

# SELECTIONS

FROM

## COBBETT'S POLITICAL WORKS:

BLIND

A COMPLETE ABRIDGMENT OF THE 100 VOLUMES WHICH COMPRISE THE WRITINGS OF "PORCUPINE" AND THE "WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER."

WITH NOTES,  
HISTORICAL AND EXPLANATORY.

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BY

JOHN M. COBBETT AND JAMES P. COBBETT.

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## SINKING FUND.

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I HAVE repeatedly stated, and, I think, proved, that our sinking fund does not at all lessen the national debt ; that it has not the least tendency to lessen that debt ; and that the words, *reduce, redeem, liquidate, &c. &c.* as applied to the effects of that fund, are totally misapplied, and are intended to deceive the people, or, which is more likely to be the case, are made use of from the deception under which those who make use of them do themselves labour.—My position is this : that as the national debt is felt by the people only in the *interest*, which they are annually called upon to provide in taxes, the amount of that interest is the only measure of the magnitude of the debt ; and, that, as the operation of the sinking fund has not, and cannot, lessen the amount of the interest, it cannot lessen the magnitude of the debt. We are told, that the Sinking Fund has accumulated to such an extent, that it has already *redeemed* 70 millions of the debt. But, how has it redeemed it ? How can these 70 millions be said to be *redeemed*, while we have annually to pay *interest on them* ? So long as we have to pay interest upon the *whole* of the debt, what is it to us, whether we pay it to individuals or into the hands of ministerial Commissioners ? What signifies the name that we give to it, whether *redeemed* or *unredeemed* debt, so that we are still compelled to pay the interest upon it ; so that it lies just as heavy upon us, as it would have done, if no trick, like that of the Sinking Fund, had been devised ? This is so evident to every man of common sense, that the people in general (I may say nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand) have entertained hopes of relief from the Sinking Fund, only because they understood, and firmly believe, that the effect of that fund was gradually to *lessen* the amount of the interest and expenses, which constitute the annual charge on account of the national debt, and consequently to lessen the taxes raised upon them on account of debt. Into this error they were deluded by the use, or rather *abuse* of words, which had never before been used but for the purpose of expressing the act of making a *real diminution* in the quantity of the thing spoken of. When they were told, that the sinking fund was to *reduce, to redeem, to liquidate, to clear off, to pay off, &c. &c.* such and such portions of the national debt annually, how were they to avoid supposing, that the interest of the debt would go on diminishing with the principal ? This they did believe, and this they do, for the far greater part, believe now. They feel, indeed, that the *taxes* come on them incessantly ; but, they ascribe this to any thing rather than the national debt, because most of them, even down to footmen and chambermaids, have something in the funds. So general is the persuasion, that the sinking fund *reduces* the *interest* of the debt, that, no longer than about eighteen months ago, the fact was asserted to me

by a merchant of considerable eminence, and one who possessed at the time from thirty to forty thousand pounds in funded property. When I insisted, that the sinking fund produced no relief to us; that it did not, and would not, in the least *lessen the annual charge upon us on account of interest of the debt*; he not only expressed his *astonishment*, but contested the point with me, till I brought him to my house, and showed him the accounts, where he saw, that, since the year 1791, the annual interest (including charges) of the national debt, had gone on *increasing* from 10 to 25,000,000*l.*, and that the sinking fund had not tended to check its increase even in the smallest degree; where he saw *all the stock still continue in existence*, just the same as if there had been no sinking fund, only that part of it was said to be held by government commissioners instead of being held by individuals, but that interest must still, he clearly saw, be continued to be paid upon it all, or else the whole of the paper fabric would instantly vanish. Now, if a person like this was so completely deceived, what must we naturally suppose to be the case with the public in general?

In America they pursue a different course. They have measures for *reducing* their debt; *really* reducing it; and they are reducing it accordingly. When Mr. Gallatin\* tells the Congress that there is an "annual appropriation of 8,000,000 of dollars for the payment of the principal and interest of the public debt," he tells them, at the same time, that 3,700,000 of those dollars are to be "applied to the *redemption* of the principal;" that is, to the *real* redemption of the principal; to the *discharge* of it; to the *paying of the holders for it*; to the *taking of it up and destroying it*. It is truly a shame to employ so many different phrases to express what is equally well expressed in one word, in the word *redeem* only; but, the fault is not mine; that word, as well as all others of nearly the same signification, have been so abused, their meaning has been so perverted; they are become so equivocal, in consequence of the use that has been made of them with regard to the Pitt sinking fund, that they are, upon subjects of this sort, no longer capable of filling their former places, or of performing their proper functions.

The Americans do, I say, *really* reduce their national debt. They raise a sum of money in taxes annually, and they *redeem* with it as much stock as it will purchase. *Really* redeem it. They buy it, pay for it, take the evidences of it from the individual holders, they throw those evidences in the fire; that which they have so redeemed is no longer in existence, and, of course, they *no longer pay interest upon it*. This is *redeeming*; but, can we be said to *redeem*; we, who *continue to pay interest upon all the stock*, just the same as if we had no sinking fund?

But, the fact is, that the original intention of our sinking fund, as expressed in the act of parliament, by which it was established, and which was passed in the year 1786, was somewhat similar to the plan pursued in America. Not so good, indeed; but, in principle, bearing some analogy to it. It provided for the redeeming, I mean (good reader, have patience with me!) I mean *real* redeeming, of a portion of the debt, when the annual income of the fund should amount to 4,000,000*l.* It did not, like the American plan, raise a sum of money every year, lay it out in stock, destroy the stock, and take from the taxes the amount of the interest before wanted for the said stock. It was not so simple, satisfactory

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\* Mr. GALLATIN was Secretary to the Treasury.—Ed.

and efficient as this plan ; but it afforded some foundation for a rational hope that an alleviation of burdens would arise from it. The commissioners, to whom was to be entrusted the management of it, were to keep it accumulating, till the interest upon it, or, in other words, the amount annually paid by the people on account of it, should amount to 4,000,000*l.* Then it was to *cease accumulating*, and its 4,000,000*l.* a year were thenceforth to be applied to the *real* redeeming of the debt ; that is to say to the purchasing of stock, upon which stock *interest was no longer to be paid by the people*. The words of the act, as touching this point, are " the *dividends* " [that is the quarterly interest] " due on such parts of the principal stock, as shall *thenceforth* be paid off by the said commissioners, shall no longer be issued at the Exchequer, but shall be considered as *redeemed* by parliament." Yes ; that would have been *real* redeeming ; but, if such an effect was required in order to justify the application of the word *redeem*, with what propriety do the ministers now apply that word to the effect of the sinking fund, which effect, in consequence of subsequent alterations in the plan of the sinking fund, and particularly the last that was made, never can, according even to the calculations of the ministers themselves, take place till about *forty or fifty years* hence ? What front, then, does it require ; what a reliance on the forbearance or ignorance or impotence or servility of others does it require to enable the advocates for the act of 1786 now to speak of, and to state in writing, as stock *redeemed*, that stock upon which *the dividends* (that is to say, the interest) *are still issued at the Exchequer !*

The great alteration, or rather the total abandonment, of the original plan of our sinking fund, took place in the year 1802, and in the act which was passed on the 22nd of June in that year, that is, *stat. 42nd* of the King, c. 72, wherein the former act, as far as related to the *real* redeeming provision, was repealed ; and the stock purchased, and to be purchased, by the commissioners was made to remain *unredeemed*, the interest still being to be paid on it, as it now is. The merit of the original plan was questionable. It was, I think, pretty evident, that, unless we began to *extinguish at once*, as the Americans did, we never could do it afterwards ; and, that which might have been foreseen has now proved to be the case. The sums paid quarterly from the Exchequer into the hands of the commissioners, answer no other end than that of *keeping up the price* of the funds, by creating a demand for stock, a considerable purchase of which the commissioners are, by law, obliged to make *every week*. So that, in fact, the 6,000,000*l.* a year, which Mr. Pitt tells us the sinking fund *produces*, is, so much money raised yearly in taxes, for the purpose of enabling the minister to make such purchases in the stock-market as shall prevent the commodity from falling to a degree that would blow up the system ; upon exactly the same principle that the old woman sent her daughter on before her to market with money to buy up other people's eggs, in order to keep up the price of those that she was about to bring in her basket.

The difference in the American sinking fund and that of Mr. Pitt is fully shown in their different effects. The American general government began in 1789-90 with a debt of 70,000,000 of dollars. The sum annually required for interests and charges was about 3,300,000 dollars ; and such their annual charge on account of debt remains to this day. But, observe, that they have, during the 14 years, made *new loans* to the amount of about 40,000,000 of dollars ; so that, it appears, they have, during the 14

years, actually redeemed extinguished, and destroyed, about 40,000,000*l.* of debt. They borrowed money for the armament against France; for that against Algiers and Tripoli; and, lately, to the amount of 13,000,000 of dollars for the purchase of Louisiana, for which 13,000,000 they have, of course, value received. Yet, their annual charge on account of debt has been kept down to what it originally was, by means of the sums which they have so judiciously appropriated for reducing the *principal* of that debt.\* But, what have we done? We, too, have been making new loans; but, have we *paid off*, have we *extinguished*, have we *destroyed* any part of the *principal* of the debt? Not a single pound's worth of it. We still pay interest upon the whole of the stock that was in existence in 1786, and also upon the whole of the stock that has been created since that time. In 1786, the total capital of the debt was 259 millions, and the annual interest and charges amounted to 9,000,000*l.* At December, 1803 (for the last year's account is not yet delivered), the total of the capital was 588,000,000*l.*, and the annual interest and charges amounted to 25,000,000*l.* Let any man show me, then, if he can, what advantage we derive, or are likely ever to derive, from this sinking fund. What *alleviation of burdens* it produces, or is likely to produce. Does not every one see the clear difference between the American mode of reducing their debt, and our mode? That the former produces a real reduction, and that the latter produces no reduction at all?

"In *time of peace*," some son of credulous hope will exclaim: "it will work miracles in time of peace!" Not at all; for, supposing us never to make another loan, and suppose peace to come to-morrow, the

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\* The amount of American Debt is understated in this article; for in a letter from Mr. FENNIMORE COOPER to GENERAL LAFAYETTE, published in Paris in 1834, we find the following statement:—"The Debt of the United States has accrued from two great causes; viz. the War of Independence, and the War with England, in 1812. In 1790, at the organization of the Union, the debt, being funded, was found to amount to 79,124,464 dollars. In 1812, it was reduced to 45,209,737 dollars, although three wars, that with France, that with Algiers, and that with Tripoli, besides several severe and costly Indian contests, had intervened. The war of 1812 increased the Debt so much, that it was found to be 127,334,933 dollars in 1816. On the 1st January, 1831, it was again reduced to 39,123,191 dollars. On the 1st January, 1832, it will be between 25 and 30,000,000 dollars, but I am unable to state the precise amount. Ten millions of dollars are devoted annually, by a standing law, to meet the demands of the public debt, and, as the interest cannot be more, at present, than 1,500,000 dollars, there is, of course, 8,500,000 dollars available towards extinguishing the *principal*, each year." Mr. Cooper then gives, from the *National Calendar*, a table, showing the amount of *principal* cleared off in each year, from 1821 to 1830 inclusive, together with the amount *left to be paid in interest* in each of the same years. It is as follows:—

	Paid in <i>Principal</i> .	Paid in Interest.
1821 .....	3,279,821 .....	5,087,272
1822 .....	2,675,987 .....	5,172,961
1823 .....	607,331 .....	4,922,684
1824 .....	11,574,532 .....	4,993,861
1825 .....	7,725,034 .....	4,370,309
1826 .....	7,706,601 .....	3,977,864
1827 .....	6,515,514 .....	3,488,071
1828 .....	9,064,637 .....	3,098,867
1829 .....	9,841,024 .....	2,542,776
1830 .....	9,443,173 .....	1,912,574

— See *Cooper's Letter to General Lafayette*, pp. 11, 12.—ED.

annual sum to be paid by us in taxes, on account of debt, will remain just as great as it now is, as long as the present pernicious system is persevered in.

But, is it not madness to think of discontinuing to make loans, as long as this system lasts? For this year the army, navy, ordnance and contingencies, are estimated at little short of 40,000,000*l.* Does any one believe, that a peace *now made*, by Mr. Pitt or by any body else, would much reduce this annual charge? Was the annual charge much reduced during the last peace? Nay, were not loans made both those years? And was not the annual charge on account of debt *augmented* in the sum of 2,500,000*l.*? And, is it likely that a peace to diminish much our naval and military expenses can *now* be made? The whole of the annual income of the nation, *war taxes included*, does not now, and will not next year, amount to more than 40,000,000*l.* The charge on account of the national debt alone, will never again, as long as the Pitt system lasts, amount to less than 29,000,000*l.* a year; leaving 11,000,000*l.* a year for the purpose of defraying the expenses of army, navy, ordnance and contingencies, which, as was before stated, now amount to 40,000,000*l.* a year, and which none but a madman, or a fool, can hope to see reduced to a sum less than about 25,000,000*l.* in time of peace, if peace should be made now. Here, then, even upon the *peace establishment*, are 14,000,000*l.* a year left to be raised *by loans*; and, observe, that this is supposing that all the present war taxes, as they are termed, will (as they must) be *rendered permanent*! Never, therefore, in peace or in war, can we again expect to see a year pass over our heads without a new loan. What must those persons be, then, who console themselves with the hope of the relief to be derived from the operations of the Sinking Fund; that fund, that very fund, which, on a future occasion, I think I shall be able to prove to be the principal cause of our embarrassments and our dangers!

But, if, upon a supposition that peace should be concluded this year, we are doomed to make annual loans, what have we, as to this point, to expect as the consequences of a six years' longer continuation of the war? Such a continuation would, in all probability, swell the annual charge on account of debt to the amount of 40,000,000*l.*, and, indeed, to a greater amount; that is, to an amount equal to that of the whole present income, war taxes included, leaving the whole of the expenses of the army, navy, &c. &c., to be provided for by loans. Is it possible, I will ask any reasonable man, for the state to exist, for the monarchy to stand, in such a state of things? And, is it, then, not time for men, for public men, for legislators, for noblemen, for nobles, and, above all, for princes, to think of making preparation for the crisis; to consider of *the means* by which the stroke may, when it comes, be prevented from subverting the throne and burying our liberties beneath its ruins?—He who is disposed to smile at these apprehensions, should, before he gives too much latitude to his mirth, consider seriously, whether there be, or be not, any foundation for my opinions. He should look attentively at the progress of the annual charge on account of debt; he should compare the present amount of that charge with the annual amount of the national income; he should estimate the probable duration of war, the probable yearly expenses of peace, and the inevitable consequences of continuing to make annual loans in peace as well as in war. He should look into the history of public debts; of currencies depreciated;

and should ask himself: What have invariably been the consequences of a state of things, in which all contracts become nugatory, or, are binding only to the destruction of right? When he has duly considered these things, let him reflect on the consequences that might arise from an invasion, an insurrection (even if confined to the capital), from combinations of different descriptions of men, drawn together and pushed on in a desperate course by the injuries arising from the disturbance of prices, occasioned by the increase, and consequent degradation, of the currency.\* And, let him be well upon his guard against drawing a conclusion favourable to the Sinking Fund, merely because he finds the *theory* of that project good; always remembering, that that which is perfectly true in figures, may be completely false in fact. Upon a point of this sort, Lord Lauderdale, in his admirable work upon Public Wealth, has in Chapter IV. the following remark: "Lest the reader should be disposed to think, with the generality of mankind, that what is true in figures, and the result of accurate calculation, must be true in practice, and possible in execution; he is desired to reflect, that one penny put out, at our Saviour's birth, at 5 per centum, compound interest, would, before this time, have increased to a greater sum than could be contained in five hundred millions of earths, all of solid gold; and that this is a calculation as *accurate*, and as *true*, as any with which parliament has been furnished in the progress of this delusion." This chapter is upon the sinking fund. Before his Lordship's pen the smoky mists, raised by the Aucklands, the George Roses, the Chalmerses, the Vansittarts, the Sinclairs, and other dabblers in political economy, fly in every direction, leaving Mr. Pitt and his project clearly exposed to every man who has common sense and a common degree of discernment.

The *theory* of the Sinking Fund must be considered separately from the practice. In theory it is true that the national debt is in a course of redemption by means of the Sinking Fund; in practice the same proposition is utterly false.—I shall, on the first convenient occasion, return to this important subject; when I intend to give a succinct history of the Sinking Fund, showing, as I proceed, how its purposes, and the opinions of its advocates, have been continually upon the shift. Particularly I shall endeavour to show the fallacy of the argument, which is built upon the acknowledged and undeniable efficacy of a Sinking Fund (founded upon a theory like that of the Public Sinking Fund) *in clearing off the mortgage upon a private estate*. Much of the present deception arises from the want of perceiving the fallacy of this comparison; by removing which, therefore, we shall certainly make an advance towards the truth.

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\* The reader should bear in mind, that Mr. COBBETT never contemplated the Act of 1819, commonly known by the name of "*Peel's Bill*," as one that the English Parliament would dream of. He never thought that it would attempt to force the people to pay the interest of the Debt in a gold currency, therefore he always, till 1811, argues on the effects of a continuation of a paper not convertible into specie. In 1811, however, the "Bullion Committee" was appointed, and as it recommended a "gradual resumption of cash payments," then he first grappled with that notion, and showed that it could not be carried into effect without producing the ruin that the landlords and farmers now (1836) tell us is come.—Ed.

## STIPENDIARY CURATES.

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THE bill now before parliament relative to the stipends of curates, who shall serve and reside in parishes where the incumbent is lawfully excused from residence, is intended principally to promote residence on the part of such curates; and, it appears to be well calculated to effect its purpose. The bill provides, that, in cases where the living exceeds in annual value 400*l.* a year, clear of all expenses, the Bishop of the diocese is, by this bill, authorized to assign to the resident curate a stipend not exceeding *one-fifth* of the annual value of the living, provided, however, that the said *one-fifth* shall not exceed 250*l.* a year; that where more than one curate is necessary, the Bishop may assign to them both or altogether a stipend amounting to *one-third* of the clear annual value of the living; that the Bishop shall have it in his power to direct where the curate or curates shall personally reside, and, if he pleases, he may direct the residence to be in the parsonage house, or, in lieu thereof, assign him 20*l.* a year for a place of residence, to be paid by the incumbent. These are the principal regulations; and, though it will be seen, that the bill gives great discretionary powers to the Bishop, yet, it is to be hoped that they will be exercised with wisdom and justice, and, no one can deny, I think, that such powers must be lodged somewhere, or that the church will very soon fall under the daily-increasing influence of the sectaries, who are spreading over every part of the country, and whose pernicious progress can be checked only by a vigilant clergy in the church, and, to be vigilant, they must *reside*.

The objection urged to this bill, that it was unconstitutional, as it would *place the property of one man at the disposal of another*, appears to me to have arisen from an erroneous idea of the *nature of that property* which consists of church benefices. The living of a clergyman seems to have been regarded as his *private property*; but, that it cannot be so, in the usual meaning of those words, must, I think, appear evident to every one, who, for a moment, looks back to the *origins* of that property. A church was built by some proprietor of the land, and the tithes of a certain district round the church were left by that proprietor to the clergyman who should perform divine service there. This, generally speaking, was the way in which parishes were formed; thus was this sort of property created; and, though the laws regulating its distribution have undergone great alterations, the nature of the property itself can never be changed. We do, indeed, call a living *private property*, and this appellation is countenanced by the fact of its being a freehold, and conferring the right of voting at elections for members of parliament; but, if we take but a moment to reflect, we always find the *living* inseparable from the *clerical duties* of the possessor of the living; that the possession is a *conditional* one; that the thing possessed cannot be, positively, either sold, or let, or lent, not even for the life of the possessor, no, nor for a single month. The *condition* upon which a clergyman receives his living is, that he shall perform the duties attached to it, according to the ordinances of the church and the laws of the country; and, as by a disobedience of those ordinances and laws, he may forfeit the living altoge-

ther, it follows, of course, that a part of the income of that living may be justly applied to the causing of those duties to be performed, which he either does not or cannot perform himself, and for the performance of which, and that only, the living was given him.

To the same error as to the origin of church property is to be attributed much of the clamour against tithes. The possessors of the land, and more especially the immediate possessors, always speak of the tithe as of something which is *theirs*, and which the law unjustly takes from them to give to another person. But, by looking back to the origin of this sort of property, they would soon perceive that it is *not theirs*; that the tithe is a charge entailed upon their land; that they purchased or rented the land with a full knowledge of the existence of such charge; and that, therefore, to withhold any part of that tithe from the clergyman is an act of fraud. They would further perceive (and I heartily wish every *poor* man in England could be made to perceive it), that they, the possessors and cultivators of the land, are by no means to be regarded as persons who pay the clergy; as persons who maintain the clergy; as persons to whom the clergy are under obligations. They would perceive, that what they render to the clergy they have no right, either legal or moral, to withhold; that they confer no favour; that they give no gift; that the gift comes from those who founded the church and settled the perpetual charge upon the land; and, at this stage of the inquiry both those who grudge the tithes and those who regard livings as private property would perceive, that the gift was not only for the maintenance of the clergyman, but also for the support of religion, and this, not only for the sake of the owners and the renters, but also for the sake of the tillers of the land. In short, they would perceive, that the living of each parish, is a pious bequest from some one or more of our ancestors to all the people, but particularly to the *poor*, of that parish; which living is to be so disposed of and conferred as to ensure to the people the due performance of religious duties in their church and parish.

This, though a mere glance at the subject, must, I should imagine, produce in the reader's mind such a train of reflection as will make him reject the principle, upon which chiefly the bill has been opposed.

It must, however, be confessed, that there is a palpable inconsistency in passing a law like this; a law to *produce residence*; while the practice of bestowing *pluralities* is every day becoming, in all the channels of preferment, more and more prevalent. We have seen above, whence church property arose, what is its nature, and what is its object; and, can we, then, behold the number of pluralities that exist, can we observe who the pluralists but too frequently are, without being amazed, almost stunned, at the sound of a *law* for the purpose of inducing to *residence*? — It has been said, out of doors, at least, that the *consequence* of the beneficed clergy will be diminished by this law, while the increase to the stipends of the curates will not raise them high enough in society to give them *any consequence at all*; so that, upon the whole, the clergy will lose consequence. If I thought so, I should disapprove of the bill. But, people very often lose their breath in dispute, for want of settling the meaning of the terms upon which they are disputing. What is meant by the *consequence* of the clergy? Is it their consequence in the pulpit, or in a ball room? It is certain, that misery, such as some curates are left in, is calculated to bring the clerical character into contempt; but, I can see no advantage that religion is to derive from that sort of conse-



quence, which is to be produced by the incumbent's being enabled to spend a great deal of money, and that, too, observe, *away from his living*; while, on the other hand, I can conceive, that an addition to the curate's stipend will very usefully add to his consequence in the eyes of the people, amongst whom he is to officiate. But, I really am afraid, that this is not the species of consequence that is contemplated. There seems to be something beyond this. Something very like a wish to *spend* up to the tune of the 'squire, at least; and, if so, the case is desperate; for, the clergy never have been, they never will be, and they never ought to be, able so to spend. This is, besides, quite a new way of acquiring clerical consequence, which was formerly sought for rather by the road of humility, abstinence, and mortification. Without, however, entertaining any wish to drive the clergy back to primitive manners, while their flock, or rather their herd, are wallowing in the luxury of the day, I may venture to assert, that the only *useful* consequence for the clergy to maintain, or acquire, is to be maintained or acquired, by means very little connected with the possession of large incomes. They will easily perceive the *means* I allude to you; but, alas! it is so much pleasanter to acquire consequence by riding a fine horse, by lolling in a coach, by strutting at a ball, by melting away at a music meeting, by eating fricandeaus, and by drinking claret, that it would be presumption in the extreme to hope that my hint would not be treated with disdain.

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## SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

(*Political Register, June, 1805.*)

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In the preceding article some grammatical errors were made, in an article upon this subject. A few lines from the beginning there occur an instance or two of tautology, and in one place, the word "*you*" is inserted by mistake after the words, "*I allude to.*" But, what I am most desirous of correcting is, a part of my statement which a correspondent has noticed as containing an historical inaccuracy. I allude to the description which is given of *the origin of church property*. As a description of the origin of the *whole* of the property of the church, it certainly is inaccurate, or, at least, defective; but, the reader must have perceived, that my wish was, for perspicuity as well as for brevity's sake, to avoid a complicated picture, and yet to select such a single object as should afford a fair and firm foundation for the argument which I was endeavouring to construct.

Since the aforementioned article was written, a passage in Sir William Scott's speech of the 7th of April, 1802, has occurred to me. The passage I particularly allude to is that describing *advowsons* as *private property*. He tells us, that advowsons were "*originally, perhaps, mere trusts*;" but, that they "*are now become lay fees. They are bought and sold, and are lay property, just as much as any other tenements or hereditaments.*" That this is the truth there can be no doubt; and, I think, there can be as little doubt of its being a truth greatly to be deplored. For, with submission to Sir William Scott, I presume, that, in describing advowsons as

being originally mere trusts, the word "*perhaps*" might have been omitted, without any risk either to the argument or to historical truth; and, that the buying or selling of presentations to church livings is a shameful abuse, and tends directly to the degradation and ruin of the church, will, I think, be denied by nobody. There may be *law* for it; but, it is of comparatively modern invention; and, as the rights of the church stand upon an ancient foundation; as that foundation is an excellent one, I am always sorry to see any attempt made to prop them up by modern contrivances, and, especially, when those contrivances have evidently been suggested by the very excess of abuse. When the right of presentation to a living is openly bought and sold, there is little wonder that the living itself is regarded as *private property*; and, there is no very great wonder, that common men should not clearly perceive the justice of their being obliged to give to the clergyman the tenth part of the produce of their land; seeing that it is hardly possible for them to conceive a reason for property really *private* being held in such a way. I am convinced, that it is to the prevalence of this notion of the advowsons and livings being private property, and being by the holders considered as such, that the church owes great part of that grudging and ill-will which we find to exist with respect to its claims and its clergy. Do away this notion; tell the people, and let them see by your manner of bestowing benefices and of performing the duties attached to them, that you regard the livings as things held in trust for the convenience, consolation, and salvation of the people; let the people see this; let it be visible to them in the conduct of the patron and the incumbent, and I am much deceived if you will not, even in a short space of time, perceive a returning attachment to the Church, at least, amongst the common people, and particularly people of no possessions in house or land, such as we may properly enough call the poor; all of whom would then perceive the church establishment to be neither more nor less than a means of securing the consolations of religious service to them, who, otherwise, would, from their poverty, be excluded therefrom. They would perceive that they had some interest in the tithes, and it would be difficult for the farmers to persuade them, as they now do, that to rob the parson is doing God service. But, if the patron, by his manner of bestowing the living, and the incumbent, by his manner of performing, or, rather, neglecting his duty, give to the whole the appearance of a concern entirely *private*, we need not be surprised, that the poor join the farmers in their clamours against tithes.

I will take some other opportunity of endeavouring to point out some of the principal evils which result from considering livings as private property; and, I think I shall be able to show, that, in differing very widely from Sir William Scott as to the *indulgences* which ought to be granted to the beneficed clergy, I am not, according to my capacity, less than he a friend of the church. I must here observe, however, that it is not to his speech, as a whole, that I object. It is a most valuable performance, and should be read and well considered by every one whose attention is turned to public affairs; for, however slightly some persons may think of the church establishment altogether, I am persuaded, that, as the state grew up with the church, so it will fall with it, whenever it falls.

## B O X I N G.\*

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“Whereas divers cruel and barbarous outrages have been, of late, wickedly and wantonly committed in divers parts of England, upon the persons of divers of His Majesty’s subjects, either with an intent to murder, or to maim, disfigure, or disable, or to do other grievous bodily harm to such subjects; and, whereas the provisions, now by law made, for the prevention of such offences, have been found ineffectual for that purpose; he it therefore enacted,” &c. &c.—PREAMBLE TO THE ACT 43 Geo. III. chap. 58, passed 24th June, 1803.

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THE public attention having been called to a recent, an extraordinary, and somewhat alarming decision of a Coroner’s jury upon a case wherein death was the consequence of a boxing-match, I cannot, consistently with the opinions I have always entertained and frequently expressed upon the subject, omit, upon this occasion, to submit to my readers, some few of those reflections that press upon my mind. The case, here particularly referred to, is, as stated in the *Morning Chronicle* of the 25th ultimo, as follows: “George Hodgson, Esq., one of the coroners for the County of Middlesex, yesterday evening, at 7 o’clock, resumed his court of inquiry as to the means by which Patrick, otherwise Michael, Lenon came by his death. The Court was again held at the Cannon Tavern, the corner of Carburton-street, Portland-road. The evidence of yesterday was repeated to the jury, and in addition to it they had the testimony of Mr. Charles Lane, of Carburton-street, surgeon, who examined the body of the deceased in company with Mr. Reeve, of Great Portland-street, surgeon. The substance of his evidence was, that they had been employed about three hours in the examination, and that, upon the most minute observation that could possibly be made, it did not appear that there was any injury done to the viscera of the thorax, neither was there any extravasated blood within the head, such as would have been the case if a bloodvessel had burst.—Upon the whole, he conceived that the loss of life must have been occasioned by some injury done to the nervous system, or else by a violent concussion of the brain, which might have arisen either from great exertion or passion or from repeated heavy falls, in which cases there might not be any mark upon the subject from which a professional man could form a decided opinion. But, from the evidence which he had heard of the fight, which was sworn to have taken place, he had no doubt that it was from some circumstance that had taken place during that affray that the deceased came by his death. The coroner repeated his admonitions to parish officers in general, to provide a surgeon in such cases as the present, but added, that it did not appear to him that in the instance then before the jury, there appeared to have been any thing of culpability in the officers. He then acquainted the jury, that in his opinion where there was a premeditated design between the parties to commit a breach of the peace, and where that violation of law terminated fatally to one of them, with the additional consideration that it was a prize fight, in which each had money as an inducement to do an injury to the other; in such case he thought the act of the one man who killed the other,

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\* See our Note to the letter on BULL-BAITING, vol. i. p. 256.

“ was clearly murder. If they thought otherwise, however, they would say so. But of this the jury had not the least doubt, and immediately gave a verdict of WILFUL MURDER, by Dennis Dillon.”

Such is the account given in the public prints. Upon inquiry I find, further, that the combatants were two journeymen in the same shop, who, having quarrelled at their shop-board, agreed to decide their quarrel by a boxing match. It is said, that the only pecuniary stake, for which they contended, was a bet of half a guinea, which bet, however, did not take place till the moment before the fight began. There was so little of what could be truly called malice, between them, that the deceased had proposed to make up their difference without fighting; and, though this was not accepted, a similar proposition was made by the survivor, during the course of the battle. There was, as, indeed, it clearly appears from the above-stated evidence, no reason to suppose the death to be occasioned by any particular blow, but merely by the effect of exertion, and the breaking of a bloodvessel, as might have happened in a race, a rowing-match, a jumping-match, a cricket-match, or in any other exercise requiring, either constantly or occasionally, any extraordinary exertion of bodily strength. These being the circumstances of the case, one may confidently hope, that this will not be the instance, in which the last blow will be struck at that manly, that generous mode of terminating quarrels between the common people, a mode by which the common people of England have, for ages, been distinguished from those of all other countries. But, though we may safely rely upon the wisdom and justice of the courts, before one of which this unfortunate boxer must finally take his trial, the occasion calls for some remark upon those exertions, which, of late, have been, and which yet are, making in every part of the country, with the obvious, and, in many instances, with the declared, intention, of utterly eradicating the practice of boxing; than which, I am thoroughly persuaded, nothing could be more injurious, whether considered as to its effects in civil life, or in its higher and more important effects on the people regarded as the members of a state, and, of course, always opposed to some other state, and therefore always liable to be called upon to perform the duties of war.

As few persons will be inclined to believe it possible so far to work, by any human laws, such a change in the hearts and minds of men as shall prevent all quarrelling amongst them, it is not necessary to insist, that, in spite of the law and the gospel, in spite of the animadversions of the bench and the admonitions of the pulpit, there will still be practised some mode or other of terminating quarrels, some way in which the party injured, or offended, will seek for satisfaction, without waiting for the operation of the law, even in those cases where the law affords the means whereby satisfaction is to be obtained. If this be not denied, it will remain with the innovating foes of the pugilistic combat to show, that there are other modes of terminating quarrels amongst the common people less offensive to the principles of sound morality, less dangerous in their physical effects, better calculated to produce the restoration of harmony, to shorten the duration, and to prevent the extension, of resentment, together with all the evils attendant upon a long-harboured spirit of revenge. Without proceeding another step, I am confident, that the reflecting reader, though he may, for a moment, have been carried away by the cry of “brutality,” latterly set up against boxing, will, from our thus simply stating what our opponents have to prove, have clearly perceived, that the proof is not within their power. He will have perceived,

that, of all the ways in which violence can possibly be committed (and violence of some sort there must be in the obtaining of personal satisfaction), none has in it so little hostility to the principles of our religion, and that none is so seldom fatal to the parties, as boxing. He will have perceived, too, that this mode, by excluding the aid of every thing extraneous, by allowing of no weapons, by leaving nothing to deceit, and very little to art of any sort, is, in most cases, decisive as to the powers of the combatants, and proceeds, besides, upon the generous principle, that, with the battle, ceases for ever the cause whence it arose; a principle of such long and steady growth, so deeply rooted in the hearts of Englishmen, that to attempt the revival, or even to allude to, with apparent resentment, the grounds of a quarrel which has been terminated by the fists, is always regarded as a mark of baseness, whether visible in the conduct of the parties themselves, or in that of their relations, or friends.

Instead, however, of rejoicing at the existence of a practice which is so well calculated to soften the natural effects of the violent passions, there are but too many amongst us, who seem to be perfect enthusiasts in their efforts to extirpate it. Whether, if they could extirpate those passions themselves, or could so far neutralize them as effectually to prevent their producing acts of violence; whether, in that case, they would leave us any thing whereby, and whereby alone, private injustice, domestic oppression, or foreign hostility, is to be resisted, I submit as a question to the doctors in the school of modern philanthropy; but, unless those passions can be *extirpated*, and until that great work be *completed*, I think, that every one who listens to reason in preference to an outcry, and who is attached to the substance and not the mere sounds of humanity and gentleness, will readily agree, that, to attempt the extirpation of the practice of boxing is to make an attempt, which, if successful, would lead to the frequent commission of all those sanguinary and horrible acts, by which the common people of but too many other countries are disgraced, and which, amongst the people of England, have, till of late, been almost unknown. In support of this opinion, I may, as to an argument of experience, surely appeal to the law, recently passed, and the preamble of which I have chosen for my Motto; \* and, that such a law should have become necessary, I am sure the reader, if he has an English heart in his bosom, will reflect with sorrow and with shame. What is now become of those manners which authorized the honest exultation of so many of our eminent writers, that, from the generous spirit of Englishmen, acts of cruelty were rendered so rare in their country? Our travellers must now hold their tongues; for the world is told, and that too by the legislature itself, who have placed the disgraceful truth upon the records of parliament, that the laws and statutes of the land, heretofore in force, are *no longer sufficient* to prevent us from committing "cruel and barbarous outrages, with intent to murder, maim, disfigure, "or disable, one another." It is not till "*of late*," certainly, that such a law has been necessary, and, it is not till of late, that such a general desire to suppress the practice of boxing has prevailed. The mere co-existence of this desire (and of the measures proceeding from it), with the frequency of the commission of cruel and barbarous acts, may not, indeed, be regarded as a conclusive argument in favour of the practice of boxing;

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\* Sometimes called Lord Ellenborough's Act; and sometimes "the cutting and maiming Act."—Ed.

but, no one can deny, that it strongly corroborates the conclusion, which reason, without the aid of experience, has taught us to draw ; and, if this conclusion, thus fortified, be legitimate, it follows, of course, that we must either have *cuttings and stabbings*, or *boxing* ; the former of which, as being perfectly compatible with " a godly *conversation*," and with the cant of humanity, it is more than probable that the saints and philanthropists would not hesitate to prefer.

But, it is the political view of this subject which appears to me to be most worthy of attention ; the view of the effect which may, by the contemplated change of manners, be produced upon the people, considered as the members of a state, always opposed to some other state ; for, much as I abhor cuttings and stabbings, I have, as I hope most others of my countrymen have, a still greater abhorrence of submission to a foreign yoke. — Commerce, Opulence, Luxury, Effemincy, Cowardice, Slavery : these are the stages of national degradation. We are in the fourth ; and, I beg the reader to consider, to look into history, to trace states in their fall, and then say how rapid is the latter part of the progress ! Of the symptoms of *effemincy* none is so certain as a change from athletic and hardy sports, or exercises, to those requiring less bodily strength, and exposing the persons engaged in them to less bodily suffering ; and when this change takes place, be assured that national cowardice is at no great distance, the general admiration of deeds of hardihood having already been considerably lessened. Bravery, as, indeed, the word imports, consists not in a readiness and a capacity to kill or to hurt, but in a readiness and a capacity to venture, and to bear the consequences. As sports or exercises approach nearer and nearer to real combats, the greater, in spite of all we can say, is our admiration of those who therein excel. Belcher has, by the sons of cant, in every class of life, been held up to us as a monster, a perfect ruffian ; yet there are very few persons, who would not wish to see Belcher ; few from whom marks of admiration have not, at some time, been extorted by his combats ; and scarcely a female Saint, perhaps, who would not, in her way to the conventicle, or even during the snuffing there to be heard, take a peep at him from beneath her hood. Can as much be said by any one of those noblemen and gentlemen who have been spending the best years of their lives in dancing by night and playing at cricket by day ? The reason is, not that Belcher strikes hard ; not that he is strong ; not that he is an adept at his art ; but that he exposes himself voluntarily to so much danger, and that he bears so many heavy blows. We are apt to laugh at the preference which women openly give to soldiers (including, of course, all men of the military profession), a preference which is always found, too, to be given by young persons of both sexes. But, if we take time to consider, we shall find this partiality to be no fit subject for ridicule or blame. It is a partiality naturally arising from the strongest of all feelings, *the love of life*. The profession of arms is always the most honourable. All kings and princes are soldiers. Renowned soldiers are never forgotten. We all talk of Alexander the Great and of Julius Cæsar ; but very few of us ever heard, or ever thought of inquiring, who were the statesmen of those days. There is not, perhaps, a ploughman in England, who has not a hundred times repeated the names of Drake and of Marlborough ; and of the hundreds of thousands of them, there is not one, perhaps, who ever heard, or ever will hear, pronounced, the name of Cecil or of Godolphin. When princes are not renowned military com-

manders, they themselves, though they leave so many and such various traces behind them, are, amongst the mass of the people, soon forgotten, except as having reigned during the victories of such or such a commander. Literary men have, almost uniformly, spoken with more or less contempt of military fame; but, notwithstanding the singular advantages which they have over soldiers, in perpetuating a knowledge of their famous deeds, within how narrow a sphere, comparatively speaking, is their fame confined! Where is the man, woman, or child, in this kingdom, who has not heard and talked of Nelson? And, does not the reader believe, that there are many parishes, in either of which the knowledge of Pope or of Johnson's having existed is confined to two or three persons? Such, too, is the nature of military fame, that it obliterates all the folly and all the crimes of the possessor. The discriminating few, the criticisers of character, will, indeed, take these into account; but, with the people in general, and particularly those of the nation, to which the renowned soldier belongs, his deeds of valour only are remembered.

Whence, then, arises this universal suffrage of mankind in favour of military heroes? Why are their deeds prized above those of all other men? Not because their profession demands more skill than that of others; not because it supposes hard study or great labour of any sort; not because it is thought to require an extraordinary degree of genius or of wisdom. Some have ascribed it to the terror inspired by military combats; but, we often admire those heroes most at whose deeds it is impossible we can have felt any terror. Others have ascribed it to the signal and extensive consequences produced in the world by the deeds of military commanders; but, the deeds of statesmen produce much more signal and more extensive consequences; and yet, these latter sink silently to the grave, and rot there, without ever being named by the common people of only the very next generation. To what, therefore, can we ascribe this universal preference of military fame before all other fame, but to that all-pervading and ever-predominating principle, the love of life, and the consequent admiration of those who voluntarily place their lives in the most frequent and most imminent danger? This principle exists, naturally, in the same degree, in every human breast; and, bravery consists, as was before said, simply in the capacity of subduing the love of life so far as knowingly, deliberately, and voluntarily to put it to risk. Hence it is, that we cannot refrain from admiring the hardihood of miners, well-sinkers and the like; but, in them we justly ascribe a good deal to habit, to hard necessity, and, besides, we do not, in their case, see where and what is the immediate cause of their danger; but, in the case of the soldier, we clearly perceive this cause; we see him voluntarily going forth and marching on till he comes within reach of those, who, on their side, are advancing for the sole purpose of taking his life. In proportion as the readiness to hazard life exists in a country, that country is brave, and, consequently, in proportion to its numbers, powerful. How deeply sensible of this does our rival and enemy appear to have been! Amongst all the changes and chances of the French revolution, there has never been a single day, when the rulers were not careful to reward and to honour those who had distinguished themselves by putting their lives to risk. The consequences we have seen, and now but too sensibly feel. We, on the contrary, seem to be using our utmost endeavours to extirpate every habit that tended to prepare the minds of the common people for deeds of military bravery. Am I told, that there are no boxers in France?

I answer that there never were ; that their exercises and their combats were of another description ; I have seen peasants in France turn out into a field, and cut one another with their sabres. But, if you extirpate boxing in England, can you substitute any other mode of exercise or combat in its stead? No : and that is not the object ; the professed object is, to cry down and to put an end to, every species of exercise or of combat, in which life shall at all be put to the risk, or, indeed, in which bodily opposition and great bodily strength and a great capacity of bearing bodily pain are acquired.

Not only boxing, but wrestling, quarter-staff, single-stick, bull-baiting, every exercise of the common people, that supposes the possible risk of life or limb, and, of course, that tends to prepare them for deeds of bravery of a higher order, and, by the means of those deeds and of the character and consequence naturally growing out of them, to preserve the independence and the liberties of their country ; every such exercise seems to be doomed to extirpation. Even the very animals, for the bravery of which the nation has long been renowned, are to be destroyed, as men would destroy savage and ferocious beasts. Every thing calculated to keep alive the admiration, and even the idea, of hardihood, seems to have become offensive and odious in the sight of but too many of those, whose duty it is to endeavour to arrest, and not to accelerate, the fatal progress of effeminacy. That many of the persons so zealously engaged in supporting the system of effeminacy (for such it may properly be called), are actuated by motives of tenderness for the common people there can be no doubt ; but, while I must think, that such persons act without due reflection, I hesitate not to declare my belief, that those with whom the system originated, and who are the principal instigators of all the measures adopted for effecting the extirpation of boxing and other hardy exercises, are actuated by motives far other than those of compassion for the persons who are in the habit of being therein engaged. Let, however, what will be the motives, the consequences are, some of them, already obvious, and others it is by no means difficult to foresee. That cuttings and stabbings are more fatal than boxing, to say nothing of the disgrace, every one must agree ; and, it cannot be denied, that the former have increased in proportion as the latter has been driven from amongst the people. But, boxing matches give rise to assemblages of the people ; they tend to make the people bold : they produce a communication of notions of hardihood ; they serve to remind men of the importance of bodily strength ; they, each in its sphere, occasion a transient relaxation from labour ; they tend, in short, to keep alive, even amongst the lowest of the people, some idea of independence : whereas, amongst cutters and stabbers and poisoners (for the law above-mentioned includes *English poisoners*), there is necessarily a rivalry for quietness and secrecy ; they generally perform their work single-handed ; their operations have nothing of riot or commotion in them ; as to labour, they lose little of the time for that, seeing that their mode of seeking satisfaction is with the greatest chance of success pursued in the dark ; and there is not the least fear, that their practices will ever render them politically turbulent, or bold. In fact, the system of effeminacy as it has grown out of, so it is perfectly adapted to, the Pitt system of internal politics, which, by making, in a greater or less degree, almost every man, who has property, a sort of pensioner, or, at least, an annuitant, of the state, aims at ruling the nation by its base, instead of



its honourable feelings. On the selfishness of the common people, particularly the labouring part of them, the Pitt system of finance and taxation has, directly at least, no hold; and, therefore, it required the aid of the system of effeminacy, which includes the suppression of mirth as well as of hardy exercises, and, indeed, of every thing that tends to produce relaxations from labour and a communication of ideas of independence amongst the common people. Systems better calculated for preventing internal opposition to the government never were invented; but, this is not *all* that a wise statesman and one that loves his country will look to. Such a statesman will perceive, that if he destroy the feelings, from the operation of which the government might occasionally have something to apprehend, he thereby destroys the means, by which alone the government can be permanently preserved. Render the whole nation effeminate; suffer no relaxation from labour or from care; shut all the paupers up in workhouses, and those that are not so shut up, work in gangs, each with its driver; this do, and it is evident, that you will have no internal commotion; it is evident, that you will hold the people in complete subjection to your will; but, then, recollect, that they will be like the ass in the fable, that they will stir neither hand nor foot to prevent a transfer of their subjection to another master.

Thank God, we are yet at a great distance from a state so full of wretchedness and of infamy, and, I trust, that we shall long be so preserved. In speaking of the system of effeminacy as adapted to a co-operation with the Pitt system of internal policy, I by no means would be understood as supposing, that it has been contrived, or at all encouraged, at least wilfully, by Mr. Pitt, or by any other minister. It is, indeed, one of the many evils that have naturally grown out of the Pitt system; but, whatever other faults I may impute to Mr. Pitt as a minister, justice to him obliges me to confess, that I have never heard of his directly favouring the endeavours of those weak, meddling, and, in many instances, fanatical persons, who are the chief instruments in the persecution of all manly and mirthful exercises; and, I confidently hope, that, if any further attempts are made at legislative innovation upon these subjects, he will be found amongst their determined opponents.

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## “ PERISH COMMERCE.”

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THIS is the title of an article in the *Courier* of the 6th instant, in which an attempt, by way of *last shift*, I suppose, is made to terrify the fundholders and the merchants with the persuasion, that, if the Opposition were to come into power, they would instantly overset the funds, that they would destroy all the manufactories, and that they would give up our ships and our colonies to the Emperor of the French, and that, too, because the monied and commercial influence have been the support of Mr. Pitt.—The words, “perish commerce,” are put into the mouth of Mr. Windham, though every reader must now know, that they, with their context, “let the constitution live,” which expressed the proper sentiment, mean that, to preserve the constitution we ought to wish the loss of our commerce; it is well known, and it has been so stated more than

once in the House of Commons, that Mr. Windham never used these words; but that they were used by Mr. Hardinge, who, in his place in parliament, owned, or rather claimed them as his. To this fact, if the reader will add another and that is, that the words were uttered at the time that Mr. Windham, even supposing him to have spoken them, was in office *with Mr. Pitt*, he will have tolerably good means of judging of the candour of this tool of the "young friends," as well as of the sincerity of that alarm for the safety of commerce, which alarm, he would fain make us believe, arises, in part at least, from this sentiment having been expressed by Mr. Windham.

After quoting, or rather garbling, several passages in the *Register* and one in the *Morning Chronicle*, relating to the funding and commercial influence of the nation, and more especially to the dangerous *predominance* of that influence over every other, over the spirit of the people as well as over the legal and constitutional prerogatives of the crown; but, at the same time, making such an arrangement of, and giving such a turn to, these passages as to make them convey a personal censure upon, and a personal hatred of, all monied and all commercial men; after this effort of candour, the writer proceeds as follows: "Such are the sentiments, the views, and the expectations, of the two journals of the two party branches, which, united, make the coalition. Though disagreeing on so many points, on the subversion of the commercial system, on the ruin of commercial men, they are most cordially of opinion, for no other reason, than, that Mr. Pitt having successfully cherished that system and these men, who in their turn support him, both must be swept away, that the road to power may be made accessible for the Opposition. It is for the King and the Country to consider whether an Opposition having such designs should be intrusted with any degree of power, *even with the privilege of sitting in Parliament*. To nothing is this nation so much indebted for its greatness as to its commercial system. Every commercial nation in the world has been powerful as well as rich. There never was a commercial nation in the world the twentieth part so powerful or so rich as England now is; nor was there ever one the twentieth part so formidable as a *military state*. In our navy we have more than 100,000 of the bravest, of the most skilful, of the best troops in the world; they are the bulwark of this country; but *without the reprobated commercial system that gullant race of men would soon be extinct*. It is for the King and the country to consider whether they will give the reins of Government to a party whose first object *avowedly* is to destroy that system, for the purpose of crippling a political rival."

Of the *tolerance* and the *truth* of the direct assertions here made, nothing needs be said; but, there is one opinion, upon which I cannot refrain from offering a remark or two. And, first of all, who has said, that *commerce* was injurious to this country? I have always said, that without commerce, and particularly *commercial navigation*, that this island could not *possibly* continue to be great; that it could not *possibly* retain its consequence amongst the nations of Europe. With this qualification I have always spoken; but, it is the system of rendering *every thing* commercial; of making merchants and bankers into Lords; of making a set of fund-dealers the distributors of honours and rewards in the army and the navy; of the government, in its several departments, making official reports to Lords Mayor and Lloyd's Coffee-House; of a

system, in short, which, day by day, is drawing every thing, in the way of influence, from every part of the country, and depositing it in the hands of those, who necessarily become tools in the hands of the minister of the day, *be he who or what he will*. It is the commercial system, thus distended, thus spread over the whole country, thus swallowing up and preventing all the influence of the aristocracy and the church and all the constitutional influence of the crown; it is this system that I reprobate, and that, most assuredly, has nothing to do either in creating or in supporting "that gallant race of men," by whom the nation has been so long defended, and by whom her glories have been caused to shine forth in every quarter of the world. In what way is the creating or the preserving of this race of men connected with the commercial system, as now extended and perverted? How does gambling in the funds tend to support the navy? England was great; she was powerful upon the sea; she was queen of the ocean; all this was long, very long indeed; before her sons ever heard of *funds*. The *real* merchant, as I have a hundred times observed, is a person to be cherished; his calling is as honourable and as conducive to the good of the country, as that of the farmer. It is only when his calling is perverted; when his trade becomes, as it must become under a funding system so extended, a species of gambling; when he trusts more to craft than to industry, prudence, and integrity; when he, if he be *lucky*, may become richer than a lord by the speculations of a few days; when his fortune may be made, when the means of bringing five or six members in amongst the *representatives of the people*, may be obtained in consequence of one valuable hint from a minister, or a minister's favourite. Then it is, that the commercial system becomes dangerous to the liberties of the people and the throne of the king; and then it is, that it becomes an object of my reprobation.

But, to suppose, that the Opposition would set about overthrowing the fund-dealers, because they have been, and are, staunch friends of Mr. Pitt, is to have a very great opinion of their vindictiveness, or a very little one of their discernment and their recollection; for, must they not have perceived, that it is to the minister of the *day*; not, to this or to that minister, but to the minister of the day; the minister who makes loans and lotteries, and who gives bonuses; the minister who makes contracts for hemp and timber and tents and baggage and slops and corn and wine and brandy, and who expects, perhaps, to be *treated civilly in return*; must not the Opposition have perceived, that it is this sort of minister that the money-lenders and merchants are attached to? And, must they not remember, that the money-lenders and merchants were as much attached to Mr. Addington as to Mr. Pitt? Or, if there was any little falling off in the case of Mr. Addington, might it not be reasonably ascribed to his not having afforded any of those little *accommodations* so judiciously afforded by his predecessor to those excellent persons Messrs. *Boyd and Bensfield*? And, if the Opposition, thus perceiving and thus remembering, should harbour any designs hostile to the fund-dealers and the merchants, must they not be actuated by something other than a love of place and emolument? As to the way of lessening, or of removing, if possible, the enormous evils attendant upon the funds, I know, as I have frequently said, nothing of the sentiments of any one member of the Opposition; no, not even by hearsay; and, being fully persuaded, that the whole nation will think with me at last, I am by no means anxious to hear their opinions. *My own* I shall freely state, as often as it appears proper and

is convenient. In the next number but one I intend to do this somewhat at large; and, in the mean time, I beg leave to refer the reader to a letter, which he will find in a subsequent page, and to which letter I propose to give an answer. I will just now observe, however, not by way of answer to the *Courier*, whose paragraphs I only introduce as convenient openings to my remarks (and very convenient and useful they are in that respect), but by way of remonstrance to those who seem to think me rash upon this subject, and *unaware of the consequences* of the measures I have sometimes alluded to as necessary; and, I must say, that before such an opinion be expressed, something should be done, in the way of *argument*, to convince me of the erroneousness of the premises whence my conclusions have been drawn. This has been attempted by my correspondent; and, if I am not convinced by him, I shall, I trust, be able to show that my want of conviction is founded on reason; and, at any rate, the reader will have an opportunity of deciding between us; but, to the conduct of those who bestow the term *rashness* upon my opinions, without giving me any, even the least, proof, that they have themselves ever taken the trouble to *think* upon the subject, I cannot bring myself to affix any epithet milder than that of presumptuous. I mean not this for the Huskissons and the Cannings and the Old Roses and the Wards: I mean it not for the men of the Two Bulletins; but for men whose opinions I respect, but whom I cannot permit to censure my opinions, unless they condescend to favour me with the reasons whereon that censure is founded.

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## FATE OF THE FUNDS.

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“There is a set of men, my Lords, in the City of London, who are known to live in riot and luxury upon the plunder of the ignorant, the innocent, the helpless; upon that part of the community, which stands most in need of, and that best deserves, the care and protection of the legislature. To me, my Lords, whether they be miserable jobbers of ‘Change Alley, or the lofty Asiatic plunderers of Leadenhall Street, they are all equally detestable. I care but little whether a man walks on foot, or is drawn by eight horses, or six horses; if his luxury be supported by the plunder of his country, I despise and detest him. My Lords, while I had the honour of serving his Majesty, I never ventured to look at the Treasury but at a distance; it is a business I am unfit for, and to which I could never have submitted. The little I know of it has not served to raise my opinion of what is vulgarly called the ‘Monied Interest;’ I mean, that blood-sucker, that muck-worm, that calls itself ‘the friend of government;’ that pretends to serve this or that administration, and may be purchased, on the same terms, by any administration; advances money to government and takes special care of its own emoluments. Under this description, I include the whole race of commissaries, jobbers, contractors, clothiers, and remitters. Yet, I do not deny, that, even with those creatures, some management may be necessary; and, I hope, my Lords, that nothing I have said will be understood to extend to the honest industrious tradesman, who holds the middle rank, and has given repeated proofs, that he prefers law and liberty to gold. Much less would I be thought to reflect upon the fair merchant, whose liberal commerce is the prime source of national wealth. I esteem his occupation, and respect his character.”—Speech of the *great EARL OF CHATHAM*, in the House of Lords, on the 22nd of November, 1770.

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WHAT I am now about to submit to the reader, upon this subject, I wish to be considered as an answer, as far as it is, at present, necessary

to give an answer, to the letter of my correspondent, "D. N." The writer of that letter, by admitting, that the national debt, even in its present magnitude, goes far towards cramping public spirit, enervating patriotism, and deadening the love of our country, and that taxes upon taxes cannot fail to extinguish virtuous independence; by making this admission, he saves me the trouble of proving (if, indeed, such proof were necessary), that the national debt, or, rather, the funding system, is an enormous evil, and, of course, that *something* ought to be done to get rid of it, or, at least, to prevent its further increase. And, by the proposal of a *new* scheme for paying off the debt, he renders it unnecessary for me to show, that the *present scheme* is inefficient for that purpose. I do not conclude, hence, that the public ought to be satisfied upon these points: I am speaking of nothing more than the admissions of an individual: I think myself bound to prove these positions, at some future time; but, in answer to this writer, I am not so bound. When I enter into that proof, I shall, I think, not find it very difficult to show, that *his* scheme for paying off, or diminishing the amount of, the debt, is unjust in its principle, and would prove utterly impracticable in the execution; and that his notions respecting the nature of *capital* are those of a mere banking-house man, and are founded in no one principle of political economy. At present, as well for the sake of clearness as of brevity, I shall confine myself to a defence of my opinions and my wishes against the two charges, distinctly preferred by this writer, of INJUSTICE and of CRUELTY.

But, previously to entering upon these, it is incumbent upon me to make a remark or two upon the charge of *levity*, not very equivocally preferred at the outset of this letter; and, surely, I may ask him to point out, if he can, the passage, in which I have ever treated this subject with levity; to show wherein I have used it as a "hobby;" to make good the charge of my having sported with the well-being of thousands and hundreds of thousands of people; to reconcile with this dread of the effects of the promulgation of my opinions the idea, clearly conveyed by him, of their being rash, inconsiderate, and characteristic of shallowness. Nor can I omit, here, to refer the reader to my motto, and then to put it to his candour, whether I have ever spoken of what is vulgarly called the monied interest in terms more degrading than those in which that "blood-sucker, that muck-worm," was spoken of by the *great* Lord Chatham;" by that man, under whom England was so *truly* great; by that man under whose administration this country had to record the events of "the glorious year 1759;" by that man, whom the nation honoured while living, and commemorated by a public funeral and by statues of marble after his death. Let the hired writers, or any of the vile calumniators of office, any of the tribe of bulletin-makers, search through the pages of the *Register*, and put, if they can, their foul hands upon the passage, wherein I have ever expressed, against the swarm of city locusts, sentiments more hostile than those expressed by Lord Chatham. The passage selected for the motto was pointed out to me by a correspondent; I had never in my life read it, previous to the writing of the *Register* of the 11th instant; and, when the reader looks back at page 41\* of the present volume, he will, I am sure, think it excusable, if I feel and express no small degree of pride at the striking coincidence of those sentiments with the sentiments of Lord Chatham. The principles

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\* See pages 18 and 19 of this volume.—ED.

there laid down were just in 1770, and must always be just; but, the indignation due to the plunder and the insolence of the "blood-sucker" admits of degrees; and, how greatly, how beyond all measure, has this degree now been heightened! If, on the day when Lord Chatham made that speech, some one, gifted with a foreknowledge of what was to come, had risen up, and requested him to be cautious how he gave way to his feelings against the "blood-sucker," for that the times were approaching when this same "blood-sucker" should be taken to the bosom of the government; when it should be cherished in preference to, and at the expense of, every other being in the community; when after having wormed itself into every department of the state, it should effect the dissolution of the parliament, and, bearing down all before it, enforce measures for the creating of a mortgage upon the nation to the amount of 27,000,000*l.* of annual interest, payable to itself; when, from a "muck-worm" it should rear itself up into a pretender to the highest honours in the gift of the crown; and, when, after having thus triumphed, it should, with unpunished boldness and insolence, invade at once the privileges of parliament and the prerogative of the king, by raising, of its own mere motion, money upon the people, and by making itself a fountain of honour and of reward for the army and the navy, by bestowing badges of distinction and by the granting of sums of money and of pensions, at its pleasure. If any one had told him this; and, while his heart was still exulting at the events of "the glorious 1759," if it had been added, that these things should finally reduce the country to such a state, that it should become a question (as put by the Committee at Lloyd's) "*whether Englishmen should remain free, or become the slaves of Frenchmen; if, at that time, this had been foretold him; and, if, by way of finishing the horrid picture, he had been again cautioned to beware, for that all those things should come to pass under the rule, and should be produced by the measures, of his own son, would he not, with Macbeth, have exclaimed: 'Down! down! damned prospect; thou searest mine eyeballs?'*"\*

In entering upon the two points which I propose to discuss, it is necessary first to state in general terms, what is the measure that I wish to see adopted, with regard to the national debt; and this is done in a very few words; for, I wish to see the interest now paid upon it, first *greatly lessened*; and, finally, I wish to see no interest at all to be paid upon it. The time and the manner of doing this would require much consideration; and, a preliminary measure, a measure of which no one could, with reason, complain, would be, to stop the operation of what is drolly enough called the sinking fund, for the support of which the people now pay 6,000,000*l.* sterling every year. This would be, so far, removing the ficti-

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\* Lloyd's Fund, which is so often referred to in these writings, was a company of merchants, who assembled at Lloyd's and raised a fund for rewarding soldiers and sailors, and for giving *badges of honour*. They also made collections at the churches for the same purpose. With respect to the "muck-worm" and "blood-sucker," we cannot help reminding the reader of a speech made by Mr. MACAULEY (reported in the *Morning Chronicle*, 8 April, 1833), on the Emancipation of the Jews, and in which the orator exclaims: "Would they say that he (the Jew) should not be allowed to be a member of the *Privy Council*, while, at the same time, he possessed an *influence in the money-market which gave him a control over the affairs of empires, more powerful and extensive than that enjoyed by any of those who were at the head of public affairs?*" We give this as a specimen of the settled and acknowledged superiority of the "muck-worm," over the statesman of modern times.—Ed.

tious support to the funds ; it would be leaving them to their own natural credit and solidity ; and would ease the land and the labour of the burden of upholding that which, if it stand at all, ought, in justice, to stand upon its own bottom. This would neither be taking, nor deducting, any thing from any body but those, who, at an enormous expense to the people, manage the sinking fund. But, all these are matters of detail, and are, of course, matters of future consideration ; the object being, as I explicitly avow it, to relieve the nation from the weight of that millstone, which is now dragging it down to the mud, and to do this by ceasing to pay any interest at all upon the national debt (except in a few cases hereafter to be mentioned) ; and, while I endeavour to defend this measure against the charge of INJUSTICE, I beg the patient and candid attention of the reader.—The declamation, which my correspondent has not thought unbecoming him to give way to ; his horror at the prospect of the name of Britons being handed down to posterity with a tarnished and polluted character ; his reprobation of the baseness that would reduce thousands to wretchedness and despair for no other crime than that of confiding in the national honour ; his pathetic appeal in behalf of the widow, the orphan and the helpless, to which he might, with full as much propriety, have added, the halt and the lame and the blind : all this has a fine and affecting sound ; but, it has nothing to do with the *reason* and the *justice* of the question.

On this question, as well as on all other questions relating to national credit and national wealth, there is, amongst men little accustomed to think upon them, a radical vice in the reasoning. From the habit, which we all naturally contract, of comparing great things with small, and of bringing high things down to the level of our comprehension, we, in speaking of the affairs of nations, of their engagements and obligations, are universally prone to illustrate our meaning and to enforce our arguments from comparisons drawn from common life ; and this is the more likely to take place, in a case like the present, where the *terms* are the same. It is, therefore, not at all surprising, that an honest, well-meaning man, as my correspondent appears to be, should have considered the debt and the credit and the honour and the honesty of the nation in the same light as if he had been speaking of those of an individual ; it is not at all surprising that he should view the nation as a rich individual withholding (if my wish were to be accomplished) property due to a number of poor individuals ; and, that he should put to me the solemn question : “ Do you, Mr. Cobbett, really mean to argue, that a British parliament should enact, or that a British public should sanction, a measure which, *if acted in private life*, would expose the most hardy individual of that public to the lash of British law, as well as to merited reproach and indignation ?” To this question I answer in the negative. Certainly I do not mean to argue any such thing, the cases being entirely dissimilar, and it being completely impossible, that, with regard to the claimants upon the national funds, or taxes (for that is the word), any such measure should be adopted. As to the dissimilarity, there are, to all contracts between man and man, *three parties* ; first, in the case of a loan, the *borrower* ; second, the *lender* ; and third, the *nation*, which, by its laws, and its executive authority, compels the two former to fulfil their contract with one another, without any consideration as to the ruin which such fulfilment may bring upon either of them. But, in a case where the nation itself is a party, there are only *two parties* ; there is no one to com-

pel it to proceed on to its ruin ; the very first duty of its rulers is, to take care, let who will suffer by it, that it be not ruined ; and this upon the maxim, laid down by all the civilians, universally acknowledged to be just, and daily acted upon by this same British legislature, that the good and the safety of individuals must give way to the good and the safety of the community. We proceed, observe, too, upon the position, that the measure, which I wish to see adopted, is *necessary to the safety of the nation* ; its ability to maintain its independence, its power to keep out the conqueror ; and, if it be necessary to this, the not adopting it would, of course, produce the same effect, as to the fund-holders, as if it were adopted ; but would, in that case, be attended with no benefit to the nation.

In speaking of contracts we must not refer merely to the *letter* of them. Even between man and man, equity steps in, and rectifies whatever may have become amiss, and cannot be rectified by the ordinary course of law. The circumstances under which a contract is made, the facts known to or hidden from the parties, the true intent and meaning of their arguments with one another, are all subjects of consideration, and of weight in the decision. And, here we touch very closely upon the point immediately before us ; for, when any one of those who have bought part of a loan scrip, and who, in consequence thereof, now draws interest from out of the taxes of the nation, did he not well know, that there were only two parties to the contract ? Did he not well know, that the borrower had it in his *power*, at any time, to refuse to pay the interest ? And did he not consider, that, if such a refusal should become necessary to the safety of the nation, that it would be the first *duty* of its rulers to make it ? What was he purchasing ? Any thing real ? Any thing that he could see, or feel, or hear ? Any thing which he could claim, in the same state, and take away at his pleasure ; or, in the same state, transfer it to another ? Any thing of a specific and fixed value ? No : he was purchasing nothing more than a right to demand a certain nominal amount of interest from the nation ; and, of course, as the nation could not be, and ought not if it could be, ruined for his sake, the right to demand could, even in his contemplation, have extended no further than the ability of the nation to pay without risking its ruin. He purchased scrip, or stock, or call it by what name you will ; and he knew, that it was liable to great fluctuations in its value ; he had seen that its value depended upon the state of the nation ; and, long before he lent his money, or rather, purchased his right of drawing upon the people's taxes, he, and every one else, had talked of, and regarded as possible, that event which has been denominated a national bankruptcy. With all this knowledge of facts, still he bought. He had heard, that, at former periods, the legislature had *reduced the interest* upon the national debt ; he had, if he purchased of late years, seen that the same power and authority had, contrary to the express provisions under which the several loans had theretofore been made, or, more properly speaking, by a tacit repeal of those provisions, made a deduction from the interest upon the national debt, under the name of Income Tax ; and, must he not, then, have known, must not his contract have been made with the full knowledge, that, by the same power and authority, a further and a further deduction, and, if so, a total extinction, could at any time take place ? Had he not seen, that the promissory notes of the Bank of England, payable to bearer, upon demand, in specie, and carrying upon the face of them the proofs of a contract as sacred as law could



make it ; had he not seen this contract between a company of merchants and the holders of their notes annulled by an order of the king in council, and the act sanctioned and ratified by the legislature, with, at least, a score of acts and charters hostile to the measure, and, could he, with that fact before his eyes, regard acts of parliament relative to what is called public credit as being like the laws of the Medes and Persians ? He will tell me, perhaps, and, if he be a " blood-sucker," he certainly will tell me, that *that* measure was necessary to the good of the community, before which the good of individuals must give way ; and, without, however, admitting of the propriety of the application, I cheerfully acknowledge the justice of the principle, and the more so, because it is precisely that upon which I found my present defence against the charge of wishing for an act of injustice.

From this view of the circumstances, the well-known facts, under which the contract was made, it must, I think, be evident to every one, that this purchaser of stock, or this lender to the nation, if you will, was duly apprized of the *risk* that he ran ; that his contract was, in fact, made upon a *calculation of chances*, of an order one degree, and only one degree, higher than that of gambling ; and, is not this position strengthened, nay, completely established, by the fact of his expecting to receive, and of his now being in the receipt of, a much *higher interest* than he could expect to have received, or than he could now actually receive, if his money had been laid out in *real property* ? This brings us, at once, to the point of *equity* ; and, as my opponent has chosen to make an appeal in behalf of the *widow*, I shall, by way of simplifying my argument, suppose a case of two widows, each of them, twenty years ago, left with a family of children and with a landed estate worth ten thousand pounds sterling. The one, whose views are unambitious, who is not carried away by the temptations to vanity, visiting, and luxury, and who is content to live at home, and to educate her children for those walks in life where they will be likely to get bread and even to obtain a competence for old age without bowing and cringing, lets her land, and lives upon the income, which, at *three per centum*, and that is rather above the average, yields her 300*l.* a year. The other is a dashing dame. Hardly is her pains-taking, plodding husband, laid in the grave, when her head begins to run upon London ; upon sentimental plays, and haberdashers' shops. Her gaping sons are all instantly destined for the Excise, the Custom-House, or for plunder in the East. She cannot accomplish this with 300*l.* a year ; and, besides, she is impatient under the pestering of clownish and dirty-shoed farmers. In this embarrassment some sleek-headed, deep-sighted attorney (who, thanks to the funding system, is, most likely, also a tax-gatherer, a second-hand stock-broker, and a coiner of paper-money) at once discovers her distress, and points out the remedy ; and, up she comes, in a post-chaise overladen with her and her litter. At first, upon the money advanced her by brother Scut, who is left with a power to sell her land, she takes a lodging in Portland Place, but finding a half year's income gone in a week, she removes with her laced footman to a tawdry ready-furnished lodging at Camberwell or Kentish-town, where, though the best of her company consist of stock-jobbers' wives, her efforts to hide her poverty is the topic of their continual ridicule. Her daughters waste their lives in turning the cast-off finery of the mother into finery for themselves, in reading novels and the *Morning Post*, and in ogling the spruce apprentice stock-jobber, who lodges over the way ; while her sons are thumped black and blue at a school for French and commercial education, into which

they have been inveigled by a large board with golden letters upon it; and while the silly mother expends the rest of her 500*l.* a year in hackney coaches, wherewith genteelly to dance attendance upon the clerks of Leadenhall-street and the Treasury.

But, observe, she has, all this time, been receiving, from the sale of her land laid out in stock, at least, 500*l.* a year, while the widow, the good and sober and considerate mother, who has remained in the country, and who has of necessity been expending her income upon the spot whence it was derived, instead of throwing it away upon the vermin collected together in this overgrown and corrupted metropolis, has been receiving only 300*l.* a year. From real property, possessed twenty years ago, of exactly the same value, the former, in consequence of speculations, her risk, her gambling, received and expended 10,000*l.*, while the latter, whose moderation and economy prevented her from putting the independence of herself and her children to hazard, has received and expended only 5000*l.* And, to this gentleman, who declaims in behalf of "the widow," I put the question, whether it would be just to take from the sober matron, who has not ventured to gamble, in order to make up the losses of her who has gambled? Observe, too, that the land of her who did not purchase stock, has been taxed all this time, and in all manner of ways, for the purpose of getting money to pay the 500*l.* a year to the gambler. And when the chances begin to run against this latter, shall she, at the end of twenty years of comparative luxury, come to the person who has been practising economy, and say to her, "Give me part of your land, *that after all, I may still be as well off as you?*" Is this justice? Is this the justice for which my correspondent contends? Is it the *contrary* of this against which he so declaims? He may, if he choose, again resort to his powers of exciting passion and prejudice; he may again assert, that the weight of the measure I propose would fall upon the helpless and the destitute, upon the widow, the fatherless, and the orphan, and that all these would sink into the vale of misery, calling for the vengeance of Heaven on the barbarous authors of their misfortune and ruin. He may again assert, that this measure would stain the annals of our age and country with an everlasting stigma; but neither these assertions, nor the lofty exclamatory appeals to "British honour," will, in the minds of men of sense and of justice, avail him aught, unless he can upset the argument, imperfect as it is, that I have made use of.

I shall, I am aware, be told, that the fund-loving widow, whom I have described, is an over-charged picture. Be it so; but is there any man who will deny, that there are many instances of that sort? Will he deny that thousands upon thousands have become fundholders from motives similar to those given to that widow? Will he deny that this enormous, this overgrown, this wen-headed metropolis, including its environs, owes one-half of its population to the funds? And will he deny, that this system is the cause of the villages being depopulated, and impoverished, by inducing persons to draw their incomes from the places where it is produced by labour, and from suffering hardly any part of it to fall back again to cheer the heart of the labourer? Will he deny, that, by removing the population from the country to the metropolis; by crowding the people into lanes, courts, and alleys, great injury is done to the health of the people, great injury both to their bodies and their minds? Will he deny, that they are rendered, by this system, feeble, mercenary, and base, in every possible way? And, if he cannot deny this, and I think he cannot deny any part of it, will he contend,

that, for the sake of putting an end to an evil of such magnitude, the good, the comfort (as it is called) of individuals ought not to give way ?

"The widow," I shall perhaps be reminded, has, in great likelihood, been *compelled* to be a fundholder ; for, that the stock may have been purchased by her husband, or ordered, by his will, to be purchased. But, what is that to my argument ? The wife must submit to the consequences of having had a foolish and avaricious husband ; and so must orphans submit to similar consequences flowing from the disposition of their parents, as, indeed, is, and must be, the case, in all ranks and situations of life, and with reference to all sorts of contracts. In regard to stock held in consequence of compulsion, there is, indeed, one exception ; and that is, where the compulsion has arisen from some positive law, or some legal decision. Here the deposit is not the voluntary act of the party ; the nation, by its laws and its executive officers, has *forced* the property from its right owner, and to its right owner it is, therefore, bound, in justice, to restore it.—But, when my correspondent is declaiming about the widow, the orphan, and the helpless, he seems entirely to overlook the *great body* of fundholders. To hear him, one would think, that all the fund-holders were poor, helpless mortals, unable to shift for themselves ; and, what is more, unable to *sell their stock*, not only at this time, but even after it shall have begun evidently to depreciate ! One would think this impossible, too, in a person who has a mind capable of embracing such mighty objects and of inventing such grand schemes ; one would think it quite impossible, that such a person should not, long ago, have perceived, that the fund-holders, generally speaking, are the most active, the most greedy, the most cunning part of the community ; that they are persons who are constantly upon the look-out ; that their minds embrace all possible chances ; that they are seldom without two strings to their bow ; that they are persons who have risen from the dirt, merely by their speculations in the funds and in other things therewith closely or more remotely connected ; and that, as to the far greater part of them, they have received ten, or from ten to twenty per centum for any thing of real value that they have ever advanced. With respect to the loan-contractors, too, though they do not still hold, though they would not, if they could, still hold the stock proceeding from their loans ; though they have sold it out in little parcels to subaltern speculators, who would have made loans themselves if they could ; though the stock is not still theirs, it is gone elsewhere with all its qualities along with it ; with all its bonuses and its other immense gains ; and, justice will never cause a separation in its view of them ; they must always remain united ; it being no matter to the nation *who are the holders* ; who swallows the fruits of its labour, whether it goes into the belly of the shark or the gudgeon. Take a loan, then, of twenty years ago, and you will find, that the interest and the bonuses, and other emoluments arising from it (to say nothing of the political and other indirect gains), are much more than *double* the amount of what land, equal in value to the amount of the loan, would have produced in the same time. Where then is the injustice of now cutting off, or, at least, greatly reducing, the interest upon such loan ? and, where would be the justice of coming to the land-owners and seizing a part of their property, in order to divide it with those who have already drawn therefrom the full amount of whatever they advanced ? Aye, says this writer, but, the loan-contractors are land-owners too. It is not *they* who would suffer, but the poor helpless creatures who

have bought their scrip. What is that to the nation? It may be, and must be lamented, that these people were so foolish, or so greedy, as to become funnels for the loan contractors to suck the fruit of the nation's labour through; but the act was their own; it was perfectly voluntary; there was no compulsion for them to purchase stock; and they made the purchase with a full knowledge of all the risks and chances attending it, and in consequence of a determination to run those risks and chances for the sake of enhancing their emoluments. They saw that, by becoming unfair "blood-suckers," they could add to their incomes; and are they not to submit to the consequences of having chosen that way of life? Are they now to be huddled together with those whose blood they have been so long sucking, and have been enabling others to suck more copiously?

My correspondent, pursuing his erroneous notion of a perfect similarity between a national debt and a debt between man and man, argues as if the national debt was an actual mortgage upon the land and goods of the nation; but, not only is it not so by law, but it never was, or could be, considered in that light by any one of the loan-makers, whether great or small. It is a mortgage upon the taxes of the nation; and it was, of course, understood, at the making of every loan, that if those taxes were not sufficient to pay the interest, the interest must go unpaid; so that, at last, we are naturally brought back to the question whence we started: whether it be consistent with the safety of the nation; with its independence; and not only with its mere independence, or, in other words, its *existence* as a nation, but with the preservation, or the restoration, of its due degree of power and greatness; whether it be consistent with these any longer to continue to raise 27,000,000*l.* a-year upon the people to defray the expenses attendant upon the national debt. I am decidedly of opinion, that it is not consistent with the safety and well-being of the nation any longer to continue such levy; I am decidedly of opinion, that we cannot make either war or peace in a way that shall not accelerate our ruin, as an independent people, without a discontinuance of it; I am decidedly of opinion, that to express myself in the words of the greatest of political philosophers, the nation must destroy the debt, or that the debt will destroy the nation. Nor is this opinion so singular as the fund-holders may imagine; but, even amongst those who entertain it, it is not rare to find persons ready to avow, that, such is their love of that *justice*, for which my correspondent is so sturdy an advocate, they would prefer the destruction of the nation; that is to say, its subjugation to a foreign power. The *folly* of this preference may not be evident to those who can console themselves with the base hope of being still permitted, as the Dutch are, to derive something of an income from the continuation of the funds protected by the edicts, and the arms of a conqueror; but, the *justice* of it, my correspondent will not, I presume, attempt to maintain; for, here, still more obviously than in the former comparison, his argument, founded upon the similarity between the debt of a nation and a debt between man and man, would fail him. Why? perhaps, will he say. Is the *ruin* of a bankrupt any reason for his creditors abstaining from *taking his all*? No: it is not to prevent them from taking all his goods and all his property; but, they cannot take his *life*; they can make him as poor as a day-labourer; they can, in some cases, and in virtue of commercial laws, take away his liberty, in a certain degree, and under the control of certain regulating powers in the state; but they cannot cut off his limbs; they cannot poison or suffocate him; they

cannot demand a pursuit of him to the very verge of existence; they cannot *kill* him; they must leave him life and limb, together with all his capacities, mental and physical, for the purposes of prolonging his existence and for those of regaining his weight and consequence in the world. But, the argument of the "blood-suckers" would *destroy* the nation rather than quit their hold; they would make it *cease to exist* as an independent community; and not to exist in that state, is, with a nation, not to exist at all. And this they call *justice* and *honour* and *honesty!* In favour of this it is that we are to listen to the incessant and noisy and hypocritical declamation that we daily hear in behalf of the widow and the orphan and the helpless; to support this destroying principle we are invoked to consider the fate of our character in the world; and that we are to submit to be called, unless we yield to it, by every name descriptive of a base and abominable people, for whose signal punishment the thunders of Heaven and the vapours of the earth are gathering themselves together! And shall we thus submit? Shall we, after having been inveigled even to the brink of the fatal precipice, be bullied, because we hesitate at taking the leap; shall we, indeed, tamely submit to be thus taunted and insulted, because we wish to retain that small portion of the vital principle that the "blood-sucker" has left in our veins?

Having trespassed so far upon the patience of the reader, I will not now enter upon my defence against the charge of CRUELTY. Those who think that I have done away the charge of INJUSTICE, will not regard it necessary that much should be said upon the other point; but, I think, I am able to show, and, for many reasons, I shall endeavour to do it in my next Number, that the calamities to individuals, from the measures that I would propose, would not be of nearly so fearful a magnitude as people in general appear to apprehend, an apprehension industriously propagated by all that large portion of talkers and of writers, who are under the influence, direct or indirect, of the "blood-sucker."

I must once more express my desire to be understood, as speaking, upon this subject, my *own* sentiments, without knowing that one member of what is called *the Opposition* agrees with me. It would be contemptible as well as false to pretend, that, in no instance, one's opinions are not to yield to those of others, particularly for persons of whose talents and wisdom one entertains the greatest possible degree of deference; but, in most instances, I have followed my own original opinion; and, upon all subjects relating to the funding system, I have suffered the judgment of no one to bias me. If I am in error, let the error be my own, and if not, I have a right thus early to put forward my claim to the merit.

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## SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

(*Political Register, February, 1806.*)

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"The Tempter saw his time; the work he plied;  
 "Stocks and Subscriptions pour on ev'ry side,  
 "Till all the Demon makes his full descent  
 "In one abundant show'r of cent. per cent.,  
 "Sinks deep within him, and possesses whole,  
 "Then dubs DIRECTOR, and secures his soul."—POPE, Epi. iii.

The reader will have seen, upon this subject, a letter from a correspondent, who takes the signature of A. Z. That letter was written by way of comment upon my defence of a proposition for the reducing of the interest upon the national debt, and for adopting such measures as would, in a very short time, have annihilated all demands upon the public on the part of that description of persons who are called public creditors. This correspondent is an opponent, of whom one need not be ashamed. His arguments have considerable merit in them, and are well and fairly urged. Still, however, I think, it will be found, upon examination, that they leave my principles unshaken, and that no great deal will need to be said in order to convince the reader, that, after trial, those principles are sound and just.

But, unwilling as I am to be, for a moment, drawn off from this examination, there is an opponent of quite another description, of whom I must first of all take some notice. Allusion is here made to an article, which appeared in the *Courier* newspaper of the 14th instant. The main object of the writer appears to be, to cause it to be believed, that the sentiments published by me, relative to the fate of the funds, proceed from the instigation of Mr. Windham, and, that as these sentiments are greatly dangerous in their tendency, it is greatly dangerous that Mr. Windham should be a cabinet-minister. This conclusion would be just enough, were not the premises false. But, in the first place, the dangerous tendency of my sentiments is a position which should have been proved by a refutation of my arguments, and not assumed without any attempt to effect such refutation; and, secondly, with regard to my publications upon this subject proceeding from the instigation of Mr. Windham, the fact is entirely false, and the falsehood is uttered with a perfect knowledge of its being a falsehood, as the reader must remember, that I have all along expressly declared, that the opinions upon the subject of the funds are my own. In spite, however, of these repeated declarations, this candid gentleman infers the exact contrary, and the facts, whence his inference is drawn, are, first, that, when in 1803, Mr. Windham was, in a like spirit of candour, charged, in the House of Commons, with being the instigator of my publications, he "refused to disavow the fact." But, surely, this might have been fairly attributed to his disdain at the falsehood of the imputation, and not to his consciousness of its truth. The other fact is, that the *Political Register* is entirely devoted to Mr. Windham; that, "it addresses itself to the promotion of "his views, to the flattery of all his passions, animosities, and even eccentricities," which is instanced, particularly, in its having, "though "strictly a political paper, lately descended to defend the practice of "boxing, because Mr. Windham is an admirer of it." Now, as to the real merits of the case, what matters it whence arguments proceed, so that they be good and irrefutable? And, that the arguments made use of by me in favour of boxing are such, is tolerably well proved by the fact, that no one has ever attempted to answer them with any thing but canting or abusive declamation. To those who confine the epithet *political* to the manœuvring of parties and the intrigues of a court, or who extend it, at the utmost, not beyond the circles of Whitehall and the Diplomatic Body; to such persons, those customs, which have an influence upon the minds and manners of the people, must, to be sure, seem of a nature not at all political. But, to those, and, I trust the number of them is very great, who take a wider range of thought, and whose minds

pénétrate more deeply into the sources of national character and national power, discussions relative to a practice, so intimately connected with that character and that power, will, surely, not be thought uncongenial to the nature of a *Political Register*. And; moreover, the fact, which this writer assumes, and on which he proceeds, is here, again, totally false; for, though it would be perfectly natural in me to imbibe opinions from the expression of those of Mr. Windham, and having so imbibed them, it would be perfectly proper in me to defend them; yet, the truth is, that my opinions, either upon the subject of boxing or of bull-baiting, were not so imbibed; and, I can, at any time, produce proof, that, being at a dinner, the second or third day after my return to England, when Mr. Windham's speech, the day before made in parliament upon the subject of bull-baiting, was criticised, I declared myself to be of his opinion, and avowed, that, at Philadelphia I had always assisted at, and encouraged, bull-baits. This was before I had spoken to, or had the most distant notion of ever having the honour of speaking to, Mr. Windham. Say, then, if you will, that this congeniality of sentiment was cause instead of effect; say that, out of it, first arose that respectful attachment which I have constantly discovered towards that truly enlightened statesman, and, assuredly, I need not seek to trace it to a more honourable source; but do not produce it as a mark of servility; be not so unjust as to ascribe it to a base devotion to his will, when every man who has been a constant reader of my writings, and who knows any thing of the state of parties and of the feelings of the great actors upon the scene, must be convinced, that, in very many instances, my opinions and my views have not accorded with those of Mr. Windham; to which I will, however, frankly add, that, where they have not so accorded, I have, in the end, generally found the error to be with myself. No: I have never been the servile tool of Mr. Windham; his nature abhors servility; and, I repeat my former declaration, that he has never attempted to remonstrate very earnestly with me, except in behalf of those whom I regarded as his foulest enemies.

In returning to the subject of the funds, I shall, previous to making any remark upon the article in the *Courier*, insert, according to my usual custom, the article itself. Not the whole of it, indeed; for this gentleman plies me, in the course of his six days, with not less than thirty of his columns; columns, the *whole* of which, in the sinking state of this vehicle of Ward's and Huskisson's Bulletins, are not read, I should suppose, by above thirty readers; a supposition which will need little to corroborate it, when the following specimens have been produced.—“ A pretty story about two widows is given, equally false, ignorant, and malicious. It is said, supposing twenty years ago two widows had each 10,000*l.* One of them a frugal, prudent lady, lays “ her money in land for which she obtains but 3 per cent.; the “ other, a dashing dame, lays it out in the funds, for which she obtains “ 5 per cent. (five is not always to be had). At the end of the twenty “ years, the landed lady has spent but 6000*l.* while the funded lady has “ spent 10,000*l.* The conclusion drawn is, that the funded lady has no “ such claims to protection on the State as the landed lady. Now what “ is the fact? The funded lady's property has not at all improved, while “ the landed lady's has probably doubled in value. The one, by selling “ her land and buying into the funds, can have 1000*l.* per annum, “ while the other must remain with her 500*l.* only, all the necessaries of

" life being enormously increased in price. In such a case the fundholder is to be pitied, the landholder envied. The proprietors of lands and houses fatten on the distresses of the times, while the fundholders suffer. Almost all landholders, who are not immediately prevented by leases, advance their rents to pay the property-tax, for instance, and annually increase them as taxes and commodities rise. But what relief has the stockholder? None. He goes on, year after year, his income reduced, and reduced by the advance of commodities. One thousand per annum is not now worth more than 600*l.* twenty years ago. The fundholder is in fact the only sufferer by the public distresses. Landlords, tradesmen, and mechanics have all increased their incomes in proportion to the increased expense of living. The interest paid on the national debt is not, perhaps, more at this moment than it was twenty years ago, with relation to the price of commodities, though nominally it is double; and this may explain how it is that the large amount is so easily paid. But for all this it is the fundholder and the fixed annuitant, such as a mortgagee, that suffers. Every new loan raised for the state, ultimately and absolutely comes out of their pockets. And shall we be told that these persons, whose property is daily eaten up by the wants of the nation, should be robbed of the remainder? The suggestion is most cruel and atrocious. Let not the landed proprietors be flattered with the notion that their lands would be secure if the funds were swept away, or that their rents would be larger. The same feeling in the landed proprietors of France produced the revolution. The nobles would not pay taxes to defray the interest of the national debt. The funds went, and the lands followed. The French Monarchy fell with the funds; the French nobles fell also. Why are such libels on the faith of Parliament, such attacks on the property of the subject, suffered to pass? Persons have been punished for saying the king should be destroyed, the Parliament should be destroyed, the land should be divided, &c. and why are doctrines so truly, so systematically revolutionary, suffered to pass with impunity? The funding system is still sound and salutary, though somewhat feeble from having been so rapidly drawn upon. It should be eased a little by raising the whole, or nearly the whole, of the supplies within the year. The sinking fund is making rapid advances towards the extinction of the debt. Never was there a time when the country would bear burthens more patiently than the present, because it is satisfied of the justice and unavoidable necessity of the war. Ministers have no clamorous opposition to dread to inflame the people and paralyze the efforts of government."

Taking these assertions (for they are very little better) in the order in which they present themselves, the first thing to observe is, that this writer presumes, that the lands of the country are *not let on lease*, and, of course, that the owner has, at the end of every year, or on any day, the power to raise his rent to meet the effects of the depreciation of money. But, is this true? and, if it were generally true, how alarming would be the consequences! The several surveyors, employed by the Board of Agriculture, and paid out of the taxes of the nation, have represented, indeed, that it is fast becoming the custom of the landowners to refuse to grant leases, and to hold the cultivators as tenants at will; a custom, say they, which, in the proportion that it obtains, deadens industry, diminishes the produce of the soil, lessens, in a national view, the value of the land, and reduces the farmer to a mere



wretched dependant upon the will of his landlord ; and, observe well, this terrible evil, these deep-sighted gentlemen ascribe to the caprice, the unaccountable prejudice, and the hard-heartedness of the landlords. Against these heavy charges the *Courier* does, I think, furnish the land-owners with a tolerably complete defence, by showing, that, if they do let leases, they throw away, in consequence of the depreciation of money, nearly one half of their incomes. This is a subject worthy of the most serious attention of the government. The effect, here spoken of, of the depreciation of money, arising from the funding system and its paper of all sorts, is one of the great evils, against which we have now to contend ; or, rather, of which we have to get rid ; for, while the funding system remains, it is utterly impossible to overcome, or even to check it. But, all this belongs to a separate question, and has nothing at all to do with the question arising out of my comparison of the two widows, which, as the reader will see, supposes the landed widow to have *let a lease of her land* twenty years ago ; and, as it is evident, that her rent depreciated in the same degree that the annuity of the fund-holding lady depreciated, it must also be evident that my argument is not at all impaired by the producing of any circumstance relating to the depreciation of money. If I am told, that, at the expiration of the lease, the landed widow may raise her rent ; or, that she might have kept the land in her own hands ; or, that she might have let it by the year, or the month : if I am told this, I answer, that the gambling lady might have left off in time ; or, that she might have bought in low ; or, that she might have sold out high. We are not to talk of what may have, or might have, happened, in the last twenty years ; but, of what has, upon a general view, taken place.

We are next told, that, in consequence of the depreciation of money, 1,000*l.* now, is not worth more than 600*l.* was worth twenty years ago ; and, therefore, that, as the nominal rate of interest paid upon the amount of the national debt continues the same that it was twenty years ago, “ the total amount of interest paid upon the debt, is not, perhaps, “ in relation to the price of commodities, more than it was twenty years ago, though, nominally, it be double.” We will, if you please, Sir, leave out the “ perhaps ” in a statement like this, particularly when the statement be made in answer to an argument, which you have represented as “ ignorant, false, and malicious.” I not only allow that money has depreciated in the degree which you say it has, but, I will go further, and say, because I can prove it, and, indeed, have proved it, that money has, since the time referred to, depreciated *one half* ; and, of course, that 1,000*l.* now is not worth more than 500*l.* was twenty years ago. I shall, indeed, leave you to apply this to Mr. Pitt’s and old Rose’s boasting accounts of the increase of imports and exports, and in which no allowance at all was ever made for depreciation of money. I take your statement, even with my addition to your degree of depreciation, and a very few words will show against whom the charge of ignorance and falsehood and malice ought to be preferred. In 1784, when the late pretending projector took upon him the direction of the nation’s concerns, the annual charge on account of the national debt was, to speak in round numbers, 9,000,000*l.* ; it is now 27,000,000*l.* Nominally, therefore, it is now tripled, instead of being doubled ; and, as the depreciation is only in the degree of one half, the real annual charge on account of debt is now half as much again as it was twenty years ago. We are got out of our subject

here ; but, that is not my fault ; and, as we have digressed, I will digress a little further, in order to remind you, that, this addition to the taxes on account of the debt has arisen, not in twenty years, but in *thirteen* years ; and that the depreciation of money, of which you speak, has arisen in the same time. This is said for the comfort of yourself and your " blood-sucking " employers, and by way of giving you a foretaste of that which is to come.

But the land proprietors are told, that, if the funds were swept away, their lands would not be secure. " The same feeling in the landed proprietors in France produced the revolution. The nobles would not pay taxes to defray the interest of the national debt. The funds went, and the lands followed. The monarchy fell with the funds, and the French nobles fell also." That they all went together we know very well ; but as to the *cause*, " as to the cause, good Japhet," we differ very widely in opinion. The nobles and others ; in short, the people of France, were *unable* any longer to pay the full amount of the annual interest of their national debt, without submitting to such vexation and oppression as were beyond mortal endurance. There were Mr. Huskisson's and other clubs of the like philosophers, and many most famous bulletin-makers upon a grand scale. But the deficit in the finances was the grand cause ; and, that deficit arose, not out of the want of will, but out of the inability to pay, without a submission to that which would have rendered life not worth preserving. The fund-holders, the " blood-suckers," hung on like leeches ; the government had not the courage to tear them off ; an outcry just such as that set up by this writer, prevailed ; the state went reeling on, buffeted on one side by the people, and on the other by the fund-holders ; and, at last, down it came never to rise again, an awful warning to all those nations who have been so unwise as to contract great public debts, and who have thereunto added the folly of acting upon the maxim, that, let come what will, the interest upon those debts is to be paid. The question in France was, " Shall the nation destroy the debt, or the debt destroy the nation ? " that is to say, the government and constitution ; and such is, at this moment, the question in England ; with this addition, however, as to the latter choice, that, the liberties, the independence, and the very name of England are at stake as well as the government and the constitution. Yes, yes ; it is true enough, that the French monarchy and the French funds fell together ; not, however, because the monarchy was supported by the funds, but because it was so foolish as to support them too long. They fell together as a man and his load fall together, the supporting, and not the throwing off, of the latter, being the cause of the falling of the former.

This is my opinion ; and who does not apprehend similar, not to say much worse, consequences in England, if England does not, while yet there is time, throw off her intolerable load ? And, shall those who warn her ; those of her sons who yet dare to put up their voice for her preservation, be stigmatized as " *libellers* ? " Libels, these are called, upon what ? " Upon the faith of parliament ! " Why, what I say is, that the faith of parliament is no more pledged for the continuation of the payment of the interest upon the national debt, than it was pledged for the payment of the Bank of England notes in specie ; or than it is now pledged for the continuation of that famous project the Parish-army-bill. And this is to libel the faith of parliament, is it ? But, we are guilty of sedition, too, if not of treason. " Persons have been punished."

we are gravely reminded, "for saying *the King* should be destroyed, the *parliament* should be destroyed, the *land* should be divided, &c." Aye, and very justly, too! When I make a proposition for destroying either king, or parliament, I shall certainly not hope to escape punishment; and, as to *dividing the land*, why, you wiseacre, is not this the very thing that I am objecting to! Is it not a proposition, on the part of my correspondent, for the seizing of the land and dividing it, that has given rise to this discussion? The fund-holders and their advocates are for dividing the land; they see that the taxes must very soon fail to produce a sufficiency wherewith to pay their dividends at the present rate, and therefore are they endeavouring to prepare men's minds for a division of the land, to which I object; and, I am ready to join any one in calling for the vengeance of the law upon the heads of all such revolutionary incendiaries.

As a consolation at parting, we are assured, that "the funding system, though somewhat feeble, from having been so rapidly drawn upon, is still sound and salutary." We are told, "that the sinking fund is making rapid advances towards the extinction of the debt; and, that the funds should be eased a little by raising the whole, or nearly the whole, of the supplies within the year." Comforting assurance! Profound remark! Judicious advice! As to the operation of the Sinking Fund, we have seen, that, in the space of twenty years, it has tripled the nominal amount of the annual taxes raised upon us on account of debt, and has added in the degree of one half to the real annual amount of the taxes raised upon us on account of debt. This is rapid enough, I think. Does this sagacious politician, this profound political economist, want it to go on faster? What, then, in the name of all that is shallow and empty, does he want? But, the funding system is to be "eased;" and how? By raising the whole, or almost the whole, of the supplies within the year. Does this wise man bear in mind, that, last year, the taxes raised amounted to about 88,000,000*l.*, and the expenditure to about 70,000,000*l.*? And, if he does, does he besides think it possible to raise this year taxes nearly double in amount to the taxes raised last year? Away, away with all such dabblers and dreamers! Send them to 'Change Alley, or to Bedlam; but, let them not approach even the steps to the cabinet or the parliament. No: the present ministers have not come into place to hide the sins of the last. The last contracted the debt; and let those who supported them in it, and who lent them the money, be very well contented if their interests be not immediately stopped. A wise scheme indeed would it be in the present minister, to say nothing about its absolute impracticability, to squeeze the whole of the annual supplies out of the people, in order to avoid adding to, and thereby impairing the solidity of, the interest upon the national debt! On the contrary, not one penny of new tax ought they to lay on, other than that which will be necessary to pay the interest upon the money which *they* borrow. They ought, in fact, to have nothing at all to do with the old debt; or, they ought, at least, to distinguish it by some name different from the debt now to be contracted; they ought always to be able, in a moment to show the state in which they found the concern. And, observe, that this was what the great reformer Pitt did, when he began those measures, which he boasted should cause his name to be inscribed upon the proud column about to be raised to public credit!

Having, and not, I think it will be thought, quite unnecessarily, occu-

pieced so much of the time of the reader with the remarks upon this article in the *Courier*, I am compelled to defer an examination of the arguments of A. Z. till my next number. It would, moreover, be great injustice to him to couple his production with that of a stock-jobber's hireling; for, in no other light can I possibly view the person, whose at once feeble and malignant efforts I have here thought it right to expose.

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## SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

(*Political Register*, March, 1806.)

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As I regard this subject as being second to none in point of public importance, excepting solely that of forming a permanent military system, I shall make no apology for now entering upon that examination, which, in my last number, I stated it as my intention to enter upon, of the arguments advanced by A. Z. in opposition, not to the main principle whereon I proceeded in justification of my proposition for ceasing to pay the interest upon the national debt, but to my arguments in support of a distinction, in point of right, between funded and other property. But, in this stage of the controversy, it is necessary to revert a little, in order to come at the true state of it, by taking a short view of its origin and its progress.

