s Anſwer to the Gloucestershire Addreſs. The Sovereign meant Charles duke of Somerset, ſo nick­named by the Whigs. 2. Anſwer to the Representation of the Houſe of Lords on the State of the Navy, 1709. 3. The Debts of the Nation dated and considered, in four Papers, 1710. 4. The Thirty-five Millions accounted for, 1710. 5. A Letter from a foreign Minister in England to Monsieur Pettecum, 1710. 6. Four Letters to a Friend in Scotland upon Sacheverell’s Trial ; falſely attributed in the General Dictionaιy to Mr Maynwaring. 7. A short History of the Parliament. It is an account of the last Session of the queen. 8. The South-Sea Scheme considered. 9. A Pamphlet against the Peerage Bill, 1719. 10. The

Report of the Secret Committee, June 9th, 1715.

WALRUS, in zoology. See Trichecus.

WALSH (William), an English critic and poet, the ſon of Joſeph Walsh, Eſq; of Abberley in Worcestershire, was born about the year 1660. He became a gentleman-com­moner of Wadham college, Oxford, but left the university without taking a degree. His writings are printed among the works of the Minor Poets, printed in 1749. He was made gentleman of the horſe in queen Anne’s reign ; and died in 1708. He was the friend of Mr Dryden and of Mr Pope ; the former of whom esteemed him the best critic then living ; and Mr Pope has celebrated his character in the Essay on Criticiſm.

WALSINGHAM, a town of Norfolk, with a market on Fridays, and a fair on Whit-Monday, for horſes and pedlar’s ware. It is ſeated not far from the ſea ; and in former times was famous for its college of canons, and was greatly frequented by pilgrims who went to pay their de­votions to the image of the Virgin Mary at the chapel, where there are two fine ſprings, called the *Virgin Mary’s wells.* Not many years ago there were found here 100 urns full of aſhes by a husbandman, which were ſuppoſed to be thoſe which the Romans filled with the aſhes of the dead. It is 22 miles north-west of Norwich, and 117 north-north-east of London. E. Long. 0. 53. N. Lat. 52. 56.

WALSINGHAM (Thomas), an Engliſh Benedictine monk of the monastery of St Alban’s, about the year 1440. He applied himſelf to the history and antiquity of hiscountry, in quality of historiographer to the king; and compoſed the History of King Henry VI. with other works.

Walsingham (Sir Francis), minister and ſecretary of state during the reign of queen Elizabeth, and one of the greatest politicians of his time, was descended from a noble and ancient family at Chiſlehurst. After having made great progress in his studies at Cambridge, he was twice ſent ambassador to France, and at his return to England was em­ployed in the most important affairs ; became ſecretary of state, and was one of the commissioners for the trial of Mary queen of Scotland. Sir Francis was undoubtedly one of the most refined politicians and most penetrating stateſman that any age ever produced. He had an admirable talent, both in diſcovering and managing the secret recesses of the heart. He had his ſpies in most courts in Christendom, and allowed them a liberal maintenance ; for it was his maxim, That knowledge cannot be bought too dear. In 1587 the king of Spain having made vast preparations, which ſurprised, and kept all Europe in ſuspence, Walsingham employed his utmost endeavours for the discovery of that important secret; and accordingly procured intelligence from Madrid, that the

@@@[m]\* Letters on a Regicide Peace.