Nor have the imperial laws been totally neglected even in the English nation. A general acquaintance with their decisions has ever been deservedly considered as no small accomplishment of a gentleman; and a fashion has prevailed, especially of late, to transport the growing hopes of this island to foreign universities, in Switzerland, Germany, and Holland; which, though infinitely inferior to our own in every other consideration, have been looked upon as better nurseries of the civil, or (which is nearly the same) of their own municipal law. In the mean time it has been the peculiar lot of our admirable system of laws, to be neglected, and even unknown, by all but one practical profession; though built upon the soundest soundations, and approved by the experience of ages.

FAR be it from me to derogate from the study of the civil law, considered (apart from any binding authority) as a collection of written reason. No man is more thoroughly persuaded of the general excellence of it's rules, and the usual equity of it's decisions, nor is better convinced of it's use as well as ornament to the scholar, the divine, the statesman, and even the common lawyer. But we must not carry our veneration so far as to sacrifice our Alfred and Edward to the manes of Theodosius and Justinian: we must not prefer the edict of the praetor, or the rescript of the Roman emperor, to our own immemorial customs, or the sanctions of an English parliament; unless we can also prefer the despotic monarchy of Rome and Byzantium, for whose meridians the former were calculated, to the free constitution of Britain, which the latter are adapted to perpetuate.

WITHOUT detracting therefore from the real merit which abounds in the imperial law, I hope I may have leave to affert, that if an Englishman must be ignorant of either the one or the other, he had better be a stranger to the Roman than the English institutions. For I think it an undeniable position, that a competent knowlege of the laws of that society, in which we live,