Much has, at various times, been stated in the *Political Register*, respecting the justice and the policy (the measure being supposed necessary to the preservation of the independence of the country) of ceasing to pay the interest upon the national debt; and, much has also been said, in speeches as well as in print, in disapprobation, not to say execration of such sentiments, my opponents always having, in the superabundance of their wisdom as well as their candour, chosen to appear to consider the whole debt as due by *me*, and, in the regular course of reasoning to conclude, that I had deliberately conceived the intention of committing a fraudulent bankruptcy upon a large scale. From adversaries thus proceeding it is no wonder that I had little to dread; and that, without any trouble on my part, the doctrine I had broached made an impression upon the public mind, men beginning, at last, seriously to talk of throwing off the almost insupportable millstone. Early, in the present year, however, seeing the cause, perhaps, in a desperate way, and wishing to retrieve it while yet there was time, an opponent of another stamp did me the honour of addressing to me the result of his reflections upon the subject. In his letter, he acknowledged, first, that the national debt, in its present magnitude, was an evil full as great as I had ever described it; secondly, that the present scheme for reducing it was totally insufficient for the purpose; but, he insisted, that the nation possessed ample means for paying it off; that it had effects wherewith to make the liquidation; and that, this being the case, to cease to pay the interest, until the debt was paid off, would be an act of injustice and of cruelty, which would stamp eternal infamy upon the character of the nation. This conclusion, however, resting upon the fact of the nation's possessing ample means of paying it off; he thought himself bound to prove this position; but, unfortunately for his argument, this proof was

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drawn from the statements of Old Rose and Mr. Pitt, statements, the falsehood of which I was not called upon to prove ; first, because the falsehood of them was matter of notoriety, and, secondly, because he himself had repudiated them in asserting the inefficiency of the sinking fund, the efficiency of which never failed to make a part of those very statements. Nevertheless, the statements whence his conclusion of ability to pay were drawn, were hardly noticed ; because, in his scheme for turning this ability to account, he brought the whole controversy to one simple question : namely, whether, the taxes being insufficient to pay the interest upon the debt, the land and the goods and chattels ought not to be seized for the purpose of being sold by the government, in order to pay off the principal. More amused with than alarmed at this project, I took little notice of it in detail ; but, endeavoured to show how unjust it would be in principle, even if it were practicable ; and, in doing this, as I could not deny that something must be done to get rid of the debt, it became necessary to maintain the justice of my own proposition. This answer, preceded by a most appropriate motto, taken from a speech of the great Earl of Chatham, will be found in page 20. Here I endeavoured to establish a clear distinction between the debts of a nation and those of an individual ; I endeavoured to show, that, in no way in which the bargain of the fund-holder could be viewed, did he acquire a right of pursuing the nation to its ruin, which ruin being compared with the ruin of a bankrupt individual, a total dissimilarity between them was made manifest ; and as to the main point, the injustice of seizing upon the land and the goods and chattels, in order to reimburse the fund-holder, it was, I think, incontrovertibly established.

These comments drew forth a letter from A. Z. which I was about more fully to notice last week, when, as the reader's exhausted patience will, in all probability, remind him, my attention was drawn aside by a wise-acre in the *Courier*, who, having stolen a thought or two from my own correspondent, had made a most violent effort to work them into a ground of calumny on myself. We must now turn back to the letter of A. Z. which I am disposed to treat with every mark of respect due to talents and to controversial candour.

This writer appears to be duly impressed with the evils produced by so enormous an amount of debt ; he states no reliance and no hope whatever on the operation of the sinking fund ; he advances nothing by way of proof, that the nation is able to pay off the principal of the debt, and even seems to doubt of its ability to continue much longer to pay the interest ; he contends not for the justice of seizing upon the lands and the goods and chattels, for the purpose of indemnifying the fund-holder ; on the contrary, he allows, that the parliament has the power to cause the payment of the interest to cease, that the exercise of such power may become an act of justice, and that, when the nation is no longer able to pay out of the taxes, the fund-holder must go unpaid ; but, he does, nevertheless, lay down, and surrounding himself with divers illustrative statements, endeavour to maintain this plain and broad proposition, *that the interest upon the national debt stands upon precisely the same foundation as the ownership of lands and houses.* I say that it does not. Here we are at issue ; and I think myself able to convince him, that, in maintaining, that to cut off the interest upon the national debt is merely a matter of expediency, I do not "strike at the root of every species of property."

But, previously, and for the purpose of removing whatever may tend to prevent our coming at a clear and distinct view of the principal point at which we aim, it will be necessary to notice two or three detached, and somewhat irregularly-introduced statements.—The statement relative to the great change in the value of money, as shown in the height of prices, was purloined by my old friend of the *Courier*, and has been answered.

As to the high rate of interest, which the nation has paid, and still pays, to the fund-holders: this, embracing a point of fact, cannot be wholly answered without a reference to those documents, which would give us correct information as to the terms of the several loans that have been made, from which documents we should, I believe, find that the conjecture of my correspondent is not correct. But, whether the nation has, upon the whole, paid more or less than five per centum a-year for the money that has been borrowed by its successive administrations, is a point upon which I laid very little stress, it being quite sufficient for my purpose, that it has paid a higher rate of interest than land will bring; and, I think no one will deny, that upon the supposition that lands are generally let by lease, it has paid nearly twice as high an interest as lands will bring, loaded as they are with poor-rates, and with several other burdens, from which the stocks are entirely exempted. The partial instances of great gains from speculations in land, at the sea-side, or elsewhere, are not to be noticed in an argument of this sort; and, besides, the writer did not see me including the partial gains of fund-holders; the large fortunes acquired by their gamblings I do regard as a terrible evil, but I did not proceed upon a supposition, that, in a mere pecuniary point of view, the nation was a loser by the acquirement of such fortunes. As being closely connected with this point, I will here notice an observation, that the willingness of persons to purchase stock and to hold it at a lower rate of interest than they could obtain by letting their money out on mortgage is a proof, that my argument, founded upon a supposition that every fund-holder knew beforehand the uncertainty of his tenure, is not sound. But, are there not many advantages, present advantages, always the most powerful in deciding men's conduct; are there not many of these advantages which the funds possess over mortgages upon lands and houses? First, the funds are always open for deposit; not a single day need ever be lost; the nature of the security is such, is so well known, as to render the advice of no lawyer necessary, as safely to dispense with the burdensome aid of attorneys and negotiators of every description. Next, the short periods and the punctuality of payment, to the very hour, of the interest; whereas, in the case of mortgages, though the payment be, in the end, secure; yet it may be, and it frequently, not to say generally, is, very far from being punctual; and, in numerous instances, is, at least obtained not without a lawsuit, a part, at least, of the expenses of which must fall upon the mortgagee. Then comes the facility of transfer. From the funds money can at any hour be drawn, without either expense or trouble. A part can be withdrawn and a part left. In short, it is the same almost as having it in your desk, with the advantage of its bringing interest while it remains there. Can the same be said of mortgages? And, when to all these real present advantages we add the chance of great gain, of the sudden acquirement of fortune without any gift of talent or any exertion of labour, is it wonderful, that men though they clearly perceive the inferiority of the funds in point of permanent

solidity, should prefer them to mortgages, as a place of deposit for their money? Arising out of these observations, there is another, which, though not immediately belonging to the subject before us, I cannot refrain from making; and, that is, that, while every transfer of property, whether real or personal, out of the funds, is loaded with a heavy duty, the transfer of funded property is loaded with no duty at all; no tax of any kind; and hereby, in addition to the sole payment of the poor-rates (now amounting to 6,000,000*l.* a-year), is the land-holder most grievously injured. He is loaded with taxes on one side, while on the other, a general, a national borrower has set up against him, and has offered terms so advantageous to every lender, that it is, and must be, with the utmost difficulty, that he can obtain a mortgage upon his land. The consequence is, he sells it; the fund-holder, the jobber, the contractor, the "blood-sucker and the muck-worm" purchase it; and thus are the ancient gentry in the kingdom become nearly extinct. Why not, if we must have, as we must have, new taxes; why not tax the transfer of stock? Not, however, that I would aid in deluding the public with any hope of effectual relief from any measure of this description, being fully convinced, that, unless the payment of the interest of the debt be discontinued, all other measures will prove useless.

A. Z. acknowledges, that the fund-holder has no claim whatever to his principal, unless the nation choose to pay him off at par, in which acknowledgment, I should think, he would have perceived, that he himself was making a pretty clear distinction between the foundation of funded and other property. But, laying this aside for the present, let us proceed to the observation made upon my statement, that the interest of the fund-holder had upon former occasions, and by the sole will of the nation, been reduced. This fact, says A. Z., does not alter the case; that is to say, it is no precedent for lowering the interest now; because those of the fund-holders, who, upon the particular occasion referred to, "did not choose" to subscribe to Mr. Pelham's plan, had the option of being paid off their "stock at par." This circumstance may be of weight as to degree; but, how does it impair the precedent as to the principle? The stock-holder had, perhaps, purchased at a price above par. The loans had been made at various prices; and when, from favourable circumstances, the possession of funded property was become more advantageous than it before had been, where, supposing that property to rest upon precisely the same foundation as landed property, was the justice of compelling the fund-holder to sell out at par, or to take a less interest than he had hitherto taken? But, proceeding upon the contrary supposition; upon the supposition, that funded property rests upon no other foundation than that of the ability of the nation to pay the interest without risking its ruin, and, that, of that ability the parliament must be the judge; proceeding upon this supposition, the measure of Mr. Pelham was perfectly just.

In coming now to the main position of this writer, that the interest of the national debt rests upon precisely the same foundation as the ownership of lands and houses, it ought, at the very outset, to be observed, that, if this position be established, the proposition for seizing upon, and dividing the real property of the nation, as an indemnification for the fund-holders, becomes, at once, just and reasonable, though, as to its practicability, few, even amongst the inhabitants of the 'Change, can, I should think, be very sanguine. In order to maintain this position, my

correspondent has recourse to a description, sometimes not very correct, and I might, perhaps, add, not quite so fair, as one could have wished, of the origin of the proprietorship of lands and of tithes. He describes this proprietorship as proceeding from the "arbitrary grants of despotic sovereigns;" or, more recently, from grants made by limited monarchs, in conjunction with their parliaments; and, having characterized these grants as founded in violence and injustice, he asks, "Is not the title of the fund-holder as good as the title of those land-proprietors, whose proprietorship arose from such grants?" As to the *goodness* of the title, he himself has admitted, that a case of necessity may fully justify the parliament in cutting off the payment of the interest upon the debt; all, therefore, that I have to prove, is, that the proprietorship of lands and that of funds, rest upon *different* foundations, the goodness or badness of either being a matter of inference, left entirely to those who may choose therein to deposit their wealth. And here, first of all, I must protest against the description of "arbitrary grants by despotic sovereigns;" for, what are we, the English nation, but the descendants of invaders, possessing the country in right of conquest? Another conquest did, at a subsequent epoch, confer a new right of the same sort, which was exercised either in making new grants, or in confirming the grants made in virtue of the former right; and this description, whether applied to land or to titles; whether to England, Scotland, or Ireland; whether to times ancient, or to times recent; whether to periods previous to the existence of parliament, or to periods since its existence, is equally correct, is perfectly simple, and is as perfectly consonant with all the principles of natural and universal law, strengthened in many respects, and in very few impaired, by the common and statute law of this realm. This is the foundation of the real property of the nation. The original grants consisted of what the sovereign acquired by right of conquest. They consisted of things which nobody possessed. They consisted not of things taken or collected from the people; for the people were not originally the owners of the soil; and, for this simple reason it is, that the people, considered in a body, have no claim, either in law or in reason, to property the ownership of which has grown out of such grants. But, is such the foundation of funded property? Is such the foundation of the claims to a continuation of the payment of the interest upon the national debt? Can it be said, that the money raised for this purpose is not previously private property? Can it be said, that it is not taken, or collected, from the people? Can it be said, that the interest to be paid this very year is not at the moment I am writing the property of the people who are to pay it? And, if this cannot be said, will it yet be said, will my correspondent yet contend, that landed property and funded property rest precisely upon the same foundation? And, will he still persist, that, in contending for an inferiority of right in the fund-holder; that, in contending for the justice, on the part of the people (through their representatives), not to take away what they have granted out of their private property, but to refuse to grant any more from that source; that, in contending for the justice of this measure, rendered necessary, too, for the preservation of their liberties and of the throne of their sovereign, I "strike at the root of all property whatsoever?"

Here, as to matter of controversy, I naturally stop, and wait for a reply; notifying, however, that, as the position just discussed, and, as I



think, refuted, is the point upon which every thing inferior must turn, I shall hope, considering the scantiness of my space and the various disadvantages arising from voluminous discussions, to see the reply confined solely to this point.

Merely as matter of observation, there are two passages of A. Z.'s letter which remain to be noticed. The first is that, wherein he admits, that "when it shall have been *proved*, that the interest of the debt can "no longer be paid without ruin to the country, it must be lowered, and "possibly, in the end, be altogether done away." This admission, coupled with the position, that the interest upon the debt stands upon precisely the same foundation as the ownership of lands and of houses, does, indeed, produce a strange confusion of ideas; but, what I am now tempted to ask, is, what will this writer regard as proof, that the interest of the debt can no longer be paid without ruin to the country? Or, as this would naturally depend upon the answer to another question, I would wish to ask him, what he should consider as national ruin? If, in answer to this latter question, he says: "The total annihilation of the people, or, at least, their subjugation to a foreign power." If no proof short of this will content him, it must be confessed that it has not yet been given; though it must, at the same time, be observed, that, if he wait for such proof, his remedy would be as useless as a dose administered to a patient already most effectually relieved by the hand of death. But, if his notions of national ruin extend not to the utmost verge of national existence, then, let him look around him; let him view the miseries and degradation of the people; let him look over the melancholy account of 1,200,000 parish paupers, upon a population of nine millions of souls; let him survey the innumerable swarms of tax-gatherers; let him trace back the failures of the last war, the miserable attempts at peace, and finally the peace of Amiens, big with the seeds of another and more disastrous war, to their pecuniary causes; let him think of the influence, given by the funding system, to jobbers and contractors and all that description of men, whose interest is ever in opposition to the true interests and the honour and the power of the country; let him, casting his eyes abroad, first look at India, with all its fundholders, its debts, and its consequent wars; returning to Europe, let him estimate the power of our natural and now implacable enemy, punishing every where our friends, deposing kings, creating monarchies; and, last of all, let him look at Boulogne, asking himself, at the same time, what are the terms, how long the duration, and what the natural and no very distant consequences, of the peace which next we shall make. This let him do, and in doing it chase from his mind the fumes of delusion; and then let him say, whether national ruin is not at hand, and whether the application of the remedy, if it come not soon, will not come too late.

The other passage, on which I think it necessary to make an observation, is that, in which my correspondent introduces the authority of Mr. Fox, and this is the only instance of a deviation from controversial fairness, of which I have to accuse him. I have had recourse to no authorities; I have come to the controversy unaided by the strength and unadorned by the brilliancy of authorities; I have declared my opinions, as far as relate to living political economists, to be my own; I have ventured forth at the risk of the imputation of peculiarity; I have rested for success solely upon the truth of my facts and the force of my arguments; an example which will, I trust, be, in future, followed by all my oppo-

nents. As an omission, I might notice, that it was incumbent on my correspondent, before he drew his conclusions with respect to the binding engagements of parliament, to reconcile his notions upon that subject with the measure for exempting the bank of England from making payments in specie. But, as he has not chosen to meet this argument, it must, of course, be concluded, that he was persuaded, that he could not meet it with any probability of success.

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## PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

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“ Upon this last score it is, that the people feel most sensibly ; and, it must have been evident to every tolerably accurate observer, that, by his tortuous measures to protect pecuniators, Mr. Pitt lost more of the public confidence, than by all his other measures and tricks put together. If, therefore, the new ministers shall set their faces against all measures of this sort ; and if, as I trust will be the case, they should resolve to institute an inquiry into the corruptions of the last twenty years ; if they should do this, they need fear neither the ‘ blood-suckers’ voices nor the arms of the French. But, if they do not something, at least, in this way, all their other measures will be useless. For they will inspire no public confidence ; and truth to say, no public confidence they ought to inspire.”—POLITICAL REGISTER, Feb. 1, p. 143.

Much as I have, at different times, heard upon this subject ; various and contradictory as have been the schemes for effecting, in the mode of electing members of parliament, such a change as should render the House of Commons the real representatives of the people, the real and efficient guardians of their properties and their personal rights ; little room as was left us for surprise at any project of this sort that might now be broached, there are, I think, but few persons, who could have been entirely free from emotions of that sort upon listening to the speech of Mr. Tierney, made in the House of Commons on Monday last, the 10th instant. This gentleman, upon the occasion here referred to, moved for leave to bring in a bill for the purpose of altering and amending the act of the 7 and 8 of William III. chap. 4, commonly called the *Treating Act*. Leave was given ; but not without some observations from Mr. Secretary Fox, which shall be noticed by-and-by ; and, the bill will, accordingly, be presented to the House in the course of a few days.

As every one, who feels the least degree of interest in the preservation of the constitution, must necessarily regard this as a subject of great importance, I think no apology necessary by way of introduction to the remarks which I am about to submit thereon ; and I am fully persuaded, that every reader, who has, in any way or degree, the power of preventing this bill from becoming a law, will, if he should not have already perceived the dangerous extent of it and of the principles upon which it is to be supported, thank me for my endeavours thereunto to draw his attention while yet there is time.

Mr. Tierney, whom I had never before heard, opened his subject with a statement as concise and as clear as his manner was unaffected and unembarrassed ; the arguments by which his proposition was supported exhibited similar evidence of talent ; his speech fully came up to what I had always considered as the perfection of parliamentary oratory ; and the

impression it left upon my mind was, that the speaker was a much greater man than I had ever before thought him. But, in spite of this impression, which, especially under such circumstances, was eminently calculated to produce acquiescence, the proposition appeared to me, even at the moment most favourable to it, to be grounded upon a partial and erroneous view of the great subject to which it related; and, as I am perfectly ready to ascribe to the proposer none but the most laudable of motives, I trust that, in endeavouring to maintain my opinion with respect to his proposition, I shall be regarded as acting from motives equally laudable.

He stated, that, from the different constructions of the Treating Act, by different committees and even different benches of judges, it was become matter of uncertainty whether it was or was not lawful for candidates to pay for the conveyance of electors to and from the place of election. That no law of uncertain construction ought to exist was manifest; and, therefore, he concluded, that *something* ought to be done to remove the uncertainty; a conclusion, in which, of course, every one must be ready to concur. But, then, it remained to be considered, *what* ought to be done: whether the uncertainty should be removed, 1st, by enforcing the act according to its letter, and thereby prohibiting, in all cases whatsoever, the conveyance of electors to be defrayed by candidates; or, 2dly, by clearly distinguishing the cases, wherein candidates should be permitted to defray, from those wherein they should not be so permitted; or, 3dly, by giving the permission in all cases indiscriminately. He chose the first of these; and, accordingly, his bill, if it become a law, will contain an entire prohibition to defray the expenses of conveying electors to and from the place of polling for members to serve in parliament.

When we consider the scattered situation of electors; when we reflect how large, comparatively speaking, is the number of those who reside at such a distance from the place of polling as to render it improbable that they should, were they compelled to travel at their own expense, that they should, in any considerable proportion, ever poll at all; when this is considered, every one will readily perceive, that a law, founded upon the proposition of Mr. Tierney, would virtually disfranchise one-half, perhaps, of the present electors. An objection, at once so powerful and so obvious, was not to be overlooked, and, of course, not to be suffered to approach unanticipated, by such a person as Mr. Tierney, who met it in advance, therefore, by observations to the following purport. First, that the elector (in the case of boroughs and cities, leaving that of counties to be hereafter noticed), if he removed from the place where he inherited, or acquired, his franchise, did, as far as his distance therefrom operated against his exercise of it, voluntarily disfranchise himself; that, if in consequence of such distance, he was prevented from being able to give his vote, the prevention arose from his own choice, and that, therefore, he had no equitable claim to any indulgence or assistance, whereby to remove the inability; and, further, that by his removal, he, in all probability, acquired the right of voting elsewhere, and therein obtained a compensation for what he had lost, having, indeed, done nothing more than exchange his franchise of Guildford, for instance, for that of some other borough or city. These arguments are plausible, but are they not much more plausible than solid? For, who that contemplates, but for a moment, the state of society in this country, the never-ceasing, and, in

most cases, the necessary, migration from place to place, will allow, that the removal of an elector from the place of polling is an act, which ought to be called voluntary? Since the times, to which Mr. Tierney reverted, and to which we shall by-and-by follow him back more closely; nay, since the time that the Treating Act was passed, has not the state of society in England undergone a total revolution? Have not the capital and its environs now become, in population, equal to one-eighth of the whole kingdom; and is not this population kept up and daily increased, in great part, by migrations from the several towns and cities of the country; a migration rendered absolutely necessary to the persons migrating, in order to their obtaining of bread from the hands of those, who, through the means of the taxing and funding system, draw the wealth of the country within the vortex of the Bank and the 'Change? And, with these facts before us, shall we tell the migrating electors, that, if they are unable to defray their own expenses to and from the place of polling, they must put up with a virtual disfranchisement, it having proceeded from an act of their own choice? Mr. Fox, who, in expressing his intention not to oppose the bringing in of the bill, could not help making an observation or two as to the difficulties that there would be to surmount in the adoption of it, pointed out, in adverting to this effect of disfranchisement, the case of soldiers, both of the regular army and militia, particularly the latter, who, he said, would, if such a bill were to pass, be virtually disfranchised, and that, too, not in consequence of any act of their own choice, but in consequence of having been actually by law, compelled to absent themselves from the place where they had acquired their franchise, and that, too, for the purpose of defending, probably at the hazard of their lives, the country together with all its franchises. This remark was very just and pertinent; and, I hope to live to see the day when the principle of it will be carried much further; for, as was long ago asked, in the Register, where is the reason for expecting men to fill the ranks of the army, to offer their lives for the service of their country, while to them, and to them alone, the hope of participating in the much-valued franchises of that country, is for ever cut off by the very act of their enlistment? As the army now stands, this hope is very faint indeed; the soldiers are very nearly severed from the rest of their countrymen as to all common interest; and to pass an act that would sever them quite, and that, too, just at the moment when all men are wishing to see formed an army whose interests should be completely interwoven with those of the people, and who should feel, that, in fighting for England, they were fighting for their own rights and immunities, must, I think, be regarded as extremely impolitic as well as unjust.

But, to return to the latter part of the argument of Mr. Tierney; namely; that, by his removal, the elector does, in all probability, acquire the right of voting elsewhere, and does therein obtain a compensation for what he has lost: does Mr. Tierney, then, mean, that in every place, to which an elector can remove, he will have a vote for members of parliament? Surely he cannot mean this? If, from Guildford, for instance, where the right of voting is in the freeholders and the freemen, an elector removes to Southampton, indeed, where the right of voting extends to scot and lot, he acquires the right of voting again, but even here, he must first be able to pay scot and lot, and he must have done it for some time too previous to the day of election; but, if he remove to Winchester, where the right of voting is confined to the Mayor and Corporation, he

must spend many years, and those very fortunate ones, before he can have any thing to say in the choosing of members of parliament; and, if his removal be to Croyden, which sends no members to parliament, he cannot even, by possibility, obtain a compensation for the loss of his franchise as an elector of burgesses to serve in parliament. But, the main tide of migration constantly sets towards the cities of London and Westminster. In the former, the migrating elector has to purchase his freedom before he can be entitled to a vote: in the latter, to pay scot and lot is sufficient, but, then, he must not only pay scot and lot first, but, after all, the city and liberties of Westminster, after having swallowed up country voters equal to those now found in forty or fifty restricted boroughs, afford but two members to represent the whole of them, together with all its own native population. When we take this view of the real state of the case, Mr. Tierney's theory of compensation does, I think, in a moment, melt into air. But, this is not all; for, it is quite impossible for any man, deriving his right of voting from his freedom, to find a compensation elsewhere; or, more properly speaking, it is impossible for the community to find a compensation in any right of voting that he may acquire elsewhere, unless, indeed, we are ready to allow (what Mr. Tierney afterwards seemed to be strongly disposed to assert), that a diminution in the number of votes would be a good, rather than an evil. In talking of a compensation for the loss of a freeman's vote in a borough like Guildford, Mr. Tierney appeared to suppose, that, in case of a removal to and residence at Westminster, the elector could vote, and ought to vote, at only one of the places; but, the fact certainly is, that his scot and lot vote at Westminster does not deprive him of his freeman's vote at Guildford, and it as certainly ought not so to deprive him, any more than his freeholder's vote at Guildford ought to deprive him of his freeholder's vote for the county of Surrey; or, than his liveryman's vote in London ought to deprive him of his freeholder's vote, if he has one, in the county of Middlesex, or in any other county.

With regard to freeholders, resident within the county to be polled for, but at a distance from the place of polling, Mr. Tierney, perceiving clearly that to them the theory of compensation elsewhere could not be applied, did, indeed, confess, that, in the minds of some persons, there might be a difficulty in enforcing the Treating Act according to the rigorous construction contemplated by his bill; because it was evident, that many freeholders, though resident within their county, must, from their utter inability to defray their own expenses to and from the place of polling, be virtually disfranchised by the operation of the Treating Act as altered and amended by him; and therefore he was ready to grant, that many persons, amongst whom he had been one, had thought, that, as to counties, some regulation should be adopted, such as appointing different places of polling in the same county, in order to prevent so serious a diminution being made in the number of those who now vote for county members. But, further reflection had, he said, convinced him, that no such measures of prevention were called for by the spirit of the constitution; and in order to show, that this his conviction was founded in reason, he reverted, and here I must beseech the reader to revert along with him, to the origin of the *forty-shilling qualification* of freeholders. Let it be assumed, says he, for the sake of arguing upon the inability of the distant freeholder to defray his own expenses to and from the place of polling; let it, for this purpose, be assumed, that forty shillings a-year is the ut-

most value of each freehold; and then let us see under what circumstances, compared with the present, this qualification was fixed as the suitable qualification for an elector of members to serve in parliament. He then proceeded to state, that the qualification was fixed in the eighth year of the reign of King Henry VI.; and the reader will find, that it was by the act chapter 7. Now, said he, whoever has paid attention to the subject will find, that, such has, since that time, been the *depreciation of money*, that *thirty pounds* of the present day is a sum not more than equal to *forty shillings* of that day; whence the House were left to infer, not, perhaps, that no man not having a freehold worth thirty pounds a-year should now be permitted as a freeholder, to vote for members of parliament; but, certainly (because there was no other practical or rational inference to be drawn), that there would be no departure from the spirit of the constitution in virtually disfranchising a considerable portion of the forty-shilling freeholders.

To this doctrine, which I am persuaded I have stated with perfect fairness, I am very anxious to direct the reader's attention; because, if the time, which I have bestowed upon matters connected herewith, has not been much worse than thrown away, the doctrine, so far from being consonant with the spirit of the constitution, tends to the utter destruction of whatever remains of that once noble and hallowed fabric.

And, first of all, when Mr. Tierney was reverting to first principles, it behoved him to give the House some reason for stopping short at the reign of King Henry VI. It behoved him to say a word or two at least as to the justice, or, at least, as to the policy, of a measure, which began the abridgment of the liberties of the people of England, and which was adopted in the reign of a prince, whose councils were always distracted, whose life, from the interference of foreigners and of women, was a scene of alternate tyranny and imbecility, terminating at last in the destruction of himself and of his house. It really did behove Mr. Tierney to say some little, in order to convince the House of Commons, that the act of 8 Henry VI. to which he was resorting, as the basis of his doctrine, was not itself a departure from the spirit of the English constitution, as it then stood; that it was not an act of disfranchisement; that it was not outrageously unjust; that it did not tend to degrade the people, to throw them back into a state of subjection to the nobles, to alienate them from the crown, and to render them the instruments in the hands of those by whom that crown was afterwards, with so much facility, shifted from head to head and from house to house. But, let us, for argument's sake (for as to the fact I shall always deny it), allow the act to have been both just and politic; and then let us, agreeably to Mr. Tierney's desire, compare the circumstances, under which that act was passed, with the circumstances of the present day. As Mr. Tierney chose to deal in theory whenever it suited him, and where it suited him, to deal in practice, we will not stop to do anything but smile at his assuming, that service in parliament must "still be considered a *burden*," just as much as it was in the reign of Henry VI. We will say nothing about the price of seats, nor about the emoluments frequently arising out of them. We will not dispute, that there might be, though we never read of it, a **TREASURY BENCH** in the House of Commons, during the wars of the red and white rose. Nor will we positively insist, though we have neither record nor tradition for the affirmative, that there were no Bank or East India directors and no loan or lottery contractors in the parliaments of the Edwards and the Hearys. Upon

none of these points will we dispute ; but, when Mr. Tierney talks about the depreciation of money, and would fain have us infer, that since the reign of Henry VI. a vast increase has, from that cause, arisen to the number of voters for members to serve in parliament, and, of course, a vast addition to the weight of the people in the legislature, we must be allowed to inquire a little into the state of the fact.

It would, perhaps, be very difficult to come at the bare fact of what was the number of persons, who actually voted for members of parliament immediately after the passing of the law, of which we have been speaking ; and, if we could come at it and were to see how many members were then sent to parliament, we should, destitute as we are of all authentic information as to the then populousness of the kingdom, be as far as ever from the means of making a correct comparison in that way. But, we know, that previous to the passing of the forty-shilling act, *every man having a freehold had a vote* ; and that, after the passing of that act, every man having a freehold of the value of forty shillings a-year had a vote. Now, then, in applying this in a comparison with what exists in the present times, I beg Mr. Tierney not to overlook the important circumstance, that *all men*, who had real property of their own, were, in the times, to which he has thought proper to carry us back, *freeholders*, the property which is now called copyhold, being then in reality the property of the lords, occupied by themselves, or let out on lease and at a rent quite or nearly in amount equal to its annual value, instead of being, as it now is, in reality the property of others, who are merely tenants in form, and whose rent, or fines, are, in point of property, in most cases, little more than a recognition of the feudality of the tenure, but politically, they have the important effect of depriving the persons, by whom they are paid, of one of the most valuable and most valued rights of Englishmen. To bring us back, then, to the spirit of the English constitution, since Mr. Tierney is resolved upon the task, let him, without saying a word about the Treasury Bench, or about directors and loan-makers, they being too tender to be touched ; let him, laying aside all trifles about Treating, which, in itself, is no bad thing ; let him propose, since forty shillings has been (and I allow it has) turned into thirty pounds ; let him, at once, propose, and he shall have my hearty assent to the proposition, to make the qualification thirty pounds a-year instead of forty shillings ; but, let him, in the name of the constitution of England I conjure him ; let him include the copyholders as well as the freeholders ; and, let him, too, restore, by an extension of district, or by some other means, the ancient boroughs and cities to their former population and relative opulence : these things let him do, or, which may be full as well, let him, in the name of that same constitution, suffer every thing to remain quietly as it is, or, at least, let him forbear to remind us of the spirit of the English constitution.

Since, however, Mr. Tierney has forced the subject upon us, we must, lest our silence should be construed into acquiescence, go a little further in controverting his doctrine. He seems to have taken for granted the position, that, in consequence of the depreciation of money, the number of voters has increased. It would be very easy to show, that no increase whatever in the number of voters would counterbalance the great, the irresistible, the terrible influence of the taxing and funding system, to which, almost entirely, the rapid depreciation of money is to be attributed. But, has the number of voters actually increased in consequence of the depre-

ciation of money? I do not ask whether it has increased since the reign of Henry VI.; I do not ask whether it has increased at Old Sarum and many other boroughs that could be named; I do not mean to ask, whether, relatively considered, the number of voters have not greatly decreased, taking as the points of comparison, the reigns of Henry VI. and of George III.; I ask only, whether the number, not of *voters* neither, but of *freeholders* merely, has actually increased since the rapid depreciation of money began; that is to say, since the commencement of the funding system? I am fully persuaded that it has greatly decreased; for, though, on the one hand, a piece of ground or a house, that was formerly worth less than forty shillings a year, is now worth forty shillings a year, and, of course, entitles the owner to vote now though it did not formerly give him such title; yet, on the other hand, how many hundreds and thousands of small freeholds have been swallowed up by the immense fortunes amassed through the very same means which have occasioned the depreciation of money! The taxing and funding, or, in other words, the *paper* system, has, and from its very nature it must have, drawn the real property of the nation into fewer hands; it has made land and agriculture objects of speculation; it has, in every part of the kingdom, moulded many farms into one; it has almost entirely extinguished the race of small farms; from one end of England to the other, the houses which formerly contained little farms and their happy families, are now seen sinking into ruins, all the windows except one or two stopped up, leaving just light enough for some labourer, whose father was, perhaps, the small farmer, to look back upon his half-naked and half-famished children, while, from his door, he surveys all around him the land teeming with the means of luxury to his opulent and overgrown master. Is this not so? Will any man say that it is not? Will any man say that the picture is over-charged? And will Mr. Tierney, while he must see that the number of parish paupers has been nearly doubled in the last twenty years; while he must see that we are daily advancing to that state in which there are but two classes of men, *masters* and *abject dependants*; while he must see this, does he yet represent the number of freeholders as having been increased by these causes; and does he, indeed, hold a doctrine evidently tending to justify a virtual disfranchisement of a considerable part of those that still exercise the right of voting for members of parliament?

When Mr. Tierney touched upon the depreciation of money, as affecting the civil or political rights of the people, he was, as we shall, I think, easily convince him, touching a cord, which, for harmony's sake, might as well have remained untouched; and, as this conviction may possibly tend to render him more cautious for the future, it may not be amiss to endeavour to produce it. Numerous are the ways, in which the depreciation of money, especially when viewed in conjunction with the other effects of the taxing and funding system, have abridged the privileges, the immunities, and the liberties of the people; but, at present, I shall, for the sake as well of brevity as of clearness, confine myself to one. In order to prove to us, that the depreciation of money had worked in favour of the lower classes of the people, a material change, and had caused, in this respect, a material deviation from the spirit of the constitution of England; in order to prove this, Mr. Tierney went back to the reign of Henry VI. For proof of a most striking instance of the contrary, I will go back no farther than the reign of Henry VII. In the 11th year of



that reign was passed (chap. 12), the famous act of *Forma Pauperis*, and, under that law, the sum of qualification for demanding justice free of all cost was *five pounds*, which five pounds were equal to *fifty pounds*, at least, of the present day; and, therefore, in order to restore to the people of England the spirit of their ancient constitution, Mr. Tierney should propose, that the act of *Forma Pauperis* should now be so altered and amended as to give to every man, not worth fifty pounds, the benefit of this just, this wise, this fostering, this truly paternal statute; this most effectual means of protecting the little against the oppressions of the great, of preserving to the poor man the fruit of his labour, of giving him a fair chance for rising in the scale of political importance, and, above all things, of preventing him from falling into that degradation of mind, and that indifference as to the good and the renown of this country, which must ever be inseparable from a state of habitual dependence and perpetual dread of petty tyranny.

Of instances of this sort I could make a voluminous chapter; but, as this one may suffice to convince Mr. Tierney, that he has here touched upon a cord of more than one tone, it will, until a new necessity shall arise, be as well to spare the probably too far exhausted patience of the reader, and to hasten to a conclusion with a remark or two upon the objects, which, besides that of rendering the Treating Act no longer liable to misconstruction, Mr. Tierney appears to have in view. These objects, indeed, he stated; and, considering the admirable perspicuity of the statement, it would be a shame in me not to have clearly comprehended and remembered them. They were two: 1st, to prevent the bustle and noise and loss of labour arising from the conveying, at the charge of the candidate, non-resident voters to and from the place of polling; and, 2nd, to prevent the necessity of those enormous expenses of conveyance, which expenses now operate as an exclusion from the House of Commons, of men of moderate fortunes, who would otherwise, from the merited confidence acquired amongst their neighbours, be returned to parliament in preference to those persons that now are returned only because they have the money wherewith to defray those enormous expenses, while men of moderate fortunes have not.

As to the first of these objects, though I perfectly agree with him, that men travel in a manner much more orderly, more silent, more expeditious, perhaps, and less costly, when they travel at their own expense, than when they travel at the expense of another, I am by no means disposed to allow that this is an advantage, in the case of elections. An election ought to be a time of bustle and of noise (if noise it must be called); for, if we think the contrary, let us at once join in the cry of those pious and independent gentlemen, who so severely censured Sir Francis Burdett, for "*disturbing the peace* of the county of Middlesex;" and let us declare, that, as there will always be, while men are mortals, bustle and noise produced by drawing great numbers of them together, especially for the purpose of opposing one another; since such is the inevitable consequence of opposition at elections, let us, in the fulness of our hatred of bustle and of noise, frankly declare, that there ought never to be an opposition at elections; to which let us add, that, for the purpose of saving trouble to the electors, and of ensuring wisdom and public virtue in the elected, that the nomination shall always be in the minister of the day. That this savours a little of the absurd, I allow; but, I cannot help thinking, that it will be regarded as a fair and natural deduction.

With respect to the loss of labour; who, I would ask, is the object of Mr. Tierney's economical views; the elector himself, or the community? If the elector, let it be observed, that if, in losing labour, he loses money, he saves the labour itself; he spares himself all its exertions, its vexations, and its pains; and, though labour be necessary, both to his sustenance and his public morals, continual, never-ceasing labour is not, or, at least, it ought not to be. It is, I am aware, becoming, amongst some persons, a favourite maxim, that the handicraftman, the mechanic, and the ploughman, ought to pass six days in constant labour, and the seventh in thanksgiving for all the good they enjoy. As to the latter, disapproving, however, of any puritanical construction of the precept, it has my decided concurrence. But, as to the former; as to imposing the necessity of never-relaxing toil and care upon the lower classes of the people, in order, as the expression is, to keep them out of mischief, it is a maxim that never could have been engendered in any mind not by nature formed for the exercise of the worst of tyranny; whereunto may be added, that the acting upon such a maxim would not be less impolitic than unjust, the natural and inevitable consequence being, either that the lower classes of the people would become disaffected to the state, or would sink into total indifference as to its welfare and existence, and would, when the occasion served, contribute, by their activity on the one hand, or by their inertness on the other, to overthrow, instead of defending, that from the destruction of which they could not possibly apprehend any change for the worse. Besides, and to dismiss this point with a remark which seemed to have escaped the mind of Mr. Tierney, the loss of labour, whether a voter travel at his own expense or at that of another, must be nearly the same; the loss of labour must bear an exact proportion to the loss of votes; and, therefore, any hope of producing, in this way, good to the community from his proposed alteration of the law, must necessarily be founded upon a diminution to be produced in the number of voters, which, as a project for effecting "a parliamentary reform," has, it must be confessed, all the attractions that perfect novelty can give.

There remains to be considered, if the reader be not too weary to follow me, the other object professed by Mr. Tierney; and in this there is much plausibility; but, I think, a very little reflection will convince us, that this is the very highest merit, to which it has any pretensions. We have seen, that the necessary effect of the proposed law would be to diminish the number of voters; but, where is the ground for hoping that the salutary consequences of which Mr. Tierney speaks, would follow? Where is the ground for hoping, that, while the paper system lasts, the good character and good will which the man of moderate fortune acquires amongst his neighbours will, except in some particular case, operate so much in his favour as to enable him to oppose, with success, the effect of the riches of the loan-jobber, the contractor, or the nabob? It will not be disputed; indeed, Mr. Tierney allows, that the operation of his proposed law would prevent from voting many of those persons who now vote; and, I think it is evident, that, upon an average, more than one half of those who vote at present would no longer vote. What, then, is the immediate consequence? The close boroughs would, indeed, remain as they are; those boroughs where the right of voting is confined to a dozen of persons could experience no change from the proposed law; but, the open boroughs would experience a material change, and which change, in a degree exactly proportioned

to the effect of the proposed law, would bring the open boroughs down to the state of the two before-mentioned classes. In the counties, few, if any, of the small freeholders residing at more than six or seven miles from the place of election would vote; and thus, every county, large or small, would be reduced to a level with an open borough, and would, perhaps, poll a less number than a large open borough. That such would be the effects of the project cannot be denied; and, therefore, the only questions we have to ask of Mr. Tierney are these: Does he think, that the rendering of the open boroughs close boroughs, and the rendering of the counties open boroughs, would be likely to operate in favour of the object which he professes to have in view? Does he think, that lessening the number of the persons who are to decide an election will tend to ensure the independence of those persons? Does he think, that the money of loan-jobbers and contractors would not be as likely to operate upon a small number as upon a large number? Does he think, that, if the voters of a county were reduced to so small a number as to be worth their weight in gold, the gold would not be forthcoming? In fine, does he really mean to say, that the county-members are now less respectable and less connected with the people than the borough-members, and that the boroughs, in proportion to the smallness of their number of voters, are now represented by men of moderate fortunes, who have acquired their seats through the confidence excited by their good character amongst their neighbours? No: none of this does Mr. Tierney believe; yet, all of it he must believe, before he can seriously hope to effect his professed object by the means which he has proposed to employ.

That Mr. Tierney does wish to carry his project into effect, it were unandid to express a doubt; but, that he should really expect to be able to do it is quite incredible, especially when we consider what are the principles which have, for twenty-six years past, been held and openly avowed by more than one half of the persons who compose the present ministry. Let the Treating Act be rendered plain; let its liability to misconstruction be removed; let it be rendered as fair and as certain in its operation as the nature of the case will permit; but, let it not be so altered as to have a necessary tendency to diminish the number of voters, to render opposition at elections less frequent and less obstinate, and to put an end to all that bustle and agitation, which, in some instances, at least, elections still give rise to, and which are so favourable to the preserving, amongst the people, a recollection of those rights, for which their fathers so often and so nobly struggled.

Of what has been denominated *Parliamentary Reform*, I have always disapproved; because I never could perceive, in any one of the projects that were broached, the least prospect of producing a *real reform*. Of universal suffrage I have witnessed the effects too attentively and with too much disgust ever to think of it with approbation. That the people of property; I mean *all* persons having real property, should have some weight in the election of members of parliament I allow; but, even if this were provided for by law, the funding and taxing and paper system still continuing in existence to its present extent, I should be glad to hear the reasons, whence any one is sanguine enough to conclude, that the evil complained of by Mr. Tierney, the evil of leaving the making of laws in the hands of men of mere money, who have little or no connection with or feeling for the people; I should be glad to hear the reasons,

whence, the present money system continuing in full force, any man can conclude, that this evil, as to the magnitude of which I agree in opinion with Mr. Tierney, is to be gotten rid of. To me, it appears, that, while the present means of acquiring such immense fortunes, at the expense of the people, remain, there can be found out no effectual cure for this evil; and this is, I think, fully proved by the uniformity in the parliamentary irresistance from the time the funding system began to the present hour. Without laying much weight upon the theories of Montesquieu, De Lolme, Paley, and others, who have written in praise of the English constitution, we must allow, that the real protecting power of the House of Commons lies entirely in their being able to *refuse money*. There was a "pensioned parliament" in the reign of Charles II. But, in that reign, the most excellent of our modern statutes were passed; and, let it be remembered, too, that they were wrung from the throne solely by the power, the real and active and frequently-exercised power of refusing money; not little paltry sums for this public purpose or for that private job; but of refusing *supplies*, and thereby checking the will of the king and his ministers, and effectually controlling their measures, with regard to foreign as well as domestic affairs. Since the establishment of the funding system we have seen many just and virtuous measures originating in the House of Commons; we have seen kings thwarted and ministers turned out by that House: whether the main object of these struggles has generally been for public good, or party triumph; whether they have generally tended to the happiness and honour of the country, or merely to the emolument of the victors, are points that may admit of dispute; but, that no House of Commons, since the establishment of the funding system, has ever refused to grant supplies, however large and burdensome, and for whatever purpose wanted, is a fact which admits of no dispute; and, as to the present, we all know, that, when the minister now comes for money, the question for the consideration of the House of Commons, is not, in fact, whether it shall, or shall not, be raised upon the people, but, simply, in *what manner* it shall be raised. Viewing the House of Commons, therefore, as "the guardians of the property of the people," as Mr. Pitt, in his better days, described them; and not as assembled merely to discuss, or rather, to sanction executive measures, I cannot, with the above facts before my eyes, perceive any ground for hoping that any practical good would, while the funding system exists in its present extent, result from the adoption of any of those projects, which have professed to have in view what is called *Parliamentary Reform*; to which I must add, that, in my opinion, every such project would be found utterly impracticable; that it would, at once, drop lifeless from the hands of the projector, or, which is infinitely worse, would disseminate the seeds of a convulsion, to be freed from the numerous torments and horrors of which, the people would gladly resort to the at once protecting and deadly shield of a military despot. When the funding system, from whatever cause, shall cease to operate upon civil and political liberty, there will be no need of projects for parliamentary reform. The parliament will, as far as shall be necessary, then reform itself; and, until then, no attempt at alteration in this respect, should, in my opinion, and for the reasons I have above-stated, be made, either in or out of the Houses of Parliament. —For the length of these observations I have no other apology to offer than my persuasion of the vast importance of the subject; and, if

my arguments should be regarded as imperfect, or my opinions as erroneous, my mind is, I trust, open to conviction, or, at any rate, my pages are open to those who may think it worth their while to produce conviction in the minds of my readers.

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## HONOURS TO MR. PITT.\*

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“Prais'd, wept, and honour'd by the men he lov'd.”

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I HAVE before expressed my confident hope, that the intention of granting, by parliament, funeral honours to the memory of this gentleman, would be abandoned. I have been greatly disappointed; and, certain I am, that, at the proceeding, which I am now about to record, every honest and reflecting man in the country has felt, and still feels, mortification such as has seldom been experienced.

On Monday last, the 27th instant, Mr. HENRY LASCELLES, the same person who moved for the bill of indemnity for Mr. Pitt's conduct relative to the unwarranted and unauthorized loan of the public money to Boyd and Benfield, then two members of parliament; this person, on the day above-mentioned, made a motion, in the House of Commons, that the House should come to a resolution in the following words: “That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, that his Majesty will be graciously pleased to give directions, that the remains of the Right Honourable William Pitt be interred at the public charge; and that a monument be erected in the collegiate church of St. Peter, Westminster, to the memory of that excellent statesman, with an inscription expressive of the public sense of so great and irreparable a loss; and to assure his Majesty, that this House will make good the expenses attending the same.” This motion found a most suitable seconder in the Marquis of Titchfield, and as suitable an opponent in Lord Folkestone, who, at the close of a short speech, characteristic of modesty, of sound understanding, of political integrity, and of a high and paramount sense of public duty, declared, that, if any other gentlemen entertained and expressed an opinion similar to his own, he should certainly divide the House upon the question. Whereupon a debate of some hours ensued. The speakers for the motion were, Lord Louvaine, Mr. Isaac Hawkins Brown, Mr. Hiley Addington, Sir Robert Buxton, General Tarleton, Lord Temple, Mr. R. Ryder, Sir Robert Williams, Mr. Wilberforce, Lord Castlereagh, and *Old George Rose!* The speakers against it were, Mr. William Smith (not a relation of Lord Carrington), Mr. Pytches, The Marquis of Douglas, Mr. Windham, Mr. G. Ponsonby, and Mr. Fox.

The speech of the Marquis of Douglas was distinguished by every thing, which such an occasion was calculated to draw forth, worthy of an intelligent, a just, and a gallant nobleman, feeling as he ought for the distressed and disgraced situation of his country. And, indeed, it is

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\* Mr. Pitt, then Prime-Minister, died on the 23rd January, 1806, aged 49 years.  
—ED.

not unpleasant to observe, that there are, besides the two young noblemen whose exemplary conduct is here particularly mentioned, many young men, either in parliament or having obvious and legitimate pretensions to enter it, who have discovered a degree of talent, of spirit, and of application to public affairs, which, while they reflect great honour on their possessors, form a ground for national hope and confidence. For my own part, it is with a degree of satisfaction that I should in vain endeavour to express, that I view this race of young men, who stand upon their own fortunes and who act upon their own opinions, succeeding over and treading down, never again to rise, the penny-less, place-hunting, crawling, toad-eating crew of "young friends," whose greediness has so long been sucking the blood, and whose impertinence and upstart assurance have so long been insulting the understanding and the feelings of the people. This change, which has been gradually and imperceptibly taking place, and which has been produced by the striking events of the six last years, and by the unveiling of the at once odious imbecile Pitt system of government, is one which ought to be, and that will certainly become, a subject of general congratulation. To the young noblemen and gentlemen whom I am alluding to, no advice can be necessary: but, if any were, it would be, that they should persevere in their present course; that they should continue to inquire, to read, to devote their time to public affairs; to form their opinions upon the result of their own researches, to act upon those opinions, and not to become the blind instruments of any leader, whether in or out of office; to give their disinterested support, upon a great and general principle, to that set of men whom they regard as the most wise, the most able to serve their country, and the most disposed to exert their powers for its good; but, in doing this, to take special care, so to act as to convince the people, that there is no resemblance between the support which they give and that which was derived from the "young friends," who were the supple slaves, the mere mouth-pieces, of a leader and a master, and whose pens and tongues were always at his command, whether for the purpose of fulsome eulogium on himself, or for that of calumny on his opponents.

In returning to the debate, the first thing we have to notice, is, that the division produced 258 for the resolution and 89 against it. Many persons kept away, who would not have voted for it; others, from family considerations, gave it their support; but, after all, it was carried by much less than one half of the House, and, with some few exceptions, by the very same persons who voted with Mr. Pitt in favour of Lord Melville on the memorable 8th of April last, when, by virtue of the casting vote of the Speaker, that Lord was declared to be guilty of a gross violation of the law and a high breach of duty. This was perfectly consistent on their part; it was as it should be; it was fitting that funeral honours to William Pitt should be decreed by those who had supported him upon that occasion, and who, afterwards, enabled him to remove the intended trial from the Court of King's Bench to the House of Lords. But (lest the honourable circumstance be not engraven upon the monument) it is also fitting that it should be recorded somewhere, that, if the monument should be erected and should remain many years erect, some, at least, of our children may be acquainted with its history.

The resolution, it is to be observed, is copied from that which was passed in the case of LORD CHATHAM; that Lord Chatham, who "never

dared look at the Treasury but from a distance;" that Lord Chatham who scorned all petty and dirty intrigues; that Lord Chatham who declared his hatred, and who stemmed the pernicious influence of "the blood-sucker and muck-worm that calls itself the friend of government, that advances money to the government, but that takes special care of its own emoluments;" that Lord Chatham who was the sworn, the steady foe of corruption, and the terror of all corrupt men, whether walking on foot or drawn in a coach with six horses; that Lord Chatham, who rested, for support, upon the wisdom, the justice and the efficacy of his measures, who disdained the aid of jobbers and contractors, and who, when he could no longer keep his place and his power without submission to the low intriguers of the court, resigned it without looking back, without any banking, without any juggling project for the purpose of keeping open a way to his return; that Lord Chatham who preserved undiminished the liberties, who extended the dominions and the power of England, and upon whose tomb it was recorded, that he had reduced the power of France. This is the statesman, the parliamentary resolution for doing honour to whose memory has now been copied and passed for doing honour to the memory of Mr. Pitt!

Mr. Windham and Mr. Fox argued, and most satisfactorily, against the resolution, upon general principles, expressly denying, however, that the deceased was an "excellent statesman," and, of course, denying that his loss was "irreparable" to the nation. But, they admitted much which I am not disposed to admit, and which I am certain the people of England will deny. As to Mr. Pitt's being an excellent statesman, no man dare attempt to maintain the position by argument. The view, short as it was, the mere outline of a view, which the Marquis of Douglas took of the subject, was quite enough to convince his opponents, that they had no resource but in *assertion*. Indeed, the bare facts, well known to every man of common sense; a mere look at the situation of the country, especially when that of France meets the eye at the same time, is more than sufficient to silence any one but a mere creature of the Pitt system, any one who has not fattened upon that system, any one who does not hope still to gorge upon its continuance, or its revival.

To describe the particular measures of this minister; to show the nature and the consequences of them and also the motives whence they arose; to trace him, in the use of his power, from the time when he first scaled the walls of the cabinet to that when he saw France the absolute mistress of Europe and the hourly threatener of England; to put upon record all the deeds of this man, in his public capacity, all his conduct whether with regard to the throne, the parliament, the church, his opponents, his colleagues, or the people, is a task, not to be performed in a short space, either of time or of paper; but, it is one which I look upon it as my duty to perform, and which duty, if I have life and health, I assuredly will not neglect, nor delay, nor listlessly discharge, being sincerely persuaded, that such neglect would be a desertion of principle, that it would be treachery to those, however few they may be, amongst the people who have contracted a respect for my opinions and a reliance upon my statements, and that, supposing my influence to be confined under my own roof, it would be there to leave falsehood and evil example to work their malignant effects, and eventually to corrupt and debase those minds, in which, as it is my first of duties, so it is my first of wishes, to implant an immoveable attachment to the good, the

liberties, and the renown of their country. It is not amongst ministers only that exists the desire of being thought and spoken well of after their decease. I, too, should wish it; and though I cannot hope to be heard of beyond the circle of my family, there, at least, it shall never be said, that this monument was erected without my protest. If I live to see it erected, I will take my children to its foot, one at a time, as they become able to comprehend and to remember, and there will I count them the history of the intrigues, the disasters, and the disgrace of the Pitt administration, not forgetting the part which therein was borne by Lord Melville. The power of these men, from its dawn to its extinguishment, will I trace; all their deeds will I describe; shun this, will I say, my sons, as you would shun the curse of your father.

But, though I am necessarily unable to enter upon a history of the Pitt measures and intrigues, at this time, I must not postpone some few observations upon a point or two, which has been touched upon in the course of the newspaper discussions (under various names and titles) upon the public character and conduct of Mr. Pitt.—And, first, our notice is attracted by an admission, said to have been made, with respect to the *great talents* of Mr. Pitt. But, of what *sort* were these talents? For, Kemble has great talents, and Cooke has great talents, in their way, and in his way, so had Katterfelto. Mr. Pitt never gave *proof* of any talents, except as a debater. He was a great debater; a person of wonderful readiness and dexterity in conducting a contest of words; a most accomplished, a truly incomparable *advocate*. But, that was *all*; and that, from the use which he made of it, was pernicious to his country. His eloquence was frothy; it was always unsubstantial; it very rarely produced conviction; but, its object was answered by the plausibility of it, which furnished the means of a justification, or rather which protected against an unbearable sense of shame, those who, from motives of self-interest, gave him their support. In all matters of state, rightly so denominated, he was conspicuous for nothing but the imbecility of his plans, and the fondness of his expectations, arising from that arrogance which had been born with him, and which had been nursed up by the flattery of the supple slaves, with whom he was, and loved to be, continually surrounded. In all his schemes, whether of war or of peace or of interior economy, you trace the shallow mind, which was no where more conspicuous than in his schemes of taxation and finance, which was so glaring in the pamphlet published under the name of Old Rose in 1799, and which has been so ably exposed in the work of Lord Lauderdale. Allusion is not made here to mere errors, errors into which a man of great talents might have fallen; but to proofs of sheer ignorance, arising, too, not from a deficiency in the knowledge of recorded facts; but from an evident want of that sort of mind which is necessary in a profound search after causes, and in the tracing of those causes to their natural effects. In point of talent, he was, in short, exactly what Mr. Grey once described him to be: "A man of showy, but of shallow, parts."

The newspapers have circulated, under the name of Old George Rose, a paragraph, which they call a speech in parliament, stating, in praise of Mr. Pitt, that he had *doubled* the commerce of the country. This statement is as false as any of those in the Treasury pamphlet of 1799, and that is saying quite enough of it. But, why did not the paragraph add, that this "excellent statesman" had *tripled* the number of tax-gatherers; that he had *tripled* ten-fold the bank-notes; that he had banished specie



out of the kingdom ; that he had more than doubled the number of parish paupers ; that he had effaced the Lilies and yielded the honour of the Flag ; and that, under his administration, the power of France had broken through all bounds, and had finally extended itself over every part of Europe ; Old George, or whoever else wrote this paragraph, appears to have forgotten, too, the very flourishing state of the pension and place list, which has been more than tripled by Mr. Pitt, in number of names as well as in amount of sums. Had he not quite forgotten this, he would, surely, have adverted to the vast increase of the last year ; the famous grant to the Duke of Athol ; and to the no less famous grants to Lord and Lady Melville. Paul Benfield : O, Paul ! you should have been here ! The thing will be incomplete, it will be botched, without you ! How hard ; how blind is fortune ! At the moment when funeral honours are decreeing for Mr. Pitt, Paul Benfield is begging his bread ! That great man, who, as Mr. Burke described him, was the very soul of the new system of "parliamentary reform," once sat, with no less than seven members at his back, voting for Mr. Pitt. And, shall he *now* be suffered to pine in want ? Shall he not have a single vote ? Shall he, merely because his speculations have failed ; merely because he has not succeeded ; merely because his efforts have proved abortive ; shall he, for this cause, be forbidden to share in the honours of the day ?

Upon the point of *purity*, too, I must be allowed to differ from Mr. Windham and Mr. Fox. I cannot shut my eyes to what has so recently passed before them. I cannot already forget the Tenth Report and its sequel. I cannot forget the want of recollection so conspicuous in the examination before the Select Committee. I cannot forget the loan made without interest to two members of parliament. I cannot forget the neglect to pay attention to the information of Mr. Raikes. I can efface from my memory none of these things ; and, while they remain there, never can I bring myself to act with so much injustice as to separate Mr. Pitt's conduct from that of Lord Melville ; Lord Melville, whom he excused, whom he defended, whom he justified, whom, to the last moment of the struggle, he protected, and whom, to the last moment of life, he cherished ; and, I must say, that I do, from the bottom of my soul, believe, that if Lord Melville were to die, his memory would have as fair and as just a claim to public honours as that of Mr. Pitt. In those, who, from the beginning to the end, defended Lord Melville, it is perfectly consistent to call for funeral honours for Mr. Pitt, or, at least, to contend for his purity ; but, if it was a gross violation of the law and a high breach of duty in Lord Melville to do what he did, how, in the name of truth and of reason, is the conduct of Mr. Pitt to be defended or palliated ? Lord Melville, by suffering the public money to be drawn from the Bank and lodged at Mr. Coutts's, violated the law ; but was not Mr. Pitt informed of the violation ? Did he not hear of it from a bank-director, and was not the report, even according to his own confession, confirmed by Lord Melville himself ? And did he take any measures to put a stop to it ? Nay, did he even desire, that the violation should cease ? He has confessed, that he did not. At another time we find him in an act of direct participation in the illegal application of the Naval Money. Not only did he wink at the drawing of 40,000*l.* of that money away from the Bank ; but, he himself took it and lent it to two members of the then parliament, taking care to communicate the matter to no one but his confidential secretary, and taking good care likewise that no minute, or record of any kind, should be made of the transaction. What difference,

therefore, is there in the conduct of the two men? And, yet, to the memory of the one we are granting all the honours due to the untarnished and meritorious dead, while we are pursuing the peace, the fortune and the fame of the other?

It has been stated, in some of the paragraphs to which I have alluded, that the loss of Mr. Pitt is a subject of regret amongst the people. This is an impudent and insulting falsehood. That he may be regretted by those who were looking up to his power for emoluments, or for *shelter*; by the numerous swarm of "blood-suckers and muck worms;" that his loss may be regretted, and deeply regretted, by these, I am far from meaning to deny; but, that he is regretted by the *people of England*, is a falsehood which, come whence it will, never shall pass uncontradicted by me. They do not regret his loss; so far from regarding his death as an "irreparable" loss, they regard it as no loss at all; they feel and they *express* satisfaction at it; their resentment has ceased; they retain little or no anger against him; it is in their nature easily to forgive; but, they look upon his death as the first dawn of their deliverance from an accumulation of danger and disgrace. They will be, as will be seen, very indifferent spectators, either of the funeral or the monument. They will be silent; and so they have been under the operation of all the other long train of measures proceeding from the same source; they will coldly submit, but a cold submission is not what, upon such an occasion, wise men would be content to secure.

One person is said to have talked against raking up the ashes of the dead, and we have been reminded, that, of the dead, we should speak *well*, or *not at all*. But, surely, this maxim applies to *voluntary* speaking of the dead, and not only voluntary, but *unnecessary* speaking of them; otherwise, away goes, at one sweep, all historical truth, and, with it, all the advantages therefrom derived, whether in politics or in morals. There is a time, however, for all things; and, just at this time, one could have wished to refrain from all mention of Mr. Pitt or of his actions. But, this forbearance has been rendered impossible, without a shameful abandonment of public duty. The movers for honours, for an act that, if passed unanimously, would have given a sanction to all his and all their measures. They it is who have raked up the ashes of the deceased. They have challenged all men who think like me to the contest. They have compelled us to protest against this indirect censure upon our opinions and our conduct. They are the unprovoked assailants; and they ought not to complain that we have recourse to the only means of defence left us by their ungenerous mode of proceeding. Ungenerous, too, it is, in the extreme, towards the deceased as well as towards us; for, the use they make of his memory, is, to bespeak an eulogium for themselves, though thereby they expose that memory to the natural effects of our sense of the injustice of such an eulogium. Allow that Mr. Pitt was an "excellent statesman," and you therein allow, that they were excellent colleagues; next grant that his loss is "irreparable," and you proclaim that unworthiness in yourselves which you before tacitly admitted, you having been, for the far greater part of your political lives, in direct opposition to his measures. This is the extent of their proposal; and, shall they complain that it is resisted? Shall they silence us by their whining and their cant about the ashes of the deceased? Peace to those ashes, with all my heart! Profound peace to them, as far as historical truth will permit. But, let it be real peace; peace on both sides; let them not be raked up for the purposes of annoy-

ing us ; let them lie quiet ; let them not be thrown either in our eyes or our teeth ; for, if they are, we must, and we certainly shall, as in self-defence and in duty we are bound, throw them back again. Let him be wept by the Cannings and the Jenkinsons and the Huskissons and the Roses and the Melvilles : *they have, indeed, lost by his death ; to them the loss is truly " irreparable."* Let that race of creatures, whom the great Lord Chatham called " blood-suckers " and " muck-worms ;" let them weep ; their mourning is suitable, and sincere ; but, in their feelings *the people of England have no participation.* Let the City of London erect a monument to his memory, if they choose ; it will become both them and him. I should be sorry if they did not do it by an *unanimous* vote. I should exceedingly regret that their conduct, in this respect, was not clearly distinguished from that of the people of England, acting by their representatives in parliament. To be " praised, wept and honoured " by the swarm of contractors and jobbers is due to his memory. He loved them ; they were the part of the community that he selected for his own ; and that man must be unjust indeed who would wish to deprive his memory of the honour of their praise. But, let them not abuse us, because we do not partake in their feelings and their acts. Let not their newspapers slander the men, who, only about seven months ago, were called upon to grant him a bill of indemnity for misapplication of the public money, and who now refuse to acknowledge that he was an " excellent minister," and that his loss is " irreparable." So far from meriting censure for their *opposition* to the resolution, I am fully persuaded, that ninety-nine-hundredths of the people, could they be polled upon the question, would declare that Mr. Fox and Mr. Windham went much too far in the way of *acquiescence* : much farther than strict justice warranted ; much farther, I think, than can be fully justified ; or, indeed, justified at all, upon any other plea than that of magnanimity, they having, for so long a time, and to the day of his death, been his political opponents and his rivals for power. Too far they certainly went ; much too far they stretched their magnanimity, in their expressed acquiescence in the proposition for the *payment of his debts* by the public ; for, to say nothing, just at present (though I certainly shall, hereafter) about his *disinterestedness*, what a dangerous precedent is here ! To admit, that, though a minister does not merit the honours of the tomb, the public ought to pay his debts. This principle once established, there is no bounds to the extent of its operation. A minister has only to contract debts : he has only to owe, or acknowledge, debts. And, I should like to hear the argument, by which it is to be shown, that the creditors of one subject of the King are to be secured by parliament more than those of another subject of the King. If such a resolution pass, who, henceforth, will scruple to trust a minister ? What minister need ever, henceforth, want money ? Mr. Pitt brought no fortune to lose in the public service : he did not, like the old Duke of Newcastle, waste a princely estate in supporting the dignity of office : and why should his debts be paid by the public, by that public who was never called upon for a penny to restore the estate of the truly noble statesman here mentioned ? Every view of this subject presents an obstacle to the adoption of the proposed resolution ; it will not be just ; it will not indicate a due regard to the interests and the laudable feelings of the people ; and it will be a precedent productive of insidious comparisons, and of other most extensively dangerous consequences.

## TO THE ELECTORS OF HONITON.

### LETTER I.

NOTE BY THE EDITORS.—In June, 1806, Mr. BRADSHAW, member for Honiton, having vacated his seat by accepting the office of Teller of the Irish Exchequer, a new writ was issued, and an election ensued. Mr. COBBETT had been writing for some time against Mr. PITT's system of Government; but he had now formed the opinion that a reform of abuses, and, in order to obtain that, of the Parliament itself, was necessary. He accordingly addressed two letters to the Electors of Honiton, one of the rottenest of the rotten boroughs of Devonshire, and resolved to offer himself as a candidate. The late COLONEL BOSVILLE, who was a leading man amongst the early Parliamentary Reformers, but who had not till then been acquainted with Mr. COBBETT, offered to carry him and his friends down into Devonshire in his carriage. The offer was accepted, and thus the affair became one of pleasure, mixed with a faint hope of doing something towards calling the public mind to the subject of the flagrant corruptions of the then House of Commons. Mr. Bradshaw was, of course, returned, but not without some annoyance.

“The dangers principally to be apprehended from regal government, relate to the two articles, *taxation* and *punishment*. In every form of government, from which *the people* are excluded, it is the interest of the governors to get as much as they can. Wisely, therefore, hath the British constitution guarded the safety of the people, in this respect; for, every law, which, by the remotest construction, may be deemed to levy money upon the property of the subject, must originate, that is, must be first assented to, in the House of Commons; and the application also of the public supplies, is watched with the same circumspection as the assessment, many taxes being annual, the produce of others appropriated to specific services, and *the expenditure of all of them being accounted for in the House of Commons*.”—PALEY: Moral and Political Philosophy; book vi. chap. vii.

GENTLEMEN,—Upon the principle that example is more powerful than precept, and that, to the producing of virtuous actions nothing is more conducive than the bestowing of just praise on those who have virtuously acted, it was, perhaps, my duty, in common with that of other public writers, to have, before now, recorded, commended, and honoured, your discernment and public spirit, as exemplified in your choice of Mr. ROBSON as a member in the pre-ent parliament, and in the truly disinterested and constitutional manner in which that choice was made. But, Gentlemen, an opportunity now offers for our discharging this duty in a manner which will compensate for the delay; because our eulogium upon your conduct now comes forth accompanied with proofs the most satisfactory of its beneficial effects.

Having witnessed the enormous abuses lately, by inquiry, brought to light, with regard to the expenditure of the public money, and having traced that inquiry back to the repeated, though then unsupported, exertions of Mr. ROBSON; having perceived, that, but too many of those persons, into whose hands devolved the finishing of what he so well began, were actuated by motives very different from his; having seen, that those persons were ready to accede to, nay, themselves to propose, a bill of indemnity for Mr. Pitt, who himself had connived at a gross violation of the law, in lending 40,000*l.* of the public money, without interest, to two

members of the then parliament; and, finally, having seen these very same persons, these pursuers of abuses under the administration of Mr. Pitt, propose to vote away, and actually vote away, 40,000*l.* of the public money to pay the debts of that Mr. Pitt, and that, too, upon the ground, as by them explicitly stated, of his "public merits:" having all this before your eyes, you naturally looked back to Mr. ROBSON, the man with whom the inquiry originated, and who had had no participation in the compromises, the inconsistencies, and the abandonment of principle exhibited in the subsequent proceedings thereon. You saw, in Mr. ROBSON, no sycophant, either of the court or the populace; no seeker for place, either by cringing at a levee or by hollow professions to the people; you saw, in him, no warrior against the Treasury Bench, no stickler against the free use of the King's prerogative in appointing his servants, but a determined enemy of corruption and of all abuses, through those servants committed, and, provided these were prevented, caring very little who those servants might be; in short, you saw, in Mr. ROBSON, a plain, honest, and independent man, wanting nothing from the public, either for himself or his relations, having the good of his country warmly at heart, and having industry and resolution sufficient to bring his wishes into action. Such were the reasons for which you chose him to be your representative in parliament; and, it is the bounden duty of all those of your fellow-subjects, who have the means in their hands, to acknowledge to you publicly, and to proclaim to the world, that experience has already proved, that your reasons were well-founded, that you have not been deceived, and that, in the effect as well as in the motive, you have a just claim to the praise and the gratitude of your country.

It is, Gentlemen, but a few weeks, since, as the consequence of your choice, as the consequence of your unshackled and constitutional exercise of that right, so valuable in itself, and once so dear and so much revered by Englishmen, that Mr. ROBSON was returned to the House of Commons; yet, as will appear from the report of a debate and proceeding which I propose here to lay before you, he has already done more than any member of this present parliament towards the correction of those abuses in the expenditure of the public money, which are now, by all men, except the mere slaves of corruption, acknowledged to exist, and which, there is no one to deny, do greatly contribute to the weight of those burdens that are weighing us to the earth. But, before we proceed to the particular subject thus placed before us, and even before we come to a statement of the circumstances which led to the proceeding in question, it is not unnecessary that we advert, for a moment, to the doctrine of the constitution, as touching the powers and duties of members of the House of Commons. The celebrated writer, from whom I have taken the motto to this paper, represents the *power of the purse* as the sole security for the liberties, properties, and the lives of the people; and, if this was always so, how much more necessary is it to cling to the doctrine now, when there is a regular army of 200,000 men in these kingdoms, about 30,000 of whom are *foreigners*? But, Gentlemen, *what* is this "power of the purse," and what is the use of talking about it; what is its use to you and me; how can we possibly derive any benefit from it, unless our representatives, I mean, *any one of them*, can bring before parliament proof, if it exist, of frauds in the *expenditure* of the public money? The House of Commons, PALEY tells us, is to *watch over* the expenditure of the public money; and this is the language of all those who have praised

our constitution of government. They tell us, that we *tax ourselves*, and that we ourselves have a *check and control over the expenditure*; and this they explain by saying, that we choose members of the House of Commons to *act for us*, and that whatever *they* do is done by *us*. Well, then, Gentlemen, have not our representatives the right of inquiring *how* the money has been expended? And, how is such an inquiry ever to *begin*, unless some *one* man begins it? And, can you possibly conceive any good reason for checking any inquiry into the expenditure of the public money, from whatever quarter the first motion for such inquiry may come?

Now, Gentlemen, previously to my submitting to you the report of the proceeding, in which Mr. ROBSON has taken so considerable and so useful a part, and which, as you will see, related to the wasteful expenditure in the BARRACK-DEPARTMENT, it will be necessary to state to you, with somewhat more precision than they may as yet have reached you, the circumstances which led to it.

The disclosures, with regard to Lord Melville, gave rise to public observation respecting the abuses in other departments; and, it was proposed, by the then *Opposition*, who are now *ministers*, to move for the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the MILITARY BRANCH in general. Mr. Pitt, the then minister (whose debts, observe, we have since paid!), thought it would be better for *himself* to have the appointment of this Commission; and, accordingly, he brought in a bill for the purpose, and, in the month of June last, five men, picked out by himself and OTHERS, were appointed by law. To work this Commission went, beginning with the Barrack-department, and not, as one might have expected, with that of the office of COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, that being, certainly, the head department belonging to the army; but, upon reference to the act, I find, that that particular office, was, for some reason or other (a very sufficient one, no doubt), not included; so that, *there*, even these Commissioners, have no power of inquiry at all. But, at any rate, upon the Barrack-department they began; and, in the space of *nine months*, the *seven Commissioners and their clerks*, produced to the House of Commons their first report, contained in *111 pages of loose print*, being, in the whole, about three times as much print as is contained in this letter, which, on this 22nd of May, I am writing to you, and which must be finished and printed by to-morrow night at 12 o'clock! And, Gentlemen, what is the subject-matter of the report? Is it a statement in *result*? No: it consists of the evidence taken down, as well as of the observations thereon; and, it relates to *one single little point* in the affairs of the Barrack-office, namely, the arrears due from the Barrack-master-general to the public; as to which arrears I will, begging leave to digress for the purpose, give you a brief account. The report, thus made to the House of Commons, states, that DE LANCEY, the Barrackmaster-General, by the means of *incorrect* statements, had drawn from the Treasury large sums which he ought not to have drawn; that GREENWOOD, an army agent, who was the Treasurer to the Barrack-Office, and who was also the private agent of De Lancy, did, in the years 1803 and 1804, transfer 11,096*l.* of the money drawn for the Barrack-Office, to De Lancy's *private* account, instead of applying it to meet demands upon the Barrack-Office; and that, upon the whole of his account, DELANCY stood indebted to the public (to say nothing of the large sum for *interest*) to the amount of 97,415*l.* This report, which had cost nine months in making out, Mr.

Robson had seen lie nearly two months longer upon the table of the House of Commons unnoticed by the ministers, when he obtained information relative to some flagrant abuses and speculation in the Barrack-Department in the Isle of Wight; and, upon obtaining this information, he, on the 16th instant, came into his place in the House, where, like an honest representative of the people, he moved for the production of the papers, which, in the following report of the debate of that day, you will find accurately described:

“ Mr. ROBSON rose to bring forward his promised motion for the production of certain documents relative to the Department of Barracks, with a view to institute an inquiry into certain gross abuses in that Department, through the wasteful expenditure of the public money. He said it was now four years since he had ventured to obtrude himself upon the attention of the House, by some observations, and a motion, on the very subject which it was now his purpose to offer to their consideration; namely, the scandalous abuses then existing in the Barrack Department; and he, on that occasion, warned the House of the enormity of those abuses, upon which he had not the good fortune of being able to institute, at that time, any inquiry; but which now were palpably proved to have existed to the full extent which he then asserted, by the Report of the Military Commissioners now in his hand, and which for some weeks had lain, most unaccountably, unnoticed upon their table: and he now ventured to say, that had his advice been then taken, many millions of the public money would have been saved, and no occasion would have existed for laying such a Report before Parliament. It was now some years since the House had been in the habit of voting large sums of money for the erection of Barracks in various parts of the kingdom; but those votes had, of late years, increased to an enormous extent. Last year it was 2,300,000*l.* and for the present year it was 1,700,000*l.* Having upon a former occasion, attempted in vain to induce the House to go into some investigation, finding his former opinions justified by the Report now before the House, and desirous once more to bring forward the subject to the notice of Parliament, it was natural for him to look a little into the cause why this expenditure had so increased, and the more so after he had heard the plea of necessity which the ministers had set up as a reason for the heavy taxes they had recently imposed upon the people. He felt it incumbent upon him, now that the reins of government had passed into the hands of other ministers, who, he sincerely trusted, would offer no impediment to fair inquiry, to ascertain, if possible, what became of those enormous sums so voted. At present it was his intention to move for the production of certain papers relative to the Barrack Department, for the purpose of investigating some very recent transactions. Without entering into any detail on the subject in the present instance, he should proceed to name the papers for which he intended to move. They were short, and their production would neither be troublesome nor expensive, the first of which, and he would now move for it, was ‘ A List of the several Barns rented by Government and used as Barracks, in the Division of Sandown Bay, in the Isle of Wight; specifying the time when first taken, and also the weekly or annual rent thereon paid, respectively, from the time of their being so taken up to the 25th Dec. 1805, inclusive.’—Mr. MARTIN seconded the motion.—Lord HENRY PERRY said, that if the hon. gent. had done him the honour to

“ make the slightest communication to him of his wishes or intentions  
 “ upon the subject, he believed he should have been able to have satisfied  
 “ the hon. gent. that his motion for papers and the purpose he had  
 “ avowed, were rendered unnecessary, by another arrangement which had  
 “ already taken place. As the hon. gent. had not thought proper so to  
 “ do, he would beg leave to say now, that, although he saw no objection  
 “ whatever to the production of the papers named in the hon. gent.’s  
 “ motion, yet, at the same time, as the House had already appointed  
 “ Commissioners, for the very purpose of the investigation avowed by the  
 “ hon. member as his object, and had delegated to them its authority to  
 “ inquire, with the utmost minuteness, concerning every expenditure in  
 “ the Barrack, as well as other Military Departments; which Commis-  
 “ sioners were proceeding with all the expedition in their power, consist-  
 “ ently with the nature of the subjects referred to their examination; he  
 “ would put it to the good sense of the hon. gent. whether it would not  
 “ be much more orderly and consistent with the regular proceedings of  
 “ parliament, first, to await the Report of those Commissioners, or to  
 “ communicate to them any information that could aid or accelerate their  
 “ inquiry, before he proceeded to call upon the House to institute another  
 “ inquiry, to proceed at the same time, and upon the very same subject.  
 “ He would submit to the hon. gent. whether it was a proper, whether it  
 “ was a discreet procedure, while a Parliamentary Commission was occu-  
 “ pied in this very inquiry, to supersede the authority delegated to them,  
 “ without any alleged ground of imputation upon their proceedings, and  
 “ to move for another inquiry upon the same topic. If, indeed, when  
 “ they should make their Report, the hon. member should find any just  
 “ cause to complain of their negligence, or partiality, or unnecessary de-  
 “ lay, it would be competent to him to call upon the House for the in-  
 “ quiry now proposed; but until such an occasion should occur, he hardly  
 “ could conceive the House would be disposed to comply with the hon.  
 “ gent.’s wishes for such an inquiry.—Mr. ROASON rose and said: If,  
 “ Sir, my eyes did not convince me to the contrary, I should have con-  
 “ ceived that it was the ghost of the late minister I have just heard.  
 “ What the noble lord has just said is, word for word, the objection made  
 “ by the minister four years ago, to a motion which I then made for in-  
 “ quiry upon the same subject, and I have brought down with me the  
 “ Parliamentary Register to prove the fact. But, notwithstanding the  
 “ disappointment I feel at such an answer coming from the noble lord, as  
 “ one of his Majesty’s present ministers, I shall persist, aye, inexorably  
 “ persist, with the leave of the House, in my determination of having this  
 “ business sifted to the very bottom. It cannot interfere with the Mili-  
 “ tary Commission. But, am I to be told, that the House of Commons  
 “ has, in any case, abandoned its inquisitorial authority, and delegated it  
 “ to any Board of Commissioners, so as to preclude itself from investiga-  
 “ tion upon any similar subject it may think necessary? The Military  
 “ Commissioners have now been sitting almost a year, and what have they  
 “ produced? Why, only one Report; and this Report, notwithstanding  
 “ the enormous, corrupt, and profligate waste of the public money which  
 “ it has exposed, has now lain nearly six weeks upon your table; and I  
 “ take shame to myself as a member of this House that it has laid there  
 “ so long unnoticed. As a member of parliament, I have a right to in-  
 “ quire, though a Commission is sitting. Don’t tell me, Sir, that a Com-  
 “ mission of Inquiry is sitting? Am I to be told, that the House of



“ Commons, apprized as it is of such an enormous profusion of the public money, is to delegate its privilege of inquiry to any Commissioners of Barracks, or Commissioners of Accounts, or Commissioners of any sort, military or civil; and then wait a year or two until those Commissioners shall think proper to report their opinions? I can admit of no such argument. What do I sit in this House for, but as a guardian of the public purse? What is the duty of the House of Commons, but to watch over and control the public expenditure? Am I then, as a member of parliament, to be denied the right of calling for papers, to inform myself, and the House, upon the subject of public expenditure, in order to institute inquiry, if necessary? I never will listen to such an argument, as that parliament is bound to wait, year after year, the slow progress of a board of Commission, before it can proceed to the prompt steps necessary on the discovery of any prominent or enormous instance of profusion or peculation. What appears by this Report? Why, that 184 unsettled accounts were then before the Commissioners, not yet entered upon. Let not this House be told, then, that this subject is already before Commissioners of inquiry, who may sit year after year, before the result of their inquiries is known, while the House is, in the mean time, called upon to vote, year after year, new and enormous supplies, without inquiring how the past has been expended. The House, without the grossest dereliction of its duty, cannot any longer persevere in such a mode of proceeding. How long, I would ask the noble lord, has this account of the Barrack Department been bandied about from one office to another for investigation, without effect? First, it was sent to the Treasury; from thence it was referred to the Auditor of Public Accounts; then it was sent to the Secretary at War: and, at last, the system blew itself up, and corruption and venality had wrought their own reform. But the fact not to be denied, is, as I stated *four* years ago, that the expenditure in the Barrack Department has grown to an enormous amount. Why, I ask, has not parliament done its duty and prevented the progress in time? The purpose I have in view, is to examine the old accounts, in order to prevent similar profusion from occurring in future. I wish also to procure the protection and justice of parliament for many of those persons who have had the misfortune to give credit to a considerable amount to the Barrack Department, whose accounts now remain *ten* years unsettled, and whose families may be driven to ruin and beggary while they are waiting the tardy investigation of the Military Commissioners. I do not mean to charge any individual with a criminal misapplication of the public money. I am only desirous to do justice, and to ascertain where the fault lay; and I believe the Barrack Master General will turn out to be a very ill-used man, in the delay of settling his accounts.— Lord H. PERRY appealed to the House, whether government could be said to have lost any time in proceeding on the suggestions of the Report of the Military Commissioners. He had himself made a distinct statement to the house on the subject of that Report. He did not deny the right of members of parliament to interfere with the inquiry delegated to the Commissioners. He only appealed to the hon. gent.’s discretion, an appeal of which, after what he had just heard, he should be inclined to doubt the success.—Mr. BASTARD recommended to the hon. gent. to substitute the word ‘Buildings’ instead of ‘Barns,’ and to make the motion general.—Mr. ROBSON thanked the hon.

" gent. but would defer that till another day —The question was then  
 " put upon the first motion and agreed to. The hon. gent. then moved,  
 " for a ' Copy of a Letter to the late Secretary at War, dated 29th Dec.  
 " ' 1805, from the then Barrack-Master of Sandown Bay division, en-  
 " ' closing Proposals on the part of Mr. James Day of Brading, for the  
 " ' building of a Barrack at Brading.'—Mr. PERCEVAL wished the hon.  
 " gent. would explain to the House what was the object of his motion,  
 " and the nature of the letter.—Mr. ROBSON observed, that he was  
 " prepared to give an answer, but he thought he was entitled to the  
 " papers upon the grounds he had already stated. He observed, that  
 " there seemed a disposition to resist him in every step he advanced upon  
 " the subject, instead of thanking him for his endeavours to expose to the  
 " House a system of delinquency in the public expenditure. His object  
 " in moving for this paper, the contents of which he already knew, was  
 " to produce what the learned gent. would call legal evidence.—The  
 " SPEAKER having looked at the written copy of the motion, wished to  
 " know whether the letter alluded to, was a letter *to* or *from* the Secre-  
 " tary at War.—Mr. ROBSON, *From*, Sir, if you please.—The  
 " SPEAKER. The hon. member having in his verbal motion spoken of the  
 " letter which is the subject of it, as being a letter *from* the Secretary at  
 " War, and the written motion being for a letter *to* the Secretary at War,  
 " the object of my question is to know which the hon. member meant.  
 " —Mr. ROBSON. *To*, Sir, if you please; as it is written in the paper  
 " now in your hand. (*A laugh*).—Mr. PAULL said, he was confident  
 " that if his hon. friend had not felt himself perfectly acquainted with the  
 " business he had undertaken and the objects of the motion he had of-  
 " fered, he would not have moved them. His hon. friend had moved for  
 " papers upon a subject of grave and serious importance, no less than a  
 " gross and corrupt profusion of the public money, to which it was at all  
 " times the duty of that House to attend; and he thought his hon. friend  
 " had experienced a levity of treatment ill comporting with the gravity of  
 " the House, or the respect due to one of its members.—Lord H. PERRY  
 " was not aware that there was any ground for the charge of levity, when  
 " the House had discovered every disposition to grant the information  
 " required. He trusted the House would act always with becoming gra-  
 " vity, and that when the papers granted for its information were pro-  
 " duced, it would not countenance any proceeding upon them derogatory  
 " to the Commission it had appointed.—Mr. ROSZ did not think it decent  
 " or becoming to charge the House with levity. He was surprised that  
 " the hon. gent. who made the motion should refuse to explain to the  
 " House what was the object of it. He was entirely of opinion with the  
 " noble lord, as to the impropriety of instituting an inquiry in that House  
 " at the same time that Parliamentary Commissioners were employed in  
 " the investigation elsewhere, who had power to call for papers and to ex-  
 " amine witnesses on oath.—Mr. W. SMITH was convinced the hon.  
 " mover had too much pleasantry and good humour to feel hurt, if a smile  
 " was excited in the House by the uncertainty he had evinced on his own  
 " motion, as to whether the letter for which he moved was *to* or *from* the  
 " Secretary at War. He thought it more regular for the Commission to  
 " go on and do its functions, and afterwards for the hon. gent. to come  
 " forward with his motion, if he should then deem it necessary.—Mr.  
 " ROBSON explained, that the motion was written in the sense in which  
 " he wished to have it put, but the hand-writing not being the most

" legible, he had inadvertently read one word for the other.—Mr.  
 " HILEY ADDINGTON still pressed for an answer. Could the House, he  
 " asked, enter into the inquiry when there was a Parliamentary Commis-  
 " sion actually sitting?—Mr. ROBSON thought he had made out a strong  
 " case for inquiry. If the letter he had moved for had been attended to,  
 " there would have been an absolute saving of 100 per cent. to the pub-  
 " lic.—Mr. CALCRAFT thought there never was a case on which a mo-  
 " tion for the previous question could so properly be put. Unless sus-  
 " picions were entertained of the Commissioners, he did not see how the  
 " House could proceed further. It had delegated its authority for the  
 " present to those Commissioners, and till there was some ground made  
 " out, that they were not doing what was right, he thought it would be  
 " improper to interfere with their proceedings, and should therefore move  
 " the previous question.—Mr. BASTARD could not agree with the hon.  
 " gent. that inquiry in that House should stop, because inquiry happened  
 " to be going on elsewhere. He did not think that parliament, by dele-  
 " gating its power to a Commission, did thereby preclude itself from ad-  
 " verting to the subject if it thought proper.—Mr. ROBSON was sorry  
 " that the hon. gent. had not been in the House to move the previous  
 " question upon his first motion. By moving for the previous question  
 " the House would put itself in the situation of having ordered one paper,  
 " which was of no use, unless explained by those which there was now a  
 " disposition to refuse. To say, continued the hon. gent., that a commis-  
 " sioner is equal to a member of parliament is ridiculous. Are there not  
 " men in this House as good as any commissioners can be? All I ask  
 " for is two or three short letters which a clerk can copy out in half an  
 " hour. Give me but these, and I will take upon me to prove that there  
 " has been a corrupt and profligate profusion in a branch of our expen-  
 " diture which has cost the country 10 or 12 millions, and I pledge my  
 " character as a member of parliament to do it. What am I to think,  
 " Sir, when the Treasury Bench start up and move the previous question  
 " on such an occasion? I am resolved to take the sense of the House  
 " day after day, till I see that there is no intention to keep the public  
 " accounts *private*. And this at a time, Sir, when the people of England  
 " are loaded with new and intolerable burdens, and when every man is  
 " called on to shed the last drop of his blood, and to deliver up the last  
 " guinea from his bureau, for the defence of the country! Surely, upon  
 " cool reflection the hon. gent. (Mr. Calcraft) will withdraw his motion!  
 " —Mr. CALCRAFT said that nobody was more fond of inquiry than he  
 " was, and it was because an inquiry was actually going on, that he  
 " thought it proper to move the previous question. He advised the hon.  
 " gent. to give his papers to the Commissioners, who might make a Re-  
 " port upon them. Had he been in the House when the first question  
 " was put, he should certainly have moved the previous question upon it.  
 " —Lord HENRY PETTY said, he felt himself justified in supporting the  
 " previous question moved by his hon. friend, specifically on the grounds  
 " that the hon. gent. had not satisfied the House as to the nature of the  
 " papers for which he had moved. In supporting the previous question,  
 " however, he desired expressly to disclaim any wish of precluding inquiry,  
 " or any denial of the undoubted right of every member of that House to  
 " move for any papers he might think necessary. But the question of  
 " right was one thing, and the expediency of exercising that right in all  
 " cases, quite another: there might be many rights unquestionable in the

" possession of many men, but there were many cases in which it might  
 " be wise and expedient to dispense with the exercise of them. The present  
 " he conceived to be one of those cases : but by opposing the hon. mem-  
 " ber's wishes on this occasion, he by no means meant to preclude him  
 " from the fullest information he should feel it necessary to demand upon  
 " this subject at a future day, when those Commissioners should have  
 " finished their inquiry, to which, under the authority they possessed of  
 " examining evidence upon oath, they were more competent to accomplish  
 " than any inquiry that could be carried on by that House.—Mr. MAR-  
 " TIN said, he thought it his duty to stand up in defence of a gent. who,  
 " he was convinced, was desirous of doing good to the public, and who  
 " ought to be supported in his honest endeavours to do his duty, and was  
 " of opinion he had made out his case.—Mr. ROBSON asserted that  
 " there would have been a saving of 100 per cent. on the transaction, if  
 " the letter he moved for had been attended to. Surely, Sir, said the  
 " hon. gent. this case is clear enough ! My motion seems to cut upon  
 " both parties, the goers out and the comers in. The previous question  
 " is a thing that I hold cheap. In my motion *four* years ago respecting  
 " the 19*l.* 10*s.* business, when I wanted to see the Bill-book, I was met  
 " with the previous question. The motion on the 10th Report was also  
 " attempted to be done away by the previous question ; that famous Re-  
 " port which has excited the attention of all Europe, nay, I might say of  
 " all the world. My motion then did good, and this will also do good ;  
 " for ever since that time government acceptances have been regularly  
 " paid.—He then moved for a Copy of proposals transmitted by the  
 " Barrack-Master of the Sandown Division to the Secretary at War, on  
 " the part of Mr. James Day, of Brading, for the building of a Barrack  
 " at Brading.—Mr. ROSK thought it would have been much the better  
 " way, if the hon. gent. had stated to the Commissioners what had come  
 " to his knowledge about the business.—Mr. BOURNE agreed with the  
 " last speaker, and observed, that those Commissioners had greater  
 " powers in this respect than the House itself, as they could examine  
 " upon oath.—Mr. CALCRAFT said, that as all the objects could be ob-  
 " tained by the Commissioners, he should move the previous question on  
 " this motion also.—Mr. PAULL said, that his hon. friend had given  
 " sufficient grounds for his motion, by stating that a clerk could copy out  
 " in half an hour what would enable him to prove that gross frauds had  
 " been committed.—Mr. BASTARD said, as the hon. gent. had stated  
 " that 100 per cent. might be saved, he thought that a sufficient ground.  
 " He wished to know what security we had that the public would not  
 " continue to pay this sum, till the Commissioners had reported upon it.  
 " —Mr. HUSKISSON, as the hon. gent. had stated that the granting a  
 " few papers would enable him to prove such gross abuses, thought it  
 " would not be right to wait till the Commissioners might have leisure to  
 " inquire into the business.—Lord H. PERRY said, that as the hon.  
 " gent. had now assigned some reason for his motion, he should consent  
 " with the leave of his hon. friend (Mr. Calcrafft) that the previous ques-  
 " tion should be withdrawn.—Mr. HUSKISSON wished the hon. mover  
 " would state the object for which he moved for these papers.—Mr.  
 " ROBSON then confessed, that the shameful waste of money he com-  
 " plained of was not only in building the barracks, but in the rent of the  
 " barns, which might have been got for a quarter of the money.—Sir  
 " J. NEWPORT said, this was a quite different thing: the motion was about

" building barracks, while the meaning of the hon. gent. was about renting barns. He thought the hon. member should state what object he had in view, as the House could never get through their business, if every individual member might move for whatever papers he pleased, without assigning any reason, and if the House were to consider themselves always bound to grant papers when moved for.—Mr. W. SMITH suggested to the hon. mover, that he had better withdraw his motions for the present, and bring them forward in a more distinct form on an early day, suppose on Monday.—Mr. ROBSON refused, and said he should be content if his motion were put upon the Journals, as it would then be upon record that he, at least, had done his duty.—Mr. VANSITTART begged the hon. gent. would give the House some explanation why he wished for these papers? He might understand his own motions, but certainly he had not succeeded in making him understand them.—Mr. ROBSON said, he had already explained himself sufficiently; he would not submit to be examined and questioned as if he was a witness at the bar: as a member of parliament he thought it beneath his dignity to wait upon any set of Commissioners, standing in a hall, going up one staircase and down another in pursuit of them.—Lord H. PERRY thought, that if the hon. gent.'s sense of the dignity of a member of parliament would not allow him to answer a question put to him in that House, or to explain why he brought forward motions, the House would probably think it was agreeable to their dignity, as members of parliament, not to give any countenance to such motions. He should therefore again move the previous question.—Mr. W. SMITH took notice of what fell from the hon. mover, 'that he only wished to have his motions on the Journals.' This certainly was not a sufficient reason for the House agreeing to them. He thought the best way would be at once to move the previous question upon all the motions. The previous question was then agreed to upon this question.—Mr. ROBSON then moved for a 'Copy of the answer (if any) that was given, or communicated to Mr. James Day, in consequence of his making proposals to the Secretary at War, for the building of a barrack at Brading, in the Isle of Wight; and, if no answer was given, information to that effect.' Also, 'A List of the several Barns rented by Government and used as Barracks in the division of Sandown Bay, in the Isle of Wight, specifying the rent now weekly or annually paid for each Barn, and also specifying the precise time when any alteration (if any) in the rent of the said Barns took place.' Upon these the previous question was also put and carried.—Mr. ROSE expressed his regret that the business would make its way into the public prints."

Thus, Gentlemen, ended the debate. The first paper (a paper of no use without the rest) was ordered to be produced; but, all the others, all those that were necessary to bring the abuse to light, were, in effect, refused; and Mr. ROBSON stood represented, as far as the proceeding could so represent him, as a person who had brought forward an unfounded complaint. But, before we proceed to further remarks, let us attend to the sequel of this proceeding. When the "previous question" was moved by Mr. CALCRAFT (a person in the *Office of Ordnance*, observe), Mr. ROBSON, as you will have seen, reminded the ministers, that the proceedings upon the occasion of the 19*l.* 10*s.* bill of exchange had taught him to hold previous questions very cheap; and you will remember, that, upon

that occasion, after having been called upon to retract his words; after his words had been taken down; after he had been actually threatened with the *censure of the House*, unless he retracted and *begged pardon* of the House, he made good his charge, and reduced the minister (one of the *present* cabinet) to the necessity of acknowledging, that the charge was just, and of getting rid of inquiry by a "previous question." Of this, as you will have seen, Mr. ROBSON reminded the mover of the previous question, predicting, at the same time, that a similar fate would attend the present attempt to defeat his laudable purposes; and, accordingly, on Wednesday last, the 21st instant, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord HENRY PETTY, the very person who had stood at the head of the opposition against Mr. ROBSON's motion, came to the House, and himself moved for those very papers, which he had before represented as improper to be called for. But, let us take his words, as given in the *Morning Chronicle* newspaper of this day, the 22nd of May:—"Lord HENRY PETTY rose and observed, that before he proceeded to the statement of the business of which he had given notice, he trusted the House would indulge him with their attention for a few moments, while he said something respecting what had lately passed in the House concerning the Barrack Department. It would be in the collection of the House that when the honourable gentleman behind (Mr. Robson) brought forward some motions on that subject, one of them had been agreed to, while the previous question had been moved and carried with respect to the others. This, the House would recollect, had been done in the *absence of all explanation*, as to the object which the honourable gentleman had in view, that was intelligible to him, or, he believed, that could be intelligible to any person in the House. He had moved the previous question with a view to induce the honourable gentleman to *come forward with the necessary information*, and also with the intention, in case he should still refuse, to *examine into the business himself*, and find it out either with or without assistance. He now flattered himself that he had *discovered the object* of these motions. He found that they related to transactions which took place in 1805, respecting the barns hired as barracks in the division of Sandown Bay, in the Isle of Wight, which were *paid for at a very extravagant rate*, when a building for barracks was offered at a much more reasonable expense. He would, therefore, under these circumstances, move all the motions of the honourable gentleman, respecting which the previous question had been before carried, and also add a new motion, which would relate to the Barrack-Master, who, it appeared, had hired these barns at an extravagant rent, and *made an improper report with regard to the building offered as a barrack*. It was right that he should be called upon to explain his conduct with respect to this transaction. He concluded by moving for all the papers that Mr. ROBSON had before moved for, and the motion was *carried without a division*;" to which you, Gentlemen, will, doubtless, add the observation, that by a voice, equally unanimous, these identical motions had been *rejected* only four days before! Upon this motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. ROBSON observed "that when he had before made these motions, he had pledged himself to the House and to the country, as a member of parliament, to call their attention to an affair that highly deserved it. And now, after some days had elapsed, and the affair was in the mouth of every body,

“ the minister, who had before moved the previous question, came down “ to the House and moved for them himself;” but, as Mr. ROBSON further observed, some *apology* was, upon this occasion, necessary, if not to him, at least to the House. To which LORD HENRY PATTY replied, that, when the papers were before moved for, a sufficient notice had not been given, and that *no grounds* were laid for their production. Mr. ROBSON rejoined; “ that he had given notice on the *Tuesday* of the “ motion that he made on the following *Friday*; that, as to the grounds, “ he had very distinctly stated, that his object in calling the attention of “ the House to the subject, was, that *double the money* had been expended, in the case referred to, that ought to have been expended; “ and that” . . . . . but here he was CALLED TO ORDER by the Speaker, upon the ground, that he had spoken before in the debate!

In observing upon these proceedings, Gentlemen, the first thing that presents itself, is, the doctrine as to *notices* of motions; and, you will, doubtless, observe, that the giving of notices at all, upon any subject, is of quite modern invention; that it never was heard of until of late years; that, if the intentions of all parties were right and fair, there could be no one to desire any such thing; and, that if all the members of the House regularly attend in their places, as in duty they are bound, there can be no use whatever for a notice. Besides, to insist upon notices of motions is greatly and most dangerously to abridge the powers of individual members of parliament; may there not an emergency arise, when the safety of the state may depend upon the instantaneous making of a motion? Nay, do we not daily see *the ministers* making motions without any notice at all? And, indeed, notices of motions are entirely unknown to the laws and orders of the House, in which we have heard this very important motion of Mr. ROBSON set aside upon the alleged ground, in part, at least, of a want of notice. But, as Mr. ROBSON himself observed, a notice *was* given in this case, and that, too, *four days* before the motion was made. Surely four days were enough to afford time for *preparation!* One would have thought, that the minister of finance would have panted for the moment, when some one should point out to him how the public money might be saved, at the time when he himself was endeavouring to convince us that it gave him so much pain to be compelled to add to our taxes! At the time when he was raising the rate of the Income Tax to ten per centum; was proposing a tax upon the raw material of our manufactories, and was proposing a tax upon beer brewed in private houses! At a time when Mr. Fox was declaring, that, such was the state of our pecuniary concerns, that the ministry were “ *driven* to impose taxes that must *affect the prosperity* of some branch or other of our commerce!”

The next thing that calls, and it most loudly calls, for your attention, is, the demand for “ *grounds,*” whereon to found a motion. With respect to which, on no transaction that occurs to me at present, can any “ *explanation*” as to the “ *object*” of a motion be demanded from the mover, consistently with the idea which we have always been taught to entertain of the rights and privileges of a member of the House of Commons, and, as to the expenditure of the public money, what object, other than that of a desire to know *how it has been expended,* need any member state as the *ground* of a motion? It is not as a right, or a privilege, that we ought to regard this; but, as a *duty,* as a duty incumbent upon every member of the House of Commons. And, when a member moves

for an inquiry of this sort, upon what ground can any one pretend to call him to account as to the *object* that he has in view? And where, Gentlemen, is the right which any one possesses of inquiring into his motives, seeing, that unless he does make such inquiries, he is guilty of a manifest breach of his first and greatest duty? Perhaps we shall be told, that *the amount of the whole of the Public Expenditure* is annually laid before the House of Commons; and, that *there* Mr. ROBSON ought to have looked for information. Such an account, that is to say, the account of the foregoing year, is, or *ought to be*, laid before the House on, or before, the 25th of March in each year; and, I must confess, that this account *ought* to convey some information; but, Gentlemen, this amount is a lumping one; it lies in a very small compass, and, as to the immediate object of our attention, the whole of the Barrack-Expenditure, the whole of the immense sum drawn from us on account of Barracks, is accounted for in one single line, thus, and even in one single word, thus:

“ BARRACKS - - - 1,786,048*l.*”

This is all that Mr. ROBSON would have found in the account for the year 1805; and what shall we say of a member of the House of Commons, who would be satisfied with this? Who, merely by looking at this, should pretend that he had “*watched over* the expenditure of the public money?” From this account how was Mr. ROBSON, or any body else, to know, or even to guess *how* the money had been expended? What *check* does such a document form to a wasteful expenditure? It must be manifest to you, that it forms no check at all; and that it is the duty of every individual member to inquire how this enormous sum of more than a million and three quarters was expended upon barracks in one year; or that, if this be not his duty, he can be of no use in the House of Commons.

There was one argument, Gentlemen, which was used against Mr. ROBSON upon the first occasion, which must not here be overlooked; to wit; that the affairs of the Barrack-Office being now before the *Commissioners of Military Inquiry*, there could be no occasion for any such matters to be taken up in the House of Commons; which argument was urged with great vehemence and with an air of triumph by Lord HENRY PERRY. Of the dangerousness of this doctrine one never can speak too often, nor in terms too strong; but, Gentlemen, how comes it, that this argument, which was so good on the Friday, was good for nothing at all on the next Wednesday? For, you will observe, that this same Commission was full as effective when Lord HENRY PERRY moved for the papers, as it was when Mr. ROBSON moved for them. There must, then, one would naturally suppose, have occurred some cause for this change of doctrine; and, I think, you will agree with me, that Mr. ROBSON was not very uncharitable in imputing the change to the impression, which, in the interim, did evidently appear to have been made upon the mind of the public. The detection and exposure of this instance of glaring inconsistency are, however, of no importance, when compared with the doctrine itself, which strikes at once at the very root of the constitution by taking from individual members of parliament, in their capacity and in their places, as members, to begin and to prosecute inquiries as to the expenditure of the public money. The minister (and, in this case, it was Mr. Pitt) appoints a list of commissioners to inquire into the expenditure of the public money in the Military Department; and, if the existence



of this commission is to take away the right of individual members of the House of Commons to move for and to prosecute any inquiry with regard to the expenditure of the public money in that department, there is, at once, half the power of the members taken away; for, at this time, the annual expenditure of the army and its appendages amounts to about *twenty millions*, and, in the account annually laid before the House of Commons, this expenditure does not occupy *twenty lines*! Again and again, therefore, I beg you, Gentlemen, and I beg, I beseech, every man in England, to whom the happiness and the honour of England are, in anywise, dear, to reflect upon the dangerousness of this doctrine. Let it but once be established; only let a refusal to suffer an individual member to inquire; let such a refusal, upon such a pretext, once grow into a precedent, and who does not perceive, that we shall have commissioners for every department, and, that all notion of a control in the expenditure of the public money will be given up? Let this doctrine be once established, and, very soon afterwards, the ministry and their boards of commissioners will know how to dispense with the House of Commons; and, indeed, of what use would that House, in such case, be; and what regard could the people have for it, or what confidence could they have in it? Excuse me, Gentlemen, for urging and re-urging this point; for, compared with this, of what importance to us are the disputes about Malta and Hanover? The *time*, too, that these commissioners take to make their inquiries, and the comparative *secrecy*, with which they conduct them, are well worthy of your consideration; for, if it took nine months merely to report upon the balances due from Dr LANCY to the public, how long, good God! would it have been ere they had come to the contracts in the Isle of Wight? I wish you to observe, too, that it is provided in the act constituting this Commission, that none of its members shall, during the time that they are Commissioners, "accept or hold any *Civil* office of profit, during pleasure, under His Majesty." But, they may accept and hold such offices *for life*; and as to *military* offices (which are all held during pleasure), they may accept and hold as many of them as the king, or any one under him, will give them; and, just by way of illustration, I wish you to know, that, *since* the creation of this commission, the first commissioner, *Major General Hildebrand Oakes*, has accepted, and that he does now hold, the office of *Colonel of a regiment*, worth from 1,200*l.* to 1,500*l.* a year! The second commissioner is a *Colonel Beckwith*; the third is a *Lieutenant-Colonel Drinkwater*; either of whom may, of course, accept, at any time, of any military office, depending for duration upon the sole will of the king, or his advisers.

Lord HENRY PERRY, as you have seen, Gentlemen, seems, in his speech of Wednesday last, to say, that he has taken up the matter himself, because Mr. ROBSON did not understand what he was about. You have read a faithful report of the debate, Gentlemen, just as it took place; and, do you think, that Mr. ROBSON appeared not to understand what he ought to do? It is easy to set up a laugh. There is an affectation of this sort, which has been very fashionable; but, amongst many other foolish fashions, it is growing stale; and, I think, you will agree with me, that, if, upon a subject so serious, laughter was not disgusting, the laugh would not be against Mr. ROBSON. A man of very good sense, and even a very wise and a very clever man, may, in the haste of delivery, use the word *to* instead of *from*; and may, even from his laudable anxiety, be for

a moment, confused; but what is this compared to such an instance of glaring, of . . . I would fain not, but I must, call it puerile inconsistency, as that exhibited in the conduct of Lord HENRY PETTY, who, after having spoken against the production of the papers on the Friday, upon the ground that the Military Commission was sitting, came, on the next Wednesday, and moved for those identical papers himself, the said Commission being still sitting? And, here, Gentlemen, I must repeat to you his words; I must save you the trouble of referring back to them, and must beg you to mark, and to retain them in your minds. He said, that, "if the honourable gent. had done him the honour to make the " slightest communication to him of his wishes or intentions upon the " subject, he believed he should have been able to have satisfied the hon. " gent. that *his motion for papers*, and the purpose he had avowed, were " rendered unnecessary, by another arrangement which had already taken " place. As the hon. gent. had not thought proper so to do, he would " beg leave to say now, that, although he saw no objection whatever to " the production of the papers named in the hon. gent.'s motion, yet, at " the same time, as the House had already appointed Commissioners, for " the very purpose of the investigation avowed by the hon. member as " his object, and had DELEGATED to them *its authority to inquire*, with the " utmost minuteness, concerning every expenditure in the Barrack, as " well as other Military Departments; which Commissioners were pro- " ceeding with all the expedition in their power, consistently with the " nature of the subjects referred to their examination; he would put it to " the good sense of the hon. gent. whether it would not be much more " orderly and consistent with the *regular proceedings* of parliament, first " to await the Report of those Commissioners, or to *communicate to them* " any information that could aid or accelerate their inquiry, before he " proceeded to call upon the House to institute another inquiry, to pro- " ceed at the same time, and upon the very same subject. He would " submit to the hon. gent. whether it was a *proper*, whether it was a *dis- " creet*, procedure, while a Parliamentary Commission was occupied in " this very inquiry, to supersede the authority delegated to them, without " any alleged ground of imputation upon their proceedings, and to move " for another inquiry upon the same topic. If, indeed, when they should " make their Report, the hon. member should find any just cause to com- " plain of their negligence, or partiality, or unnecessary delay, it would " be competent to him to call upon the House for the inquiry now pro- " posed; but *until such an occasion should occur*, he *hardly could con- " ceive the House would be disposed to comply with the hon. gent.'s wishes " for such an inquiry.*"—Yet, this same gentleman, who could give such a lesson upon good sense, order, regularity, propriety, discretion, and consistency, all which, on the Friday, were so directly opposed to the production of the papers, could, aye, and he actually did, come, into the same seat, and looked the same persons in the face, and moved himself for the production of those very same papers! This Lord HENRY PETTY is, Gentlemen, the representative of the University of Cambridge, which learned body have, too, the honour to claim him as a member; whence, in conjunction with what you have just seen, you may, I think pretty safely conclude, that a man may swagger about a long while in a black gown and a four-cornered cap without acquiring many of the faculties of a conjuror. The fact is, that the mere knack of making speeches, the mere knack of twirling of strings of sentences, is no mark whatever of

superiority of mind; but is, very frequently, a mark of the contrary; heads, like other things, being, in general, empty in proportion to the noise that they make. By the fools and the sycophants of the last twenty years, Mr. Pitt has been compared to CICERO and Mr. Fox to DEMOSTHENES, these being the two most famous orators of antiquity. What *they* might be besides talkers, whether they contributed to the prosperity, or the ruin, of their countries respectively, it would, perhaps, be difficult precisely to ascertain; but, as to *ours*, we know, that, under the sway of Mr. CICERO, we have, as Mr. DEMOSTHENES himself tells us, been brought into the last stages of national distress, and, indeed, without his telling us of it we know it very well; and, what is quite disheartening, we do not perceive the least sign of Mr. DEMOSTHENES's intention to do better than his famed predecessor, whose debts, however, Mr. DEMOSTHENES has, with great liberality, called upon us to pay. Let us be no longer thus amused, then; let us no longer be the sport of this sort of *brotherhood* amongst the pretenders to superiority of mind. Let us ask for the *proof* of their superiority: let us inquire whether our country has increased in domestic happiness and in consequence abroad, while it has been in their hands; and, if we find that it has *decreased in both*, let us turn with contempt from their pretended superiority. To conduct the affairs of the government of a great nation demands great talents; talents such as few men, comparatively speaking, possess; but, not the talent of public speaking, which, though it may serve to gloss over bad measures, can be of no use whatever in the conceiving or adopting of good measures; and, as to a member of parliament, as far, at any rate, as relates to inquiries into the receipt and expenditure of the public money, all that he need possess, are, common sense, common industry, and common honesty, which last ingredient is, as to all the purposes for which a member of parliament is sent to the House, worth much more than the combined talents of CICERO and DEMOSTHENES. Gentlemen, you have done honour to yourselves in sending Mr. ROBSON to parliament; it is the duty of us all to support him in his laudable efforts, by all the means in our power; it is our duty to stand by him, to lend him our assistance, to join him in his combat against the *brotherhood of placemen by trade*, who, whether *in* or *out*, will always support the abuses and corruptions that exist, and who, though they may hate one another, though they may seek the destruction of each other, will, at any time, suspend their animosities, and most cordially combine to keep down, and, if possible, to destroy, any man, who, they are convinced, has the good of his country at heart.

There remains one other part of Lord HENRY PETTY's speech, Gentlemen, to which I am desirous of drawing your attention; I mean that, wherein he conveys a feeling of dissatisfaction at Mr. ROBSON's not having made a previous communication *to him*, with regard to the object of his motion. What! is it come to this, then; is it become; is it actually become the custom for members of parliament to wait upon the minister and know his pleasure, or, at the very least, his opinion, as to the propriety of making a motion before they make such motion? Is it really true, that the minister; that a person appointed by the king; that a *servant* of the king, is to be consulted by a member of parliament before such member can make a motion in his place in the House? What shall we hear next? Where is this to end? What are members of parliament finally to become? If in one case, so in all cases is this doc-

trine sound ; and then, Gentlemen, let me ask you how we can, without the most shameful mockery, the most gross insult to our own understandings, affect to regard the members of the House of Commons as the "guardians of the public purse?" It is their business to watch the ministers, and, if they can make no motion for inquiry into the expenditure of the public money, without previously stating their *object* to those ministers and obtaining their *consent* to such motion, is it not evident that no *useful* motion of that sort will ever be made? Mr. ROBSON acted as he ought ; he came forward upon the ground of right as a member of the House of Commons ; he firmly stood upon that ground ; the public, seeing that his cause was their cause, stood by him ; the press (I allude particularly and with hearty approbation to the COURIER, the INDEPENDENT WHIG, the MORNING HERALD, and the MORNING ADVERTISER) expressed the feeling of the public ; and the result has, thus far, been what every honest man wished it to be.

But, Gentlemen, in our anxiety to maintain the principles upon which Mr. ROBSON has undertaken this inquiry, we must not lose sight of the matter of the inquiry itself. You have seen, that MR. ROBSON, probably for the sake of avoiding complexity, has begun with one small point of the Barrack-office abuses, namely, the rent of barns, used as barracks, in Sandown-Bay Division, in the Isle of Wight ; and you have heard him state, that *double the money* was paid for such barns that ought to have been paid for them. But, what would you think, Gentlemen, if it should appear, that *five times* as much had been paid, in this case, as ought to have been paid? What would you think, if it should appear, that we have been paying for each barn *annually* as much as the *fee simple* of the barn is worth? What would you think if it should appear, that we have been paying annually for each barn, for the mere shell of each barn, a sum nearly equal to the annual *rent of the whole farm*, on which such barn stands, and of which, of course, the barn forms a part? What would be your conclusion from such facts? What other conclusion could you form, than that a most profligate waste of the public money has prevailed in this department ; that *here* alone nearly a million a year might be saved ; that this sum now ought to be saved ; and that, if it should be saved, we shall all have Mr. ROBSON and his informant to thank for it. And here, Gentlemen, bear with me, if I again press it upon you to observe, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has *now* confessed the existence of these shameful abuses, knew nothing at all of them until Mr. ROBSON made his motion, a fact, I think, quite sufficient to convince you of the great danger that would arise from "*delegating*" the powers of inquiry to boards of Commissioners. I wish to give credit where credit is due ; and I do sincerely believe, that, until the motion of MR. ROBSON, led Lord HENRY PETTY to inquire, he knew nothing at all of the abuses we are speaking of. But, Gentlemen, the discoveries which his lordship has now made, will, if I am not greatly deceived in my conjecture, place some of *his colleagues* in an awkward predicament ; for, by a reference to the motion, you will clearly perceive, that the representation of the Barrack-Master of Sandown-Bay Division, for the saving of the public money, though it was transmitted to the *late* Secretary at War, came under the consideration of the *present* Secretary at War ; that at any rate, in *his office* did Lord Henry Petty find those very documents, which have convinced him of the necessity of a speedy parliamentary inquiry into the matter ; and, that the same person

was Barrack-Master General last year is *still* the Barrack-Master General; and that, moreover, the Assistant Barrack-Master General, who made, as Lord Henry Petty now says, "the improper report," and who, as he further says, "ought now to be called to account for it," is, *to this hour*, an Assistant Barrack-Master-General! This discovery, observe, Gentlemen, Lord HENRY PETTY has made from documents that *already existed*; and, therefore, it behoves us to inquire, *where* they have existed? In *whose hands* they have lain, all this while, as inactive as a sleep mouse? For, if it be now, upon a few hours of inquiry, on the part of Lord HENRY PETTY, become so evident that great abuses have taken place; if this has, as once appeared, and that, too, upon a bare inspection of the documents; what are we to think, and what ought the ministry to do, with regard to the persons, in whose hands these documents are, and under whose inspection they so long have been? Is not the conduct of these persons a proper and a necessary object of inquiry? For, if such an inquiry with *appropriate consequences*, do not take place, how can we reasonably entertain a hope, that abuses will not in future be committed? Anxiously, therefore, do I hope that the inquiry will not stop at the conduct of the *inferior agents*, but that it will mount upwards to the source of the evil; at any rate, certain I am that the further proceedings in this, will furnish us with an excellent criterion, whereby to judge of the real views, with which the ministers have now brought forward their new plan for the examining into the public accounts; though, if we were to judge from the language of the *Morning Chronicle*, which is now the slave of the Ins, we should not entertain any very great degree of hope from the execution of this plan: "The measure," says that fallen print of this day (Friday, the 23rd of May), "The measure proposed by Lord Henry Petty, for the institution of an effectual audit of the public expenditure, has justly engaged the most serious attention as well as gratitude of the public. It is a great and laudable attempt; and no part of it promises to be so useful as that which goes to check abuse *for the future*; for it is almost *vain to hope* for much benefit from the *revisal of what is past*. What check or audit can there be of the Commissariat Accounts of our famous campaign in Flanders, where a *convenient fire* at every depot settled the accounts of all Commissaries, Contractors, and Insupers? But it is a material thing to institute a new system; and that the check should go on hand in hand with the expenditure. Nor will it be enough to see that there are vouchers for the actual expense, but that the expense itself is actually economical. For instance, in the Report of the Barrack Department, we see that the barracks were built, at what is technically called measure and value, though it is well known that contracts for building, even on a small scale, are made at 25 per cent. under measure and value. General De Lancey well knows this fact. He has built for himself a beautiful villa in Surrey, and he boasts that it only cost him 1,000*l*." This is perfectly consonant with the new doctrine of Mr. Fox; and perfectly consonant, too, with the wishes of the *Brotherhood*, whether *in or out of office*; for, to them, nothing surely can be so convenient. "What check or audit can there be of the Commissariat Accounts of our famous campaign in Flanders, where a convenient fire, at every depot, settled the accounts of the Commissaries, Contractors, and Insupers?" What a question is here to ask, and to be asked, too, by that same *Morning Chronicle*, that bellowed so loudly for punishment upon the

head of Lord Melville and Mr. Trotter, *because* they had destroyed their books and accounts! The House of Commons and Westminster Hall still ring with the indignant reproaches of the late opposition (who are the present ministry) against those who wished to bury in oblivion the *past* with regard to Lord Melville and Mr. Trotter; and, do their writers now; good God! do they now tell us; now, the moment that their friends are in power; do they tell us; do they, with an air of languor, as if weary of inquiry, ask us *how* we are to make inquiry about the *burnt* accounts, relating to the Commissary-General's Department, during those ever-famed campaigns of *Flanders*, from which the DUKE OF YORK happily returned in a whole skin to go again on the no less famed campaign of the *Helder*, from which he also happily returned in a whole skin to command, with such distinguished celebrity, the army at home?

In coming, Gentlemen, by way of conclusion, to the practical application of the facts and observations here presented to you, let me, in the first place, caution you against the cry of *disaffection* and of *revolutionary designs*, which, upon all such occasions, is sure to be set up, first, by the innumerable swarm of speculators, and next, by the *Brotherhood* in general. It is their way to tell you, "abuses have always existed, in "all countries; and, that, after all, this is the best government and the "best country in the world;" the inference left to be drawn from, which, is, that things must remain as they are, or that the government will be destroyed. So each of them will declare to your teeth, if you push him to the point; and, so they say one and all. But, Gentlemen, if, by "disaffection," they mean, disaffection to the country and to our sovereign, clothed with all his constitutional authority; if, by "revolutionary designs," they mean designs tending to the destroying of the present orders in the state; if this be their meaning, their charge is utterly groundless, and it is equally malicious, because they know it to be false. It is the sincere desire of every good man, that the monarchy and that all the ranks and degrees in the state should remain unshaken; that the property, lawfully obtained, of every man should continue secure in the hands of its owner; but, it is also his sincere desire, that the people in general should be happy and free, as their forefathers were. And, Gentlemen, it is because we wish *not* to see things destroyed; it is because we *love* our country and its unimpaired constitution, in all its branches and in all its provisions; it is because the name, the laws, the liberties, and the renown, of England are dear to our hearts, that we anxiously seek to promote a *real* reformation of abuses, being fully convinced, that, unless such a reformation do take place, and that right speedily, a sweeping destruction will ensue. We have been told, Gentlemen, by the present ministers, that they are, by the pecuniary distresses of the state, "driven to impose taxes which must *affect the prosperity* of some branch or other of our commerce;" we have, in defence of every new tax, heard them urge the argument of hard and cruel *necessity*; in every other breath we have heard them exclaim, "money *must be obtained!*" And, gentlemen, at the same time that we hear these arguments and exclamations, we see at the Board of Admiralty, a gentleman who has recently declared, in open parliament, that, in the department of the navy, a saving of one-third might be made. Add to this what has actually come to light in the Barrack Department; and, I think, you will not find it difficult to believe me, when I say, that, after the fullest consideration that I have

been able to bestow upon all the branches of the national expenditure, my sincere opinion is, that, in the current expenses of the year, leaving quite a sufficiency to support the splendour of the throne and fully to reward every service rendered to the state, *one-half* of the present expense might be saved; and, Gentlemen, this object; this object, the effecting of which is, in my opinion, absolutely necessary to the preservation of the monarchy, and even to that of our existence as an independent nation; this object in comparison with which all others in this world shrink into nothing, may be effected, and easily effected, by a few, and a very few, independent, honest, and zealous members of parliament; members of parliament, in short, like the honourable Gentleman, whose upright and useful endeavours have given rise to this letter, and for whose ability to serve us the thanks of the whole nation are due to the Electors of Honiton.

With an anxious hope, that you will pursue the good path, to walk in which you have begun, and that you will scorn to sell your birthright for a mess of pottage to a venal slave who will take care to obtain a double mess in return,

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your humble and obedient Servant,

WM. CORBETT.

23rd May, 1806.

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## SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

### LETTER II.

(*Political Register*, June, 1806.)

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“Fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery.”—Job, ch. xv.

GENTLEMEN;—Perceiving that Mr. Cavendish Bradshaw has, since by your voice he was constituted one of the guardians of the public purse, taken care to obtain a place by the means of which he will draw into his own pocket some thousands a year out of that purse, and this, too, at a time when the load of indispensable taxes is pressing his honest and industrious constituents to the earth; perceiving this, and being fully persuaded, that, whenever the electors of any place re-choose representatives under similar circumstances, the cause is not so much in their own disposition as in the apathy and lukewarmness of those independent men who may have the ability to rescue them from such hands; with this truth being deeply impressed, I did, upon hearing of the approaching vacancy, use my efforts to prevail upon other men of this description to afford you an opportunity of evincing your good sense and uprightness, and, having failed in those efforts, I have thought it my duty to afford you this opportunity myself; it being manifestly true, that, unless men of independence and of public spirit will offer themselves as candidates, to rail at electors for choosing and re-choosing the dependent and the mercenary is, in the highest degree, unreasonable and unjust.

As to professions, Gentlemen, so many and so loud, upon such occasions, have they been; so numerous are the instances, in which the foulness and shamelessness of the apostacy have borne an exact proportion

to the purity and solemnity of the vow ; so completely, and with such fatal effect, have the grounds of confidence been destroyed, that, it is now become necessary, upon all occasions like the present, to give a pledge, such as every man can clearly understand, and such as it is impossible to violate without exposing the violator to detection and to all the consequences of detected hypocrisy and falsehood ; and, such a pledge I now give in declaring, that, whether you elect me or not, I never, as long as I live, either for myself, or for, or through the means of, any one of my family, will receive, under any name, whether of salary, pension or other, either directly or indirectly, one single farthing of the public money ; but, without emolument, compensation, or reward of any kind or in any shape, will, to the utmost of my ability, watch over and defend the property, the liberties, and the privileges of the people, never therefrom separating, as I never yet have, the just and constitutional rights and prerogatives of the crown.

This declaration, Gentlemen, is not made without due reflection as to the future as well as to the present, as to public men in general as well as to myself. It proceeds, first, from an opinion, that the representatives of the people ought never to be exposed to the temptation of betraying their trust ; secondly, from long observation, that those who live upon the public are amongst the most miserable of men ; and, thirdly, from that experience in the various walks of life, which has convinced me of the wisdom of Agur, who prayed for neither riches nor poverty ; not riches, lest he should forget God ; not poverty, lest he should be tempted to steal ; and, to receive the public money unjustly, is not only stealing, but stealing of the worst and basest sort, including a breach of the most sacred trust, accompanied with the cowardly consciousness of impunity. From reflections like these, Gentlemen, it is, that the declaration now made has proceeded, and, when I depart, in word or in deed, from this declaration, may I become the scorn of my country ; wherein to be remembered with esteem, I prize beyond all the riches and all the honours of this world.

But, Gentlemen, as it is my firm determination never to receive a farthing of the public money, so it is my determination equally firm, never, in any way whatever, to give one farthing of my own money to any man, in order to induce him to vote, or to cause others to vote, for me ; and, being convinced, that it is this practice of giving, or promising to give, money, or money's worth, at elections ; being convinced, that it is this disgraceful, this unlawful, this profligate, this impious practice, to which are to be ascribed all our calamities and all the dangers that now stare us in the face, I cannot refrain from exhorting you to be, against all attempts at such practices, constantly and watchfully upon your guard. The candidates who have resorted to such means have always been found amongst the most wicked of men ; men, who, having, by a life of adultery or of gambling, or of profligacy of some other sort, ruined both their character and their fortunes, have staked their last thousand upon an election, with the hope of thereby obtaining security from a jail, and of selling their vote for the means of future subsistence drawn from the sweat of the people at a hundred-fold ; and thus expecting to pocket the profit of the corrupt speculation, sneering at their bribed and perjured constituents, as Satan is said to have sneered at the reprobate with whom he had bargained for his soul.

Far from you, Gentlemen, be credulity so foolish ! Far from you,



disgrace so deep, infamy so indelible ! Far from you, so flagrant a violation of the law, so daring a defiance of the justice and the power and the wrath of God ! But, were it otherwise, and did I find in Honiton but as many righteous men as were found in Sodom and Gomorrah, I would tender them my hand to lead them from the rest. Very different, however, are my hopes ; these hopes forbid me to believe it possible, that there should be, collected upon one spot, four hundred Englishmen, having the eyes of all England upon them, who will not, by their votes, freely and cordially given, sanction the great principle upon which I now stand ; and, in these hopes, I will, if I have life, do myself the honour to meet you on the day of election. In the mean while

I am, with great respect, Gentlemen,

Your most humble and most obedient servant,

1st of June, 1806.

WM. COBBETT.

## HONITON ELECTION.

**NOTE BY THE EDITORS.**—This article closes the affair of the election at Honiton ; but, as the reader will perceive, the close view of corruption taken by Mr. COBBETT during this short contest, made him, from that day, leave nothing that he could do undone, in order to obtain a thorough reform of the Parliament.

THIS *contest*, the very existence of which has been justly considered as matter of wonder, has terminated in favour of Mr. Bradshaw, if any success obtained by such means can, with propriety, be called favourable. That he will not be *again* elected for Honiton is, I believe, pretty certain ; but, of small consequence indeed is any thing of this sort compared with the facts that have come to my knowledge through the means of offering myself as a candidate for the borough, into which I entered with some hope, though no very great hope, that all notions of public virtue were not quite extinguished in the minds of the people, but out of which I came with the sad assurance of the truth of every thing which, from tongues the most censorious, I had heard.

But, before I proceed to give a description of the deplorable state of this borough, let me do away a misrepresentation relative to a supposed preconcerted scheme between Lord Cochrane and myself, such a representation of the matter being highly unjust to us both, as it would clearly imply, that my professions of purity were intended solely to stay the progress of the usual means, until those means could be brought into action against Mr. Bradshaw. It is well known that Mr. Cochrane Johnstone (Lord Cochrane's uncle) went down to Honiton with me ; and this appears to have been the main circumstance whence the above representation proceeded ; but, a few words will explain this matter. Two days before I set off from London, having then fixed upon the hour of my departure on Friday morning the 6th instant, I met Mr. Johnstone, and, having asked him if he had any news from his nephew, of whose recent gallant conduct the newspapers had just informed us, he pulled out a

letter, saying he had just received it from him, that he was safe arrived at Plymouth, and that he, Mr. Johnstone, was then going to the Admiralty, in order to get him leave of absence to come part of the way to London to meet him upon some business between them: Whereupon I observed, that as I was going to Honiton, he might as well go with me, especially as there was plenty of room in the coach of Mr. Bosville, who (never having *seen* me in his life before) had, with the greatest kindness, and, I may add, with as great a desire to promote the public good, come to me, and offered to carry me and my friends to Honiton and back again. Mr. Johnstone accepted of my offer, and we set off accordingly at three o'clock on the Friday. That night we stopped at Blandford in Dorsetshire; we arrived at Honiton on Saturday the 7th instant, and, on the same day Mr. Johnstone received a letter from Lord Cochrane informing him that his Lordship *could not leave Plymouth* just then. But on the Sunday, while we were at dinner, there came an express from Lord Cochrane, bearing a letter for me, informing me, that his Lordship, having read my address to the people of Honiton in the London newspapers, and having perceived that I had resolved to stand myself, *merely because I could find no other independent man to oppose Mr. Bradshaw*, he had determined to accept of my general invitation, and that he was actually on his way (dating his letter from Exeter) to put his purpose in execution. In an hour afterwards, having stopped at Exeter to provide lawyers &c., his Lordship arrived. What passed after this until I declined proceeding to the poll, has been faithfully recorded in the *Register* of the 14th instant; and, it remains only to state, that the poll opened on Tuesday, the 10th instant, and that, on Wednesday morning, the 11th instant, I set off from Honiton on my return to London, never having been at the place of polling, and never having, in any one instance, made use of any means whatever to induce any man to vote, or to refrain from voting, one way or the other, and having from the beginning to the end strictly adhered to the principles upon which I offered myself to the borough. Those principles led me anxiously to wish for Lord Cochrane's success; because he stood upon the ground of *self-denial*, the only ground that any man ought, in my opinion, to succeed upon; but, I never *interfered* otherwise than in my exhortation publicly delivered to the electors, and, of course, the whole that Lord Cochrane has done to thwart this dependent placeman, and to set an example of disinterestedness to candidates in future, has proceeded from his own mind, and has been performed by his own zeal and public spirit.

Now, as to the *state of the borough*, who shall describe it? Who shall describe the gulf wherein have been swallowed the fortunes of so many ancient and once respectable families? There is, the electors will tell you, *no bribery*. They take a certain sum of money each according to their consequence, their degree of influence, and their services to their candidates respectively; "but this," they say, "comes in the shape of a *reward* after the election, and, therefore the oath may be *safely* taken." Considered as a question of morality, how contemptible this subterfuge is need hardly be noticed; but, to say the truth, they do not deceive themselves, and I must do them the justice to say, that they are not very anxious to deceive any body else. They tell you, flatly and plainly, that the money, which they obtain for their votes, is absolutely necessary to enable them to live; that, without it, they could not *pay their rents*; and

that, from election to election, the poor men run up scores at the shops, and are trusted by the shopkeepers, *expressly upon the credit of the proceeds of the ensuing election*; and that thus, the whole of the inhabitants of the borough, the whole of the persons who return two of the members to every parliament, are bound together in an indissoluble chain of venality! There are in the borough about forty or fifty dissenters, who, we were told, never did take any money themselves; but, even these men, are so bound down in one way or another, as to retain hardly any portion of freedom; and, in short, the election of members in this borough is made from motives precisely the opposite of those from which it ought to be made, it being quite impossible to imagine a perversion of the spirit and the end of the law and the constitution more complete than is in this deplorable scene openly exhibited.

Far from me, however, be it to join in the contemptuous reproaches of those, who ascribe this shocking disgrace, this terrible evil, solely to the electors themselves; and, these reproaches are always the more unjust and the more disgusting when they come from the *corrupters*, which is not unfrequently the case. The greater fault is in those who expose the poor and miserable to the temptation of selling their votes. The people of Honiton are not, except as far as this cause has operated, against their morals and their public spirit, less moral and less public-spirited than other men. I found many amongst them duly impressed with the injury which conduct like theirs produced to their country; but, except in one solitary instance, I found the plea of hard necessity urged as their justification. As to myself they treated me with the greatest respect; and, to use their own expression, "I had their *hearts* and Bradshaw their *voices*!" Two or three of them, with whom some of my friends remonstrated upon their selling their votes, observed, that "the *member* took care to get *well paid*, and they had a right to do the same if they could." The poorest of the people made a sort of pun upon my name as being descriptive of my non-bribing principles, and moulded their sentiment into a cry of "Bread and Cheese, and *no empty Cupboard*;" and some of them, in a very serious and mild manner, remonstrated with me upon my endeavour to deprive them of the profits of their vote, or, in their own phrase, "to *take the bread out of poor people's mouths*," describing to me, at the same time, their wants and their misery. There was one man, whom I had observed amongst the most vociferous in the ranks of Mr. Bradshaw, who came to me early on the Tuesday morning, told me that what I had said the day before, and what I circulated in print, had made a deep impression on the mind of himself and of his wife; that they had lived in the borough all their lives, and had never before heard a word of truth from a candidate; that they were convinced that if all members of parliament were such men as I, things would be managed much better and that the people would be much happier; that it was a shame for men to vote from motives such as those from which they voted; that he himself saw that he was a disgraced creature in giving his vote for a man like Mr. Bradshaw; "but, Sir," said he, "I have a numerous family of small children, and I cannot bear to see them crying for bread!" What other feeling than that of pity could such a statement possibly excite? "My poverty, and not my will consents," was the language of their hearts, while their tongues pronounced the name of Bradshaw at the close of the awful protestation they made in the presence and in the name of their God! One man,

and one man alone, as far as I know, did entertain the intention of accepting of my invitation to come forth and be distinguished from the rest. This man, whose name is WILLIAM PORTER, seeing me walking by his workshop on the day before my departure, came out to me and said: "I am sorry, Sir, you do not stand the poll, for I wished to vote for you, because my conscience tells me it would be my duty so to do." He had all the appearance of a hard-working man; the sweat stood upon his forehead; he had not taken time to lay the tool out of his hand; and his manner, joined with his declaration, excited in my mind a pleasure which alone would have been an ample compensation for all the trouble I had taken. Had I gone to the poll, there would, probably, have been found twenty or thirty such men as this; but, justice to William Porter bids me record, that, though there are residing several men by the name of Lor in the borough, he was the only man that openly and manfully declared his wish to be led forth from the sons of bribery and corruption.

In quitting this scene; in looking back from one of the many hills that surround the fertile and beautiful valley in which Honiton lies, with its houses spreading down the side of an inferior eminence crowned by its ancient and venerable church; in surveying the fields, the crops, the cattle, all the blessings that nature can bestow, all the sources of plenty and all the means of comfort and of happiness, it was impossible to divest oneself of a feeling of horror at reflecting upon the deeds which the then rising sun was about to witness, upon this one of his most favoured spots. And, is there, said I to myself; can there be a statesman, who can say that he has done his duty; who can quiet the calls of his conscience; who can calmly lay his head down upon his pillow; who can close his eyes without a dread as to where and how he shall awake; is there a statesman in England who can do these things, until he has formed a solemn resolution to endeavour to correct this shocking abuse; to remove this terrible curse from the land committed to his care?

As to the *manner* of prosecuting an endeavour of this sort, that shall be the subject of future inquiry; but, the more I reflect upon what I have now seen with my own eyes, the more firm does my conviction become, that this is the cause of all our calamities and our dangers, and that it is not, as Blackstone vainly imagines, to be removed by the laws *now in existence*.—With respect to my own views relative to the Honiton election, they have been stated with great distinctness and with perfect sincerity. Self-interest, in offering myself as a candidate, either now or at any future time, I can have none. My declaration precludes the possibility of my having any; and, as to personal ambition, if I know my own heart, I have not a particle of it. I never desire to be higher in life than I now am. I have as much acquaintance with the great and the rich as I want to have. I know that happiness is not to be procured by riches: and I have no desire to be thought better than others, merely because I am resolved not to partake of the public money. That this resolution has not arisen from any *new thought* of mine many persons in public life, and particularly he, with whose acquaintance I have been most honoured, can testify. It was *always* my resolution; and, it is my opinion that it ought to be the resolution of every man that offers himself as a member of the House of Commons. This opinion can be maintained by argument irresistible, and so strongly is my mind impressed with the necessity of a declaration, such as I have made, from every candidate for a seat in the House of Commons; so firm is my conviction that this is

the only means of bringing about the adoption of the measures that are wanted at this time, that, I shall, as often as a favourable opportunity offers, come forward myself, *if no one else will*, to put it in the power of the electors to sanction this great and saving principle. I repeat, that, for my *own sake*, I have no desire to be in the House of Commons; for, though it would be contemptible affectation to pretend to doubt of my ability to discharge the duties of a member of that House, yet my habits do not lead me that way, nor any way that takes me from my home. But, if I think that I can serve the country more effectually by becoming a member of parliament, a member of parliament I will, if I can in the constitutional way, certainly become; and, the present impression upon my mind is, that, if neither of the candidates *for the City of Westminster*, do, at the next election, make a declaration against accepting of the public money, I ought to afford the electors of that city an opportunity of choosing a man that will make that declaration. I do not hereby promise so to do; but my present opinion is, that I ought, in such case, to do it. If any other man will do it, I shall be glad, and shall be ready to lend him all the assistance in my power; for, again and again I repeat, that I have no desire to be in parliament, nor any desire ever to appear in public, if the good I wish to see done can be done by others, and others there are enough and more than enough if they will but bestir themselves.

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## TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER.

### LETTER I.

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“The English are free only forty days, once in seven years; and, the use, which they then make of their freedom, shows that they deserve to be enslaved all the rest of their lives.”—ROUSSEAU: Social Contract.

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GENTLEMEN,—On the 10th of May last, I addressed a letter to you upon the subject of the waste of the public money, under the head of “*letter the first*,” it being then my intention to address a series of letters to you upon that, and other subjects, therewith connected. But, it being now become almost certain, that a *dissolution of the present parliament* will speedily take place, I propose to address to you about four or five letters thereupon, and upon your duties which will therefrom arise; which letters, that they may not be confounded with any others, I shall number from one to as many as they shall amount to.

Before I proceed to submit to you the observations and suggestions, which, upon the above-mentioned subject, present themselves to my mind as being likely to be useful at the present moment, give me leave to express a hope, that you are duly impressed with the importance of the subject itself; for, if you regard, or, if you act as if you regarded, the days of an election as a time merely for keeping holiday and making a noise; as a time for assembling in a tumultuous manner, without running the risk of smarting under the lash of the law; if, like the slaves of Rome, whose tyrann-

nical and cunning rulers let them loose, once in a while, to commit all manner of foolish and beastly acts, in order thereby to terrify their own children from the commission of such acts; if, like these degraded creatures, you suffer yourselves to be made the sport of those who solicit your votes, then, indeed, will you verify the assertion of the French writer, from whom I have selected my motto; then, indeed, will you deserve to be slaves all the rest of your lives. But, my hope is, and, indeed, my expectation is, that your conduct will be exactly the reverse; that, 1st, you will look back to the days of your forefathers, and revive in your minds the arduous and successful efforts, which, at various times, they made for the preservation of the privilege, which you will soon have an opportunity of exercising, and that you will duly reflect upon the nature of that privilege: that, 2ndly, you will view, in its true light, the present situation of your country, and that you will diligently and impartially inquire, whether all the evils we endure, and all the dangers that threaten us, are not to be ascribed to the folly and baseness of those, who have possessed, and who have so shamefully abused, their privilege of choosing members of parliament; that, 3dly, you will inquire, whether, at any time heretofore, the members whom you have chosen, have held to their professed principles, or their promises, and that you will endeavour to ascertain the cause of their desertion of their principles and of you; that, 4thly, you will, beforehand, while you have time well to weigh and to consider, inquire, and resolve upon, what sort of men those ought to be whom you shall elect, and what sort of security you ought to demand for their holding to the principles which they profess; and that, 5thly, you will, as soon as may be, determine upon the very men for whom you will vote, and in support of whom, as your representatives in the parliament, as the makers of the laws to which you are to submit, as the guardians of your property and your personal freedom, you will use all the lawful means within your power. To assist you in these considerations and inquiries is the object of the letters that I am now beginning to address to you; and though I am well aware that the far greater part of you stand in need of no such assistance, yet I am persuaded, that want of the habit of reflecting in some, and want of leisure in others, have heretofore prevented them from forming right opinions upon the subject, and, under that persuasion I cannot refrain from endeavouring to do some little in the way of guiding those opinions upon the present important occasion, begging you to bear in mind, however, that it is not my intention to offer *myself* to you as a candidate, unless it shall be found, that no other man in the kingdom has the public spirit to stand forward upon that ground, whereon alone I think any man ought to be chosen as a member of the House of Commons, and particularly as a member to represent the City of Westminster.

1. In looking back to the days of our forefathers, we find them, in ancient times, fallen into a state of personal bondage to the few great possessors of the soil, who were the only part of the subjects of the king enjoying anything worthy of the name of freedom; we find, that, from this degraded state they began to rise under the reigns of those Kings of England, who carried the English banners in triumph over the fields of France, who won and who left, as an everlasting memorial of the valour of Englishmen, those Lilies, which, only six years ago, were effaced from their arms; we find, that the right, or the duty, of voting for members of the House of Commons, which right had, by those gallant kings, been conferred upon every man not a mere bondsman, was, by a foolish

and cowardly successor, restricted, in many cases, to persons having a certain portion of property of a particular kind; we find, that, in more recent times, the advisers of the kings, the creatures who swarm about a court, and who rob the people of their substance as the drone robs the industrious bee, contrived various means of rendering the representatives of the people the mere tools of the court, and, that, when unable to succeed in corrupting them to their purposes, they caused the parliament to be dissolved; we find, that, when this scheme had been tried to its utmost without success, a weak and bigot king endeavoured to govern without a parliament, and soon after we find him driven from his throne, the crown being settled in succession upon another family, and provision being made, a solemn compact being entered into, that, for ever afterwards, the people should have an opportunity of choosing a new House of Commons once in *three* years; we find, however, that a House of Commons, so elected, became parties to a law for depriving the people of this right, and for making the term *seven* years instead of three, from the passing of which law we may date the rapid decline of public liberty, and the no less rapid increase of the public burdens. Until that fatal day great and almost constant were the exertions of the people to maintain their due weight in the Government; since that day, they have made but few and those very contemptible exertions; but, now, when they see that there is no hope left of safety from any other source, ought they not to rouse themselves? Ought they not to exert their power as often as it comes into their hands? The object of our ancestors in contending, with their lives, for their rights as relating to the choice of members of parliament, was, to keep a check upon the power of the crown; to prevent the king, or his favourites, from taking from them any more of their property than what should be found necessary for the support of the government and for the carrying into effect such measures as should be found requisite for the good of the nation in general; to prevent their substance from being drawn from them to fatten idlers and profligates; to prevent any part of their fellow subjects from becoming oppressors of the rest; to prevent, in short, the loss of their freedom and of the enjoyments therefrom arising. The *means* was the power, given to representatives of the people, of *refusing to grant money to the king*. And, when I say the power, I mean the *real* power of refusing, and not the mere *nominal* power of refusing; for, if the power be merely nominal, it is no power at all; and, if it be *never exercised*, it is merely nominal.

“To what,” some one may say, “does all this tend, but to convince me, that all exertions on the part of the electors would be useless?” Yet, this is not so. The fault has been with the *independent* electors; for, though, owing to several causes, there always will be, until a material change in the representation take place, a great majority in favour of whomsoever is minister; though the representation arising from the decayed boroughs will always produce, in point of mere numbers, the means of overbalancing anything that can be done by the independent electors, still, these latter are able, if they were willing, to make such a choice as would be a sufficient means of protection against all the schemes of oppression that ambition or rapacity could devise. The electors of boroughs, where their numbers are small, or where they are, in some way or other, dependent upon one or two rich men; the electors of such places, whether they actually take bribes, or not, have some excuse for becoming the miserable and degraded tools of a corruptor. Their crime is, indeed,

detestable ; they deserve to be held in execration ; their names ought to be inscribed upon the gallows-tree, after their carcasses have therefrom been carried piece-meal by the fowls of the air ; " BE SUCH THE " FATE OF THE VENDERS OF THEIR CHILDREN'S LIBERTIES " AND HAPPINESS," ought to be uttered from the lips of every honest man ; but, still, *they* have some excuse ; they have the excuse of the hungry robber and assassin, whose crimes they equal and whose fate they deserve. But for you, Electors of Westminster, what excuse shall be made for *you*, if you fail in the performance of your duty ; if you violate so sacred a trust ? If you, who have all the political advantages that time and place can give ; who well understand what is right, and who have no temptation to do what is wrong ; who can plead neither ignorance nor want ; who are, in short, as free as you could possibly be made by any scheme of liberty that human art is capable of devising ; what shall be said for you, if, setting at nought all considerations of country and of individual honour, you become the passive instruments, the trodden-down things, of some half-dozen of opulent men, whose only merit, in the eyes of the world, would be, that they would hold you in a degree of contempt, surpassing that which they entertain for the beasts that perish ?

To hear some persons talk of an election for Westminster, a stranger to the state of things would believe, that the electors were the bondsmen, or, at best, the mere menial servants of a few great families. The question, upon hearing such persons talk, seems to be, not what man the electors may wish to choose, but what man is preferred by a few of the noblemen, though, by-the-by, it is well known, that the law positively forbids such noblemen to interfere in elections. Notwithstanding this law, we hear the boroughs called after the names of the peers who are the *owners* of them ; we hear that such a peer has so many members in the House of Commons, and such a peer so many more ; and this we, at last, have come to hear and to talk about with perfect unconcern ; but, this is no excuse for *you*. Neither peers nor any body else can render you dependent, if you are disposed to be free. You are nearly *twenty thousand* in number. Your trades and occupations are, generally speaking, full as necessary to your employers as their employment is necessary to you. If you are turned out of one house, there is always another ready to receive you ; if you lose one customer, you gain another ; you need court the smiles, you need fear the frowns, of no man, and no set of men, living. Some few unfortunate dependants there may be amongst you ; but, the number is so small as to be unworthy of notice, when compared to the whole. Yet, under these circumstances it is that we hear of the *interest* of such or such a nobleman, and, indeed, of such or such a nobleman's *Butler* or *Housekeeper* ; and, after hearing what we do hear in this way at every Westminster election, it seems surprising, that the Butler does not himself become your representative in parliament. The king has his powers ; the peers have theirs, and ample powers they have, every one of them being his *own representative* in parliament. These powers it is our duty to maintain ; but, it is also our duty to maintain our own powers, and, if we basely surrender them at the command of the Butlers and Footmen of peers, we deserve every species of insolence that the minds of Butlers and Footmen are capable of conceiving. To make use of any interested motive for the purpose of inducing an elector to give, or to withhold, his vote, is a crime in the eye of the law, which has



provided injunctions and oaths, which has prepared shame and punishment for every such crime ; but, to attempt to induce an elector to vote contrary to his conscience, is also a personal offence, that every honest man will resent with as much indignation as he would an accusation of perjury. How scandalous, then, is it that tradesmen should patiently listen to the commands of their customers, nay, that they should obey those commands, in direct opposition to the dictates of their own minds, from the paltry consideration of gain, which, when compared to the weight of taxes, brought upon them from the want of real representatives, is as a farthing to a pound !

Men who have been *born* slaves, who, and whose fathers before them, have never had an idea of freedom, may be pitied, but they cannot reasonably be blamed, any more than the Pagans of Peru could be blamed for their want of Christian faith. Yet, it is not rare to hear Englishmen speaking contemptuously of those nations who quietly submit to the absolute will, and who lick the foot, of a ruler ; but, if such nations be objects of just contempt, what shall be said of us, if, with all the noble examples of our ancestors before us, with all the laws which their valour obtained and their wisdom has secured, we give up, and that, too, from the basest of motives, all the *real* freedom, which we enjoy, or which we might enjoy ? In the exercise of perfect freedom at elections, we are not only secured by the law ; not only does the law say, that we shall be permitted freely to make our choice of persons to represent us ; but, it commands us not to be biassed, and it provides heavy penalties for all those who attempt to bias us. In short, men must arrive at a state of sheer baseness of mind, before they can suffer themselves to be induced to vote for persons, of whom, in their consciences, they do not approve ; and this must be more especially the case in a city like Westminster, where it is morally impossible that any motive of real *interest* should exist sufficiently powerful to bias a rational man.

The possessor of the elective franchise is the holder of a trust ; he acts not only for himself, but for his country in general, and more especially for his family and his children. To violate his trust, or to neglect the performance of what it imposes upon him, is, therefore, not merely an act of baseness, not merely a degradation of himself, but a crime against others ; and, a man so acting, ought to be regarded by his neighbours as a public offender : as an injurer of every other man ; as a person to be shunned and abhorred ; as a person very little, if at all, less detestable than one who betrays his country into the hands of an enemy. It is no justification of such a man, to say that those who bias him are his superiors, or that the temptation is great. In the case of Westminster there is no temptation at all ; and, besides, what crime is there which might not, upon such a principle, be justified ? And, as to the "*superiors*" who bias, they may be superior in riches ; but, in every other respect, are they not the basest of mankind, except only those who are biassed by them ? Are they not violators of the law ? Are they not hypocrites of the most odious description ? Are they not, with the sound of loyalty and patriotism on their lips, the worst of enemies to their King and their country ? I shall be told, that, in some instances, even the Clergy have used the means of corruption at elections. I hope such instances are rare ; and it cannot but shock any one to know that they at all exist ; but, if they existed in ever so great a number, no countenance would thereby be afforded to the corrupted ; for, of all detestable characters, the

most detestable assuredly is, what is called "an *electioneering parson*." From the chalice of such a priest one would flee as from a goblet of poison; and if ten such instances could exist, without producing an ecclesiastical censure and punishment, the Church ought to be destroyed, root and branch, for ever.

Having now endeavoured to describe to you the nature of the privilege, which you will speedily be called upon to exercise, I shall, in my next, proceed upon those inquiries, the result of which will, I trust, convince you, that it is entirely owing to the shameful abuse of that privilege, that we now have to lament being so situated as to have very little to hope either from peace or from a continuation of the war. In the meanwhile I am, Gentlemen, yours, &c. &c.

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 6th August, 1806.

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## SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

### LETTER II.

(*Political Register, September, 1806.*)

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"E'en liberty itself is barter'd here.

"At gold's superior charms all freedom flies;

"The needy sell it, and the rich man buys."—GOLDSMITH.

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GENTLEMEN,—The words of the above motto contain a description of the political state of Holland about forty years ago. From such a state abject submission to a foreign power is never far distant; it never can be far distant; to which I will add, that it *ought* not to be far distant; and, so far from pitying the people of Holland, we shall, if we duly reflect, be inclined to think, that the conqueror rules them with too light and gentle a hand, and that their punishment is by no means adequate to the political crimes which have brought that punishment upon them.—We are apt to ascribe the overthrow of states, and the subjugation of nations, to adventitious circumstances, to the fortune of war, to the ignorance or treachery of statesmen. No nation is willing to attribute its ruin to its own baseness, and the world is generally disposed to listen to accounts given by those who have been engaged in the scene. But, if we inquire diligently into the causes which have led to the subjugation of nations, we shall find, that nine times out of ten, *the baseness of the people*, low as well as high (as in the case of Holland), has been the principal cause.

Our country is not yet subjugated; let us hope that it never will; but, it is, by every one, confessed to be in a perilous situation; it is, by every one, confessed to be in a situation in which it cannot possibly for many years maintain its independence; and, if you see it in that light, does it not behove you, at this moment in particular, "diligently and impartially to inquire, whether all the evils we endure, "and all the dangers that threaten us, are not to be ascribed to the folly "and baseness of those, who have possessed, and who have so shamefully "abused, their privilege of choosing members of parliament?"

These evils are, **FIRST**, a system of taxation so extensive as to leave to no man scarcely any thing, scarcely any species or article of property, in which the tax-gatherer does not, in one way or another, come to claim a share on the part of the government; **SECOND**, an universal prevalence of disguise, insincerity, suspicion, fraud, and ill-will between man and man, engendered by the system of taxation; and, **THIRD**, the existence of nearly a million and a half of paupers, in England and Wales only, upon a population of less than nine millions of souls.—The dangers that threaten us, are, an increase of taxes, an increase of immorality thereby engendered, an increase of paupers, and, as the natural consequence of all these, a further decrease of public spirit, and, in short, such a state of things as may finally render England what Holland now is.

The greater part, the far greater part, of the evils which we now endure, have been brought upon us by the councils and the measures of **PITT**. The immense sums which he squandered upon East-Indian speculators; the millions he wasted in pensions and grants of various sorts; the hundreds of millions he expended upon ill-concerted schemes of war, and upon the innumerable swarm of his friends and supporters, who profited from that expenditure: all these rendered taxes absolutely necessary; but, it was, at all times, in the power of *the House of Commons* to have prevented the minister from adopting the measures by which that necessity was created, it being the chief use of that House to watch over the expenditure of the public money, and to withhold it, unless in cases where the granting of it is evidently necessary for the public good. Yet, during the twenty years squandering of Pitt; during the whole of the time that he was more than doubling the national debt, never did the House of Commons, in any one instance, refuse him the money he asked for, however enormous the sum, and however foolish or profligate the purpose. The law required, that the formality of a vote should take place, in order to enable the minister to levy each successive tax upon the people; but, with the exception of this *form*, what was there more than the mere mandate of the minister?

The fault, then, lay in the House of Commons. That House we have to look to for all the evils we feel, and all those we apprehend. But, the House of Commons is called the *representative of the people*, and, in many cases it is so; and, if that House do wrong, it is because the people themselves have made a bad choice. I shall, perhaps, be reminded, that **MR. GRAY**, now Lord Howick, asserted in parliament, that there were 300 of the members, whose seats were the private property of noblemen and others, and who came into the House without having had any connection or acquaintance with those who were called their constituents. But, though we cannot deny this, the people have still power enough, if they had the virtue, to elect such a House of Commons as should protect them against the effects of every weak or wicked measure, on the part of a minister. There are upwards of 70 *county* members; there are 50 more sent by cities or boroughs, over the electors of which no man can have any other control than that which is given him by the folly or the baseness of the electors; and, though 120 members are but few in comparison with the whole number of which the House now consists, every one must perceive, that, against the decided will of 120 such members as might be selected, no minister would be able to carry any measure whatever; because, in the mind of the nation, those members would be

estimated according to their real worth, and not merely according to their numbers. Nay, it is my opinion, that if there had been, for the last twenty years, but twenty members, chosen upon principles such as ought to prevail, we should have avoided great part, if not the whole, of our present calamities and dangers. We have, upon particular occasions, seen what only one or two members are capable of effecting; what, then, might not be effected by 20 members, entering the House with a fair resolution to do their duty, and particularly with a resolution *never to touch the public money, either by their own hands, or by those of their relatives?* This is the great test. All professions, short of this, I account as nothing; for, experience has proved to us, that, the moment the patriot begins to pocket the profits of a place or a pension, he changes his tone, or he becomes mute, and seems to forget every thing that has theretofore passed in his life-time.

These are truths which hardly any man will attempt to deny; but, the worst of it is, that the electors are, but in too many instances, participators in all the worst feelings of the elected. They can complain, most bitterly complain, of oppression; but, comparatively speaking, there are very few of them who will scruple to avail themselves, as often as they can, of the advantages, or imaginary advantages, to be derived from assisting those who are the cause of such oppression; and, perhaps, in their complaints against the government, none are more clamorous than those, who find themselves compelled to refund in a tax the price of their vote at an election. Such men may complain; but, who will be weak enough to pity them? A nation of such men may be subjugated, and crawl along the remainder of their days under the lash of a conqueror; but, is there any man that will not say, that those who have sold their liberty ought not to be slaves? In the City of Westminster, as was observed in my last letter, there is less excuse for base conduct, than there is in almost any other body of electors; and, therefore, for you to barter your liberties, is a crime such as can be committed but by very few others.

Let no man deceive himself by the subterfuge, that it is not *money*, for which he gives his vote. To give money to all, or to half the electors of Westminster, would strain the purse, even of a Nabob, or a contractor; but, to bribe with the hopes of gain, with the hopes of increased trade, or with the more seducing hope of causing the elector or his relations to be maintained at the expense of the government: or, in other words, of enabling them to cheat the public; to bribe in this way is easy enough; and, in this way has bribery been most successfully practised. Weak, however, must that elector be, who hopes, by a pitiful evasion, to escape from the punishment which awaits such conduct; who hopes to escape from the contempt of mankind, and from those stripes of oppression, which, by his own baseness, he has enabled others to inflict upon him. To hear such a man complaining of the weight of taxes, and to see him, with that complaint upon his lips, go to the hustings and give his vote for a man, from whom he has no reason to expect anything but a tame acquiescence in every measure proposed by any and by every man who happens to be minister, is something too disgusting to admit of an adequate description.

That there will, upon the present occasion, be *few* such men found amongst you, it would be too much to hope; but, surely, it may reasonably be hoped, that a *majority* of you will not be found of that class. The *journeymen* who compose no small part of the electors of Westminster,

appear to me to be entirely out of the reach of seduction. They are, generally speaking, independent of the power of their employers; and, if that power be attempted to be exercised over them; if their employers attempt to deter them from voting according to their consciences, every means should be taken of exposing to public scorn and indignation the conduct of such employers. The artisans of a workshop, led to the hustings under the command of the master, are degraded to a level with cattle, retaining all the sins of the worst description of men. The language of law, and the language of reason, is, that "elections should be freely and indifferently made;" that is, that there should be no undue influence used; no threats, no promises, to any individual elector; nothing to induce him to vote, or to abstain from voting, contrary to his own will and intention: and, every man, using such undue influence, is guilty of an outrage towards the person he attempts to seduce, and of offence against the law. That such attempts have been made with impunity, and even with success, is no justification of those who may again make them, much less is it a justification of those who leave them unresented; and, I earnestly hope, that upon this occasion, every elector, upon whom such attempts may be made, will act like a man who retains a due sense of his rights, and who is resolved to exercise those rights solely for the good of his country.

As to the candidates, who have offered themselves to you, at this time, I could have wished, that either one or the other had explicitly pledged himself never, in his whole life, to touch, either by himself or his relations, one farthing of the public money. But, since neither of them has done this, your choice, if no new candidate offer himself, must be influenced by other considerations; and, it appears to me, that the very first consideration is, that of preventing your city from becoming, as to all practical purposes, a *mere family property*, handed over from one Lord to another Lord, just like a private estate, with all the game and deer thereon feeding and being. I beg you to reflect, only for one moment, upon the shocking degradation of being thus transferred; upon the shame, the infamy, of being bargained for, bought and sold by ATTORNIES, and of becoming the subject of a Bill and Receipt! On the extent and weight of your *example*, I beseech you to reflect still more seriously. Where, if not in Westminster, shall we look for evidences of freedom in elections? Where, if Westminster become a family borough, shall we find an object of imitation, towards which to direct the attention of other places? In short, so fearful are the consequences of your becoming the slaves of a great family or two, that I scruple not to say, that upon your decision on this occasion depends infinitely more than upon any other event, which, at this day, can be regarded as within the compass of possibility. In your hands is now placed the fate of the people of England, as far as regards their political liberties; and, in the confident hope, that you will not betray your trust,

I remain,  
Gentlemen,  
Your friend and humble servant,  
WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 18th Sept. 1806.

## SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

## LETTER III.

(Political Register, September, 1806.)

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“ ..... And when transferr'd  
 “ From one to t'other, like a flock or herd,  
 “ The crowd, with senseless shout, the contract seal.”—DRYDEN.

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GENTLEMEN,—When, in my last letter, I was endeavouring to warn you against the effects of being handed to and fro, like a family borough, I had been informed, that Mr. SHERIDAN meant to offer himself to you, as the successor of Mr. FOX; and, though I should greatly have preferred an independent man, though I should have preferred a man unplaced to Mr. SHERIDAN, who and whose son together receive about 7,000*l.* a year out of our taxes, yet, Mr. SHERIDAN, even with all his recent conduct before me, with all his tergiversation and abandonments, with all his shrinking from the tasks to which he was solemnly pledged, and with all his silence upon the subject of the bills, which he denominated acts of unbearable tyranny, upon the subject of *parliamentary reform*, and many others; even Mr. SHERIDAN, with all this his conduct before me, appeared to me greatly preferable to the Lord that had been offered to you; because, by the choosing of that Lord, it seemed very clear, that Westminster would, in fact, place itself upon a level with OLD SARUM, or GATTON, or any such borough. But, with all my suspicions, as to the motives and conduct of Mr. SHERIDAN; with all my doubts of his ever acting but from some motive closely connected with self; with all my experience as to his twisting and turning, I really was deceived, and I had not the least suspicion, that, when, at his instigation, you had been called together, the purpose was to transfer you to the Lord, against whose becoming your representative he had at a meeting privately called by himself, said all that his mind could suggest, and that his eloquence could express. This meeting was, as I understand, held at his quarters in Somerset-place, on Sunday, the 14th instant. He there called together all those persons most likely to be able to aid him in a contest for Westminster, and particularly, several gentlemen connected with *the press*. The mischiefs to be apprehended from suffering Westminster to sink into a family borough were dwelt upon, and it was resolved to call a public meeting of the electors to agree upon the nomination of a proper person; or, in other words, of *some other person* than the Lord, and, that other person, it was clearly understood, was Mr. SHERIDAN himself. With these sentiments in their minds, and with this object before them, the meeting adjourned to Thursday, the 18th instant, then to become, at the Crown-and-Anchor Tavern, a public meeting of the Electors. How, at this meeting, he amused some of you, and melted others, with his pathetic descriptions; how he drew your attention from the object of your assembling; how he first divested you of your public feelings in order to lead you to an abandonment of your public duty, his speech, imperfect as the report of it must necessarily be, will explain. But, yet, I must confess, that I was grievously mortified at the apparent want of indignation in you, when,

upon the mere paltry pretext of fulfilling what would have been the wish of his deceased friend, in not "disturbing the peace of the city," he had the boldness to propose to you as a proper representative, the very Lord, for the professed purpose of opposing whom, he himself had caused you to be convened! You did, indeed, reject, and decidedly reject, the proposition; and, I am inclined to believe, that the resolution in compliment of Mr. SHERIDAN was smuggled up amongst some half-dozen of his friends; but, what I would have fain heard from you, what was necessary to your reputation, was, a resolution expressive of your indignation at such a barefaced attempt to treat you like a transferrable property.

Now, Gentlemen, as to his pretended reason for declining the contest, how came he to suppose, that Mr. Fox, if he had been consulted previous to his death, would have recommended an acquiescence in any thing, rather than "*disturb the peace of the city?*" What does he mean by "*disturbing the peace?*" Is it to disturb the peace to hold an election? If so, we had better have no more elections. It would be better for the ministers to nominate all the members, at once, without any reference to the choice of the people. But, Gentlemen, this is now a fashionable phrase; and, that we may have nothing left to wonder at, the *Whigs* are the first to make use of it.

Yet, how came Mr. SHERIDAN to suppose, that Mr. Fox would have been averse from a disturbance of the city's peace? Mr. Fox, who had been a disturber (if we must go on with the notion) of that peace all his political life-time? Or, did Mr. SHERIDAN mean to infer, that six months of office and salary had operated upon the mind of Mr. Fox a conviction of the errors of the former twenty years of his life?—But, after all, if we were foolish enough; if we were idiots enough to believe, that this was the real motive from which Mr. SHERIDAN gave way to the Lord, may we not ask how this motive came to have no influence with him previous to the calling of the meeting at his quarters at Somerset House? The Lord had already been announced as a candidate. The Lord was the same then that he was on the next Thursday. And, how did it come to pass, that Mr. SHERIDAN did not, *at that time*, discover, that it would have been the wish of his deceased friend, that the peace of the city should not be disturbed? He was, at that time, fully apprized of the intentions of the Lord, with *whose father's Steward he is in close intimacy*; in fact, the Lord's intentions and pretensions were the subject of discussion at Somerset House, where it was agreed to support Mr. SHERIDAN against him; and, therefore, to some other motive than the unmeaning one, held out at the meeting, you must ascribe his attempt (and I am afraid, successful one) to transfer you to the Lord.

There was, indeed, a threat thrown out in a ministerial paper, that Mr. SHERIDAN should *lose his place* if he opposed the Lord; and, I am of opinion, that such would have been the case; but, if a fear of losing his place had been the sole object before him, that fear would have operated with him previous to the meeting at Somerset House as well as afterwards; and, upon a view of the whole of the transaction, it appears clear to me, that, from the beginning, he was in concert with the Lord and his Steward; that the meeting at Somerset House, and the advertisement for a public meeting, were for the purpose of preventing any other candidate from coming forward against the Lord, and for keeping the Electors in a state of suspense, until it should be too late for them to fix upon a proper person to represent them.—This is the only interpretation of which his

conduct admits. What is to be his *reward*, I shall not pretend to predict; but, you may have the satisfaction to assure yourselves, that you will have to contribute towards it, whatever it may be.—His scheme has not, however, completely succeeded; for, besides, that you seem not satisfied with his nomination, the Lord does not appear to treat it with any great degree of respect, another meeting having been called, where the Lord has again been nominated by Mr. WHITBREAD, as if the first had been something clandestine, a sort of Gretna-Green union between you and the lord, and as if the bridegroom was rather ashamed of the priest and doubted of the efficacy of his functions.—But, it is for you, Gentlemen, and for your country, that the deep mortification and disgrace is reserved, unless you instantly bestir yourselves; unless you instantly fix upon some man, some commoner of real independence, as your representative. Let me hope, that your conduct will be such as to prove that you abhor being transferred from hand to hand like a family borough; let me hope, that you will not, like the crowd described by the poet, in the words taken for my motto, seal the contract with shouts of applause. If you must submit, let it, for God's sake, be with every mark of reluctance; with a firm resolution to retrieve your honour as soon as possible; and, above all things, with a solemn vow, never again to be made tools in the hands of Mr. SHERIDAN.—With the hope, that there are some at least, amongst you, who will not reject this advice,

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your humble and obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 25th Sept. 1806.

## LETTER

### TO THE RT. HON. WILLIAM WINDHAM,

I. *Upon the Westminster Election.*\* II. *Upon the Situation of the Younger Sheridan in the Army.* III. *Upon the general State of Public Affairs.*

“ Unless the next change in the ministry be speedily followed by great changes in the system of ruling the country, a new race of men will arise, and what changes they may produce God only knows. This has long been my opinion, and though I have often expressed it, I have yet met with no one to convince me that it is erroneous.”—LETTER TO A FRIEND, in the Autumn of 1804.

SIR,

Botley, 27th Nov. 1806.

The conduct of the younger SHERIDAN, during the recent election in Westminster, suggested to my mind the propriety of addressing a letter publicly to you upon the subject of *his situation in the army*, that army for the exciting and preserving of emulation in which you have shown such a laudable anxiety. But, Sir, upon taking up my pen for this purpose, my thoughts naturally fly back to the time, when you as well as I

\* The Election began on the 3rd Nov. 1806. Sir Samuel Hood, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Paull were the candidates.—ED.



had to encounter the effects of the elder Sheridan's mob-courting cant and misrepresentations; and, thus reflecting, I cannot refrain from endeavouring to give you, who were in Norfolk during the whole of the period of the contest in Westminster, a tolerably accurate idea of the occurrences with respect to this our former assailant, who, during the existence of the Addington ministry, was, as he succeeded in persuading the House of Commons, the only man possessing popularity in an extensive degree.

I. You have read, Sir, in the Political Register an account of the reception which Mr. Sheridan met with upon his first appearance at the hustings in Covent Garden; but, Sir, the scene was far beyond the ordinary powers of description. Mr. Sheridan, according to his usual custom, kept every thing waiting for his arrival; and, when he did arrive, he appeared to have been hurried away in an unprepared state. By surplus of misfortune he placed himself on the side of Sir Francis Burdett. Good heavens, what a contrast! An involuntary shout broke forth from the multitude, through whose voice honest nature seemed to exclaim: "Look on *this picture*, and on *this!*"—It was not until this moment that Mr. Sheridan was convinced, or, perhaps, that he suspected, that, so far from being popular, he was an object of unanimous unpopularity and odium. I could have told him of the fact several days before; and so could his friends; but facts of such a nature friends are not, in general, very ready to communicate.—The general hissings and groanings, with which Mr. Sheridan and his supporters were received, have been before spoken of; and some notice has, in the venal daily prints, been taken of the particular reproaches of a person, whose *face* Mr. Sheridan attempted to render a subject of ridicule, an attempt which I will not repay by giving a description of Mr. Sheridan's face. This person, as soon as the speeches and the uproar were at an end, approached as near as he could to the hustings, where, raising his arm and shaking his clenched fist, he, in a loud and clear voice, audible within as well as without the hustings, thus began: "Sheridan! many days and weeks "and months and years I have longed for an opportunity of daring to "speak the truth of you to your face; that opportunity is now come, and "I will not let it slip." He then began, and, though it took him no little time, he went through the whole of his character and conduct, private and public, moral and political. His description was nervous and eloquent; and, when I tell you that it was *perfectly true*, you will not, I am sure, expect me to repeat it in print, notwithstanding all Mr. Sheridan's professions respecting the liberty of the press.

From the reports of the venal press, Sir, you would imagine, that Mr. Sheridan kept his temper through all this. Nothing is further from the truth. He did, indeed, vent a few of his threadbare jests; but, by the few who were able to hear them, they were received with expressions of disgust and contempt, and, at the close of the first day, he, in these words, took his leave of the people, of that people whom he had so long succeeded in deluding: "You have behaved like a set of blackguards, particularly you, you broad-faced bully, and d—— you, I'll stay with you no longer."—The venal press has told you, Sir, that this "broad-faced orator" was *hired* by Mr. Paull; but, the fact is, that neither Mr. Paull nor any of his friends had ever spoken to the orator, nor, until after the day was over, did any of them know who he was. We then learnt, that his name was BURRAGE, and that he kept the Old Parr's Head in Swallow Street,

But, while I say this, I for my own part shall say, that I highly approved of his conduct; and was glad to find, that there was one man, at least, who had spirit enough to discharge so useful a public duty.—The venal prints have said, Sir, that Mr. Paull *hired a mob*; and, that very profound personage, Mr. PETER MOORE, swore, that *he, forsooth*, would look to Mr. Paull for any violence that might take place. But, if any thing had been to be done by *hiring*, is it likely that Mr. Paull would have had the advantage? Was it possible for him to have the 50,000 young men, who every evening conducted him from the hustings? Mr. Sheridan (and it was truly curious to hear it) requested Mr. Paull, on the first evening of the election, “to *speak to the mob*” to cease hooting him. “The mob!” exclaimed Mr. Paull. “They are *the people*, my very good friends, and it is not for me to dictate to them, as to the manner in which they shall express their feelings.”

But, though Mr. Paull *hired* nobody, Mr. Sheridan, or his supporters, hired people enough. On the first day, Mr. Paull, in compliance with custom, had a band, if I may so call them, of marrow bones and cleavers; but, they were that night dismissed. The Sheridan party had not only a large body of this description, but also 200 *bludgeon men*. Yet this formidable corps, though aided by a large gang of Sir Samuel Hood’s *sailors* (who would have been better employed on board ship), were unable to keep the field, when, towards the close of each day, the people were assembled at the hustings. The fact is, that the whole of the *free* part of the people were with Mr. Paull; and if he had not been extremely moderate in his conduct, his opponents never could have brought any body to poll for them.—You have seen, Sir, that the heroic Sheridan *kept away* from the hustings for several days; and, after what has already been published, you will want nothing to convince you, that the *illness* ascribed to a *blow* received at the hustings, was a mere pretence. Such it certainly was. No blow ever was, in my opinion, given. Mr. Sheridan, that same night, drank many toasts and made a long speech, at the Crown-and-Anchor, and he was, the next day, seen by many persons canvassing from door to door. Of the letter, which has appeared in the newspapers, under the name of the pretended *striker*, you will easily guess at the origin; and, if this man was really guilty of a *breach of the peace*, and was, as he is said to have been, *committed* for it, upon oath made against him, it will not fail to occur to you to ask, by what *sort of law* it was that Mr. Sheridan was able to *order him to be released*!

After Mr. Sheridan had been spurred on to come again and show that face of his at the hustings, he took occasion, one evening, to put in his claims to public gratitude on account of what he had done, or rather said, with respect to the *Volunteers*, of which *establishment*, he said, he had the honour to be a *colonel*.—Upon this the hisses and groans, which, from the effects of fatigue, had begun to subside, broke out again louder than ever. “No *regiments of tax-gatherers*; no *Major Downes the undertaker*; no *paluvering*; no *canting patriotism*,” were heard from ten thousand mouths at once. Finding that this did not take, he, as a prelude to another meditated stroke, began to pay some compliments to me, which compliments, coming from him, I took the earliest opportunity to say that I rejected with scorn. They, however, answered his purpose in obtaining silence, which he availed himself of to say, that he “detested my recommendation for *breaking faith with the public creditors*;” which words were hardly out of his mouth when the air rang with a shout of

indignant surprise; and this unusual clamour, in which every voice had been strained to its utmost, being followed by a short interval of comparative silence, a man, from the middle of the crowd, in a very distinct voice, uttered the following words: "Hear! hear! hear! Sheridan; "Richard Brinsley Sheridan, DETESTS BREAKING FAITH WITH "CREDITORS!" which words were echoed and re-echoed through every part of the immense multitude collected in Covent Garden and the adjoining streets and houses. The venal prints have recorded his observations levelled at me; but, they have taken special care not to notice the indignation and sarcasm drawn forth from the people by those observations.—Mr. Paull's address to the Electors, after the election, you have seen, Sir, in the Register. Mr. Sheridan's you may also have seen; and, if you have, I think I may venture to say, that so strong a mark of mental imbecility never before met your eye. Is this the man of great talents? Whither, then, are those talents fled? And what has chased them from their former abode? Is this the man, who has the modesty to rail against Mr. Paull, as a person unfit, from want of talents, to represent the city of Westminster? Could not the Whitbreads and the Moores and the Russells and the whole of the pompous pretenders to superiority of mind, make up any thing better than this senseless address, especially after having taken three days to write and alter and improve? Are we, indeed, to be told, that we shall all be ruined, unless we have men like these to rule us? In yourself, Sir, and in men like you, I, for my part, have no objection to acknowledge a real superiority; but, in men, such as we have had to contend with at Westminster, and of whom, at every step, we have *proved* ourselves to be the superiors in every thing of which men are laudably proud, base and despicable is the meanest man amongst us who acknowledges a superiority, and especially when the acknowledgment is, and with so much insolence, too, demanded at our hands.

Of the *high blood* of our opponents, and particularly of the *Sheridans*, I have before spoken, and I will not, therefore, offend your ears with their disgusting pretensions upon this score. But, Sir, it was impossible to hear the language of our opponents in general; the language of the several branches of but too many of the titled families, of the bankers, of the farmers of taxes, of loan-makers, and others, without looking back to the *real causes* of the destruction of the French Government, and to the conduct of the titled families when the French revolution broke out, and when the unhappy king stood in need of the defence of the titled families. And, what had we done, that we were to be treated as persons too low and insignificant to be heard in public? We had only claimed the exercise of that right, which the King's writ not only called upon us, but commanded us, to exercise. We had called upon all the free electors to choose a candidate free from the influence of either king or minister; and, were we, for this, to be treated as low and insignificant men? We have convinced our adversaries, that we are not insignificant even now; and, let fortune but give us another opportunity, and we will produce in their minds, if they are not completely stultified, the further conviction, that ours is not a sinking propensity.

Mr. Paull, as you have seen, Sir, obtained not only much *more suffrage* than either of the other candidates, but much more than had ever been before obtained by *any* candidate for the representation of the city of Westminster. And, Sir, this was done without any unfair means. We made no attempt to deceive or seduce the people. No sentiment

was expressed by us, that I myself had not expressed in print, when addressing myself to the dispassionate judgment of my readers, who, from the very nature of my publication, are, in general, to be found in what we commonly call the higher ranks of life. I never addressed myself to the ignorance and discontent and prejudice of the people; nor has Mr. Paull done it now. No influence, other than that which was visible to all the world, did any of us use; and as to myself, though there were many persons in Westminster, on whom I might have imposed almost a command to vote for Mr. Paull, I defy any man to say, that I even *solicited* a vote from any person under obligations to me. The law says, that "elections ought to be *perfectly free*;" and the dictates of the law I have, both in Hampshire and in Westminster, strictly obeyed. To say the truth, however, no commands were, on our part, necessary. We found all the *free* voice of the people for us; and, amongst those who were not free, we invariably met with hearty wishes for our success. The united influence of the government, the aristocracy, and the dependent clergy, operating upon avarice, upon self-interest, and upon self-preservation, was, with the aid of splitting votes, too numerically powerful for us; but, we had with us all the truly independent and virtuous men in the middle class of society. If the list of our voters were examined, it would be found, that we had not for us one play-actor, not one vagabond, not one of those immense numbers who live by means, which are notoriously illegal or immoral. Yes, Sir, it will always be our boast, that, out of the 4481 persons, who voted for Mr. Paull, only 335 voted for Mr. Sheridan; and, it will be amusing enough for you to hear, that Mr. Sheridan has the honour to number amongst his voters every one who voted at all of those godly persons, the members of the *Society for the Suppression of Vice!!!* Mr. BALDWIN, to whose name, though he verges upon three-score, is generally prefixed, for what reason you may probably guess, the infantine appellation of BILLY; this gentleman who is a *Commissioner of Taxes, Paymaster of the Policemen's salaries, and a member of the House of Commons*, in which latter capacity he, of course, votes the money that he himself receives on his own account; this gentleman, who was as busy and as clamorous in the cause of Mr. Sheridan as if he had never been a dependant of the Duke of Portland; this gentleman had the modesty to say, upon the hustings, that he would have the names of Mr. Paull's voters published, "*that none of them might ever be admitted into gentlemen's company.*" Now, what will Billy Baldwin say, when I publish the names of all the placemen, pensioners, and the relations of placemen and pensioners; of all the tax-gatherers, magistrates, police-men, and dependent clergy; of all the play-actors, scene-shifters, candle-snuffers, and persons following illegal or immoral callings? What will Billy Baldwin say, when I publish the names of all the persons of these classes, who have voted for Mr. Sheridan, and when I take care to show the people of England the *sums* which the voters of the former classes receive from them in taxes? He surely will not complain of illiberal dealing? Billy Baldwin, as the organ of our high-blooded adversaries, has thrown down the gauntlet; and shame upon our cause if there be a single man amongst us so base as to be afraid to take it up!

You have, doubtless, read, Sir, a description of the *chairing* of the two "*favourite*" candidates, as they are called by the venal writers of the daily press; and, until you read Mr. Paull's last address, it will certainly have appeared odd to you, that *favourites* as they were, they should not

have followed the invariable custom of being chaired round *Covent Garden*. They no more dared to attempt it, than General Regnier dared to attempt being chaired through our army in Egypt, they slipped away from the hustings, carefully keeping from the people all knowledge of their intentions; and, while the people were waiting in Covent Garden, they got to their CAR, through a narrow passage, which leads from St. Paul's Church into Henrietta-street. The car, which had been constructed by the people of *Drury-Lane Theatre*, was surrounded by beadies, constables, police-officers and police magistrates, to whom, even their own venal prints inform us, had been added the numerous officers of the Thames Police. "*The people*," of whom they talk, as *huzzaers*, consisted of the play-actors, scene-shifters, candle-snuffers, and mutes of the Theatre, aided by a pretty numerous bevy of those unfortunate females, who are, in some sort, inmates of that mansion. So that, the procession did, altogether, bear a very strong resemblance to that of BLUE-BEARD. The "*favourite*" candidates were almost entirely hidden by large branches of laurel, which the Property-Man, as they call him, of Drury Lane Theatre, had placed round the car; but, notwithstanding this, and notwithstanding the constables and police-officers (some of them on horseback and armed with cutlasses) were placed six deep on each side of the car, the mud found its way to the inside of it; and as the venal prints inform us, one man was actually seized, and committed to prison, for this act of throwing mud at the "*favourite*" candidates! About the time that they had got in safety to their place of dining, Mr. Paull set off from Covent Garden to his house, conducted by thousands upon thousands of men. Soon afterwards Mr. Paull, together with Sir Francis Burdett, set out from Charles Street to the Crown-and-Anchor; and, though it was now dark, the zeal of the people overcame even that inconvenience; for, the street quickly became as light as if it had been day. There needed *no money* to be given to buy torches. The people felt, that they were asserting their own rights; that they were engaged in their own cause; and, Sir, if I am told that they were *foolish*, let me never again be told, that they discover their *good sense* and their *patriotism* when they draw the carriages and light the way of such men as Lord Nelson.

Let us now look back upon the "*favourite*" candidates. As to the Commodore, few people, I believe, grudged him the honour of being the colleague, of being encircled in the embraces, of that man, from whose political touch Lord Percy had recoiled; and, as to Mr. Sheridan himself, though he talked of a *victory*, he well knew, he severely felt, that the 19th of November, the day when he was returned for Westminster, was the day of his everlasting political disgrace. Before Mr. Paull offered himself as a candidate, no notion existed in the mind of Mr. Sheridan that he should have any even the slightest opposition to encounter. He expected that the election would pass off as Lord Percy's had done; and, I dare say, his speech for the occasion was already prepared. He would have considered himself as the *successor of Mr. Fox*; so he would have been considered by the greater part of the country; and, he would have taken care to make the minister consider him as having the people of Palace-Yard always ready to petition, or remonstrate, at his nod. In short, the cup of his ambition was just touching his lip when we came and dashed it to the ground. The charm was dissolved; all his arts of delusion we baffled; we exhibited him in his true colours;

and, in those colours he will be seen unto the end of his days. Previous to the publication of Mr. Paull's first address Mr. Sheridan's friends gave it out, that he had refused any assistance from the ministry, being resolved to be the candidate of *the people*. What, then, Sir, must have been his feelings, when he was, at last, compelled to go, surrounded with his friends, and humbly implore the protection of the minister; aye, of that very man, whose public character and conduct, and whose talents as a statesman, had, for years, been subjects of his almost incessant censure and his affected contempt!—Sir, I cannot see *him*, thus stripped of his independence by an over-weening confidence in his powers of delusion; I cannot see him upon a level with the holder of a Treasury-Borough, while I see *you* a representative of your native county, having had recourse to no mean arts, but relying upon your own virtue and upon the friendship of a truly independent and honourable man; I cannot view this contrast without reverting to the time, when Mr. Sheridan, conscious of a hundred-to-one majority at his back, revelled in the delight of misrepresenting your arguments and your views, and of exciting a prejudice against you, amongst the very people, by whom, politically speaking, he has now been trampled in the dirt.

Here I should dismiss this part of my subject; but, the following passage in a publication of Mr. Sheridan demands a remark or two:—  
 “To this I can only repeat the answer I gave to a similar remark at the Thatched House, that I am far from being anxious to obtrude on the notice of the public Mr. Paull's praises of me, and still more reluctant to assist in circulating a *very coarse, though impotent, attack on the Duke of Northumberland and Earl Percy*. And as to Mr. Cobbett, I must again beg leave to differ from the committee. Believe me there can be no use in continuing to detect and expose the gross and scurrilous untruths which his nature, his habits, and his cause, compel him to deal in. Leave him to himself; rely on it, there is not a man, woman, or child, in Great Britain, who believes one word he says. With regard to the passage repeating the scandalous words, he continues to assert, I spoke on the hustings, notice of a different sort will be taken of that.”—I will not stop to ask who is most likely to be believed, *Mr. Sheridan or me*; but, I cannot refrain from observing with what ingenuity he is attempting to shift “*the coarse and impotent attack on the Duke of Northumberland and Earl Percy*” from his *own shoulders* to *mine*. I merely asserted that *he* had made such an attack, in addressing himself to a gentleman who was ready to make oath of the fact. So far from joining in this attack, I have, upon all occasions, expressed my decided disapprobation of it, well knowing, as I do, that the Duke of Northumberland stands as high in virtue, private and public, as he does in rank and in real dignity. The conduct of this nobleman, and all the persons acting under him, has been, during the contest at Westminster, truly exemplary and constitutional. They have, in no instance that I have heard of, attempted to interfere in the election. The manner in which the Duke withdrew his son from the city was most dignified and patriotic; and the public have only to regret, that the laudable example of both father and son was not followed by others who ought to have been proud to follow it. A fact has come to light, too, which I have great pleasure in stating, because it will operate as a correction of an error, into which, with many others, I was led with regard to Lord Percy's election, namely, that there had, from the beginning, been a

secret understanding between Mr. Wilson and Mr. Sheridan. It now appears, from unquestionable authority, that there was no such understanding; but that Mr. Sheridan, having his own objects with respect both to Westminster and Stafford in view, was the sole cause of all the public discontent which, upon that occasion, was so visible.—Mr. Sheridan and his committee interchange resolutions and vows *not to publish any contradiction of my statements*. They are wise, Sir; for they well know, that I have stated nothing which is not *perfectly and notoriously true*.

II. The situation of the Younger Sheridan in the army was, Sir, when my foregoing Number was written, but imperfectly known to me. I observed, that he had *given up* the sword for the more profitable pen; but, I now find, that the sword, as far as the *profit* of it goes, is retained by this person of wonderful versatility of talent.—What the younger Sheridan was, in what line of life he was known, previous to the Autumn of 1803, it is quite unnecessary for me to say; but, at that time he became a cornet in the Prince of Wales's regiment of Dragoons, which corps has now the honour to number the well-known Mr. *Mellish* amongst its officers! Hardly upon the list of cornets, the younger Sheridan became, as the newspapers told us, an *aide-de-camp* to the Earl of Moira, to whose wisdom was committed the protection of the Sister Kingdom, then threatened with invasion.—From the cornet of dragoons, however, our hero soon became a *Lieutenant of foot*, in the 7th Regiment, then and now at Bermuda.—Without having seen this his new corps, he became, in Sept. 1805, a *captain* in the 27th Regiment of foot, of which *Lord Moira* is the *colonel*, and, though the regiment, which is now in Sicily, was then at home, our hero *did not go abroad with it*.—Since the change in the ministry, our hero has become *Master-General* in Ireland, a place, I find, worth three *thousand pounds sterling a year*; and, Sir, if I am rightly informed, a *large pension* has been settled upon the person, who before held that office, as an inducement for him to retire in order to make way for our hero.

Now, Sir, leaving for a moment this waste of the public money out of the question, upon what principle is it, that this captain of foot is permitted to be, not only absent from his regiment, but placed in a situation of enormous emolument, which necessarily compels him always to continue absent therefrom, and which, as necessarily, throws his share of the regimental duty and of *personal danger* upon some other officer, or causes that duty to remain unperformed? Is this the way, Sir, that military merit is rewarded? Is this the way to excite and preserve emulation in the army? Is it thus, that the officers of our conquering enemy have been formed, and have been led to the performance of those deeds, by which almost the whole of Europe has been subdued? Is it, Sir, I put the question close to your bosom; is it reasonable, is it just, is it politic, that this man should cost the country, at a time like this, not less than *five thousand pounds a year*? And are we, Sir, to be abused and reviled; are we to be called *jacobins* and *levellers*; are we to be accused of a wish to pull down the government, to destroy all property and all rank, morality, and religion, because we complain of such an application of the public money? Is this the way, Sir, to ensure the affection of the people; to inspire them with ardour in defence of their country; to induce them cheerfully to make sacrifices of property, and, if necessary, to shed the last drop of their blood in that defence? To your wisdom and your in-

tegrity I put these questions of infinite importance; and, be assured, Sir, that I entertain and utter the sentiments of millions.

III. The general state of public affairs is, Sir, it cannot be denied, becoming, every day, more and more alarming. This fact nobody will attempt to controvert; but still, no one, as far as my observation goes, thinks seriously about the means of averting the threatening danger. As to the *people*, Sir, what I have recently witnessed in Westminster (whence the whole country will inevitably take its tone) has given me greater hope than any thing I have ever before contemplated. I found the people of that populous city full of public spirit, of real loyalty, and of resolution to defend their country. In all the various situations, into which I was thrown during the contest, I heard, from no man, a single sentiment of disloyalty; and, the sentiments the most favourably received were those of attachment to the King and the constitution, and those of hatred towards their and our enemies.

This disposition in the people, Sir, if properly cherished and cultivated, leaves us nothing to dread, even from the conqueror of Europe, should he land upon our shores; but, Sir, when we view the situation of all the other states; when we contemplate the mighty means that will now be brought to bear against us; when we consider how *long* this war may yet last, and when we reflect on the burdens which the people now bear; and the *daily increase of that portion of them who have no property to preserve*: when thus we reflect, can we avoid entertaining the most anxious apprehensions as to what time may produce?—One of the worst features in the aspect of our affairs is, that we have *no plan*, whether for domestic or foreign operations. Every one sees the danger; every one agrees that something great must be done; but no one, that I hear of, attempts to tell us *what*. In my view of the matter a great change is necessary in our financial and fiscal affairs; for, after all, it is *here* that the feeling of the people is most alive; and, I imagine, it will not *now* be contended, that it is even *possible* to defend a country, where the people are indifferent as to its fate. Never could the French in so few days have arrived at Berlin, if the people's hearts had been made of the right sort of stuff. A province, or a kingdom, may be invaded and overrun, indeed, in certain cases, though the whole of the people may be bent upon resistance; but, for an enemy to advance with post-horse celerity, driving over regularly constituted armies as if it were over so many flint stones, and to take possession of cities and fortresses with as little difficulty as if they were sheep-folds, argues a total rottenness in the conquered state; a rottenness, from the fatal effects of which God preserve our country.

In the Autumn of 1804, when a report prevailed, that a coalition was about to take place between the party of Mr. Pitt and the persons then composing the opposition, I publicly gave my reasons for thinking, that such a coalition would prove destructive to the country, *because it would prevent any change in the system*. These reasons I stated more fully in a letter to a friend, which letter you, I believe, saw, and from which letter, as correctly as my memory will enable me, I have taken the motto to this letter. I retain the same opinion still. Every day's observation serves to strengthen it; and, I ask you, Sir, whether you really think it chimerical? Only, for a moment, look back to the year 1800; and then turn to the scene now before you. What a change! Whither are fled the great, well-organized, and regularly combating parties? All is now dis-



jointed. Men know not on what to rely. There is no rallying point; no fixed object of political confidence left. A general confusion of opinion prevails; and, it appears to me, that there needs nothing but some untoward event, however trifling, especially if it come near home, to plunge us into miseries of which no human foresight can anticipate the extent. Yet, Sir, to avert this dreadful danger, there requires only such measures as the *present ministry* have it in their power to adopt. I, for my part, wish to see *no change of ministry*. If the present cannot save us, none of the sort that would follow it, can save us; and, Sir, these opinions of mine, are those of all the persons, with whom I have had an opportunity of conversing upon the subject.—The present ministry have it completely in their power to endear themselves to the people; and, I am of opinion, that there requires nothing but *some one man* amongst them to speak the first word. The rest, even if their hearts were not with him, would be ashamed not to follow; and, Sir, perceiving, as you must from the general tenor of my observations, the specific measures which I have in view, and acting, as you always have done, from a disinterested desire to serve your country, why should I not hope, that *you* will be that man?

I remain, Sir,

Your most humble, and most obedient Servant,

WM. COBBETT.

## TO THE RT. HON. WILLIAM WINDHAM, LETTER II.

I. *Upon the State of the Continent.* II. *Upon the natural consequences with respect to England.* III. *Upon the measures necessary to prevent those consequences.*

“No person, who has an office, or place of profit under the King, or receives a pension from the Crown, shall be capable of serving as a Member of the House of Commons.”—Act of Parliament, passed in the twelfth and thirteenth of William III. Chap. 2; and by which Act the crown of these realms was settled upon the present reigning family.

“*Qu.* Who is likely to be frugal of the people’s money?”

“*Ans.* He who puts none of it in his own pocket.”—BOLINGBROKE.

SIR,

Botley, 4th Dec. 1806.

In the last letter, which I did myself the honour to address to you, I alluded to the measures, which I considered as absolutely necessary to ensure the preservation of our country from the perils that await it. Those measures I now propose to speak of in a manner more specific, troubling you previously with some remarks tending to show that the necessity of those measures actually exists.

I. To attempt a description of the present state of the Continent of Europe would be a waste of time. That Continent is now subdued. The whole of it, Russia excepted, has fallen before the arms of one nation; and that nation is our implacable enemy. To see so many governments, so many ancient establishments, so many of the works of centuries swept down one upon another, like the pines of America yielding to the force of

the hurricane; to see so many noble and royal Houses annihilated, or worse than annihilated by owing their existence to the mere compassion of men, who were but yesterday unheard of in the world; to contemplate this picture the heart sickens within one. Yet, I must confess, that with all my veneration for antiquity; with all that desire, which is so powerful in me, to see preserved whatever has been long established and held in honour; notwithstanding all my feelings on the side of birth and of rank, I must confess, that the contumely and insolence of our "high-blooded" opponents at Westminster, and that the foul combination there formed against the exercise of the undoubted rights of the people, a combination avowedly founded upon the arrogant and unjust allegation, that, on account of our low birth, we were unworthy of any public influence or trust; this, I must confess, Sir, has had a tendency to mollify, in me, the mortification and grief, which the fate of certain persons on the Continent was so well calculated to excite. To forgive, and even to love our enemies, is, in certain cases, our duty; but, this precept, if stretched too far, would subvert every principle of justice, and would leave nations as well as individuals without the means of defence against aggressors of every description. Not to carry resentment beyond the period of repentance is reasonable and just, and is strictly commanded; but, to love and cherish those, who discover their inward hatred, and who openly affect contempt of us, is commanded by neither morality nor religion.—But, Sir, to apply these remarks to the subject more immediately before us, may we not be permitted to ask, whether contumely and insolence, somewhat resembling that above noticed, may not, upon the Continent of Europe, have largely contributed towards the producing of those events, which now seem to have stricken terror to the hearts of even the most arrogant and foolish? May we not be permitted to ask, too, where, in the history of the last eighteen eventful years, the superior wisdom and courage and virtue of "high blood" has discovered itself in a manner so decided and so conspicuous as to warrant the doctrines held forth by our haughty and supercilious adversaries at Westminster? Yes, surely, we may ask, whether any one will now venture to maintain, that none but "high-blooded" men are capable of defending the honour and the territory of their country?—With respect to what may yet take place in the way of subjugation upon the Continent, the erection of a kingdom in Poland seems pretty certain; and, this, it will be recollected, was predicted by me more than a twelvemonth ago. It was, indeed, an event easy to foresee; and, whatever effect it may produce upon Russia by carrying the armies and the principles of the South into that vast Empire, it will not fail to produce astonishing effects elsewhere, and of which effects we shall, if I am not greatly deceived, soon have ocular demonstration. This last event will complete the "federative system" of France; or, in other words, her scheme of "*universal dominion*," so much laughed at by the elder Sheridan and others, and so much dreaded by Mr. Burke and yourself. These Islands (God be praised!) are still unsubdued; but when the Romans had, in the common acceptance of the words, "conquered the world," there were still many parts of the world wherein they had never set foot. To be called the conquerors of the world it was sufficient that they had left no nation in a state to be their competitor for power.

II. Of the consequences, which the subjugation of the Continent by our enemy must naturally produce with respect to England, we have already, in the transactions at Hamburg, seen a trifling specimen. Often, as the

public can bear testimony, have I reminded the Balaams of the city, that the soldier was abroad, and that, rail and curse and cry as much as they pleased, he would, I was afraid, before he sheathed the sword, have his share of the good things of this world. They may now, probably, begin to believe me; and, when they consider, that at the very moment when their goods were seized at Hamburgh, they were exulting in their triumph at Brentford, they will certainly excuse the people, over whom they triumphed, for being too much absorbed with their own chagrin to have time to break their hearts with sorrow for that seizure. For my own part, events of this sort do, I will freely confess, give me very little uneasiness; because I am persuaded, that, with respect to the general and permanent interests of the kingdom, the seizure of mercantile property, already deposited in foreign states, can be productive of very little injury. I know well enough, that the merchants and the daily press will set up a most lamentable outcry upon this score; and they will accuse me of rejoicing, or, at least, of not weeping, at the success of the enemy; but, this will not deter me from expressing my opinion upon this subject; and, they cannot, in this instance, at any rate, accuse me of magnifying the power and success of that enemy. I will go a little further in this way, and say, that, were the French to succeed in seizing all the English goods and property in every port and place in Europe, and if they were to prevent such goods from being sent thither in future, I do not believe it would, even in the smallest degree, tend to disable England either for the defending of herself, or for the annoying of her foes. That it would shut up a great number of commercial houses, I allow; that it would lower a great number of merchants and bankers; that it would diminish the means by which the Shaws and the Mellishes have been put into Parliament; that it would do much in this way I am ready to allow; but, I am by no means prepared to allow, that it would be injurious either to the liberties and happiness of the people, or to the permanent security and dignity of the throne.

There is a strange perversity, which, upon matters of this sort, appears to have taken possession of men's minds. "*How are we to live,*" say they, "*if we cannot get rid of our manufactures?*" They regard the nation in the light of an individual shopkeeper; and then they run on reasoning upon all the consequences of a *total loss of customers*. But, they forget, that the individual shopkeeper must sell his goods in order to obtain food and raiment and money to pay for his goods, whereas the nation has nobody to pay for its goods, and can never receive an addition either to its food or its raiment for the sale of its goods. The fact is, that exports of every sort, generally speaking, only tend to enrich a few persons and to cause the labouring part of the people to live harder than they otherwise would do. We have seen, that many other nations have arisen to the highest pitch of greatness without the exporting of a single article of merchandise; and we have, I think, a pretty satisfactory example, at this time, in the situation of France. Yet, our eyes are not opened. We are not, indeed, so stone-blind as we were some few years ago, when, in answer to those who dwelt upon the dangers to be apprehended from the increasing power of France, the conceited and shallow-headed Pitt talked of nothing but the inexhaustible resources of our commerce, and of that poverty and bankruptcy, which must, he said, end in the total destruction of the power of the enemy. You well remember, Sir, that, at the peace of Amiens, your apprehensions of the still further increasing

power of France were, by that enlightened statesman, Lord Hawkesbury, answered by a constantly repeated appeal to our Capital, Credit, and Commerce, to which he as invariably and triumphantly pointed, as the no less profound Mr. Mellish lately did to the state of the poll. But, if one were now to go and ask that famous possessor of a four-thousand-a-year sinecure what Capital, Credit, and Commerce have been able to do in arresting the progress of French power, and how they are likely to operate in the preserving of England from the lot of Prussia, he would, methinks, be puzzled for a reply.

To the embarrassment and obstruction in our commercial pursuits, I do not, therefore, for my part, attach much importance; but, in the complete subjugation of the Continent, I see, and, I think, every man must see with dread, the means which the French will acquire of meeting us with an equal, if not with a superior force, upon that element, where we have hitherto been the acknowledged masters, and upon which mastery, talk as we may, we do, at bottom, place our *only* hope of safety. Exactly how long it may be before our enemy will be able to arrive at such equality, or superiority, it would perhaps be difficult to say; but, is it possible to believe, that, with the naval arsenals of every state upon the Continent, those of Russia excepted, at his command, he will not, in a comparatively short space of time, be able to send out fleets equal, at least in numbers, to ours? Holland, let it be remembered, is now no longer under the rule of an assembly of fat-headed burgo-masters. That Denmark will be somewhat worse than neutral who can doubt? Whatever force Prussia had will now belong to France. Genoa, Spain, Portugal, must contribute to their last ship and last sailor. With all the ports and all the arsenals of continental Europe at his command, he may, and I trust he will, be unable, for a long while, at least, to equal us in naval skill and prowess; but, while defeats will cost him little, victories will cost us much. We have seen what he is able to do by land; and can it be doubted, that, when all the Continent is fashioned to his will, the same extensive plans and unremitting perseverance will be applied to his operations by sea? The conquest of England has always appeared to me to be, by him, reserved for his last labour. To suppose that he has not resolved to attempt it would be a mark of downright insanity. The only question is as to the time.

There has been, and yet is, much difference of opinion with respect to the practicability of his landing a large army in England, while our fleets can keep the sea; but, in the case of those fleets being unable to keep the sea, there can be no doubt upon the point; and, if he arrive at the capability of engaging, at the same time, or nearly the same time, all our naval forces in the Channel and in the North Seas, our fleets, even supposing them to be at all points completely victorious, will not, immediately after such engagements, be able to keep the sea.

In viewing his points of attack he surely will not overlook Ireland. To *risk* a fleet and an army of thirty or forty thousand men, will not, with such an object in view, be the subject of an hour's hesitation. If one expedition fail, another will follow; and, if that fail, another, until success, in some degree, at any rate, crown his enterprises. This is a war, which, with him, will be now only *beginning*. There will be novelty to recommend it to his people and his army, while to the latter will be held out the powerful enticement of plunder unparalleled. Every day his means of carrying on this war will be increasing in quantity and improving in

quality; while, with us, it will be singularly fortunate, if the reverse is not the case.—To hope, therefore, that we shall not have, at no great distance of time, to fight for England upon English ground, can be expected in nobody but such men as Messrs. Bowles, and Mellish and Shaw, and the Sheridans, and Byng and Moore, and their like. We have long been *talking* about this fighting for England upon English ground; but we must now think of *acting*; for, as sure as we are in existence, the necessity will come.

III. If we regard it as certain, that, first or last, we shall, before the contest with the Emperor Napoleon is at an end, have to fight against his armies upon our own land; if this be our opinion, it then behoves us to consider what may be the final consequences; it behoves us to ask, why we should not, in such a war, share the fate of our neighbours; or, in the language of the courts, to *show cause*, why we should not be subjugated. For, though we must all, of course, have the greatest possible confidence in the wisdom as well as in the personal courage of the Duke of York, and in the wisdom and personal courage of the Dukes of Cambridge, Cumberland, Gloucester, and all the other persons, whom his Majesty and the Duke of York have selected as commanders upon the staff in these islands; and though we have the happiness to know, that our army have all been disciplined and dressed in exact conformity to the discipline and dress of the Prussian army, while we, at the same time, reflect, that we have the excellent example, both military and moral, of at least, thirteen thousand Hanoverian troops; yet, Sir, since we have seen great commanders, like ours, I mean the Duke of Brunswick, Prince Hohenlohe, &c. &c. defeated and their armies captured by wholesale; since we have seen that Prussian discipline and dress could not defend Prussia; since we have seen, that Hanoverian troops, though animated by the presence of one of those illustrious and gallant princes, to whom the defence of England is now so judiciously committed, were not sufficient to defend Hanover: since we have seen all this, and that, too, within a very few months, I think that every man who is really anxious to preserve the independence of the country will wish to see it provided with something more than the wisdom and courage of our generals, great as they may be, and aided as they are by Prussian discipline and dress and by Hanoverian troops.

The states, which, one after another, have fallen before the arms of France, have contained a miserable and degraded *people*. We have seen all their princes and nobles and armies active enough; but, except in Switzerland, we have never seen any thing of the people. In every other instance the people of the conquered country seem to have been quiet and indifferent spectators of the conflict; or, if they have appeared to feel any interest at all, it has, as far as our intelligence goes, been on the side of the conqueror. France, on the contrary, has exhibited a most complete proof of what *the people alone* are able to do. There, not only had the people no princes or nobles to assist them against the invaders of their country; but, their princes and nobles were either inactive, or expressing impatience for the arrival of the invaders, or, were employed in stirring up and encouraging those invaders, and actually aiding them in their attacks upon France. We know the result: love of country supplied the place of generals, of discipline, of magazines, of resources of every kind, or rather, it created them all in abundance. The king and his family, the nobles, the clergy, the farmers of taxes, the merchants, the parliaments, the courts of justice, all were overthrown and destroyed;

but, amidst the wreck the people lived, fought, defended their country, and finally became the conquerors of their invaders.

With this example before him, Sir, is there any man, is there any statesman, who, in calculating the means of defending England, will leave the hearts of the people out of the question? "No," I shall, perhaps, be told, "but the hearts of the people *are now* decidedly with the government;" [a fact which I certainly shall not deny. But, this being happily the case, then, all that I shall venture to do, is, to point out such measures as appear to me to be necessary to prevent the hearts of the people from being alienated from their government, or, in other words, to prevent the people of England from looking at an approaching invasion with the eyes of Italians and Germans.—It is greatly to detract from the merit of patriotism, or love of country, to regard it as an attachment to the mere soil, an attachment of which brutes are not only capable, but which they invariably entertain. Love of country is founded in the value which men set upon its renown, its laws, its liberties, and its prosperity; or, more properly speaking, perhaps, upon the reputation, the security, the freedom from oppression, and the happiness, which they derive from belonging to such country. If this definition of the foundation of patriotism be correct, it follows, of course, that, in proportion as a country loses its renown, has its laws and liberties frittered away, and its prosperity diminished, the patriotism of the people will decline; and, if we could suppose it possible for England to become, in matters of government, what many of the states upon the Continent were, upon what ground could we expect to see Englishmen voluntarily risking their lives in its defence?

The objects, for which men in general contend with the most zeal, are those in which they are most deeply interested. Amongst men who set a high value upon reputation, whether for talents or for courage, the renown of their country will be an object full as interesting as its liberties or its prosperity; but, amongst the mass of the people, freedom from oppression, and that happiness which arises from a comfortable subsistence, will always be the chief objects of attachment, and the principal motives of all the exertions which they will make in defence of their country.

If this be true, and I do not think that any one will deny it, does it not behove us, Sir, to think seriously of some means of alleviating the burdens of the people, or, at any rate, to prevent the increase of those burdens? Are these burdens imaginary? Are they not but too real, and too severely felt? Can you, Sir, contemplate the 1,200,000 paupers in England and Wales, without lamenting that so large a portion of the people have nothing, no, not even the rags upon their backs, to call their own? Add to these the vast numbers, who, though not actually paupers, have nothing worthy of the name of property; consider how fast this class is increasing from the natural and unavoidable effects of such a system of taxation as ours; and then say, how great is the number of persons who are in the enjoyment of that for the preservation of which they may reasonably be expected to venture their lives.

Persons, who do not examine or reflect; persons, who, in certain situations of life, can know nothing of the distresses and miseries of the labouring part of the people, may be excused for paying no attention to them; but, such inattention in a statesman is, at all times, and particularly at a time like the present, inexcusable. Experience, daily observation, minute and repeated personal inquiry and examination, have made me familiar with the state of the labouring poor, and, Sir, I challenge

contradiction when I say, that a labouring man, in England, with a wife and only three children, though he never lose a day's work, though he and his family be economical, frugal, and industrious in the most extensive sense of those words, is not now able to procure himself by his labour a single meal of meat from one end of the year unto the other. Is this a state in which the labouring man ought to be? Is this a state, to preserve the blessings of which he can reasonably be expected to make a voluntary tender of his services? Is this a state, to prevent any change in which he must naturally be ready to make, if necessary, a sacrifice of his life? How this state of hardship and of misery is produced by the system of taxation; how that system, by creating idlers, lessens the quantity of production, at the same time that it feeds one man upon that which has been produced by the sweat of another; how that system diminishes the number of proprietors of the soil; how it increases the riches and the luxuries of the few and the poverty and wretchedness of the many, I have heretofore, to my own satisfaction at least, amply proved. And, Sir, in answer to all this, shall we be told by those "petty tyrants," of whom you speak in your Address to the Norfolk Freeholders, that the labourer's miseries arise from his vices, and that, instead of bread he stands in need of the lash? Shall we be told by the elder Sheridan and Messrs. Bowles and Redhead Yorke, wallowing as they are in luxuries derived from our labour; shall we be told by these men, that we must make further sacrifices? Sacrifices "not only of the comforts but of the *necessaries of life*?" And, if we complain at this cool and hardhearted insolence; if we say that it is for them to begin at last to make some little sacrifices, shall we be stigmatized as Jacobins and Levellers? Not merely to the labourer is the degrading effect of the taxing system confined. The tradesman, the farmer, the clergyman, and the gentleman of ancient family, if he be not already driven from the mansion of his forefathers; all these feel, and most grievously feel, the effects of a system, which is daily and visibly depriving them of the hope of seeing their children able to move in the same circle that they themselves move in, and the means of accomplishing which hope they see taken away by the tax-gatherer, to be carried to aggrandize such men as the Bowleses and the Sheridans. And, if these persons, when they see themselves and their families thus stripped, complain; if they express a wish to have their burdens alleviated, and to see the public money more wisely and justly applied, are they to be told, by the Bowleses and the Sheridans, that they are Jacobins and Levellers? And that, though it is just to call them Jacobins and Levellers, it is also just and reasonable to call upon them to make voluntary sacrifices, and, if necessary, to shed their blood, in defence of this same system?

But, *what are the specific measures that I would recommend?* They are not few, Sir, in number, nor do they relate solely to a reduction of taxes; but, there is one thing, which must, if any good be to be done, take the lead of all attempts of an inferior description; and that is, *a House of Commons, in which there should be neither placeman nor pensioner.*—From a thorough conviction, that all our calamities and dangers had arisen from the members of the House of Commons being capable of receiving the money of their constituents, in consequence of votes given by themselves, I did, when I offered myself to the Electors of Honiton, state that I thought that no member of that House ever ought to touch the public money. I was instructed thus to speak from the reason of the

case, as well as from experience ; but, until I saw Sir Francis Burdett's last Address to the Freeholders of Middlesex, I did not know that the principle had been so clearly laid down in a legislative enactment, and that a law had actually been passed, containing the wise and important provision, the words of which serve as a motto to this letter. That act of parliament I have now read ; and, considering the time when it was passed, and the persons by whom the passing of it was advised, I should like to hear how the *Whig*, Mr. Whitbread, would answer the observations of Sir Francis. Mr. O'Bryen too (of whom, by-the-bye, I think much more highly than I do of Mr. Whitbread), after declaring Mr. Whitbread's letter to be *unanswerable*, says : " The objection to Mr. Sheridan (as a candidate for Westminster) of holding an office, is neither English, nor even French, nor Grecian, nor Roman ; it is of no clime or country, but totally original ; it may be the best of doctrines, but it is wholly new." How Mr. O'Bryen will answer the act of parliament, made for the security of the liberties of Englishmen, I will not presume to guess ; but, I am very strongly of the opinion, that, by this time, both these gentlemen are heartily sorry for having suffered their wish to annoy Sir Francis Burdett to carry them to such lengths. Mr. Whitbread's attack, when the obvious motives are taken into view, was the most unfair and the most unmanly, that, as far as my observation has gone, has ever disgraced electioneering contests. But he evidently estimated his character and his power far too highly. Like Mr. Sheridan, he does not seem to have had a friend to tell him that he was upon the wane in public opinion. He thought his stock of reputation so great as to leave him enough to squander in defence of his placed and pensioned friends : and, like Mr. Sheridan, too, he did not discover his error, until it was too late.

To return to the principle, for which I am contending as proper to be acted upon most rigidly at this moment ; there is, upon the very face of the thing, such an evident incongruity, nay, such a barefaced indecency, in members of an assembly, who are chosen to represent the people, and who are specially charged to see that their money is not misapplied, voting part of that money to themselves, that it appears to me passing strange, that any disinterested and reflecting man should ever have been reconciled to it. That members of the House of Commons should have been paid by the people who sent them, and that they should now be paid, for their time and expenses, was, and now would be, just and reasonable ; but, that they, or any of them, should receive, in any shape, remuneration from any other quarter, and especially in virtue of appropriations made in consequence of their own votes, the money coming out of that purse to guard which is their office, is, whatever Messrs. Whitbread and O'Bryen may say of it, without a parallel amongst all the mischievous inconsistencies and incongruities that ever were heard of in the world.

Mr. Whitbread's doctrine is, that, if the members of the House of Commons were prohibited from holding places of profit, the people would be reduced to the necessity of being governed by the worst of mankind. Upon this point he has been answered by Major Cartwright ; and, in this sheet, he will find another letter addressed to him by that gentleman, after which if he can hold up his head in public he must have more confidence or less feeling than generally falls to the lot even of the Whig of the 19th century. But, *why* does it follow that we must be governed by the worst



of mankind, unless our representatives in Parliament hold places of profit under the king? If the profit of your place, for instance, and that of Lord Howick's and Lord Henry Petty's were taken away, would you, all at once, become the worst of mankind? "No," but, perhaps, it will be said, "you would be unable, from want of means, to defray the expenses attendant upon the filling of a high office." I do not, for my part, see the necessity of any such expenses, when I know that every thing belonging to the office, down to the very pens and ink, is furnished by the public; and, when I am told of the keeping up of the *dignity* of the office, I really never can perceive how this is to be done by money, especially when I see no outward and visible signs of this dignity, and hear of nothing, for which ministers are, in the way of splendour, distinguished above other men, but the giving immense Dane-like dinners, the very accounts of which are surfeiting to men of mind, while they are cruelly insulting to the sinking and starving families with which the country abounds. You may read all the Paris papers long enough, Sir, without meeting with the history of a turtle-feast given by any minister of the Emperor Napoleon; and, if Napoleon himself had given turtle-feasts, and had associated with play-actors and buffoons, be assured that he never would have been an emperor.

But, supposing, merely for argument's sake, that a man, when he becomes a member of the ministry, is compelled to live at a more expensive rate than he otherwise would do; or, supposing, that it is in vain to look for men who will serve as ministers without deriving profit from their services. If this be so; if the people, on whom the ministers call for sacrifices even of "the necessaries of life," are to be told that these same ministers will not sacrifice so much as a part of their time; why, then, be it so; but, all that we in such case contend for is, that those ministers ought not to be members of the House of Commons, there to vote the public money into their own pockets. And, Sir, I think it would be very difficult to show how the business of the state would suffer from the banishment of that thing called *the Treasury Bench* out of the House of Commons. On the contrary, is it not notorious, that the business of that House interferes so much with the official business of ministers as to leave them little or no time for those reflections and deliberations, which are absolutely necessary to the well-governing of the country? And, how many are the instances, Sir, which you well know I could point out, where measures in the cabinet have been fashioned much more with a view to their effect in *debate*, than with a view to their national utility! —The great business of the House of Commons is, to watch over the interests of the people, and not to grant any money which ought not to be granted. The writers upon our "Excellent Constitution," that constitution of which Mr. Mellish vows to be the champion, have, all of them, spoken in high terms of this *third branch* of the legislature. To be sure, say they, the King has great prerogatives and power, and so have the peers; but, then, the people are completely protected against all these; because without the consent of their representatives, that is, *of themselves*, not a shilling can the King obtain in taxes. This is the "glorious constitution," of which we have heard, and of which we talk so much; but, is *this* the sort of constitution which Mr. Mellish, and the like of him, have in view? Or, do they mean a constitution, which admits of a House of Commons, elected as the late House was, and headed by the *servants of the King*? A House of Commons, in which, when a member

moved for certain papers relative to the expenditure of the public money, a servant of the King had the audacity to tell him, that the paper should not be produced, *because the member who moved for it had not previously communicated his motion to him!* This, Sir, is the constitution, which Mr. Mellish and Mr. Sheridan eulogize, and which, I doubt not, they will defend to the utmost of their power.

That a man cannot serve two masters is universally allowed, and this maxim may, surely, be regarded as particularly applicable to a case where the two services have been devised as a *check* upon each other; but you, Sir, if you are not grossly misreported in the newspapers, have, in your speech to the Freeholders of Norfolk, not only denied the truth of this maxim, as applicable to the case in question, but have asserted, that *the contrary* is the truth; and, that a servant of the King, so far from being *less* able to serve his constituents, is *more* able to serve them! If you meant, by serving his constituents, the obtaining of places for them, the making of them officers in the army or navy, or the giving livings to them, or the making of them excisemen or clerks or doorkeepers or sweepers or messengers; if you meant, that he was more able to scatter the public money amongst them; more able to bribe them with the spoils of their country; if this was what you meant, Sir, you were certainly correct. But, I hope, and do believe, that this was not your meaning; yet, Sir, how, in any other sense, are the words attributed to you reconcilable to reason? If you spoke of services to be performed *in the House of Commons*; and if your doctrine were sound, it would, of course, be better for the country, if that House consisted wholly of servants of the King. In one way or another, the House is, to say the truth, pretty well furnished with such persons already; but, as they are *more* able to serve the people than any other description of persons; as they are even *better* than independent men, why should we not be completely blessed at once; especially when there are so many hundreds of placemen and pensioners, who have nothing upon earth to do, and to whom the passing of laws and the voting of money at St. Stephen's might offer an agreeable afternoon's amusement, and might a little relieve the booksellers' shops from that lounging which is now their curse?—Surely, Sir, when you uttered the words to which I have referred, you must have entirely forgotten the act of parliament above quoted, which act was passed, observe, for the two-fold purpose of *settling the crown upon the family of his Majesty* and for *securing the liberty of the subject*. That act, with a view to this latter object especially, provides, “that no person holding an office “or place of profit under the King, or receiving a pension from the crown, “shall be capable of sitting in the House of Commons;” but you tell the people, that the *fittest* of all persons to sit in the House of Commons are those which this law so explicitly disqualifies! And yet, Sir, you do not fail, when occasion offers, to call upon us to make sacrifices for the preservation of our “glorious constitution!”

The House of Commons ought to have the power, the real and practical power, of *refusing* to grant money. Has it this power, Sir? Does it ever refuse? Let the minister that asks it be what he may; whatever may be the purpose for which the money is wanted; have you ever witnessed a refusal? And, if every sum, be it what it may, is *sure* to be finally granted, where, I should be glad to know, is the use of that *power of the purse*, with which the world has been so long amused? That this invariable submission to the will of the minister of the day, no matter who

or what he is, has proceeded from the power which that minister has of bestowing places and pensions upon the members, there will no doubt be pretended to be entertained by any well-informed and candid man : and, therefore, Sir, until this evil be removed, by restoring to us the practice of the constitution in this respect, I, for one, expect to see nothing efficient done for the preservation of the country ; because, until then, it would be folly worse than childish to look for any measure calculated to lighten the burdens of the people and to encourage them to make those exertions, without which you will find regular armies, though partly composed of Hanoverian troops, of little avail against a powerful host of invaders.

Nevertheless, I shall in my next letter, proceed in pointing out such measures as I think ought to be adopted ; and, in the meanwhile,

I remain, Sir,

Your most humble and most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

## TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER.

### LETTER X.

NOTE BY THE EDITORS.—Letters *three to nine*, to the Electors of Westminster, relate to nothing but the conflict between the parties to the Westminster Election, and are of no importance in any way ; but, those which relate to the turning out of the Whigs in 1807, on the Catholic question, are of great importance, both as to the question itself, and as to the state and intrigues of parties.

“ That nothing of this sort ” [the Pitt deceptions] “ will now be attempted  
 “ I am confident ; and, if it were, it certainly would not succeed. The nation is  
 “ not again to be duped in that way. It would look with abhorrence upon the  
 “ attempt ; or, which is still worse, it would entirely give way to that feeling of  
 “ indifference, which has long been creeping over it, and which, of all possible  
 “ feelings, is the best calculated to ensure and accelerate our destruction as an  
 “ independent people. Let us, however, hope for better things ; let us hope,  
 “ that there is now forming, and that we shall soon enjoy the benefit of, an ad-  
 “ ministration, including all the distinguished men in the country, all the  
 “ weight, whether of rank or of talent, that the nation possesses. Let us hope,  
 “ that, after this long, long night of ignorance, of jostling selfishness, of ser-  
 “ pentine intrigue, of crawling sycophancy, and of miring corruption, the dawn  
 “ of knowledge, of talent, of public spirit, and of integrity is approaching. If  
 “ so, and, surely, we have good reason to hope that this is the case, we may  
 “ safely rely upon the spirit of the people. That spirit is not dead : it is only  
 “ dormant ; it only wants to be roused ; but, as was before observed, this is not  
 “ to be done by rabble-rousing words. The threats of invasion, and other, *all*  
 “ other terrors, will now be of no avail. The people have ‘supped of terrors,’  
 “ foreign as well as domestic. They want nothing to terrify them. They want  
 “ something to console in ; something to cheer them ; something that shall  
 “ present itself to them as a fair foundation for hoping that they will, at some  
 “ time or other, be restored to their former state of happiness at home, and of  
 “ renown in the world ; something that shall make them love their country as  
 “ Englishmen were wont to love it ; something that shall make them think it an  
 “ honour to arm and to defend it. They want to *feel* the beneficent effects of  
 “ the acts of the government ; they stand in need of the impression to be pro-  
 “ duced only by great and striking measures ; and to adopt such measures, with  
 “ a fair prospect of success, will demand an exertion of *legitimate influence* to be

“hoped for only from the union of all those public men, who have distinguished themselves as the *enemies of corruption* and of *corrupt rulers*. Upon this last score it is, that the people (without whose *hearts*, let men say and think what they will, the *nation* cannot be saved) feel most sensibly; and, it must have been evident to every tolerably accurate observer, that, by his tortuous measures to protect peculators, Mr. Pitt lost more of the public confidence than by all his other measures and tricks put together. If, therefore, the new ministers shall *set their faces against all measures of this sort*; and, if, as I trust will be the case, they should resolve to institute an inquiry into the corruptions of the last twenty years; if they should do this, they need fear neither the ‘blood-suckers’ voices, nor the arms of the French. But, if they do not something, at least in this way, all their other measures will be useless. They will inspire no confidence; and, truth to say, *they ought not to inspire any confidence*. To a *change, a great change*, in this respect, I have always looked forward as the natural consequence of the overthrow of the Pitt system of rule; and, if no such change take place, not only shall I be cruelly disappointed and mortified, but, though, I trust, I never shall despair of my country, I shall be compelled to transfer my hopes from the present to a future day; for, as to going on in the corrupt path of the last twenty years, I shall hate myself if I did not recoil with horror at the prospect.”—POLITICAL REGISTER, Feb. 1, 1806. Vol. ix. page 143.

GENTLEMEN,—It was my intention to have analyzed, in this letter, the whole of the evidence given in the House of Commons, relative to the last petition of Mr. Paull against Mr. Sheridan, and then to have inquired into the justice of the decision, which was, at last, made on Wednesday the 18th instant, by that famous House (with the sole dissenting voice of Lord Folkestone), namely, that “the petition was *false* and *scandalous*,” and that Mr. Drake, the unfortunate acquaintance, son-in-law, and election supporter of Mr. Sheridan, should be committed to Newgate; but, though it would be an entertaining and not unuseful task to trace Mr. Sheridan through his connections with the persons, whom he has now blackened, and with those respectable personages, Mr. Homan, the Matron Butler, and the not less respectable Mr. Aaron Graham, who is, at once, superintendent of *convicts* and of the *Theatre of Drury Lane*; yet, I shall decline this task, at least for the present; and for the two following reasons: first, because I am satisfied, that, as to the evidence and decision, there can be but one opinion in the minds of all uncorrupted men; and, second, because, in speaking of the decision, I should not, in the present state of things, dare to express myself in the manner that I could wish; I should not dare to express my feelings, and I am unwilling to disgrace them by having recourse to rhetorical inventions, especially as a time is, probably, at hand, when with respect to every thing done by the present parliament, we shall be at liberty to say what we please.—With respect to the petition against the return of Mr. Sheridan, I have no scruple to say, that I am *decidedly against its further prosecution*. To the reasons, which I urged against it, at the beginning; or, rather, before it was begun, I might now add the argument of *experience*. Of all the means that the powerful and corrupt have of keeping down the people, that of ruining those who stand forward in support of their rights is the most effectual. Those, who are resolved not to take the wages of corruption, should take care not to expose themselves to the necessity of doing it. The corruptors say to those who would defend the people’s rights: “We will make you betray the people and join us in plundering them, or we will compel you to cease from your exertions, or we will ruin you; one way or the other we will prevent the people from deriving any benefit from what you are able to do.” Such is their threat,

Gentlemen, and, unhappily, they have, at present, the power to execute it with but too much punctuality. When they have succeeded, upon any such occasion, they never fail to boast, that it is the effect of *the people's* voice ; but, they and the devil well know, that, through the influence of that very corruption, which it is their chief object to support, the *free* voice of the people is as completely stifled, as it could possibly be by the feather beds of the murderer's den.

But, Gentlemen, though I decline addressing you any further, at present, upon the foregoing subject, there is another, upon which I cannot refrain from addressing you, as being of the greatest importance to us all, because likely to lead to the destruction of the system of corruption, by which we are so grievously oppressed ; I mean, *the change in the ministry.*

This change, which cannot *possibly* be for the worse as to *men*, or as to present *measures*, and which may possibly produce future good, has arisen out of a bill which was before the House of Commons, relative to the removal of certain restraints, under which Roman Catholics and other Dissenters laboured. I propose, first, to submit to you some remarks upon the effect which the bill would have naturally produced ; second, upon the motive whence the ministers brought it forward, as clearly demonstrated by the readiness with which they gave it up ; third, upon the conduct which is, by the newspaper writers, ascribed to the King upon the occasion ; fourth, upon the causes of the boldness of their opponents ; fifth, upon the way, in which we, the people, are considered and treated in this and similar cases ; and, sixth, upon the great and general cause of these struggles, so manifestly hostile to the interests, the tranquillity, and the honour of our country.

I. The Roman Catholics and other Dissenters, who refuse to comply with certain religious tests, are, by the law, as it now stands, disqualified from holding superior ranks in the Army or the Navy ; and, the natural effect of the bill in question would have been to open the road of promotion to persons of that description. This road is, in fact, already open to every class of Dissenters except the Roman Catholics, because the former either comply with the ceremony required, or are freed from the penalties of noncompliance by an act of parliament, annually passed, called the "Annual Indemnity Bill," which is no other than a law for the purpose of excusing from punishment men who have been guilty, knowingly, of a breach of the law. But, there is one test, which the Roman Catholics refuse to give, namely, that, according to which they are called upon to acknowledge the *supremacy* of the King, as relating to the *church*. This they make a point of conscience. They hold, that the Pope is the true and legitimate successor of St. Peter, whom, they say, Jesus Christ placed at the head of the Church, or, in other words, gave him the supremacy over it. They see plainly enough, that the Popes, like our prime ministers, are set up and pulled down by whatever power happens to be strongest ; and that, at some times, there are two Popes at once. They see, that any old man, sometimes a grasping miser, sometimes a concubine keeper, sometimes an incestuous beast, sometimes a tyrant, sometimes a consummate hypocrite, and sometimes much more than half a madman, may be Pope ; yet are they kind enough still to regard him as a being perfectly sacred. We, of the Church of England, who scorn such self-degrading bigotry, who are enlightened by philosophy, and have liberty to say what we think, hold, on the con-

trary, that *our King is the head of our church*, as we hold him to be also of the army and the navy and the courts of law and justice; and, all that we ask the Roman Catholics to do, is, *to swear that they hold the same*, which they, to a man, refuse to do; alleging, as was before observed, that, as Jesus Christ's Church is one, as theirs is that one, and as the Pope is the only legitimate head of that, our King cannot possible be the head of the Church. They are willing to swear, as often as we please, that they regard the King as the only temporal sovereign in his dominions; that with such matters their Pope has nothing at all to do; and that they own no earthly allegiance to any other sovereign than our King; but, we insist upon their swearing, that they own no religious allegiance to any body but the sacred person at the head of our Church; and, here it is that we split.—Now, Gentlemen, the bill in question would (as far as related to military and naval officers, and no farther) have done away the necessity of Roman Catholics giving this test; and, the natural effects would, as was above stated, have been to have placed our Roman Catholic fellow subjects, in the army and navy, upon the same footing with ourselves, leaving them in the quiet enjoyment of their notion, that an old man, living at Rome, whence he was sent for, the other day, by Buonaparté, to travel over the Alps, in the dead of winter, at the evident risk of his neck, is the true and only successor of St. Peter, the supreme head of the Church all over the world, and that it is agreeable to the will of a God of infinite wisdom, that this old man, or much about such a one, should be universally regarded as possessing sacredness and infallibility. Such a notion is, to say the least of it, consummately ridiculous; but, after having given due consideration to the subject, I cannot, I must confess, perceive any practical mischief that could possible have arisen out of it. Had the measure, indeed, tended to re-introduce the Roman Catholic religion here, with all its attendant temporal abuses, such as they are, or have been, in some foreign countries; with all its abbots and bishops, who, instead of residing in their abbeys and diocesses and superintending their priests, spent their time, in the metropolis, at balls, routs, dinners, cards and dice, and who, instead of bestowing benefices upon men of exemplary piety, crammed their abbeys and cathedrals with their stupid and profligate relations, and, not unfrequently, with their own bastards: yes, indeed, if this measure had tended to re-introduce an establishment, the clergy of which were promoted, not according to their merits, but through the influence of family connection, of government interest, of party or court cabal, or amorous intrigue; where benefices were frequently the price of political apostacy, of successful sycophancy, of prosperous pimping, or of the prostitution of a sister, a wife, or a daughter; and where so scandalously partial was the distribution of benefices (four or five of which were sometimes bestowed upon one clergyman), that it seemed as if the design was to belie the Gospel, and, instead of giving the hire to the labourers, to bestow it on the lazy and pampered pluralists, while the curates, the real pastors, were starving in rags, and while the flocks were regularly fleeced, but never fed: let any man reflect upon these things; let him compare what I have here described with our present happy situation; and then let him say, whether we ought not to have exposed our lives, to the last man, rather than submit to a system of imposture so degrading to us, had the ministers attempted to introduce it. But, Gentlemen, as I said before,

I am fully persuaded, that the bill would have had no such tendency ; that it would not have altered our church affairs at all for the worse ; and that, therefore, the cry, which the detestable hypocrites are setting up, about *danger to the church*, from the dreaded prevalence of *popery*, is surely one of those tricks, by the means of which knaves impose upon fools, and amongst which fools, I am confident, none of you will be found.

II. But, Gentlemen, while I am fully persuaded, that the bill in question would have produced *no harm*, either as to church or state, and while, I think, you will discover no reason why any class of our own countrymen should be excluded from posts of military trust, at a time when we see an army of *Hanoverians*, commanded by Hanoverian officers, stationed in the heart of the kingdom, I have, I confess, no very high opinion as to the *good* that would have been done by the bill ; and, as to the *motives of the ministers* in bringing it forward, they appear to me to be much worse than doubtful.—There has been much shuffling and quibbling upon the subject ; but, in few words, the state of the case is this. The ministers stood unequivocally pledged to bring forward some measure for the further relief of the Roman Catholics of Ireland. You will tell me, I know, that they stood as firmly pledged to bring forward many other measures, all which pledges they have set at defiance, laughing in the faces of those who were credulous enough to believe in their former professions. But, you will please to observe, that, upon this question, the *Grenvilles* also stood pledged, and not the less firmly because the Marchioness of Buckingham was a Roman Catholic. Yet, having seen, that Pitt found some difficulty in getting off from this rock, they would have avoided it, had they not seen, that the Roman Catholics were coming forth *with a petition to Parliament, in order to put their fidelity to the test*. Thus penned up, they fell upon a scheme, by which they thought to be able, at once, to silence the Catholics and to keep their places ; and this was, to get the bill in question passed, which they would have held out to the Catholics as a mere *beginning* of the fulfilment of their promises, and as a proof, that if more was not now done, the fault lay elsewhere. Their newspapers assert, with what truth I know not, that to this bill they obtained the previous approbation of the King. We will speak, by-and-by, upon this mode of originating bills ; but, that they really did obtain this approbation is, I think, pretty certain from that love of place which has marked their subsequent conduct, and which would have prevented them from agitating the question, if they had therein seen any danger to the duration of their power and emoluments. But, it is, with equal confidence, asserted, on the other side, that the King was not *fully* apprized of the purport of the bill ; and that he began to express his disapprobation of it, the moment the Mutiny Bill had passed. The real truth, however, is, I believe, that the King thought this a good opportunity of humbling them ; and was resolved to avail himself of it accordingly. When, therefore, he expressed his disapprobation of the bill, and when they instantly consented to *withdraw it* (though it was in the hands of the parliament, you will observe), that, as they now say, did not satisfy him, and he demanded from them a *written promise*, that they would, for ever after, refrain from interfering with him upon certain points, this, of course, amongst the rest. This written promise, which the Morning Chronicle denominates an “*indenture of servitude*,” they refused to sign ; and that refusal is the cause of their being stripped of their offices. Now, Gentlemen, if, after all that we have seen of these

ministers, since they have been in power, we wanted any proof of their want of principle, of their total disregard of every thing when put in competition with place and emolument, what other proof do we want than this their offer to withdraw this bill? In my last Register, not aware of this fact, I observed, that if they did not press this bill upon the House with all their might, they must be covered with everlasting disgrace; and, we now find, that not only do they not press the bill upon the House, but that they would have kept their places even on the condition of withdrawing the bill. Yet has this, even this part of their conduct, met with an advocate in the Morning Chronicle. Its defence of it is, I think, rather more curious than any thing I have seen for some time; I, therefore, beg you to read it with attention, bearing in mind, all the while, that when Pitt returned to office, without bringing forward a bill of the same sort of much greater extent, this Morning Chronicle accused him of the basest abandonment of principle. I must once more press upon you the necessity of reading the whole of the passage with attention; for, be assured, it contains the substance of their defence; and it contains, too, some very pretty doctrines about our "invaluable constitution," as they are continually calling it, in the House of Commons.—

"The Prerogative by which the King may remove his Ministers is, like every other, a Prerogative vested in the Crown for the good of the Nation, and to be exercised with no other view and to no other end.

"The House of Commons has just as unquestionable a constitutional right to refuse Supplies as the King to change his Ministers—but in *neither case* is the right *arbitrary*. It is to be exercised with a sound discretion, and, in fact, in both cases is a *latent remedy*, inherent in our Constitution, to be called into use upon great emergencies, rather than the ordinary *healthful system* of our Government.—Ministers felt that they had a most important duty to perform. They had recourse, therefore, to no abstract theories. They knew that measures were to be conducted from their commencement to their conclusion, according to the PRACTICE OF THE CONSTITUTION, and every measure they have proposed has been framed and brought forward, as much with a just acknowledgment of the authority under which they acted as Ministers, as with an ultimate view to the best interests of their country.—When a particular measure came to be discussed, either as to pressing or abandoning it, it was their duty to consider the whole ends and views of their general administration, and its tendency to advance the public interest, as well as the value, at the time, of a single measure, however important. *They were under no DIRECT pledges*; and they knew that if they could not, as Ministers, effect the object, their abandoning the Government would, in every way, render worse the situation of those whom they wished to benefit. In the situation in which the country stood, it was not one question on which its fate was staked, and *they did not feel themselves justified in forsaking the general management of affairs at so important a crisis, because one measure had encountered obstacles*.—They knew, moreover, that if a conscientious scruple might have influenced in one quarter, that scruple was sure to create a whole swarm of tartuffs and hypocrites from interest; and that the very supposition of extorting a disagreeable concession from the King, was sure to set all the activity of pettifogging devotees in motion, to make religion and conscience the watchwords of faction. Ministers, therefore, resolved to deprive their enemies of this



" factious pretence of conscience and principle; they resolved to strip  
 " the pettifogging casuists of all apology for exciting old prejudices, and  
 " kindling forgotten rancours. They gave up the question, the success  
 " of which, in the circumstances of the case, would not have been ad-  
 " vanced by their adherence to it. They did not wish to afford an excuse  
 " to a set of unprincipled intriguers for exciting a ferment in the state,  
 " under the cloak of any assumed authority above them.—This *firmness*,  
 " and this just consideration of the *whole interest of the State*, has with-  
 " held Ministers from giving up their places to the intriguers, who wish  
 " to supplant them."—To take this defence in due order, we are first  
 called upon to express our admiration at the discovery, that the prerogative of the crown to dismiss ministers and the privilege of parliament to refuse supplies are "*latent remedies*" in our constitution, to be brought forth and applied in great emergencies, and not to be used in the *healthful* state of the patient. With respect to the latter, it is very latent; very latent indeed; and it is hard to conceive any state of the patient that will be able to call it forth. But, the former is not so latent. It is used pretty often, and with wonderful effect. The truth is, Gentlemen, that this difference arises from the state of the doctors and not of the patients. The prerogative of turning out ministers is in active hands, while the privilege of refusing supplies is a remedy that is deposited with those who seem to have been, by some means or other, prevailed upon to leave off business. Yes, Gentlemen, it is this power of *refusing supplies* that constitutes the *sole* check which the parliament has upon the crown, and, if this power ceases, no matter from what cause, there is no check at all upon the crown.—The ministers, we are told by this writer, " did not amuse themselves with abstract theories," but acted upon " the *practice* of the constitution." That is to say, they threw aside what ought to be done, and did what others had done before them; and, accordingly, they first obtained the consent of the king to the passing of a law, before that law was propounded to the House of Commons. This is a fine doctrine to urge in favour of men who have, for twenty years past, been bawling about the constitution, and railing against the increase of the power of the crown! No; they " did not amuse *themselves* with abstract theories" about checks and balances: that was a treat they kindly kept for us: mountebanks never play their tricks for the amusement of one another: they would as soon think of curing their ailments with their own brick-dust and yellow-ochre drugs.—But, now for the two grand reasons for withdrawing the bill; the first of which is, that the ministers, being under " no *direct* pledges," thought it for the good of the country, in such an important crisis, that they should give up the bill and keep their places. As to the pledges, they mean, I suppose, by introducing the word *direct*, to say, that no man holds a bond, under their hand and seal, for their bringing forward the measure relative to the Catholics; for, in every other way, short of this, had they pledged themselves to that measure. Several of them had resigned with Pitt, in the midst of war and difficulty, because the king would not consent to it; all of them, except Lords Sidmouth and Ellenborough, had urged the adoption of it after Pitt's return to power; and had reproached him, and justly reproached him, with the basest apostacy and love of place, because he accepted of that place upon conditions which disabled him from carrying the measure. No; there was no bond to hold up to their teeth, there was no "*direct* pledge," nor was there any in the case of the Spartan

General towards Colonel Johnstone; but, Gentlemen, those who were not to be held to a pledge, such as these ministers had given to the Catholics, and such as the Spartan General had given to Colonel Johnstone, would, I think you will agree, have made, with the help of a pettifoggng attorney, a tolerably decent struggle against the trammels of a parchment bond. "No direct pledge!" Verily, when the king had heard this from them; when he had seen the readiness with which they acted upon it, it was high time to have their pledges down in black and white.—With respect to the plea, that they gave up the bill, in order that they might be able to keep their places *for the good of the country*, it is, I will say that for it, the most modest I ever heard in all my life; but, at the same time, it is a plea that every set of placemen have made use of from the days of the famous CABAL down to those of Lord Howick and General Fitzpatrick. Pitt did not court place. Lord Melville never wanted place. Nor the Addingtons nor the Hawkesburys nor the Hobarts nor the Edens nor the Roses nor the Huskissons nor the Cannings nor the Calcrafts nor Alexander Davison nor General De Lancey; no, none of them ever wanted, or now want, place and pelf, any more than these are wanted by the Grenvilles: all, all to a man, have wanted merely the power of serving the country; that country which is so dear to them, and to which they are so dear. But, in such case, men, in the ardour of their zeal to be serviceable, are apt to overrate their ability; and, I think, if we look at the thirteen months' administration of these men, we shall find it difficult to imagine how they could possibly have done less good to the country; the putting a stop to the increase of the taxes being the only act of theirs worthy of marked approbation, and that was a measure, which the state of things would, of itself, have effected. It may, indeed, be said, that, after having, most of them, been kept out of power for twenty years, nay for twenty-two years, it was no more than fair to allow them the first year to settle themselves and their relations well down; and that, when we accuse Mr. Sheridan of having fulfilled none of his pledges, we uncandidly overlook the fact, that he has been settling his son in a place worth three thousand pounds a year, at home, while he is captain of a regiment serving abroad; is this doing nothing? Is it nothing for Mr. Grey to have made his father an Earl and himself a Lord? Did he do nothing while he was at the head of the Admiralty? Those who accuse him of that forget, surely, that he turned off Sir Charles Saxton, the Commissioner at Portsmouth, upon a pension, for life, of six hundred pounds a year, in order to make way for his brother, the "Honourable" Mr. Grey; and that another brother of his, who has acquired his military fame I know not where, has been appointed to supersede General Baird in the command of the Cape of Good Hope. Is this doing nothing? And this is only a very small part of what he has done for his own kindred, to say nothing of what he has done for those who have shown themselves willing to defend him against the reproaches of his former friends. Then there is my Lord Henry Petty, has he done nothing? Let any one look at the brood of young friends that he was nursing up, and some of whom he had actually got, not only into office but into parliament, though, to ignorant observers, it would not seem that nature ever intended them for any thing beyond the desk of a counting-house. This is, I think, doing much; and, only a little of his lordship's works, in this way, have become visible, the chief part of his brood having not yet made their appearance, being, at this moment, in much

about the same situation as that of a nest of callow rats at the tearing down of the building, amongst the rotten and hollow parts of which they are deposited. Has Mr. Calcraft done nothing? Has General Fitzpatrick done nothing in not only attending to his office, but in securing to himself, independent of that office, a colonelship of an old regiment, though he sold his company in the Guards twenty years ago, and though he has not seen a day's service since? Has Lord Erskine done nothing? Is the taking of his son from the bar (where, doubtless, he would soon have got briefs and fees), and the making an *ambassador* of him; is this nothing? Is it nothing to have bestowed a large church living upon a son of Mrs. Bouverie? Is it nothing to have made comfortable provision for every relation that was dependent upon himself? And, are all these things; are they, and a hundred others that might be mentioned, nothing? Are they nothing at all? And, coming to reason and conscience, Gentlemen, could we expect, that, amidst all these important concerns, the old musty pledges about parliamentary reform and the sedition bills should be remembered? To be sure, it may be said, that any body else; that any fifty men that one could have stopped in the Haymarket, would have been as able, though, perhaps, not quite so willing, to do all this, as the Whig ministers have been; and, as this is probably true, I really can see no reason to regret, upon the score of ability, their departure from office, especially when I consider, that they will be succeeded by men equally adroit in the creating and disposing of places and pensions.—The second grand reason alleged for their offering to withdraw the bill, is, that they wished to deprive the *tartuffe* courtiers, as they call them, of an opportunity of asserting, that they were turned out for attempting to force the king to do that which was contrary to the dictates of his conscience. Now, Gentlemen, you will observe, that, either they did attempt to force the king's conscience, or they did not. If they did not; if they proposed to him nothing but what was constitutional and expedient; what a pretty proof of their *firmness* have we, in their having given up the measure, lest their adversaries should make of their perseverance a handle wherewith to excite popular prejudice against them? And, if they did attempt to force the king's conscience, what shall we say to the sincerity that taught them to endeavour to make the world believe, that they did not? Their choice, therefore, seems to lie between unparalleled pusillanimity and unparalleled hypocrisy, the very least of their meannesses being, that, at any rate, and upon any condition, they wished to keep their places. "No," they will say, "we refused to keep them upon the last condition proposed to us." Aye, aye; so you did; but, you well knew, that if the king had once had you down in black and white, your places would not have been worth an hour's purchase; and that, in fact, you would have been turned out, and, if possible, in a plight a little worse than that in which you now are.—As long as there was any, even the faintest hope, of preserving those places, you stuck to them like a louse to a German's beard, which retreats and advances with the ebbing and flowing of the beer mug or the gin glass; but, when you were *certain* that you could keep them no longer, then, and not until then, you made a refusal that might serve, as you hoped, to reinstate you in the opinion of your former friends; a hope in which you will, assuredly, find yourselves deceived. Your promised *explanation* cannot have reached me, before this sheet is in the press; but, after what I have seen in your associate, Mr. Perry's newspaper, I want not

to hear it, in order to enable me to judge of its substance. It will consist in dark hints, in general, loose, and common-place observations, upon the prerogatives of the crown, upon the duty and *responsibility* of ministers, upon the critical situation of affairs, and upon your own endeavours and virtues; but, mark my words, your harangues will be received, out of doors, at least, with as much indifference as you received the petition of Colonel Johnstone. The newspapers containing them may be *read*, and may be *suffered to lie upon the table*; but, not one sigh of sorrow will they draw forth, not one word will they cause to be articulated in your favour.

III. Upon the conduct of the King, in this case, there is no need of saying much. He acted as most other men do, in similar circumstances; he followed his own inclination. It is not necessary to enter upon the question, whether he did right or wrong; and, besides, the constitution says, that he can do no wrong. All that it seems to be worth our while to think about, as touching the conduct of the King, is this; that, the newspaper writers assert, that it was he, or persons acting under his commands, that stopped the progress of the bill in the House of Commons. I have before observed, that we have been taught to believe, that there are certain *checks* and *balances* in our constitution of government; but, Gentlemen, if these news-writers speak truth; if the King can, when he pleases, put a stop to the progress of a bill in the House of Commons; if this be the case, it is, in reality, the King who causes every law to pass that does pass; and, as he is also the executor of the law, where, in that case, are those famous *checks* and *balances*? And, of what use at all is the House of Commons? You will, of course, perceive, that I am arguing against the doctrine of the newspaper writers, without pretending to admit the fact; but, Gentlemen, I scruple not to assert, and that in the most unqualified manner, that, if the King had it in his power to stop, whether directly or indirectly, the progress of a bill in parliament, that parliament, like the old degenerated, corrupted, and despised parliament of Paris, would be a mere court wherein to register the edicts of the King, and that we, however we might endeavour to disguise the shameful truth, should be the subjects of an arbitrary monarch.—So far, however, am I from regarding this as our present situation; so far am I from looking upon the parliament as a set of puppets, moved backward and forward by a set of ministerial wires; so far am I from supposing that 658 of our countrymen could be found to be so detestably base, that I must regard the postponement of the Roman Catholic Bill as merely temporary. It was brought in by Lord Howick; but, having been read by the House of Commons, having been received by that House with every mark of approbation, some other member will, surely, move for the second reading, in due time. I confidently trust, that I shall not be disappointed in this, because it seems necessary in order to give a proof of the absurdity of the above-mentioned doctrine of the newspaper writers. Good God! the King cause a bill to be stopped in its progress through the House of Commons! I dare be sworn that such an idea never entered the mind of His Majesty even in a dream. If this were the case, what a farce would be the *deliberations* of that house! We might do with their votes what that excellent fellow, Swift, proposed to do with those of the Legion Club. Forbid it, decency! Forbid it the title of "honourable gentleman!" Why, if this abominable doctrine were to be admitted, the deliberations of the House of Commons

would resemble the proceedings of a Dean and Chapter, acting, in the choice of a bishop, under the illuminating inspiration of a *congé d'elire*; that is to say, a leave to elect a bishop, accompanied with the name of the person to be elected." Mr. Baron Maseres, in an excellent pamphlet upon church affairs, recommends that this mode of proceeding be discontinued; because, says he, it is ridiculous to hold an election, when the parties electing are commanded whom to elect, and it is particularly offensive, to a mind really religious, to see the aid of the Holy Ghost invoked upon such occasions. It were much better, he adds, for the King to appoint the bishops at once by letters patent. And, Gentlemen, if the doctrine of the newspaper writers were sound, would it not be much better for the King to make the laws himself and to issue them to his subjects, as the Emperors of Russia and Austria do? If the King and his ministers, no matter which, could stop the progress of a bill, in the House of Commons, when they pleased, they could of course cause to pass whatever laws they pleased; and, if they could do this, no matter by what means, whether by the bayonet or by securing a corrupt majority of the members, should we not be the most base of wretches to affect to believe ourselves to be the subjects of an arbitrary monarch? Far, however, from us, Gentlemen, be such thoughts as these. We know that this newspaper doctrine is base and wicked. We know, that the "faithful Commons" are the guardians of our purses and our liberties. We know that they are all, yea all, "honourable gentlemen." We know how full of independence and of spirit they are; and, therefore, I call upon you to join me in execrating this abominable doctrine of the newspaper writers, who, when I consider what passed with respect to Mr. Reeves, must, I should think, certainly have their ears clipped off. Mr. Reeves had said, in a pamphlet, that the constitution was a tree, of which the King was the trunk, and the two houses of parliament the branches, or, rather the limbs. "These two," said he, "may be hewn down and cast into the fire; but the trunk still flourishes." This metaphor caused a prodigious uproar. The Whigs, with Mr. Sheridan at their head, brought the matter before parliament, and moved and voted for the pamphlet to be burnt by the hands of the common hangman, and to address the King never to suffer Mr. Reeves to enjoy any place of profit or trust, as long as he should live. This motion failed, but the House ordered the Attorney-General to prosecute Mr. Reeves in the Court of King's Bench, and in the motion for this order they were nearly unanimous. Well, then, will the Whigs now be silent, when it is openly, and, doubtless "*falsely and scandalously*" asserted, that the King has caused a bill to be stopped in its progress through the House of Commons, and what is more, that these very Whigs have been the bearers of his commands? Oh, foul and wicked slander; equal, at the very least, to that contained in Mr. Paull's last petition! And, shall this pass unnoticed? I trust not. I trust, that some one of those "youths of elevated rank and of lofty and generous sentiments," whom Mr. Wilberforce so applauded, during the debate upon the slave-trade abolition bill; I do trust, that some one of them will, step forward, upon this occasion, to avenge us, who have been so grossly insulted in the persons and office of our independent and faithful and incorruptible representatives, called the House of Commons.

IV. As to the cause of boldness in the adversaries of the ministers, it is simply this; that they well knew, that there was not one sensible

and sound man in the kingdom, or upon the face of the whole earth, that would make an effort to prevent their being turned out, or that would express, or feel, the smallest regret at the event; and, as to the great body of the people, exclusive of the government dependants, it was easy to foresee, that, though they might expect no good from their successors, they would feel satisfaction at the fall of those, who, after twenty years of pledges, had disappointed and betrayed them. In the passage which I have taken as a motto to this letter, Gentlemen, I express the hopes and the fears, which alternately pervaded my mind, at the time when these ministers came into power. In twenty other passages, written about the same time, I exhorted the ministers so to act as to merit the confidence of the people; and, in one of those passages, in particular, I predicted, that, unless they so acted, their power would be of short duration, and their fall unregretted. My exhortations passed by unheeded. Instead of a *great change* as to the system of Pitt, the new ministers began their career by voting away our money to pay the debts of Pitt, whose character and whose system have been, from that day to this, subjects of their incessant and even gratuitous applause, while, in their measures, in their doubling of the Income-tax; in their screwing up of the collections of the assessed and other taxes; in their stifling of inquiry, by their previous questions; in their backwardness to grant papers of information; in their constant and but too successful efforts to screen persons, accused of misrule or speculation; in their unrelenting oppression of all those who became accusers of such persons; in their dissolving of parliament and their interference in elections; in their introduction of foreign troops; in their creating of new offices and granting of new pensions; in all these, and in almost every thing else, they have followed the example of Pitt, and have, with all their might, both in words and in deeds, supported his destructive system. And, as if all this were not enough, the persons formerly attached to them, and to whom they principally owed their elevation, not being made of stuff sufficiently supple for their purposes, they uniformly turned their backs upon, while they embraced with political philanthropy, the ready-made sycophants of Pitt. Of the numbers upon whom they turned their backs, *I am not one*, I having, on the eve of their elevation, explicitly declared to them, that *I never would have any public emolument as long as I lived*; but, I know many, upon whom they have turned their backs; and, amongst all their sins, this, their sin of ingratitude, is by far the greatest. Let them now wail the lost love of the people; that people, whom, in the hey-day of their power, they despised and held in derision. Do they expect, Gentlemen, that *you*, for instance, to whom they formerly addressed themselves for support, and against whose free voice they have recently combined with the Pitts in such malignant hostility, representing as Jacobins and Levellers all of you who adhered faithfully to the principles formerly professed by themselves; do they, indeed, expect, that, amongst you, there will be found one single man foolish enough to regret their fall? Whatever they may expect, however an overweening vanity may lead them to conclude, that their powers of delusion and deception will again serve their turn, their adversaries will draw no such conclusion. Those adversaries well know, that while they have lost all their former friends, they have gained over not one of their former enemies, who, while they were cherished by them, were watching for the opportunity of ensuring their destruction. Those adversaries well know, that their

professions will never again be believed; and that, when, from the opposition benches, where they are already seated, they again clamour about corruption, and about the increasing power of the crown, we shall remind them (as, with life and health, we will) of their own corruption, and of their having added so enormously to the pensions of the Royal Family, while, at the very same time, they passed an act to exempt from the Income Tax the King's property in the funds. All this their adversaries well know, and knowing it, they also know, that they have nothing to fear from their clamours, which will all be ascribed as is most justly due, not to the love of their country, but solely to the love of power and emolument.

Upon the remaining topics I shall trouble you with some observations in a future letter. In the meanwhile,

I remain,

Gentlemen,

Your faithful friend and obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 26th March, 1807.

## SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

### LETTER XI.

(*Political Register, April, 1807.*)

"I pledge myself to this house and to this country, to show, that the waste and profligacy, that attends places and pensions and abuse of various public offices, are so great as to be sufficient to maintain with bread all the labouring poor of this country. I do not speak hastily and at random; I have information to proceed upon; for I have been in a situation, in which I had an opportunity of examining into these matters."—Mr. SHERIDAN'S Speech, 13th March, 1797.

GENTLEMEN,—The two topics, which, from want of room, I left untouched upon in the last letter that I had the honour to address to you, namely, the manner in which the people are considered and treated in the changes of the several ministries, and the great and general cause of these struggles, so manifestly hostile to the interests, the tranquillity, and the honour of our country; upon these two topics I shall not now need to address you much in the way of reasoning, seeing that the debates, which have since taken place in the House of Commons, will, when merely analysed, afford you a *practical proof* of what it would have been my object to establish by argument.

But, before we proceed to this analysis, it seems necessary to observe, that the EXPLANATION, which was, with so much previous pomposity, given by Lord Howick, in the House of Commons, on the 26th of last month, differs in no material circumstance, from the statement of the case, as given in my last letter. It appears, 1st, that the bill in question, was before the House of Commons, where it had been received with great applause, and had been read a first time; 2nd, that the king expressed to the ministers his disapprobation of it; the ministers immediately consented to *withdraw it*, without, observe, seeming to think the consent of the House of Commons at all an object of solicitude; 3rd,

that they made a minute<sup>d</sup> of council, however, in these words:—"That they trusted that his Majesty would see the indispensable necessity of their expressing, on withdrawing the Bill, the strong persuasion they felt of the benefits which would result from a different source of policy to the Catholics of Ireland; and they further stated, that it was indispensable to their characters, that they should openly avow these sentiments, not only on the present occasion, but in the event of the Catholic Petition coming forward; and they further insisted, that the present deference to his Majesty might not be understood as restraining them from submitting *for his Majesty's decision*, from time to time, such measures as circumstances might require respecting the state of Ireland;" 4th, that, upon perceiving this minute, the king not only dissented from it, but required of the ministers, that they should withdraw the latter part of it, and even substitute in its place a written obligation of a directly opposite nature, pledging themselves never to bring forward again the measure they had abandoned, nay more, never to propose, even to the king himself, any thing connected with the Catholic question; and, 5th, that, upon refusing to enter into this written obligation, the ministers were dismissed, and others, as we have seen, appointed in their stead. This is the fair state of the case, agreed upon by all parties. There is, indeed, a little dispute, as to whether the king was, beforehand, fully and circumstantially apprised of the whole extent of the measure, or whether a part of the tendency of the bill was not perceived by him previous to its introduction; but, of whatever importance this circumstance may be to those who attempt to reconcile with the spirit of our constitution the practice of originating bills under the express authority of the crown, and of withdrawing them under the same authority; of whatever importance this circumstance may be to such persons, it can, Gentlemen, be of no importance at all to us. These ministers we now find not ashamed openly to avow, that they proposed and brought in a bill, to which they thought it their duty to obtain the king's consent; and that, the moment they perceived a change in the mind of the king with respect to it, they agreed to withdraw the bill from the House of Commons; and, this avowal they are not afraid to make in that very House of Commons, where, that the thing may be complete, they are heard with applause! Observe, too, that they complain most bitterly of having been *misrepresented*, and the gentle Lord Howick talks of newspaper *libellers*. But, what is this misrepresentation? Some one, no matter who, publishes their famous minute of council, leaving out the words which I have marked by italic characters; so that, from this publication, it might have been understood, that they reserved to themselves "the right of submitting, *for the decision of parliament*, such measures as circumstances might, from time to time, require, respecting the state of Ireland." No, say they; no such thing; we did not attempt to reserve to ourselves any such right. All we attempted to do was, to reserve a right to submit such measures *for the decision of the king*. The newspaper libellers have represented us as having put upon record an assertion that we retained some small part of our rights as members of parliament; but their representations are false and malicious; for we were still willing not to stir an inch in proposing any act of parliament, without the previous decision of the king in its favour. These wicked "newspaper libellers" never think of accusing the ministers of any thing but of not going far enough in obeying the will of the king and in causing the parliament to



obey that will; and all that these patriotic Whig ministers appear to be anxious about is, to convince the nation, and especially the House of Commons, that, as to all practical purposes, they went as far in this way as it was possible for any body to go, and that, therefore, it was extremely unjust to turn them out of their places; and this, Gentlemen, is the ground, upon which they mean, it seems, to appeal to the parliament against their successors in office!—But, let us take a little more in detail, the facts and doctrines contained in Lord Howick's explanation. He tells the parliament, 1st, that the opinions of himself and his colleagues, respecting the Catholics of Ireland, had been, at the time when they came into power, recently manifested in their speeches and their votes, which opinions no one of them could be expected to give up for the sake of office and emolument; 2nd, that they stood pledged to the measures for the relief of the Catholics; 3rd, that, in addition to the general reasons of justice and of policy, they were induced to bring forward the bill in question, from a conviction that it was necessary to tranquillize and conciliate the people of Ireland, in which discontents and disturbances notoriously prevailed; 4th, that, though the bill was agreed upon in the cabinet before the ministers heard of the coming Catholic petition, yet, that the knowledge of that petition being in agitation, operated as an additional inducement to the ministers to press forward the bill, hoping that, if promptly passed, it might induce the Catholics to abandon the object they were pursuing, a motive, which was not overlooked by me, in my last letter, page 488; 5th, that finding the King resolutely bent against the bill, they immediately agreed to withdraw it; and, 6th, that this was, on their part, a painful sacrifice of personal feeling to public duty!—Of personal feeling to public duty! What! was the giving up of this measure, which they were “convinced was necessary to tranquillize and conciliate the people of Ireland, in which discontents and disturbances notoriously prevailed;” was the abandoning of such a measure, under such circumstances, a sacrifice of personal feeling to public duty? No; my Lord Howick, you may assert this as long as you please, and you may find a crowd of base place-hunting people (at your Whig Club or elsewhere) to swear to the truth of what you say; but, be assured, that every man of a just mind, uncorrupted by views of place or emolument, will say, that it was a sacrifice of public duty to personal feeling, to views of emolument and of low ambition. You may make professions of sacrifices; but the nation has grown weary of your professions. You trust, you tell us, that, “whenever that kind of sacrifice becomes necessary, no man will be found more ready to submit to it than you will.” I believe you with all my soul! But, believe that you would yield one guinea of emolument, or one rag of official pride, for the sake of your country, I do not.—But, Gentlemen, it is Lord Howick's doctrine, relative to the introducing of bills into parliament by order, or, at least, under the authority, of the King, that I wish to turn your particular attention to. This lord found it necessary to say something in explanation of this part of the transaction; he had perceived, that men were struck with the wide difference between the theory of the constitution, relative to checks and balances, and the practice of it, as so strikingly exemplified upon this occasion; and, he seemed very desirous to reconcile the theory with this practice. The best way is, first to put upon record his words, as reported in the Morning Chronicle, and then to make our remarks upon them.—“It has been stated,” said he, “by some persons, who have

"animadverted upon this transaction, that ministers were not warranted  
 "in bringing forward a public measure without previously obtaining the  
 "consent of his Majesty. But this extravagant proposition scarcely de-  
 "serves serious notice. According to any rational view of the subject,  
 "the duty of a minister appears to be *two-fold*. He may act in a double  
 "capacity upon different occasions; namely, as a minister, and as an in-  
 "dividual member of parliament. There was no minister who had not  
 "acted so occasionally. If, indeed, it were culpable to pursue the course  
 "some extravagant writers now maintain, Mr. Pitt's conduct upon the  
 "Slave Trade and Parliamentary Reform would have been highly cen-  
 "surable; for that *distinguished statesman*, in both these instances, brought  
 "forward the propositions as an individual member of Parliament. The  
 "constitutional distinction, which, in concurrence with my colleagues, I  
 "take between the duty of a minister in the one case and the other, is  
 "this; that when a minister brings forward any motion *as a measure of*  
 "*government* which has undergone any discussion in the Cabinet, he  
 "violates his duty, *unless such measure shall have received the sanction of*  
 "*that authority*. I should, of course, feel myself very culpable, if I at-  
 "tempted to bring forward any measures in Parliament as a ministerial  
 "measure *unless I had previously submitted that measure to the consi-*  
 "*deration of the King, and obtained his Majesty's consent to its adop-*  
 "*tion*. It was therefore I laid before his Majesty all the particulars with  
 "regard to the measure respecting the Catholics, and waited to obtain  
 "his Majesty's approbation before I attempted to submit the considera-  
 "tion of that measure to this house."—Here we have the modern  
 creed of the Whig politicians. What does the English constitution, or  
 the law of parliament, know of any *two-fold* capacity of the members of  
 the House of Commons? According to that constitution, those members  
 are the guardians of the property and the liberties of the people; and  
 they are nothing else. But, now we learn; now, for the very first time since  
 the parliament of England began to exist, the House of Commons are  
 flatly and plainly told, that there is another body, namely, the Cabinet  
 Council, who discuss bills, and resolve upon adopting them, before they  
 are presented to that House, before *leave* is given to bring them in!  
 One of their own members rises in his place, and plainly tells them, that  
 he has recently brought in a bill because the King wished him to do it,  
 and that he has since *withdrawn* that bill because the King changed his  
 mind, and for no other reason whatever, though he was, at the same  
 time, firmly convinced, that the passing of the bill was necessary to tran-  
 quillize and conciliate a fourth part of the people of the kingdom! Nay,  
 he does not stop here; but goes on to say, that, unless he had obtained  
 the King's approbation for bringing in the bill, he should have regarded  
 it as an act *highly culpable* to have brought it in!—Thank him, how-  
 ever, for his frankness. We might, perhaps, have presumed, before, that  
 such really was the case; but now it is openly avowed, that bills, before  
 leave be moved for to bring them in, are discussed and resolved upon in  
 the Cabinet, that is to say, amongst men who are the King's servants  
 during pleasure, and that they receive the sanction of their master, be-  
 fore they are proposed to the parliament.—What pretty stuff has  
 Blackstone and Paley and that foreign sycophant De Lolme been writing  
 about the checks and balances in that wonderful effect of human wisdom,  
 called the English constitution!—As to the distinction between bills  
 brought forward *as measures of the Cabinet* and bills originating with

persons as individual members of *Parliament*, what does the constitution know of such distinction? Does any writer upon our constitution make such a distinction? Does Blackstone, who has given us a commentary upon the whole of our laws, talk of any such distinction? Has he once named such a thing as a *Cabinet*? Can the parliament recognise the existence of any such council, or body of men? Is not such a body utterly unknown to our laws? Besides, let us ask a little, what bills there are, of any consequence, which are *not* measures of the Cabinet, if we admit of this distinction? All bills relating to the army; all bills relating to the navy; all bills relating to the church; all bills relating to the colonies; all bills relating to foreign connections and subsidies; all bills relating to loans and taxes, not only in the principle but also in the amount; in short, I am sure no one will pretend to deny, that every bill, in which the people are generally interested, must, according to this distinction, be regarded as a *measure of the Cabinet*; and, therefore, if to all such bills, the King's consent, *previously* obtained, be an indispensable requisite, again I call upon Blackstone and Paley to come forth from the grave, vindicate their writings, and tell, if they can, of what use is a House of Commons, except that of amusing the unthinking mass of the people with the idea that they are represented, and that the laws, by which they are taxed and bound, are made with their own consent. Yes, Mr. Blackstone, you, who, through four mortal volumes, which, piled upon one another might supply the place of a stool, have rung the changes upon the blessings arising from the checks and balances of the English constitution, do rise and tell us, where, if Lord Howick's doctrine be sound, or if the parliament be content to act upon it, or, rather, to be passive under it, we are to look for those inestimable checks and balances? It is the peculiar business of the House of Commons to frame and to pass bills for the raising of money upon the people; and, when they pass any bill, for the placing of the public money at the disposal of the crown, it is called a *grant*. Now, as all these bills, without one exception, are what Lord Howick terms *measures of the Cabinet*, what a farce, if his doctrine were sound, would this *granting* work be? According to this doctrine, it is resolved in the Cabinet to bring in a bill for granting the King money; the King has the bill submitted to him, and directs it to be brought in; the Secretary to the Treasury brings it in; it is passed without a division; and, *this, this*, Gentlemen, my Lord Howick would tell us, is the true "*practice of the constitution in this free country*," where, as Blackstone says, the people, by their representatives, *tax themselves!*

Having taken sufficient time to congratulate ourselves upon the inestimable blessings which must naturally flow from this doctrine of the Whigs, let us, next, take a view of their conduct, as exhibited in the debates of the 24th and 25th of last month, taking those debates as they stand reported in the Morning Chronicle newspaper, and commenting upon them as a newspaper publication.—On Tuesday the 24th, the King had chosen his new "confidential servants" and, amongst them, was Mr. Perceval, who was appointed *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, and was, it was understood, to be immediately appointed what is called *Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster for LIFE*. This last place, like the places held by Lord Grenville, the Marquis of Buckingham, Mr. Thomas Grenville, and many others, is a mere sinecure, worth about 4,000*l.* a year, and having attached to it a good deal of church patronage. It has sometimes been granted for

life before, and was so granted to the greedy Whig patriot Mr. Dunning by a ministry of which Lord Rockingham was the head. But, generally, it has not been so granted. It has, according to the "*practice of the constitution,*" been a good decent reward for some one able to give pretty efficient support to the ministry of the day. But, Lord Howick and his public-spirited colleagues, seeing it going for a *man's life*, and that man, too, not above four-and-forty, and withal very sober, abstemious, and moral, in his way of living; seeing it thus going, with respect to them, for ever and ever; seeing this part of their prey, not only snatched from them for the present, but about to be devoured by anticipation, they seem to have been inspired with an unusual degree of Whiggism, and to have resolved to preserve, if possible, the chance of again enjoying the profits of this fat sinecure. Accordingly, on the 24th, Mr. PLOMER, member for Hertfordshire (for, as I had occasion to observe lately, in such case, some man of this description always begins the discussion), having first stated what he had heard, respecting the intended disposal of the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, said, that he begged leave to protest against the granting for life any place usually held during pleasure. Sir JOHN NEWPORT (a member of the late ministry) joined in this opinion, and he said something about places granted in *reversion*, which we will hear in his own words, because, though relating to no very rare instance, it is good to have it upon record, as something declared in the presence of our faithful representatives. A *reversion*, Gentlemen, is, we should recollect, the right of possessing a thing after the demise of the present possessor. If, for instance, an annuity of a hundred a year was settled upon me for life, and upon one of my children after me, for his life also; this annuity would be settled in reversion, and my child might, if any one would buy it of him, sell his reversionary right. Little did I imagine, when I was writing in America, that a traffic of this sort was carried on with respect to places of trust under that government, in the defence of which I made such exertions! But, away with these mortifying reflections! Let us hear the cheering voice of Sir John Newport. "With respect to some of the Irish offices which had been reported as proper, some to be abolished, and some to be reformed, and which *could not be touched* in either way, on account of the interests of the *reversioners*; the office of *customer and collector of the port of Dublin*, one of those reported as requiring regulation and reform, had been *granted on reversion TWO DEEP*, and consequently could not be touched by the late bill for the retrenchment, reform, and regulation of offices in Ireland, though it had twice fallen vacant within the year, and though it was one of those that most particularly required reform and regulation." A reversion "*two deep*," Gentlemen, exists in the case, where a thing is settled for life upon one person first, and, upon his death, is settled to descend to a second person, and, upon his death to a third person. This is the way, then, in which the place of a high Custom-House Officer is disposed of! And, yet, there are wretches so impudent and so infamous as to call Sir Francis Burdett a Jacobin and a Leveller because he complains of these things!—In proceeding with the debate, we find Mr. GEORGE JOHNSTONE (of whom more by-and-by) "could not help observing, that those who had been most clamorous in cheering the reflections cast upon the hon. and learned gentleman, were members of the family (the Grenvilles) which was loaded with wealth derived from public sinecures. He wished

“ with the hon. gentlemen, that the resolution now before the house (against reversions) had been adopted long since, and then that family would not be drawing 60,000*l.* a year from the public. He hoped the indications they now gave of a different disposition would be permanent.” This was a fine slap upon the other side; but, Mr. HUSKISSON gave a better, because it came exactly in the right place. “ As to the propriety of any *arrangements* with a view to induce individuals to accept of office he believed that the first measure of the administration then in office, with a view to enable a noble lord (Grenville), for whom he felt a very sincere respect, was a sufficient proof that such an arrangement was not very extraordinary.” This was very well done. The tap was light as air; but it was like the end of the finger upon the tender part of the arm, or under the ear, and which is much more painful than a broomstick laid across the shoulders. The thing he alluded to was this: Lord Grenville was Auditor of the Exchequer, a place worth five or six thousand pounds a year, and so completely a sinecure, that he had been, by act of parliament, relieved even from the trouble of signing his name. When, however, he was become prime minister and first Lord of the Treasury, it was discovered, that, as the law stood, it was illegal for the First Lord of the Treasury to be also the Auditor of the Exchequer; and, indeed, well it might be unlawful, the one office being a check upon the other. Yet, what was to be done? His Lordship had a mind to be First Lord of the Treasury, without having a mind to give up a life-certain place of such excellent revenue. Inclination said: “ Take both places at once;” but the law said, “ You cannot.” In this dilemma, recourse was had to the grand and infallible remedy, an act of parliament; and, it is the real truth, that the very first measure of the late reforming patriotic ministry, was, an act of parliament, to enable Lord Grenville to hold, at one and the same time, the two offices above-mentioned. “ Was it not shocking?” said a firm friend of Mr. Fox’s to me at the time, “ was it not shocking to begin with a bill like this, and to make poor old Fox the instrument to bring it in?” It was shocking, indeed; and, you will, probably, remember, Gentlemen, that I lost no time in stating my opinion respecting it. I said, it would, one day or other, rise up in judgment against the ministers, and now it has so risen.—When the ministers have found themselves at a dead lift, as the vulgar phrase is, Mr. WHITBREAD has generally stepped forward to assist them, not only with his readiness at speaking, but with the strength of his character for independence and purity; which character, however, is, by no means, what it used to be. Upon the present occasion he so stepped forward; with what degree of success we shall presently see. He said, “ that the case adverted to by the hon. gentleman, and that alluded to by his hon. friend (Mr. PLOMER), were entirely different. The former case had been brought under the consideration of the house, the latter was to be by the act of the crown. The act that had been discussed in that house, was to enable a noble lord to hold a place, that had been granted to him for past services, and which he then held for life; but the case then under consideration, respected the grant of a place for life, which was always heretofore granted during pleasure, and before any services could be performed for which it was to be a reward.” Now, as to the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster having always heretofore been granted only during pleasure, Mr. Whitbread was misinformed; and, as to the distinction between past services and services to come,

there is nothing solid in it. Those services are most amply paid for *during their continuance*; and, all the world knows, that the *reward*, as Mr. Whitbread chooses to term it, is neither more nor less than money given for the sake of enriching the receivers of it, without any reference at all to services, or else, I should be glad to know, upon what principle this very place was last given to the *Earl of Derby*. But, the other distinction is worthy of particular notice. This grant to Mr. Perceval was to be the *act of the crown*, whereas, says Mr. Whitbread, the grant to Lord Grenville was brought under the *consideration of this house*. Yes, Sir, and then take along with you Lord Howick's doctrine, that it is culpable in ministers to bring forward such a measure without thereupon *receiving the sanction of the King*; take this along with you, Sir, and then, in the language of a plain honest man, tell me, if you can, where is the *difference*? Ah, Sir! there was a time, when you would have scorned such miserable shifts; and I cannot help hoping, that there are yet moments when you lament that you have been drawn into a situation that compels you now to have recourse to them.—Mr. Whitbread, by way of recrimination, stated, that Mr. Perceval was already a *reversioner*. That a large sinecure place (a place worth nearly *ten thousand pounds a year*) was now enjoyed by *Lord Arden*, a brother of Mr. Perceval; that, upon this place there was a reversion "*two deep*," and that the second of the two was Mr. Perceval himself. This is very true, and not less notorious; and it is also true, that Mr. Perceval holds the sinecure of *Clerk of the Irons*, worth about one hundred pounds a year. But, still the Percevals are very far indeed behind the Grenvilles; and, one thing let us always bear in mind, that all these grants of which the late ministers complain, were made by that same Pitt, with the praises of whom they have been, and yet are, continually insulting this pauperized and bankrupt and tax-gatherer nation. Were it only for this they merit our execration. Mr. Windham has not praised him; but, he is the only man amongst them who has not. Mr. Whitbread has been conspicuous for it. It was a vile scheme for gaining over and securing the support of his old corrupt partisans; and, like all other schemes of the sort, it has, in the end, produced an effect precisely the contrary of that which it was intended to produce.—The last person, who spoke upon this occasion, was Mr. PARNELL, who said: "A noble lord (lord Castlereagh) who had carried the practice of granting reversions to such an extent in Ireland, was to have a high office under the new arrangement, and he had a suspicion that he might introduce the same practice in England. He had had the honour of a seat in the Irish Parliament, during the whole of the proceedings on the Union. That measure had been *lost in the first instance, because two of the great interests remained neuter*. Before 12 months had elapsed, the measure was again brought forward, and carried by a majority of 30, on which occasion *both those interests voted for the measure*. The son of the gentleman, who was at the head of one of those interests, at present, had the *reversion of the Clerkship of the Pells*, in Ireland, and the son of the other had the *promise of the first bishopric that should fall in after the Union*." Upon this, Gentlemen, we will make no comment at all. We will content ourselves with merely calling to mind, that this Union, and all its transactions, were the work of that Pitt, whom Lord Howick and Mr. Whitbread are now continually eulogizing, and whose debts they have caused us to pay. If we were to add any other reflections, they would

naturally relate to the blessings of our invaluable constitution in *church* as well as in state, and particularly in those admirable *checks* and *balances*, upon which Blackstone and others have written such long chapters.—Before the House broke up, a Mr. MARTIN, who is, it seems, a “*learned gentleman*,” and, of course, a *lawyer*, gave notice, that he would, the next day, make a motion, for an address to the King, beseeching him not to grant, for life, any place, usually granted during pleasure; which motion was avowedly pointed at the grant about to be made to Mr. Perceval, and which motion was made accordingly, and, upon a division, was carried by a majority of 93; there being for the motion 208, and against it 115.—But, to you Gentlemen, to you, as free, independent, and honest men of plain common sense, I particularly address myself, when I remark, that my Lord Howick, who, while in place, was ready to withdraw a bill which he was convinced was necessary to the tranquillity of the most vulnerable part of the kingdom; that my Lord Howick, who was ready to do this *while in place*, from his tender regard for the personal feelings of the King; this same Lord, *the moment he is out of place*, urges on, aids and abets with all his means, this motion of Mr. Martin, which must, if successful, necessarily produce extreme pain to those feelings. This lord, who, while in place, had such high notions of the King’s prerogative, that he would have regarded it as culpable in himself to introduce a bill without the King’s approbation; steps forward the moment he is out of place, to obstruct that same King in the exercise of his undoubted constitutional prerogative of granting a place for life, which place had been more than once before granted for life. He, good gentle lord, could see no harm in the King’s having the power to cause, or to prevent, the originating of bills to become laws to bind all his subjects; but, the moment he finds him granting a lucrative place to a rival for power, and in such a way, too, as to preclude the hope of its ever coming into his own hands, that moment he takes alarm for the constitution!

—Mr. MARTIN having made his motion, “that an humble address be presented to his Majesty, praying that he would not grant, in any other way than during pleasure, the office of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, or any other office not usually held for life;” and, the motion having been seconded by Mr. WARD (not the famous pensioned *Robert Ward*), Mr. PERCEVAL rose, and began by acknowledging, that, if he had not heard, that this motion was intended to be made, he should at this moment have been in possession of the much envied place, for life; that having heard of the intended motion, he had been to the King, and, for the present declined it; that, as to precedents, Mr. Dunning’s was a case in point, and clearly proved, that the King was now proposed to be addressed not to do precisely that which a Whig ministry, while in power, had prevailed on him to do; that the case of Lord Grenville was a still greater stretch of power in this way; and, that, whatever might be the decision of the house, and whether he had the place, or not, he was ready and willing, and was resolved to serve the King to the best of his abilities, if the King commanded his services. Having said this, he left the house. But, there was one fact, which Mr. Perceval brought out, relative to *reversions*. There are many places in the gift of the Lord Chancellor, and these also are frequently given in reversion. The late Lord Chancellor Erskine has, it would appear, given but one place in this

way; and *to whom* do you think he gave it? *To whom*, Gentlemen, do you think that the liberty-loving, the abuse-decrying, and the place-condemning Mr. Erskine, now "*Lord Erskine*," granted that one reversion? Why, to the person, who, for a great number of years, served himself, as clerk, in his private capacity of barrister! For such a person, Mr. Erskine must, upon retiring from the bar, have, for very decency, made some sort of provision; and, I suppose, his lordship thought that this provision, would be more honourable if it came from the public purse than if it had come from his own. We have to thank Mr. Perceval for this fact, Gentlemen; and, if he does nothing else than make exposures of this sort, he will do much more for the people of England than has been done by his predecessors, one of whose great objects appears to have been to *smother* every thing done by Pitt, with praises of whom, with encomiums on whose wisdom and virtues, they have daily insulted us. — LORD HENRY PETTY, whose father was one of the ministers, when the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster was bestowed, for life, upon Mr. Dunning, afterwards Lord Ashburton, said, in answer to Mr. Perceval, upon that point, "that personally alluded to as he had been by the " comments made by a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Perceval) upon an appointment sanctioned with the approbation of a noble and near relative " of his (Lord Lansdown), he could not help offering himself then to the " house at once to retort every sinister insinuation against his noble relative and himself. He contended, in the first instance, that between the " case of the right hon. gent. and that of Lord Ashburton, there was a " great and leading distinction; the latter was, in the technical phrase, " a law lord, excluded from the duties of that profession from which he " derived a great and valuable consideration, and receiving the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, with the express understanding that " he was to resign it on the occurrence of that event which would put " into the hands of his Majesty the disposal of the place of Chief Judge of " the King's Bench; such was the honourable ambition of a lawyer the most " eminent of his day. It was not then granted, it was not held forward as " a bait to entice him to discharge the duties of an office great and lucrative, (*loud and repeated cries of hear! hear!*) no! he should say, in " vindication of the noble personage alluded to, that it had never been " offered to entice *future services*, but to *reward past*; and in equal " vindication of the person who accepted it, he would say, that great " lawyer did not accept it as a bargain, as a pitiful compromise to indemnify the apprehended consequences of risking his support to any " administration (*loud and repeated cries of hear! hear!*)."—But, Gentlemen, let us not be hallooed out of our reason. What are these distinctions? What do they amount to? First, we are told, that Mr. Dunning was become a *Lord*, before the place was bestowed upon him for life; but, we are not told, what was the fact, *that he would not accept of the peerage without the place*; and, observe, that the *bargain* was, that he was to be Lord Chief Justice if a vacancy happened, and that the place in question was only a sort of stay-stomach, till the full-meal came to hand. But, Lord Henry Petty tells us (and upon this distinction he seems principally to rest), that the place was given to Mr. Dunning for *past services*, and not as an indemnification for the risk he might run in making part of a new ministry. The fact is, that Mr. Dunning had never rendered any public services at all; he had



never been in the public service; he had spent his time, and had *exhausted his health*, in labouring for money, of which he was very fond, and of which he had amassed a great deal, as a private barrister; and, if the place was not given him as an indemnity for his risks in supporting the new administration of the day, I believe it would puzzle a more acute man than Lord Henry Petty to find out a reason for the gift. Mr. Dunning had been a great wrangler in parliament; he was the author of the famous resolution about the *increasing influence of the crown*, to which influence he, in the right Whig way, added, as soon as he got into place; he had been a most useful party-man. What *past services*, then, had he to make a claim for? What *past services* had he performed? And, then, if we must take private circumstances into view, he was very rich, and had, I believe, neither wife nor child, and, consequently, no temptation, other than that of sheer avarice, to take the place in question for any term at all, much less for life; whereas Mr. Perceval has a numerous family, dependant almost, if not altogether, upon his labours for becoming support and provision; and, therefore, though I condemn the grant in either case, and though, generally speaking, I have no partiality for Mr. Perceval, yet, I must declare, that the grant to him would have been much more proper than the grant to Mr. Dunning; and there is no clamour, excited by a popular cry, coming from those who have proved that the love of place is their predominant passion, that shall prevent me from saying, that, in every way in which a comparison can be drawn, Mr. Perceval is in my opinion the worthiest man of these two — Mr. STURGES having represented Mr. Perceval as a barrister of the highest rank in point of professional emolument, and Mr. SHARPE having denied the fact, Mr. *Montague* asserted that the fact was true, and, in continuation (after a cry of *order*), said, “that if  
 “ a member did not intend to be disorderly, whatever expressions might  
 “ have fallen from him, that member was not to be put down by clamour  
 “ (*a laugh*). He addressed himself to the *independent* members of  
 “ that house, and to their attention did he particularly address himself.  
 “ Whereupon, the reporter informs us, that there was again a *loud and*  
 “ *general cry of order, order, chair, chair,*” a cry, we may suppose, Gentlemen, that arose from the idea (a misconceived one, no doubt), that there were some members in the house that were *not quite independent*. The Speaker, however, with that coolness which so well comports with the dignity of our representatives, put the matter at rest by uttering the following words: “The hon. member will be pleased to  
 “ recollect, that in the language of this house *no such distinction* between  
 “ its members is recognised.”—Mr. *Montague* proceeded, and said,  
 “ that the distinction he meant was between those *seeking for places and*  
 “ *pensions, and those who were not candidates for either.*”—A distinction that many people make; but one that it may be very improper to make in the House of Commons.—Next, according to the report, followed Mr. GEORGE JOHNSTONE, who, “with *great warmth*, expressed  
 “ his unqualified disapprobation of the entire course pursued by the late  
 “ administration, and was inclined to think that the cabals of men about  
 “ power could serve only, like those between Sir R. Walpole and General  
 “ Stanhope, to *discover secrets*. that would make all *honest men disgusted*  
 “ *with both parties.*”—This is false; I mean the *report*, or, rather, the former part of it; for if ever Mr. George Johnstone spoke with more

warmth than Little Moses in the School for Scandal, I will be contented to suffer martyrdom for the sake of a Whig ministry. No; with anger the honourable Gentleman might speak; but with *warmth* never in his life. He derives his philosophy from a school, of which he is a most eminent disciple, and which is much too cooling in the nature of its precepts and its practice to encourage, or permit, the indulgence of warmth. As to the latter part of what this honourable man said, I must leave you, Gentlemen, whose honesty is unquestionable, to judge of its truth.—This censure of the late ministers, however, brought up Mr. SHERIDAN, who, as you will see, “*discovered a secret*” with respect to Mr. George Johnstone. He said, “that it was not the first time he had observed in the hon. gent. who had just sat down, an eagerness to attack the late administration, and its friends, though certainly the present, like every former attempt, evinced rather an avidity to attack than a power to be offensive. He was glad, however, to see in the present attack something like a philosophical neutrality, and that as the late administration had had the misfortune of the honourable gentleman’s opposition, so the present would be now likely to come in for its due share. The hon. gent. had said a great deal about independence, and had congratulated himself in an angry tone upon his having no place under any government. He (Mr. S.) could only say that he was no divulger of *private* secrets; but he might make some allusion to a certain public message, which it had been deputed to him to deliver to a noble friend of his, at the formation of a certain administration. He was sure the hon. gent. perfectly understood him (*a loud and general laugh*). He was rather inclined to believe, from the nature of that message, that the hon. gent. notwithstanding his present acrimony, might then have been entirely *dulcified* towards that *terrible* administration he had been so much of late in the habit of condemning (*a laugh*).—Aye; and disinterestedly condemning too; or *disinterestedly*, if such pronunciation better suited the taste of the hon. gent., whether classical or vulgar.”—Now, what in all the world could Mr. Sheridan mean by this pronunciation? For what could he make shift to lay particular stress upon the letters making up the word *interest*? I will certainly sift this out, if I submit to the cruel vexation of reading all the India Papers over again.—That Mr. George Johnstone had made overtures for a place, at the forming of the last ministry, was pretty certain, from what Mr. Sheridan said; and, therefore, when our old friend sat down, the former rose, and said, “that he neither had, nor would have applied to the right hon. gent. who had just sat down for the purpose of procuring him any appointment upon the occasion alluded to, and for two reasons, the first, that he knew if he had applied the right hon. gent. *was too much engaged in providing for himself and his family*, to attend to any agency for others; and secondly, because if he had requested the right hon. gent. to undertake the commission, he was pretty sure that, although he might promise, he would have been very apt to forget it. Now, the fact was, upon the case referred to by the right hon. gent. simply no more than this. After stating to the right hon. gent. the substance of some conversations which he had had with an illustrious person, now no more (Mr. Fox), he did communicate to that right hon. gent.

"and authorize him to mention *his readiness to accept of any office to which no salary should be attached*, and in which he might be able to make himself useful. He remembered that he particularly mentioned *Indian affairs*: from his knowledge of which he stated to the right hon. gent. his opinion that he should be able to render *some service to the country*. In offering, to accept a situation in the conduct of those affairs, without any emolument for his services, he hoped he was making a proposition which should not expose him to censure, or to the suspicion of any unworthy motives."—Mr. SHERIDAN rose again, and said what is well worthy of being remembered: "that he was sorry to have felt himself under the necessity of stating any thing which might serve to fix an unworthy imputation upon the character or motives of any hon. member. But he begged leave to observe, that men were induced to seek for offices from different views—some for honour, others for profit, [others for *patronage*.] and the disappointment of the views in the one case might create as much irritation and discontent as in the other. With regard to the very active agency which the hon. gent. imputed to him in his attention to his own interest, he would beg to state of what nature that agency was. Understanding that his illustrious friend, who was now no more, had mentioned that in consideration of *his services for 27 years*, for which he had *received nothing whatever, something permanent should be settled upon him*; but that upon communicating this wish to his colleagues, they expressed their determination that nothing of the kind should in any case be granted, and again, he immediately declared to his illustrious friend, that upon no account should the thing be any further agitated, but at once dropped."—Now, Gentlemen, leaving Mr. George Johnstone's *disinterestedness* to pass for what it is worth, not forgetting, however, *the nature of his connections with India*; let us ask of what sort are those "*services*" for *twenty-seven years*, of which Mr. Sheridan speaks, as the foundation of his claim upon our purses, for a "*settlement of something permanent*." His services, like those of Mr. Dunning, were given to a *party*. Great services, indeed, did he render in that way; but are we to be called upon to pay life annuities to *members of parliament*, for their services in that capacity? This is fine doctrine indeed. But, *what place* was it that it was proposed, by Mr. Fox, to give him for life? He himself, you will readily be sworn, did not propose the thing to Mr. Fox. It was, of course, to be pressed upon him. The thing was to be done entirely without his knowledge; and yet, that being the case, it does seem odd, that Mr. Fox *should apologize to him for the failure*. However, let us suppose, that all this was so; but what was the place, that Mr. Fox proposed to give him for life? Why, Gentlemen, it was *this very Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster*! "By the mass," as Falstaff says, "he would have made a brave judge." And, to use his friend Weatherhead's phrase, what choice "*cushion-thumpers*" he would have furnished us with; for he would have had considerable *church patronage*! If this statement be true, then, Mr. Fox recommended to be done for him precisely that which the King was about to do for Mr. Perceval. Whether church-benefices would not be as properly deposited in Mr. Perceval's as in Mr. Sheridan's hands is a question that I will not put to you; but, what a cruel satire is it upon the memory of Mr. Fox, to represent the bestowing of the

thing in question as so flagrantly unconstitutional, at the very same time, that it is asserted, that Mr. Fox would, if he had been able, have bestowed it exactly in the same manner! The truth is, that the objection was not to the principle of the appointment, but to the *man*, whom the Grenvilles disliked, and whom the Foxites, with their accustomed meanness, would risk nothing to support. Mr. Sheridan has now the power of repaying them in their own coin. He is the only man amongst them, whom the change will not sink. Him it will raise. He has been eclipsed merely by the *power* of those, who owed so much to the former exertion of his talents. Now their power is gone, those talents will again have their worth; and, though he will not, perhaps, actually join the opponents of his supercilious and ungrateful party, he will not fail to make them *feel*, that he is not to be slighted with impunity. Whatever else he may be, he is a man of wonderful resources of mind; and, if he had been true to himself and to the people, he would never have had to sue for "a permanent settlement."

Having but little room remaining, I must be very brief in what I have to say with regard to interference with the King, *relating to the change of ministry*.—Gentlemen, it is the King's prerogative; a prerogative which he possesses, and which he ought to possess, to change his ministers, whensoever he pleases, and without being liable to be questioned, or taunted, respecting it, by any power upon earth. The House of Commons has its rights, too. It has the right to refuse to grant money; and this it can do at any time; but, it has no right to interfere with the King in choosing, or dismissing, of his servants. It can take up, and pass the Catholic Bill; it can refuse money; but, greedy turned-out ministers will never propose any such mode of proceeding; they will naturally desire the parliament to side with them upon a *question of place*. And, if the parliament were to side with them, were to adopt any measure, having for its object the forcing of them back upon the King, to what a degraded situation would it be reduced! They well know, that the House of Commons itself is armed with *constitutional* powers, quiet sufficient to render it an effectual check upon the crown; but these powers such ministers never wish to see it exercise; because they know, that, in such exercise, it would break from their trammels; whereas their object is, to render it always subservient to their views of interest and of ambition; to use it against the people as long as they are in place, and against the King the moment they are out of place. But, if such a thing were attempted, in the present instance, it would be too glaringly scandalous for any man, except perhaps Mr. Perry, to defend, the house yet resounding, as it does, with the declaration of Lord Howick, that, while he was in place, a Bill was brought into the house because the King approved of it, and was afterwards stopped in its progress and *withdrawn*, because the King changed his mind. What would that house be? In what light would it be considered by the country, or by the world, if, immediately after this declaration, it was to join the same Lord Howick in a complaint against that same King for exercising his undoubted prerogative in dismissing those, whom it calls his *servants*? What an absurd, what a preposterous conclusion would this lead to! The House of Commons hears, without a single whisper of disapprobation, that a Bill has been brought in, and afterwards withdrawn, by the sole authority of the King; and Mr. Perry has the impudence to tell us,

that it is proper of this very same House of Commons to interfere with the King about the choosing of his own servants. "Aye," will he say, "but you perverse, hard-hearted dog, Lord Howick and I were in place in the first instance, and now we are walking about arm-in-arm" (this was really the case a few days ago) with our eyes nailed to the pavement, and with countenances as wise as those of a couple of briefless lawyers in Westminster Hall, while the unfortunate judges and jurors are stunned with the bawling of their more successful brethren."

Mr. Perry, hoping, probably, that something of the sort above spoken of will be attempted, has, in his newspaper of the 30th of last month, made an attempt to prove, that to dissolve the parliament *now* would be *unconstitutional*, though he has, at the same time, the unparalleled profligacy to defend the dissolution of 1784 and also that of last summer! His arguments, as he would call them, in support of this monstrous proposition I have neither time nor room to answer at present; which may, too, be rendered unnecessary, if, in the small space that I have left, I should be able to console Mr. Perry with the hope that a dissolution *need* not be attempted. It may not have occurred to Mr. Perry, in his bustle of giving dinners to cabinet and other ministers, that it is just possible, that Lords Sidmouth and Ellenborough, if not another or two lately high in office, may join the new ministers before parliament meets again. And, as to the members of the Houses of Parliament, does Mr. Perry think, that a long *prorogation*, with the time which it would give for men to cool and reflect, would not tend to mitigate their passions and their opinions? Does he think, that members of parliament are stocks and stones; and that the soft and melting powers of eloquence will have no effect upon them? One of the faults which Mr. Burke found with the French National Assembly was, that they were permanently sitting. Retiring now-and-then to converse with one another as private persons, he said, was a great means of enlightening our legislators. Well, then, does Mr. Perry (who *now* quotes Mr. Burke too) think, that, the many occasions, which, during a recess, will offer for conversation, will have no effect at all? If you would convince a man, and particularly a politician of a certain stamp, of his error, there is nothing like a private interview; politics being, in this respect, very nearly akin to love, the arguments of which, when they approach to points of extreme delicacy, are never successfully discussed, never urged on to complete conviction, if there are more than two persons present. The cause of this I shall not presume to assign; but the fact will, I am persuaded, be denied by no man of common observation; and I am fully convinced, that a summer's recess would render a dissolution of parliament perfectly unnecessary, though I must, at the same time freely confess, that a dissolution, and, of course, a general election, would be a measure for which I should heartily thank the King and his advisers.

I remain,

Gentlemen,

Your faithful friend, and obedient servant,  
WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 2nd April, 1807.

## TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER.

### LETTER XII.

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“ Yea, all which it inherit shall *dissolve*,  
“ And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
“ Leave not a rack behind.”—SHAKESPEARE.

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GENTLEMEN,—At the close of the last letter which I had the honour to address to you, I stated, that want of time prevented me from examining in detail a paper, upon the subject of *dissolving parliaments*, published by that notorious place-hunter, Mr. Perry of the Morning Chronicle. And here, Gentlemen, before we enter upon this always important, and now interesting subject, let us just cast a glance over the state of the *press*. This press, which has been called the Palladium of free men, and which, in plain English, might have been called the Guardian of free men; this press of which so much has been said and so much has been sung, has, like many other things in our political state, been so completely perverted, as to be one of the chief means, by which freedom, real and necessary freedom, the freedom which an honest and loyal man ought to enjoy, has been nearly extinguished amongst us. As to the operation of the *law* upon this press; as to the powers which the maxims and precedents established by different Judges have given to the Attorney-General, that is to say, to the ministry of the day, relative to publications in print; as to the severe penalties, enacted, under the administration of Pitt, against those who should, in print, animadvert upon the characters or conduct of ministers, let those characters and that conduct be what they might; which enactments Lord Howick, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Erskine, Mr. Whitbread and all the Fox party, represented as justifying *open resistance* on the part of the people; and which enactments, observe, they have suffered to remain, not only without an effort to remove them, but without seeming to remember that they were in existence, while, at the same time, they daily insulted the nation with praises of the man by whom they were invented and caused to be adopted. It is not to these trammels, in which the press is held, these perils which surround every man who ventures to write and publish truth, that I am, at present, solicitous to draw your attention; but, to the corruption and baseness of the press itself, and the way in which it has been rendered an enemy to real freedom. Of this we have an instance sufficiently striking in the Morning Chronicle alone. For twenty years that paper, the property of the very same person who now owns it, was the eulogist and champion of the party of Mr. Fox. When Mr. Fox and his party came into power, that proprietor, Mr. Perry, had a place given him; and thus for his party-labours was he remunerated at our expense. The True Briton and Sun newspapers were set up with the public money; and, when Mr. Heriot, the person who conducted them for so many years, and whose sole and settled business was to eulogize Pitt and his minions, retired from the business, he had five or six hundred pounds a year of the public money settled upon him for life, in what is called a double-Commissionership of

the Lottery, which salary, *if at all necessary*, should have gone to reward some man, who had rendered undoubted services to the country. Mr. Walter, the proprietor of the Times newspaper, did receive for many years, if he does not still receive, a pension of six hundred pounds a year from the public purse in consequence of his devoting his paper to the minister Pitt. The Anti-Jacobin weekly newspaper, in which those famous "young friends," Messrs. Canning and Frere wrote, was set up at the public expense; and Mr. William Gifford, whom they employed to assist them and to edit the paper, had, first, a patent place of a hundred a year bestowed upon him; next he was made a double-Commissioner of the Lottery, and, since, in addition, Paymaster of the Gentlemen-Pensioners, making in all about a thousand a year for life at our expense; and, never in his whole lifetime, though he is a very modest, and, I believe, a very worthy man, has he ever rendered any service to the country. I will pass over the particulars relating to the "Pilot" and the "Royal Standard," weekly papers set up by the Addington administration to oppose my Register; but, I cannot help pointing out to you the nature of the influence arising from advertisements in *all* the papers. This is the great source of emolument; and this source flows from all the public offices as well as from Lloyd's and all its numerous connections according to the *politics* of the paper through which it runs. Some papers, the Morning Post in particular, are the property of companies of traders or speculators. The thing is regarded merely as a money speculation, is to be made the most of, and, of course, the most profitable politics will be always preferred. In all the daily papers, paragraphs from individuals, or bodies of men, are inserted for payment, no matter what they contain, so that the proprietor be not exposed to the lash of the law. The price is enormous, not less than half-a-guinea an inch; of course, the rich villain has the whole of the daily press for his defender or apologist, while the oppressed or slandered man, if he be poor, has no means whatever of appealing to the justice of the public. You and the whole nation will agree with me, that, after all the dark hints that had been thrown out about the conduct of Col. Cochrane Johnstone, previous to, and during his trial, the decision of the court-martial was a matter of general interest; yet I have been assured, that that deeply injured gentleman was unable to obtain the publication even of so brief a thing as the mere decision without paying, to the different daily papers, fifty or sixty guineas; while we see that paragraphs, and long ones too, in defence of Davison and Delancy, have appeared in all the daily papers in London. Add to this, the power which the Stamp-office has; add also the influence which the numerous sets of commissioners, surveyors, inspectors, &c. &c. have over the provincial papers, in which also the innumerable government advertisements are inserted, or not, as the papers may behave, and then wonder, if you can, at the torpor of the people, and say, if you can, that this press is "the Guardian of free men?" As to the Magazines and Reviews, the far greater part of them are in exactly the same state. The proprietor of the Gentleman's Magazine, Mr. Nichols, has great profits as a printer to the government. The British Critic Review, is conducted by two clergymen, Messrs. Nares and Beloe; the former is an archdeacon, had besides one living given him long ago, and has recently had bestowed upon him another large living by Lord Chancellor Eldon. Mr. Beloe has a living in the city of London, is a prebendary of Lincoln, and has lately been appointed to a place in the British Museum, in which his worthy

colleague had a place before him ; and, observe, that by an act of parliament, passed in the year 1803, these two holders of living upon living, are, under pretence of their offices in the Museum, excused from residing on any of their livings, and, of course, from all clerical duties whatsoever. Mr. Beloe is, indeed, now no longer in the Museum ; but, that the public are not acquainted with *the cause of his dismissal* is another proof of the corrupted state and base partiality of the press.—The Anti-Jacobin Review was begun by a person, who, for cogent reasons, no doubt, has, of late years, changed his name, by patent, from *Green* to that of *Gifford*, and who is now a police-magistrate, at a salary of £500 a year. This Review is now in the hands of the famous John Bowles, whom some persons humorously call the Reverend John Bowles, the intimate friend and associate and co-operator of Redhead Yorke. This John Bowles began his career of greatness by writing a pamphlet against Paine ; that pamphlet, which did not preclude the necessity of a proclamation against Paine's works, procured Bowles a Commissionership of Bankrupts. He was the agent in setting up the Anti-Jacobin newspaper ; that procured him a Commissionership in the management of Dutch Property, sequestered at the beginning of *last* war, and which office, an office that yields, probably, a thousand or two a year, is suffered to continue until this day. Mr. Bowles was, as the saying is, *brought up to the bar* ; but he has found the press, the “ Palladium of free men,” a much more profitable concern.—Pamphlets, and even large books, upon whatever subject, owe, in a great degree, their doctrines, if at all connected with politics, to the same all-influencing cause. Money, the *public* money ; to share in the immense sums raised upon the people ; in some way or other to effect this purpose is the object of ninety-nine out of every hundred persons who write and who publish their writings, and which object is, and must ever be, in direct and necessary hostility to the interests of the people at large. If therefore there ever was in the world a thing completely perverted from its original design and tendency, it is the press of England ; which, instead of enlightening, does, as far as it has any power, keep the people in ignorance ; which, instead of cherishing notions of liberty, tends to the making of the people slaves ; and which, instead of being their guardian, is the most efficient instrument in the hands of all those who oppress, or who wish to oppress, them. An abusive pedagogue has lately told me, that, like all other rash and ignorant reformers, I am unable to distinguish the *abuse* of the press from the press itself ; but, Gentlemen, when a thing becomes *wholly* abused ; when it is totally perverted ; when a *cordial*, no matter by what means, becomes *poison*, are we not then to represent it as an evil ? But, the question is, should we be better off without any press at all ? To which I answer in the affirmative ; because, the public mind being then not misled by falsehood, being left to its own natural conclusions, its judgments would be founded upon events ; every man would form his opinion according to what he saw and what he felt ; and though oppressors would proceed unaccused, the oppression would not be of long duration. It is by the semblance of freedom that men are most effectually enslaved. Would you rivet their chains never again to be loosened ; would you stifle the voice of compassion towards the injured and oppressed ; would you provide complete impunity to the oppressor, shelter him from reproach and even from silent execration ? your means are, the *names* and *forms* of freedom and justice. So, likewise, if you would suppress the promulgation of truth ;



if you would propagate falsehood ; if you would engender and perpetuate ignorance ; if you would rob of its utility experience, which is said to make fools wise ; if you would prevent the natural effect of observation and of feeling, the most, and, indeed, the only effectual means, is a shackled and corrupted press ; and that such is the press of England no honest man will attempt to deny.—But, you will ask me, where is the *remedy* ? or, are we then to lie down in despair, regard ourselves and our children as slaves, and, of course, view the fate of our country with perfect indifference ? No : none of these. The remedy for this evil, and for all the other political evils that oppress us, is very simple, and undeniably constitutional ; but, of it I must reserve what I have to say, until I have submitted to you some observations upon the above-mentioned paper of Mr. Perry.

The paper, to which I refer, appeared in the Morning Chronicle of the 30th of last month ; and, I must beg your perusal of the *whole* of it ; because, as you will find, it leads to the discussion of many points, each of which is ten million times more interesting to you and me and to our children, than is the fate of Prussia, or of Russia, or of all the kingdoms and states of continental Europe put together.

“ The symptoms of decided disapprobation with which the new Ministers have already been received by the House of Commons, and the sentiments which many leading individuals and connections are known to entertain respecting their conduct, have convinced them that they cannot expect the confidence and support of that Body.—Indeed the dangerous and unconstitutional principles which they have virtually recognised, has excited just alarm. The late Ministers, who had absolutely and completely given up the Catholic Bill, and in doing so had given a proof of deference to his Majesty’s feelings as strong as could be afforded, one necessarily carrying with it a security as valid as could be given that they would not wantonly urge the subject, were required to sign a written pledge not to advise or propose any thing relative to a great public question, involving the interest of a third part of the Empire, and the preservation of the state.—If they had subscribed such a paper they would have created a document that might have been the ground of impeachment. It would have been an abdication of their trust, a dispensation with their official oaths, and an exchange of their character as faithful advisers, for that of abject tools of the crown. It would have been wholly repugnant to the principles of this government, and tending to establish in the Crown a responsibility for every thing culpable, either of omission or commission in public affairs, that might be of the most dangerous consequences both to the welfare and the tranquillity of the nation.—The new Ministers have not, they say, subscribed any pledge ; but can they deny that virtually they have agreed to observe that silence and reserve by which perhaps the greatest calamities may be entailed upon this country ? the present Ministers have virtually discarded wisdom and counsel from their system, with respect to one part of the King’s affairs, and it may be doubted whether they have left themselves liberty to apprise him of what misfortune may teach, or to whisper those counsels which necessity may prescribe.—In this situation, abandoned by all those who have a real permanent interest in the state, the new Ministry affect to talk of what they call an appeal to the country by a dissolution of Parliament.—This proposition certainly was suggested, and is earnestly recommended by a certain class in the country, *whom it would be improper to call by any antiquated nickname*, but who, it may be presumed, have views very different indeed from those who would advise the dissolution of the parliament. *That class wish to see a Westminster election, and a Middlesex election ; telling us that a new election would be ‘ a great good. An unmixed good, a good undisputable. A good that will make up for many an evil.’ The motive of those who wish to see a Westminster and a Middlesex election, for these objects are doubtless very deserving of encouragement from the Court ! That class to whom we allude are wise in their generation. THEY think that THEY MUST GAIN. But what will the GEN-*

"in their counsels (though we have from motives of delicacy considered our information as to the proceeding of these unfounded); can they consider a dissolution of parliament four months after its meeting a thing to be hailed with joy, for the same reason that the agitators of Westminster and Middlesex sigh for it? Surely, those who look to such a thing must be blind indeed, if they do not see that they are the dupes of their bitterest enemies.—But in dissolving parliament these gentlemen say they appeal to the country! Do they mean to say that they would gain a single vote by appealing to the gentlemen of England, to the counties, or popular boroughs? They know they could not. What then? Do they mean to say that they would gain their object by a traffic in the corrupt boroughs? And would they call that an appeal to the people, supposing it could succeed? They ought, however, to beware of these experiments. Every body knows what they mean, but they would not succeed. Let them be assured, however, that they will not be suffered to call this an appeal to the people, for the falsehood of the pretence shall be exposed.—The parliament would be dissolved if the House of Commons did not think proper to transfer their confidence from those who, according to Mr. Dickenson, possessed its confidence, and from whom it ought not to be withdrawn, unless they were guilty of something which would justify its being withdrawn.—What a situation then is this, that a ministry is removed by a positive interference of the King's prerogative, without any fault whatever alleged against them; nay, because they would not enter into a most unconstitutional pledge with respect to their future conduct?—Suppose, what will unquestionably be the case, that the House of Commons adheres to those ministers who possessed their confidence, and who have done nothing to forfeit it, and therefore refuse their confidence to those adventurers, without talent, property, connection, or permanent interest in the state; that are by the most ridiculous of all intrigues advanced to office, is the parliament to be dissolved? The Duke of Portland, at least, should remember what Mr. Burke, in his proposed address, said upon an occasion, which, deep as his Grace has since drunk of the oblivious stream, he cannot yet have forgotten.—'It is the undoubted prerogative of the crown to dissolve parliament; but we beg leave to lay before his Majesty, that it is, of all the trusts vested in his Majesty, the most critical and delicate, and that in which this House has the most reason to require not only the good faith, but the favour of the crown.'—Again, 'A House of Commons respected by his ministers is essential to his Majesty's service. It is fit that they should yield to parliament, and not that parliament should be new-modelled until it is fitted to their purposes.'—In what situation then do we stand? The present parliament has now sat little more than four months; and is it to be dissolved merely that it may be 'fitted to the purposes' of those desperate adventurers, without property or consideration, avowedly seeking to be the pensioners of the public for bread before they commence their ministerial junctions? Shall they dare to dissolve the parliament in order to fit it to their purposes? What say the people of England to such policy?—Since the Septennial Act was passed nothing of this sort has ever been attempted. It has been considered the leading difference between this and the arbitrary governments of the Continent, that our King was obliged to listen to the advice of his unfettered counsellors, but to defer to the wisdom of his great court of parliament. The prerogative of dissolution never was vested in the crown to enable the King to get rid of an honest and virtuous set of counsellors, but to protect him against a supposed exuberance of republicanism and independence, which might threaten the royal authority. Is that the vice or the excess of parliaments now?—No, no. Parliaments are not apt to commit such offences. The right of dissolving parliament was intended to protect the monarchical branch of the constitution—not to indulge the personal caprices of the monarch.—But in all that time have we ever seen parliament dissolved for displaying their confidence in ministers who had committed no crime, and for distrusting new ministers, who had, by their abdication on the death of Mr. Pitt, publicly proclaimed their own incapacity? Never can that memorable retreat be forgotten; and though Lord Mulgrave ventures to take the Admiralty, Mr. Canning the Foreign Affairs, Lord Hawkesbury the Home Department, Sir James Pulteney and Lord Castlereagh the War Department and Ireland, with Mr. Perceval and the Duke of Portland at the Treasury, every one must see that they are the very same people still, and that, as is natural, cowardice is changed for the

" moment from panic to presumption.—The only instance that can be quoted,  
 " is that of 1784, but we deny the precedent. The parliament of 1783, which  
 " Mr. Pitt dissolved, was in the middle of its fourth session. Is there nothing  
 " of degree in these matters? Is there no difference between dissolving a par-  
 " liament, after four years and after four months?—But the case of Mr. Pitt's  
 " dissolution is every way unlike; and if it were, what Mr. Pitt did in the con-  
 " sciousness of his great genius, and supported, perhaps in some degree, by a mis-  
 " guided zeal of the people, in favour of his wonderful maturity, and promises of  
 " talents, can afford no precedent for the despicable drivellers to whom the great  
 " offices of state have fallen, in the present chance-medley distribution.—But it  
 " is pretended too, that the late ministers dissolved parliament for party pur-  
 " poses, which forms a precedent. This is false two ways. It is false in point  
 " of fact, and in point of inference. The late ministry dissolved a parliament  
 " that had sat four complete sessions—a thing surely very different from dissolv-  
 " ing a parliament that has not sat four months. But they did not dissolve that  
 " parliament from any doubt of its supporting them. They had come into power,  
 " and had produced various most important measures, some new, and exposed to  
 " a most furious, malignant, and factious opposition on the part of certain mem-  
 " bers of that parliament, but carried by very large and decisive majorities.  
 " They never were in the slightest degree pressed, far less compelled, to dissolve  
 " for support. They dissolved at the end of four sessions complete, and they  
 " dissolved at the time when, by the failure of the negotiation, a new era in the war  
 " had begun.—This is proved by the testimony, or the reproach, of the present  
 " ministers, that the failure of the negotiation determined the late ministers to  
 " call a new, instead of assembling the old parliament; and it was even matter  
 " of bitter, though unjust censure, that the determination to dissolve was taken  
 " in this manner. But the dissolving in that manner was founded upon the great  
 " event which then happened. It gave the people the opportunity of choosing a  
 " new House of Commons coolly, at a most important crisis, in which party  
 " spirit did not mingle. It was an era too, which, if the representations of the  
 " present ministers were well founded, was very unfortunately chosen, if the  
 " conduct of the negotiation was so foolish and contemptible as they chose to  
 " describe it.—But whether the moment, on account of popular impression, was  
 " well or ill chosen, at least it was not chosen with a view to any pitiful clamour  
 " artfully excited; it was not with a view to a parliamentary support indispens-  
 " able to them; it was not with a view to a momentary existence, but the public  
 " had the opportunity of choosing their representatives, as coolly, as fairly, as im-  
 " partially as ever was known since the origin of parliaments.—Now, what would  
 " be the case were parliament at present dissolved?—1. It would be a bold exer-  
 " cise of the royal prerogative for an immediate purpose; and in order to get rid  
 " of a parliament which continued to confide in a ministry against whom no  
 " fault whatever could be alleged. 2. It would be an act justified by no preced-  
 " dent; inasmuch as no parliament was ever dissolved in this country, since the  
 " accession of the House of Hanover, so soon after its being convoked, particu-  
 " larly for ministerial purposes.—Such being the case, we may fairly inquire  
 " what pretence could be alleged for a measure which in its principle tends to  
 " the degradation of parliament, by avowing the object to be one that will be fa-  
 " vourable to the creatures of the court. Dare the present men pretend—do  
 " they pretend, to have the country with them? They know it is not so. All  
 " they can hope then is by a corrupt exercise of Government influence to obtain a  
 " majority in parliament, without the least consideration of their public merits or  
 " principles—or rather in defiance of their self-convicted imbecility, and their  
 " flagrant subserviency.—Are they aware too of the agitation of men's minds  
 " that must take place in Ireland, if a general election take place? Is it possible  
 " that the feelings of men naturally warmed during the quietest election, should  
 " not be inflamed by one that brought home to their bosoms questions in which  
 " they were so peculiarly interested? Would it be possible to make the people  
 " of Ireland forget, that in the circumstances which led to the dissolution, there  
 " were things most dear, most important to them? Could they enter upon elec-  
 " tion contests without feelings strongly excited? Hitherto the ill-used people  
 " of Ireland have been beguiled by soft words, and soothed with hope. Amidst  
 " all the evils of their destiny, hope at least has been kept at the bottom of the  
 " chest. But now these robbers and pilferers of the plan, who have stolen into  
 " power, have let even that escape. The people of Ireland see a ministry hostile

“ to them from principle. Is that a time then to inflame the natural unavoidable  
 “ feelings of four millions of our fellow subjects by the collision and heat of a  
 “ general election? Those who love a Westminster and Middlesex election could  
 “ tell the new ministers why they love it. It is on account of the turbulence, the  
 “ jubilee suspension of authority; the immoderate license of debate which accom-  
 “ pany that event. And would not all this happen in Ireland? Would it not  
 “ give rise to the most violent exaltation of men’s minds, and perhaps prepare  
 “ them for corresponding acts?—Let those who advise the King to dissolve his  
 “ parliament, look to these things. It is not enough that they are prepared by  
 “ martial law and military force to subdue discontent. Is the nation willing, or  
 “ is it able, to spare its troops either to watch or subdue disturbances wantonly  
 “ excited? This is not a moment for a diversion of our force. Buonaparte in-  
 “ deed will hear of these things with pleasure.

“ Audiet, cives acuisse ferrum

“ Quo graves Persæ melius perirent.

“ No friend to England, however, no friend to Europe, can hear of such pro-  
 “ posals without horror. They must lead to a total diversion of all our energies  
 “ from the common cause, if they do not excite the rebellion which the national  
 “ force will be called upon to suppress.—Let the noblemen and gentlemen of  
 “ England and Ireland, who have an interest in the country beyond that which  
 “ a thousand such fugitive ministers as the present have in possession or pros-  
 “ pect, think to what such desperate counsels must lead; and let them join in  
 “ preventing the mischief while yet it can be prevented.”

The great purpose of this paper is, as you will not fail to perceive, Gentlemen, to deter the king from dissolving the parliament; and, as the writer presumes, that the present members of the House of Commons will continue to vote on the side of the late, or turned-out ministers, he expects, as a consequence, that the present ministers will be unable to carry any measure in parliament, and, of course, that their rivals will regain the places, from which they have been ousted, not forgetting the attendant circumstance, that he himself would re-possess his place and his profits, which I am fully persuaded he would have gladly held under the present ministers, had he not been of the opinion, that, from their weakness, his chance was better in adhering to the former. The confused and bungling execution of this article in the Morning Chronicle, arising, probably, from the agitation in the writer’s mind, renders it necessary for us to pass over many of the topics, which he has introduced, or rather lugged in. We will, therefore, leave his representation of the “ *just alarm*,” that has been excited by the supposition that the present ministers have given the king a written pledge not to propose to him that which the late ministers had abandoned the moment they found he was averse from it; we will leave his parade about *oaths*, which compel ministers to *advise* such and such measures, but which do not prevent them from *putting a stop* to such measures, even after they are before parliament, though in such measures are “ involved the interests of a third part of the empire, and the preservation of the state;” we will leave his affected fears about the tranquillity of Ireland, *the people* of which he chooses to consider as deeply interested in supporting the late ministers, who, for what reasons the people of Ireland will, perhaps, be able to judge, withdrew the bill they had introduced, and which was pretended, at least, to be in their favour; we will leave the distinction between ministers who claim a right to advise measures, and who are ready to abandon them at the mere suggestion of the king, and ministers who, before hand, as he asserts, pledge themselves not to advise measures of which the king is known to disapprove; we will leave the *ferment*, which he foresees will arise in Ireland at the dissolution of a parliament, which, after it had

before it a bill for the good, as it is assumed, of the people of Ireland, suffered that bill to be withdrawn without one single opposing voice : all these we will leave, including the sublime reveries of Lords Grenville and Howick about " conciliating the affections of the people of Ireland, uniting the whole kingdom in one bond of brotherly love, drawing off the super-abundant population, and extracting the means of defence from the very bowels of discontent," and that, too, observe, by the enabling of about three or four dozen of Irish Catholics, chiefly of the nobility, to become Generals upon the staff, looking upon this as a most rational scheme for rendering happy, and, of course, contented, two or three millions of ragged, half-starved, houseless creatures, not one out of one thousand of whom knows what a General upon the staff means : all these we will leave to produce that impression, which they are so well calculated to produce upon the minds of sensible men, and we will come, at once, to the question of *the right and the expediency of dissolving the parliament, at this time* ; after which we may be allowed to indulge ourselves in a few remarks upon the insinuations of this writer respecting *my views* (for he quotes my very words) *in wishing for a dissolution of the parliament.*

That the king has a *right* to dissolve the parliament whenever he pleases, has never been denied by any man, who did not feel an interest in a parliament's continuing undissolved. It is, in fact, the only *constitutional* means which the king has of protecting himself and his authority, of preserving his due weight in the scale, or of preserving to the Lords their due weight, against the encroachments of the House of Commons ; for, that assemblies of men are as apt to encroach as individuals, history affords us many and striking proofs. This prerogative is also necessary to the protection of the people, seeing that it is possible for a House of Commons to betray its trust, and, by the means of the power of granting or withholding supplies, to tyrannize over both king and people. It is now, however, contended, that the parliament itself has the right of inquiring, whether this prerogative be justly exercised. We are told by this writer, that it was " given to the king not to enable him to get rid of *honest and virtuous counsellors*, but to protect him against the *exuberance of independence*," which latter, he tells us, by way of question, is not the vice of parliaments now-a-days : and which assertion I am, Gentlemen, by no means disposed to deny. But, with regard to his two positions, before-stated, as applied to the present circumstances, I must first observe, that there would be, if we were to admit his principle, a previous question to be discussed, namely, whether the late ministers were " honest and virtuous counsellors ;" and, I think it about ten to one that the result would not be exactly conformable to the assumption of Mr. James Perry, who enjoyed a pretty good place under those ministers. Than the principle nothing can be more false, nothing more contrary to the constitution of our government, nothing more degrading to both king and parliament, and nothing better calculated to keep alive a constant jealousy and hatred of the former. The true doctrine is, that the parliament has nothing at all to do with the choosing, or the dismissing of the king's ministers, who are called, and who ought to be regarded, as " *his servants*." The true office of the parliament is, to propound, to discuss, to pass laws, and to present them to the king for his approbation or rejection ; and, it is the peculiar office of the House of Commons to grant, or refuse, money to the king, for any and for every purpose whatever. In this, and this alone, consists its power as a check upon the other branches ; and, in the just

and wise exercise of this power consists the only constitutional security that the people have, either for property, liberty, or life. Take away this power, or render it of no use, *no matter by what means*, and all we have, life included, is placed at mere hazard. Such a well-poised government, supported by laws so just and of so long standing, does not, all at once, sink down into an open and merciless tyranny, crushing every man without exception: but, by degrees, and with a motion continually accelerating, down it must come, if this power be once destroyed, or, by whatever means, rendered of no effect. If this doctrine be sound, and I think that no reasonable and disinterested man will deny that it is, what despicable nonsense is this that we hear about the *confidence of parliament* in the king's ministers? A man cannot serve two masters. It is certain, that, the parliament, viewed in the constitutional light as a *check* upon the king, are the very last of all his subjects who ought to be able to interfere in the choice of his servants. If there be a *limit* upon the prerogative; if the exercise of it be subjected to any considerations of expediency, in any body besides the king himself, it is evident that the parliament must be the judge; and, if the parliament are of opinion, that it is inexpedient to dissolve them, of course they will not be dissolved. What, then, becomes of the prerogative? But, Gentlemen, the fact is, that people who preach such doctrine as this, wish to make a mere tool of the parliament; a mere mouth-piece wherewith to remonstrate against every measure of the king that may militate against their interests, whether in the way of power or of profit. They never tell us, that the House of Commons, upon seeing the affairs of the nation committed to dishonest or childish men, ought to *refuse money*, till they see those affairs in honest or abler hands; these writers never call upon the House to exercise this its constitutional and efficient power. That would not suit their purpose. It is always some dispute about *who shall have power and profit*, in which such men wish to engage the parliament; and it is, to be sure, ridiculous enough to see the whole nation engaged in the same disputes, taking the side of one place-hunting faction, or another, and seeming to think it of no consequence at all who compose the House of Commons, that House, which, as was before observed, forms the only constitutional check upon the exercise of the royal authority!—Mr. Perry does, however, acknowledge, that the prerogative of dissolution *has been exercised before*, an acknowledgment, which, when we reflect on the events of last year, certainly does great credit to his candour. His apology for the dissolution by Pitt, especially when we consider how often he has vehemently reprobated that measure, is really too disgusting to admit of an appropriate comment. "But," says he, "is there *no difference* between *four months* and *four years*?" Yes, thou sagacious querist, there are just forty-four months difference; but what difference is there in the *principle*? Aware of the paltriness of this subterfuge, he next comes to the *object* of the dissolution. "The late ministers," says he, "dissolved at the end of four sessions complete, *and they dissolved at a time when, by the failure of the negotiation, a new era in the war had begun.*" Well, and what then? Why not go on? Why not go on, and tell us *why* a parliament should be dissolved for *that cause*? You have stated your fact, but have left us to make the best use of it we can; and the use I make of it is to say, that, in my opinion, the reason why they dissolved it then, was, that they suspected, that, having failed in making peace, they would not be able to keep a majority in the House of Com-

mons, without an appeal to the *free voice* of the people, which appeal they made, Gentlemen, in the manner that we witnessed in Westminster and Hampshire. Does Mr. Perry mean to say, that it is necessary to dissolve the parliament as often as the ministry find it expedient to take a new course as to their executive measures? If so, what a degraded thing would he make the parliament; and how far beyond expression degraded things would he make those by whom one branch of that parliament is chosen? One would hope, that he could not mean this; but, upon the supposition that he does, we may surely ask him whether a dissolution should not, upon the same principle, take place *now*, when I venture to assert, that there will be a perfectly "new era" as to warlike and all other measures.—In short, in the whole of this article, evidently intended, as was before observed, to deter the king from dissolving the parliament, there does not appear to me to be any one reason why that measure should not be adopted, if the king choose. Harm to the country it is *impossible* it should do; it is quite impossible it should do harm; and it may possibly lead, though indirectly, perhaps, to a great deal of good.

The other part of this article of Mr. Perry, to which, Gentlemen, I am anxious to turn your attention is, that where this sage personage quotes my words, and where, doing me the honour to rank me with some others, whom he styles the Agitators of Westminster and Middlesex, he says, in substance, this: "That we wish for a dissolution of parliament, on account of the turbulence, the jubilee suspension of authority that would arise from, and the immoderate license of debate that would accompany it; that we seek the total overthrow of the government and laws, because we are sure to gain thereby; that we are desperate Jacobins, though he will not make use of an antiquated name; that we are deep cunning fellows, wise in our generation, and well knowing what will tend to the accomplishing of our views; that the poor silly courtiers (and he broadly hints at some pretty high in rank) are doing our work for us; and that it is for the *gentlemen* of England to step forward, vote for the late ministry against the king and his new ministry, and thus prevent the whole fabric of the English government from being destroyed."—This is pretty well, and particularly from Mr. Perry, who, for so many years past, has been the proprietor of the Morning Chronicle, in which the French revolution was eulogized, and in which all the acts, the silliest and bloodiest not excepted, of the French revolutionists were, if not actually defended, apologized for. We must keep our temper. For this, amongst other things, Mr. Perry was made. It is perfectly becoming him and his cause. But, Gentlemen, supposing the world were to believe what he says; supposing it to be believed, that I am in such desperate circumstances, or that the existence of government and law is so repugnant to my nature and my habits, or that I am so totally bereft of the love and esteem of my country, family, and friends, that *any change* would be a benefit to me, and that, as being most consonant to my disposition, I wish to see the destruction of the government effected through the means of degrading the parliament and the ministry; supposing all this, which he insinuates, to be true, what, I ask you, Gentlemen, must be my gratification at reading, for three weeks, the mutual exposures and recriminations, published in the Morning Chronicle and the Courier? Nay, why need I go farther than the very article above quoted. Here Mr. Perry describes the men, whom the King has now

chosen for his confidential servants, as “adventurers without talent, pro-  
 “perty, connection, or interest, in the country, advanced to office by the  
 “most ridiculous of all intrigues;” as “desperate adventurers without  
 “property or consideration, avowedly seeking to be pensioners of the  
 “public for bread before they commence their ministerial functions.”  
 He says that they mean to gain a majority in parliament “by a traffic in  
 “corrupt boroughs; that they shall not be suffered to call a dissolution  
 “an appeal to the people; that the right of dissolving parliament was  
 “not intended to indulge the personal caprices of the monarch; that all  
 “the new ministers can hope for is, by a corrupt influence of government,  
 “to obtain a majority in parliament, without the least consideration of  
 “their public merits or principles, or rather in defiance of their self-  
 “convicted imbecility, and their flagrant subserviency.”—Every one has  
 his characteristic manner of doing a thing, and this is Mr. Perry’s way  
 of supporting “government and social order” against us Jacobins and  
 Levellers! In other of his papers he has been much more vehement  
 in this sort of opposition to us. There is scarcely a term or an epithet  
 expressive of his contempt, or of villany in them, which he has not applied  
 to the members of the new cabinet, to “his Majesty’s confidential ser-  
 vants!” He has ascribed to them bad qualities, of all sorts, to each  
 in the highest degree; insomuch that, if the world were to believe  
 his statements, they must regard these “confidential servants of the  
 king” as a set of wretches unfit to be trusted with the management  
 of the most trifling individual concern, especially where honesty was  
 required, whence the inference as to the master who has chosen them  
 is inevitable. Yet, Gentlemen, this is the man who represents us as  
 Jacobins and Levellers, and who has taken upon him the task of defending  
 the “monarchy of England” against our crafty and wicked machinations!  
 —The truth is, that he and his party well know, that they have  
 nothing more to expect from the independent part of the people; they  
 know, that the very weakest amongst them will never trust or believe them  
 again. They may as well abuse us as not; for hate them we do, and hate  
 them we shall. The deeds of the last six weeks of their power will never  
 be forgotten by me; and, I hope, they never will be forgotten by you.  
 They gained our good wishes and our confidence by their apparently sin-  
 cere condemnation of the measures and the principles of Pitt; the very  
 first vote they gave after their elevation was to oblige us to pay the debts  
 of that very same man. From that day, until the day when their power  
 was destroyed, they praised his measures, praised his character, and  
 pursued his example. With what face can they now stand up to condemn  
 the principles of his professed followers? Except, indeed, they condemn  
 them for not acting contrary to their professions, which, in them, would be  
 natural enough. Lord Melville, they tell us, is at the bottom of all this  
 intrigue; and they throw out most significant hints about the indecency of  
 consulting Lord Melville. You and I, Gentlemen, might consistently  
 enough throw out such hints; but, for them, who volunteered with a  
*bill of indemnity* for Pitt’s lending the forty thousand pounds of the public  
 money to Boyd and Benfield (two members of parliament), without  
 interest and without the knowledge of his colleagues, and even without  
 making any minute of the transaction, leaving the fact to be detected by  
 a board of inquiry; for them, who well knew, who had evidence before  
 them, that Pitt was duly acquainted with all that Lord Melville did in the  
 concerns alluded to, and that he never expressed his disapprobation of it;



for them, who saw Pitt contend, in all manner of ways, that Lord Melville's conduct was justifiable; for them, who have since so eulogized that same Pitt, and who, even during the trial of Lord Melville, eulogized him to the skies; for them to complain of the "indecenty" of Lord Melville's being again employed in public affairs, is an instance of inconsistency too shameful, one would have thought, even for Mr. Perry to become the promulgator. They had their motive for eulogizing Pitt, for cherishing his under adherents, and for turning their backs upon those who had aided and supported them in their warfare against him; but, it was a motive of short-sighted ambition. Thirteen months of power they have purchased with political annihilation. They will, in a few weeks, find themselves without a single adherent; from the *very highest* to the very lowest, of those who were formerly attached to them, they will scarcely find a man, who does not, in his heart, rejoice at their fall; and, as to the independent part of the people, not one man of them will ever again be deceived by their professions or their clamours. They may call together their *Whig Club*; they may send forth their puffs about *Francis Horner*, and the rest of the new recruits of Whiggism; but, this old rump of a Club will, from this day to the day of its final extinction, be an object of contempt, a by-word and a reproach.

Of the *remedy* for all these things, of the means of protection against imposture and oppression, I shall, Gentlemen, speak in my next, and in the mean while I remain,

Your faithful friend and obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 9th April, 1807.

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## TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER.

### LETTER XIII.

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"I know it may be said, that I and those with whom I have the honour to act, are no more actuated than those on the other side of the House by motives of a pure disinterested nature, though my conscience acquits me of the crime." —Speech of Mr. GREY (now Lord Howick) on moving for a reform of parliament, on the 26th of May, 1797.

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GENTLEMEN,—Much as I fear, that these letters of mine must prove wearisome to you, I must beg you to indulge me with your attention, until I have submitted to you all the observations which occur to me, relative to the unconstitutional doctrines, of which the recent change of the king's ministers has caused the open avowal and promulgation. And, Gentlemen, I trust, that I shall not be thought to have led you much astray from the subject wherewith we started; for, now, as when I first had the honour to address you, the state of the representation of the people in parliament, and your interests and duties, as therewith connected, it is my wish to describe and exemplify.

In my last letter I deferred giving you my opinion respecting the *remedy* necessary to be applied, in order to remove the political evils, which

we all see and feel. To speak of that remedy, which is at once constitutional, efficacious, and of easy application, I now propose, after having taken a view of what passed in the House of Commons, on Thursday, the 9th instant, when a discussion took place respecting the pledge, which, as the late ministers assert, they were called upon to give to the king, as the sole condition, upon which he would suffer them to retain their places.

This discussion arose from the following motion made by Mr. BRAND :  
 " That it is contrary to the first duties of the Confidential Servants of the Crown to restrain themselves by any pledge, expressed or implied, from offering to the king any advice which the course of circumstances may render necessary for the welfare and security of any part of his Majesty's extensive empire." — This motion was discussed for a great many hours, at the end of which, as it appears from the report in the newspapers, a division took place, when there were for the motion 226, against it 258; and, of course, the new ministry, at the head of whom is the Duke of Portland, had a majority of 32; though, as you must have observed, Gentlemen, that, while these ministers were *out of office*, they were unable to obtain, at their utmost need, more than about 60 votes! What! what in all the world could have produced this sudden change! what could have induced so many members, who constantly voted with the late ministers, now to vote with their successors? Mr. Perry has positively asserted, that the present parliament was chosen as fairly, and with as much freedom on the part of the people, as have ever prevailed at the choosing of any parliament, *since parliaments were known in England!* He has, Gentlemen, positively asserted this; and, the conclusion, according to him, must be, that the majority aforesaid arose purely from the impulse of conscience in the honourable gentlemen composing it, who, of course, were convinced that Mr. Brand's motion ought not to pass, and, that the late ministers, whom they had so long given their support to, were, at last, in the wrong. The result before-mentioned must, too, have convinced Mr. Perry, that he was much mistaken, when he called the new ministers "adventurers for place, without talents, and without interest in the country, men of notorious imbecility and flagrant subserviency;" for, if this description had been true, would they have obtained, in the very first division, a majority over men of such great talents, and that, too, you will please to observe, in a parliament chosen so very fairly and freely, as not to yield, in this respect, to any parliament ever before chosen in England? Time is a great teacher, and, if he has not yet sufficiently instructed Mr. Perry, that gentleman will, I hope, now have the candour to thank me publicly, for the consolation, which I endeavoured to give him, for the balm which I strove to pour into his wounded soul, through my Register of the 4th instant. (LETTER XI.) I found him alarmed at the prospect of a dissolution of the parliament; I found his imagination disturbed by the dread of a ferment in Ireland, where he appeared to foresee, that the people would rise in a mass in favour of the late ministers; I found him shocked at the idea of "a corrupt traffic in boroughs," which, as he asserted, would be resorted to; I found him seized with horror, at the prospect of new agitations in Middlesex and Westminster; I found his loyal heart sinking within him at the thought of that "jubilee of licentious debate," to which a dissolution might give rise amongst us Jacobins and Levellers. To assuage these torments of his anxious and purely patriotic mind, I used my utmost exertions to convince

him, that, for the purpose alluded to, namely, the gaining of a majority over to the new ministers, a dissolution would not be necessary. I reminded him (and I was ashamed to think it necessary to remind him) that reason and reflection were the characteristics of man, as contrasted with the brute creation; that these faculties, which were possessed, in a greater or less degree, by all men not shut up in a mad-house, were, double-s, possessed by the members of parliament, who, I besought him to remember, were neither stocks nor stones. I pointed out to him the almost irresistible powers of eloquence, especially of a certain sort, employed upon politicians of a certain stamp; and, my conclusion was, that the opportunities for private interviews, for the sweet converse of souls, which would be afforded by a prorogation, particularly during the summer months, when our lawgivers would, of course, retire to commune with wisdom and conscience in solitude; my conclusion was, that such opportunities might lead to the producing, in the minds of the members, or, at least, of many of them, a way of thinking, which would induce them to vote for the new ministers, especially as these latter were engaged in protecting the royal conscience from violation, a point upon which we well know, that the members of the House of Commons are nice in the extreme. The event of the debate, of which I am now about to attempt an analysis, has proved, that I was perfectly right; or, that, if I erred at all, it was in supposing that a prorogation was necessary for the purpose in view; for, in the short space of ten days, without scarcely any opportunities for the soft powers of persuasion to operate; without any time for retirement or cogitation; without any other aid than that of their intuitive wisdom and integrity, their perspicacity and decision of character, they, as it were from sudden inspiration, at once gave their votes on the side of the new ministers. But, Gentlemen, in place of thanking me for having, and, as it now appears, with such correctness of reasoning, enjaveoured to quiet his fears of the effects of a dissolution; in place of thanking me, Mr. Perry has, in his oblique way, most outrageously abused me. Nay, which must, I think, surprise you greatly, he has, in all possible ways, expressed his disappointment, his mortification, and his rage, that the new ministers have obtained a majority without a dissolution, rather than which, as it now appears, he would have seen the dreaded "ferment in Ireland," and even the much more dreaded "jubilee suspension of authority" over us Jacobins and Levellers in Middlesex and Westminster. Leaving Mr. Perry, for the present, we will now proceed to the debate.

Mr. BRAND, in prefacing his motion, is reported to have said:

"When he perceived that pledges had been demanded from the late ministers which were dangerous to the constitution, inimical to the interests of the country, and subversive of the prerogatives of the crown, he felt himself bound to confine his motion to that point. The advice to his Majesty, to demand from his ministers a written pledge that they would abstain from giving him advice upon subjects of importance to the security of the empire, must have originated with persons who had no regard to the rights of that house, nor the prerogatives of the crown. His Majesty had full discretion to dismiss his councillors, and to choose others in their place, but he could limit the range of advice which they might give him, and for which they were to be responsible according to the constitution. Where were they to look for responsibility for misrule, misconduct, or mismanagement of the public affairs, if such a pledge were to be given? Where was blame to attach for grievances, upon which ministers might have given a pledge, not to give any advice to his Majesty? Ministers might be men of great character and exalted name, but after giving such a pledge, they would not dare to advise their sovereign on such subjects. It

“ would not be becoming in him to delineate the outline of the constitutional principles upon this point. If they were doubtful, it might be proper for him to endeavour to ascertain them; but these principles were admitted, recognised, and supported by the constitutional law of the land. The oath of a privy councillor, as reported by Sir Edward Coke, bound him to advise his Majesty to the best of his judgment upon all matters connected with the interests of his realms, without exception or partiality, and also with secrecy, and not to publish by word or letter what passed in council. The present oath, which was only a translation of the old oath, was equally binding upon the privy councillor. But if a privy councillor was to subscribe to any pledge to restrain his advice, he would sign judgment upon the violation of his oath to his king, his country, and his God. He would be ashamed to argue what he considered as the axiomatic law of the constitution; but as there might be some who might admit the principle, whilst they advised the infraction of it, who might allow the law of the constitution, but recommend its subversion, he thought it would be right to declare that law. He had confined himself to the immediate effects and future dangers of the proceeding that had taken place, and did not mean to go into any consideration of the measures of the late administration, *their attention to the liberty of the subject*, and to the rights and comforts of the people, nor of the benevolence that characterized their act for *the abolition of the slave trade*. When the constitution was in danger, he thought it not right to depart from the immediate question, and, therefore, should conclude with “ moving ”——

As Mr. Brand did not think proper to go into any account of the “ attention which the late ministers paid to the *liberty of the subject*,” neither will we lose our time in endeavouring to find out what the *abolition of the Slave Trade* could possibly have to do with the pledge demanded of the king’s servants; but, I cannot refrain from observing, as I frequently have done before, that the abolition of the Slave Trade will, at best, do no good to the people of this country, except, indeed, in the way pointed out by Sir Thomas Turton, that, by throwing the trade into the hands of the French, we might thereby the sooner fill up the measure of their iniquity, and, of course, bring down the vengeance of Heaven upon them; an idea of which it is difficult to say, whether it had its origin in legislative wisdom, christian charity, or pious devotion; but, I think, it will be unanimously agreed, that Sir Thomas’s is a way of fighting the French perfectly original; and, seeing, that he has taken up the affairs of India, I really do not despair of hearing him propose to throw our manifold sins in that country also into the measure of our enemy’s transgressions. To come back to the debate; I think, that Mr. Brand, if the above report of his speech be correct, confounded the office of *privy councillor* with that of the office of *minister*, or servant of the king. At the time when Sir Edward Coke wrote his famous book upon the laws of England, the king had nothing belonging to him resembling in the most distant degree what we now call a *ministry*; and, indeed, it was not until after the Revolution, at which time the Whigs, as they are called, began to rule in a body, that such a thing as is now called a *ministry* existed. The duty of a *privy councillor* is to advise the king in all matters whatever, and at all times, whether he hold any other office under the Crown, or not. The privy council, which, by way of eminence, is called *The Council*, is a thing known to the constitution of our government, and is, perhaps, nearly as ancient as the parliament itself. *The Cabinet Council* is a thing quite unknown to that constitution; and, until very lately, has never been named in the parliament. It was not as members of the privy council, that the king demanded a pledge of the late ministers. They were, indeed, members of the privy council; but, there are forty, or more, members of that

council ; and, if the pledge had been demanded of them, as such, it would, of course, have been, by implication, at least, demanded of the whole of the members of the council. But, and this puts the matter in a light not to be misunderstood, of the late ministers it was demanded to sign the pledge, or to give up their places. They refused the demand ; they were dismissed from their places ; but, *still they are privy councillors* ; from the privy council they are not dismissed ; they may still give their advice, as privy councillors, upon all matters whatever ; and this clearly shows, that the pledge was demanded of them merely as servants of the king. Whether they, being also privy councillors, could, without a violation of their privy councillor's oath, have given the pledge, is another matter ; but, Gentlemen, as the ministers had, at the mere suggestion of the king, abandoned the only measure, at which the pledge pointed ; as they had given way here, as they had actually withdrawn a bill which they have declared to be absolutely necessary to the safety of the nation ; as they, who had introduced this bill amidst the applauses of the House of Commons, could, at the bare expression of the king's disapprobation, do this, notwithstanding their oaths as privy councillors, one can hardly see why they should lay such stress upon that oath, as an obstacle to their proposing to the king any other such measure ; unless, indeed, we are inclined to admit, that, so curious is the nature of this oath, that it binds you to advise what it permits you to abandon the very next moment. In their minute of council, they claim a right to submit to the king whatever measures they may think requisite for the good of the country. What was the *use* of this minute ? They possessed the right. The king had expressed no doubt of it ; and the minute had no meaning at all, if it did not mean, that, though they had abandoned the particular measure now, they were resolved to renew it again. " So far from that," says the king, " I demand of you a pledge, that you never will renew it again." This pledge they cannot give ; their oath will not let them ; but the very same oath leaves them free to abandon the measure the moment they have advised it, if they find it grating to " the *personal feelings of the king.*" Observe here, again, the nice discrimination of their consciences, which will not suffer them to abstain from *giving advice*, on account of the feelings of the king ; but which, for the sake of sparing those feelings, will freely suffer them *to prevent that advice from having any effect.* Under this view of the subject, I should have seen no necessity for the adopting of Mr. Brand's motion, and I really wonder, that such a motion should have been supported by men, who had expressed such extreme sensibility towards the " feelings of their gracious master," that being, I think, the phrase recently most in vogue amongst them. It is truly astonishing that men, who, while in place, could, out of pure regard for the feelings of the king, withdraw a bill from before parliament, which bill they thought indispensably necessary to the safety of the nation, should, the moment they were out of place, have supported a motion, declaring that which the king had demanded to be contrary to the first duties of his ministers, than which nothing more hostile to the feelings of the king could I think well have been imagined.

So much for the merits of the question before the House ; but there were some other topics, which arose during the debate, upon which, Gentlemen, I must request your permission to offer a few short remarks, as tending, either directly or indirectly, towards the elucidation of the great point

which I always endeavour to keep in view, and in which alone either you or I have any real interest,—

“Mr. MAURICE FITZGERALD was of opinion that there was not a single sentence in the resolution, nor a single part of the conduct of ministers, which *derogated from the prerogative of the crown*. If the prerogative had been infringed, it had been infringed by those who would *destroy the responsibility of ministers*. He entered into an examination of the recent proceedings of the late administration, and contended, that had they acted differently, they would have been guilty of a dereliction of their trust. It was an administration of talents, of consideration, and possessing the confidence of the country. *By every man in the empire, therefore, it was to be lamented, that the services of such men should be lost to the country*. He described the state of Ireland as very hazardous, deprecated the *total ignorance, and even, he feared, the apathy*, on this subject, and wished that he was of sufficient importance to rouse the attention of the house to the consideration of this question, namely, *whether they would command the services of four or five millions of people, or hazard their enmity.*”

This speech as curtailed by the reporters, is very short, but *full of matter*; and, to say the truth, those reporters are exceedingly clever and judicious at this work of curtailing. They frequently sit sweating under a speech of several hours; and then down they clap all the substantial parts of it in half as many minutes; in-somuch that some very shrewd men have been of opinion, that it would be of great convenience if the several orators were to commune with the reporters beforehand; but, this opinion, if acted upon, would not only put an end to parliamentary oratory, but would very little comport with the dignity of either house, and we know, from Pitt and Lord Howick, that that is an object of great importance.—Taking Mr. Fitzgerald’s points in their due order, our attention is first attracted by the anxiety expressed by the honourable gentleman, lest it should be thought, that the motion tended, even in the smallest degree, to *derogate from the prerogative of the crown*; and, we have, indeed, observed, from the beginning to the end of the discussions, both in doors and out of doors, relating to the dismissal of the minister, the most earnest solicitude on their part, and on the part of their partisans, to *deny*, that, in any respect whatever, *they were not submissive enough to the king*. “They did,” said Mr. Perry, “they did withdraw the bill the moment they found it *unpleasant* to the king. “They did not wish for parliament to control his will. We assert, “we *boldly* assert (pray observe the extent of this boldness), we *boldly* assert that the ministers, in the minute of council, did *not* claim the right of submitting to parliament such measures as they might deem indispensablely necessary to the safety of the nation, but *to the king only*;” and, this was the burden of Lord Howick’s famous complaint; he complained, that he and his colleagues had been scandalously *misrepresented* by a newspaper *libeller* (mark, and remember the terrible word); and, what was this scandalous, this *libellous* misrepresentation? Why, that Lord Howick and his colleagues (all members of parliament, observe) had, in words, asserted their right to submit to parliament whatever measures they might, from time to time, deem indispensablely necessary to the safety of the country. This was the *libellous* misrepresentation of them, who had only asserted their right to submit such measures to the king alone, being ready, of course, to abandon them, if they found them *unpleasant* to him. Against *this misrepresentation* it is that they have so laboured to defend themselves in the eyes of Englishmen, whom they are, nevertheless, surprised to find totally indifferent as to their fate.—With regard

to the effect which the pledge would have had in "destroying the responsibility of ministers," as the speech before us seems to apprehend, that would be an alarming evil indeed! We have seen how real, how efficient, how active this responsibility is in practice, and Mr. James Perry has, within this week or two, given us the modern theory of it, which is this, that "resolutions of censure, and impeachments, are now become obsolete; that they can never have place but in the feverish fits of the constitution; and that, when the constitution is in its *healthful* state, the real responsibility of ministers consists in this, that when they lose the *confidence of parliament* they must quit their places." And that is all! That is the whole history of the famous responsibility, of which we have heard so much, and which Mr. Maurice Fitzgerald is afraid would be destroyed by the precedent of ministers giving a pledge to the king not to offer him advice contrary to his wishes. If the doctrine of Mr. Perry be the right doctrine; and, we may presume, that it is the doctrine of my Lord Howick and his colleagues, what will the nation lose by the destruction of this responsibility? Besides, we now see that the thing is going on at full swing; for the late ministers *lost the confidence of parliament*, as it has been proved, clearly proved, upon the last division; they lost their places too; and there was the ultimate and complete effect of the responsibility. Now, none of your shuffling, Mr. Perry; here we have you fast; get out of the hobble if you can.—Of that *universal lamentation*, which Mr. Fitzgerald talks of, as arising from the dismissal of the late ministers, and of the *apathy* which he perceives to exist upon the subject of that dismissal, which are, doubtless, perfectly reconcilable in his mind, we will speak, after we have spent a moment or two in admiration of the astonishing effect which he seems to suppose the bill recently withdrawn would have produced; no less than that of commanding *the services of four or five millions* of people. Now, though I cannot possibly see any *harm* that the bill would have done, except that of gaining those who joined with the Pitts in order to stifle your voice at the last election; though, the gaining of them some degree of unmerited support is all the *harm* that I can see it possible for the bill to have produced, I can really see *no good* that it could have done, or that any other than a mere visionary projector could have anticipated from it. "Four or five millions of people!" Why, including even the infants in embryo, the Roman Catholics in this kingdom do not amount to more than about *three* millions; and, I think, it may be safely affirmed, that, of those three millions not three thousand, at the very utmost, would have thanked the king for acceding to the measure proposed. "To tranquillize Ireland," indeed! Tranquillize two or three millions of half-starved, half-naked, half-barbarous people! To the *principle* of the bill I have nothing to object; but, to ascribe to it such amazing practical effects is, surely, most strangely to exaggerate. The state of Ireland is, indeed, full as alarming as the late ministers now describe it; though we cannot but recollect how earnestly they deprecated all discussion upon the subject, and even all allusion to it, no longer than about four months ago. But, the discontents, the heart-burnings of Ireland, are not to be cured by such means. The giving the Irish Catholics what is called complete emancipation would not, in my opinion, allay those discontents for an hour amongst the great body of the people, though it might gratify and even pacify a few of the principal persons of that sect. Since I have understood any thing of the matter, I have always remained convinced that Ireland stands in need of something very different from a law

merely to enrich, or ennoble, a few scores of men. It is the whole *state of Ireland*; it is the *system of governing Ireland*, that all men, when they speak their minds, say ought to be changed. To refuse the oath of supremacy is the mere test of discontent at other things. The persons who refuse would have some other test, if they had not that. If the Pope himself were installed in Ireland, the same system of rule still continuing, those who now contend for his supremacy, would combine against him. The feelings of the people of Ireland are those of a people oppressed by their conquerors; but, these feelings are not of recent origin. All that they have had at the hands of the present king, at any rate, is concession. They are oppressed by numerous ills, arising from various causes; and, to suppose that these could be cured by heightening the ladder of promotion for a few officers in the Army and Navy is, in my opinion, absurd. One of the evils in the state of Ireland, and one, too, of the most mischievous tendency, is, *the flagrant non-residence of the Protestant clergy*; for, even here in England I, for my part, know of few things so grating to the heart of man as the being compelled to yield one-tenth part of the produce of his fields to enrich, or, at least, support a parson, who ought to be continually resident in the parish, but who never shows his face in it. This is a point upon which Mr. Perceval stands virtually pledged; and, unless he has the same way of getting rid of his pledges as Mr. Sheridan and Lord Howick and Mr. Whitbread and Lord Erskine had, he will surely do something in this way. If he can enforce residence in Ireland; or, if he only does, in Ireland, what his bill of last year (which our friends, the reformers, threw out) proposed to do in England, he will do more towards the tranquillizing of that country than has ever yet been done, or attempted to be done. That is the path for him to proceed in, and not in that of "*extraordinary exertions of the law*;" for, he may, I think, count upon it as a certainty, that every such exertion will be an exertion in favour of France. I, for my part, do not think that mere religious concessions to the Roman Catholics would do any good. Experience has proved, that they have done no good hitherto; but that, in the present state of Europe, leaving justice and humanity out of the question, policy calls for something to be done for Ireland nobody will deny. It is quite useless to call the Irish by hard names, to revile them as malcontents and rebels; there they are, they are pretty near to us, and, as we cannot make them cease to exist, we must either induce them to love us, or make up our minds to have their hatred with all its possible and probable consequences. A correspondent of mine, after having very ably described the non-efficiency of the bill in question, proposes, as a grand remedy for the evils existing in Ireland, to send *Mr. Hastings*, of all men living, to be the viceroy of that country! To this I should object, because that gentleman was the ruler of slaves once in his life-time. But, it is not in Ireland, any more than here, that a change of rulers is wanted; it is a change in the system of rule, by which I do not mean, a change in the name or the form of the government; but a change in the manner of conducting it, and especially in the manner of raising and expending the public money; and which change, so far from impairing the constitutional strength and permanency of the throne, would strengthen and confirm them. This it is that is wanted. This work, which is not the work of a day, once well begun only, all our apprehensions, and dreadful apprehensions they are, about Ireland, would be at an end; but, unless something in this way be attempted, we may consider as mere sublimated reveries all the talk about



“extracting the means of defence from the bowels of discontent.”— Sir THOMAS TURTON, who, though he has taken in hand the questions respecting Marquis Wellesley, found time to reflect upon the subject of the debate before us, said, that “the late ministers had talked a good deal about pledges to the Catholics, though they had not hesitated to postpone the redemption of their many other pledges, such as that for a *parliamentary reform, &c. &c. &c. &c. &c.*”——This was the blow, Gentlemen, and not the less severe on account of the hand, from which it came. Well must you remember, Gentlemen, these pledges. Well must you remember the descriptions which the late ministers, the famous Whigs gave of the House of Commons, as at present constituted. Often have I had the book of their speeches thereon before me; often have I taken up the pen to make extracts from it; but, as often have I dropped it again, and with still itching fingers, threw away the book of temptation, when I recollected, that Pitt, whose conduct and character they have, since they succeeded to his power, so constantly eulogized, saw prosecuted for sedition, and even for treason, those, who, as the judge himself declared, had only endeavoured to effect such a reform as Pitt had asserted to be absolutely necessary to the preservation of any thing like liberty in England. Yes, Gentlemen, Sir Thomas Turton struck them to the heart. It was so good, so sweet to the ears of us, who had felt the effects of their reforming spirit at Westminster and in Hampshire, to hear them reminded of this their great and forfeited pledge. And to hear it come, too, not from any of our brethren, the Jacobins and Levelers, but from a Pittite, from a partisan of that “illustrious statesman,” from “a friend of government, of social order, and of our holy religion,” as the phrase is with John Bowles and Redhead Yorke. If all sense of feeling was not gone, how must they have felt at that moment! Making the change of a word or two in the exclamation of the fallen Woolsey, they must have said in their hearts: “Had we but served the people with but half as much zeal as we have eulogized Pitt, they would not thus have treated us in the wane of our fortunes.” Here is their great sin, and here, too, is the *real* cause of their fall. Mr. Fitzgerald seems to think, that their dismissal has spread *universal lamentation* over the country; and yet he laments the *apathy* that prevails. Not one sensible and disinterested man laments their fall; and the apathy is complete indeed. The change has been productive of much exultation, on the one side of much chagrin on the other, and of unprecedented bitterness amongst place-men and place-hunters, and also amongst a few honest fools who yet, from habit rather than from reason, lend their lungs or their pens, to one party or the other; but, amongst the people at large, it has produced neither sorrow nor pleasure, and the only feeling that has arisen from it has been merely that of a momentary satisfaction at seeing the late ministers punished, and that, too, in the most appropriate of all ways, for their political apostacy, their eulogizing of Pitt, and their mockery of the country for expecting them to act up to their professions. They now tell us, after all their twenty years of professions and of pledges; after all the hopes which they excited with respect to a reform of abuses, and an amendment in our internal situation, including every thing that is, or that ought to be, dear to us; they now tell us that they had, when they came into power, *two* great objects in view; and what were these, forsooth, but *the restoring of peace to troubled Europe*, and *the abolition of the slave trade*, than which the reduction of one single sinecure place,

the relieving us from one single tax-gatherer, would be, beyond all comparison, of more importance to us. How are we to restore peace to troubled Europe? The scourge is sweeping on, and sweep it will, in spite of us; and, as to the abolition of the slave trade, allowing it to be a good, which I deny, it is not a good *unto us*, who have, besides, amongst our own countrymen and our own colour of skin, a sufficiency of objects for our compassion, the number of our English paupers being three times as great as the number of slaves in all our West-India Islands. Aye, Gentlemen, these were the two great objects that they had in view, and it fortunately happened that by neither of them would any place or emolument have been touched, nor any source of corrupt influence dried up, or diminished. It is so good, it is so just, that, after all their praises of Pitt, after all their uncalled-for praises of his schemes and his character, after all their abandonment of the people, they should have been taunted with their apostacy by the Pittites themselves. Had they been true to their promises, had they made a stand upon some measure for the relief of the people, or for the restoration of those rights, of which they formerly talked so much, then, indeed, would there have been "universal lamentation" at their dismission; but, the bill, upon which they split, even supposing them not to have abandoned it, was no such measure: it was a measure which would not have been felt by us, while it would have added to their own influence. Not a single measure, in their view of it, did they propose, favourable to the people; for even their putting a stop to new taxes was, by them *intended* to perpetuate the system of funding and taxing. Of all this they were well aware; but they scoffed at our disappointment, mortification, and indignation, to which we dared not, and yet dare not, give utterance in suitable terms. They said in their hearts, "Let them fume; let their anger consume them; we hate the Pitts, as much as ever, but we hate them as rivals for power and emolument, and not as we hate those, who would tear up corruption by the very roots." Scarcely were they seated in their places, when we heard them begin to talk of their disregard of "popular clamour"; of their resolution to do their duty, "heedless of what *unreasonable* men might think of them;" and their chief supporter, Mr. Perry, has treated us with several very serious dissertations upon the danger of listening to wild theoretic men, who know nothing of the difficulties which those have to overcome who are burdened with the management of state affairs. The growth of *wholesome* reform is, we have been told, like that of the oak, slow and sure; and that none but thoughtless hot-headed men could expect "his Majesty's government" (for that is a very fashionable phrase) to do every thing at once. No: we knew they could not do every thing at once; nay, we might have excused them for some part of what they did not do; but, for their doubling of the income tax, while, at the same time, they added enormously to the pensions of the Royal Family and exempted the King's funded property from the operation of the income tax; for these and for many other of their acts of commission, and, above all others, for their incessant praises of Pitt and his system, it was impossible for us to find an excuse. To praise Pitt and the Pitt system of taxation and of funding, to vote the payment of his debts expressly upon the *score of his merits*, was so galling, so cruel, so outrageous an insult to us, who had supported them for the very cause that they attacked that same Pitt and that same system, that it is not in the heart of man to forgive it. How justly, how fitly, are they punished ever-

thrown as they are, not by us, but by the followers of Pitt, who reviled them, too, for having attempted to do, though in a smaller degree, that which Pitt himself attempted to do! If they had begun by a steady adherence to their pledges; if they had said, "Have a little patience, and we will perform all that we promised you;" had they made a *beginning* only, we should have been patient. But, no; they scoffed at us. They told us of nothing but their power; and, by their acts they showed, that they praised Pitt's system, because they found it to suit their purpose. There is a singular fitness in the whole of their punishment. The *Well-lesleys* form a part of their successors. Let Mr. Paull complain no more. He is amply avenged on them for all their treatment of him and his cause. They took the Pitts to their bosom. All those, who were willing to be subservient to them, they embraced with eager arms; and these Pitts it is who have now crushed them, not forgetting to revile them for the forfeiture of their pledges to us, the people of England.

This appropriate hint of Sir Thomas Turton has led me to wander so far from the debate, that I hardly know where I left off. I must, however, return to it; for there are several points remaining unnoticed; and, besides, it would be unpardonable, and would certainly subject me to a charge of inattention to "dignity," were I to pass over the speech imputed to my Lord Howick.

But, first, let us notice the speech of Mr. ROMILLY, the late Solicitor-General, apparently a very able man, and, by all account, a man of excellent principles. He said, "that, to choose his own ministers is, no doubt, the prerogative of the crown. By that prerogative the King can call any man he pleases to his councils. Even a man in whom that House has no confidence. He may call to his service a man who has been convicted by that House of a gross violation of the law, who has been brought to trial and acquitted; but so acquitted, that not one of his powerful friends in that House had ever yet ventured to move the rescinding of the resolutions which stood against him; who could not come into the other House of parliament without reading in the looks of men around him the sentence passed upon him, and who must still have resounding in his ears the words, "*Guilty; upon my honour.*" But then the ministers were responsible for that exercise of the prerogative, otherwise the constitution was no more: the King would be absolute, and the House of Commons lose its dearest privileges."—What, then, do the dearest privileges of the House really consist in a right of demanding, at the hands of some one, an account of the King's choice of his servants? Is this their dearest privilege? Verily it is one of very little importance to the people. That the speech before us aimed at Lord Melville there can be no doubt; but, as often as such allusions are made by the Whigs, so often will I remind them, that they voted the payment of Pitt's debts, expressly upon the score of his merits, and that they have, from the day they came into power, been constantly eulogizing the character and conduct of Pitt, who, all the world must agree, was a full participator in all the acts attributed to Lord Melville. What did Lord Melville do? What was proved against him? Why, that he suffered the public money to be, for a time, diverted from the service of the public, and used for the profit of individuals. Well, and was it not proved to the House, upon the oaths of good witnesses, that Pitt was, during the time that Lord Melville so acted, apprized of it? Nay, was it not also proved, that, in one particular instance he himself took forty thousand

pounds of the naval money, and lent it to Boyd and Benfield, two members of the then parliament, without interest, without consulting his colleagues, and also without causing any minute to be made of the transaction? Forty thousand pounds of this very money he lent to two of his loan-contractors to enable them to make good their bargain; forty thousand pounds of the public money, without interest, to enable two members of parliament to lend that money to the poor public itself, which public had to *pay interest* for the use of its own money so lent to it! All this the Whigs well knew; they had it before them upon oath; and what did they do? What did these lovers of justice, these talkers about *responsibility* do? Why, they supported; nay they *proposed* a bill of *indemnity* for the conduct of Pitt, and for that bill they unanimously voted in that same House of Commons, where they were then moving articles of impeachment against Lord Melville! What was the cause of this? Why, it is now known, that *they were, at that time, negotiating with Pitt for a share of the powers and emoluments of office*; and unless the power of Lord Melville was destroyed, there was no room for them. Lord Howick says, as we shall presently see, that no influence of government was exerted against Lord Melville. No; the Whigs had no motive for it after they were in power; and so great is my opinion of their christian charity, that I really believe they rejoiced at his acquittal. After the bill of indemnity for the conduct of Pitt, I became, as the public may remember, very cool with respect to the case of Lord Melville; for I held it to be partiality of the basest description to take advantage of popular opinion for the purpose of hunting him down, while Pitt was not only suffered to escape, but was complimented and praised by the pursuers. — These Whigs do, I know, accuse me of impatience, and I confess that I am, in some cases, impatient; but of this bad quality they, at any rate, have no reason to complain, as, I think, the public must be convinced. But the public know very little of my forbearance. At the time just mentioned, I remonstrated with them in private, through an infallible channel; I represented to them the impolicy as well as the injustice of their proceedings; at every stage of their political apostacy I endeavoured, in the most earnest and yet most respectful manner, to prevent that which has finally produced their overthrow, and, having, after they came into power, obtained an audience of Mr. Fox, I represented to him the inevitable consequence of following the example of Pitt, namely, the annihilation of not only the party of which he was the head, but also the annihilation of all confidence, on the part of the people, in the then existing race of public men. He who was, in his nature, kind and indulgent to a fault, who was wonderfully gifted in the faculty of perceiving and of judging, whose heart and mind were always disposed to the right side, and who only wanted, as Major Cartwright observes, “the resolution to *say nay to bad men*,” heard me with patience and with attention; but I gathered from the arguments he made use of to quiet my fears, that he had no longer any confidence in his powers of effecting any thing great for the country. In answer to all the reproaches of the Whigs, I might appeal to the gradual public warnings that I gave them; but, I further assert, that, at every stage of their dereliction, I remonstrated privately; I told them that if their impatience for office produced an abandonment of their principles, their power would be of short duration, and they would fall unregretted. That I was right in my judgment, they may now, perhaps, have the justice to say to themselves, if they have not the candour pub-

licly to acknowledge it. The cause of their fall, and especially the cause of their falling unregretted, is to be ascribed entirely to the compromise that they have submitted to in order to obtain power and emolument; and, oh! how often have I, publicly as well as privately, remonstrated against any and every such compromise not only as fatal to the country, but as fatal, as totally ruinous, to themselves! "They *wished* to do good, they *wished* to relieve the country;" aye, and Balaam *wished* to do right, when, for hire, he cursed where he should have blessed, and blessed where he should have cursed. "They *wished* to do good, they wished to relieve the country;" but, they made us pay the debts, they eulogized the conduct and character, they adopted and pursued the system, of Pitt. To this charge, a charge which I will never cease to prefer against them as long as they keep their heads above, or as long as they shall at times make them appear through, the troubled surface of politics, I should be glad to hear *their answer*. I will give it publicity equal to the publicity of the charge; but, I forewarn them, that they must find something far better than the pleadings of their advocate, Mr. Perry, which amount to neither more nor less than an assertion, that a combination of interests and a compromise of principles, amongst great men, are, in this "the *healthful* state of the constitution," necessary to counterbalance the power of the throne, than which a more detestable doctrine never was preached, the people and their representatives being, by such doctrine, totally excluded from any share in the real powers of the state, and no choice being left us but that of being governed by an absolute monarch, or an aristocracy as absolute, and ten thousand times more oppressive.

In returning once more to the debate, we find, in the speech of Mr. PRACREVAL, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, a minute and sort of official account of the steps which led to the dismissal of the late ministers, and, as such, it is worthy of particular attention. He said,

"That it would, he conceived, be convenient in the discussion to consider the measure which had been the occasion of the dismissal in three stages: First, when the application had been made for his Majesty's consent to bring it in; secondly, when it had been brought in in a shape very different from that in which his Majesty had understood and sanctioned it; and thirdly, when it was withdrawn, and the circumstances attending that proceeding. As to the first, it was quite clear that his Majesty could have understood the original intention only as meant to extend the provisions of the Irish Act of 1793 to Great Britain, by means of clauses in the Mutiny Act. The first dispatch to his Majesty, turning on the anomalies of the law in Ireland and Great Britain, and on the obligation of the pledge given in Ireland in an extension of the law of that country to this, and then the use of the words, of the Irish act in that dispatch, that is, to grant all commissions, and all the arguments offered to gain his Majesty's consent, tended to show that nothing more was meant at that time than to extend that act to this country. This was rendered still more clear and unquestionable by the change which was introduced into the expressions when it began to be in the contemplation of the late Ministers to grant more than was granted by the Irish Act. Then the former expression of commissions was omitted, for it did not apply to the Staff, and the words "warrants and appointments" were introduced into the Bill. It was besides to be considered, that it was not till after much reasoning that his Majesty had been induced to withdraw his dissent from the original proposition; and that his Majesty had then declared, that nothing should ever induce him to go one step further. His Majesty, at the same time, expressed a hope, that his forbearance in this instance would save him from being pressed further upon a subject upon which his mind was unalterably made up against all further concession. It was not his Majesty alone that understood the original intention in the limited sense of extending the Irish Act to this country. The person who was em-

"played in Ireland (Mr. Elliot) to communicate with the Catholics did not feel  
 "himself authorised to give any larger understanding till he had referred to his  
 "principals for explanation, and the noble lord employed to communicate to his  
 "Majesty (Lord Sidmouth), had understood it merely as a measure to get rid of  
 "an anomaly between the laws of different parts of the empire. He believed the  
 "noble lord opposite (Howick) when he stated a different understanding on his  
 "own part; but the right hon. baronet, late Chancellor of the Exchequer for  
 "Ireland, had given some sanction to the other belief, when, in opposing the de-  
 "lay of the proceedings on the bill, which was urged by some on the ground of  
 "the absence of the Irish members, the hon. baronet stated that the bill was  
 "already law in Ireland, and already sanctioned by the Irish members. But  
 "there was a still further sanction in the understanding of his Majesty, as three  
 "members of the late cabinet were under the same difficulty. (A communica-  
 "tion from the other side, across the table, Only two.) He begged pardon; he  
 "thought the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and  
 "the Lord President (Sidmouth), had been dissentient to the exclusion beyond the  
 "limits of the Irish Act; but he found that the Lord Chancellor had not been  
 "summoned on the second day, and he thought it not so right that the lord who  
 "had the particular guardianship of the King's conscience should have been  
 "omitted in the order of summons; and still further he thought it right that the  
 "dissentient members of the council, as well as the consentient should be sum-  
 "moned, in order that the King might have the benefit of hearing the opinion  
 "of those who confirmed as well as the opinions of those who invalidated his  
 "principles, with respect to the church, which were known to have been here-  
 "tofore unaltered. Having established that when it was a thing unknown to  
 "some of his Majesty's cabinet ministers, and to the minister in Ireland, charged  
 "to negotiate this particular point, that it was intended to exceed the Irish Act  
 "of 1793, it was not extraordinary that his Majesty himself should have been at  
 "a loss to understand the extent of the proposed measure. Here he closed the  
 "first point of the question, contenting himself with having clearly established,  
 "that his Majesty had no knowledge in the first instance of its being intended to  
 "carry the measure so far as was afterwards proposed. As to the time when  
 "the measure was introduced into the house in its present extent, no communica-  
 "tion had been made to his Majesty on that subject till 3rd March. In the  
 "intermediate time, dispatches had been laid before his Majesty, stating that the  
 "Irish Catholics would not be content with the measure then pending, without  
 "large additional concessions. The hope of keeping back the agitation of the  
 "general petition of the Catholics, could not, in the opinion of the Lord Lieu-  
 "tenant, nor of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, who was more particularly con-  
 "cerned, be accomplished without granting, in addition to the Officer's Bill, the  
 "situations of sheriffs and members of corporations to the gentry, and the situa-  
 "tions of King's counsel in the courts of law. The dispatch containing this  
 "intelligence was certainly sent to the King, but without any precise notifica-  
 "tion of its meaning; and here he must say, without any charge of intention to  
 "circumvent, or overreach the King, that the want of precision and explanation  
 "that existed was the cause of all, or a great part of the difficulties that were  
 "found to encumber this question. When the doubts arose in Ireland, and the  
 "dispatch sent back with a view to remove those doubts led to a more clear dis-  
 "closure of his Majesty's mind, it was attempted first to modify the proposed  
 "measure to his Majesty's wish; but when it was found that that could not be  
 "done with the satisfaction which it was at first proposed to give to the Catho-  
 "lics, it was thought better by the advocates of the measure to withdraw it. And  
 "here was a point upon which the late ministers had overlooked a material duty  
 "indeed. After they had urged that the importance of this business would not  
 "admit of its being postponed a single day, they had, he would not say from the  
 "motive, but certainly with the effect of keeping their places, by the oddest sa-  
 "crifice that had ever before been known, the sacrifice of private feeling to  
 "public principle. His Majesty's late ministers claimed a right, in withdrawing  
 "the measure lately before the House, to state their sentiments strongly in fa-  
 "vour of that measure, and of a general system of favour towards the Catholics.  
 "This was the strangest plan he had ever known; and he wished those who  
 "were so anxious to guard against the case of a crown, without responsible mi-  
 "nisters, to consider in what situation we should be, if the ministers in this case  
 "were allowed to come down and state their own case against their sovereign,

“to say they were favourable, and they were right, but his Majesty opposed them, and they were obliged to concede. Was not that the fact? and he was sure the noble lord would support himself in nothing but the fact, and every thing he saw and heard confirmed the impression he had stated. What responsibility then had the House to look to? The late ministers would have said, if the pledge had not been required, we are strongly for the measure, but the King is strongly against it, and therefore we must give way. In such a situation, what responsibility would parliament have to look to? His Majesty here contented himself upon this too, with regretting that his ministers should have opinions different from his, and with lamenting the necessity of introducing discussions so improper; but when the right of submitting other measures was insisted on, not to combat a mere loose opinion, but a settled principle of his Majesty's mind during his reign, the House would see the mischiefs that must result. He was ready to allow that, abstractedly, ministers were not to fetter themselves in the right to advise how the prerogative, to give or withhold consent to acts of the legislature, should be exercised. But the case in agitation was a case of bringing forward a great legislative question against the crown, with the authority and influence of ministers of the crown. It was ridiculous to say the King had the prerogative of changing his ministers, unless he could change them upon certain topics and principles. His Majesty's mind was made up not to concede further upon this question, and further instances could produce nothing but agitation and irritation. If the minute had been suffered to pass without a pledge, an attempt might be afterwards made to bring forward the measure again, on the ground, that it was not contrary to the sanction of the profession, and acquiesced in. His Majesty therefore required a pledge in writing, that he should not be disturbed with applications which could only produce distress and irritation; and that pledge, at the present moment, went only to extend for a little time, the forbearance which the late ministers were disposed to show in conceding the measure lately proposed by them. When they could not go farther in that concession, they were bound to no eternity of service, they might resign.”

Mr. Perceval defended himself and his colleagues against the charge of having come into office under a pledge, and also against that of having advised the King to demand a pledge from the late ministers; but of these we must speak after we have heard my LORD HOWICK, who, as the reporter informs us, rose amidst a loud cry of *question! question!* which, Gentlemen, means, “Let us divide: we want to hear no more.” Nothing dismayed, however, and concluding, apparently, that those who intended to vote for him and his colleagues, were impatient so to do, the noble Lord, after some prefatory matter, said “that it was now confessed, that a pledge had been demanded of the late ministers; but who advised the proposing of the pledge was not acknowledged. But there was no act of the crown for which *there must not be a responsible adviser*. Who, then, were responsible for the advising the pledge? Those who *gave it effect*; the new ministers, the men who contrived to poison the royal mind. Yes, it was now well known, and *these were times to speak plain*. It was Lord Eldon who had an audience of his Majesty, at which, without exactly knowing what had passed, it was *easy to see* that then it was that the subject of the pledge was started. Lord Hawkesbury had also an audience of his Majesty at that conjuncture, and that noble lord, in conjunction with Lord Eldon, were employed by his Majesty to consult with the Duke of Portland, in *framing a new administration*. These noble lords are, then, *the responsible persons*; for they have *given effect to the demand of the pledge*.”—This, Gentlemen, is the reasoning of my Lord Howick, at least so the newspaper reporters of debates tell us. But, was there ever any thing farther fetched, or less worth the carriage? What a whimsical notion, that some one, other than the King, must be responsible for having caused the late ministers to be displaced? It was

the new ministers who *gave effect* to the pledge, because, forsooth, they took the places of Lord Howick and his colleagues! But, suppose it had happened, that the demand of the pledge had been advised, supposing it to have been *advised* by any body, which does not appear to be the fact; suppose it had been advised by some one, who had not accepted of a place in the new ministry, what then would Lord Howick have done for a charge of *giving effect* to the demand of the pledge? The true doctrine of responsibility is this, that for all measures, adopted by the King, his ministers, for the time being, are liable to censure and punishment at the hands of the two houses of parliament; but, did any man ever before dream of a parliamentary censure or impeachment of ministers for having accepted of their places as such? If this doctrine were acted upon, how is it possible that the King should ever change his servants, without the previous consent of parliament? For what man would place himself in a situation which would instantly expose him to punishment? In the choosing of his servants the act must necessarily be the King's own, without any responsibility any where; nor can there arise any harm from this, if the parliament be properly constituted; for, if the House of Commons are convinced, that the King has put foolish or wicked men into offices of great trust, they have the power, and it is their bounden duty, to refuse to suffer any taxes to be raised to be exposed to the management of such men. This is an effectual check upon the King; it is quite as much power as the House of Commons ought to possess; it is agreeable to reason and to the laws and usages of our country, and, at various times, has been exercised with complete effect, and to great national advantage. It is, indeed, that cause to which our forefathers owed those liberties, which, alas! they bequeathed to us. And is it not strange, Gentlemen, that my Lord Howick never thought of it? or, at least, that he appeared not to think of it? His Lordship averred, in the close of his speech, that he had *no confidence* in the present ministers. I believe him with all my heart, and so, I dare say, you will; but, why not, then, proceed in the constitutional way? Why not move to withhold all public money from their clutches? His Lordship, whose office *now* is that of "an individual member of parliament," has no confidence in "his Majesty's confidential servants," but yet he seems to think nothing at all of letting sixty or seventy millions of his constituents' money pass annually through their hands. Yes, my lord, "these are times to speak plain," and I would speak, if I dared, upon many subjects, and particularly upon the deeds of the *last six weeks* of your administration; but this I dare speak, that I remember those deeds, and, remembering them, I rejoice that you are no longer surrounded by a majority in parliament; I rejoice, that that same majority which supported your motion for reprimanding Mr. Paull, have now, with singular justice, expressed their approbation of your dismissal from office.

Mr. CANNING, now Secretary of State for foreign affairs, concluded his speech and the debate in a strain of moving eloquence. He said, "that, whatever might be the decision of the House that night, he *thanked God*" (God, observe!)—there was *an appeal from the bar of the Commons to the nation*. The discussion and correspondence that had taken place, however, had shown his Majesty to be not only *as competent* as any amongst themselves to the discussion of the most important concerns of his empire, but also to be in a *state of health that promised many years* addition to nearly the half century that he had



"auspiciously already reigned over this empire. Whatever might be the  
 "issue of the division or the succession of divisions in that house, his  
 "Majesty's ministers would *stand by* their sovereign, though circumstances  
 "might occur, in which they would find it their duty to appeal to the  
 "country."—It is not for me, Gentlemen, to dictate either to your  
 taste or your feelings; but, for my own part, I think I never read any  
 thing more sublime, affecting, or convincing. First, we perceive profound  
 gratitude towards the Creator for the great blessing of being able to  
 appeal from the House of Commons to the people, convoked, as upon  
 such occasions we knew them to be, to give their free and unbiassed  
 suffrages to their representatives in "the great council of the nation," as  
 the Morning Post, with appropriate reverence, calls the parliament. Next;  
 and as naturally following an act of religious devotion, comes an effusion  
 of loyalty and personal attachment to the King, or, "the sovereign," as  
 the modern phrase is, and an assurance to his faithful commons, that he  
 is as competent as any of them (and I dare be sworn to the fact) to the  
 management of the concerns of the kingdom (no, the "empire") at this  
 present time; and not only that, but that he is in a *state of health that*  
*promises us many years' prolongation of a reign*, which has hitherto been  
 so auspicious. Here I think, with great submission however, that Mr.  
 Canning might have closed, without a significant avowal, that the new  
 ministers might *find it necessary to appeal to the country*, that idea having  
 been before pretty fully expressed. But, Mr. Canning is a better judge  
 of these matters than I am; and, besides, I have always said, as well of  
 speaking as of writing, "Give me that which produces the most effect;"  
 and, that Mr. Canning's speech was rich in this capital quality, the  
 division, in a few minutes afterwards, abundantly proved. So confident  
 was Lord Howick of a majority in his favour, that he actually talked, we  
 are told, while the division was going on, of *following up* the motion  
 then deciding upon with other motions of a similar tendency: and,  
 particularly by one respecting "the *threat*," as it is called, thrown out  
 by Mr. Canning in the effusion of heart-melting and mind-convincing  
 eloquence, which we have just been admiring! A *threat*! What does Mr.  
 Perry mean by a threat? Is it to threaten the House of Commons to  
 give them an assurance of the King's competence and good health? Or,  
 is it to threaten them to say, that it is possible that their constituents may  
 have an opportunity afforded them of re-choosing their representatives,  
 or, of choosing new ones? We know, that the House of Commons  
 consists of the people's representatives; we know, that there are the same  
 persons to vote for members that voted last summer; we know, that the  
 law forbids, under heavy penalties, bribery, corruption, treating, or undue  
 influence of any sort, at elections; we know, that every member takes a  
 solemn oath as to his qualification in point of property, and of course,  
 that none of the members so recently chosen can be deficient upon that  
 head. So that it is really hard to conceive how these people could have  
 discovered a *threat* in the speech of Mr. Canning; for, as the seats of  
 the members, we must take for granted, cost them nothing, and as their  
 views, in offering themselves as candidates, are, as we plainly see from  
 their several election addresses, purely to be able to *serve us*, to watch over  
 our welfare, to protect and cherish our rights, and particularly to guard  
 our money; as their views are so perfectly free from any tinge of self-  
 interest, how could the telling of them that they might probably be dis-  
 solved, possibly be regarded as a threat, seeing that the utmost extent of

the inconvenience of a dissolution, would be, to some of the members, a day or two of visit to their constituents, and, perhaps, to the far greater part of them, even this slight trouble might be spared, so perfectly satisfied are their constituents with their conduct? Yet, Gentlemen, do the Whigs, and particularly Mr. Perry, incessantly rail against this speech of Mr. Canning; and, since the House of Commons has discovered a majority against them, they rail against that too; and, would you believe it, Gentlemen, that this very Mr. Perry, who, observe, calls us Jacobins and Levellers, published, in his paper of the 13th instant, an article which he denominates "*The Puppet Show*," but in which he evidently enough aims at the depicting of political scenes, and which I shall here insert for the purpose of drawing down upon him and his writings your just censure and indignation:

"The *Westminster Company* of independent performers being lately dissolved, and it being thought highly desirable to encourage a taste for pantomime, spectacle, melo-drames, legerdemain, and Bartholomew-Fair entertainments, a new puppet-show has been recently established upon a larger and more expensive scale than any ever before exhibited. No pains have been spared to procure the very best *automata* extant, remarkable for a certain degree of voluntary motion, combined with the utmost docility, and obedient to the slightest touch of the springs which set them in motion.—A few friends have been admitted to a rehearsal, which, however, from the unfinished state of the machinery, was entitled to every indulgence. The theatre is in the form of a *Chapel*, dimly illuminated by a number of transparencies, the principal of which represent the burning of heretics, assassinations, massacres, a conversation between the *pope* and the *devil*, and other subjects calculated to bring to the recollection of the spectator, those dark ages when mumming and puppet-shows were in high repute. The stage, as usual on such occasions, is furnished with a semi-curtain to conceal those managers, performers, or scene-shifters, who either wish to be invisible, or are ashamed to be seen. After waiting a considerable time, some person having called out "*manage*," a voice from behind the curtain replied, 'Wha wants me? Mun I be the manager?—Weel, come 'awa lads, be steady, and mind what I say—Recollect what you are—You are *automata*, mere puppets, you are greatly to resemble the idols of old in the hands of crafty priests. You are to have eyes, but to see not; ears, but to ear not; speak you may, but like wise fools, *not a word more than is set down for you*.' The voice was here interrupted by some person who seemed to think these expressions were not intended for the ear of the audience, and who begged leave to remark that a regular performance was not as yet to be expected, the immediate object in view, being to inspect the materials and workmanship, and to see if the different figures were proof against *nose-wringing*, *ear-pulling*, *kicks*, *cuffs*,  *cudgelling*, and the usual indignities to which performers of this class have been immemorially subject, and which constitute the principal part of the entertainment.—In this respect it must be confessed, the figures have been manufactured in a style of high perfection, with faces insensible to shame, and apparently unconscious of their inferiority, degradation and disgrace. Hisses, groans, and cries of '*Off, off*,' with the usual accompaniments, are to be of no avail. Large sums paid down, extravagant promises, and *threats of a premature death*, and subsequent damnation, are conjointly employed to hire and keep together a large establishment of chorus singers, to drown the loud notes of disapprobation. Nay, it is resolved, that should the theatre even tumble about their ears, John Bull shall still have his favourite fun, and with all the effrontery of itinerants they will continue to play their pranks in every *county*, *city*, and *borough* in the United Kingdom. Much is expected from the exhibition of a few harlequins, who in the rotatory motion of their heads, and vacillation of their bodies, possess so much rapidity that it is impossible to say on which side of the stage you perceive them.—A more particular description of this new establishment, the scenery, secret machinery, principal puppets, and general claim to public notice, must necessarily be deferred, not for want of rational anticipation, but until opinion be established by facts."

Who Mr. Perry may mean to designate by "*the devil*," squabbling with the Pope, I must leave you to guess, and, indeed, all I shall say with respect to this article, is, that the author, or publisher of it, expressed his alarm, a few days before, lest a dissolution of parliament should produce "*licentiousness of debate*, and a *jubilee suspension of authority*," among us, the "*agitators of Middlesex and Westminster*."

To connect with high and authentic matter, like the foregoing, any notions, proceeding merely from myself, would, I feel, be indecorous in the extreme; and, therefore, I must beg leave once more to defer, until another opportunity, the observations, which I think it may be useful to offer you, upon the subject of what I regard as the sole *remedy* for our political evils in general, and especially for the heart-burnings which incessantly arise about the distribution of power and emolument in the state. In the meanwhile, anxiously hoping, that you will seriously reflect upon all these matters,

I remain,  
Gentlemen,  
Your faithful friend, and obedient servant,  
WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 15th April, 1807.

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## TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER.

### LETTER XIV.

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"If the House reject this petition" [which it *did reject*], "notwithstanding the strong grounds upon which it is supported, what will be the consequence?" "What a proud precedent shall ministers have to boast of in this precious sample of their Treasury correspondence—then may they fix a Treasurer in every county, in every town, in every borough, then may each member circulate through his respective barrack department, *the decrees of the government against the subject's birthright*: provided only that they keep within the cautious limits of their precious precedent; provided only they do not pronounce actual menace; provided only they convey, through the medium of an *innocent* freeholder's letter, a bribe taken from the public money; provided they keep within such limits, they are safe—the precedent of this night will bear them out, *and they will again find a House of Commons who will countenance them in their breach of that House's privileges, and in the violation of the subject's constitutional rights*, provided only that in the act of such breach and violation, the forms of discretion and decorum prescribed in the present precedent, be observed."—MR. PERCEVAL'S Speech, on the Hampshire Petition, 21st Feb., 1807.

GENTLEMEN.—The event, which we anticipated, has already taken place, the parliament has been dissolved, and another is immediately to be called.—This is a proper, and most favourable time, for us to take a view of our national situation, particularly as far as relates to any real share of political power, which the people enjoy through the means of that House, which is, when assembled, said to contain their *representatives*.

Upon the intrigues and cabals and contests which have led to the dis-

solution of parliament, I have already taken the liberty to address you ; and, my present intention is, first to give an account of the last transactions of the House of Commons, and of the prorogation and dissolution, and then to offer you a few observations thereon.

After the late ministers had lost their places, and, with those places, *their majority* in the parliament, they began, as has been the invariable custom in similar cases for many years past, to make what is called "*An Opposition*;" they began to make motions for inquiry into abuses ; they began to set about harassing those who had succeeded them ; in short, they began to use all the means in their power to turn out their successors, and, of course, to get into place again themselves. Their successors, however, in nowise disposed to yield their places, and thinking them not secure without changing the House of Commons which had been elected during the day of their opponents' influence, advised the King to dissolve the parliament ; and, accordingly, dissolved it was, after a statement of the *reasons* had been given to the two Houses in the following speech, delivered by commission, on Monday, the 27th of last month. But, before I insert the speech, let me dwell for a moment on the critical circumstances, as to time, under which the parliament was prorogued. There had been appointed, during the power and influence of the late ministry, a committee denominated the "*Committee of Finance*;" and the *professed* object of it was to produce economy by examining into and correcting *abuses* ; but, the real object, on their part, seemed to be to amuse the nation, and, perhaps, to let their opponents (who had been in offices while the abuses were committed) see, that they had a rod ready pickled for them. This committee appeared, accordingly, to be doing little or nothing for several months ; but, as soon as the places of the late ministers had been filled with other men, the Committee of Finance became wonderfully diligent ; and, some of the late ministers themselves, who were members of the Committee, and who had scarcely ever attended it before, *now attended it every day* ! Upon a remark of this sort being made, Lord Henry Petty observed, that his occupation as a minister took up so much of his time, that he was unable to attend the Committee before ; but that, having been released from those duties, he had now time sufficient to attend the Committee. Be the cause, however, what it may, the effect was, that the Committee made a progress truly astonishing ; insomuch that it had, in the course of a few days, made discoveries of enormous misapplications and defalcations ; and, it is positively stated, that they had a report drawn up, and ready to lay before the House on Monday evening. But, of this their alacrity and dispatch others were acquainted as well as themselves, and, just as they were going to make this report, which must have speedily found its way out into the world, came a command for the House to attend in the House of Lords, where they heard a speech, which at once prevented the making of the report of the Committee of Finance, which annihilated that Committee, and which put an end to the existence of the House itself. Lord Howick wished, apparently, to say something ; there was an anxious desire, on the part of the late ministry, to send forth something to the public by way of exposure ; but, the *Usher of the Black Rod* was ready at the door some minutes before the Speaker arrived ; and, the moment the latter took the chair, the former, with his three well-known knocks at the door, sealed up the lips of every one present, and the House was compelled to go to the Lords to hear its death pronounced. With this little preface, gentle-

men, we shall proceed with advantage to the perusal of the speech, every word of which is worthy of our attention.

“ **MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,**—We have it in command from his Majesty to inform you that his Majesty has thought fit to avail himself of the first moment which would admit of an interruption of the sitting of parliament, without material inconvenience to the public business, to close the present Session : and that his Majesty has therefore been pleased to cause a commission to be issued, under the great seal, for proroguing parliament.—We are further commanded to state to you, that his Majesty is anxious to recur to the sense of his people, while the events which have recently taken place are yet fresh in their recollection.—His Majesty feels, that in resorting to this measure, under the present circumstances, he at once demonstrates, in the most unequivocal manner, his own conscientious persuasion of the rectitude of those motives upon which he has acted ; and affords to his people the best opportunity of testifying their determination to support him in every exercise of the prerogatives of his crown, which is conformable to the sacred obligations under which they are held, and conducive to the welfare of his kingdom, and to the security of the constitution.—His Majesty directs us to express his entire conviction that, after so long a reign, marked by a series of indulgences to his Roman Catholic subjects, they, in common with every other class of his people, must feel assured of his attachment to the principles of a just and enlightened toleration ; and of his anxious desire to protect equally, and promote impartially, the happiness of all descriptions of his subjects.—**GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,**—His Majesty has commanded us to thank you, in his Majesty’s name, for the supplies which you have furnished for the public service.—He has seen, with great satisfaction, that you have been able to find the means of defraying, in the present year, those large but necessary expenses, for which you have provided, without imposing upon his people the immediate burden of additional taxes.—His Majesty has observed with no less satisfaction the inquiries which you have instituted into subjects connected with public economy ; and, he trusts, that the early attention of a new parliament, which he will forthwith direct to be called, will be applied to the prosecution of these important objects.—**MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,**—His Majesty has directed us most earnestly to recommend to you, that you should cultivate, by all means in your power, a spirit of union, harmony, and good will amongst all classes and descriptions of his people.—His Majesty trusts that the divisions naturally and unavoidably excited by the late unfortunate and uncalled-for agitation of a question so interesting to the feelings and opinions of his people, will speedily pass away ; and that the prevailing sense and determination of all his subjects to exert their united efforts in the cause of their country, will enable his Majesty to conduct to an honourable and secure termination the great contest in which he is engaged.”

Now, Gentlemen, the question which is particularly interesting to us, is, what was the *real cause* of this dissolution.—Those public prints, which are partisans of the late ministry, assert, that the cause was not that which is held forth in the speech of the Lords Commissioners ; though men who reflect coolly before they write or speak may censure so hasty and disrespectful an assertion, particularly as coming from the “ friends of regular government, social order, and our holy religion ;” but, it is but fair to hear what they say, which we will do, contrasting it with the assertion of their opponents, and then form our opinion.—The Morning Chronicle, which, as we well know, is the official partisan of the late ministry, contained, on the 27th of April, the following article :

“ The present ministry, in dissolving the parliament, can have no other than the most manifest party objects. They cannot pretend to appeal to the people at large, as to the wisdom of their measures. They cannot pretend as yet to have claims to confidence from the experience of the past. They therefore avail themselves of a wicked clamour, which only one of them has had the front to avow and to justify ; and while a certain degree of effervescence exists in the public mind, they will endeavour to procure a House of Commons to their

"purpose by every method which the actual state of the representation enables them to employ. They have brought this matter *more home to the senses of the people of this country than all the reforming societies for the last thirty years.*  
 "—But besides the object of getting a parliament more favourable to them than the present, the new ministers *have another motive in dissolving the parliament without delay.* The committee of the House of Commons lately appointed are daily making discoveries of the greatest importance, and if they sat but a month longer, it is impossible to say who might not be affected. Committees like this would make every department responsible. We are informed that something very important is come out respecting an issue of one hundred thousand pounds of the public money, which remains wholly unaccounted for. The proceedings and progress of the committee leave us no doubt of the determination to dissolve this parliament. It is absolutely necessary for certain persons, that inquiry should be quashed.—As to the party objects which ministers expect to gain, we are confident they will be disappointed. None of the present ministers, nor any man who supports them will, on the ground of their merits, try a popular election. Lord Castlereagh will not stand for the county of Down, but will sneak into an English borough. We do not believe that all their influence will carry even one member for Westminster, if proper candidates offer. In Ireland they will gain nothing, even with the menaced vigour of Mr. Perceval hanging over that country. Notwithstanding all the courtly doctrine and the religious bigotry, by which the ministerial candidates recommend themselves, the people at large have not been deluded, and are very little inclined to support the present ministry.—We have said, and we repeat, that it is the discoveries made, and likely to be made, by the committee of the House of Commons, that have precipitated this dissolution. We hope, however, if there is time this day, that some independent member of parliament will state the facts and point out the true causes of the dissolution. It would be of the greatest service to the public. In one of the parliaments of Charles I. when a House of Commons was about to be dissolved for its faithful examination of public abuses, the famous Sir Edward Coke boldly came forward and named the Duke of Buckingham as the great grievance of the nation, and in himself comprehending every other grievance. If there were a member of the House of Commons bold enough to follow this example, and to denounce the abuses ministers wish to screen, he might do his country infinite service, and check that torrent of corruption which must in the end, if unchecked, lead to the most fatal consequences.—The sudden dissolution of the parliament at a time so many private bills have at a vast expense been carried almost to their termination, must be greatly felt by many individuals. But ministers had no time to lose; and therefore they cannot be blamed. Their existence and that of the present parliament was incompatible. They had not a moment to lose, and it is no wonder that they preferred themselves and those who at present protect them, for the sake of protection, to every consideration of public advantage."

Before we take the other extract from the Morning Chronicle, we may be permitted, perhaps, just to ask Mr. Perry, since when it is, that he has discovered there is a "torrent of corruption" existing in our government, seeing, that not many weeks have passed since he severely rebuked all those who threw out insinuations that the government stood at all in need of correction. But, Mr. Perry is now out of place. Place and profit are apt to produce mental blindness as to such matters; and, it is truly fortunate for the country and for truth, that place and profit have been taken from the late ministers. They will now see abuses with eyes very different indeed from those that they saw them with before; but, Gentlemen, however much we may rejoice at the exposures which they will make (for make them they will), we must never lose sight of the fact, that, while in office, they used every art in their power to prevent similar exposures. Never, do what they will, in the way of exposure, never shall I forget their abominable treatment of Mr. Paull, whose only crime, in their eyes, was, that he wanted to make exposures. Their treatment, too, of poor Atkins, the Barrack Master, whom they completely ruined,

if not started to death, with his numerous family. This is another thing which will always occur to my mind, when I hear them inveighing against *abuses*. When Mr. Robson moved for the papers relating to the Barracks in the Isle of Wight, we remember with what difficulty he obtained them; and, I do hope, that we never shall forget, that Lord Henry Petty refused the papers, in the first instance, merely upon the ground, that Mr. Robson *had not submitted his motion to the ministers before he made it!* Any thing more arrogant than this, more hostile to all notions of freedom of deliberation, more degrading to the House of Commons, I never heard of in my life. And all this was justified by Mr. Perry. It was all applauded by him, who has now discovered, that it is blamable in ministers to screen those, who have been guilty of speculation. He told us, that *wise men went slowly to work in such matters; that it was easy to set up a cry about abuses; but, that, to reform them was a thing that required consideration.* All his heroes, too, took the same tone; they discovered no haste in reformations of any sort; they seemed to set inquiries on foot for mere party purposes; and, in no one instance did they seriously attempt to bring any public robber to justice.—But, let us hear him again from his paper of the 28th of April.

“What we yesterday stated, has taken place; parliament is dissolved, and dissolved in such a manner as leaves no doubt whatever of the motives which led to it. We have now to state a fact in corroboration of what we yesterday mentioned, and we defy ‘*all the swindlers*’ in the country, great and small, to deny it. Nay, we defy any member of the present administration to deny it.—The finance committee of the House of Commons met yesterday, and had prepared a report to be presented to the House, but they were prevented by an artifice of ministers, which would have been worthy of ‘*all the swindlers*’ in the country.—The members of the committee were in the house, and the chairman was ready to present the report. Ministers, however, aware of what might take place, and dreading a charge that would have been made against a most *notorious speculator and defaulter*, kept the Usher of the Black Rod in attendance at the door of the House of Commons, and the instant PRAYERS were over, the Black Rod rapped, and being introduced, summoned the House to the House of Peers. By this manœuvre did the new ministry prevent the formal presentment of the speculators who have been plundering the public. We are happy, however, in being able to relate, in addition to the above circumstances (the truth of which we challenge any man to deny), that the report of the committee of finance, states in substance, that a sum of 19,800*l.* had been applied by a late paymaster of the forces to his own use; and that *this fact came to the knowledge of his colleague, the Right Honourable George Rose, who did not give any direction to the clerks on the subject.*—The report also states, that the committee had discovered *other and great abuses in the public money concerns, on which they should shortly proceed to report.*—These are facts for the truth of which we pledge ourselves. We leave it then to the public to judge of the motives which led to the present precipitate dissolution. It is, indeed, a strange thing that those who have on every occasion, and now most palpably, endeavoured to protect the speculators of the public money, should have the impudence to hold themselves out as most distinguished for their affection to pure and undefiled religion, and their attachment to the church of England! Such hypocrisy is truly shocking.—The proceeding of yesterday, and the managemment of the Black Rod to prevent disagreeable observations, so forcibly remind us of the conduct of that misguided Prince, Charles I. on a case very similar, that we cannot help detailing the circumstances. On the 5th day of June, 1628, Sir John Finch, the Speaker of the House of Commons, delivered a message to the House from the King, importing that his majesty had fixed a day for putting an end to their session, and therefore required that they should not enter into a new business, or lay *aspersion on the government or ministers thereof.* This produced a warm debate, in which Sir John Elliot, advancing somewhat as if he meant to touch the Duke of Buckingham, the Speaker rose up and said, ‘*There is a command upon me that I must command you not to pro-*

'ceed.' Upon this a deep silence ensued; and then the House resolved itself into a committee to consider what was fit to be done; and ordered that no man should go out on pain of going to the Tower. The Speaker, however, desired leave to withdraw, and had leave so to do; and Mr. Whitby being in the chair, Sir Edward Coke spoke to the following effect.—'We have dealt with that duty and moderation, that never was the like, *rebus sic tantibus*, after such a violation of the liberties of the subject. Let us take this to heart. In 30 Ed. III. were they then in doubt in parliament to name men that misled the King? They accused John de Gaunt, the King's son; and Lord Latimer and Lord Nevil, for misadvising the King; and they went to the Tower for it. Now, when there is such a downfall of the state, shall we hold our tongues? How shall we answer our duties to God and men? 7 H. IV. par. Rot. No. 31, 32; and 11 Hen. IV. No. 13, there the council are complained of, and removed from the King. They mewed up the King, and dissuaded him from the common good. And why are we now retired from that way we were in? Why may we not name those that are the cause of all our evils? In 4 H. III. and 27 E. III. and 13 R. II., the parliament moderateth the King's prerogative; and nothing groweth to abuse but this House hath power to treat of it. What shall we do? Let us palliate no longer; if we do, God will not prosper us. I think the Duke of Buckingham is the cause of all our miseries, and till the King be informed thereof, we shall never go out with honour, or sit with honour here. That man is the grievance of grievances. Let us set down the causes of all our grievances, and all will reflect upon him.'—Such was the bold and constitutional language held by Sir Edward Coke, the greatest lawyer this country ever saw, at a time, too, when the liberties of the people were unconfirmed. He had no hesitation in denouncing the authors of ill advice, and showed that the House had a right to name evil counsellors, even the KING'S SON, and to moderate the prerogative even to the removal of the council or ministry that 'dissuaded the King from the common good.'—And yet such lawyers as Mr. Perceval say, that the King's right to choose his ministers is too sacred for the House of Commons to offer its advice upon.—But the management yesterday far excels that of the unfortunate Charles. The Black Rod is planted at the door to make it impossible to inform the King of those things, without informing him of which, as Sir Edward Coke says, 'The House could neither go out with honour nor sit with honour there.' Ministers yesterday did better than the counsellors that brought the unfortunate Charles to ruin. They utterly quashed all appeal to the King. They checked all denunciation of abuses, and took a desperate chance of getting a parliament that will overlook these proceedings, that will screen delinquents, that will connive at peculation. What can be expected indeed from those who conducted the scene of yesterday? To what can it be compared, and indeed their whole conduct, but to the device of a gang of pickpockets, who raise a false cry and get together a mob on any clamour, to enable a detected accomplice to escape, and to facilitate new depredations? Such is the cry of the danger of the church, set up by men who thus notoriously, and in the most public manner, have quashed the denunciation of the most scandalous abuses."

As to the instances of the reign of Charles I. Mr. Perry may be assured, that they will have very little terrors for those, whom he wishes to intimidate, and who know full well that, from a parliament, whenever it shall meet, composed for one half of placemen and pensioners, and for nearly the other half, of dealers in the funds, there is no patriotism to be dreaded. The new ministers, in whatever else they may be deficient, are not wanting in political cunning. They know that Charles's parliaments were made of stubborn stuff. They know that he dissolved them over and over again; and, that, at every return, he found them more and more resolved to check the abuses of the times; and the new ministers also know, that exactly the contrary is always the effect of a dissolution now-a-days. The new ministers know that poor Charles's parliaments refused him money; and they know, that, in no case whatever, for these thirty years past, has any House of Commons refused to vote whatever money the minister of the day demanded, the only ques-



tion in any case, being, merely that of how the money shall be raised. The new ministers know exactly how many of the members of the last parliament will be turned out; and the late ministers know it too, for they took care to have the managing of an election. The new ministers may not know the *causes* of this great change in the nature of the House of Commons since the reign of Charles the First; they, possibly, may never have reflected upon the effect of the funding and taxing system with respect to the constitution of the House of Commons; they, possibly, may not have perceived, that, in establishing the national debt, the power of refusing money was, in fact, taken from that House; they, possibly, may not have had leisure to trace the pliancy of the House of Commons to its real cause; but, they are extremely well versed as to the effects; and Mr. Perry may quote and hint till he is tired about the "*ill-advised and unfortunate Charles*," whose head, could he dig it up and restore it to the state in which it was immediately after amputation, would have no terrors for Mr. Perceval or Mr. Canning, unless Mr. Perry could, at the same time, prove to them, that there were a *Hampden* or two amongst their opponents, amongst those men who doubled the income tax, who added a third to the pensions of the Princes, while they exempted the funded property of the King from the income tax, at a time when they declared that, in imposing taxes, they were reduced to a choice of evils; those men, who, having discovered the famous loan of Pitt to Boyd and Benfield, moved for a bill of indemnity for his conduct; those men, who, amongst their very first acts, almost doubled the number of foreign troops in the kingdom; those men, who have declared, that Hanover ought to be as dear to us as Hampshire; those men, who, after having opposed Pitt for twenty years, after having, upon numerous occasions, represented him as the waster of our property, as the subverter of our liberty, and as the destroyer of the character and consequence of the country, voted for making us pay his debts, expressly upon the score of his *public merits*. Unless Mr. Perry can make Mr. Perceval and Mr. Canning descry a *Hampden* or two amongst these men, he may be assured, that all his comparisons about the reign of the "*ill-advised and unfortunate Charles*" will be totally thrown away.—But, is it not truly shocking, Gentlemen, to perceive the rage, into which this dissolution has thrown Mr. Perry and his Whig patrons? They call their opponents "*swindlers*;" nothing less than swindlers; and, in another part of the same paper, they are called *miscreants*; "the *miscreants*, who are endeavouring to excite a popular clamour against popery." To be sure such an endeavour is rather in the *miscreant* way; but, it is painful to perceive Mr. Perry, who so lately deprecated "the immoderate license of debate," falling into such "coarse language." Really I begin to think, that the old hackneyed charge of *coarseness*, always preferred against me when I speak a home truth, will begin to attach to these wranglers for the public money, who have, until lately, always kept up a sort of decorum of phraseology towards one another, like lawyers at the bar, but who now appear to have lost all patience. *Miscreants*, indeed! This is a pretty term to use, as descriptive of statesmen and legislators, acting under "the best constitution in the world." *Miscreants*! Why, that is a name to be applied to men, who seek to live entirely upon the earnings of others, who, in *coarse* language, are denominated robbers, or thieves, and who, if not, by some means or other, protected, are frequently transported or hanged. And, I ask Mr. Perry, if, in his cooler moments, he would have applied such a

name to the persons whom he evidently has in view? What a pity, how sincerely to be deplored, it is, that passion, arising from disappointment in the laudable desire to live upon the public, should so far get the better of the "gentlemanly" taste of Mr. Perry! But, really, the quarrel is so much like that between *Peacem* and *Lockit*, that the comparison strikes every one. Never, according to all account, was there such virulence before heard of amongst politicians. The reason is, the contest is for place and profit. It is purely personal. There is nothing of a public nature that can be made to mix itself with it. Both sides are trying to make the world believe that they are, respectively, contending for principle. One side cries *toleration*: no, says the other, you only want power and profit; your measure was merely intended to nullify the King, and to render yourselves ministers for life. The other side cries *no popery*: you lie in your hearts, says the other, and all you want is to obtain a corrupt majority, thereby to secure your power and your profits. Which are we to believe? For my own part, I have a great dislike to contradict people, and am, therefore, rather inclined to give credit to the assertions of both sides.—We must now hear what the partisans of the new ministers say as to the *real cause* of the dissolution; and, we will begin with a short extract from the *Courier* newspaper of the 28th of April, first observing, that this last-named paper is, to the new ministry, what the *Morning Chronicle* is to their predecessors, namely, an instrument of faction, the proprietors and editors respectively having in view no other object than their own gains. It will be observed, that the article I am now about to insert was written by way of comment upon the articles before quoted from the *Morning Chronicle*:

"We are not surprised at the anxiety of all the partisans of the Papists to put the question on other grounds; we are not surprised at their wishing to hear no more of the cry of the church and state being in danger; they would be glad to drown it, no doubt; but this cry they shall not drown—the people shall not fail to be told repeatedly, that the change of the ministers, and the necessity of a dissolution so soon after that unnecessary and uncalled-for dissolution last autumn, have been produced by these reformers, these 'English Brissotins,' who conceived a measure contrary to the fundamental laws of the land—a measure of such obscurity, and power of extension, that every one explained it his own way—who, having obtained their sovereign's consent to one measure, extended it to a compass and capacity which never was in his contemplation—who were guilty of the most petulant disrespect to the King's authority, in having consented first to return to the original measure, and afterwards having insultingly retracted and refused to do any thing, because they were not allowed to do all. Happily, however, for the constitution, and the prosperity of the country, these 'English Brissotins' had to deal with a Sovereign very different from the one which the 'French Brissotins' had. —But there is no fear that the people will be misled by the artifices of 'all the partisans of the Papists,' or that they will fail to see that the conduct of the late ministers has rendered the present dissolution necessary. But it was to prevent the presentation of the report of the finance committee we are told—and ministers kept the Black Rod in waiting at the door of the House of Commons to summon the House the moment prayers were over, because they dreaded a charge that would have been made against a notorious speculator and defaulter.' Here again we must remind our readers, that the person alluded to was an officer under the administration of which Lord Grenville, Mr. Windham, and Lord Spencer, were members. What reason, therefore, had the present ministers to dread any charge that could have been made against the person in question? But we are relieved from the necessity of saying more upon this absurd and idle charge, that parliament was dissolved to stifle the discoveries made by the committee of finance, by the language held by the Addington party, who, alluding to this charge, explicitly declare, that

"with respect to the committee of finance, we cannot suppose that any administration would be weak enough to imagine that public curiosity and inquiry are to be repressed and stifled by such means. The present ministers well know the men of whom that committee was composed. They know that they will do their duty; and that, if they have detected any flagrant instances of malversation or embezzlements, the country will hear them. It would be the idlest hope that ever was entertained, to think that a British parliament, by a temporary suspension of its faculties, is to be wholly diverted from pursuing and hunting down those great state delinquents, who 'cover and devour' the people. To obviate the impression which such a statement is calculated to produce, the speech particularly relies upon 'the inquiries which have been instituted into subjects connected with the public economy,' the prosecution of which is especially recommended to 'the early attention of the new parliament.' Such is the language of the Addingtons, and it renders it unnecessary for us to dilate upon the subject."—

Yes, such may be "the language of the Addingtons," but, Gentlemen, it must be manifest to every one who is at all acquainted with the subject, that the dissolution will also *dissolve the Committee of Finance*, set aside all their proceedings, afford time, which, in such cases, is a great point, and will enable the new ministers either to prevent another Committee of Finance from being appointed, or to select for that committee whatever persons they may like best to have it composed of; and, in short, that, though it may not totally stifle the inquiry, it may go nearly that length.—The observation of the Courier, that Lords Grenville and Spencer and Mr. Windham were in the cabinet, at the time when the peculation alluded to was committed, does not apply. Their being in the cabinet gave them no more opportunity of being acquainted with this misapplication of the public money than it did of the misapplication of the forty thousand pounds by Pitt. This writer might almost as reasonably render us responsible for it, because we were in the country at the time when it was committed. But, the Courier might have justly charged the late ministers of inconsistency in complaining of this act of peculation after all their praises of Pitt, who must have been acquainted with it, and whose debts they have made us pay, upon the score of his *public merits*. Here it is that they are assailable; but, here no hireling writer will ever assail them.—What I have further to offer upon this subject I shall defer, till I have inserted the article from the Morning Post of the 28th instant, which is, indeed, an elaborate, and somewhat pathetic "address to the electors of the United Kingdom," the objects of which being, first, to justify the measure of dissolving the parliament at this time, and, second, to prevail upon those who have really any right of voting, to vote for men who are opposed to the late ministers.

"The parliament is prorogued, a dissolution is announced, and we hesitate not to applaud what every true lover of his country has anticipated and recommended. When the constitution is invaded, when the throne is attacked, there is only one true legitimate recourse, viz. an appeal to the sense and justice of the people.—His Majesty having found his prerogative and independency menaced and invaded by a cabinet junto, has been obliged to change his ministers. This cabinet junto has dared, as a measure of resentment or defiance, to accuse their Sovereign at the bar of the nation of unconstitutional conduct, and by false statements and unwarranted misrepresentations, to arraign his Majesty as a criminal before his people.—They further brought forward in parliament a resolution directly tending to censure his Majesty, though that censure was disguised in general terms. They had not even the decency to suppose that his Majesty was acting by any responsible advisers, but contrary to every principle of the constitution; their measures were so managed as to point at his Majesty alone, as the only guilty and responsible individual, and personally to censure and condemn him. The parliament, however, could not

"be brought, under any artifice or promises, to support a proposition so dangerous and unconstitutional; yet so deeply connected together and so widely extended were the adherents of the late cabinet, that 226 members of the House of Commons were induced to join in the censure of their Monarch.—After this unprecedented attempt, the King, with the most perfect consciousness of his integrity and uprightness, has appealed to the GREAT BODY of his subjects, in the firm confidence that they will confirm the decision of the House of Commons, approve the necessary change he has been forced to make of his ministry; and that they will give both him and them that countenance and support which will on the one hand secure the constitutional independency of the crown; and on the other, enable his present servants to carry on the business of the nation with ease and comfort, unawed by any combination of parties, which might otherwise conspire to interrupt the ordinary proceedings of Government.—We conceive that one of the great and fundamental principles of the British constitution, is this—that the House of Commons is to be considered as the organ of the people, the representative of their power, the interpreter of their will: and whenever the House of Commons speaks, it speaks, in legal and constitutional acceptance, the sense of all the Commons of the empire. — When, therefore, any great question arises affecting the rights of any branch of the legislature, or the interests of any great description of the people; which was not foreseen or in contemplation at the time the Commons were elected; which it was morally impossible for the electors to have foreseen, and which, consequently, they could not have referred to in the choice of their representatives; it is in strict conformity with the fundamental principles of the constitution, that an opportunity should be given TO THE PEOPLE of expressing their collective sense on the subject, and making their elections conformably. This doctrine is so evident as to need no proof, however it may be illustrated by stating the converse of it. Let us suppose that the House of Commons, when once elected, has a right to sit for its legal period of seven years—it might, by its power over the purse of the nation, dictate both to the Lords and the King, and create a septennial despotism.—We now, then, ask you, whether the late transactions which have taken place on the Catholic Question, were in your contemplation when you elected your late representatives, in October last?—1. Was it in your contemplation that a cabinet junto should, by every possible artifice, by alleged misconception, and by false misrepresentation, endeavour to deceive or to force his Majesty to a total repeal of the test laws, as far as the army and navy are concerned? We answer boldly for you, it was not.—2. Was it in your contemplation, that, if his Majesty should evince an unshaken firmness in support of his conscientious engagements to the state, that his ministers should be authorised to impose upon him conditions which should empower them to turn against him all his influence, power, and prerogative for controlling his opinions, forcing his conscience, and exposing his character to obloquy and reproach? We again answer, in your name, that it was not.—3. Was it in your contemplation that, upon the tender of such degrading conditions from his ministers, his Majesty should surrender his prerogatives, authority, and independency, into the hands of a cabinet junto? Here, again, we answer for you in the negative.—4. Was it in your contemplation, that if his Majesty, in endeavouring to liberate himself from the attacks of his ministers, should demand them to retract the conditions they had imposed upon him, and to give him an assurance that they would not bring forward again measures connected with the repeal of the test acts, as his ministers, he should be held up to the public as a criminal, should be accused of having violated the constitution, and of having exacted an illegal pledge of his counsellors? We answer again, in your name, with confidence, no.—All these circumstances, unprecedented and preposterous, form such a combination of measures, as you could neither have foreseen nor conjectured: and which, although they have taken place, you can now hardly believe.—The attack on the King's independency, the efforts to carry a repeal of the test laws, an act of supremacy in favour of Roman Catholics, and of every other Dissenter from the establishment, the attempt of ministers to force the Sovereign to admit the cabinet to act in defiance of his sentiments, and the accusing the Monarch personally, as guilty of a criminal act, in resisting this attempt, are all measures novel and extraordinary, totally out of the common course and current of affairs, and which require a distinct proceeding, con-

“formable to their importance and novelty.—Under these impressions  
 “therefore, the Monarch with *affectionate confidence in the attachment of his*  
 “*people*, and with the most conscientious sense of his OWN SINCERITY, in en-  
 “deavouring to perform the duties and maintain the trusts committed to his  
 “charge, makes a condescending appeal to your sentiments and impartiality.—  
 “1. He has refused to give his ministers leave to carry through Parliament,  
 “with the colour of his consent, a bill, which went to *repeal the act of suprem-*  
 “*acy, and the test acts*, as far as the army and navy are concerned, and to  
 “give the capacity of holding the highest naval and military commands to  
 “*every species of dissenters* from the church establishment, whatever sect  
 “they might belong to, *christian or unchristian*, or even if they were of *no re-*  
 “*ligion whatever*.—2. His ministers having demanded that they shall, on aban-  
 “doning their obnoxious bill, give their sentiments in support of it, and *also give*  
 “*their sentiments in favour of the Catholic petition when presented*; and, 3dly, be  
 “allowed from time to time, to bring forward, for his Majesty’s decision, such  
 “measures as they thought proper respecting Ireland.—His Majesty did, in an-  
 “swer, desire his ministers to withdraw these commands; and did also desire  
 “them to give assurances, that they would not bring forward any measures con-  
 “nected with the Catholic Question, as upon that subject his sentiments could  
 “never alter.—You have now, then, a plain case before you to decide upon.—Is  
 “it your wish to force the surrender of the test laws, and to give *the whole power*  
 “*of the sword into the hands of Catholics*, and of every dissenter from the  
 “church establishment? or do you wish to preserve the existing system of gen-  
 “eral toleration, but at the same time to maintain *the established guards of the*  
 “*constitution of church and state*?”

We might here, at the very outset, ask that writer, who affects such anxious concern for the preservation of the constitution, how he thinks that constitution would, in *practice*, be rendered worse than it is now by the bill proposed to be passed. Does he conceive, that the passing of such a bill would add to the taxes? That it would lessen the value of our *election* rights? That it would make the House of Commons more *servient* to the minister of the day? That it would enable that minister to cause the Act of Habeas Corpus to be suspended for more than seven years at a time? That it would render the system of *influence* more extensive and efficient? That it would make boroughs more venal? That it would throw more of them into the hands of the peers? That it would add to the long list of placemen, pensioners, and grantees of any description? That it would embolden ministers to add to the number of foreign troops in the kingdom? That it would increase the number of contractors, defaulters, and speculators? That it would add to the embarrassment, vexation, distress, poverty, misery, and degradation of character, which, owing to the all-pervading system of taxation, are now so general in this once free and happy country. These are the points, upon which we *feel*. These are the points, as to which we call for the “*established guards of the constitution in church and state*.” And, if the bill in question affect us in none of these points, I trust, Gentlemen, none of you will be such miserable fools as to be misled by the hypocritical declamation of writers such as that whom I have just quoted.—He tells us, that the late ministers would have “repealed the Act of Supremacy and the Test Acts, as far as the army and navy were concerned.” Well, and what then! These are *now* of no avail whatever. They prevent the advancement of no man, in practice; and, even supposing the intended measure to have opened the door for promoting Roman Catholics, you must well know, that to promote any one, Protestant or Catholic, is the act of the King, and of *the King alone*; so that, all that this measure would have done, would be to *enable the King to promote Roman Catholics if he chose, leaving him at perfect liberty to follow his own inclination upon the subject*; in

other words, it would have made that perfectly legal, which, in fact, is *now done* without the sanction of law, but with a general connivance. Whether this was attempting to "force the conscience of the King; whether this was an attempt to subvert "our holy religion;" whether this would have placed the "church in danger;" you will easily decide.— But, this writer is alarmed, lest persons that are *not Christians* should, by the means of such a measure, get into offices in the army; nay, he fears, that it might open the doors to persons of *no religion at all*; just as if men who are not Christians, or who have no religion at all, would be restrained from doing any thing by an oath taken upon the four books of the Gospel! What a miserable pretence! What shocking hypocrisy! The sincerity of this hireling writer is, indeed, rendered manifest enough by his stating, that by a dissolution of parliament, the King appeals to the *great body* of his subjects, just as if there were no such things as Treasury Boroughs; just as if there were no members sent into the Commons House through the influence of peers; just as if all was fair and free according to the spirit of the constitution and the letter of the law! What a villanous hypocrite! *Conscience*, indeed; and talk at this rate! —The Courier insists, however, that the cry of "*no popery*" shall be kept up; but, if the cry has no more success any where else than it has in Westminster, it will, I should think, be of little avail. He tells us, that we ought now to be afraid of popery because our ancestors of a hundred years ago were justly afraid of it; but, he well knows, that the circumstances are totally changed; he well knows, that there is no more reason to be afraid of popery now than there is to be afraid of witchcraft, which was once a subject of legal provision and punishment. In fact, the cry of "no popery," and of "danger to the church," upon this occasion, is a mere trick to delude the people, and to turn their attention to the real cause of the struggle between the late and present ministry, as is also the cry of "toleration," on the other side. The former well knows, that popery is extinguished, and the latter knows, that, as to all practical purposes, toleration, with respect to the army and navy, is already complete. The intended measure was merely to answer a party purpose, and the opponents of the late ministers seized hold of it as the lucky means of ousting them from their places. Both sides clamorously appeal to the *constitution*, that word of various interpretations; each accuses the other of a violation of the constitution; and the design of both is, to draw the attention of the world from the selfish views, by which they are actuated.—The late ministers, however, finding that empty sounds are unavailing; finding that their cry is inferior in point of effect to that of their adversaries, betake themselves to something more likely to attract attention; and, accordingly their partisans assert in terms the most unqualified, that the real cause of the dissolution, at this time, is to be found in the documents which have been discovered by the *Committee of Finance*. No, says the Courier, "because the speech of the Lords Commissioners says, that the subjects before that committee will be "*taken up by the next parliament.*" But, in the first place *time will have been gained*; secondly, *the documents will have been for some months in the hands of the new ministers*; thirdly, another committee, if appointed immediately upon the assembling of the new parliament, will not be able to make any considerable progress this year; fourthly, that committee will be composed of *such persons as the majority of the House shall think proper*; fifthly, I think, you will agree with me, that the majority

of the House will be very like to agree with the new ministry; and sixthly, the natural conclusion is, that the committee will be differently composed, and that its reports will breathe quite a different language and different sentiments.—The Morning Post says, that the parliament is dissolved, in order that the new ministry may be relieved from the embarrassing power of the opposition, and that they may “carry on the affairs of the nation with *ease and comfort* to themselves.” This is fine talk! Yet, this is, in truth, the object of the dissolution; and, Gentlemen, only think of the state to which we must be reduced, when such a reason is publicly given in justification of a dissolution of parliament! Just as if the increase, thereby, of the minister’s majority was *certain!* Plainly telling us, that it is for the sake of having a parliament devoted to their will; and, at the same time, telling us, that an appeal is made “to the sense of the people.” Never was there, in the whole world, a people so grossly insulted, and, I must say it, never was there, generally speaking, a people, whose apathy, whose torpor, whose willing degradation, so richly deserved it.—But, to enable the new ministers to carry on the affairs of the nation “with *ease and comfort* to themselves,” what need was there of a dissolution of parliament, seeing that, in the space of ten days only, the new ministers, who, before they were in place, could obtain only about seventy votes, had obtained much more than one half of the votes of the whole house, having a majority of *forty-six*. This fact, which cannot be denied, would lead one to conclude, that there must have been some other reason for the dissolution than merely that of obtaining a secure majority. Yet do the partisans of the Whig ministry stoutly deny, that the real object was the one alleged by the Morning Chronicle, who has been answered by his rival, the Courier, in an article which I shall insert, not only as it contains the justification of the measure, but as it contains also what there is to be urged in justification of Mr. Rose, and of the *supposed defaulter*.

“Whenever a faction cry out against any particular measure, we may take it for granted they do not so much feel or fear that it will be detrimental to the country, as that it will be destructive of their own factious views. Such is the feeling of ‘all the talents’ with respect to the dissolution of parliament; they know that this appeal to the people cannot possibly be of the slightest injury to the rights and liberties of the people, but they know that it will be in the highest degree injurious to their own prospects and projects—they feel that the voice of the people is every where against them, and they dread looking their constituents in the face—they are trying, therefore, by every artifice to mislead the public mind; and though the people have been solemnly assured from the throne, that ‘his Majesty is anxious to recur to the sense of his people while the events which have recently taken place are yet fresh in their recollection,’ they are attempting to persuade them that his Majesty feels no such anxiety, but that parliament was dissolved to protect speculators and defaulters. Upon this subject we have some facts to state.—And first we must notice the following paragraph, contained in an article in the Morning Chronicle—‘We are happy however in being able to relate, in addition to the above circumstances (the truth of which we challenge any man to deny), that the report of the committee of finance states in substance that a sum of 19,800*l.* had been applied by a late paymaster of the forces to his own use; and that this fact came to the knowledge of his colleague the right honourable George Rose, who did not give any directions to the clerks on the subject.’—A respectable morning paper commenting on the above paragraph says, ‘This charge is of too serious a nature to permit the gentleman, whose character is thus aspersed, to be satisfied with a refutation in a newspaper: we are authorized to assert, that it will be made a matter of legal investigation, if it shall be found to be cognizable in a court of law. In the mean time, it is

"thought right to state, that the facts, as applicable to Mr. Rose, are utterly  
 "false. Mr. Rose was never the colleague of the paymaster of the forces alluded  
 "to in that situation. The transaction in question he never heard a syllable  
 "about till after he had retired from the duties of that office; when (after re-  
 "proving the clerk whose duty it was to have made the communication while he  
 "was in office) he gave the advice that appeared to him to be proper on the oc-  
 "casión. These circumstances will be found in the minutes of the committee;  
 "how far they agree with what it is alleged is in the report of the committee,  
 "may hereafter be a subject of inquiry.'—Upon Mr. Pitt's return to the ad-  
 "ministration in 1804, the person alluded to was removed from the Pay-Office,  
 "and Mr. Rose was appointed to succeed him—during the whole time he was  
 "there he had no intercourse whatever with the person, on account of the cold-  
 "ness naturally arising from the separation of Mr. Pitt (to whom Mr. Rose con-  
 "tinued attached) from Mr. Addington—but Mr. Rose never heard a syllable on  
 "the subject alluded to till he had actually retired from the Pay-Office.—Even  
 "then, when the communication was made to him, after he had so withdrawn,  
 "no *criminality* appeared in the transaction, though it was apparent there was  
 "great *irregularity* in it. If it be *now* known that the money was received for  
 "*private purposes*, that discovery must have been made by recent investigation.  
 "When the communication was made to Mr. Rose he gave the best advice he  
 "could.—Orders he could not give—which advice was to the proper officer to  
 "call on the person in question for an explanation of the matter, and to that per-  
 "son to make an immediate communication of the whole transaction to Lord  
 "Grenville and the then Paymaster General.—The transaction was *officially*  
 "*known to the late Treasury*, and was repeatedly under their consideration. They  
 "gave directions for the repayment of the money at certain periods, *without im-*  
 "*puting any offence to the person concerned—no censure was expressed—no appli-*  
 "*cation to Parliament was made—no inquiry of any sort instituted on the subject,*  
 "TILL THE LATE MINISTERS WERE OUT OF OFFICE. And then an  
 "attempt is made to criminate a gentleman who never heard the remotest allusion  
 "to the subject while he was in office.—Such is the case, the truth of which  
 "we challenge any man to deny—and such are the particulars as they appear in  
 "the minutes of the committee.—If there be any other improper transactions  
 "discovered, can they be suppressed by the dissolution of parliament? Will  
 "they not be produced upon the assembling of the new one with redoubled force  
 "and effect? The discovery now alluded to, was *not made by the committee—*  
 "the transaction had, as we have already shown, been the subject of proceedings  
 "in the Treasury—the minutes of which board on the subject it is hoped will be  
 "called for, and the whole matter fully investigated when parliament meets. We  
 "shall then see, *when the honest indignation of the late ministers was first ex-*  
 "*cited respecting it, and whether there was the same anxiety and eagerness to*  
 "*inform the country about it while they were in office, as when parliament was*  
 "*about to be dissolved."*

Aye, that is the rub. It was not until they were out of office; it was not  
 until this engine was wanted for party purposes, that is to say, purposes  
 connected with place and profit, that the Whigs thought of saying a word  
 about the matter in public. We now find, that they had been long ac-  
 quainted with the facts; that they had had the matter officially before  
 them; and, so close did they keep it, so anxious were they to prevent its  
 reaching the ears of the profane vulgar, that, not even a rumour of it  
 found its way to the world, *until they were out of place*. Whether the  
 fact was known to Mr. Rose when he was Paymaster, or not until after  
 he quitted the office; whether it be at all probable that he could be in  
 the office for a year and a half without becoming acquainted with it: how  
 it came to pass, that he should be informed of it after he was out of office;  
 why, *as a member of parliament*, as one of the *guardians of the public*  
*purse*, he did not happen to make it the subject of inquiry in the House;  
 and, what were the motives whence the exposure was reserved for this  
 late hour: these are questions, which it might take some little considera-  
 tion to answer; but, this we know, that, on the one side, it is asserted,



that a sum of *nineteen thousand pounds* of the public money has been embezzled by a paymaster of the forces; that is, on both sides, agreed, that this fact has been well known, for a considerable time, to several members of parliament; and we also know, that, until a great and mortal conflict of party arose, not one of those members, not one, no, not one of "the guardians of our purse," said publicly a word upon the subject. With their quarrels we have little to do. With the means that they employ to assail one another, or to shield themselves, or their adherents, we need not much trouble ourselves; but, amongst them, the fact was well known, and, amongst them it was kept closely disguised, until it was brought forth by a *contest for place and profit*.—Here it is; in this fact, and in facts resembling this it is, that consists the strength of the new ministry, as opposed to the Whigs. There was a time, when a cry about Jacobinism, or danger to the church, would have had great weight. But those cries have seen their day pass, every man's attention being now turned to *the abuses in the expenditure of the public money*; and, when he takes time to reflect, he finds that the Whigs, *while in office*, did really nothing at all in the way of correcting those enormous abuses. To this simple view men confine their attentions. In vain would Mr. Whitbread, whose address to his late constituents I shall take care to insert, endeavour to excite a friendly feeling towards the late ministry by dwelling, with weighty emphasis, upon the *Scotch Judicature Bill* and the *abolition of the slave trade* and the *new plan of finance*. The latter now appears to be a mere bubble, and, as to the former two, there is not a reflecting man in the kingdom that cares one straw about them. To his statement respecting the Report of the Committee of Finance, which was, as he tells us, just about to be made, when the tap at the door put an end to all further deliberation, we should have listened with great attention; but, the moment we hear of the circumstance of the report being suppressed by the dissolution, we ask, "Why was it not presented before?" To which question it is impossible for him to give a plain and honest answer, without stating for motive that which would instantly draw from us an expression of total indifference as to which party shall obtain the preponderance. Had the late ministers, I mean the Whigs, acted up to those professions, by which they gained your confidence; had they not appointed boards upon boards of Commissioners, at an enormous expense to the country, but brought subjects of speculation and default at once before that House which ought to be the real guardians of the public money; had they even encouraged others so to do; and had they proceeded to *punish* speculators and defaulters; then, indeed, would they have had the people with them. Then might they have laughed at the base hypocrisy of those, who are now running them down with a cry of *no popery*; and, indeed, that hypocritical trick never would have been thought of. But, the reverse they chose for a line of conduct. Under a show of investigation, they were sedulously employed in forming schemes for the effectual protection of speculators; and, as in the case of Mr. Paull and Mr. Robson, the whole force of their influence was employed to prevent others from doing that which they themselves were resolved not to do. Many are the speculators that have been talked of; but, where have we an account of any one sum that the Whigs caused to be *refunded*? Where is the single delinquent, whom they caused to be pilloried or imprisoned? These are the questions that men ask of the Whigs, and these questions they cannot truly answer without depriving themselves of all ground

whereon to claim a preference before their rivals, who, if they do no more than their predecessors, in the way of reformation, can, assuredly, not do less. And this, I repeat it, is the sole point, upon which men's attention is now earnestly fixed. Of the affairs of the Continent; of conquests in South America, and of means of defence at home, they have not leisure to think. The reading of tax-papers, and the providing for the incessant demands of the tax-gatherer, take up all their time. Their present grievous burdens are the only subject upon which they can be expected to think; and, while they feel these burdens, they know that enormous speculations remain unpunished; they see no hope of preventing them for the future; and they feel as men must feel under such circumstances. The last three years have brought to light most important truths relating to the public expenditure and to the representation in parliament. These truths must, and will, have their effect in due time; but, until then, it is perfectly useless to endeavour to fix the general attention upon any other object.—Now, Gentlemen, let us hear Mr. Whitbread, our old friend at Westminster. His address to the electors of the borough of Bedford contains some useful matter. It is good to hear it from him, and quite proper that we should remember it.

“The King's ministers have rashly advised His Majesty to dissolve the Parliament which was first assembled for the dispatch of business on the 15th of December last; its duration has been short, but its career has been memorable.—The assiduity with which all public business has been dispatched is without precedent. The works which it has performed, and those in which it was engaged at the moment of its dissolution, will be recorded to its honour. In consequence of judicious arrangements, the election petitions, which have usually occupied the time and attention of the House of Commons during two or three years, would all have been decided in the course of one session. After wars so protracted and expensive, as you know those in which we are unhappily engaged to have been, a plan of finance was devised and adopted, notwithstanding the opposition of the persons now in power, adequate to the exigencies of the state, without imposing any fresh burdens upon the people. A committee was appointed to control and reduce the public expenditure, and to diminish the amount of salaries. A bill was brought in under the sanction of that committee for prohibiting the grant of places in reversion. A plan for the reformation and bettering the condition of the labouring class of society was under consideration. Measures for the improvement of the courts of justice in Scotland were in progress through the House of Lords. The slave trade, after a struggle of 20 hours, was abolished.—At the moment the Commons were precipitately summoned to attend His Majesty's commission for the prorogation of the Parliament, preparatory to its dissolution, there was actually at their bar a special report from the committee above-mentioned, stating the discovery of some gross abuses in the department of the paymaster-general, which was thereby stopped. The bill to prohibit the grant of places in reversion is lost. More than a hundred private bills carried to advanced stages, at great expense to the parties in them, drop, and the improvement of the country is impeded. At the same moment the Scotch judges were in attendance in the House of Lords, with their answers to certain questions relative to the administration of justice in Scotland, for which purpose they had been expressly called to London, to the interruption of the ordinary duties of their important offices. The usual act of appropriation of the funds voted by Parliament has not been passed.—Under these circumstances the King has been advised to dissolve the Parliament, and in the speech delivered by the Lord Chancellor in his Majesty's name, the assertion is made, that no material interruption in the public business will take place. In that speech satisfaction is expressed at the adoption of those financial measures, which exempt the people from the burden of additional taxes, but which the King's present ministers would have persuaded the House of Commons to reject, and the completion of which is prevented by their conduct. It is professed to inculcate a spirit of union, harmony, and good will amongst all classes and descriptions of the people,

" when at the same time the only appearances of discord have been excited, by  
 " the attempt of one of his Majesty's ministers to sow the seeds of religious  
 " animosity in the neighbouring county of Northampton, upon a ground which  
 " his colleagues have not avowed, and against his principles, in that particular,  
 " many of them have been heretofore solemnly pledged. In a situation so  
 " alarming, and when the councils of the King are guided by such persons, I  
 " have thought it necessary to make this exposition to you, my earliest, best,  
 " and constant friends; I have treated with freedom the acts of government  
 " and the speech delivered by the Lord Chancellor in the King's name, because  
 " I abhor and deny the position lately urged in parliament, and to which (as it  
 " appears to me) countenance is given in the terms of that speech, that the  
 " King can ever act without an adviser; if that position be admitted, the people  
 " may be without redress, or the sovereign without security—by the constitution  
 " both are impossible.—Of my own conduct during the important interval  
 " which has elapsed since I last addressed you, I say nothing, because it has  
 " been so public that it cannot have escaped your notice. I court your inquiry,  
 " and if you are satisfied in the result of it, I hope for your votes at the present  
 " election. If you do me the honour again to return me, I shall indeed be  
 " proud of it, and I will again endeavour to do my duty.—I have the honour to  
 " be, gentlemen, with every sentiment of attachment and respect, your grateful  
 " and obedient servant, SAMUEL WHITBREAD."

Yes, this may have been as foul play as Mr. Whitbread pleases; there  
 may have been manœuvring and jockeying enough. All may have been  
 as he would wish us to perceive it; but, I defy him to show, that he and  
 his party have been so foully dealt by, as *he and his party have dealt  
 by you and Mr. Paull*; and, if I had been at his elbow, when he was  
 setting down the deeds of the short parliament, I should certainly have  
 requested him not to omit the *unanimous vote for reprimanding Mr.  
 Paull*, whose only crime was, that of denying a charge falsely, and to his  
 face, alleged against him. I rejoice that that parliament is dissolved.  
 That act alone deserved a death somewhat more than political. One of  
 the members of it rises and charges a person, who stood as a petitioner  
 at the bar, with having repeatedly gone out to communicate with and  
 prompt the witnesses; the petitioner, who had never stirred from the  
 bar, feeling as any man of truth and of spirit must feel, speaks in his own  
 defence and denies the charge. Upon this, Lord Howick, the minister,  
 moves that he be punished by a reprimand, and some of the members  
 even propose that he shall be sent to prison. One member, however,  
 Mr. Whitbread himself, asserts that the petitioner, on whom he has had  
 his eye constantly fixed, has never moved from the bar, therein flatly con-  
 tradicting the assertion of the accusing member, Sir Watkin Wynne.  
 "That is no matter," says Lord Howick, "I still say reprimand him,  
 reprimand him," after the manner of the Jews, when they importuned  
 Pontius Pilate; and reprimanded he was. Such a proceeding would have  
 become an assembly of Bashaws. I rejoice that it no longer exists. I  
 rejoice that I have an opportunity of speaking my mind of it. "But, its  
 successor . . . . . ." No matter. I care not for that. It is a  
 satisfaction to me to see my oppressors humbled; and, in every human  
 breast, this is a feeling perfectly natural and justifiable.—There is, too,  
 Gentlemen, another consideration, and that is, that the Whigs were only  
*beginning*. My Lord Howick was merely making a commencement in  
 his career of authority; and, with a parliament ready to support him; or,  
 rather, ready to let him do what he pleased, in a case like that above re-  
 ferred to, would he not have been, if possible, ten thousand times more  
 arrogant than Pitt, whose character and conduct he so often eulogized,  
 and whose example he so strictly followed? One of the first acts of the

Whigs was to prevent the trial of Lord Melville to be published in the newspapers, or in any shape except in one monopolized book, by which means the *public* have never been made acquainted with the evidence given. And now they complain, that Lord Melville has supplanted them. How justly are they punished! This act was also a beginning with the press. What they would have done, if they had subdued the King, we may easily guess; and, in short, when we consider what they did, and what they left undone, it is impossible not to rejoice, that both they and their parliament are politically dead.—Mr. Whitbread, Gentlemen, talks about “the *constitution* ;” and, it would be strange indeed if he did not; for when have you heard a stickler for party who had not the word everlastingly in his mouth? But, though Mr. Whitbread can complain of the Speech as unconstitutional; though he can see something very dangerous to the constitution in the King’s *changing his ministers* without a responsible adviser; though he can see this, which I cannot see, he thought it, I suppose, perfectly constitutional to set on foot that famous Subscription, which was raised for the purposes of depriving you of the use of your elective franchise; and when Mr. Whitbread again complains of the *hypocrisy* of his opponents, remind him, I pray you, of his speech at the last of Mr. Sheridan’s election dinners, where he congratulated the company on their triumph, which, he said, was so much the more agreeable to him that it had been achieved *without any undue influence*; when, at the same time, he had been the great author of that Subscription, which has been brought to light by the Committee, and to which subscription alone, and the nefarious means that it enabled our enemies to resort to, the *triumph* of Mr. Sheridan was to be ascribed. Mr. Whitbread well knew, that, if your free voices had been heard, Mr. Paull would have been the member. This he knew. This he cannot deny; and, he cannot deny, that *he* had the principal hand in stifling that voice. Let him now himself complain of foul play, till his lungs are exhausted. Let him now cry out against unconstitutional dealing, till he be weary. What care you or I for his complaints? Us, and all the people, who are not subservient to his views, he would deprive of every benefit of the constitution. Except as the tools of himself and his party, he would not, if he could have his will, suffer us to exist. Let him complain to those who received his subscription money. Let those degraded wretches condole with him. From us he merits, on this occasion, nothing but contempt.—Another reason, too, for my rejoicing at the death of the late parliament, is, that it affords those electors who have yet any part of their franchise remaining, and especially *you*, an opportunity of choosing men in whom you ought to confide, and that one of those men ought to be Mr. Paull the whole nation is convinced. Much had he done when you before gave him your votes; but, what he has since done entitles him to your gratitude in a degree not to be expressed. You would have had, on the last occasion, no election, had it not been for him; and, had it not been for his exertions, for his unparalleled exertions and sacrifices since, you never would have had another. His firmness and perseverance, his devotion to the public cause, have prevented your city from becoming a close borough. It is from pure fear of him that those who before attempted to monopolize you have decamped. That you have, practically speaking, any voice at all to give, you owe solely to him, and, therefore, not to support him, upon the present occasion, would argue a degree of depravity, which I should be loath to ascribe to any part of my country-

men, and particularly to you. With Catholic bills, or ministerial pledges, or royal consciences, you have nothing to do. You want, in the House of Commons, a member, who, in spite of seduction and of threats, will set about the pursuit of public robbers, and who will never desist, until he has brought them to punishment. This is the man you want, and this man you have in Mr. Paull. Of the several millions of men, of whom this nation consists, there is, perhaps, scarcely one other, who, under all the embarrassments and dangers that he has had to encounter, would have done what Mr. Paull has done for the maintaining of his rights, and your rights still more than his own. It is not so rare to find persons of talent as of firmness, industry, and perseverance; and all these great public virtues are possessed by Mr. Paull in the highest degree. Two such men might do a great deal, even in the House of Commons; but, one man, if you cannot obtain two, may do much, particularly in the way of bringing to light useful facts, such facts as must, in time, produce their due effect. But, I freely confess to you, that, if, upon this great occasion, you fail in the performance of your duty, all your complaints, like those of Mr. Whitbread, will be a subject of ridicule rather than of compassion. You should remember, that the question with you now is, not whether you shall have a real representative in the next parliament; but, whether you shall ever have another real representative as long as the present mode of choosing members of parliament shall exist. It is a contest for your franchises; and, if you neglect to exert yourselves, of those franchises you ought to be deprived. These are not times for flattery. In the series of letters, which I have done myself the honour to address to you, I have, first or last, though in a manner somewhat irregular, laid before you the whole of the state of the country, in a way not easily misunderstood. You must see what is the cause of all our calamities; you must perceive, that it is in your power to aid in removing that cause; and, if you fail to afford that aid, you may still complain, but you will find no one to pity. In the anxious hope, that you will not be found wanting upon this great and trying occasion, I remain, with those sentiments of respect and admiration, which your conduct at the last election was so well calculated to inspire,

Your faithful friend and obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 30th April, 1807.

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## TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER.

### LETTER XV.

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"A BOROUGH.—A Gentleman of *fortune* and respectability will bear of one, by immediately applying to Mr. Prince, Bookseller, Old North-street, Red Lion Square."—MORNING POST, 1st May, 1807.

"SEAT IN A CERTAIN ASSEMBLY.—Any Gentleman having the *Disposal* of a *Close One*, may apply to Mr. Francis, Stationer, Cross-street, Hatton-garden."—MORNING POST, 2nd May, 1807.

"PATRONAGE.—Wanted, by a Gentleman of *high honour and character*, a respectable *Official Situation*, in England (either a *Sinecure*, or one which does

"not require constant attendance), for which an adequate compensation will be given, according to the annual produce. The most satisfactory reference will be given and required, previous to any treaty being entered into. Apply by letter (post paid) to A. B. at Mr. O. Turner's, law-stationer, Chancery-lane."  
—MORNING CHRONICLE, 30th April, 1807.

"Wanted to Purchase the next Presentation to a living from 300*l.* to 500*l.* per annum, with the prospect of an early vacancy. Address, post paid, to A. B. Strawbridge and Tyler's, 78, Warren-street, Fitzroy-square."—MORNING CHRONICLE, 30th April, 1807.

GENTLEMEN:—I have long been afraid of wearying you with my unasked-for observations and advice; but, though I do not see, that under the present circumstances, any thing that I can say is at all likely to produce any immediate effect upon your conduct, or, at least, any effect that can be of conspicuous utility to the public cause, I cannot refrain from addressing to you this one letter, first upon a topic or two of a more general nature, connected with the elections now going forward, and next upon the subject of your own election.

One of these topics is the recent exposure with regard to a great defalcation in the Army-Pay-Office, to prevent the publication of the report relating to which the partisans of the late ministry represent as one of the principal causes of the dissolution of parliament. Indeed, those ministers themselves so represent it; for we find the representation distinctly made in the address of Lord Howick to his constituents, the freeholders of Northumberland. Mr. Whitbread says the same in his address, and so does Mr. Herbert. In my last letter some observations were made upon this subject; but, since the publication of that letter, an elaborate defence of Mr. Rose, as having been made acquainted with the defalcation, has appeared in the Courier newspaper, which defence is, apparently, written either by Mr. Rose himself, or by some person nearly as much interested in the matter as he is, and on which, after inserting it, as I now am about to do, I shall have to beseech your attention to a few short remarks.

"The facts stated to the Committee of Finance by Mr. Rose, were, that on the 10th of February 1806 (some days after he had actually retired from the Pay-Office), three of the senior clerks called upon him at his house, respecting some matters that had passed in the office in his time, and to thank him for marks of attention, &c.; and that on their going out of the room, one of them (not the accountant, whose duty it was to have made the disclosure) turned about, and said that a circumstance of an extraordinary nature had occurred in the time of his predecessors; that MR. STEELE had in 1798, and 1800, applied two sums amounting to 19,000*l.* or thereabouts, out of the cash in the hands of the Pay-Master General, on giving his own receipt for the same, without any authority from the Treasury or the War-Office; at which statement Mr. Rose expressed great surprise, and, to the accountant, some resentment at the communication having been delayed till he was out of office, when he could apply no possible remedy; observing that the transaction was upon the face of it, at least a most irregular one; but that from his long knowledge of Mr. Steele, he was persuaded that he would be able to explain it, so as to acquit himself of having done any thing more than taking upon himself a serious responsibility; that he probably had vouchers in his possession; but that in any event it had been his (the accountant's) duty to remind Mr. Steele of the transaction on his quitting office in 1804, in order that, if it had not been satisfactorily explained, he might then have stated it to Mr. Rose and his colleague, on their appointment; to which the accountant answered, he had called two or three times at Mr. Steele's door, without finding him; which conduct appeared to render the conduct of the accountant less excusable, because if he thought it necessary to see Mr. Steele on the subject, he certainly should have apprized him of his

" wish to do so to ensure his meeting with him. Mr. Rose therefore desired  
 " him to write to Mr. Steele to render his seeing him certain, and to let Mr.  
 " Rose know on his return from Buckden, whether any interposition of his with  
 " Mr. Steele would be necessary.—Lord Temple has stated that Mr. Rose de-  
 " clined even to give advice to the accountant on the subject. On the 11th of  
 " February Mr. Rose went to Buckden, and returned the 19th; on the 20th the  
 " accountant called on him and told him he had seen Mr. Steele, who said gene-  
 " rally that the sums before mentioned were received by him for army services  
 " of a secret nature. The accountant's statement of his interview with Mr.  
 " Steele was so little satisfactory to Mr. Rose, that the latter went to Mr. Steele  
 " on the morning of the 21st, from whom he could obtain no clear explanation  
 " of the business; Mr. Steele said Mr. Rose must excuse his entering into par-  
 " ticulars at present, as he did not feel himself at liberty to do so; *that the ad-  
 " vances were made to a person or persons for services of a secret nature; that  
 " the whole would be repaid, but that he could not at the moment fix the precise  
 " time, as knowing that he had no warrant or other authority whatever for the  
 " issue.* Mr. Rose then observed to him, that under such circumstances he (Mr.  
 " Steele) should see Lord Grenville or the present Paymaster-General, and ex-  
 " plain so much of the transaction as should satisfy them; the whole of it cer-  
 " tainly if they should think it necessary; adding that it was beyond all com-  
 " parison better he should do that in the first instance as from himself, than wait  
 " to give an explanation when he should be called upon to do so; stating too,  
 " that as the matter had been spoken of publicly in the office, *it would soon be-  
 " come a topic in a wide circle; that this appeared to be the more important, as  
 " the precedent would show to future paymasters-general the possibility of their  
 " taking money placed in the Bank on the account of the public for their own private  
 " accommodation at any time, when they should find themselves under a press-  
 " ing urgency to do so, which was plainly against the spirit of the Pay-Office Act.*  
 " —Instead, therefore, of the indifference imputed to Mr. Rose on the subject,  
 " the whole of this communication with the Accountant and Mr. Steele, shows  
 " his anxiety about it. But he could not reconcile to himself to become AN INFOR-  
 " MÉR out of office, against a man universally beloved, with whom he had no private  
 " intercourse whatever from political differences.—Not content with this verbal  
 " communication with Mr. Steele, Mr. Rose, in the afternoon of the same day,  
 " wrote to Mr. Steele, repeating what he had urged to him in the morning; and  
 " added, that *however he might be justified in taking such responsibility upon himself  
 " by the exigency of the case,* it was not desirable that a paymaster-general should  
 " have the power of applying money in his hands, at his own will, without any  
 " authority whatever, &c. &c. &c.; and then went on to say that his (Mr. Steele's)  
 " making the communication he recommended, would remove the difficulty he  
 " (Mr. Rose) was under, of giving the accountant advice out of office: which he  
 " (the accountant) ought not to have called upon him (Mr. Rose) to do then,  
 " never having even alluded to the matter till after his retirement from it.—  
 " To which letter on the 23rd, Mr. Steele answered, he would certainly follow the  
 " advice given, and take an early opportunity of communicating to Lord Gren-  
 " ville the circumstances which related to the issue of the two sums in question;  
 " and that Mr. Rose might therefore, if he thought proper, apprise the accountant  
 " of that intention.—On the 14th of February, Mr. Rose wrote two letters from  
 " Buckden, to the accountant, on the subject. And after his return to town, he  
 " wrote to the accountant on the 24th, to acquaint him with the assurance he  
 " had from Mr. Steele of his intended communication with Lord Grenville, and  
 " concluded with telling him, that *as no communication whatever was made to  
 " him (Mr. Rose) while he was in office, he did not think he could then with pro-  
 " priety give any further advice on the subject; and Mr. Rose hearing at the time  
 " no further mention of it from any quarter, FELT A CONVICTION, that a  
 " SATISFACTORY explanation had been given by Mr. Steele to Lord Grenville,  
 " relative to the services for which the sums were received by him; and the matter  
 " was completely discharged from his mind, till on the 9th of last February he  
 " received an official letter from Lord Temple dated the 7th, stating he had dis-  
 " covered the two issues having been made without any authority, and that as he  
 " found the circumstance was communicated to him some days before Mr. Rose  
 " resigned the paymastership, desired he would refer him to the documents in the  
 " office, in which he might find any minute or memorandum of it.* It now appears  
 " by the Treasury minutes, that Lord Temple made the disclosure to that board

" the 31st of January: this attempt to implicate Mr. Rose must therefore have  
 " been an afterthought. To which Mr. Rose instantly answered, that the cir-  
 " cumstance alluded to was *not communicated to him till after he had quitted the*  
 " *Pay-Office; he could therefore make no minute, nor give any direction upon it;*  
 " about which, as there were three gentlemen present at the time when the com-  
 " munication was made, any possibility of a mistake was precluded.—It now ap-  
 " pears that so early as on the 31st of January last, and the 4th and 6th of Feb-  
 " ruary, Lord Temple acquainted Lord Grenville with the discovery made to him  
 " of the issue of the two sums, and that in consequence thereof, a minute of the  
 " treasury board was made on the 10th, calling upon Mr. Steele to pay the said  
 " sum, the first having been previously paid; and that other minutes were made  
 " on the 26th of February and 19th of March on the same business, in no one of  
 " which does there appear to be the slightest imputation of any thing tending to  
 " criminality in the transaction, no censure, no rebuke; nothing but directions  
 " about the repayment. The Lords of the Treasury, therefore, tacitly sanctioned  
 " what had been done by Mr. Steele, so far, at least, as not blaming his conduct.  
 " And yet a charge is attempted to be sustained against Mr. Rose, for not inform-  
 " ing of it when out of office. *by endeavouring to prove he was informed of it when*  
 " *in the public service.* He had however positively retired from his employment  
 " several days before the 10th of February, 1806, and went on the 11th to Buck-  
 " den for a week. The King's appointment of his successors (*it is found on in-*  
 " *quiry*) *was not signed till the 13th, but of that he knew nothing till within the last*  
 " *fortnight;* and the time when the cash at the bank was transferred to his suc-  
 " cessor, he was ignorant of till he saw it in the Morning Chronicle last week.  
 " It was therein stated not to have taken place till the 24th of February; it  
 " might not have been done till the 1st of May, for any thing Mr. Rose knew; he  
 " was not a party to it.—These are the circumstances of the case as it affects  
 " Mr. Rose. If he had at the time foreseen the attempt that would be made to  
 " implicate him in the transaction, he could hardly have acted with more caution  
 " and circumspection on a disclosure of a business which, as stated by the Ac-  
 " countant of the Pay Office (when reproved by Mr. Rose) had nothing criminal  
 " in it: Mr. Steele's statement too led to a belief, *that he had taken on himself a*  
 " *most severe responsibility, but to no suspicion of any thing beyond that.* The charge  
 " against government for dissolving parliament to prevent the investigation of  
 " the whole matter by the committee of finance, hardly deserves serious refuta-  
 " tion. What particular inducement had the present ministers to protect Mr.  
 " Steele? When the occurrence took place, Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, and  
 " Mr. Windham, were in the cabinet; few of the present ministers were. Mr.  
 " Steele adhered to Mr. Addington after his separation from Mr. Pitt; and the  
 " latter, when he returned to the administration, removed Mr. Steele from his  
 " office. How then, it may be asked, *does any thing done by Mr. Steele affect the*  
 " *present Ministers?* The entire separation of Mr. Rose from him would have  
 " made it a very painful task for Mr. Rose to have become AN INFORMER  
 " against him when he no longer had a duty imposed on him to put himself in  
 " that situation."

Now, Gentlemen, stripping this statement of all its quibbling and  
 shuffling, the facts, as acknowledged by this defender of Mr. Rose, are  
 these: 1st, that Mr. Rose was, on the 10th of February 1806, he being  
 still paymaster-general, made officially acquainted with an embezzlement  
 of his predecessor, Mr. Steele (Pitt's favourite, "*Tommy Steele*"), to  
 the amount of 19,000 pounds of the public money; 2nd, that Mr. Rose,  
 then, and all the while since a member of the House of Commons, did  
 not make any report of such embezzlement to the succeeding paymaster,  
 nor any minute of it in the records of the office, nor any motion respecting  
 it in the House of Commons; 3rd, that the embezzlement was discovered  
 by Lord Temple, one of the succeeding paymasters-general, in January  
 last; and, 4th, that the facts, having been communicated by Lord Tem-  
 ple to a committee of the late House of Commons, that committee was  
 about to present a report upon the subject, when the Gentleman Usher  
 of the Black Rod, the moment the reading of prayers was over, and  
 before the House could possibly proceed to business, brought a summons



for the House to proceed to the House of Peers, where they heard a speech, which, at once, put an end to the report, the committee and the parliament.—In Mr. Rose's defence, it is by the above writer alleged, that he was *out of office* at the time when he received information upon the subject. This allegation however he is obliged to retract, for, it appears, that the new paymaster was not appointed, that is to say, did not enter upon the exercise of his functions, until the 24th of February, whereas it is expressly acknowledged, that the information was given to Mr. Rose on the 10th of that month. "Yes," says this defender, "but Mr. Rose did *not know* that. He *looked upon himself* as being out of office on the 10th," and as a proof of this, he states that Mr. Rose "went off to Buckden on the 11th."—Gentlemen, what a sorry shuffle is this! *Not know* that his official duties had not expired! *Not know* the time, *not know* the day and the hour, when duties expired, for the performance of which duties he received, out of our hard-strained purses, 4,000 pounds a year! This fact, if true, would tend to show us, with what degree of care and diligence such offices are executed. He "went off to Buckden." But, *why* did he go off to Buckden, and that, too, observe, the very next day? Why did he run out of the way the moment he had heard of so important a matter? He *thought* he was *out of office*, though he has received the salary for that office up to the 24th of the month, I dare engage. Yes, he might *possibly* think so: but, in such a case, it appears to me, that any man, worthy of such a place of trust, and so situated, would have wished to be able to probe the matter to the bottom, and to expose the embezzlement; and, that wish would naturally have led to an *inquiry* as to his official power of acting. Such a man would have said, "Let me see: my power as paymaster still remains; no successor has been actually appointed; I am yet able to bring this embezzler forth before I leave the office, or, at least, to put the facts upon record, so that my successor may be enabled to proceed upon the business, and to cause justice to be done to the public without delay." What man, worthy of high public trust, would not thus have thought, and have acted accordingly? When we complain of the enormous salaries that we are compelled to pay to men in such offices, and allege, that their labours are nothing at all, we are reminded of the great *responsibility*, the dreadful load of *care*, which, for our good, they take upon themselves; but, how has this been proved in the instance before us? Mr. Rose makes no discovery of the embezzlement, though he is two years in the office, and receives 8,000 pounds from us; and, when the discovery is made to him, he does not take the pains to ascertain whether he be still paymaster, or not, but goes off to the country as fast as post horses can get along.—Nor, were we to admit of this miserable shuffle, that he did *not know* that he was still in office, would that admission at all diminish the blame imputable to him, if the facts, above stated by his defender, be correct; for, in the first place, it was his duty, his bounden duty, to have gone immediately to his successor, instead of going to Buckden, and to inform him of the facts, which had come to his knowledge. "My power, as paymaster," he would have said, "has expired; I am unable, officially, to make any record of this embezzlement; but, I am come to enable you to obtain, without delay, justice for that injured people, from whom I and my family have received so much money, that it would be ingratitude black as hell in me, were I, for one moment, to wink at any frauds committed upon them, burdened and oppressed as they

“already are.” But, in lieu of this, which I trust would have been the conduct of either of you, Gentlemen, had you been in Mr. Rose’s place, what does he do? He sets off instantly for Buckden, whence however he writes upon the subject; but, not to his successor in office, not to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury; no, nor to any person or persons having power to obtain justice for the public, but to *Mr. Tommy Steele himself!* To this person alone he confines his communications upon the subject; and, upon Steele’s telling him, that he would explain the matter to Lord Grenville, he, we are told, becomes, “without hearing any thing more of the matter, CONVINCED that a satisfactory explanation has been given to Lord Grenville!” A satisfactory explanation of the withdrawing of 19,000 pounds of the public money from the service of the public, in direct violation of the law! God Almighty! Was there ever a nation so pillaged and so insulted as this! And is it indeed for the honour of fattening, with the sweat of our brow and the straining of our sinews, Tommy Steele and his like, that we are to “spend our last shilling, and shed the last drop of our blood?”—Supposing, merely for the argument’s sake, that the being out of the office, or, rather, the mere thinking that he was out of the office, and supposing, to strain the hypothesis to the utmost, that such was the real thought of Mr. Rose; supposing all this, what sort of apology would the like of this be, if viewed in a moral or even legal light, and compared with the maxims and practice of men in the common concerns of life? If I know that my neighbour’s servant has purloined his cash or his plate, and do not make the fact known to my neighbour, I am manifestly chargeable with moral guilt, and, if my connivance be discovered and proved, the law deems me an accessory after the fact, and justly punishes me accordingly. And, if this be so in the case of an embezzlement, committed upon my neighbour, what is the judgment that ought to be awarded against me, if I am guilty of similar connivance, in the case of an embezzlement of the property of my master; my generous and confiding master, from whose means I have grown rich, and whose purse is to me still a source of riches? Nay, further, if I am, too, still one of “the guardians of this master’s purse,” and have solemnly pledged myself to execute that trust with fidelity and diligence? Could either of you, Gentlemen, had you been a member of the House of Commons, have remained in that post from the 10th of February 1806, until the end of April 1807, without making any motion relative to the transaction in question, had it come to your knowledge? I trust not; and, had there been upon Mr. Rose no other responsibility than merely that of a member of parliament, that alone demanded, on his part, an immediate exposure of the transaction.—By way of palliation, as to motive, it is stated, by the defender of Mr. Rose, that he was, at the time when the discovery was made to him, not in habits of intimacy with Steele, and that they had been separated by the separation of Mr. Addington from Mr. Pitt, to the former of whom Steele adhered, while Mr. Rose remained in adherence to Mr. Pitt. But, Gentlemen, a very slight effort of the memory will enable us to set a proper value upon this statement. Mr. Rose was not so separated from the friends of Mr. Addington as to be prevented from joining with them and with Mr. Addington himself, in December 1804, after the first separation took place; nor has his attachment to Mr. Pitt prevented him from now embracing the Duke of Portland, who remained, like Steele, separated from Pitt, till the day of the death of the latter. Separated! No, Gentlemen, such

men are never separated as far as concerns transactions like that of which we are speaking. They may find it convenient, now-and-then, to affect being separated, and, sometimes, they may have their quarrels for place and emolument; but, as towards us, they are always firmly united, and are always found ready to stand by each other.—Denying that the dissolution of parliament had, for one of its objects, the protection of Steele, the writer, above-quoted, asks, “What particular inducement had the present ministers to protect Mr. Steele?” No *particular* inducement, perhaps, but, I can easily suppose a *general* inducement, and that it was powerful with them I have no doubt. As to the circumstance of Lords Grenville and Spencer and Mr. Windham being *in the cabinet*, at the time when the embezzlement took place, namely, in 1798 and in 1800, that is a most foul insinuation against those gentlemen, because it is well known, that the two former were in offices not at all connected with the disbursement of the public money, and, it is, by this writer, declared, that the 19,000 pounds were withdrawn *without the knowledge of the secretary at war*, and Mr. Windham was that secretary at war. They were all, indeed, *in the cabinet*, but, we have seen that Pitt, being first Lord of the Treasury, could lend, of the public money, without interest, 40,000 pounds to Boyd and Benfield, two of his then majority in parliament, *without consulting the cabinet*, without ever making the fact known to any member thereof, without making any minute of it; and, has any body ever dreamed of making the cabinet responsible for that violation of the law? But, Gentlemen, though it is pretty certain, that Lords Grenville and Spencer and Mr. Windham were not privy to the embezzlement, it is by no means certain that some other persons, and those, perhaps, *now in place*, were *not privy to it*; this is by no means certain; and, therefore, it is not at all difficult to conceive a powerful motive for endeavouring to stifle the inquiry, which, as in the case of Lord Melville, would, in all likelihood, have led to further exposure, and would have implicated many persons, who naturally enough prefer the signal of “No Popery” to “No Peculation.” Whether, however, the stifling of this inquiry was, or was not, a principal motive for dissolving the parliament, will soon become evident, when the new parliament has met. If the committee of finance be renewed, and *composed of the same persons as nearly as possible* as the last committee was composed of, then I shall be ready to allow, that the stifling of the inquiry was *not* a principal object of the dissolution; but, if the committee be not renewed, or, being renewed, be not so composed, I shall be convinced that to stifle the inquiry was a principal object in making what Mr. Canning calls “an appeal to the people.”—Our writer again reminds the public, that the late ministers had been in possession of the facts relating to Steele’s embezzlement for several months previous to the time when they were bringing those facts out to light, and he infers, that they would never have brought them out, *had they remained in place*. This I believe; and this, Gentlemen, conveys a strong censure on the late ministers; but, it does not alter the case with respect to Mr. Rose or any of his party. It implicates two ministries instead of one in the charge of connivance; but, it lessens the blame due to neither, while it aggravates the grievance of the suffering people.—Were I to judge from the language of the defender of Mr. Rose, I should certainly anticipate a resolute endeavour, on the part of the new ministry, to *wife* the inquiry in question. He calls the act of Steele an *irregularity*; he says that Mr.

Rose saw nothing *criminal* in it; he talks of his being *justified* in taking so serious a *responsibility* upon himself; he talks of his having done *nothing more* than taking upon himself a *responsibility*; and he calls him a gentleman *universally beloved!* This is pretty language; pretty cant! The robber upon the highway *only* takes upon himself a severe responsibility. The murderer does no more. But, they are both hanged, if caught. Let us hope, at any rate, that we shall be favoured with the *name* of "the *person* to whom the money was given for *secret services*." Let us hope, too (though that, perhaps, is too much to hope), that we shall know the *nature* of the *services*. But, Gentlemen, how infamously impudent it is to talk of *services* in such a case! What *services* could possibly be furthered by the misapplication of this money? What else than an injury to the country could possibly be effected by the employment of 19,000 pounds of its money for purposes that *dared not be avowed*, and that have been kept secret from 1798 to the present day?—When we see such things brought to light, what must we think of the magnitude of the peculations that remain hidden? Oh, that the day were arrived, when the whole mystery of iniquity shall be developed! In that day, when it comes, and come it will; in that day, when, to use the words of Sir Francis Burdett, "corruption shall have destroyed corruption," we shall clearly see how we have been beggared, what has produced the income-tax, and what all the enormous burdens we bear; but, until that day comes, expect no good, I pray you, except in the way of *exposure*, from any human being, and much less from the apostate Whigs, who, while the prospect of long enjoyment of place lay before them, extolled the character and conduct of Pitt, and walked in all his footsteps, but particularly in those which tended to the screening of peculators, many of whom they saw clearly detected, but not one of whom did they punish, or cause to disgorge his plunder.

Another topic, which I wish to address you upon, is the election in general, of which, however, after your reading of the advertisements, which I have taken for my motto, it will be useless to say much. And *this*, Gentlemen, is what they call "an appeal to the *people!*" This is the mighty blessing, which, we are told, the world envy us! From one corner of the kingdom to the other corruption extends his baleful, his serpent-hatching wings. Can this last? Ought it to last? Of what avail is it that the miscreants engaged in this infamous traffic call us jacobins and levellers? Will any one of them say, that this ought to be? Has any one of them the ingenuity to find out any thing, even in imagination, worse than this? Politicians may endeavour to alarm us with cries of revolution, and divines may preach to us about hell; but, if the one can find any thing more disgraceful, or the other any thing more damnable, than what is described in these advertisements, I beseech them speedily to exhibit it to our view. *Fifty-seven* of these advertisements have I read in the London daily papers; and, I defy any man living to produce me, in the history of the whole world, any thing so completely descriptive of national degradation. Well may Mr. Fawkes say, in his address to his late constituents of the county of York, that a seat in parliament, which he once regarded as the height of laudable ambition, he now views in quite a different light; and, the only wonder is, that he should have been till now in the dark upon the subject. Again I call upon our accusers, upon those, who, for hire, denominate us jacobins and levellers, and who cry aloud for the preservation of the constitution, to say, whether the

constitution sanctions these things. If it does, what an infamous imposture it is! and, if it does not, it is we, and not our revilers, who are endeavouring to support the constitution of England. Aye, it is we who would restore and support the constitution; the real constitution; that constitution which so strictly forbids the buying or the selling of a single vote, much more a seat in parliament; that constitution which inhibits peers from any sort of interference in elections, and that supposes it impossible that any peer should, in any way, send a member to the Commons' House; that constitution, in short, which forbids, in the strongest terms, and under severe penalties, every one of the abuses, of which we complain; and yet have the hireling revilers the audacity to reproach us with *a wish to overturn the constitution!* In such a state the country cannot long remain. No country has ever long remained in such a state. Those who have an evident interest in perpetuating abuses of all sorts, may endeavour to terrify the people with the consequences of what is called a revolution; and, from a revolution, in the usual sense of the word, as applied to politics, God preserve us! but a *change*, and a great change too, must come, and come it will, in one way or another, and that at no distant day.

I should here make some remarks upon the baseness of those, who have, at a time like this, set up a cry of "*No Popery.*" Mr. Perceval may be, and for the honour of human nature, I hope he is, sincere in his alarms upon this score; but, as to the rest of the ministry, if they have had any hand in setting up this cry, while, at the same time, it is well known that they approved of the measures contemplated by Pitt, they must be the very basest of all mankind. I am inclined to expect, or to hope, little good from them; but, really, to impute such baseness to them, without positive proof, I cannot. Of all sins that of political hypocrisy excites the greatest degree of public hatred; and, if it should appear, that it is they who, while they have not dared to avow it openly, have thus set to work the mercenaries of the press and the pulpit, they will see the day when a terrible vengeance will fall upon their heads. On this subject, I refer you to the excellent Letter of Lord Grenville, contained in the *Register of May 9, 1807*, reserving my remarks upon it for another opportunity, but availing myself of this opportunity just to remind his Lordship, that there are other Societies besides *Corresponding Societies* capable of carrying on the work of "*sedition,*" and that, the trick of "*no Popery,*" in 1807, is very little, if any, worse, or more base, than the trick of "*chartered rights,*" in 1784. His Lordship seems to have been paid off in his own coin, or, perhaps, in the coin of his admired Pitt; but, the unhappy Whigs, have, owing to their own cupidity in the last instance, been overreached in both cases.

Now, as to your *own election*, Gentlemen, it will, perhaps, be too late to offer you any thing in the way of advice; but, I cannot refrain from thus publicly expressing my deep regret, that Mr. Paull is no longer in a state to be thought of as your representative, and more particularly that the cause of his incapacity should also have endangered his life; a life, which, from the time that I had the honour first to know him, I knew to have been ardently and disinterestedly devoted to the public. His conduct, in some instances, may have been precipitate, rash, violent; but, these are faults not of the worst stamp, and they are greatly overbalanced by his public virtues. Of those virtues, the exercise of which I have witnessed, I am sorry the country will now be deprived; but, in the consci-

ousness of possessing them, he will, I hope, find more than a sufficient consolation for any disappointment that he may, at present, have experienced. Mr. Paull was first known to me through the means of Mr. Windham, in June 1805. From that time to the close of the last Westminster election, I was privy to all his public proceedings, and, I think, to all his motives; and, I am convinced, that all those proceedings flowed from a desire to render good to his country. He withstood temptations such as no other man, that I know of, ever withstood. There is nothing, in reason, that he might not have possessed, in the way of what is called honour, and what really is profit, if he would have desisted from the performance of what he regarded as his public duty. This I know; for this I honour him; for this I shall always rejoice at his good fortune, and mourn whatever of bad shall befall him.—Sir Francis Burdett I have, from the time of the second Middlesex election, regarded as the fittest man to represent you, an opinion to which Mr. Paull is no stranger, and, I am persuaded, that the latter would, at any time, have resigned all pretensions in favour of the former. That you will, at this late hour, succeed in electing Sir Francis Burdett, he being absent too, I can hardly expect, though I most anxiously hope it; for, until his principles, which are the real principles of the constitution, prevail, neither happiness nor liberty, nor one moment's safety from without, will this our harassed and distracted country enjoy.—With respect to Lord Cochrane, excepting solely his being an officer appointed by, and liable, at any hour, to be promoted or cashiered by the King, or rather, his ministers, to him I have no objection; but, on the contrary, I have the highest opinion both of his head and his heart. He has a solid understanding, has much of the right sort of study, reflects deeply, is sober, industrious, politically brave, is proof against the blandishments of courts and of factions, hates sycophants, place-hunters, speculators, and oppressors of every description; and, if he should be elected, by you especially, I venture to predict that he will zealously discharge his trust. That your choice may fall upon him and Sir Francis Burdett is my anxious wish, and, let what will be the result of your present arduous endeavours, be assured, that for all and for every man of you a sincere respect will ever be entertained by

Your faithful friend, and obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 7th May, 1807.

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## TO THE RT. HON. SPENCER PERCEVAL.

### LETTER I.

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"That elections of members to serve in parliament ought to be free."—  
BILL OF RIGHTS.

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*Upon the "Appeal to the People," the "Obligations under which the Crown is held," and upon the "Danger to the Church."*

SIR,—As the series of letters, of which this is the first, may, probably, extend to a considerable length, I think it right to say, by way of preface, a few words, as to the light, in which I view the person, to whom

they are, or will be addressed. As far as relates to private character, which always ought to be duly considered when we are estimating the worth of public men, I can, of course, possess no other knowledge of you than that which has reached me from mere report; but, it is generally believed, that, as to all the concerns and relationships of private life, it would be difficult to find a better man than yourself; and, in this belief, I sincerely join. As to public concerns, as there requires but very little more, in a minister (for you are now *the minister*) of this country, than strict honesty, a clear understanding, common powers of convincing others, industry such as is necessary in common life, love of country, and resolution to do that which the constitution demands, I should have no doubt of your being fit for the situation, were I not afraid, that the lures of ambition and your want of intrinsic political weight, may possibly drag you along, step by step, in the paths wherein your predecessors, for twenty-three years past, have invariably trodden. That you would not voluntarily join in those deeds of corruption, which are such a disgrace to the government and the country, and which have, at last, brought the latter to the brink of ruin, political as well as pecuniary, I believe; but, when a man has once staked his fortune upon the maintenance of any principle or any party, and particularly if he has persuaded himself that to maintain the same is for the public good, he is very apt to yield to the solicitations of those by whom he is surrounded, and, when the necessity occurs, to regard the end as sanctifying the means. I do not believe, that, for the love of the thing, you would wish to see your country bent down under an inexorable tyranny, but, I may think, and I do think, that you are too much of the opinion, that fear, and not love, is the principle by which we are to be governed, and, of course, that your reliance, for the maintenance of the governing powers, is much more upon coercive than persuasive means. I believe, that (self-interest out of the question), you are extremely anxious for the preservation of the independence of your country; but I may fear, and I do fear, that, in the struggle for preserving your power, the means of effecting this greatest of all public objects will be frequently overlooked, or neglected. Having thus, Sir, frankly stated my sincere opinion of you, give me leave to add, that, as to myself, however erroneous any of my notions may be, there is not, in the whole kingdom, a man who would go farther than I would go to aid in the preservation of the throne, as established by the constitution of our country; that I wish for no *innovation*, and that I hold in abhorrence every species of popular outrage; but that, at the same time, it is with a heart-burning hardly to be described, that I see myself, or any of my countrymen, deprived, no matter how, of any of those liberties, which our forefathers enjoyed. To me it appears evident, that a dreadful storm is gathering over our country. The elements, which have been for years collecting, seem now to be upon the eve of producing their combined effect. Of precisely what nature this effect may be, no man can tell; who amongst us may survive it, it would be presumptuous even to guess; and, therefore, I am anxious, that, when the war of faction shall have been drowned in the terrific contests, of which it is the mere forerunner, it shall, by some one or other, be said of me, that if my voice had been heard in time, the calamities of England would have been prevented.

With this motive, principally, it is, that I now address you upon two or three important subjects connected with the dissolution of parliament;

and first upon the "*appeal*," which is said to have now been made to the people.—The Lords Commissioners, in the speech, which they recently delivered to both Houses in the King's name, and by his express command, state, "that his Majesty is anxious to recur to *the sense of the people*, while the events, which have recently taken place, are yet *fresh in their recollection*;" and, that "his Majesty feels, that, in resorting to this measure, he at once *demonstrates*, in the most unequivocal manner, his own conscientious persuasion of the rectitude of those motives upon which he has acted; and affords to his *people* the best opportunity of testifying their determination to support him in every exercise of the prerogatives of his crown, which is conformable to the sacred obligations under which they are held, and conducive to the welfare of the kingdom, and to the security of the constitution." Here, Sir, are two positions clearly implied; first, that the wishes of *the people* are, or ought to be, consulted in the passing of laws; and, second, that there are certain obligations, or conditions, under which the prerogatives of the crown are held. Of the latter I shall speak hereafter, when I have inquired how far the measure here spoken of can, with truth, be called "a recurrence," or appeal, "*to the sense of the people*."

It will not be denied, that, in this way, at least, the sense of the people can be expressed only in their free and unbiassed votes for members to serve in the next parliament; for, as to any mere popular cry, that never can be considered as a mark of their opinion, and, indeed, it is well known, that no appeal of that sort can be in such a manner made. In order, therefore, to form an accurate opinion upon the point, whether to dissolve the parliament, and to call a new one, be, in *reality*, to appeal to the sense of the people, we must endeavour to ascertain what number of the new members will be, or, indeed, can be, returned by the unfettered will, the unbiassed votes of *the people*, or, more properly speaking, of that now small proportion of the people, who have nominally the right of voting at elections for members of parliament. Mr. Pitt, in a speech, made on the 7th of May, 1782, in the House of Commons, in support of a motion, made by himself for reforming that House, gave the following description of the then state of the representation:—"It is perfectly understood, that there are some boroughs absolutely governed by the Treasury, and others totally possessed by them. It requires no experience to say, that such boroughs have no one quality of representation in them; they have no share nor substance in the general interests of the country; and they have in fact no stake for which to appoint their guardians in the popular assembly. The influence of the Treasury in some boroughs is contested, not by the electors of those boroughs, but by some one or other powerful man, who assumes or pretends to an hereditary property of what ought only to be the rights and privileges of the electors. There are hardly any men in the borough who have a right to vote, and they are the subjects and slaves of the person who claims the property of the borough, and who, in fact, makes the return. Another set of boroughs and towns, in the lofty possession of English freedom, claims to themselves the right of bringing their votes to market. They have no other market, no other property, and no other stake in the country, than the price which they procure for their votes."—Was this a true description, Sir, or was it a false one? And when, in the same speech, Mr. Pitt represented



the House of Commons as "the mere tool of the ministers of the day," was he guilty of factious falsehood; or, did he utter the sentiments of a man, as yet uncorrupted, as yet feeling for the liberties and honour of the country, as yet unaccustomed to disguise the truth? If, however, he did, upon this occasion, speak the truth, how can a dissolution of the parliament be, with sincerity, called an appeal to *the sense of the people*?

I shall be told, perhaps, that Mr. Pitt afterwards changed his opinion. With regard to the subject of his motion, with regard to *the necessity of a reform*, he might change his opinion; but, with regard to the state of the representation, the nullity of the people's voice; upon that we can admit of no change; without throwing upon him a charge of wilful falsehood. He spoke of facts, upon which he had full information, and, either he asserted what was false, or the state of the representation was what he described it; and this, indeed, he never did, as far as I recollect, ever attempt to deny. When steps were taken, at a subsequent period, by other persons, some in parliament and some out of parliament, to effect the object of his motion of 1782, he did, indeed, revile the movers as Jacobins, Levellers, and Traitors; he asserted, that the *time* was unfit for a reform; and he had recourse to all his means of terrifying the nation with the prospect of a bloody revolution; but, though backed as he was, he never did, that I could discover, make any recantation as to the *facts*, which he had stated at the before-mentioned period, when he used his exertions *out of parliament*, as well as in parliament, for effecting a reform, upon which subject I must beg your permission to enlarge a little; for it is quite proper, that the people of England should remember the deeds of a man, whose debts they have been obliged to pay, and for the rearing of a monument to the memory of whom they are now to be taxed. It will not soon be forgotten, that, in 1794, a state prosecution, Mr. Pitt being then minister, was carried on by the then attorney-general, who is now lord chancellor, against Mr. Horne Tooke and others, who belonged to what was called the London Corresponding Society. The charge was that of *high treason*, death was, of course, the meditated punishment. Yet, Sir, it clearly appeared, that the acts, and the views as far as could be proved, of this society, were exactly similar to those of a society formed in 1782, to which society Mr. Pitt himself belonged, and in which society he co-operated with this very Mr. Horne Tooke. When, upon this memorable trial for high treason, Mr. Pitt was called upon to say what passed in 1782, his recollection, as in the case of the money lent to Boyd and Benfield, appeared to be remarkably imperfect. He did, however, not deny his own hand-writing when it was shown to him; and, when the fact had been proved by others, he did acknowledge, that, at the period referred to, he joined in recommending, that an appeal should be made to the people, and their sense collected, *by parishes, or smaller districts*, with a view of effecting a reform in the House of Commons. The attorney-general, by a cross-examination, gave Mr. Pitt an opportunity of saying, that he never approved of any "*affiliated societies*;" but, that there was no essential difference between the proceedings of the Corresponding Society and those without which the sense of the people in their parishes, or smaller districts, was to be collected, must, I think, appear evident to every unprejudiced mind. All the difference that could possibly be discovered was in the *times*; and this must have been matter of *opinion*. Mr. Pitt *might* think, that what was "absolutely necessary to the safety of the nation," when he was out of office, in 1782, would

have been dangerous to the nation, when he was in office in 1794 ; but, Mr. Tooke and his associates might think the contrary ; they might still retain their former opinions upon the subject ; and, surely, to endeavour to give effect to those opinions was not, by any body, and least of all by Mr. Pitt, to be imputed to them as a crime worthy of death ? To the length of this digression I will only add a remark, that Mr. Wilberforce was, in 1782, and about that time, one of the most zealous amongst those who sought a reform in the representation, as will appear more fully, when, upon a future occasion, I shall take an opportunity of referring to the papers of Mr. Wyvill and others, who united their exertions to those of Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Pitt.

The political party opposed to Mr. Pitt, and, as we have seen, opposed to him merely as the possessor of that power and those emoluments which they wished to possess, have, at various times, given us their opinion upon the state of the representation, a reform in which they have constantly represented as a measure, without the adoption of which, no combination of talents, or events, could possibly produce any real and permanent benefit to the country. Of their abandonment of their principles ; of their remaining a year in power without any attempt to effect this great purpose ; of their language, which all along implied, that no reform, of the sort we are speaking of, was necessary ; of the doctrine of their avowed advocates, who have asserted, that, for the House of Commons to be really independent of the crown is *mere theory*, and not at all conformable to the *practice of the constitution in its healthful state* ; of their proceedings, during the election of 1806, specimens of which have been brought to light in the cases of Westminster and Hampshire : of these it is quite unnecessary for me to say any thing more than merely what is sufficient to call them to mind. Nor will I make a particular reference to any of their *opinions* relative to the necessity of a reform in the House of Commons. I will confine myself to the statement of facts, upon which they grounded their motions for a reform, which statement was, it was understood, drawn up by Mr. Erskine and Mr. Grey, which they offered to prove at the bar of the House, and which was expressed in the following words : " That seventy-one peers and the Treasury nominated seventy members of the House of Commons and procured the return of seventy-seven ; that ninety-one commoners nominated eighty-two, and procured the return of fifty-seven : so that, together, one hundred and sixty-two persons returned three hundred and six of the members. Besides which, twenty-eight members were returned by compromises, and seventeen boroughs, not containing one hundred and fifty voters each, returned twenty-one members ; those members together making a majority of one hundred and ninety-seven votes in the House."

Now, Sir, whether the introduction of a hundred *Irish* members, the *patronage* of many of the boroughs they are returned for having been actually *purchased* by law, and with taxes raised upon the people ; whether this alteration has produced an improvement in the state of the representation ; whether an improvement has been produced by any other means ; whether the open and public conversation about the proprietorship of boroughs ; whether the numerous advertisements, for the sale and purchase of seats, which we daily read in the public prints, and for the publishing of which no man is ever called in question by the House of Commons, or by any body else ; whether any or all of these amount to a

sign of improvement in the representation, since the time, that Mr. Pitt and Lord Howick gave the descriptions that I have above faithfully quoted; and, indeed, whether their descriptions were true, or false; these are questions which I leave you, in your conscience, to answer. But, if those descriptions were true, and if no improvement in the state of the representation has taken place since those descriptions were given, I put it to your sincerity to say, whether, by dissolving a House of Commons and calling a new one, an appeal is really made "*to the sense of the people.*" I put it to your justice, whether men ought to be reviled, and punished, as traitors, or seditious libellers, because they are discontented under such a state of things; because they wish for, and seek, an improvement in the representation; because, in short, adhering to the principles of that constitution, for the sake of which they are called upon to shed their blood, they desire that a dissolution of the parliament should, to use the words of the Speech, be a "*recurrence to the sense of the people.*" And, I put it to your reason, whether the upholding of such a state of things, and whether such revilings and punishings, be the likely means of calling forth the zeal of the people, if need shall be, in defence of the government?

I am aware, that there are those, who hold the opinion, that the less weight the people have, the better it is; but, Sir, this is a question, which is totally set aside by the Speech, which you and your colleagues have advised the King to order to be made upon this occasion; for in that speech, as was before observed, you declare, in as clear a manner as possible, that, "*the sense of the people*" ought not only to have some weight in the passing of laws, but in regulating the conduct of the King and his servants; you challenge, therefore, an inquiry, as to whether the dissolution of the House of Commons and the calling of a new one, be really an appeal to the free and unbiassed voice of the people; and, if the result of that inquiry be a decided and incontrovertible negative to the proposition, it will remain for you, in some still moment of your life, to ask yourself how we ought to qualify the *professions* contained in the Speech.

The second topic upon which I think it useful, at this time, to address you, is suggested by that part of the Speech, wherein the King, by the advice, of course, of you and your colleagues, speaks of the "*obligations under which the prerogatives of the crown are held*;" that is to say, under which the crown itself is held; for, take away the prerogatives, and the crown is a thing to be estimated by the physical weight, and the nature of the materials, of which it is composed. And here, Sir, believe me, when I say, that I am one of those, who would by no means wish to see diminished any of the justly exercised prerogatives of the King. Bolingbroke observes, and with great truth, that the real liberty of the people is in as much less danger from *prerogative* than from *influence*, as an open assailant is less dangerous than a secret assassin. When the kings of England exerted frequently, and boldly, their different prerogatives, we see that they were sometimes guilty of acts of injustice, and even of tyranny; but, we see also, that they had to deal with a *boldly resisting House of Commons*, and the final consequence invariably was, the asserting and establishing of the rights of the people. The Whigs, after they obtained a complete mastery over the King and the kingdom, introduced a new system, of which system, alas! we now feel the effects.

Of the *obligations*, under which the crown is held, we have, in varying

phraseology, heard much, from different descriptions of men, since the agitation of the question respecting the Catholics. The course of reasoning with all of them is this : " That the placing of the crown upon the heads of His Majesty's illustrious family was, at the time, and has been and will be, in its consequences, the greatest of national blessings ; that the only principles which produced that inestimable blessing were, the maintenance of the predominance of the Church of England, as by law established and the preventing of every thing tending to re-exalt the Roman Catholic Church ; that Lord Howick's bill would have tended to re-exalt the Roman Catholic Church, and would thereby have sapped the predominance of the Church of England ; and, therefore, that Lord Howick's bill was contrary to the principles, which placed the crown upon the heads of His Majesty's illustrious family ;" a conclusion perfectly correct, and indeed self-evident, if we admit the premises ; but, except as far as is contained in the first proposition (with which I presume not to meddle), all those premises I think that even I am able to disprove. But, before I proceed farther, let me put in my protest against the imputation of having, now that the ministers are out of place, become a supporter of them, and that, too, as some persons might say, merely because they are opposed to the servants of the King, who, in the modern style, are called *the government*. I am not, and never shall be, a supporter either of them or their bill. To support the one, indeed, is to attack the other ; for they *withdrew the bill*, and therein pronounced a condemnation, either of the bill or of themselves. I have, for the reasons which I have more than once stated, always regarded the bill as likely to produce, neither immediately nor remotely, any harm or any good. I rejoice, for the reasons that I have before stated, that your predecessors were turned out of office ; but, it by no means follows, that I am to join in a cry, which, apparently, for no other purpose than that of public delusion, has been set up against the measure which was the cause, or pretended cause, of their dismissal. Them I accused (the *Whigs*, I mean) of public delusion ; and, from whatever quarter it may come, my hatred of the thing is always the same.

Coming now to the proposed discussion, who that was a stranger to our laws and history, would not, upon hearing the language of the Speech, and of the divers addresses to the King, recently delivered, imagine, that when the crown of this kingdom was transferred from the Stuarts to the Guelphs, the sole condition with the latter was, *that they should suffer no relaxation in the then-existing laws relating to the Roman Catholics* ? To hear these addresses, and, indeed, to hear the language of all those that opposed the late ministry, or that intend to support the present ministry, who would not suppose, that the revolution in the reign of James II. was produced by a dispute about religion solely ; and, that the crown was transferred to the present family merely for the sake of preventing the return of papal power or influence ? Yet, Sir, nothing can be further from the truth. Popish bigotry was only a part, and a very small part, of the objections which the people of England had to that king, who was a wilful, obstinate tyrant, without the cunning, which some tyrants, of more inveterate baseness, have, to disguise their rapacity and their cruelty. That he was a real bigot, and no *hypocrite*, there can be little doubt ; and, the nation would have done well in getting rid of him, if he had had no other fault ; for he was beginning to crowd his court and the country with greedy foreigners, under the name of priests, and, under

whatever name they might come, they were, and in all cases must be, a grievous curse to any nation. But, that his crimes were not confined to tyranny in religious matters, will manifestly appear from the following list of them as recorded in that famous act of parliament, which was passed in the first year of the reign of William and Mary, and which is commonly called the *Bill of Rights*.

"Whereas the late King James the Second, by the Assistance of divers evil Counsellors, Judges, and Ministers employed by him, did endeavour to subvert and extirpate the Protestant Religion, and the *Laws and Liberties* of this Kingdom :

"I. By assuming and exercising a Power of *dispensing with* and *suspending of Laws*, and the Execution of Laws, without Consent of Parliament.

"II. By committing and prosecuting divers worthy Prelates, for humbly petitioning to be excused from concurring to the said assumed Power.

"III. By issuing and causing to be executed a Commission under the Great Seal for erecting a Court, called, the Court of Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes.

"IV. By *Levying Money* for and to the Use of the Crown, by Pretence of Prerogative for other Time and in other Manner, than the same was granted by Parliament.

"V. By raising and keeping a Standing Army within this Kingdom in Time of Peace, without consent of Parliament, and quartering Soldiers contrary to Law.

"VI. By causing several good Subjects, being Protestants, to be disarmed, at the same time when Papists were both armed and employed contrary to Law.

"VII. BY VIOLATING THE FREEDOM OF ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO SERVE IN PARLIAMENT.

"VIII. By Prosecutions in the Court of King's Bench, for Matters and Causes cognizable only in Parliament; and by divers other arbitrary and illegal Courses.

"IX. And whereas of late years, *partial, corrupt*, and unqualified persons, have been returned and served on *Juries and Trials*, and particularly divers *Jurors in Trials for High Treason*, which were not Freeholders.

"X. And excessive Bail hath been required of Persons committed in criminal cases, to elude the Benefit of the *Laws made for the Liberty of the Subjects*.

"XI. And excessive fines have been imposed; and illegal and cruel punishments have been inflicted.

"XII. And several *Grants and Promises made of Fines and Forfeitures*, before any Conviction or Judgment against the Persons, upon whom the same were to be levied.

"All which are utterly and directly contrary to the known Laws and Statutes and Freedom of this Realm."

Such, Sir, were the crimes of James II. Whether, in any other reign, laws have been dispensed with, or suspended; whether, in any other reign, money have been levied, or expended (which is exactly the same thing) for other purposes than those for which it was granted; whether the freedom of elections of members to serve in parliament has, no matter how, been violated; whether there have been any packed juries, especially for the trial of those who were charged with crimes connected with politics; whether the laws for the protection of personal liberty have been eluded, and men kept in prison for years without any trial, from first to last; whether fines and forfeitures have been held out as inducements to every man to betray and to swear against his neighbour; whether these things have taken place in any other reign, I must leave you, who are, of course, better acquainted with such matters than I am, to say; but, I think, it must be allowed, that, when we see that they existed in the reign of James II., we need seek for no other cause of his being driven from his throne. That he was a bigot, and that the church, so soon after the days of Popery,

were justly alarmed, is true; but, that his other crimes were of a much greater magnitude, we need only read the list of them to be satisfied. And, as to the *declaration of rights*, which follows the above list of crimes, not a single word does it contain upon the subject of religion.

" I. That the pretended Power of suspending of Laws, or the Execution of Laws, by regal Authority, without consent of Parliament, is illegal.

" II. That the pretended Power of dispensing with Laws, or the Execution of Laws, by regal Authority, as it hath been assumed and exercised of late, is illegal.

" III. That the Commission for erecting the late Court of Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes, and all other Commissions and Courts of like Nature, are illegal and pernicious.

" IV. That levying Money for or to the Use of the Crown, by Pretence of Prerogative, without Grant of Parliament, for longer Time, or in other Manner than the same is or shall be granted, is illegal.

" V. That it is the Right of the Subjects to petition the King, and all Com- mitments and Prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal.

" VI. That the raising or keeping a Standing Army within the Kingdom in time of Peace, unless it be with consent of Parliament, is against Law.

" VII. That the Subjects which are Protestants, may have Arms for their Defence suitable to their Conditions, and as allowed by Law.

" VIII. That Elections of Members of Parliament ought to be free.

" IX. That the Freedom of Speech, and Debates or Proceedings in Parliament, ought not to be impeached or questioned in any Court or Place out of Parliament.

" X. That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive Fines imposed; nor cruel and unusual Punishments inflicted.

" XI. That Jurors ought to be duly empannelled and returned, and Jurors which pass sentence upon Men in Trials for High Treason ought to be Freeholders.

" XII. That all Grants and Promises of Fines and Forfeitures of particular Persons before Conviction are illegal and void.

" XIII. And that for Redress of all Grievances, and for amending, strength- ening, and preserving of the Laws, Parliaments ought to be held frequently."

These, Sir, were the principles, which produced the revolution of 1668; and, though the maintenance of the Protestant established church makes a part of them, it is, as I said before, a very inconsiderable part.

The people of England saw, that, unless they overset the power of James II. they must become slaves, and, therefore, they drove him, and most justly, from the throne. Whether they acted wisely as to the appointing of his successor, is a question which I pretend not to discuss.

Out of these principles grew the *Act of Settlement*, as it is usually called, which was passed in the second year of the reign of William and Mary, and which was occasioned by the prospect of a total want of heirs to the crown from either Queen Mary or the Princess Anne, afterwards Queen Anne. By this act, which is entitled an act for *limiting* the crown, it was placed upon the heads of his Majesty's family; and, let us see, therefore, what were the principles by which it was so placed, and what were the conditions, and "obligations," to use the word of the Speech, under which it was to be held. Let us see if there was any obligation, either expressed or implied, that no relaxation should, thereafter, take place, under any circumstances whatever, in the laws and regulations relative to the Roman Catholics; but, first, let us fix well in our memory, that the act we are about to quote was, "an act for the further *limitation* of the crown, and *better securing the rights and liberties of the subject*," saying, in its title at least, not a single word about either the Protestant or the Popish religion. This act, after providing, that the King, or Queen, in

future, should take the coronation oath, as prescribed by a former act of parliament, of which oath I shall speak by-and-by, it proceeds to make the following further provisions for "securing the religion, laws, and liberties of the kingdom."

"That whosoever shall hereafter come to the Possession of this Crown, shall join in Communion with the Church of England, as by Law established.

"That in case the Crown and Imperial Dignity of this Realm shall hereafter come to any Person, not being a Native of this Kingdom of England, *this Nation be not obliged to engage in any War for the defence of any dominions or territories which do not belong to the Crown of England, without the consent of Parliament.*

"That after the said Limitation shall take effect as aforesaid, *no Person born out of the Kingdoms of England, Scotland, or Ireland, or the dominions thereunto belonging (although he be naturalized or made a denizen, except such as are born of English Parents), shall be capable to be of the Privy Council, or a Member of either House of Parliament, or to enjoy ANY OFFICE OR PLACE OF TRUST, EITHER CIVIL OR MILITARY, or to have any Grant of Lands, Tenements or Hereditaments from the Crown, to himself or to any other or others in Trust for him.*

"THAT NO PERSON WHO HAS AN OFFICE OR PLACE OF PROFIT UNDER THE KING, OR RECEIVES A PENSION FROM THE CROWN, SHALL BE CAPABLE OF SERVING AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

"And whereas the Laws of England are *the Birthright of the People* thereof, all the Kings and Queens, who shall ascend the Throne of this Realm, ought to administer the Government of the same according to the said Laws, and all their Officers and Ministers ought to serve them respectively according to the same."

These, Sir, were the principles which placed the crown upon the heads of his Majesty's family; and here, and nowhere else, are we to look for the "obligations," under which, as it is said in the Speech, the crown is held. It is true, that one of these obligations is, that *the King* shall join in communion with the church of England; but no obligation is there expressed; no obligation is there implied, that the King shall refuse his assent to any law for bettering the condition of his Roman Catholic subjects. — You will see, Sir, that I have distinguished certain parts of this quotation by italic characters; and I ask you, *whether this nation has not been obliged to engage in wars for the defence of dominions which do not belong to the crown of England, without the previous consent (for any other consent is absurd) of even modern parliaments? I ask you, whether foreigners have not been suffered to fill offices of trust, and of emolument, civil and military? I ask you, whether no person who has an office or place of profit under the King, or receives a pension from the crown, is capable of serving as a member of the House of Commons?* I shall be told, that this latter part of the provisions above quoted has been *repealed* by a subsequent act of parliament; but this only shows, that, unless the repeal was a most daring violation of the rights of the people, the repeal of no law relative to the Roman Catholics can be held as any very daring violation. If this, the far most important, in my opinion, of all the "obligations," under which the crown was held, could be done away by an act of parliament, why could not any other of the obligations be done away by the same authority? There is, neither in the Act of Settlement, nor in any act of parliament now in existence, or that ever was in existence, no prohibition, no restriction whatever, with respect to a relaxation of the laws relative to Roman Catholics. Upon what ground, then, is it pretended, Sir, that

the enabling of the King legally to promote Roman Catholics to certain ranks in the army and navy, would have been contrary to the "obligations," under which his crown is held?

Thus, Sir, by doing little more than merely quoting from the great constitutional laws of the kingdom, I have, I think, clearly shown that the principles, "which placed the crown upon the heads of his Majesty's illustrious family," were not, as is assumed by the clerical and other addressers, solely those "of maintaining the predominance of the Church of England, and the preventing of every thing tending to re-exalt the Roman Catholic Church." In my next, I shall endeavour to show, that Lord Howick's bill would have had no such tendency as that which has been attributed to it, and which I have expressed in the succeeding proposition. This I should do now; but, the language and conduct of the Universities, and of some other bodies of the clergy in particular, together with what has been called, and, I must say, not improperly, "the *miscreant* cry of NO POPERY," demand a more full exposure than, at present, I have room for.

I am, Sir,  
Yours, &c. &c.  
WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 14th May, 1807.

## TO THE RT. HON. SPENCER PERCEVAL.

### LETTER II.

"A CERTAIN GREAT ASSEMBLY.—Fourteen Hundred Guineas per annum will be given for a Seat in the above Assembly.—Letters addressed to C. B., "Turk's Head Coffee-house, opposite Catherine-street, Strand, will be immediately attended to."—MORNING CHRONICLE, May 21, 1807.

SIR,—Before I proceed to an examination of the proposition, relating to the danger in which the Church of England would have been placed by the Catholic Bill, brought into the House of Commons by the late ministers, whom we may, I think, call the *Pledging* Ministry, I must beseech you to bear with me yet a little, while I make a few further remarks applicable to the question mooted in my former letter, namely, how far the late dissolution of parliament, or any dissolution of parliament, can, in the present state of the representation, be called "a recurrence to the *sense of the people*," and, of course, what opinion we ought to entertain of the *sincerity* of those persons, who advised the use of this phrase, in the speech, delivered to both Houses by order of the King, on the day previous to the late dissolution.

I before reminded you of the advertisements, which we daily see in the public prints, offering to sell, or to purchase, seats in the House of Commons. As a motto to this letter, I have taken one of those advertisements; and, Sir, I again remind you, that, for the publishing of such, no man is ever punished, or in anywise called to account, though we are continually told of the great blessing which the people possess in the being able to send representatives to parliament, and, though we



know, that there are several laws, made for the express *professed* purpose of preventing seats in parliament from being obtained by any other means than that of a free election, and also for the punishing of every person concerned in the procuring of such seats by the means of money. — Shall I be told, that the *House of Commons* is not named in these advertisements, and that there are many *other great assemblies* besides that House? Not by you, Sir. You, who know well the extent of the law of libel; you, who know, that *inuendoes* are quite upon a level, in such cases, with plain appellations and assertions; you, who know, that the *meaning* is to be left to the jury, enlightened by the directions of the judge, and that, if the meaning be libellous, the words are of no importance; by you, I am sure, that this miserable subterfuge will not be set up as a reason for forbearing to punish the publishers of such advertisements as the one above quoted. What, then, give me leave to ask, is *the real cause*, that such publishers are not punished, and are never reprov- ed, but proceed with these their publications as coolly, and in as much safety, as if they were publishing advertisements relating to the sale of lands or merchandise? In other matters, apparently of trifling import- ance, we find the House of Commons extremely jealous of their authority and *dignity*. What, Sir, can be the reason, then, that, upon this point, they are so astonishingly lenient and careless? — “*Fourteen hundred guineas a year for a seat in a certain great assembly!*” Precisely what motive the tenderer might have, it would, perhaps, be difficult to dis- cover; but, that his motive must be powerful, that a compensation was in his view, and that he expected that compensation out of the public purse, are positions, which, I am persuaded, no one will attempt to deny. Yet, Sir, by Blackstone and Paley, and still more roundly by that Ger- man sycophant, De Lolme, we are assured, that the House of Commons are the true representatives of the people, and the guardians of the pub- lic purse! — It is useless to rail against me, and others who think and speak as I do. Statements and reasoning, such as I have here made use of, are proof against all railing. They set all nick-names and all abuse at defiance. They must be *answered*, or they must produce conviction.

But, if the advertisement, which I have quoted above, and others re- sembling it, leave any thing wanting in the way of appellation, the same cannot be said of almost any one of the numerous party publications, which have appeared of late, relative to the return of members to parlia- ment. The hiring prints, on both sides, seem to have thought it un- necessary any longer to attempt disguise upon the subject. Each has accused the opposite party of rendering that constitution, which both ex- tol to the skies, a dead letter, or, which is much worse, a mere show, whereby to cheat the people. From the numerous articles of this de- scription, which have been published in the daily papers, within the last month, the following one, entitled “*A HOG OR A HORSE,*” in the Cou- rier newspaper of the 29th of May, seems to me to be worthy of selec- tion; and, I think, that, a few years hence, it is likely to be regarded as a great curiosity.—

“On the 13th of April, the Morning Chronicle showed the small number of the constituents who send the chief members of the present ministry to parlia- ment, and desired they might be contrasted with the extensive numbers of the constituents of the late ministry. Transitory triumph! Lord Howick did re- present a populous county, it is true; but now, alas! he is obliged to sneak into the House of Commons as a representative for one of the most contempti-

"ble of boroughs. The right of voting in Appleby, is in the burgage-holds, one-half of which belongs to Lord Thanet, the other to Lord Lonsdale. *These two noblemen make whom they please burgesses for the day of election, and deprive them of the privilege next day.* The two Lords, by compromise, send each one member, and Lord Howick is of course to be Lord Thanet's man. Hogsties being burgage freeholds in Appleby, have been purchased by the Thanet family at prices exceeding all belief, and the electors of this place *sit down quietly to be represented by a Hog or a Horse, as the noble proprietors think most proper.* What! Lord Howick the substitute of a hog or a horse! Mr. Windham, lately the proud representative of the populous county of Norfolk, finds it necessary to sneak in for a rotten borough, as the substitute also of a hog or a horse. Higham Ferrers is under the sole influence, and at the entire disposal, of Earl Fitzwilliam, *who might of course send a hog or a horse to parliament for it, as well as Earl Thanet might for Appleby.* Lord Henry Petty also represented a populous place, and had a very honourable seat as the successor of Mr. Pitt, at Cambridge. He too is forced to become the substitute of a hog or a horse, as one of the members for Launceston, where the electors are but twenty, and *all at the nod of the Duke of Northumberland, who could send to parliament a hog or a horse for this borough,* as well as the Earl of Thanet could for Appleby. These were the only three cabinet ministers of the late ministry who sat for populous places in the House of Commons. They are all turned out; and obliged to sneak in for rotten boroughs, *which the owners could compel to elect hogs and horses as representatives.* 'All the talents' reduced to the situation of hogs and horses! How degrading!—There is but one of the members of the late cabinet who resumes his seat in parliament, and that is Thomas Grenville, who represents Buckingham, a borough, *in the close grasp of his brother the Marquis,* and for which the electors are no more than thirteen. Of course it will not be disputed that the Marquis of Buckingham *might send into the House of Commons a hog or a horse for this borough,* as well as Lord Thanet "might for Appleby."

Such, Sir, is the language openly made use of; such are the assertions daily published; such is the description of the House of Commons, not only *tolerated*, but given with exultation by those, who, in other columns of the very same newspapers, prove themselves to be the devoted tools of one or the other of the two parties, who are contending for the powers and emoluments of the state. Much has, at different times, been said about the representation in parliament by Sir Francis Burdett and others, but, I defy even the indefatigable John Bowles to produce me, even from the records of the Corresponding Society, any thing so degrading to the House of Commons as what I have here quoted from the writings of a man, who is devoted to the ministry of the present day, and who, while he is thus writing in one column, represents, in another, Sir Francis Burdett as aiming at the total destruction of the constitution, because he, in language less degrading to the House of Commons, expresses his abhorrence of the means by which the members of that House are returned. Why, Sir, should his words leave such a sting, while those of the Courier produce no sensation at all, especially seeing, that the former is held in "*contempt*?" Is it because Sir Francis is not "*in the regiment*?" Is it because the Courier is known to be hostile to the man merely, and that Sir Francis is as well known to be hostile to the *thing*? But, Sir, is this picture of the Courier *true*, or is it *false*? If false, why is not the seditious libeller punished? If true, why is Sir Francis Burdett abused? I know, Sir, that you are one of those, who have been amongst the loudest in condemning his language and his views. You were amongst those, who subscribed against him, in his election for Middlesex; and, we were informed in the public prints, that you gave, as a lawyer, you advice for the raising of that subscription. Now, then, Sir, I beseech you to lay aside all reviling terms, as of no use,

and to answer me, in words which you would wish the world to hear and to remember; if the picture of the *Courier* be true, why is Sir Francis Burdett abused? To this question I should like much to obtain an answer; and, however the people may have been worn down, and even corrupted, you may be assured, Sir, that, until a satisfactory answer is given to it, the revilings of the hired press will be of little avail. This press, which speaks the thoughts of both the factions, is undivided in its abuse of him. The factions hate, good Lord! how mortally do they hate each other; but, though they agree upon no one other point; though, as to all other matters, whether great or small, they are in direct and unvarying opposition; though, as to every thing else, the approbation of one faction is synonymous with the disapprobation of the other; on this one subject they perfectly agree in sentiment, in language, and in motive. There are, indeed, some few other men, whom they both hated; but, for him their most pure and cordial rancour is preserved. If from his pen, or his lips, such a picture as that drawn by the *Courier* had proceeded, what an outcry, what a yell, what an infernal howl would the all-devouring wolves have raised! "Aye, but he is not actuated by fair party motives. He is not running the fair race. He is not for any division or compromise. He is not at war with the men merely, but with the accursed thing. He is in earnest when he complains of abuses, and calls for reform." This is his sin. It is this for which the factions hate him, and for which the people love him. There need no pledges from him. He has never given any pledges. There is a confident reliance upon him, which nothing can shake. He is distinguished above all other men in the kingdom in this respect. He is reviled by villains, blamed by some honest men; some hate him, from the same cause that thieves hate a judge, some fear him from mistake or from weakness; but, amongst all those who speak respecting him, not one, the notorious hirelings excepted, is to be found who even pretends to suspect the purity of his motives. "It is reported," says the hireling of the *Morning Post*, in his paper of the 30th instant; "it is reported, and happy shall we be to And the report confirmed, that the most respectable part of Sir Francis Burdett's friends, not content with a private condemnation of his late infamous Address, now that he has so far removed the mask, mean to proceed to some public measure, either to induce him to disavow the sentiments to which he has been led to subscribe his name, or to require that he will vacate his seat, and give them an opportunity of electing another member, who, whatever his political attachments may be, is actuated by constitutional principles, and resolved to maintain that system to which we have been so long indebted for the blessings of freedom and security. Should such an expedient be resorted to, those who now find themselves so grossly deceived in the opinion which their unsuspecting nature led them to entertain of the principles of the pupil and creature of Horne Tooke, the friend of Arthur O'Connor, and the associate of Colonel Despard, may depend upon justice being done to their motives by the *Morning Post*. We wage war only against the enemies of the constitution, and those who, having discovered the cheat, which under the specious mask of patriotism, has been practised upon them, honestly acknowledge their error and renounce the mischievous impostor, will not only receive our warm approbation, but be entitled to our full and firmest support."—I do not say, that this poor hireling might not have hoped to

be able to inveigle some weak man into the infamy of being applauded by him; but, I assert, with full knowledge of the fact, that all those, to whom he here alludes as “the friends of Sir Francis Burdett,” laugh to scorn his miserable device, which in point of contemptibleness, is surpassed by nothing but the clamour of the well-dressed rabble, who read his columns, and who, for the far greater part, share with him, either directly or indirectly, in the public plunder. No, Sir, we, the people of England, feel that Sir Francis Burdett is our best friend. We participate in his principles, we rely on his talents and integrity, we approve of his declarations, we despise the circulators of the a-hundred-times refuted calumnies against him, and we look forward with renovated hope, to the day, when those calumnies will be drowned in the unanimous applause of a no longer besotted people. Indeed, to suppose that this will not be the case, would be to libel human nature; for is it not to set the people of England down for brutes, to suppose that they can approve of a system such as that described by the Courier? And, again I ask; if that description be not true; if seats in the House of Commons be not bought and sold, why are not these writers and publishers punished, by that law, which, as to matters of libel, is so watchful, so jealous, and so severe?

I now come to the proposed subject of my letter. I said, that I thought myself able to prove, “that Lord Howick’s bill, if passed into a law, would “not have tended to re-exalt the Roman Catholic Church, and therefore “by sap the predominance of the Church of England;” and this I shall now endeavour to do. But, first of all, let me observe, that there is one question, very material in this discussion, which seems to have been entirely overlooked, namely, *whether the sapping of the predominance of the Church of England would be a national evil.* I, for my own part, should regret to see it sapped, and overthrown, because I am persuaded, that it might easily be restored to its former purity and utility; but, when we see in what manner its benefices are but too generally bestowed; when we look at the endless list of non-resident incumbents; when we see the fruits enjoyed by those of its ministers who perform none, or very little of the labour; when we compare the solemn promises of the incumbents with their subsequent practice; when we see more than half of the people, who frequent any place of worship at all, turning from the church to the meeting-house: when we see all this, we must not be very much surprised, if there should be found many persons, who entertain doubts, at least, upon the question above stated; and, therefore, previous to the clamour against Lord Howick’s bill, as tending to sap the predominance of the church, those doubts should have been removed.—Viewing the church establishment as connected with the political state of the country, it should, in like manner, have been previously shown, that this establishment has been, and is, conducive to the greatness of the nation, the permanence of the throne, and the freedom and happiness of the people. It should have been shown, that the several persons embodied under the church establishment, are more jealous of the national character, than a Roman Catholic Clergy would have been; we should have been referred to a time when the Roman Catholic clergy taught political doctrine more slavish than that which has been, and is, taught by the clergy of the present day; we should have been convinced, that, if the Romish church had been re-exalted, its priests would, in general, have exceeded our priests in political sycophancy and election jobbing; we should have been assured, that an instance, *of which I myself was a witness, of a*

Doctor of Divinity offering for sale *two seats in parliament*, if not previously disposed of, *as the price of some dignity in the church*, is only a specimen of what we should have seen in gross under the re-exaltation of the Romish church; we should have been reminded of a time, when, under a Romish hierarchy, a state of parliamentary representation would have been justly described in something worse than the "Hog or Horse" article of the Courier; we should have been brought back to Romish times, and shown, that then men like Mr. Sheridan were members of parliament; something should have been said, some effort should have been made to prove to us, either from experience or from reason, that, under a Romish hierarchy, Englishmen would have experienced something more than the Income-tax, than the seven-years suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, than the introduction of foreign troops, something more than what, for these twenty-three years past, they have experienced; it should, if possible, have been shown, that, at some time or other, when England was under a Roman Catholic church, England was in greater peril from without, or in greater misery within, than she is at this moment. All this, Sir, or some of it at least, should have been shown, previous to the raising of an outcry against Lord Howick's bill, as a source of danger to the church; because, to put reasonable men on your side, it was necessary to convince them, that the thing, said to be in danger, was a thing the protecting and preserving of which was of some importance to the good of the nation.

Taking it for granted, however, that the church establishment, even as it now stands, with all its pluralities and absentees, is a thing worth contending for, I cannot see how that establishment could possibly have been affected by Lord Howick's bill, if that bill had passed into a law. It is now matter of general notoriety, and it is matter of fact not to be denied, 1st, that in 1793, the power of granting commissions to Catholics, in the Irish army, was, by law, given to the King, and that this law was passed with the approbation of Mr. Pitt, and of almost the whole of those who are now in the ministry with you; 2nd, that, in 1801, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas went out of office, being followed by Mr. Canning, Mr. Rose, and others now in the ministry with you, because the King would not consent to the bringing in of a bill, intended to give the Roman Catholics even seats in parliament, upon the bench, and in the privy council; 3rd, that in 1804, a law, brought in by Mr. Pitt, was passed, authorizing the King to raise regiments of Roman Catholic *foreigners*, to grant commissions to *foreign* Roman Catholic officers, to dispense with all oaths from them, except a simple oath of fidelity, and to quarter and station these regiments in the heart of our country; 4th, that *all this the King had done without any act of parliament to sanction it*, and that the act of 1804, was, in part, an act to indemnify those who had advised him so to do; 5th, that, at the time when this bill passed, every person now in the ministry was in power, and that you, as Attorney-General, must have examined, if not actually have drawn up, that bill. Greatly puzzled, therefore, must the world be to discover any thing in the bill of Lord Howick more dangerous to the church than what was contained in the bill actually passed with your and your present colleagues' approbation. Am I told, that, to admit Roman Catholic *foreigners* was not dangerous, because they could have no connection, or community of interests, with the Roman Catholics, whether priests or laity, in this country? My answer is, that this dis-

inction is done away by the act of 1793, which authorized the King to grant commissions to Roman Catholics serving in the *Irish* army; so that, if the acts of you and your colleagues were not hostile to the established church, it is impossible that the bill of Lord Howick could have been so.

But, waiving all argument drawn from the example of Pitt and of yourself, what did Lord Howick's bill propose to do? To render it *lawful* for the King to grant, *if he pleased*, commissions to English and Irish Catholics, through the whole of the several ranks of the army and the navy, and to insure, by law, the free exercise of his worship, to every Roman Catholic soldier or sailor. It is, Sir, beyond my powers of penetration to discover any danger, even the most remote, that could, from such a law, have arisen to the church of England; and, especially when I take into view the well-known facts, that the King, without any such law, has long granted commissions to his Roman Catholic subjects, and that the Roman Catholic soldiers and sailors are, and long have been, freed from all restraint as to the exercise of their worship. Besides, suppose the bounds to have been extended by this law, *it rested wholly with the King* to appoint or not appoint, to promote or not promote, to cashier or not cashier, any, and every, Roman Catholic, either in the army or the navy; so that, if there was any danger at all in the extension, it must have consisted solely in the possibility of the King's not being guided by wisdom in the choice and promotion of his officers. But, even in this case, where shall we look for the source of danger to the *church*? In what way could this bill, a bill intended merely to extend the operation of the King's pleasure, as to promotions in the army and navy, or rather, to render the operation of that pleasure legal; in what way could such a law endanger the safety of the church establishment? It gave nothing to the Roman Catholic priests or bishops, either in authority, in name, or in money. It took nothing, either of power or emolument, from the church of England. It left both churches just as they were before; and, if the church of England has experienced any danger from it, or does experience any danger from it, it is that danger which a false and hypocritical clamour seldom fails, first or last, to bring down upon the heads of its inventors and promoters.

"What, then," some one will say, "induced so many of the clergy of the church of England to send *addresses* against Lord Howick's bill?" That, Sir, which induces the crowds, that beset Whitehall, to address letters to the minister of the day: a desire to obtain money for doing nothing. If the motive had been other than this; if any thing but the goal of preferment had been in view, the clergy would not have been so tardy in their opposition to the bill. If they had been animated by an anxiety for the preservation of the church, and had regarded the bill as dangerous to it, how came they not to petition the parliament the moment the bill was brought in? They never thought of any such thing. They let the bill go quietly on; nor was it until the bill had been *withdrawn*, that they began to issue their godly fulminations against it. Nay, Sir, even this was not enough to overcome their propensity to be cautious; for they saw the ministry safely turned out, and even after that they *waited to see you with a majority on your side*, before they ventured to address their gracious and pious Sovereign for his care in preventing the overthrow of the church. It would be curious enough to see the list of those, who took the lead in

these addresses ; but, there needs no such list to make their motives evident to the world.

Hypocrisy, detestable in any man, is peculiarly so when met with under the garb of a minister of religion ; and, therefore, the cry of " No POPERY," set up, or propagated, by too many of the clergy, must, first or last, receive its just reward, in the natural consequences of general detestation. This is not the first set of priests, who have kindled a flame in the multitude ; and, as the usual consequence has, heretofore, been the destruction of the kindlers, let them beware. It is, upon this occasion especially, well worthy of remark, that there has been no savage, no mischief-doing mobs, in this country, for many years, except those who have been led by a cry of " church" or " king," or both together. Amongst all the hundreds of thousands of persons, who have, at different times, and at some times under circumstances extremely irritating, assembled round Sir Francis Burdett, not one man, or woman, has ever committed an act of violence. Upon several occasions what mischief has been anticipated ! What preparations have been made for resistance ! And what disappointment has been felt at perceiving that all these preparations were unnecessary ! " Church and King " mobs have assaulted and killed many people ; have rescued prisoners from jail ; have burnt and otherwise destroyed houses and goods ; and many acts of violence, including one breaking open of a jail, have been committed by " loyal volunteers." But, amongst all the assemblages of the people, the cause of which has been their attachment, real or expressed, to the cause of freedom, not a single act of violence, that I remember, has ever been committed. Is it, Sir, that the latter are less brutish than the former ; or is it, that the former think themselves sure of impunity ? Nevertheless, John Bowles and his clamorous comrades cease not to cry Jacobin and Leveller against every man who is too wise and too just to join them in the cry of " No Popery !" Every man, who wishes to see the burdens of the people lightened ; every man who wishes to see the public money fairly and fully accounted for ; every man who wishes to enjoy, whether in body or estate, the same degree of freedom that his father enjoyed ; every man who wishes the church to be supported by the piety and diligence of its pastors, and who, therefore, expresses his dissatisfaction at seeing one half of the churches left to the care of those who receive not the revenues arising from them ; every such man is sure to be marked out, by the " loyal " crew, as a Jacobin and Leveller ; as an enemy to the Church and the King.

It is, however, pleasing to perceive, that this outcry has, on the present occasion, produced little effect, and, upon the whole, no effect at all in favour of those, by whom it was set up. Here and there a set of brutish, or hired, ruffians have made the streets resound with the hypocritical cry ; but, in most other places, as in Westminster, it has been regarded as the cry of the crocodile ; and, though the selfish *Whigs* have been humbled in the dust, their not-less-selfish adversaries have made little progress, except in the hatred of the nation. Praised without ceasing be the King for dissolving the parliament ; for this his " recurrence to the sense of the people ;" than which nothing could possibly be more advantageous to the country, unless it were, indeed, another dissolution, another " recurrence to the sense of the people," in two or three months' time. What light, through the yawning cracks made by this sudden and delightful shake, has broken in upon those who were before in compa-

rative darkness ! The idiot now begins to perceive, and those who were half fools, as to questions of politics, are now men of understanding. All the slang of party, all the trickery of debate, all that amused, lulled, deluded, or defrauded, is now laid bare, is now exposed to the criticism of returning good sense, and excites, by turns, hatred and contempt.

That these feelings, thus directed, may live and gather strength in the minds of Englishmen, and that the consequence may be the restoration of the honour and happiness of England, is the constant prayer of,

Sir,

Yours, &c. &c.

Botley, 4th June, 1807.

WM. COBBETT.

## TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER.

### LETTER XIX.

“ This more than half repays whole years of pain.”  
“ *Time, health, and fortune are not spent in vain.*”—POPE.

NOTE BY THE EDITORS.—We have omitted *Letters XVI. XVII. and XVIII.* of this series, because they contain very little matter likely to be of any permanent interest.

GENTLEMEN,—The intelligence, brought me by this day’s post, induces me to address this one more letter to you, with the hope that it may reach you before the close of the poll ; for, if I should be the means of setting only a single man of you right, upon any one point, with respect to which that man may be in error, I am satisfied that I shall thereby render much more service to the country than will ever be rendered by the expenditure of all those millions of our earning, which, apparently, are now to be sent to the continent of Europe.

I do not suppose, that many of you are likely to be at all misled by the speeches of Mr. Sheridan ; but, there are some parts of them, which have not yet been sufficiently commented upon by me ; and, though I have already spoken (in a former letter) of his new language respecting Sir Francis Burdett, I cannot refrain from saying a few words more upon that subject.—In his speech of the 19th instant, he, as it were incidentally, but not without a premeditated design, introduced the name of *Mr. Bosville*, well known to have always been one of those most esteemed by Sir Francis Burdett ; and, this gentleman he called “ *one of the honestest and best patriots in the country,*” a character which Mr. Bosville certainly merits, and which he securely possessed without this extorted tribute on the part of Mr. Sheridan. But, Gentlemen, this master-stroke of flattery ; this compliment to Sir Francis Burdett, conveyed in praises of his most valued friends, will not, I trust, for one moment, deceive you, for the sole purpose of securing whose votes at another, if not at this election, all these new professions of respect are manifestly made. Nevertheless, these professions, however insincere, are valuable, inasmuch as they are indications of what Mr. Sheridan, at least, considers as the growing sentiment of the public, with regard to the principles and the



character of Sir Francis Burdett. He tells us, too, that *Mr. Brand*, one of the members for Hertfordshire, is upon the list of your subscription. *Mr. Brand's* name has no peculiar value in it; but, while, as an individual, he has his share of merit, his connection with the Whig ministry, coupled with this act, stands as a tolerably good proof of the insincerity of the Whigs, who, to a man, at the last elections for Middlesex as well as Westminster, represented Sir Francis Burdett as being every thing short of a downright traitor, and as aiming, at the very least, to overturn the kingly government of England. Gentlemen, all offences against ourselves are to be forgiven, the moment we are convinced of the contrition of the offender; and though we are justified in being more slow to forgive offences committed against our country, those offences too ought to be freely forgiven, but not until the offender has produced a *security* that he will offend no more. But, in both cases, there are some offences, which can never be *forgotten*; and, of this class was the wicked and base handle, which the Whigs made of the phrase, "*the best of kings.*" Oh! it were indeed a reproach to you to forget the interpretation which *Mr. Byng* and others put upon this phrase! That interpretation, that outcry, still baser than the outcry of "*popery,*" was used by the time-serving Whigs for the purpose of ingratiating themselves with the adherents of Pitt, for which they have been most justly punished, and that, too, by the intrigues of that very faction. How careful was *Mr. Byng* to disclaim all connection, all community even of wishes, with Sir Francis Burdett! *He*, good loyal gentleman, said, that he was "firmly attached to the constitution, and that he *affectionately loved the best of kings,*" turning, while he uttered the words, his sapient eyes towards Sir Francis. "*The best of kings*" has now most justly rewarded *Mr. Byng* and his faction; and that very magistrate, John Bowles, whom they left in quiet possession of all his offices and emoluments, apparently for no other reason than that he, in conjunction with his bosom associate, Redhead, were the notorious calumniators of Sir Francis Burdett, has now been the principal instrument of bringing the long possessed seat of *Mr. Byng* into jeopardy! Well done, John! Halloo, John! Hunt them with thy vice-scenting nose; tear them, good John, with thy worshipful fangs, and scratch, at last, a hole for them in that collection of incomparable rubbish, thy Anti-Jacobin Review!

There are two other topics, Gentlemen, upon which I must say a few words by way of comment on *Mr. Sheridan's* speeches; *the propriety of carrying on an election by subscription,* and *the expressions of my Lord Cochrane with respect to Mr. Fox.* Upon these topics, *Mr. Sheridan* has, if his speeches have been truly reported, taken a most foul advantage of his lordship, who, as to subscriptions, complained of the manner in which *Mr. Sheridan* was supported at the last election, a complaint which his crafty adversary has endeavoured to represent as an implied censure upon your present subscription. But, Gentlemen, *you* certainly have not overlooked the wide distinction here to be drawn? *Mr. Sheridan's* election was supported by a *secret* subscription of PEERS OF PARLIAMENT, several of whom were, at the same time, servants of the King, receiving large salaries out of the public purse, and, of course, engaged in carrying on an election against the people with the people's money; to which must be added, that peers of parliament are, by that constitution, for the preservation of which we are called on "to spend our last shilling and shed the last drop of our blood," strictly prohibited from

*interfering*, either directly or indirectly, in the elections of members of the House of Commons; and, if, to pay money for the purpose of keeping out one man and of bringing in another; if this be not *interfering* in such elections, the prohibition can be considered as nothing more than one of those numerous nominal securities, by which the people have been so long deluded. Your subscription, on the contrary, is prohibited by no law or usage. You have been *openly* invited to subscribe. The list of subscribers shuns the inspection of no man. You are not servants of the crown; and, it is your *own money* that you give, which, if necessary to the preservation of your rights, it is full as much, at least, your duty to give, as it is your duty to pay any sum, in any shape whatever, for the purpose of keeping an enemy from your shores. Lord Cochrane, therefore, when he complained of the subscription by which the election of Mr. Sheridan was supported, conveyed, you must clearly perceive, not the smallest censure of that subscription, which has now been entered into by you.

As to Lord Cochrane's expressions with respect to Mr. Fox, they were, as nearly as I have been able to discover, these: "that Mr. Fox in himself, was, or would have been, an honour to his country; but, that you should take great care not to bestow your confidence on those, of whom there had been many, who were attached only to the baser part of Mr. Fox." Taking advantage of the cry, excited by these words, amongst some dozen or two of his own scene-shifters, or of those unthinking beings, who are led merely by the sound of names, Mr. Sheridan has made several efforts to excite a prejudice against Lord Cochrane, who gave you most wholesome advice, and who said, or insinuated, nothing, except in *praise* of Mr. Fox, which can with truth be denied. Observe, too, that the mention of Mr. Fox originated, not with his lordship, but with Mr. Sheridan, who had, with true theatrical address, introduced that name for the purpose of exciting in you compassion towards himself, whom he took care to represent as the faithful follower and bosom friend of the beloved deceased. Well; let us meet him upon this ground; and, then let us ask, *what Mr. Fox did for us*. Before he came into power, he solemnly declared, that he never would hold a place as a minister, until the parliament had been reformed; he came into place, and never did he utter the word reform afterwards, but, on the contrary, set his face against all those who endeavoured to bring about a correction of even notorious abuses; he was the man, who, as his very first ministerial act, brought in a bill for enabling one of his colleagues in office to hold a large sinecure place, which, by law, was incompatible with the active office he then had been promoted to; he, who had, only one year before, complained that the minister, Pitt, would, by degrees, take away all the income of the people, because he proposed to add a sixth to the Income-tax, defended, as soon as he was in office, a bill which raised that same tax to ten per centum; he, who had for so many years been complaining against the influence of the crown, was one of those who brought in the bill for adding to the Pensions of the Royal Family, at the same time that, by another act, the King's property in the funds, under whatever name invested, was exempted from the Income-tax, and that, too, at a time when Mr. Fox declared, that it was impossible to lay a new tax without affecting the prosperity of the nation in some way or other; he, who had, upon every occasion that offered, all his life long, reprobated the introduction of foreign troops, did, amongst his first acts as a minister, give

his sanction to a bill for adding to the ten thousand foreign troops then in this country; he, who had all his life long contended against unnecessary wars, and especially wars for the sake of Hanover, did, in his very first published dispatch, declare, that he should advise the King never to make peace for England, except upon the condition of Hanover being restored; he, who, upon numberless occasions, had asserted, that all the calamities and disgrace of this country were the work of the minister Pitt, gave a vote for making the people of that same country pay the debts of that same minister Pitt, and that, too, expressly *upon the score of his merits*; he was a sinecure placeman, doubly blessed, from his cradle to his grave, and he, upon more than one occasion, contended, in parliament, that it was *unconstitutional* to lessen the number of patent places, which he asserted to be *private property* as much as house and land.—These, Gentlemen, are a part of the things which Mr. Fox did for us; and, as I told you in my second or third letter, if this be the sort of representative that suits you, the honour of representing you would, in no case, be coveted by me. But, it is not so. You have opened your eyes. You have seen, that, for too long a time, *names*, and not *principles*, had been your guide; and you have now resolved, despising alike Whiggism and Toryism, to ask, who will act most justly by the country? The intention of Mr. Sheridan evidently is to wheedle you back into that state which exhibited you as the mere tools of the *government*, on one side, and of the *great families* on the other side, who, together, by the means of a *quiet compromise*, left you no more of the real freedom of election than is exercised by the electors of Old Sarum. From this degraded state you have manfully risen to the assertion and exercise of your rights; but, this honourable change you owe not to Mr. Fox, while to Mr. Sheridan you owe every means that he was able to use to prevent that change. The former contentedly suffered the minister of the day to give him his colleague; and, as to the latter, after having completely inveigled you into an election of Lord Percy, conducted as quietly as that of Gatton, or of Ryegate, he coalesced with Sir Samuel Hood, joined hand and heart with those who were your bitterest enemies, and who had been the bitterest enemies of Fox himself, in order to subdue you by force. Judge, therefore, Gentlemen, whether Mr. Sheridan be a fit person for the colleague of Sir Francis Burdett; or whether you ought to leave him to the support of the play-actors, scene-shifters, and police-runners, marshalled under that respectable matron, whom he brought as a witness against his electioneering friends, Messrs. Weatherhead and Drake.—Of Mr. Fox I never *seek* to say harm; but, if challenged to speak, the truth must be spoken; and, the truth is, as Lord Cochrane evidently believes, that, though Mr. Fox was a man of rare and wonderful talents, though he was kind and generous in his nature, and though he loved his country most sincerely; yet that he had not, as Major Cartwright told him, “the power to say *no* to bad men,” and that that failing led him so to act as to render very little benefit to his country, while he notoriously gave countenance to many men, who did it great and lasting injury.

That, henceforward, you may reject, with equal scorn, the appellation of *Foxite*, of *Pittite*, of *Whig*, or of *Tory*; that you may, in the exercise of your elective rights, be influenced by *principles* and not by *names*; and that your conduct, by becoming an example to electors in general, or a *timely indication to the elected*, may lead to a constitutional re-

form of the gross abuses that exist, and thereby produce the restoration of our liberties and ensure the safety of the throne, is the unfeigned wish of

Your faithful friend

And obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 22nd of May, 1807.

## PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

### DINNER TO LORD MILTON.

"An *Inquiring* Parliament this must be, or the people will not be satisfied with it."—Mr. CALCRAFT'S Speech, 22nd June, 1807.

THIS dinner, which took place at the Crown-and-Anchor on the 13th instant, is of importance, as connected with politics, because, though, ostensibly, intended merely for the purpose of celebrating Lord Milton's triumph in Yorkshire, over the no-popery candidate, Mr. Lascelles, it must be regarded, as it in reality was, a meeting for the purpose of declaring open war against the new ministry, and for embodying the means of carrying on that war.—In the opening speech of MR. FAWKES (late member for Yorkshire), who was chairman upon the occasion, and who stands so highly recommended to the country by his excellent address, in which he said, that, after what he had seen in the House of Commons, he had no longer any ambition to be there; in this speech there was very little worthy of particular notice, except that the speaker made an open declaration against speculators. Some time after, however, upon his health being drunk, he is reported, in the papers, to have said: "I beg  
" leave, in the first place, to return you my most sincere and heartfelt  
" thanks for the very kind and distinguished honour you have just done  
" me; and in the second place to assure you, that I shall ever consider  
" your approbation of my conduct as the most valuable of all my posses-  
" sions. My continuance in that situation to which your kind partiality  
" so recently elevated me, was not long; but during the short time I had  
" the honour of being your representative, I trust I proved myself, what  
" I had ever professed myself to be, a steady supporter of the *limited*  
" monarchy of my country, a friend to the cause of liberty at home and  
" abroad, and an advocate for a *temperate* reformation of those *numerous*  
" and *enormous* abuses, which no friend to his country can contemplate  
" *without apprehension and disgust.*"—Well, then, there are "*nu-*  
"*merous* and *enormous* abuses;" they excite "*apprehension* and *disgust,*"  
in every friend of the country; and Mr. Fawkes would fain see them *re-*  
*formed.* It were to be wished that he had been more particular; that he  
had *named* some few of the abuses; and that he had, above all things,  
been specific as to the time and manner of reform. For, Mr. Fawkes  
was in parliament four months, and he never moved for any reform at all;  
nor did he, that I know of, ever say there, one word about numerous and

enormous abuses. His *temperate* reformation, too! What does he mean by *temperate*? Does he mean, that he would not have the government torn up by the roots, and all law and property destroyed? This is a very good meaning, but what is the use of expressing it? Who is there that wishes to see such destructive work? I am afraid, that the qualification, *temperate*, means *slow*, and so very slow as for no one to be able to perceive it in any way whatever. As *temperate* as you please, Mr. Fawkes, but, let the thing be *done*. Let the reformation take place, especially as the abuses are so numerous and so enormous. This, Sir, was the way of the late ministry. They, after they got possession of office, talked of a temperate reformation; that is to say, in their evident sense of the words, a slow reformation; or, in other words, a reformation exactly the contrary of that, which, for twenty long years, they had been demanding. It is a quite wrong notion, I presume, that, to act with temperance, you must proceed at a snail's pace. In many cases it happens, that, not to act with promptitude is the same thing as not acting at all; and this is a case of that sort, for if the abuses are numerous and enormous, to reform some of them should be set about instantly, because it being in their nature to increase, unless you begin by times, and clear your way as you go, the increase will certainly surpass the diminution. In short, the word *temperate*, thus applied, was used by Pitt as often as by any body, and I have no doubt at all, that it will be used by his disciples, who now compose the no-popery ministry; and, if their opponents have nothing better than general expressions about temperate reformation to offer the people, they may rest assured, that the people will place no reliance upon them; and, that, however great their number of *seats*, and, of course, their number of votes, their opponents may safely set them at defiance. It is a reformation of abuses that is wanted; a real reformation; a reformation that we can *feel*. We want to be able to say, "Such or such an abuse has been reformed; such or such a robber has been made to disgorge, or has been punished; such or such sinecures or unmerited pensions have been abolished; such or such taxes have been repealed." We want to *know* that something has been done; and, until we do know this, Mr. Fawkes may be assured, that we shall pay but little attention to the speeches and motions of those who talk about a reformation of abuses, for the purpose, as we shall think, of ousting those who now profit by those abuses, in order to be able to profit by such abuses themselves. —Lord Milton's speech, which I am now about to insert, as I find it reported in the newspapers, was not more definite than Mr. Fawkes's.

"In rising," said his lordship, "upon this occasion, as the representative of the great and respectable county of York, something more will very naturally be expected from me than merely to return thanks for the honour you have done me in drinking my health. When I became a candidate for the high and distinguished station in which the good sense and public spirit of Yorkshire have placed me, I was not actuated by any private pique or personal consideration, as the advertisement which my opponent has thought proper to publish seems to insinuate. No, I stood forward to vindicate the late administration from the calumnies so industriously propagated against them, and to vindicate the constitution of my country, which has been violated by his Majesty's present ministers. Let those ministers who talk upon their boasted appeal to public opinion, reflect upon the answer they have received from the important county of York. There they have found a distinguished illustration of that which must be manifest to any thinking man in the empire—the county of York has decidedly expressed its opinion of the character of his Majesty's present ministers—that the clamour they would excite is ineffective—that the calumnies they

"would circulate are unfounded—that the principles they would maintain are unconstitutional—that the motives by which they are actuated, are bad. Of the nature of their motives, indeed, it is impossible to entertain a doubt; for any set of men, who could for their own private advantage and emolument, or in order to satisfy an improper ambition, resort to expedients calculated to provoke a recurrence of those disgraceful scenes which agitated the country in the year 1780, cannot be influenced by good motives. Against such men and their views, I thought it my duty to contend; and against them, gentlemen, we have fought and conquered. But my opponent, Mr. Lascelles, has thought proper to ascribe his failure to the animosity of the clothiers: and certainly it is rather odd in a man to publish to the world that he has failed in a great contest through the unpopularity of his own character. I really believe, gentlemen, that Mr. Lascelles is the first who ever publicly assigned such a ground for his defeat. The fact however is, gentlemen, that our victory rests on public grounds, and has been achieved by the public spirit and independence of Yorkshire. When I make use of the term independence, *I do not mean that hackneyed sense in which it is too often, with other phrases, used at elections for purposes of imposture.* No, I mean that independence of mind, of character, and of station *which belongs to those by whom I have had the honour to be supported.* By them the genuine force of independence has been manifested; they saw that the cause in which they were engaged was not that merely of their own county but of the empire at large, of justice, and the constitution; and it is to be hoped, that their success will teach ministers an impressive lesson as to the policy of propagating slander; as to the consequence of violating the constitution. I do not triumph, gentlemen, in the result of our contest, because it is grateful to any personal ambition, but because it affords a satisfactory evidence that the spirit of real independence and *the love of public liberty, as established at the revolution,* is not quite blotted from the hearts of Englishmen. This, gentlemen, is the reason that I am proud of this great event. I am rejoiced to find that such men as the present ministers must be disturbed to feel, that whenever an attempt is made by any government to violate the principles of the constitution, there are such men as my constituents, determined to oppose, and to conquer."

To conquer *what*, my lord? What, or whom have they conquered? Conquered the no-popery ministry? If that be your lordship's meaning, you must speak by anticipation, and may be deceived. It was a very hard run in Yorkshire. If, as your lordship seems to suppose, the votes given for you were all that were given for the *constitution*, the constitution is in a poor way.—But, what I dislike most, or, rather, what I like the least, in this speech, is, that it says *nothing*. I find nothing in it characteristic of an independent and determined mind. When I came to one part of his lordship's speech, I said to myself, "Oh, here we shall have something, at last: for he has said what he does *not* mean by the word *independence*, and he will now tell us what he does mean." Not at all. We are still just where we were. He does not mean independence in that sense in which it is used at elections for the purposes of imposture; *but*, that independence of "mind, of character, and of station, which belongs to those *by whom he has* been supported." As a compliment to his constituents; as a sugar phrase to attract political flies, this was very well; but, it was of no value with respect to the rest of the nation; for, to have given us a correct idea of the independence that he meant, it was necessary to have satisfied us with respect to the mind, character, and station of those who had voted for him; so that, upon this score, he leaves us just as wise as he found us. There is a good deal about "*the constitution*," and, if his lordship had called that "*a hackneyed phrase*," he would have been undeniably correct; but, how he can have *vindicated* the constitution by becoming a candidate for Yorkshire I am quite at a loss to discover, seeing that it was but by a mere

trifling majority that he was chosen, and seeing, that the capacity of bearing the *expense* was one of the principal causes of his success. The truth is, however, that this, again, is an expression of *no acknowledged meaning*. It conveys no clear idea. Five men might, in reading it, attach five different meanings to it.—His lordship says, that his being chosen for Yorkshire proves that “the love of liberty, as established at the revolution, is, not quite blotted from the hearts of Englishmen.” But, in order to ascertain, as nearly as may be, whether his lordship spoke with due reflection, let us first ask what that “*liberty*” consisted of, which was “established at the revolution.” And, here, we will not talk about *the constitution* as something which any man may interpret as it best suits his purposes; but of that constitution which is to be found written in the *laws* passed at and almost immediately after the stupid tyrant had been driven from the throne. These laws, the *BILL OF RIGHTS* and the *ACT OF SETTLEMENT*, which were, in fact, solemn contracts between the people and their sovereign and his successors, say, that the elections for members of parliament shall be free, and, of course, the buying and selling of seats in parliament are contrary to those laws, and hostile to liberty, as then established; those laws say, that no placeman or pensioner, under the crown, shall have a seat in the House of Commons; those laws say, that no person, not a native, *born*, of these kingdoms, shall hold any place of trust civil or military; those laws say, that, without the previous consent of parliament (the House of Commons, observe, having no placemen or pensioners in it), no foreign troops shall be introduced into this country. These, with other less important provisions, were enacted for the express purpose of “better securing the rights and liberties of the people.” Now, then, to prove that his lordship reasoned correctly in regarding his recent success as a proof that the love of liberty, as established at the revolution, was not “quite blotted from the hearts of Englishmen,” it must first be proved, that those who voted for him gave their votes upon a promise on his part, expressed or implied, that he would, to the utmost of his power, cause the provisions, of which I have been just speaking, to be revived and restored to activity; and, though I do not say, that no such proof can be produced, I am much afraid that it cannot; and, when his lordship was talking of liberty, “as established at the revolution,” I could have wished him to give us some description of that liberty, some characteristic mark of it, because, as he himself well observed, it is the practice of political impostors to make use of popular but always of indefinite terms. A cry about *the constitution* will no longer take; and, besides, the other party set up the same cry, and in still louder tones, if that be possible; so that, all that the people can, of a certain, know, upon this subject, from these accusations, is, that, either those who were in place the other day, or those who are in place now, are liars, or, that both parties have violated the constitution.—The conclusion of the proceedings at this Dinner were such as one would wish to attribute to the influence of the bottle. The committee, it seems, who had *organized* the dinner, had laid upon the chairman an injunction, that the health of no person not connected with Yorkshire should be given as a toast. But, it appears, that Mr. Fawkes was induced to set this injunction at defiance for the sake of toasting one super-excellent person; and who, reader, do you think that super-excellent person was? Mr. SHERIDAN? The late candidate for Westminster;

he who called the matron Butler to appear against the character of Drake and Weatherhead who had been his supporters at the preceding election; he who, only the other day, set on foot a subscription to pay expenses which he had before declared to be paid; the protégé of Peter Moore, and "the father of Tom Sheridan." But, let us hear the report of this part of the proceedings. It is too valuable to be lost. It is conclusive as to the political character and views of the meeting, and particularly of the character of Mr. Fawkes :—

"The Chairman said, that he must swerve from the injunction of the committee, and yield to the sense of the meeting, communicated to him by an inundation of notes from every quarter of the room, which notes completely concurred with his own sentiment. This sentiment naturally disposed him to pay every tribute of respect to the ILLUSTRIOUS person who was the *highly valued, steady, and unvarying friend of Mr. Fox*, and the powerful advocate of those principles which embalmed that great man's memory. He, therefore, felt happy to propose the health of Mr. SHERIDAN; this proposition was received with *loud and long-continued acclamations of applause*. As soon as they had terminated,—Mr. SHERIDAN returned thanks for the honour which the meeting had conferred upon him, and which honour he felt to be materially heightened by a consideration of the distinguished man by whom it was preferred; for in that man he recognised the principles which were dear to his heart, accompanied by an ability eminently qualified to carry those principles into effect. The right hon. gent. pronounced an elegant eulogium upon the talents of Lord Milton, in whom he was happy to perceive a worthy successor to that great and good man the Marquis of Rockingham, under whose administration he commenced his political career, not as a member of Parliament, but as a member of the *Rockingham Club*—recollecting the utility and consequence of that institution, which comprehended some of the ablest men and best friends to liberty this country had ever known, and in which originated many highly patriotic propositions, *he could not help expressing his wish and hope that it should be revived*. After taking notice of the respect due to the old and genuine strength of the country, the right hon. gent. dwelt upon the manner in which attempts had been made of late years to depreciate that branch of the constitution, *by introducing improper persons into it*. This was an evil which appeared to be productive of much mischief. *These improper persons obtained their titles by serving an apprenticeship of seven or fourteen years to corruption in the House of Commons*; and then, when in the other House, the double mischief arose—that they neither had any sympathy with the people, nor were dissoluble by the Crown. The right hon. gent. remarked with peculiar emphasis, upon the connection which still continued to exist among the friends of Mr. Fox; and expressed his pride and pleasure to witness that connection. If indeed such a connection had ceased with the death of his illustrious friend, and his party had been dispersed, the record of history might have been, that Mr. Fox's adherents had been influenced merely by personal attachment, which no doubt produced him many adherents, as it strengthened the adherence of all who knew him. But that the great connections of that great man were actuated by *principle, was evident from the still-existing union* which all the friends of principle must be proud to witness. The right hon. gentleman concluded with again recommending a revival of the *'Rockingham Club.'*—THE CHAIRMAN expressed the pleasure he felt, in common, he was certain, with the whole company, in having on this occasion deviated from the recommendation of the committee. He thanked the right hon. gent. for the opinion he had been pleased to express of him. He should always *feel proud of such a man*. From him indeed, *praise must be truly flattering to any man*, for it is ever a just source of gratification—*Laudari a laudato viro.*"

There is one gratification, which Mr. Fawkes undoubtedly had, and that was the consciousness of being envied, at this happy moment, by no man not actually in the pillory. Oh, the inexpressible meanness of this transaction! Mr. Sheridan was not one of the Stewards; Mr. Sheri-



dan had not once been named as connected with the Dinner, until a paragraph in the Courier, written probably by Mr. Sheridan himself, hinted, that this slight of Mr. Sheridan might possibly be repented of when parliament came to meet. This hint it was, I am firmly convinced, that produced the toast. They hated the man, chiefly because he possessed greater talents than they; but, they feared those talents; and, all that can be said for them is, that their cowardice surpassed their hatred and their envy. Good God! Amongst all the men in the kingdom; amongst all the millions, "not connected with Yorkshire," to select this man! The *illustrious* Mr. Sheridan! And then Mr. Sheridan larding Mr. Fawkes; and then Mr. Fawkes almost blubbing for very joy at being thought worthy of the praises of "the *illustrious* man!" Poor Mr. Fawkes has acted wisely in "retiring to private life;" for, never was there, in public life, any thing so foolish as this before. —What gives me the most pain, however, belonging to this Dinner, is, the strong presumptive evidence, afforded by the proceedings, that Lord Milton will be made a mere party instrument, as his success in Yorkshire has already been rendered. I was much pleased at that success, first because it was a triumph over no-popery; and, secondly, because it put *political hypocrisy personified* into bodily fear. Besides, the character of his lordship and of his father, so directly the reverse of that of their crafty and slippery opponents, compelled one, without any very minute reasoning, to wish for his success. But, I did hope, that he would not have been made a party instrument; that he would not have been persuaded, that, by supporting the mongrel whigs, the mere place-hunters of the present day, he was supporting the principles of those, who effected the revolution of 1688.

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## THE WRANGLING FACTIONS.

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"When rogues fall out, honest men get their due."—OLD PROVERB.

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THE capture of Dantzic by the French having given a new feature to the war upon the Continent, and enabled us to reason, upon something like grounds, with respect to the result of that war, and particularly as far as may relate to this country, it is time now to take a view of our situation as connected with foreign nations, and to ask a question or two respecting the object of the expedition, now said to be preparing. But, as we shall, at last, find, that our sole hope of an escape from the fate of Prussia, Holland, Naples, &c. &c. must rest upon the measures to be adopted at home, I cannot refrain from making, before I proceed to other matter, one more record of the waste of the public money, as stated and exposed in the mutual accusations of the *wrangling factions*. Sir Francis Burdett complains of the RED BOOK; he uses the simile of the robbers; he calls for a destruction of the system of corruption. What is the consequence? The hirelings of *both* factions fly on upon him with the yell of wolves, and want not the will to use the fangs of that ravenous and vindictive animal. Now, then, let us hear their *own account* of the manner in which the Red Book is filled, and the motives by which the

fillers are actuated. I have had my eye upon them for some time. I have heard their railings against the "Jacobins and Levellers;" and now I shall put their own exposures upon record. They are long and full in their statements; but, these statements should be read, and well remembered. They perish too soon in a loose open sheet. They ought to be bound up in a book, and frequently referred to. I beg every reader to peruse them with attention; and, when he has so done, to ask himself this question: "If this be true, is not Sir Francis Burdett's address perfectly proper?"—We will begin with an extract from the Morning Chronicle newspaper of the 3rd instant:—

"A gross misrepresentation of the conduct of Mr. Fox and Lord Howick, with respect to their under secretaries, having appeared in several newspapers, we are induced to lay before our readers the following Statement of Facts, to the accuracy of which we pledge ourselves: Mr. Fox has been blamed for dismissing Mr. Hammond, together with Mr. Ward; and this removal has been represented as inconsistent with the censure which he himself bestowed upon the dismissal of Mr. Aust, in 1796. The cases were, however, entirely different. It had always been the practice for a new secretary to appoint his under secretaries; and if he continued those in their places whom he found there, it was to be considered equivalent to a re-appointment; for nothing can be more essential to the public service than that the principal and the under secretaries should be on confidential terms. But Mr. Aust was removed without any change of the principal Secretary of State, merely in order to make room for Mr. Canning, whom Mr. Pitt patronized and wished to have near him. For no other reason was Mr. Aust obliged to retire. Of course a provision was made for him. He was appointed Commissary General of Musters and Secretary and Register of Chelsea Hospital. These two offices, thus united in his favour, had been held by two different persons; of course a provision was required for them. Now, it was to this traffic in places, and to a practice which must increase the expense of the service, by multiplying unnecessarily the pensions to those who quitted the office, that Mr. Fox decidedly objected. That the Secretary of State should be forced to retain in the confidential place of under secretary one who would not possess his confidence, is a position never maintained by Mr. Fox, or indeed by any rational man. Mr. Hammond, who had made himself a party man, in every sense of the word, and whose whole connections were with the avowed enemies of Mr. Fox, could no more have been allowed to remain in the foreign office than to hold a seat in the cabinet. To remove him was a matter of absolute necessity. Accordingly, he and Mr. Ward were succeeded by Gen. Walpole and Sir F. Vincent. When Lord Howick came to the foreign department, upon Mr. Fox's death, he continued these gentlemen as under secretaries, because they possessed his confidence; and when he left the office, they retired also, without any pension or sinecure whatever.—If Mr. Fox had followed the example of his predecessor, he would have pensioned Gen. Walpole or Sir F. Vincent, on coming into office. And if Lord Howick had availed himself of the precedents left him both by Lord Hawkesbury and Lord Mulgrave, he would, even in succeeding to a friend, have removed at least one of the under secretaries, and pensioned him, to make way for a dependant or relation, whom also he would have pensioned before he retired from office. We assert, as a known fact, that when Lord Harrowby retired early in 1805, Mr. Elliot was removed to make way for Lord M.'s brother-in-law, Mr. R. Ward; and that one of the last acts of Lord Mulgrave, before quitting the foreign office early in 1806, was to grant Mr. Ward a large pension for less than a year's service, in a manner the legality of which was so much doubted that it was inquired into by the late ministers, with the determination of setting it aside. This Mr. R. Ward knows would have been done, had it not, unfortunately, been found that the grant, however unprecedented, both as to the grounds and manner of it, was nevertheless within the strict formalities of law. Mr. Fox and Lord Howick can certainly claim no praise for having avoided this example of Lord M. But that Lord M.'s friends and defenders should venture upon the discussion of any thing connected with this subject, is a matter of wonder, even to those who know the rashness of the new men."

The next article is the answer of the Courier newspaper of the same day :—

“ There is a long article to-day in the Morning Chronicle on the subject of pensions to under secretaries of state. We have not time to comment now upon the general subject of sinecures and pensions, though we pledge ourselves to unmask the hypocritical pretensions of the late men to superior purity, in any respect whatever regarding the grants of public money. As, however, it has more than once been boldly stated, that the pension to Mr. Ward was granted on a fund never before applied to such uses, and as it is insinuated that it was given merely for a year's service, we will state the real case. With respect to a provision generally to under secretaries on retiring, it is a very gross misrepresentation to say that it has not long existed, or that it ought not to exist. Mr. Aust was rewarded by Lord Grenville himself with sinecures to the amount of 2000*l.* a-year; Sir J. Burgess, under the same Lord G., with a pension of 1200*l.* a-year; Mr. Canning, by the same Lord G., with 1200*l.* a-year; Mr. Fisher, by the same Lord G., with 600*l.* a-year; Mr. Hammond, by the same Lord G., with 600*l.* a-year, having then 1200*l.* as a foreign minister, and 600*l.* a-year besides, added to it last year by Mr. Fox. Mr. Huskisson, by Lord Melville (then in the cabinet with Lord G.) with 1200*l.* a-year; Sir G. Shee, in the home department, with 1200*l.* a-year. So much for the novelty of an under secretary's pension! Now as to the fund, namely the office; the constitution by which the right to recommend to allowances for offices retiring was settled, was the work also of Lord Grenville himself, in conjunction with the other secretaries of state, so far back as the year 1795, as appears by the order of his Majesty in council. And how often have allowances been granted? Was Mr. Ward's the first instance? No—it was the tenth in succession, in the course of eleven years! and of the nine preceding instances, five were the work also of Lord G. If the writer in the Chronicle wishes to know them, he will find them in the office, under the heads of Allowances to Mr. Money, 380*l.* a-year; Mr. Jenkins, 400*l.* a-year; Mr. Hinchcliffe, 600*l.*; Mr. Hammond, 600*l.*; Mr. Fisher, 600*l.* The object of the last grant was the peculiar follower, protégé, and we believe connection, of Lord G.; the grant was made to him after a service of exactly five months and about fourteen days, and was 'one of the last acts of Lord G. on quitting the foreign office.' It was held also by him during his life, together with a commission of excise, worth 1200*l.* a-year more! Do we blame Lord Grenville for this? No; nor do we believe that the misrepresentations on which we are commenting proceeded from his authority. We know at least, in answer to another part of that misrepresentation, that he professed his opinion in favour of the legality of the grant to Mr. Ward, to which he also disclaimed all idea of hostility. Four other instances of allowances from the same fund in the office of secretary of state, occur before Mr. Ward's, viz. Mr. Colquhoun, 300*l.* a-year; Mr. Moore, 800*l.* a-year; Mr. Higden, 500*l.* a-year; Mr. Hay, 500*l.* Now as to the motive of granting it! Was it a job to a relation, or a compensation to a man invited from a profession in which he was advancing, and from the benefit of a study of the Law of Nations, into an office in which that law was daily and hourly an object of discussion? We can state with accuracy that the chancellor was ready to put the seal to the vacant Welsh judgeship in favour of Mr. Ward, when he was desired to give his labours to another department in the state. This is not only a great professional honour, but a place for life; and this, together with his practice, Mr. Ward relinquished, to attend the call of Mr. Pitt and Lord Mulgrave, where it was thought his service might be of particular use. We ask the world, if a man foregoing such advantages to obey such a call, is either to have no compensation at all, or to have his compensation after the precedents adduced, stigmatized wholly unprecedented, and proceeding from favour alone? As to a former article in the Chronicle, that Mr. Ward retired to a commission of bankrupts, beside his pension, it is neither more nor less than a very foolish and wholly unfounded assertion, and as such we shall leave it. And so we also leave the public to judge of the justice, the virtuous accuracy, and purity of motive, which characterize this creditable, party, true, and most impartial statement.”

The MORNING CHRONICLE's reply, on the 6th instant, starts new and valuable matter :—

" We have already exposed the unfounded calumnies of Mr. Canning's journal-  
 " nists, respecting the conduct of his immediate predecessors in the foreign  
 " office; and have demonstrated by a plain statement of the facts, that in arrang-  
 " ing the appointments of this department, Mr. Fox and Lord Howick were  
 " guided by a strict adherence to those maxims of economy which no one, save  
 " only the partisans of Lord Melville, ever dared to treat with open contempt.  
 " Attempts have been made, also, to charge the same distinguished characters  
 " with removing English envoys in order to make room for their own friends.  
 " As this accusation is false beyond the ordinary measure of party misrepresent-  
 " ation, we shall here again narrate the facts in question.—Soon after the  
 " change of Administration in 1806, Lord G. L. Gower was allowed to return  
 " from St. Petersburg at his own desire. An offer was explicitly made by Mr.  
 " Fox, with a kind attention which Lord G. L. G. has not forgotten, that he  
 " might remain, if he pleased, at a court where his conduct had given satisfac-  
 " tion. His Lordship consulted his own convenience and preferred coming  
 " home.—Mr. Pierrepont solicited leave to return from Sweden, chiefly on  
 " account of his health; Mr. Stratton was appointed to succeed him; a gentle-  
 " man only known to Lord Howick by his long and able services in the diplo-  
 " matic line; and further recommended to Lord H. by the misfortune of having  
 " no powerful friends, which had kept him in the shade during the Administra-  
 " tions of the Hawkesburys and Mulgraves; and which we lament to find has  
 " now thrown him back again, when our foreign affairs are administered by a  
 " man very little indebted to family influence.—In the missions to Copenha-  
 " gen, Lisbon, Hamburg, Dresden, and Berlin, no change whatever was made  
 " either by Mr. Fox or Lord Howick. Mr. Jackson and Mr. Wynne were of  
 " course obliged to come home in consequence of the war; when a military man  
 " was required to replace the former of these gentlemen, we presume that most  
 " people congratulated the ministry on their prevailing with such a person as  
 " Lord Hutchinson to fill that station; for the peculiar merits of our present  
 " classical envoy in a military capacity had not as yet displayed themselves. He  
 " was thought, not so much to have in himself the science of war, as to be—'the  
 " cause of war in others.'—In the embassy at Constantinople no change what-  
 " ever was made until the Secretaryship became vacant, by Mr. Stratton's well-  
 " earned promotion, and this appointment was conferred on Mr. Pole, in consi-  
 " deration of meritorious services performed by him in a subordinate capacity,  
 " and of the warm recommendations both from Mr. Arbuthnot and the Court of  
 " Petersburg. This gentleman was in every respect wholly unknown to Lord  
 " Howick; unless, indeed, his being the eldest son of a very keen antagonist  
 " (Mr. W. Pole, now of the Ordnance office) should be viewed as ground for sus-  
 " pecting an undue preference.—The necessity of recalling Sir A. Paget has  
 " never been questioned by any one who read the secret correspondence pub-  
 " lished by Lord Mulgrave. The late ministers have always been ready to ac-  
 " knowledge that gentleman's professional merits, and if the more serious irre-  
 " parable evils produced by the publication in question had left any room for  
 " personal considerations, they would have regarded the necessary loss of Sir A.  
 " P.'s services at Vienna, as an additional ground for regretting that act of rash-  
 " ness and infatuation. That the conduct of his successor, Mr. Adair, has given  
 " the highest satisfaction, both at home and at Vienna, we venture to assert with-  
 " out the fear of contradiction, even from Mr. Canning; that Mr. Adair must be  
 " speedily displaced, could never be doubted by any one who reflected that our  
 " foreign department is now in the hands of the Anti-Jacobin poetasters, Messrs.  
 " Hammond, Canning, Frere, &c., whose political consistency would be im-  
 " peached were they to leave in employment a gentleman formerly exposed to  
 " their attacks in that celebrated performance—and thus are the concerns of  
 " great empires administered!—The recal of Mr. Elliot and Mr. Merry was  
 " rendered necessary by circumstances which it is needless to specify. These  
 " regard, not so much the personal qualifications of the two gentlemen in ques-  
 " tion, as the peculiar state of affairs in the countries where they were resident;  
 " while the conduct of Mr. Erskine has given entire satisfaction, and amply jus-  
 " tified his nomination. We confidently ask Mr. Canning himself, now that he  
 " has seen a little of the office, who could be more fit for the mission to Palermo  
 " than Mr. Drummond? This gentleman had no political connection, but a  
 " slight personal acquaintance with Lord Howick. He was recommended to the  
 " notice of the ministry, solely by his known abilities in diplomacy, and his for-

mer residence at the court of Naples, to which he had been appointed by Lord Hawkesbury; and here, indeed, lies the whole offence of Mr. Drummond in Mr. Canning's eyes.—As for Consulships, they made not a single change in that department. They granted the usual floating pensions to Sir A. Paget, Messrs. Jackson, Spencer Smith, Pierrepont, and Wynne. These gentlemen were altogether the connections of former ministers; and the pensions which they now received, were such as the length of their respective services entitled them to, by the strictest precedents established in the foreign department.—It is after an administration of this kind—disgraced by no jobs—marked by the most punctual and decisive regard to the interests of the service—and distinguished by the most rigorous economy of the public money, that Lord Howick and his colleagues retire amidst the sincere regrets of their countrymen; leaving, however, an example behind them, which, if it may fail to excite the emulation, must at least prove some check to the misconduct of their successors."

Now, either this is true, or it is false. If false, the Morning Chronicle, who abuses Sir Francis Burdett, is a liar; if true, does Sir Francis deserve reproach for what he has said of the *R&D* Book?—Leaving the Morning Chronicle to answer this question, let us proceed to the rejoinder of the Courier of the same day.

"The late ministers conclude an article which they have published in a paper this morning by boldly asserting that their administration was 'disgraced by no jobs.' A more daring assertion we never remembered to have heard. The late ministry began their career by a job, the enabling Lord Grenville to hold a large sinecure with another office, the two being incompatible in the same person. Mr. Sheridan said that Mr. Fox proposed to settle on him the Duchy of Lancaster for life. Inquiries were set on foot to know if the Surveyorship of Woods and Forests could not be settled on Lord R. Spencer for life. The Muster Master General of Ireland, a lucrative sinecure, was divided between Mr. T. Sheridan and a relation of Lord Howick's at the expense to the country of a large pension to the then holder to induce him to resign. An Irish sinecure of 3000*l.* per annum was given to Cavendish Bradshaw, without a pretence of claim. A pension was granted to Judge Johnstone, who has libelled Lord Hardwicke; valuable reversions were granted to Mr. Erskine's clerk; and we believe a reversion, or some such job, was given to Mr. Wickham.—These foes to jobs and friends to reform and economy, dismissed Atkins, the Barrack-Master in the Isle of Wight, who had exposed enormous abuses, and who is now starving. A pension of 1200*l.* was granted to Col. Congreve for throwing a few burning arrows into Boulogne. Lord Howick's brother, with four other Greys, have had lucrative appointments; one was sent out commander in chief to the Cape, with a salary of 4000*l.* per annum, and another salary of equal amount, as lieutenant-governor, though under such circumstances a lieutenant-governor's salary has never been more than a hundred pounds or two.—300 dependants were provided for at an expense of nearly as many thousands per annum, as auditors, secretaries, and clerks upon the auditing establishment. When no appointment was open for an impatient dependant, the language was, 'Put him upon the Auditors till something better can be done.'—15 Judges were thought by the late ministers insufficient for the administration of justice in Scotland, though in England it is administered by a smaller number. New judicial situations were therefore to be created, and one of them was to have been superior in rank, dignity, and emolument to any now in existence. To this new and highest office, not the present president, but a new officer, was to be appointed (the brother of a cabinet minister.)—300 new surveyors of taxes were on the eve of being appointed at an enormous expense to the public. This measure was to have received the sanction of parliament—and to make that sanction more certain, and to demonstrate that this addition of patronage and expense was intended by these foes to jobs, for the sole purpose of better collecting the revenue, on the eve of the general election last autumn, the future sanction of parliament was anticipated by privately but generally announcing to the favoured candidates that such appointments would be made, and that the recommendation of their constituents would be attended to. This fact

“ however, was unfortunately delayed till the dissolution of the late vigorous administration, and nothing remained but the painful, yet necessary task of apologizing, which was actually done a few days before they quitted office, for those interests being so neglected, and those promises so broken. Such are a few of the proofs (not to mention any thing at present of the increase of she-riffs depute in Scotland, &c.) of the utter detestation in which the late minis- ters held all jobs ! ! ”

The COURIER, whose zeal for the public good is unwearied, was not content with what he had said on the 6th ; and, therefore, on the 8th, after having availed himself of the rest of the Sabbath, he returned to his valuable exposures with renovated vigour, thus :—

“ The late ministers alluding to the statements we made on Saturday, respect- ing their jobs, contradict some of them, and entirely pass over others. Thus, for instance, they pass over the job of enabling Lord Grenville to hold a large sinecure with another office, the two being incompatible in the same person, and contradict our statement that Mr. Fox proposed to settle on Mr. Sheridan the Duchy of Lancaster for life. We have Mr. S.'s authority, however, that he did think of it, and intend it for him. In the debate on the 25th of March, on Mr. Martin's motion against granting places for life, Mr. Sheridan said, in answer to Mr. Johnstone, that ‘ with respect to the charge of his (Mr. S.) be- ing busy in providing for himself and his family, the fact was, that his hon. friend, who was now unhappily no more (Mr. Fox), thought that after a service, he hoped not unmeritorious, of 27 years in parliament, some provision for life ought to be made for him. It had happened rather singularly, that his hon. friend had intended, that the office that had been so much spoken of this night, the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, should be appropriated to that provision.’ Here we have Mr. S.'s positive assertion, that Mr. Fox had intended the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster for life, for him.— With respect to one of Lord Howick's brothers, the late ministers have dis- closed a fact of which we were ignorant, that when Capt. Grey was removed from Sheerness to Portsmouth, he had a place which fell vacant in the West Indies given him, a valuable sinecure, we take it for granted, it having been held by Lord Ducie.—We find too that Col. Grey having been disabled by a severe wound in Holland, has been placed on active service at the Cape.—As to the reversion to Lord's Erskine's clerk, it was admitted in the House of Com- mons, that not one only, but two had been granted.—The increase of the number of Judges in Scotland, Surveyors of Excise, Auditors, &c. an increase which has entailed so immense an additional expense upon the country, is ad- duced by the late ministers as one of their regulations for enforcing economy ! — Upon the sinecure to C. Bradshaw, the pension to Judge Johnstone, who libelled Lord Hardwicke, the dismissal of Atkins, who had exposed enormous abuses, they preserve a profound silence. In our enumeration however, of jobs, we beg the late ministers' pardon, for forgetting to include their appoint- ments, a day or two before they were dismissed from office, of persons to fill the situations of Collector of the Customs, Surveyor of the Customs, Waiters and Searchers at Buenos Ayres, a place not then in our possession ! ”

Now, reader, sensible and impartial reader, this is the picture, which the factions themselves draw of the conduct of each other. I will not ask you how, under a system like this, it is possible that our concerns with foreign nations should be properly managed, I will not ask you, whether you, as a farmer, or a merchant, or a gentleman, would intrust your affairs to such hands ; but, I will ask you, whether, if what these writers say be true, they are not the most base of mankind to rail at the similes, and the assertions of Sir Francis Burdett ? Here we have their own account of the conduct of the two factions. The two factions, through this channel, tell the world what they have done. It is in their own mouths that we find the accusations against themselves. Sir Francis Burdett says of them only what they say of each other ; precisely that,

and not a word more; and yet, they accuse him of *seditions language*, and call upon the parliament to *expel him!* They have been *feeling the public pulse* in this way for some weeks past; but, the public pulse beats to no such time. The public, even the very blindest of the public, now see; and, that they do see, thanks to these mutual exposures.

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## TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER.

### LETTER XX.

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GENTLEMEN,—When I concluded the last letter which I did myself the honour of addressing to you, I foresaw, that occasions would arise, when I might again think this the best mode of communicating my remarks to the public in general. An occasion of this sort has now arisen. The bill for *preventing grants of Places in Reversion* has been thrown out in the House of Lords, after having passed the House of Commons; and, as it is reasonable to suppose, that some of you may not be fully acquainted of the nature of such grants, and of the circumstances under which the bill was thrown out, I, who have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with both, will endeavour to give you a just description of them.

There are, Gentlemen, numerous places under the Government, which are called *sine-cures*, from two Latin words which mean *without care*. Places having no care, no charge, and, of course, no employment, attached to them; places which give the holders no other trouble than that of receiving the salaries or fees arising from them. The reason why these places are described by outlandish words is evident enough; for, to call them, in plain English, *places without employment, or nothing-to-do places*, would naturally produce feelings, in the people, not very friendly to such a snug establishment; and, indeed, had these places always been described by English words, my opinion is, that they would have ceased to exist long ago. We have here, Gentlemen, a striking instance of the great utility of the "*Learned Languages*," which once were so serviceable to the monks and friars, and which are now kept as much in use as possible by all those who are desirous of making a mystery of what ought to be clearly and universally understood. For the same reasons *the law*, that which every man ought to understand as clearly as possible, has been rendered mystical by the introducing and the retaining of foreign words Latin, French, Half-French and Half-Latin, any thing so that it be incomprehensible to the people in general; no matter what it is, so that it keeps them from a knowledge of the real nature of the thing; and, what is above all things provoking, when a couple of empty-headed fellows have once got a gown and wig on, and have learnt the use of this barbarous jargon, they will, without the least sense of decency or shame, stand up amidst hundreds of spectators, and bestow upon each other, at every second breath, the appellation of "*learned friend*." Much more depends upon *names* than seems to enter into our philosophy: When the excellent parliament, which made a law to provide against Englishmen being unjustly deprived of their personal liberty; when they

were enacting that the persons of innocent men, of all ranks, should, for the future, be secure from the fangs of a tyrannical government, they should have taken care to give their act a name which all men must have clearly understood; and not have left it to the "learned friends" to call it the act of *Habeas Corpus*, a name that, as far as nine-tenths of the people know, may mean something to eat, or to drink. If it had been called the *personal security act*, or the act for preventing *unjust imprisonment*, be you assured, Gentlemen, that it never would have been *suspended for seven years together*, not, at least, without some complaint, on the part of Englishmen, against such suspension. The English name would, too, have sounded badly in debate. Pitt, even Pitt, would not have talked so glibly of suspending the act for preventing unjust imprisonment. Men out of doors would have been startled at such a proposition; upon inquiry they would have found, that, from the moment this act was suspended, *any man* in the kingdom was *liable to be seized by a messenger from the offices of government, and to be imprisoned as long as the council thought proper*, without any trial, and without any mode of obtaining redress, or even a hearing in his defence; and, finding this, it is not to be believed, that they would have acted as they did.

From this digression, in which I have anticipated myself as to one objection to the teaching of what modern imposture and impudence term "the Learned Languages," I return to *sine-cure places*, the nature of which I have endeavoured to explain to you. But, Gentlemen, persons to *fill*, if it may be so called, places where there is nothing to do but to receive the salaries or fees, are found in such abundance and they meet with ministers so ready to reward their public services, that these places, alas! numerous as they are, fall far short of the number required. They are all filled, at all times. This being the case, all that a poor minister can do for his friends, or relations, is to *promise* them the first vacancy. But, here arises a difficulty: two difficulties indeed; for the minister may not ~~keep~~ keep his promise; and, if, by any chance, he should be disposed to do that, he may not keep his place; besides which he may die, or the asker of the place may cease to support him. Therefore, in order to make things as sure as this sublunary state of things will admit of, the place-hunter says, if you cannot give me the place, give me the *reversion* of it: that is to say, obtain me a grant from the king, making me the *heir* of the man who now holds the place. Nay, sometimes these reversions are granted to two or three persons at once; first to one, and, if he or she should die, to another, and, if he or she should die, to another, in which way, the late ministers have asserted in open parliament, that most of the places upon the Irish establishment are now granted, many of the grantees being young children; so that the places are granted away for sixty or eighty years to come.

This, Gentlemen, is what is meant by granting places in reversion, pensions, observe, being frequently granted in the same manner, and also some offices which are not perfect sinecures.—The late ministry, composed of our friends, the Whigs, brought in a bill, *a day or two before their being ousted*, to prevent, for the future, the granting of places in reversion. Their successors, though they have, as you have seen, obtained a decided majority in both Houses of Parliament, did not oppose the passing of this bill. But, when it came to the noble Lords, the noble Lords quickly dispatched it. On the 4th instant they did this, after a debate, which I shall here insert exactly as I find it reported in the Morn-



ing Chronicle newspaper ; and I beseech you to read every word of it with attention.

“ LORD ARDEN considered the bill to be an unnecessary and *indecent attack upon the King's laudful prerogative*. Nothing whatever had been stated to prove that such a measure was necessary, except merely an expression in the preamble of the bill, that it was expedient for the public service. The manner also in which the bill originated was very unusual, and no ground had been shown to prove that there was any necessity to make such an attack upon the King's just prerogative. He should therefore oppose the bill, and take the sense of the House upon it.

“ EARL GROSVENOR expressed great regret at the opposition given to this bill by his noble friend. He conceived the bill to be so completely in unison with the popular feeling at the present moment, that it would be unwise to reject it, and he thought his Majesty's ministers, by opposing the bill, would render themselves so unpopular that they would not long remain in office. He was a warm friend to the bill, not merely for its own sake, but for the sake of those measures of reform relative to the public expenditure, of which he considered this merely as the forerunner ; measures which were highly necessary at a crisis like the present, when it was of so much importance to engage the hearts as well as the arms of the people. He trusted their lordships would not be induced to reject the bill.

“ THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE called their lordships' attention to his Majesty's speech at the close of the last session, in which satisfaction was expressed at the conduct of the committee of finance, and contended that this bill, being the only measure which that committee had then recommended, the King's speech contained in effect an approval of the measure. After ministers had thus approved of the measure, after they had approved of it in the other House, and after the bill had been so long in this House, he was greatly astonished at the opposition it now experienced. He could not help also adverting to the conduct of his Majesty's ministers upon this occasion. If they now thought this bill ought not to pass, why did they not attend in their places, and oppose it in a manly manner, instead of staying away themselves, and sending their friends and connections to oppose the bill ?” [None of the ministers were present, except the Lord Chancellor.] “ He did not mean by this to impute to the noble lord that he was sent there for that purpose ; but that construction would be put upon such conduct by the public. He was convinced that the public feeling was strongly in favour of the bill ; and that ought to be, at the present moment, a strong argument in its favour. The granting of offices in reversion he considered to be highly prejudicial to the public service, and highly improper, such grants being frequently made to children, at a very early age, and such offices, although requiring regulation, from a change of circumstances, could not, during such grant, be regulated for the benefit of the public. He would instance one case, that of the large office held by the noble lord (Arden), and the reversion of which had been granted to him *after the death of his father*, whose public services were undoubtedly great, at a time when the income arising from it was comparatively trifling. The profits of it had since increased to an amount which could not possibly have been in the contemplation of any one, and which arose, in a great degree, from the misfortunes of the country. It would, no doubt, have been thought expedient to regulate an office of that description. He thought, upon every ground that could be stated, that this bill ought to be proceeded in.

“ LORD ARDEN said he was not sent to that House to oppose the bill, nor would he be sent there by any man : he opposed the bill because he conceived it to be his duty as a peer of parliament to do so.

“ THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE, in explanation, disclaimed any intention of throwing the least imputation upon the noble lord ; he only meant to allude to the construction which would be put in the public mind upon the opposition given to the bill, coupled with the absence of his Majesty's ministers.

“ LORD VISCOUNT MELVILLE said there was only one point in which he agreed with the noble lord (Lauderdale), namely, that which related to the absence of ministers. He wished they had been there to declare their sentiments in opposition to the bill, if such were the sentiments which they entertained upon the subject. But when the absence of ministers was spoken of,

" he would ask, where were the illustrious members of the late administration ?  
 " Why did not they attend to support their own bill, and display their parental  
 " fondness for their own offspring ? He denied that this measure had been  
 " approved of or alluded to in his Majesty's speech. The speech applauded the  
 " general object of the Committee of Finance, namely, to inquire into the means  
 " of reforming and economizing the public expenditure ; but could not be made  
 " to apply to the present measure. No argument had, he contended, been  
 " adduced in favour of the present measure, except an assertion, that it was  
 " agreeable to the public feeling. He did not believe that there was any such  
 " feeling in the public mind, nor was there any thing in the bill by which the  
 " public could be benefited. If the bill were to pass, *not a sixpence would be*  
 " *saved by it* ; the offices would remain the same ; and, the only object of it  
 " would be to encroach upon the King's just and lawful prerogative. The noble  
 " lord had spoken of reversions being granted to children, but was it not the  
 " practice, when great services had been performed by *an Admiral or General*,  
 " to confer hereditary honours, and to grant also an annual sum, which was not  
 " confined to the person to whom granted, but was extended to his descendants ?  
 " It had been the constant practice of our ancestors to act upon this principle.  
 " He would put a case also to show the expediency of acting upon it in other in-  
 " stances : suppose a person was rendered incapable, by age or infirmity, from  
 " executing the duties of an office which he had held for 20 or 30 years ; such a  
 " person was not to be turned out without some provision. There were in this  
 " case only two modes of acting ; the one by a pension, and the other by grant-  
 " ing the reversion of the office to his son or other relation, who might ASSIST  
 " *him in the office*. By the former mode, a charge was made upon the public  
 " during the life of that person, and in the latter there was no additional ex-  
 " pense. He could discover nothing in support of this bill, but an assertion that  
 " it was expedient ; whilst, on the other hand, there was the uniform practice  
 " of our ancestors. He could not, therefore, consent to such a bill as the pre-  
 " sent, nor could he for a moment consent, that after a *beneficent reign* of nearly  
 " half a century, such an attack should be made upon the prerogative and in-  
 " fluence of a *beloved and revered* monarch.

" LORD HOLLAND said, as the noble viscount had begun his speech by stating  
 " that there was only one point in the speech of his noble friend (the Earl of  
 " Lauderdale) in which he agreed, so he would observe, that there was only one  
 " point in the speech of the noble viscount in which he had the good fortune to  
 " agree, and that was, that his Majesty's ministers ought to have been present  
 " to have declared their sentiments in a manly manner upon this bill. As to the  
 " charge made by the noble viscount, of the absence of the members of the late  
 " administration, he could assure their lordships, that, had there been the least  
 " expectation that this bill would be opposed, there would have been a full  
 " attendance of those noble lords, with whom he had the honour to act. But  
 " when it was recollected that only four-and-twenty hours notice had been given  
 " of any intention to oppose this bill (he did not mean to throw any imputation  
 " upon the noble lord who had commenced this debate), there was not much  
 " ground for surprise at the thin attendance. He thought it, however, of so  
 " much importance that this bill should be debated in a full house, that he in-  
 " tended to move to adjourn the debate till to-morrow, in order to give an  
 " opportunity for that full attendance, which the importance of the subject  
 " demanded. After the bill had been nearly a month before the house, without  
 " appearing to meet with any objection, he was astonished that it should now  
 " be attempted to be debated in a thin house, and at so late a period of the ses-  
 " sion. His noble friends had not attended, because they thought there was no  
 " intention of opposing the bill ; he was convinced they would attend if the con-  
 " sideration of the bill was postponed till to-morrow. He entirely agreed with  
 " his noble friend (Earl Grosvenor), that this bill was only to be considered as  
 " the *forerunner of important measures of reform and economy in the public ex-*  
 " *penditure of the country*. When it was in contemplation to abolish or to regu-  
 " late offices, it was natural, as the first step to be taken, to prevent those offices  
 " being granted in reversion, because if they were it was obvious that for a con-  
 " siderable time no regulation could be applied to them. It was therefore that  
 " the public feeling was so much interested in this bill, which he contended it  
 " was, and he begged leave to say that he thought the noble viscount, in denying  
 " the existence of this public feeling, was mistaken. He was convinced that if

“ ministers thought that the rejection of this measure would not be an unpopular measure, they would find themselves miserably mistaken. He denied that the bill was an encroachment upon the just prerogative of the crown; on the contrary, *the granting in reversion was an encroachment upon that prerogative*, and upon this subject he would put the case, which though an extreme one, would show the tendency of the argument, namely, that of all the offices being granted in reversion, it would necessarily follow, that *the successor to the crown* would find himself deprived of all influence. Reversions, besides, had a tendency to render the offices themselves sinecures, and sinecures were again granted in reversion: then reversions begat sinecures, and sinecures begat reversions. It might be true that, by the operation of this bill in itself, nothing would be saved; but when it was considered as the first step to other measures, it must be viewed in a very different light; and although there might be considerable exaggeration as to the saving which it was possible to effect, yet, at the present moment, every sixpence and every halfpenny ought to be saved, in order to lighten, as much as possible, the burdens of the people. There might, perhaps, be a popular delusion upon this subject; but even that was an argument, at a crisis like the present, for agreeing to this bill. He did not conceive, however, that a bill of so much importance should be decided upon in so thin a house, and he should therefore move, that the debate be adjourned till to-morrow.

“ The EARL OF LAUDERDALE again referred to his Majesty's speech at the close of the last session, his Majesty's speech at the opening of the present session, and to the votes of the House of Commons, containing the Resolution on which the present bill was founded: and contended that his Majesty's speeches contained a full approval of this measure.

“ LORD VISCOUNT MELVILLE again contended that his Majesty's speeches only contained an approval of the general object of the Committee of Finance.

“ The EARL OF SELKIRK approved of the bill, upon the principle that it was to be considered as the forerunner of other great and important measures.

“ LORD BORINGDON expressed his regret at differing from many noble lords with whom he usually acted; but when he considered that this bill had been supported by ministers, had passed the other House, and had been received with nearly an unanimous consent, added to the circumstances of the present moment, he felt it his duty to vote for it.”

After this, the noble Lords *divided*, as it is called, nine noble Lords voting for Lord Holland's motion, and sixteen noble Lords against it; so that the bill, by a subsequent division, was thrown out.

It will not be necessary, Gentlemen, to say much to you upon this subject. You will have perceived, that, out of about *three hundred* noble Lords, there were only twenty-five noble Lords present upon this occasion. The Morning Chronicle has given a list of the places, which are held by the noble Lords, who voted against this bill; but I shall give no such list, nor any list at all of the majority, or the minority; for, as to *motives*, I believe every noble Lord of them is animated by such as are equally pure and upright, however the said noble Lords may, “ under existing circumstances,” entertain, or act upon, sentiments widely different. It is, however, worthy of notice, that the fear of depriving the *successor of the King* of all influence from the granting of places, was openly avowed; and, I have heard, that this was the principal, if not the *only motive*, from which the late ministers introduced the bill: though, it must be observed, that this does not very well agree with the idea of *economy*, as connected with the bill for preventing grants in reversion. The truth is, that, if economy had been the object, the bill would have been of a different description. It would have enacted, that such and such places, when the present holders died, *should be abolished*, and the expenses of them put an end to. This would have been doing something; but, if we are still to be taxed to pay the holders of these places,

what is it to you or me, whether the holders of them are appointed by the present King, or by his successor? Lord Holland, after Lord Grosvenor, regarded the bill as the *forerunner of a series of reforms*. Such reforms would have been, I imagine, of but very little service to us. They would, in fact, have been injurious; for, while they would have afforded us no *real* relief, they would have served to amuse ignorant people, and would have afforded the sycophants of office grounds whereon to defend their patrons. "Here," would they have said, "don't you see, that they have *begun* to reform?" And with this they would have deceived thousands upon thousands of well-meaning men.

Lord Melville compared the place-holders to *Admirals and Generals*, who have merited great rewards from their country, and whose descendants are generally provided for. The provision in such cases is just, because, what gratification could it be to a man to be made great and rich himself, if his sons were, upon his death, to be at once hurled down from the rank in which their father had lived? And, the same reasoning will apply to men who have rendered great services to the country in any other way. But, how stands the *fact*, with respect to the holders of the places in question? Have *they* rendered great services to their country? I will give you a list of a *few* of them and their holders, and, then, leave you to answer me:

Earl of Liverpool, Collector of <i>Customs</i> inwards .....	£1,800 a year
Lord Hawkesbury, Warden of the Cinque Ports.....	4,100
Earl of Chichester, Surveyor-General of <i>Customs</i> .....	1,400
Earl of Guildford, Comptroller of <i>Customs</i> .....	1,300
Lord Stawell, Surveyor of Petty <i>Customs</i> .....	1,200
Duke of Manchester, Collector of <i>Customs</i> outwards.....	1,900
Thomas Taylor, Comptroller-General .....	1,000
Granted in reversion to Lord Frederick Montague.	

The above are custom-house officers for the *port of London* alone. What a *noble* thing is this *commerce*! But, more of that hereafter. Let us proceed with our list:

Wm. H. Cooper, and Frederick Grey Cooper } <i>one</i> of the auditors of Land Revenue .....	£2,100
To fall to the survivor.	
Lieut.-Gen. Fox, Paymaster of Widows' Pensions.....	1,067
To have fallen to the Hon. <i>Charles James Fox</i> , if he had survived his brother.	
Lieut.-Gen. Fox, Receiver of Issues, &c. £70 and fees not stated. This place was enjoyed by the <i>Hon. C. James Fox</i> for his life.	
Lord Arden (Mr. Perceval's brother), Register of the Admiralty and Ecclesiastical Courts .....	8,840
George Rose, Clerk of the Parliaments .....	3,700
Granted in reversion to his son, George Henry Rose.	
Marquis of Buckingham } Earl Camden } Lord Thurlow } Earl Bathurst }	Tellers of the Exchequer.

The fees of these are not stated; but the amount of the salary and fees of the first is estimated at about £30,000 a year; each of the others at about £20,000 a year; and, as *one* place was granted in reversion, it fell, when Lord Thurlow died, to a *son of Lord Auckland*, the name of which son is W. F. E. Eden.

Thomas Steele! King's Remembrancer.....	870
Duke of St. Albans, Master of the Hawks .....	1,342
This is a grant in <i>perpetuity</i> , that is to say, <i>for ever</i> .	

I take these from an account laid before the Honourable House in 1802. I have not the *Scotch* list immediately at hand, or I would give you some account of the places and reversions of the *Dundas* and *Melrills*. This little specimen will, however, afford you the means of judging as to how far the holders of the places, which we have been talking of, ought to be compared with *Admirals* and *Generals*, who have rendered important services to their country.

Since the bill was thrown out by the noble Lords, the Hon. House of Commons have come to a resolution to address the King not to grant any places in reversion, until six weeks after the commencement of the next session of parliament. It is pity the two houses should have any *disagreement*; it would be quite *useless*; it would answer no purpose; but, I am satisfied, that whatever *seeming* disagreement there might be between them, we, the people, should remain convinced, that they were both animated by motives equally pure and upright.

I have observed, that cases may arise, when it is just and proper to entail rewards upon the families of others than soldiers or seamen; but these cases must be rare; for, let it be remembered, that, in the civil offices, the *salaries* are very great compared to the pay of the officers in the army and the navy. In these latter services, too, a *whole life* is devoted, besides the first purchase of the commission. In fact, the cases are altogether different, and will bear no comparison.

Having thus endeavoured clearly to lay before you the nature of the offices in question and the tendency of the bill which has been thrown out by the noble Lords, I shall leave you to ruminate upon the matter, and to come to such a conclusion as your good sense shall dictate. I cannot help, however, requesting you to bear in mind, that I have now proved to you, that Mr. Fox was a sine-cure placeman all his life long; and that he asserted, in parliament, that the *property*, or ownership, of such places was as sacred, as untouchable by act of parliament, *as any man's property in house or land!* In short, that the parliament, which, as respecting all other earthly purposes, has been called "*omnipotent*;" that the parliament which has been described as having a *right* to do every thing, which it is able to do, every thing which is not *naturally* impossible; that this parliament has no right to take from any man the present or reversionary enjoyment of one of these places! This was the doctrine of the man, whom, for so many years, *you* elected as one of your representatives! And, what is still more provoking, for the *loss* of whom you are called upon to weep! Nay, upon the ground of having been a friend and supporter of whom, Mr. Sheridan had the conscience to claim your votes; and, what is worse, some of you had the patience to hear him, and even the folly to applaud him.

In my next letter, which will probably be inserted in the same sheet with this, I propose to address you upon a subject of a very different nature. In the meanwhile, I remain,

Gentlemen,

Your faithful friend

And obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 12th August, 1807.

## TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER.

### LETTER XXI.

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“For what true English heart will not swell, when it shall be made clear and evident, as in this book, that the sovereignty of the seas, flowing about this island, even to the very shores opposite, hath, in all times, whereof there remains any written testimony, under every revolution, down to the present age, been held and acknowledged by all the world, as an inseparable appendant of the British Empire; and that, by virtue thereof, the kings of England successively have had the sovereign guard of the seas; that they have imposed taxes and tributes upon all ships passing and fishing therein; that they have obstructed and opened the passage thereof to strangers at their own pleasure, and done all other things that may testify an absolute sea dominion. What English heart, I say, can consider these things together with the late actings, and not be inflamed with an indignation answerable to the insolence of these people, raised, but yesterday, out of the dust.”—NEDHAM'S Dedication of SKIDEN'S Dominion of the Seas.

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GENTLEMEN,—The subject, upon which I have now to address you, is, the dispute between England and the American States, of which, doubtless, all of you have heard much; but, as it is probable, that many of you have not the leisure to examine very minutely into the origin and grounds of the dispute, or to reflect maturely upon the consequences, to which it may lead, I trust you will not think it impertinent in me to offer you such observations as occur to me, relating to a matter with respect to which the people ought to be well informed.

It has long been a complaint, on the part of England, that the American ships, in all parts of the world, serve as a place of refuge for deserters from the British navy. We claim a right to take our deserters wherever we find them, upon the seas; and this right, though not, in my opinion, rigorously enough, we have exercised. We claim also a right to take our *seamen*, whether deserters or not, from on board the ships of any other nation, when we find such ships at sea, having, as I hope we shall maintain, a right of dominion over the sea as far as we may judge it necessary to exercise that dominion for the preservation of our independence as a people. The Americans, in order to evade these our claims, have fallen upon a device quite novel in the affairs of nations. They have enacted, that any man, be he born where he may, becomes a *citizen of the United States* from the moment that he gets what they call a *certificate of citizenship* from some one or other of their magistrates; and, having asserted this to be the law of nations, they represent as an outrage our taking of our men in spite of these miserable bits of paper. Endless disputes have arisen from this source; and, when we consider how difficult it is, in some cases, to distinguish between an American and an Englishman, we cannot wonder at such disputes; but, as I shall endeavour to prove to you, the right of searching cannot, on our part, be given up without giving up that superiority at sea, which alone can give us, under any set of rulers at home, even a chance of remaining an independent people.

The immediate cause of quarrel, however, is of a nature somewhat dif-

ferent. A ship of war, of ours, lying near Norfolk, in Virginia, had occasion to send some of her men on shore. These men desert. The officers are forbidden, by the civil authority, to take them. Some of them enter on board an American 44-gun frigate, called the *Chesapeake*. Admiral Berkeley, our chief naval commander upon the station, gives his several captains an order to demand the men from the *Chesapeake*, as soon as she shall be out at sea, and, if refused, to search for them by force. The *Leopard*, a 50-gun ship, commanded by Captain *Humphreys*, makes the demand. It is refused by Captain *Barron*, the American commander. Some shots of mere menace are fired a-head by the *Leopard*; these are returned in battle by the *Chesapeake*; this brings a broadside from the *Leopard*, which the *Chesapeake* returns with some shots badly fired; but, a second broadside from the *Leopard* brings down the American flag; the frigate is searched, the men are taken out, the *Leopard* keeps the sea, and the *Chesapeake*, with several men killed and wounded, returns to port. The American President issues a proclamation forbidding our ships of war all communication with the land (which is, observe, a violation of our treaty with America), and in this proclamation he asserts, that the men claimed by us had been proved to be Americans, and not British subjects.

Thus the matter stands at present. The English-hating party in America raging with fury against us, evidently not so much on account of any injustice on our part, as on account of the severe rebuke which their arrogance has received in its being made known to the world, that, after all their boasting, they are unable to stand a moment against British ships of war. At first they asserted, that the *Chesapeake* was quite *unprepared* for action; that her cables were lying across her guns; that her decks were covered with stores; and that her powder was out *to dry*, having somehow or other got damp. All this was quite incredible; but, the Americans themselves, in their rage against poor Captain *Barron*, have told the truth. They have now said, that every thing was in perfect readiness for action, and that the guns were *loaded*, before the *Chesapeake* left the port. The fact is, that it was want of *skill* and *discipline*, and want of the confidence, which those give, which prevented Captain *Barron* from making such resistance as a British commander, under similar circumstances, would have made. The commander of a British vessel, so acting, would have been shot; but, it does not follow, that Captain *Barron*, though a great boaster, was a coward; and, if the truth were known, I dare say it would appear, that, with such a crew, no man could have fought the ship for ten minutes.

Having thus, Gentlemen, given you a brief history of the dispute, I shall now offer you my observations upon it, which, I think, cannot be done so well in any other way as in answering an article, which has been published in an excellent weekly paper, called the *Independent Whig*, which article I shall first insert for your perusal, premising only, that I presume that you love your country better than any other country, and that because the grubs and muck-worms injure your corn, you would not, for that reason, let down the fences and invite the hogs and the cattle to trample it under foot, or devour it:

“ We, who profess to have no political attachments but what emanate from the true spirit of liberty and a love of truth, cannot forbear expressing the surprise which we felt upon reading in Mr. Cobbett's Register of Saturday, the 1st of Aug. under the head of ‘American States,’ an avowal on the part of

“ that writer, that he was very sorry to hear Mr. Perceval say in the House of  
 “ Commons what seemed to indicate a decided disposition to yield ; and to add  
 “ that, if they do yield, if they follow the advice of the Morning Chronicle,\* our  
 “ navy will not be long-lived. We have neither leisure nor room in our present  
 “ number to enter into this discussion with Mr. Cobbett; but, as in our last  
 “ number we in a manner, under the head ‘Summary of Pclitics,’ maintained  
 “ nearly the same ground upon this subject, which we consider was soundly and  
 “ properly conveyed through the Morning Chronicle of Tuesday week last  
 “ (much as we generally execrate that Journal, we must agree with it in truth),  
 “ we deem ourselves bound at least to enter our decided protest both against the  
 “ propriety of the rebuke thus conveyed in this paragraph by Mr. Cobbett, and the  
 “ general principle he contends for. We unequivocally declare, that, in our judg-  
 “ ments, nothing can authorise such conduct as that which is reported to have  
 “ been the conduct of the commander of the Leopard, but a spirit of usurpation,  
 “ and a gross despotic stride of power. *Equity revolts against such a species of ty-  
 “ ranny being assumed by any single state over that of any other :* and, as to the law of  
 “ nations, no such power has been ever conceded. With respect to the argument,  
 “ attempted by Mr. Cobbett, ‘ that if we permit the Americans to inveigle and  
 “ ‘ detain our seamen, we cannot have a navy; the Americans would in fact re-  
 “ ‘ cruit for France, and England would be beaten by our own seamen.’ The  
 “ absurdity of this doctrine is almost beneath a comment, and in charity we  
 “ would fain hope that Mr. Cobbett must have been but half awake when he  
 “ wrote it. *Where one British seaman will be found on board an American, we be-  
 “ lieve FIFTY AMERICANS* (to say nothing of Swedes, Danes, Portugucse, and  
 “ almost every other country) are to be found on board British ships of war;  
 “ and if this great tenacity is really necessary for the maintenance of the dignity  
 “ of England, *why, we would ask Mr. Cobbett, may not every power that is left in  
 “ Europe, and which remains neuter, feel the same tenacity and claim the same privi-  
 “ lege?* We cannot, in EQUITY, see the distinction; *therefore, we repel the  
 “ doctrine.*—With respect to the insinuation about the British seamen, we con-  
 “ sider it *an outrageous imputation upon their LOYALTY that nothing can justify ;*  
 “ and, if symptoms of an evil so tremendous were ever to occur, the remedy  
 “ would always be in the hands of the ministry, seasonably to remonstrate, but  
 “ not with the fire of broadsides. We will not here attempt a refutation of  
 “ what we conceive the *unmerited abuse* Mr. Cobbett has heaped upon the people  
 “ of America, in saying, ‘ the Americans are like the worst set of women ; they

\* The article and commentary here alluded to is the following :—

AMERICAN STATES.—The history of the squabble which has taken place be-  
 tween these States and us is given in the following paragraph, said to be an  
 extract of a letter from Halifax, Nova Scotia, dated on the 5th of July :—“ This  
 “ is to advise you of an important event, which has lately taken place off the  
 “ Capes of Virginia. The American frigate Chesapeake, of 44 guns, Commodore  
 “ Barron, was known to have several deserters from our ships, lying off Norfolk  
 “ (watching the French), on board her. Representations of the fact had been  
 “ as I am informed, and believe, made to the American Secretary of the Navy,  
 “ to which no satisfactory answer was given. Captain Douglas, senior officer on  
 “ that station, knowing the Chesapeake about to sail for the Mediterranean, or-  
 “ dered the Leopard to cruise for her off the Capes, and to examine her for the  
 “ deserters. Accordingly when Captain Humphreys, who commands the  
 “ Leopard, came up with the Chesapeake, he sent a boat on board, with advice  
 “ of the information he had received of the deserters, and his orders to search  
 “ for them. Commodore Barron refusing to allow the search, Captain Hum-  
 “ phreys fired several shots, which the other paying no attention to, he at length  
 “ fired a broadside, which she returned by six or seven scattering guns, and, on  
 “ *receiving a second broadside, struck her colours.* On examination, the deserters,  
 “ to the number of five or six, were found, the very men who had been de-  
 “ manded.—In this short rencontre the Chesapeake had 6 men killed, and 21  
 “ wounded, and has returned into port very much shattered. The above is as  
 “ nearly the state of the case as I can recollect, from verbal communication, not  
 “ having seen any written account of the business. I am farther informed, that  
 “ the inhabitants of Norfolk, at a Town Meeting since, have entered into some  
 “ violent resolutions, and have prohibited all intercourse with our ships, and all  
 “ supplies of water and provisions.—This affair, I am informed, took place on



" will set up a terrible outcry, they will beat Admiral Berkeley in lungs; but, if we keep a firm foot, they will soon listen to reason: ' or the remainder of his coarse invective applied to Captain Barron and his frigate, whom he elegantly and classically terms a 'swaggering blade,' &c.; we consider it quite sufficient, unless we are farther called upon, to mark this kind of language with the expression of our decided contempt, whether we read it in Mr. Cobbett's Register or Mr. Perry's Chronicle. We deprecate the propriety of reflections upon the courage of a people, whose bravery, *when struggling for their rights and independence, has already been proved invincible*; and as to the right of *insulting* their flag with impunity, and forcibly to demand the privilege of searching their ships of war, *even under the certainty* of their containing British seamen, *we insist upon it to be a right unsupported by any principle of equity*, and that can only be maintained in argument by the same species of violence that it has been attempted to be enforced by the commander of the Leopard, viz. by a thundering assertion or a thundering broadside. If *these are the principles of liberty* Mr. Cobbett would teach the British people, he must excuse us from becoming his disciples. *Our ideas of liberty are to tolerate that in others, we claim as a right ourselves, and to repel every species of assumption of power not founded in equity and justice as derogatory to humanity and inimical to the natural rights of civilized society.*—As to Captain Barron, he seems to have done only his duty, and, under the circumstances in which he was placed, to have acted with exemplary moderation and humanity; how far the epithet of 'swaggering blade,' therefore, justly applies to him, it remains for the calmer reasoning powers of Mr. Cobbett to substantiate. We like not coarse and harsh epithets at any time, still less when there does not exist any thing in the shape of provocation to justify them. National prejudices are at all times unbecoming the true friend of liberty; he looks to principles and not to men, and scorns to justify the perpetration of that by one government he would condemn the practice of in another. *Americans, Frenchmen, and all other countries, have an equal right to liberty with Englishmen; and it is high time despotism was banished the world.*—Mr. Cobbett has invariably professed a friendship for Mr. Windham, whom we have as invariably considered as the very champion of despotism; as no man but he, whose heart was steeled against every noble ebullition of patriotism and overflowing with rancour and revenge, could have recommended a *vigour beyond the law*, and branded honest men, liberated from a state of persecution, with the epithet of *acquitted felons!*

" the 23rd of June, and, as far as I can learn, has been conducted with great coolness and temper by Capt. Humphreys. What will be the result time must determine; but if we give up the right of search, we shall soon be obliged to resign the empire of the seas. This goes by the Sylvia cutter, dispatched by Admiral Berkeley, with the account to government." The American statement is said to be this:—"They admit the desertion of the men from the English ships; they admit that a remonstrance was made in the latter end of May or beginning of June, to the Secretary of the Navy of the United States, and they state, that in consequence the men were taken into custody, and carried to Washington, where they underwent a regular examination in the presence of Mr. Erskine, the English Ambassador, and that on the examination they proved themselves to be citizens of the United States, born at or near Baltimore, and they had been pressed into the British service in Hampton Roads."—The ministers have said, in the House of Commons, that they are not *fully informed* upon this subject; and, I was very sorry to hear Mr. Perceval say what seemed to indicate a decided disposition to yield. If they do yield, if they follow the advice of the Morning Chronicle (which, for years, seems to have had a general retainer from the Americans), our navy will not be long-lived. Mind, I do not pretend to say, that we may not, in this instance, have been in the wrong; because there is nothing *authentic* upon the subject; nor am I prepared to say, that our right of search, in *all cases*, extends to ships of war; but of this I am certain, that if the law of nations do not allow you to search for deserters in a friend's territory, neither do they allow that friend to inveigle away your troops or your seamen, to do which is *an act of hostility*, and I ask for no better *proof* of inveigling, than the enlisting and the refusing to give up, such troops or seamen.—The American statement I do not believe; and, were there no other witnesses, I would not believe it upon the oaths of all

" —These are inconsistencies for Mr. Cobbett to reconcile with his ardent  
 " professed love of liberty; to us they are irreconcilable.—These observa-  
 " tions, extorted from us by Mr. Cobbett, necessarily lead to the following few  
 " remarks upon the question of right attempted to be claimed by the advocates  
 " of such a power belonging exclusively to the English government.—The en-  
 " gagement between the British and the American frigate off the Chesapeake has  
 " been stated to have arisen from a demand of the British Captain to search the  
 " American for deserters, which was refused on the part of the American, who  
 " was reduced to submission at the mouth of the cannon.—The visiting by  
 " force the ship of a neutral and friendly power, for the purpose of searching  
 " for deserters, is a case which does not seem to have been, at any time, in the  
 " contemplation of writers on the Law of Nations; for, neither Grotius, Paffen-  
 " dorf, nor Vattel, gives an opinion on the question: and we scarcely imagine  
 " that civilians will be able to produce any authority for the exercise of a power  
 " wholly inconsistent with the sovereignty and independence of the State who  
 " submits to it. The right of searching ships for goods contraband of war has its  
 " limits, and has not yet been extended to ships bearing the flag of an indepen-  
 " dent State; nor can we discover any instance where such a ship has been sub-  
 " jected to search at all, much less for deserters, which has never yet become  
 " the subject of Treaties settling the contraband of war.—*If the principle be*  
 " *once admitted, it will follow as a natural consequence that the Americans or*  
 " *the Danes will possess an EQUAL RIGHT of searching our ships on the same*  
 " *pretence, and shall we argue that we prevent its exercise by our naval supe-*  
 " *riority, and call this equal justice!*—In the case of the Swedish convoy, there  
 " was no claim made to visit and search the ship of war, our claim was to  
 " search the ships under convoy. The Swedes contended that even the pre-  
 " sence of their ship of war ought to be taken for a security that the convoy  
 " carried no contraband; what would they then have said, if we had also in-  
 " sisted on a right to search the ship of war as well as the convoy? And all  
 " the learning displayed on this question by the eminent civilians, Sohlegel and  
 " Dr. Croke, does not even hint at this right as likely to become a matter of  
 " discussion. Indeed what can be a more direct invasion of the right of sove-  
 " reignty, or a more flagrant attack on the honour of an independent nation,  
 " than to insist, as a matter of right, upon visiting a ship of war and searching  
 " for deserters? As a matter of right, we can find no acknowledged law,  
 " no case, no treaty, that will support such a demand.—And, if we view the

their sea captains put together. The fault of our officers, upon that station, has  
 been excessive forbearance. We have suffered greatly from our tameness to-  
 wards those states. Our commanders (with some few exceptions) have dis-  
 covered the feelings of traders to America. The insults and injuries they have  
 endured were disgraceful.—The Americans are like the worst sort of women.  
 They will set up a terrible outcry. They will beat Admiral Berkeley in lungs;  
 but, if we keep a firm foot, they will soon listen to reason.—Poor CAPTAIN  
 BARRON and his frigate! I dare say, that this swaggering blade (who is, doubt-  
 less, dubbed *Commodore*) has, a thousand times said, that he wished for such an  
 opportunity as this. I can form a very accurate conception of the rage of the  
 people at Norfolk, and of the noisy town-meeting; and their burning of the  
 water-casks of the *Melampus* is perfectly in character, putting one in mind of  
 the savages, who used to destroy the boat-tackling of Captain Cook and to mur-  
 der his straggling mariners, when one of their queens or princesses had been in-  
 duced (without much importunity) to commit a *faux pas* with some one or other  
 of the crew. As to poor Commodore Barron, I should not wonder, if they were  
 to eat him alive. Their rage must be beyond all bounds, and if, in their manner  
 of expressing it, they should appear to be very nice, all I can say is, they are  
 greatly reformed.—The Morning Chronicle seems to anticipate an lliad of  
 woes from a war with the American States. I thought I had *proved* to him, that  
 that country could not go to war with us, without producing its own destruction  
 as a political body. If necessary, I will prove it to him again. But I would  
 not, because I am morally certain of this, commit an act of *injustice* towards  
 America. I would only demand and insist upon the *rights* of England; and,  
 above all other things, I would insist upon it, that America should not be per-  
 mitted to destroy the British navy.—We are not, observe, to judge of the  
 feelings of the *people* of America, properly so called, by what we read in their

"conduct of the British Captain as a matter of prudence, we are equally at a loss for arguments to justify his proceedings. *At a time when all the ports of the European Continent are shut against our commerce, we do not expect to find one man hardy enough to assert that it would be prudent to cause the ports of the American Continent to be shut against us also. When our trade on this side the Atlantic is sensibly diminishing, it cannot be prudent to destroy the opportunity of extending it beyond the Atlantic; and yet this must be the mildest effect of a rupture with America.*—Since then, the proceedings of the British Captain can neither be justified by the law of nations nor palliated as a prudent exercise of that discretion which every naval commander must possess, if reparation be not made for the insult offered to the American flag, it will be evident that this occasion was purposely embraced to provoke hostilities with the United States. Had we been treated in the same manner, our complaints might have been louder and more effectual than theirs, but they would not therefore have been more just.—We have penned these remarks with regret, inasmuch as they may be liable to involve us in a controversy with Mr. Cobbett, and for a moment even to create a disunion between the avowed friends of liberty; but Mr. Cobbett left us no alternative but either an ignominious connivance at what appeared to us to be nothing less than a most outrageous slander of the people of America, or an exposition of the calumny. Our consciences, we trust, will never let us compromise our public duty."

Now, Gentlemen, though I do not wish to call in question the sincerity of this writer in his expressions of good-will towards me, I must confess, that I cannot see what occasion there was for his dragging in here my constantly professed friendship for Mr. Windham, and that gentleman's old phrases of "*a vigour beyond the law,*" and of "*acquitted felons.*" My friendship for Mr. Windham, Gentlemen (though I am far from certain that he sets any value upon it), is founded in my knowledge, that he is an upright and honourable man; that, in all the many opportunities that he has had, he has never added to his fortune (though very moderate) at the public expense; that, according to my conviction, no man can charge him with ever having been concerned in a job; and that, whether his opinions be right or wrong, he always openly and strongly avows them. As to the two expressions imputed to him, the first arose from a

base and ignorant newspapers, any more than we are to judge of the feelings of the people of England by what we read from the London daily press. Nor is the conduct of the rum-soused rabble at Norfolk any criterion. *More than one-half* of the people of America are disgusted at the base partiality, which is shown to our enemies; and, though the other part is by far the most noisy, I venture to predict, that, when time has been taken to cool men's minds, the voice of our friends and the friends of justice will prevail. *They will not go to war with us.* Without justifiable cause; without some act of clear injustice on our part, their government will not venture upon such a measure; and, as I am pretty certain that our fault will not be on that side, I conjure the ministers to remain firm.—In all disputes with America, there is a set of persons amongst us, who are always ready to *presume against ourselves.* This is intolerable, and that, too, while our presumption is exactly the contrary with respect to disputes between us and every other feeble power. The reason is, that there are so many persons here, who have property in the American funds; that there are so many partners in American mercantile houses, as they are called; and that there are so many opulent manufacturers, who keep thousands of English wretches to "work and weep," for their own profit and for the clothing of the Americans. This is the principal reason of a partiality so unnatural, and so disgraceful to our character.—"*Peace, peace,*" says Mr. Whitbread. Aye, *peace,* as soon as possible; but if you mean *submission,* I am for putting it off to the last moment. I am far, God knows my heart, from relishing submission at home; but let my country hold up her head at any rate.—In dismissing this subject for the present, I beg leave just to add, that if we permit the Americans to inveigle and detain our seamen, we cannot have a navy. The Americans will, in fact, recruit for France; and, England will be beaten by her own seamen.

threat, on the opposite side, that *the law would be set at defiance*; "if so," said he, "we must have recourse to a vigour beyond the law to enforce obedience to the law." From a writer, who professes so pure an attachment to the *love of truth*, one might have expected something better than a selection of odious words, making part of a speech, which, taking all together, render those words not only not odious, but perfectly proper. And, as to "*acquitted felons*;" though Mr. Windham might be wrong in his opinion, that the persons acquitted *were* felons, will you deny, that guilty men may be sometimes acquitted? Is there *no man*, can this writer think of no man, that has been *tried and acquitted*, whom he considers *as guilty*? Nay, has not this writer asserted in terms as plain as he dared to use (and I wished he had dared to use plainer terms), that guilty men have been tried and acquitted? And, has he not continued to speak of such men as being still as guilty as if they had never been tried at all? Where, then, let me ask him, was his "*spirit of equal liberty*," when he was endeavouring to perpetuate against Mr. Windham a charge of remorseless cruelty for having done no more than what he himself daily does; namely, represented those as guilty, whom the law has acquitted? He will, doubtless, say, that *the cases were different*; that those whom he persists in accusing of guilt, though acquitted, were *really guilty*, whereas the others were perfectly innocent. This is, indeed, the point; and though I should believe him, he would, in order to substantiate his charge of injustice against Mr. Windham, be compelled to show that *he thought* those innocent, whom he denominated "*acquitted felons*," a task, which, for want of positive evidence, he must begin by giving us some one instance, at least, in which that gentleman has been known to use disguise or to discover insincerity, an instance, which, I am satisfied, he would be very much puzzled to produce.

In considering this writer's complaint against me, with regard to the dispute with America, I will first notice what relates to the particular case in question, and then trouble you with a few observations as to the general principle, upon which his reasoning proceeds.

As to the particular case, we, Gentlemen, have a treaty of amity and commerce with the Americans, in which treaty we grant them great benefits and indulgences, and, almost the only stipulation in our favour, is, that our ships shall have free entry into their ports and harbours, there to water, victual, and refit (if necessary) without let or molestation of any sort. But, if this stipulation does not include the liberty of having command over our ships' *crews* upon such occasions, of what use is it to us? Or, rather, is not the stipulation, in such case, a despicable fraud? To inveigle away any part of our ships' crews, under such circumstances; or, to secret them, or withhold them, from their officers, is a gross violation of this article of the treaty; is an act of hostility, the most hostile act, that the party is *able* to commit against us; and, therefore, if Captain Humphreys had proceeded, at once to attack the Chesapeak, without any previous application for the men, he would have done no more than strict justice would have warranted. Suppose that the whole of a ship's crew were, while lying at Norfolk, to run the ship aground, and insist upon keeping her in that situation. Will this writer contend, that we should not have a right to treat it as an act of *hostility*, if the American people, or government, were to receive these men, and prevent us, no matter by what law, from seizing them? If *some* of the men may be received and withheld from us, why not the *whole*; and, why not in one case as well as in another case?

So that, at this rate, a treaty of amity would mean, a thing whereby one nation is inveigled into the arms of another, for the purpose of that other doing it all the mischief in its power. This writer chooses to *begin* with what he calls the *insult* given to the American flag; he talks about the right of searching American flag-ships for deserters; just as if nothing *previous* had occurred. If it had suited him to notice, that, by taking the deserters on board, the Americans had committed an act of hostility against us, his conclusion, or, at least, the conclusion of his readers, must have been very different from that which he has drawn.—If, indeed, the deserters were not British subjects, but really Americans born; if this was *proved* to the reasonable satisfaction of our minister in America, or to our commander upon station, that alters the case; but, if that proof was not given, and, it is my decided opinion that it will appear that it was not given, Admiral Berkeley, in giving orders for the search, and Captain Humphreys in so manfully executing those orders, deserve the praises of their country.

But, Gentlemen, I contend for the right of searching for deserters, upon the general principle, that the seas are *the dominion* of those who are able to maintain a mastery over all that swims upon them. The waters, within *cannon shot*, of a coast, are held, by civilians, to belong to those who dwell upon the coast. But, what *right* have they to the exclusive use and enjoyment of these, any more than we have to the dominion of the whole of the seas, whereon we are able to maintain a superiority of force?—The writer before us has said a great deal about *equity* and *equal justice* and *equal liberty*. But, with submission, I must express my belief, that he has not taken time, duly to discriminate between the rights and liberties of individuals and the rights and liberties of nations. Individuals enter into a compact, express or tacit, to enjoy each of them such and such rights and liberties; or, rather, they all consent to surrender a part of their liberties; to put their natural rights into a common stock, whence, in well-regulated states, each draws an equal share and enjoys it upon conditions common to all. But, it is impossible, that any such compact should exist amongst nations, who have no common stock of rights or liberties, who have no common government, who have no general head, who acknowledge no sovereign, who appeal to no arbiter but the sword, and with whom *conquest* confers the best possible right of dominion. But, while this last-mentioned right, with respect to the *land*, is regarded as indubitable by all the Dutch and German and French writers upon what is called the *law of nations*, they all seem to deny, that there can be any rightful dominion upon the *waters*; except, indeed, as I have before mentioned, as far out from the shore as a *cannon ball* will reach; which, you will observe, amounts exactly to this, that they have a right to shoot at us, whenever we go within cannon shot of their shores without their permission, but that we can by no means obtain any right of dominion in the other waters where they want to go. It is a favourite doctrine, in America, that the sea is the *highway* of nations; but, why is it so any more than the land? I can see no other reason than this: that, because upon the land, nations are *able to prevent* their country from being common to all; and, if we are *able to prevent* this upon the sea, is not our right quite as good as theirs? This writer says, that if the right of searching for deserters be once admitted, it will follow, as a natural consequence, that the Americans will possess an *equal* right of searching our ships upon the same pretence; “and shall we argue, that

"we have the superiority, and call this *equal justice*." No: we will not mind the *equal*; but we will call it *justice*; because, will we say, "you sail upon these seas only *by our permission*, only by our forbearance and indulgence; and, as to the question of *moral justice*, while the exercise of the right of search is not at all necessary to your existence, it is absolutely necessary to ours." This, be assured, gentlemen, is the doctrine we must now maintain at the cannon's mouth, if our enemies, no matter how they have been stirred up, shall refuse to listen to any other voice.

"Americans," says this writer, "Frenchmen, and all others, have an equal right to *liberty* with Englishmen; and it is high time despotism was banished from the world." With all my heart. But, what has this to do with the right of search, or with dominion upon the seas? I want not to take away any of the liberties of the Americans, I only want to see my country assert her rights of dominion, *where she has dominion*; and, if this writer will have it to be a question of liberty or of despotism, where has he found a justification for the distinction, which, in imitation of the Morning Chronicle, he makes between American merchant ships and American ships of war? Is not *liberty* violated in the searching of the former as well as in the searching of the latter?

Gentlemen, the notions of *universal equality*, upon which this writer proceeds, are chimerical, and never can be brought into practice, as long as it shall please God to continue the world divided into nations and tongues. They are, too, mischievous as well as chimerical; because they lead to a laxity of feeling towards one's own country, which, upon every account, we are as much bound to prefer before all other countries, as we are bound to prefer our own brethren before all the rest of our countrymen. Guard your hearts, too, I beseech you, against abetting the cause of the Americans, or any other nation, upon the ground of their being *friends to liberty*; for, be assured, that, if they could destroy the navy of England they would; and, though it is possible that they might love liberty themselves, *if they could get it*, they would not stir one inch to save us from dungeons and chains; but, on the contrary, when they saw us manacled, would laugh at our folly. This tender feeling, Gentlemen, for the interests and honour of foreign nations, is a feeling of modern date in the English patriot's breast. The motto, which I have taken for this paper, contains the sentiments of one of those, who assisted in overturning the kingly government of England. His were not notions of universal equality amongst nations. The men of that day understood what liberty was, full as well as my friend of the Independent Whig. They were no court sycophants. They spared not their blood in the cause of liberty at home; but, never did it enter into their minds, that all nations were entitled to equal rights upon the seas. They gave up none, no not one, of the rights or the honours of England; but, they restored, re-established, and confirmed those rights and honours, which the preceding pusillanimous kings had suffered to wither and decay.

There are some other important points, upon which I shall, in my next letter, trouble you with some observations, such, for instance, as the danger, which this writer apprehends, from the *closing of the American ports against us*, in which he happens most harmoniously to coincide in expression with those whom, I hope, he most despises. The *character* of the Americans, too, and especially that of their sea-faring people, he has adventurously taken upon him to vindicate. The *probable number of our*

seamen on board of American ships I shall be able to state with a little more accuracy than he has done. In the meanwhile, suffer me to exhort you, not to let your resentment against our calumniators carry you one inch towards an indifference with respect to the fate of our country from without; for, be assured, that if a conqueror were to take possession of it, *we* should be the principal sufferers, and not *they*, who would readily enlist in his service, and who would be gladly received, as ready-made instruments in his works of rapacity and plunder.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your faithful friend,

and obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT

Botley, 13th Aug. 1807.

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## TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER.

### LETTER XXII.

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GENTLEMEN,—In resuming the subject of my last letter to you, I beg leave to remind you, that my reasons for using this mode of communicating my sentiments to the public, are, 1st, that, when addressing a body of persons of whose sound understanding one has an experimental proof, one is more likely to be cautious in stating, and correct in deducing; 2nd, that, having seen such striking proofs of your public spirit, and having seen so little of that spirit elsewhere, I deem it a mark of respect justly your due, to appeal to you more particularly than to any other part of the nation; and, 3rd, that I am fully persuaded, that, first or last, the opinions which *you* adopt and act upon, as to all matters whether foreign or domestic, will be adopted and acted upon by the whole of the people of this kingdom.

The writer of the Independent Whig, whose talents and whose undaunted courage are quite worthy of all the admiration they have excited, is, notwithstanding his talents, mistaken, as he very well may be, with respect to what he calls the *impolicy* of the conduct of our commanders upon the American station. He says, that it is absurd to apprehend any serious injury to our maritime power from permitting the Americans to inveigle away and detain our seamen; and, he asserts, that, for one British sailor that there is on board the ships of America, there are fifty Americans, and *others*, on board of British ships. This is an assertion calculated to give us a higher opinion of this writer's boldness than of his information upon the subject on which he is writing; for, the seamen on board the American ships amount to about 70,000, and, upon divers occasions, when I was in America, it was stated, and generally acknowledged, that one *fourth* part of the seamen on board of American ships, were subjects born of this country; and, as to foreigners on board of our ships, the number is comparatively trifling, and must be so, because our officers have so great a dislike to them. It is hinted, that desertion from

our ships might be prevented by avoiding to impress men on board, and by treating the seamen better when on board. Now, though, upon any of the principles of a free government, the impressing of seamen cannot be fully defended, still it is a thing which has *always* existed in England ; and, it follows, of course, that, when a man, or boy, first enters a coal or any other merchant ship, he is well aware of the *condition*, namely, that when the greater service of the country requires him, he is liable to be taken into that service. When a practice has existed for so many ages, under all descriptions of kings and queens, and under all political revolutions, it requires much thought upon the matter before it be held up to public execration. I will draw no comparison between the impressing of seamen and the ballot for the militia, the latter being evidently partial in the last degree ; but, those who are the most strenuous advocates for the liberties of the people, are ready to acknowledge, and, indeed, to insist, that every *landsmen*, capable of bearing arms, is, and ought to be, liable to be called forth in defence of the country, if need require ; and, if this be just, what injustice is there in calling forth *seamen*, in cases of similar need ? Nor will it, I think, be objected, that, in the latter case, the call operates *partially* ; it applies to *all* seamen ; and, observe, that, from all calls in defence by land, seamen are exempted ; to which may be added this circumstance, that seamen, when impressed, are not taken from their homes, and put into a new and strange state of life ; but are taken from one ship to be put into another, have the same sort of labour to perform, and the same sort of life to lead ; whereas the landsman, called forth to bear arms, is taken from his home and his business, is exposed to hardships unfamiliar to him, and returns, in all probability, injured in his mind, body, or estate. As to the treatment of our sailors when on board, my belief is, that much improvement might be made ; but, Gentlemen, be you assured, that, as long as confinement shall be irksome to man ; as long as change of scene shall be delightful to him ; as long as a hankering after recreation and an indulgence of his desires shall form the leading propensities of his mind, so long will seamen, to whatever country belonging, and however treated while on board, continue, occasionally, to desert, and especially when they can do it with certain impunity. Numerous, therefore, as the ships of America are ; met with as they are in all the ports of the world, how could we possibly keep our seamen, unless we maintained and exercised the right of searching for them ? *Theirs* we might have in return ; but, theirs we do not want. We want to keep our own ; we want to avoid confusion, a mixture of nations. Ships of *war*, indeed, the Americans have not many ; but, if we admit the principle, that the *national flag* is to cover every thing, I will warrant it, that we shall soon see enough of the American national flags ; and, as I before stated, we should see our own seamen, collected by the Americans, transferred to the service of France, by whom special care would be taken, that they should not again desert. This would, unquestionably, be the greatest evil that we could possibly experience ; and this evil, unless we submitted to all the demands of America, however extravagant in themselves and however insolently urged, we should very soon have to encounter.

But, Gentlemen, this writer feels, or, at least, he expresses, great alarm, lest the Americans should *shut their ports against our goods*, in which feeling he has for rivals those disinterested patriots and profound politicians, the merchants trading with America, whose Proclamation I



will here insert for your perusal. It is dated from the American "CHAMBER OF COMMERCE" at Liverpool, August 11th, 1807.

"At a general and very numerous meeting of the members of this association held this day, it was resolved unanimously, that the following circular letter, prefixed by this resolution, be printed, and that the vice-president (in the absence of the president) be requested to sign the same, on behalf of the American Chamber of Commerce in Liverpool, and to transmit a copy thereof to Philip Sanson, Esq. Chairman of the Committee of American Merchants in London.—Resolved, that the secretary do also furnish the several members of this association with copies, to be transmitted, as they in their discretion may deem expedient, to their respective correspondents in Great Britain and Ireland.

"(CIRCULAR.)—Sir: A Meeting of the Members of the American Chamber of Commerce, at this port, has been convened this day, for the purpose of taking into consideration the present serious and critical state of affairs, as relating to the intercourse between the British Empire and the United States of America.—When it is considered how essentially the vital interests of both the countries are concerned in a maintenance of the relations of amity and commerce, and particularly at the present juncture, it must be the wish of every sincere friend to his country, whether Briton or American, that these relations should not be interrupted, unless such interruption be rendered inevitable by some imperious and irresistible necessity, arising from that regard which it is incumbent on every country to pay to its honour and its interest. If the manufacturers and merchants of this kingdom shall be convinced that the conduct of the British government towards the United States of America has been and continues, such as becomes a government desirous of preserving the relations of peace and amity; and if it should now be found that these relations cannot longer be preserved, without compromising the honour, and thereby sacrificing the best interests of the British empire, it is hoped there are no sacrifices or privations to which the manufacturers and merchants will not cheerfully submit, in order to prevent such consequences.—If, on the contrary, the manufacturers and merchants of this kingdom shall be convinced that the intercourse, which has now subsisted for more than twenty years, between the British Empire and the United States of America, with so many, and such progressively increasing advantages to each, is in danger of being interrupted by an assertion to claims, incompatible with a due regard to the EQUAL RIGHTS of both countries, or by unjust conduct on the part either of the British government, or of any persons acting under its authority, it then becomes a duty to exercise that invaluable privilege,—the essential bulwark of the British constitution,—of respectfully making such representations to the government as the circumstances of the case may require.—And as these circumstances may be such as to render it highly important that the persons making such representations should act with promptness and in concert;—I am requested to inform you that, if such circumstances should arise, the Members of the American Chamber of Commerce in Liverpool hold themselves in readiness to correspond and co-operate with the manufacturers and merchants of Great Britain and Ireland, for the attainment of the important objects herein-mentioned.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,  
"JOHN RICHARDSON, Vice-President."

Now, Gentlemen, though I do not deny, that Mr. John Richardson and the Corresponding Society, of which he is Vice-President, have a perfect right to assemble and to invite others to "co-operate" with them in order to act with "promptitude;" in endeavouring to obtain, though contrary to the will of government, the objects which they have in view; though I by no means deny them this right, I greatly fear, that, if you were to form a Corresponding Society, for the purpose of effecting, "by promptness and concert," an abolition of useless places and pensions, and for a restoration of the act passed in the reign of King William III. "for the better securing of the rights and liberties of the people;" if you were to form a Corresponding Society for this purpose, and were to do me the honour to make me "Vice President" of it, I great-

ly fear, that John Richardson and his Society would, to a man, vote for my being hanged, and your being transported; and yet, it is, I think, evident, that our right, in the case supposed, would be as clear as that of the "Chamber of Commerce" now is.

But, leaving this worst of all aristocracies to enjoy its day, and waiting patiently for the arrival of our day, let us examine a little, Gentlemen, into the grounds of the alarm, expressed by the Independent Whig and the Chamber of Commerce, at the probability of seeing the American ports *shut against our goods*.

Gentlemen, part of the wool (one article is enough, for the same reasoning applies to all), which grows upon the backs of sheep, which feed upon the grass, which grows upon the land of England, is made into cloth of various denominations, which cloth is made by English labour, and is afterwards sent to clothe the Americans. Now, does it appear to you, that it would do us any great injury, if the Americans were to refuse to wear this cloth; if they were to refuse to receive the benefit of so much of the produce of the soil and of the labour of our country? *They must go naked and absolutely perish without this cloth; but, that I lay aside, for the present, as of no account. What injury would it do us, if they were to be able to prevent our woollens from entering their ports? Why, my assailant of the Independent Whig will say, perhaps, that such prevention would be the ruin of thousands; that it would break up our cloth manufactories, and produce starvation amongst the cloth makers. This sweeping way of describing is always resorted to in such cases; but, Gentlemen, though we actually clothe the Americans, they do not take off one tenth part of our cloth. And, supposing it possible for them effectually to put a stop to this outlet, how would it injure us? The consequence would be, that cloth would be cheaper in England; the consequence of that would be, that wool would be cheaper; the consequence of that would be, that sheep would be less valuable; the consequence of that would be, that less of them would be raised. But, the feed which now goes to the keeping of part of our sheep, would go to the keeping of something else, and the labour now bestowed upon part of our woollen cloths, would be bestowed upon something else; in all probability upon the land, which always calls for labour, and which never fails to yield a grateful return.*

There is, Gentlemen, as it were by pre-concert, by regular system, a loud cry, upon all occasions, set up about our *loss of commerce*. Wars have been made, over and over again, for the sake of commerce; and, when the rights and honour of the nation are to be sacrificed by a peace, the regaining or preserving of commerce is invariably the plea. To hear these merchants and their ignorant partisans talk, one would almost suppose that, if sincere in their expressions of alarm, they must look upon commerce as the sole source of our food and raiment, and even of the elements which are necessary to man's existence. Commerce, they tell us, is "essential to the vital interests" of the country? Who would not suppose, that commerce brought us our bread and our water. Gentlemen, to support commerce, the wars in Egypt were undertaken; the wars in India are carried on without ceasing; the war in South America and in Africa are now undertaken. Oh! What English blood and English labour and English happiness and English honour has not this commerce cost! But, "without commerce how are we to defray the expenses of government, and the interest of the national debt?" This is a question that every frightened female puts to one; and, really, notwith-

standing it is well known that England has been upon the decline of power ever since she became *decidedly* commercial, and that France has grown in power in the same proportion as her commerce has declined, till, at last, having lost *all* her commerce, she has become absolute mistress of the whole of the continent of Europe; notwithstanding this, the commercial tribe, with Pitt at their head, have so long and so impudently assumed, that it is commerce that "supports the nation," that it is not to be wondered at, that a man who is foolish enough to have his all in the funds, should be alarmed, lest he should lose his dividends with the loss of commerce. The merchants would fain persuade us (perhaps they may really think so) that their goods and their ships pay the greater part of the taxes. "Look, here!" say they, pointing to their imports and exports. 'That is very fine, for a few hundreds of them; but what is it to the *whole of the nation*?' "But," say they, "look at the Custom-House duties." Yes, and *who pay* those duties? It is *we*, Gentlemen, who pay those duties. The payment comes out of *our labour*, and from no other source whatever. The people of America have been cajoled by this sort of doctrine. "We pay *no taxes*," says one of their boasting citizens, "except such as are imposed upon *foreign commodities*." That is to say, except such as are imposed upon *Rum*, which is to them what beer is to us; *Sugar and Coffee*, of which, in part, the breakfast of every human creature in the country is composed; *Woollens and Linens and Cottons*, without which the people must go naked by day and be frost-bitten by night. But, what is the difference, Gentlemen, whether they pay a tax upon their coats, or whether they pay it upon their candles?

But, Gentlemen, bearing in mind, however, that *we* pay the custom-house duties, let us see what proportion those duties bear to the whole of the taxes raised upon us. The whole of the taxes, collected last year, amount to about 50 millions; the custom-house duties, exclusive of *coals*, and goods carried from one part of the kingdom to another, to about five millions! Supposing, therefore, that, if we did not pay these five millions in this way, we should not possess them, to pay in any other way, if called upon; supposing this, is there here any falling off to be alarmed at? Why, Gentlemen, the *Barley* alone of England, pays, in malt and in beer, more clear money into the Exchequer than all the shipping and all the foreign commerce put together; and, as to the revenue arising from the trade with America, it is less than what arises from the porter which you drink in the City of Westminster alone. The fact is, Gentlemen, that the means of supporting fleets and armies, the means of meeting all the squanderings that we witness, the means of paying the dividends at the Bank, come out of the land of the country and the labour of its people. These are the sources, from which all those means proceed; and all that the merchants, and ministers like merchants, tell us about the resources of commerce, means merely this, that while we are sweating at every pore to pay the taxes, we ought to believe, that the taxes are paid by others. I will tell you, Gentlemen, who would be injured by the shutting of the American ports against our goods. A few great merchants and manufacturers; and, observe it well, some hundreds of men, and some of those very great men, who have their money in the American funds. These, and these alone, be you well assured, would suffer any serious inconvenience from the shutting of the American ports; and these men are amongst the very worst enemies that the people of England have to overcome.

Nothing is more convenient for the purpose of a squandering, jobbing, corrupting, bribing minister, than a persuasion amongst the people, that it is from the *commerce*, and not from *their labour*, that the taxes come; and, it has long been a fashionable way of thinking, that, it is no matter how great the expenses are, so that commerce does but keep pace with them in increase. Nothing can better suit such a minister and his minions than the propagation of opinions like these. But, Gentlemen, you have seen the commerce tripled since the fatal day when Pitt became minister; and have you found, that *your taxes have not been increased*? The commerce has been tripled, and so have the *parish paupers*. Away, then, I beseech you, with this destructive delusion! See the thing in its true light. Look upon *all* the taxes as arising out of the land and the labour, and distrust either the head or the heart of the man who would cajole you with a notion of their arising from any other source.

But, Gentlemen, the much-talked-of and often-threatened non-importation act of America is a bug-bear fit only to frighten children and men of childish minds. Such an act was *passed* nearly two years ago; but, observe, it contained a tail clause, empowering the President to *suspend* its execution. The Congress has met twice since; the act has been *renewed*, but, still the *suspending* clause, that magic rag in the tooth of the serpent, has prevented its execution. Nay, in one case, by mistake, the term of suspension appears to have expired; but, though the act was for a few days *in force*, it was *not executed*; and had no more effect upon the importation of English goods, than if it had been one of the old ballads, of which you see such an abundance hung upon the walls at Hyde Park corner. Nor let it be imagined, that this arises from a reluctance to quarrel with us. I have before assigned the true cause. I have shown *why* it is morally impossible, that, for any length of time,\* such an act should be executed in America, our goods, besides being *indispensably*

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\* The article alluded to here is one dated 20th Dec. 1806, and the following is the argument referred to in the above letter to the Electors of Westminster:—

At no time, under no circumstances that the imagination can form to itself, would it be prudent or safe for us to concede any point connected with the maintenance of our power at sea; but, at the present time, and under circumstances that I have endeavoured to describe in the foregoing article, concession would be the beginning of annihilation to the only force, on which we have now to rely for keeping the enemy from our doors. Give up the right of search, and to give up a part expressly will be giving up the whole by implication, or, at least by interpretation; give up that, and in the space of two years, France will beat us in that which has hitherto been called the English Channel.—Refuse, and what is the consequence? The execution of a *non-importation act*, passed in America, suspended now, perhaps, but ready to be put in rigid execution the moment the final refusal is made known. And what will be the effect of this terrible act, which is to awe England into compliance? Into a surrender of rights, undisputed by the public law of Europe, and exercised by all nations, except those whose *interest* it has been not to exercise them, or who had not the *power* to exercise them? What will be the effect of this act, supposing the American government to have passed it with any other view than that of exciting the fears of timid commercial avarice? The effect would be, if it were *possible* to execute the act, to prevent large quantities of goods from being carried to America from this kingdom, which, as the phrase usually is, would *greatly injure our commerce and manufactures*; for, as to our *navigation*, it would not injure that at all, it being very material to observe, that not one English ship would thereby be thrown out of employment, because not one English ship nor one English sailor (except, perhaps, some deserters from our colliers or our fleet) is ever employed in the transport of English goods to the American States. But, what is the meaning of this phrase, “injury to our commerce and manufac-

necessary to the people of that country, being the source of much more than one half of the whole of its revenues. I then said, and I have since said, that, whether at war or at peace with us, they will have our goods and we shall have theirs; that, talk about the non-importation act as long as they please for the purpose of forming a combination amongst our merchants and manufacturers favourable to them, they can never put such an act in execution for any length of time; and that, therefore, our ministers would be amongst the most criminal of men, if, in yielding to such combinations, they gave up a single particle of our maritime rights.

The "Chamber of Commerce," this mercantile club, this new Corresponding Society, forces me back, for a moment, to the subject of *maritime rights*. These gentry, too, without any other learning than what they have picked up, in mere scraps, from the newspapers, talk about the "EQUAL rights of *both countries*," thereby assuming, as a principle *admitted*, that America is equal with England as to all manner of rights upon the sea. It is truly said, Gentlemen, that, where the *treasure is*, there will the heart be also; but, as, comparatively speaking, very few Englishmen have treasure in America, so, I trust, that there will be very few of them who will be found to adopt the sentiments of the "Chamber of Commerce," which, indeed, calls itself *American*, and which is, probably, composed of men, whose fortunes are principally lodged in that country. Men with *English hearts*, of whatever opinions respecting domestic matters, have never, until lately, suffered, in silence, any one to deny to their country a right of *sea dominion*. The dominion of the seas, even to the *opposite shores*, has, until of late, been distinctly claimed by all the kings and queens and rulers of England ever since our country has borne that name; and, our history shows, that those who have been most distinguished for their attachment to our domestic liberties, have been the most zealous in maintaining this sea-dominion.

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tures?" It is certainly figurative. It would say, that by injuring our merchants and manufacturers, the measure would injure our country. But, those merchants and manufacturers must excuse me if I regard not this as a legitimate conclusion; for numerous are the cases, real as well as supposed, in which a measure, which is injurious to particular classes of men, may be, and are, not only not injurious, but beneficial to the community in general; and, though this may not be a measure of that description, I am fully persuaded, that, if it *could* be strictly executed, the injury to the general interests of the nation, the injury to her power, to the means of defending herself, to the means of her maintaining her consequence amongst nations, would, if any at all, be very small indeed.—I made, in my second letter to Mr. Windham, when touching upon the consequences of the seizure at Hamburgh, some observations respecting the effect, in a national point of view, of excluding our manufactures from foreign countries, to which observations I beg leave to refer the reader, as applicable to this case; and, let me add here, that no abusive paragraph from a Treasury scribe, such as John Bowles or Redhead Yorke, will, either by me or my readers, be taken as conclusive proof, that those observations were erroneous.—But, would the injury, supposing it to be an injury, be all on one side? Would the Americans themselves experience no injury from this same measure? To hear some men talk upon this subject, one would imagine, that to *get rid* of goods, the produce of sheep's backs and of our mines and of the work of our hands was a positive good that nothing could counterbalance. If this be the case, why not throw them into the sea, instead of putting them on board of American ships, for the privilege of doing which we are to pay so dear? To hear some men talk upon this subject, one would really imagine, that it was purely to oblige us, out of mere compassion and Christian charity to us, that the Americans wore our cloth, and cut their meat with our knives. It may be the opinion of some, that they have proved themselves to be affectionate children; but, God preserve, I

They were not frightened with the threats of France and of Holland (then great in maritime force) combined. They heard the solemn German quack authors and the flippant Frenchmen talk about the *law of nations*, and, as far as these related to the forms of treaties and the like, they paid attention to them. But, they scouted the idea, that conquest constituted right of dominion upon land, where Englishmen could scarcely gain any conquests, and that there could be no such thing as dominion at sea, where alone, in all human probability, England could make conquests. They were told, I dare say, that their claim of sea-dominion was making might constitute right; but, they would readily answer, that experience and reason joined had taught them, that, *as to the affairs of nations*, it was might alone, in fact, that did constitute right; and, this they would avow without any fear of being thought the advocates of despotism. Upon various occasions, when I, for my part, have had to speak of the conquests of Buonaparte, I have always said, that he had, in all cases where not prohibited by a previous positive compact, to which he was a party, a right to make what conquests he pleased; and, that it was perfect childishness in us to rail against him for his conquering. He has now conquered the land of Europe. We have, long ago, conquered the seas. He may maintain his dominion, and we shall, I hope, always be able to maintain ours.

My friend of the Independent Whig, "if he will allow me to call him so" (as the people at St. Stephen's say), just as if he anticipated a sinecure office in oversetting every thing that I should be able to say upon the subject of our paramount rights upon the seas, has voluntarily undertaken a defence of the people of America against what he calls my "unmerited abuse of the *whole* of them." I *abused* none of them; and it never entered into my heart to speak even slightly of them as a *whole*. Upon all occasions, when I have spoken ill of the Americans, I have excepted,

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say, the parent from being reduced to a reliance upon their affection or compassion! God preserve the country I love from a dependence upon American generosity, charity, or even American justice! The fact is, that the Americans purchase our goods because they want them, and cannot do without them. Their whole dress, from the chin to the ankle, goes from England, Ireland, or Scotland. From the swaddling clothes of the baby to the shroud of the grandsire, all is supplied by us; and, it is in my power, at any time, to show, that, in return for English materials and English labour, England receives but, comparatively, a small portion of food or of raiment, the far greater part being a mere vehicle for enriching the few who profit from the trade. Can the Americans do without our goods? This is to ask, Can they go naked; for, in the whole world, this kingdom excepted, there exists not the means of covering their backs; of keeping them from the inclemency of the weather, either by day or by night. To say nothing, therefore, of the numerous useful and necessary articles of hardware, and goods, indeed, of all descriptions, how are they to supply the place of English goods? "Other countries." What other country is there upon earth? Even before the French revolution commenced its havoc upon the manufactories of the continent, all the other countries in the world did not supply them with as much of the articles of indispensable necessity as Gloucestershire did; and, it will, I hope, not be forgotten by Lords Holland and Auckland, that, Napoleon, in his Northern conquests, must have broken up the small source of supply there afforded to America. But, "shall we not drive the Americans to manufacture for themselves?" This is a horrid possibility to be sure; but, we must first drive two other things amongst them, namely, *sheep* and *downs* for the sheep to feed upon, and (I had like to have forgotten a third) a *sun* under which sheep can live and thrive. These are physical obstacles, which are not to be overcome, believe me, by a petulant act of Congress, though preceded by six weeks or two months of dull debate, in which, perhaps, fifty

first and more particularly, the Quakers of Pennsylvania, who, after all my experience, and I have now had not a little, I believe to be, take the whole of their character and manners together, the best people in the world. Of the people in general, descending from the old settlers, to the Northward, I have always spoken with respect; and if, generally speaking, I have had, and have, a very bad opinion of those to the Southward, I have always observed, that there were many exceptions there also. But, I have said, and this I say again, that, owing to the emigration of rogues and fraudulent debtors and sharpening adventurers, from all parts of the world; and owing to the introduction of a system of impunity for moral offences, working in conjunction with about 300 newspapers, supported by advertisements and by the passions of those who feed upon falsehood, America is, upon the whole, in my opinion, become the most unprincipled country in the world. I have said, that, as to affairs *between men and their families*, there is no shame or reproach attendant upon a breach of fidelity, on the part of man or of wife; and I have *proved* the frequency of elopements to be such, that the printers of even provincial papers, keep, cut in type-metal, the figures of a wife escaping from her husband's house, just as the printers of commercial papers keep the figures of ships, to place at the head of their ship advertisements. As to their *juries*, he who knows the *jurors* and the *parties*, must be very little gifted, if he be at a loss to know what will be the result. I have said, that, while I was in America, a *judge* was caught thieving in a shop; and, I have asked, what the people of England would say, if a similar act, on the part of a judge, was to pass with impunity here. I have said, that, in such a state of morals, there can be *no real public liberty*; and, that the fact is, that though the *name* is in great vogue, I would, if *compelled* to choose, rather be a subject of Napoleon than a citizen of America. My adversary (for, I am afraid, he wishes not to have me for a friend) says, that the Americans showed invincible courage in a war for their liberties. I deny that the war was undertaken for their liberties; but, that, though the designs *here* might be unjust and tyrannical, the war there principally arose from the easy means which it offered to American debtors to cheat their English creditors. I never denied them *courage*. They are, I believe, as brave as any people in the world; but, as to their *justice* in that war, their battles were fought by those, who

lawyers were exercising their lungs for the bar, to the great annoyance of a hundred honest farmers, who had, at last, not a more correct notion of the consequences of the act, than Mr. Spankie (the Editor of the Morning Chronicle) now seems to have. It may seem incredible to some persons that there should be *no sheep* in America; and, there are many superficial observers, who will be inclined to dispute my opinions upon the fact of their having frequently eaten lamb and mutton there. But, it will be quite sufficient, in answer to all such, to state, that for *every man* in the United States, *five pounds* sterling's worth of woollens is annually imported from England. What, then, do they do with their own wool? The truth is, that they grow scarcely enough to answer the demand for stuffing saddles and such-like uses; and they never can; both soil and climate being hostile to the breeding and the keeping of sheep. Supposing, therefore, that the people, almost all of them bred to agricultural pursuits, could, before their present stock of cloths is worn to rags, be collected together from their thinly scattered plantations, and moulded into manufacturers: supposing persons there ready to teach them the art of manufacturing; and supposing that un-supposable event, the transmutation of some of their lands into workshops, still the materials, whereon to work, are wanting; and, if ever they are obtained, from England, dear England, however they may hate her, and affect to despise her, those materials must come.

were paid in a paper called *certificates*. These certificates, for want of a law to give them value, were little, scarcely nothing, worth; but, when the speculators, who were also the leaders, had bought up the certificates, at, perhaps, sixpence in the pound, these leaders made a law to tax the people, and to make the certificates worth 20 shillings in the pound! A whole tract of country I have known to be sold, by an act of assembly; the money received, and the law rescinded without any compensation to the purchasers. I have known a lottery made in virtue of an act of assembly, the act being published by authority in order to induce people to purchase the tickets, the tickets sold, the lottery drawn, and the holders of the money keep it, and laugh at the holders of the prize tickets. Lest this should not be enough, I will give my friend of the Independent Whig one specimen of the American *liberty of the press*, and that, too, not, as he will, probably, anticipate, in my own person, but in that of a man, who, about eleven years ago, left Scotland, in order to enjoy the liberty of a free press in America. This man published in Scotland a pamphlet called the *Political Progress of Britain*, for which he was obliged to flee, and which he re-published in America. While he wrote against his own country as well as its rulers, he was wonderfully caressed; but, it took him in the head to write against the rulers there also. What was the consequence? An action? No. An indictment? No. A criminal information? No. But, as a mere *prelude* to these, a warrant, under a tortured construction of a statute of Edward III. (for the American rulers preserve all these handy things by them) to take him up, *to bind him to keep the peace and be of good behaviour*, under a heavy bail; so that, this bond might have been kept over his head for years, without any conviction, or even any trial. The man remonstrated against this act of injustice; he refused to give bail; he was committed to prison, and in prison *he died*, a tolerably striking instance of the effect of the liberty of the press, as enjoyed in America.

Were I to proceed to the extent of my own bare recollection, this letter would surpass in bulk that of a letter of Lord Wellesley, who, quite unconcernedly, refers the Court of Directors, in one letter, to the 735th paragraph of another letter, which he sends them by the same conveyance. I had no desire to say what I have said; but, when I see the persons, interested in the American commerce, combining together for the avowed object of forcing the government (which, if I am to judge from the past, is but too much inclined that way) to abandon the great protecting rights of our country; and when I see the views of this combination, aided by a public writer, who (for want of information, without doubt) holds forth America in false colours, and bespeaks your partiality towards her upon the score of her being the patroness and the guardian of liberty and of public virtue, I think, that to refrain from speaking would be a shameful neglect of my duty.

In conclusion, suffer me, Gentlemen, once more to press upon your minds the important distinction between the rights of *nations*, as considered with respect to other nations, and *individuals*, as considered with respect to other individuals of the same nation. In the latter case all ought to be upon a perfect level in the eye of the law. The law comes in to the aid of natural weakness. It says to the strong man, "You shall have all the advantages which your own strength can give you, as far as the employment of that strength does in nowise bear down those who are weaker than you are." But, nations acknowledge *no law*;



and, though there are men, who have written upon what they call *the law of nations*, their writings are merely the *opinions* of individuals, and the history of what this and that nation has, at different times, done. The fact is, that in the concerns of nations, from the very nature of the thing, it must be, that *power*, in the end, under whatever show of law or usage, will have its way. It does not hence follow, that it is just for a strong nation to oppress a weak one. The moral considerations of right and wrong are not to be left aside; but, the only check that can possibly be found to national ambition, accompanied with power wherewith to gratify it, is, the combination which, first or last, will naturally be formed against any nation, which uses its power for the purpose of oppressing other nations. The only question, therefore, for us to determine, in the present case, is, whether the exercise of those powers, which our real mastership of the seas enables us to exercise, be now exercised for the purposes of oppression, or of self-defence. I contend that, in the particular case, which has given rise to this discussion, they have been exercised for the purposes of self-defence. There may return a state of things, when we may safely forego that exercise; and then it will be proper to do it; but, at the present time, all men, I should think, must be convinced, that, if England be not to become an appendage of France, she must maintain, with more rigour than ever, her rights of dominion upon the sea. For you, Gentlemen, to give your sanction to the abandonment of those rights, upon any ground, would be to falsify that patriotic character which you have so justly acquired; and, for you to do this upon the ground of favour due to those nations, who are set up as the *friends of liberty*, would expose your understandings to the contempt of the world. Much of our liberties, as Englishmen, has been lost. Let us, by all the lawful means within our power, continue our efforts to recover those liberties; and, if we resolutely and wisely and patiently proceed, recover them we shall, in spite of the swarms of prostituted hirelings and of public robbers, against whom we have to contend. But, Gentlemen, it is *English liberty* that we want. It is not French liberty nor American liberty. It is such liberty as our forefathers fought for and obtained. It is *freedom from oppression*, whether from tyrants great or petty; and this is such liberty as neither Frenchmen nor Americans have yet tasted of. It would behove you well to stand forward, at the present moment, and to make your voice heard, and through that voice the voice of the people of England, against the selfish and mercantile considerations that are now forming for the purpose of sacrificing the honour and the security of our country to their paltry private interests. No small portion of the fruits of your labour has gone, and still goes, to the furnishing forth of armaments, the sole, and even the avowed object, of which is, to *support commerce*, that is to say, as I think I have proved to you, to furnish the means, whereby a few hundreds of men are made immensely rich, without adding, in any way whatever, to the national resources of security. And now, when a part, when one class of these men, perceive that their interests are likely to receive some injury by the assertion of our rights of sea-dominion, or superiority, they begin to combine, in order to force the, probably, too willing government, to abandon those rights, and, as a natural consequence, to punish the officers who have had the spirit to assert them. Against such a combination as this, it behoves you to raise your independent voice. You have no interests but those which are inseparable from the welfare of your

country. These men have; and, amongst all those, whose aggrandizement has tended to oppress you, this description of persons stand pre-eminent, upon which ground alone, it appears to me, that they claim a right of dictating to the government. You should always bear in mind, that it was the commercial interest, that placed Pitt upon his throne of power, and enabled him to do all those things, of which you but too sorely feel the effects. Through all his career, they clang to him. He talked of no greatness but commercial greatness; he sacrificed every thing to the interests and the whimsies of commercial men; he was made for a counting-house himself, and he delighted in the society of merchants. His followers are in power, and there is but too much reason for us to expect, that they will tread in his steps; but, it is for us to put in our protest against this mercantile combination, and thereby to deprive the ministers of the pretence of having sacrificed our security in obedience to the voice of the people.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your faithful friend,

and obedient servant,

WM. CORBETT.

Botley, 20th Aug. 1807.

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## TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER.

### LETTER XXIII.

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GENTLEMEN,—Thinking it proper to offer to the public some observations upon the question of PEACE, which is, at present, much agitated, I have, for the reasons stated at the outset of the preceding letter, thought it right to address those observations more particularly to you.

First, Gentlemen, let me beg of you to come to the consideration of questions of this sort with your minds divested, for the moment at least, of reflections upon the internal corruptions, of which we complain, and which, sooner or later, we shall be able to eradicate and annihilate, without exposing our country to subjugation, and ourselves and our children to the just contempt of the world. As I observed to you before, Gentlemen, the corruptors and the corrupted are not those, who would most suffer by the conquering of our country. They would easily accommodate themselves to the business of raising contributions upon us. Sycophants, be assured, are not nice, as you may probably have perceived, in the objects of their subserviency. The toasts, songs, and sentiments, which they have now in use, would suit very well, in a new state of things, with a mere change of names. It is the *profits* that they love, and not the patrons. They would, you would soon see, find many and most admirable reasons for throwing us into prison, or hanging us, if we expressed our discontent at the exactions of Napoleon. When a country is conquered, individual safety depends upon readiness in submission; and, it were folly in the extreme for us to suppose, that, in a race of

slavery, the base wretches, whom we now hate, would not outstrip us. No, Gentlemen, a remedy for our evils is not to come from without. That, as well as the defence of our country, lie solely in our own hands.

The question of Peace has been much dwelt upon by the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, in an article, which I shall presently insert for your perusal. But, I would first beg leave to observe, that, though, for the reasons, which I shall hereafter submit to you, I am of opinion, that, *at present*, there is no chance of our deriving benefit, of any sort, from peace, I am by no means an advocate for a war, grounded merely upon a hatred of Napoleon, and, above all, for a war carried on *now* for what has been called *the deliverance of Europe*, and which "deliverance" Europe itself has not seemed to wish for, having, as I verily believe, very little reason to entertain such a wish. We should also guard our minds against the conclusion, that, because the wars, in which we have been recently engaged, have been conducted in so foolish a manner, and have produced such fatal consequences to all those who became our allies; we must guard our minds against concluding, that war continued *now*, would be productive of similar effects; and, that peace would put an end to the evils which have arisen amongst us during war. Would peace put an end to, would it at all lessen, any of the abuses or corruptions, of which we complain? You must be satisfied that it would not now, any more than it did in 1802. On the contrary, finding our attention diverted, for a while, from these corruptions, the corruptors would take advantage thereof, and do against us that which they otherwise would not have attempted. Was the march of the heralds of peace, and the illuminations, and the drawing of Lauriston, and the feasting of Otto; were these followed by any benefit to us? No; but the hirelings gathered new strength, and stoutly put forward "the blessings of peace" as the justifiable grounds of fresh plunder. Be assured, Gentlemen, that every thing tends to deception, which would make you believe, that a remedy for the evils of England is to be found any where else than in an annihilation of the various sources of corruption.

The *pacific* article, in the *Morning Chronicle*, of which I have spoken above, and which I find in that paper of the 15th instant, is, as you will perceive, a commentary upon the King's speech, delivered, last week, to the Houses of Parliament.

"Parliament was yesterday prorogued, and the Speech delivered by the Commissioners in his Majesty's name, will be found in another part of our paper. —It was expected that the Speech would have made some allusion to the proffered mediation of Russia, but there is nothing except the customary general paragraph, taken from the file, about readiness to treat with honour and security. It says—'And while his Majesty commands us to repeat the assurances of his constant readiness to entertain any proposals that may lead to a secure and honourable peace, he commands us at the same time to express his confidence that his Parliament and his people will feel with him the necessity of persevering in those vigorous efforts which alone can give the character of honour to any negotiation, or the prospect of security or permanency to any peace.'—There is one paragraph which appears to admit the probability rather of a hostile confederacy than of a negotiation. His Majesty trusts that his Parliament will be ready to support him 'to maintain against any undue pretensions, and against any hostile confederacy, those just rights which his Majesty is always desirous to exercise with temper and moderation; but which, as essential to the honour of his crown, and true interests of his people, he is determined never to surrender.' This paragraph goes farther than anything we have yet seen or heard, to accredit the rumour that the Emperor of Russia was likely to join Buonaparte in the assertion of claims, inconsistent

" with the Naval Code which this country has always asserted as the true doctrine of the Law of Nations. It may be supposed to refer to America, perhaps, but in that case the phrase of a hostile confederacy would not apply. It is more probable, therefore, that ministers have received information which leads them to believe that the Emperor of Russia may support the new principles which Buonaparte endeavours to introduce. There is no particular allusion to the state of our relations with America.—Upon the whole, this Speech does not hold forth anything VERY ENCOURAGING to the country. The generality in which the desire of peace is couched, leaves no room to doubt that ministers persist in the extravagant opinions of those who *represent negotiation as disgrace, and peace as destruction*. Those, indeed, who consider *peace as an evil*, naturally consider negotiation as disgraceful; because it must be presumed, that they who would make war if they could, only talk of peace because they cannot. The sentiments of most of the present ministers have been so often expressed on this subject, that if they are reduced to negotiation, it is a confession that they are practically convinced that the war has no rational object, and no chance of success. Those who have held such lofty language on the subject of peace, indeed, can be supposed to look to peace either as necessary to the country, or must be suspected of resorting to negotiation only as an expedient to procure new arguments and resources for carrying on the war. We therefore cannot consider the paragraph alluding to peace as conveying any assurance even of the disposition of ministers to negotiate. But far less do we consider it any pledge that they have abandoned those frantic expectations, so inconsistent with the state of the world, which, while they prevail, must render the attainment of peace impossible. War may be necessary, if we cannot get out of it upon suitable terms, and in that case it must be carried on with courage and fortitude. But ministers seem to consider it as itself an active remedy, instead of an evil to be endured, and think it calculated to improve our situation. In that view of it we cannot concur. *The most we can gain by its continuance is, that after much exertion and vast expense, we are not swallowed up*. To reduce the power of our enemy by a maritime war, is now the most hopeless of projects, and after so much experience, those who still think it reasonable, are incapable of being taught, either by arguments or by facts. Then what is gained by a protracted war, in which let it be granted that we *keep all we have*? Is France, in her present situation, likely to be sooner or more exhausted by a lengthened war, than England? Is the ruler of that country likely to be affected by commercial pressure, could we inflict it in its utmost extremity; or even by an universal blockade, were it practicable? He cares for none of these things, and will never yield upon such considerations as are calculated only to influence those who see all things through the medium of trade. We apprehend, therefore, that after the lapse of several years, and the favourable supposition of keeping all we have, we shall have, in the comparison, lost much more than France; and that even during the interval, we are not likely to bear with patience *the privations and burdens which the war must occasion*. A defensive war, therefore, is the worst of evils, because it does not even promise, what is the greatest incentive to military effort, as well as the greatest consolation in passive suffering, that at the expiration of any given time, or after any series of exertions, we shall be better than we are at this moment. Time may inspire us with that moderation of temper, and with that resignation in that unfortunate order of things which Europe is destined to endure for a season; but it were better that wisdom should now *save us the distress* of being schooled by adversity. The power and predominance of Buonaparte are, unquestionably, a great evil; and it is impossible that England should not, though herself unsubdued, feel some share of the calamity which has spread all around her. To that, however, she must submit.—She has not the means of *redressing the injustice of fortune, and of building up the ruins of prostrate nations*. She aims at something far beyond her real means. When circumstances are so changed, she seems to act as if France were that very France with which we used to negotiate, with a certain consciousness of superiority.—That feeling, the people in a situation new and extraordinary, are desirous to cultivate and to act upon, however unseasonable it must appear. After the enormous success of France, and while she still possesses the resources and abilities with which that success was obtained, it is not reasonable for us to suppose that our success, comparatively limited in its nature and unimpor-

"tant in its effects, can counterbalance the enormous aggrandizement of our  
 "rival. We do not say that we are subdued or humbled by France, but we say  
 "that France has obtained, for a time at least, the ascendant in the affairs of  
 "Europe; and we say too, that all the efforts of England cannot in the least  
 "impair that ascendant—and therefore it is our policy to *yield to that turn of*  
 "*affairs which we cannot change.* It rarely has happened that an entire equality  
 "among the Nations of Europe has existed. The house of Austria, Spain, France,  
 "in former times, and likewise England, have had a decisive and admitted  
 "superiority. It is in vain to struggle against the occasional fortune, ability, and  
 "success of particular nations, founded on various accidents in their internal  
 "situation. It is laudable to resist the tendency towards inequality, and to re-  
 "duce the pretension, in any shape, to universal monarchy. But that resistance  
 "must be bounded by reason and by prudence. In the present case France has  
 "obtained a decisive superiority in Europe, and experience has shown how vain  
 "it is at this time to attempt by force of arms to reduce her to what it is desirable  
 "she should be. We ought therefore, *with the rest of the world,* to acquiesce in  
 "the decision obtained by an appeal to arms, which there is no probability of our  
 "being able to reverse. France must have great advantages, in consequence of  
 "her success, but that is no argument against peace when war is not likely to  
 "deprive her of those advantages. We may negotiate on the footing of equality  
 "with France; but however unpalatable the admission is, we must admit, that  
 "France was relatively greater, and England relatively less, than perhaps upon  
 "any former occasion when they negotiate. It is foolish to deny this, and more  
 "foolish still to act as if it were not so. As this elevation of France has risen  
 "from a concurrence of singular events, it may not be permanent, but at any  
 "rate we cannot by our single efforts overturn the results of such long and bloody  
 "and decisive wars on the continent. Then what do we fight for, when *in all*  
 "*probability* every thing which *reasonable men* can hope for, in the present dis-  
 "ordered state of the world, may be attained by peace? We answer, that we  
 "fight, first because our pride is unwilling to acknowledge France, in her present  
 "state of aggrandizement, or to recognise the detested Buonaparte and his inno-  
 "vations; secondly, our mercantile men are afraid that our trade may suffer by a  
 "peace, particularly they think it is quite easy at once to fight us with all the  
 "world, and at the same time serve them with goods, thus making them pay us  
 "for beating them; thirdly, there is a vague apprehension, that Buonaparte only  
 "wishes to make peace in order to devour us. Upon these and similar grounds  
 "ministers and their partisans represent peace as an evil to be deprecated, and  
 "therefore deem it true policy to use every means not to promote, but to prevent it.  
 "But the evils of peace form a copious subject of discussion which we have not  
 "time at present to pursue."

You will perceive, Gentlemen, that the chief object of this writer is, not to obtain peace, but to persuade his readers, that the faction in power are pre-determined against peace, thereby hoping to produce such a feeling against them as may tend to the ousting of them, and the placing of his own faction in their stead. The burden of his observations always is, the unfortunate, or perverse, or foolish, or mad, or wicked disposition of his opponents, or, rather, the opponents of his patrons. Of a writer who betrays such evident marks of mere party, mere factious, motives, we should always entertain great suspicions.

As to the question of peace, what may be the disposition of the present ministers I cannot positively assert; but, I should suppose, that the first consideration with them, as it was with Pitt, and the Addingtons, and the Whigs, will be to keep their places; and that, if they find peace likely to tend to that purpose, peace they will make, and, as the Addingtons did, call upon us for blessings upon their heads for the boon. But, this I know, that, whatever views they may have in carrying on the war, they cannot be more barefacedly regardless of the interests of England, than were the openly-avowed views of the Whigs, when they set us to war with Prussia for the purpose of *obtaining the restoration of Hanover.* This writer asks what we can now continue the war for; but, reserving

our answer to that question, let me ask him how it is possible for the present ministers to entertain views more unworthy of Englishmen, than those openly avowed by Mr. Fox, when he declared, in parliament, that he never felt so much pleasure at any moment of his life, as when the King commanded him to write the dispatch, in which it was declared, that the King would never make any peace, which should not stipulate for the complete restoration of Hanover to him. This was the Whig object, not for carrying on a war, but for beginning a new war, which war, you will remember, was the chief immediate cause of all that followed upon the continent of Europe.

It is the way of those, who wish to mislead, to assume, that those who differ from them must necessarily entertain the views, which it suits their arguments to impute to them. Accordingly, those who, like me, can see no benefit that we should derive from a peace, made at this time, are by this writer represented as aiming, by a maritime war, at "building up the ruined fortunes of the nations of Europe;" at "reducing the power of France" by land; objects at which no man in his senses would, at this time, aim, nor do I know that it would be desirable to accomplish those objects, even if the accomplishment were completely in our power; for, I have an ugly lurking in my mind, that, if the Prussians and Russians had beaten Napoleon, things would not have been the better for such people as you and I, which lurking has, I must confess, operated as a consolation to me, when I have read of the battles in Prussia and in Poland.

But, though I am very willing to leave the Germans (aye, *all* of them) to the rule of the Emperor of France and his brethren, I can discover a very sufficient object in continuing the war, at present, especially as it may now be a war attended with, comparatively, very little expense, taking it for granted, that no more continental expeditions or subsidies can now be thought of. The Morning Chronicle anticipates, as I anticipated months and months ago, that a *maritime confederacy* is forming against us in the North of Europe. How does he think, that this confederacy is to be got rid of? or, does he wish us to "yield to the turn of affairs," and, "with the rest of the world, acquiesce" (good gentleman!) "in the decision obtained by an appeal to arms?" How, otherwise, I ask him, is this confederacy to be got rid of, except by a prosecution of the war? Would he really counsel us to yield to terms settled upon the principle of what is called the "*liberty of the Seas*?" Pitt and Addington gave up, as far as they could give up, the honour of the flag, which honour had been maintained by England from the time that flags were first seen upon the European seas; and, would this gentleman advise us, not only to ratify that shameful abandonment, but also bind ourselves not to exercise the right of search, a right, which, it must, I think, be evident to all men, is one upon the exercise of which our maritime superiority depends?

Here, then, is, of itself, a quite sufficient object; but, I am of opinion, that a war even now, properly managed, would, in a great measure, deprive France of the advantages she expects from her conquests; and, would effectually deprive her of the advantages, which she would, without war, employ for the subjugation of this country. Without a considerable maritime force, she never can effect that object, an object which, I think, every one is persuaded her ruler has in view; and, by war, judiciously conducted, upon the avowed principle of maritime dominion, we have it

in our power to destroy, for half a century, the means of his obtaining that force. Not a ship, belonging to any power, should be suffered to pass but upon conditions prescribed by us. Every sail upon the sea should, as in former times, be obedient to the Admiralty of England. The continent Napoleon might rule at his pleasure; but, the moment any one quitted the land, he should be under the dominion of England. These principles I would openly avow as the only principles upon which I would settle terms of peace; and the right of sea-dominion I would exercise in peace as well as in war, or I would make no peace with the ruler of the land of Europe. Now, is this object to be attained, without a further continuation of the war? Will Napoleon listen to such terms of peace? How, then, are we to obtain peace without; how are we to "obtain every thing which we can hope for, in the present disordered state of the world?"

But, "are we *never* to have peace?" To which I answer, you must put that question to France. It is not our fault if we have not peace, any more than it is the fault of the man who is assaulted, that he is engaged in a scuffle. France openly avows the design of conquering our country, and her preparations keep due pace with her avowal. It is, then, unreasonable in the extreme to put a question, conveying a reproach upon us, that we do not seem disposed to put an end to the war. I would, at all times, be ready to negotiate. I would discover no hatred of Napoleon or his brethren. I would readily give up all the islands and colonies that I had conquered. But, I would distinctly maintain the right of dominion upon the sea; and that right I would so exercise, in peace as well as in war, as to be able, at all times, to say to the people, "There are not, in all Europe, the means of sending forth a fleet against you."

These being my opinions, I cannot but approve of the expedition, which is said to have been undertaken in order to seize upon the Danish fleet and arsenals, which, if not actually taken possession of by the conqueror, are, as all the world knows, within a day's march of his reach. It is a vile mockery, it is hypocrisy, or it is mere party cavilling, to pretend, that Denmark can remain, at the present time, in a state of *neutrality*. Her naval force and means, whatever they may be, must be employed against, if not seized upon by us; and, it must, I think, be evident, that the only means of reducing the conqueror to listen to such terms of peace, as would give us security from his arms, are the seizing upon or the destroying of all the maritime resources within his reach, and the preventing of those resources from being recruited. It is painful to have recourse to such violent means; but, between that and subjugation we have no choice; and, when this is the case, I am persuaded, that there are very few Englishmen who would not prefer the former.

But, Gentlemen, I do greatly fear, that this appearance of vigour is but for a day; and, I should not be surprised, if it should finally appear, that *Hanover* will be thought a sufficient compensation for the expense of these expeditions and for England's maritime dominion into the bargain. My fears may be groundless, and I hope they are; but, I cannot help entertaining them; and, certain I am, that such sentiments as those now inculcated by the *Morning Chronicle*, are admirably calculated to prepare a justification for such a peace. In fact, Gentlemen, there is nothing that the ministers, if their views are such as I fear they are, could desire more to their purpose than the humble, despairing tone of the *Morning*

Chronicle. It was upon the language of this very paper, that the Addingtons justified their peace. They threw the blame upon *the people*; and, lest the present ministers should do the same, the people should make them know, that they desire no peace without security.

That you, the independent electors of Westminster, may, above all other men, reflect seriously and conclude rightly upon these important subjects, is almost the first wish of

Your faithful friend,  
and obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, Aug. 20, 1807.

## TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER.

### LETTER XXIV.

"FIVE HUNDRED GUINEAS will be presented to any person who can procure an appointment of *Barrack-Master* in Great Britain, or the *Paymastership* of a district."—*COURIER* Newspaper, 10th August, 1807.

"FOR SALE, the manor, or lordship, of Lampeter, with all its *political* and other *rights*. Lampeter is a contributory borough for returning a member to parliament for the town of Cardigan; and all persons admitted at the Lord's Court are entitled to vote for the return of such member. More upon this head appears unnecessary in this place."—*COURIER* Newspaper, 10th August, 1807.

GENTLEMEN,—Let us turn to other matters. Having taken a view of our affairs with regard to foreign countries, let us look a little into our situation at home; and see what is necessary to be done there.

When we complain, that, under the name and show of public offices, our money is squandered away upon idlers and rogues and plunderers, we are reproached with Jacobinism. "It was thus," say John Bowles and his crew, "that the French revolutionists began their works." And, the inference is, that, we wish to bring about here what was brought about in France. That we wish to destroy the nobility and to kill the king and his family; and that, the consequence of this would be, a military despotism under an English Buonaparte. Whether the *present state* of France, compared to its *former state*, be an example so terrific as John Bowles and his crew would make it appear, I shall not attempt to determine. But, what have our complaints to do with the French revolution, or with any revolution? If, however, it be insisted upon that the French revolution began in complaints like ours, would it not be advisable to remove the ground of our complaints? No: that is never thought of. To vilify, and, if possible to oppress, if not kill, the complainants, is the mode which John and his crew recommend in order to prevent our complaints from producing effects similar to those produced in France. They accuse us of falsehood; and therefore, it is necessary, now-and-then, to state an undeniable fact. What will John say, I wonder, to the public advertisement for the purchase of an office, such as I have placed at the head of this letter, and scores of which we daily see in the news-



papers? What would he say to it? Why, Gentlemen, nothing at all; not a word *to it* or *about it*; he would instantly fall upon the person who noticed it, with a full-mouthed cry of Jacobinism and disloyalty and treason; and, when he sees this letter, he would have me strangled if he *legally* could; for John is quite one of your legal men.

But, to you, Gentlemen, and to all those who have to pay such heavy taxes, without having the means of licking yourselves whole again by getting a share of those taxes; to you I put the question, whether it be not a scandalous thing, that offices, the salaries of which the public pay, should thus be bought and sold? It is well known to you, Gentlemen, that, where one estate, or one thing of any sort, is sold, or bought, in consequence of public advertisement, there are fifty sold, or bought, without such advertisement; and, if this be the case, in transactions where no desire of secrecy exists, or need to exist, how large a proportion of all the offices, is it reasonable to suppose, are bought and sold? And, as to *who are the sellers* of offices need not be pointed out; for, whether the villains be great or small, whether they be male or female, the wrong done to us is exactly the same; and, besides, though a little villain may be the actual vender, he has obtained his power to sell from some one above him.

When we complain of the enormous amount of the taxes, for the collection of which such rigorous laws have been passed, we are tauntingly asked, if we would have no army or navy." We must have both; but we would not have Barrack-masters and Paymasters upon an establishment, which will enable the officer to give five hundred pounds for his commission; for, reckon how we will, that money is so much of the taxes *wasted*. Besides; if the offices are sold, who is it that *chooses* and *appoints* officers? This is one, out of many, of the ways of wasting the public money; and, my real opinion is, that if all waste was as effectually prevented as it might be, the navy and the army might be maintained for less than one half of the present expense, while, at the same time, those who now live in idleness upon public plunder, would be compelled to labour for their bread, and thereby augment the resources of the country. This, however, according to the cant of the leeches, who are determined to hang on upon the carcass of the nation till they are absolutely cut off, is termed "Jacobin doctrine." To own this name of Jacobin, therefore, we must make up our minds; and wait patiently for the day when we can give the bloodsuckers a hearty squeeze, reminding them, at the same time, of their past abuse.

The second part of my motto, which was pointed out to me by a correspondent, relates to a subject, which cannot be brought too frequently under discussion. It is not, verily it is not astonishing, that offices should be bought and sold by public advertisement, when, by public advertisement, "the political rights" of the people are unequivocally offered for sale. When their votes at elections are tendered publicly as an object of purchase; and, when no scruple at all is made to treat them as the *property* of individuals.

In the midst of all this, Gentlemen, there are men base enough, wretches so impudent, so abandoned, so prostituted, as to represent *you* as the enemies of the *constitution* of England! When called upon to give our money, or to risk our lives, in support of the constitution, it is painted to us in colours the most delightful; it is arrayed in robes of purity, justice, and freedom. The election of members of Parliament is,

we are told, in the words of the law, "perfectly free;" and, when we complain, that seats in Parliament are publicly advertised for sale, the infamous wretches, who are concerned in, or who connive at, such sale, have the audacity to accuse us of wanting to *destroy the constitution*. Vengeance upon the heads of these unprincipled and audacious miscreants must come first or last, and it is little matter from what hand it comes. Not one inch would I, for my part, stir to save their heads from a mill-stone falling from the clouds. John Bowles and his set are well aware of the laws respecting elections; and yet, John's piety, which is almost incredible, has never led him to descant upon the perjuries which *must* take place when seats in Parliament are bought and sold. He can read these advertisements as well, or nearly as well, as you can; but, though he be a leader in the Vice-Suppression Society, not a single word does he say upon the subject of this enormous vice. John pretends to be in great tribulation, lest the two-penny hops and the gingerbread fairs should bring down the vengeance of Heaven; but, the purchase and sale of seats in parliament, with all their indispensable perjuries, are beneath the notice of John, though John would, I dare say, have a beggar most heartily castigated, if he were to prevaricate in his worshipful presence.

Gentlemen, Pitt, *before he became minister*, spoke with horror of the sale of seats in parliament. At that time he was engaged, with Mr. Horne Tooke and others, in forming a plan for collecting, by a circular correspondence, the sense of the people, in their parishes, or smaller districts; which sense, when obtained, was to be pressed upon the House of Commons, for the purpose of obtaining a reform of that House, which reform he, Pitt, asserted openly in the House, to be absolutely necessary, in order to prevent the government of England from becoming, under the names and forms of freedom, a mere despotism in fact. But, in ten years afterwards, this same Pitt *being minister*, and having rendered a reform more necessary than ever, caused to be prosecuted that same Mr. Horne Tooke and others for having endeavoured to bring about, by the very same means that Pitt had before recommended, that very same measure, which he had represented as absolutely necessary, in order to prevent the government of England from becoming a mere despotism in fact, under the names and forms of freedom. Now, Gentlemen, though some persons, from ignorance of the history of these matters, and others, from feelings of alarm which Pitt craftily raised, have attempted to justify this his pursuit of the life of Mr. Tooke and others, it is not, I hope, possible, that there can, at this time, be found, in all England, one man so impudently, so profligately unjust, as to continue such attempts. Yet, are we to pay for the raising of a monument to this man, as we have already been compelled to pay his debts.

The way, Gentlemen, to combat our revilers, who are almost all of them profound hypocrites, is to put this question to them: "Do you approve of the sale of seats in Parliament, and of the indispensable perjury thereon attendant?" They will always equivocate and evade and shuffle. They will tell you, that it always has been thus. They will instance something worse, if that be possible. They will (precious hypocrites!) lament the frailty of human nature, and the consequent imperfection of all human institutions; and will, very likely, conclude with a prayer that it may please God to remove these evils. But, be you not so cheated. Repeat your question. Stick fast to them. Insist upon a categorical answer; and, you will find their hypocrisy too profound for them to say

that they approve of the sale of seats in parliament and of the indispensably accompanying perjury. Well, then, if they disapprove of these, they must next allow, that it would be desirable to put an end to them; and, it necessarily follows, that they must approve of the conduct of those who endeavour to effect that desirable object. But, no: they will not. Bring them to this point, and off they start again into their ejaculations and prayers, first, and, next, into their impudent accusations against those who would, if they could, accomplish what they themselves have acknowledged to be desirable. So that there is no hope of converting them. They are bent upon plunder, or upon the support of plunderers. They are resolved upon sucking the blood out of the carcass of the nation as long as they can; and, therefore, let us, on our parts, be resolved to pluck them off that wasted carcass as soon as possible.

In the meanwhile, Gentlemen, you have *real* representatives. The silly observations of the newspaper hacks, in which they affect to regard their predictions, about the *insignificancy* of Sir Francis Burdett, as being now accomplished, only betray their apprehensions for that part of the plunder which they enjoy; or, rather, receive; for, it is impossible, that such wretches can enjoy any thing. They well know, that it has, as yet, not been in the power of Sir Francis to attend in his place with any effect; that he could not, without risk of his life, have sat a night in the House of Commons. He himself has told you, that, without the aid of *the people*, he shall be able to do no good; but, one thing he will soon be able to do, and that is, to convince the people, that, without their acting, all of them, with the public spirit that has animated you, *nothing is to be done for their good by any body*. He will be able to make the people fully acquainted with many things, which they now understand but imperfectly. He will be able to expose to their full view things, which are now hidden from them. He will, you may be assured, take part with no place and self-seeking faction; he will have a hand in no motion, calculated to amuse the foolish and somewhat base people, who are *yet* to be amused with what is called *debating* a question; he will be guilty of no act which shall give countenance to the impudent pretence respecting *decisions* in the House; he can, without even one man to co-operate with him, make the Honourable House itself show you what the Honourable House is and what the Honourable House is capable of doing. This he has perfectly in his own power, and this he will, if he lives, assuredly do; and, it is because he will do this, because they know he will do this, that the newspaper hirelings revile him. There is not a man amongst them, who is not convinced, in his own mind, of the falsehood of the assertions and insinuations, which he is daily pouring forth against Sir Francis Burdett. He *knows* they are utterly false; but, a considerable part of his daily bread depends upon his writing and publishing them; and, while this is the case, publish them he will. In one part of his paper, you will find the dangers of the country portrayed in horrid colours, and the necessity of a union of all men in its defence strenuously urged; but, he is sure to have, in another part, something or other to convince you, that he would much rather the country should be conquered, than that corruption and peculation should be destroyed. He and the plundering gang, the den of thieves, who support him, must not, however, expect our love, in return, but our steady and active hatred, and our vengeance, when we shall be able to inflict it. They have declared a war of

extermination against us; and, I trust, I confidently trust, that we shall not sue for peace.

The motion of Lord Cochrane respecting places and pensions and fees and perquisites held or received by members of the Honourable House and their relations had done great good. He wanted to have a list of these *alone* published, that the public might judge of the state of the Honourable House; that the people might know how much of their money went into the pockets of those, who are said to be the guardians of the public treasure; who are said to "*hold the purse strings of the nation,*" and who, in good earnest, do seem to hold them. The Honourable House did, however, not relish this. The Honourable House thought that a list of *all* places and pensions, &c. &c. &c. held by all *manner of persons*, preferable to the nice little list pointed out by his lordship, and, then, you know, Gentlemen, we might, *if we could*, find out who were members of parliament and their relations, and who were not. Even this list, however, has not yet been produced, and the persons, to whom the making of it was referred, declared, that it was impossible for them to say what time, during the *next session* of parliament, they should be able to produce it. Never mind! The motion has had an excellent effect. It has shown us the feeling of the Honourable House. It has furnished us with one proof more, and a most convincing proof too, of the nature of that feeling. These proofs, frequently repeated, are what we want. If any thing can do us good, these proofs, well packed upon one another, will do it. The plunderers have not accused Lord Cochrane of *treasonable* designs yet; but, they, in the superabundance of their charity, suspect him to be *mad* only. If a man be not a coward in the field, or a plunderer at home, or a partisan of one or the other, the miscreant writers are sure to represent him as a traitor or a madman. And, it is after this, that they expect us to love and cherish them!

In a future letter I purpose to give you an account of some curious *contracts*. In the meanwhile,

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your faithful friend,  
and obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 26th August, 1807.

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## TO THE ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER.

### LETTER XXV.

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GENTLEMEN,—I had lately occasion to address you upon the subject of the present dispute between our country and the American States; and, as you will recollect, the address proceeded in the manner of a commentary upon an article, which had just before appeared in a weekly newspaper, called the Independent Whig. The writer of that paper had expressed in a tone very vehement, his disapprobation of what I had, in my paper of the preceding week, said respecting the dispute in question. I

had asserted, that our admiral and his captains had done well in the case referred to, and had expressed my *fears*, that our ministers were disposed to *yield*, that they were disposed to give up our right to search ships of foreign nations for deserters from our own ships. This assertion the writer of the newspaper above-mentioned had severely attacked ; and, as it was a point of great national importance, I thought it right to endeavour to maintain my assertion, by all the authority and all the arguments, which, at that time, suggested themselves to my mind. This I did in the two letters, addressed to you, which I have above referred to ; and, as the writer of the Independent Whig had, subsequent to the publication of my first letter upon the subject, announced that he was *perfectly prepared* to answer me, and had been pressed, by many correspondents, to do it without delay, I naturally expected, that, after having taken a week to examine both my letters, he would, in his paper of last Sunday, have published what he regarded as an answer. What was my surprise, then, when, instead of an elaborate defence of the Americans and of their denial of our right of search, I found a very long and uncommonly desultory article upon the sins of Mr. Windham, Lord Grenville, Pitt, Lord Hawkesbury, Lord Melville, Steele, Trotter, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Cobbett. A great deal in this article is true, and a great deal of it, though, perhaps, true in the facts, perfectly false (unintentionally, without doubt) in the inferences. Upon the whole, however, there is so much boldness, so many home truths told in this article, that I am glad it was published ; and shall, at any time, be ready to thank the writer for making a criticism upon my conduct and character the vehicle of similar truths. But, it must be confessed, I think, by this writer himself, that neither my sins nor my weaknesses nor my virtues (if he will allow me to have any of the latter), have any thing to do with the question of England's maritime dominion ; and, I must say, that it gives me satisfaction to perceive, that a person whose talents I greatly respect, and who has very recently expressed great admiration of me, upon comparing my character with my arguments in defence of my country's rights, found the former the most vulnerable of the two. For, as to any answer, which he has *in reserve*, it is quite incredible that he should have allowed another week to pass without giving it to the public, seeing that the time will be, and, indeed, already is, gone by, for such answer to produce any useful effect. Of this he must have been fully aware, and, therefore, I cannot regard his concluding notification, respecting an answer in reserve, in any light but that of a tacit acknowledgment, that he was, for once, in the wrong, which acknowledgment he, doubtless, regards as tantamount to having inserted (as I usually do in such cases) the arguments made use of against him. At any rate, I am convinced, in my own mind, that he will find great difficulty in executing his promised *re-futation* ; but, if he should advance any thing which I think of weight in the question, and not too thickly covered with matter quite extraneous, I shall not fail to bestow upon it attention proportioned in degree to the importance of the subject.

In the meanwhile, Gentlemen, our time will not be badly employed in bestowing some further consideration upon the subject itself, first noticing what we find, in the public prints, relative to the conduct of the Americans.—The article, which I am about to insert for your perusal is, it appears, taken from a paper published at Norfolk, in Virginia, on

the 13th of July last. This article is entitled, "*Some Retaliation.*" It is in these words :

"Last evening an express arrived at head-quarters to the commander, General Matthews, from Capt. Shepherd, of the troop of cavalry stationed near the Cape. The intelligence the express brought is of *great importance*: it announces the *first act of retaliation* for the outrages of the British squadron. "The substance of the intelligence, as far as we are informed, and our information may be relied on, is, that a boat with five men, viz. *two midshipmen* and *three sailors*, were seen to land on Thursday evening, on the east side of the inlet; the people came on shore, and *were fired at by a detachment of militia* under the command of a lieutenant from Kempsville. They *retreated* and took refuge in the woods. Information having been given to Captain Shepherd of the place to which they had retired, it was *immediately surrounded*. "In the morning they were discovered, and surrendered themselves prisoners *without resistance*. The boat and arms on board of her have been *taken possession of*; and the men are now *prisoners* at Mr. Lemuel Cornick's waiting "the orders of the general."

This account, which bears so exact a resemblance to Gay's journal of the wars against the geese, ducks, and chicken in a farm-yard, you will hardly believe to be serious; but, I, who know the heroes well, also know, that they will boast of this exploit through columns upon columns of their base and stupid newspapers; nor should I be at all surprised, if we were to find, that the several town-meetings in Virginia had sent addresses of thanks to the Lieutenant, who caused a detachment of militia to fire at two little boys and three men.

"Father and mother and I  
"And two or three lusty men,  
"Beat a poor little boy  
"Till he cou'dn't go or stand."

This bit of an old burlesque ballad, though it has neither rhyme nor measure, is most eloquently descriptive of the heroism of the American militia, upon all other occasions that I have heard of, as well as upon this. Gentlemen, let me ask you, whether you would have thought this an act worthy of being boasted of as an act of national retaliation? If, under similar circumstances, an American boat, so manned, had come into any of our rivers, would either of you, having the command of a detachment of soldiers, have ordered these soldiers to fire at two boys and three men? Would you have boasted of being able to make them "*retreat*?" Would you have thought it necessary to "*surround*" them? And, would you have cried victory! victory! when they surrendered "*without resistance*?" No: there is not a single Briton or Irishman, in whatever state of life he may be found, in whose mind sentiments so base could possibly exist. This achievement together with the account of it is well worthy of the Americans; perfectly characteristic of their minds and their manners; and, I have not the least doubt but they will console themselves with the reflection, that this *defeat* and *capture* of our boat's crew of two boys and three men *rubs off their disgrace* in the affair of the Chesapeake and the Leopard.

The following paragraphs, from the same American paper, are also worthy of attention :

"We are authorized to state, that in consequence of information received "that the British squadron had departed from Hampton roads, and had taken "a station off our Capes, the Executive *have suspended the march* to Hampton of "the 500 militia ordered out from Gen. White's brigade. They have been permitted to return to their respective homes, with orders to *hold themselves in*

“readiness to take the field at a moment’s warning.—We understand, that on application being made to the Secretary of the Treasury, on the subject of the President’s proclamation, he has advised, that its prohibitions are *not meant to include British merchant vessels, although armed and bearing letters of marque.*—It has been stated in several papers that Mr. Erskine was at Washington when a discussion relative to the seamen took place between Mr. Madison and that Minister, *who had consented to waive all claim to them.*—Mr. Erskine, we are well informed, denies that his opinion was ever asked, or that he ever gave any upon the subject, and we moreover understand that *he has expressed a wish that the report should be contradicted.*—We notice this merely with a view to present a correct statement of facts, for we never look to but one point in this case, and which is, *that under no circumstance whatever, should a national ship be visited, or her crew mustered, but by her own officers. The ship, like our territory, must be sacred, or we are not independent.*”

The real cause of suspending the march of the 500 militia, I should suspect to be, that the said 500 militia were not, and could not be collected, and, if collected, not kept together for five days, much less be made to march to Hampton, or to any other place, ten miles from home. Every man, capable of bearing arms, is a militia-man in the American States. I belonged to that respectable body for several years; but never did I join it for one moment in my life; and, what is more, I never personally happened to know any man that did. I never saw that militia out at parade, or drill, nor any portion of it; and, though I was told, that some few men, unable to pay a half-crown fine, sometimes did attend, with sticks and staves for arms, I cannot say, that I believed the fact. When a paltry insurrection took place in Pennsylvania, the men, called out, positively refused to march; and, at last, men of property; and those principally from other States, consented to march only upon condition that Washington would go with them himself. The men, who had the honour to attack and defeat our two boys and three sailors, were, depend upon it, a numerous rabble, armed with their fowling-pieces, quite sufficiently to be dreaded (for they are excellently expert at a dead mark), but still to be dreaded less than those thumbs and teeth of theirs, with which, in the Southern States, they gouge out men’s eyes and bite their flesh.

The mildest possible construction is, it seems, put upon the President’s Proclamation. He will touch *merchant vessels* in no shape, whether equipped for war, or not. The object is, perhaps, to inveigle our merchants to his side, who, in truth, as we have seen, do not want much inveigling. His proclamation is a mere *huff*. It is wind. It is an empty show to please the numerous enemies of England; and so it will clearly appear to be, before four months have passed over our heads. They *cannot go to war with us*, without bringing certain ruin upon their own heads.

That Mr. Erskine, whose appointment to the station of English minister in America I remarked upon at the time, may, for aught I know to the contrary, have “consented to waive *his claim*” to the sailors who had deserted; but, it does not follow, that Admiral Berkeley had consented to waive *his claim*, or rather, the claim of his country. I know very well how Mr. Erskine would feel upon such an occasion; indeed I knew beforehand how he would feel; and, I am not at all surprised, that he should have expressed a wish, that the report of *his having given an opinion upon the subject* should be contradicted. I am not at all surprised at this; for, I have before seen English consuls and ministers in America. But, Mr. Erskine’s *opinion* was not wanted by Admiral Berkeley, who had quite sufficient authority for what he did.

The Americans tell us, that they look to but one point, and that is, "that, under no circumstance whatever, should a *national* ship be visited, or her crew mustered, but by her own officers; the ship being, *like their territory*, sacred, or they are *not independent*." It is a curious and somewhat droll idea, that a nation cannot be independent, unless it has an indisputable right to send its ships whithersoever it pleases upon the seas. But, leaving the Americans to reconcile themselves to it as they may, we shall, I trust, insist upon the rights, which ancient usage, and our undisputed power, give us of searching all ships whatever for British seamen, when we have reason to suspect that they are to be found on board; and, if the ministers should be so base as to recal Admiral Berkeley for ordering the Chesapeak to be searched, he will easily be able to prove, not only that England has always claimed this right of search, but that all her naval commanders, from the admiral of the fleet down to the captain of the smallest ship, is, even to this day, not only permitted to enforce this right, but absolutely *ordered* to enforce it, in cases where the enforcement may be required, and where he has the means of enforcement. The only error committed by Admiral Berkeley, was, his ordering the Captain of the Leopard to permit the American to search the Leopard, if he chose. That he had no authority to do; but, to search the American he had full and complete authority, and, if attempted to be punished, he has it in his power to cover the ministers with shame.

What nonsense, then, Gentlemen, was it that the Morning Chronicle preached upon this subject. What a scandalous thing was it, to set up a cry against our naval commanders for having done, not what was proper merely, but what they were *commanded* to do. But, as I had before the honour to observe to you, the faction of which that paper has always been the slave, seem to have a feeling, in all cases, against their country, and especially when the American States is a party in the dispute. Against speculators, against plunderers of every description, it is not very bitter. Like the Edinburgh Reviewers (as a correspondent has pointed out) it can find an apology for corruption, for flagrant corruption, even for the buying and selling of seats in parliament. It can, like them, coolly calculate the *cost* of corruptions, and drily tell us, that, if we could put a stop to all of them, in which the Reviewers evidently and almost avowedly hope to share, we should not save above a *million of money annually*, pretending not to perceive, that the mere amount of the *bribe* is a trifle compared to the *effects* of that bribe. In these matters, and in all cases wherein the *general* interests of the factions are concerned, the Morning Chronicle, like the Edinburgh Reviewers, can be very lenient. The reason, is, that neither has any feeling at all, either for the people, or for the honour of the country; they are zealous only where the *particular interests* of their faction and themselves are at stake. But, what I like in them the least of all, is, that there never, even by accident, drops from their pen any sentiment whence we can reasonably conclude that they love this country better than another for any reason besides that of its being likely that they shall be able to *make more of it*. There is a coldness in their principles and opinions that I hate. Adam Smith seems to be their sole guide. The gain, the mere pecuniary, and even present, gain of the thing is all they appear to look at.

Such men will always be ready, if it squares with their selfish views, to



take part against their country in any dispute which it may have with a foreign nation, whatever may be the justice of the case: and, to talk to them of *national honour* is like singing to a man that has been born deaf.

One of the chief merits, in my eyes, of Sir Francis Burdett, is, that he has upon no occasion sided against his country. To do this nothing has ever provoked him. In all his complaints against corruptors and plunderers, amidst all the expressions of his resentment, I never perceived him leaning towards the enemies of England. He was not one of those who expressed their joy at the conclusion of the peace of Amiens. He has never been found amongst those, who have taken occasion to recommend fawning language towards any foreign power. He has censured the wars of Pitt, and who does not now see, that the censure was well-founded; but, while he has been accused of all manner of political crimes, no man can cite the passage wherein he took part against his country. It is not pretended, that cases may not arise, wherein it may become a man's duty to defend the cause of another nation against his own; but, in the case before us, the question is, whether we are to give up or maintain a right, which was, formerly, constantly maintained by all the kings and rulers of England. From the time of there being an English navy, England has, until the peace of Amiens, claimed, and, in some way or other, maintained, a right of sea-dominion. Till then we always claimed, as a right, that the ships of other nations should bow their flags to our ships. In our treaties with the Dutch, from the reign of Charles II., a recognition of this right was always inserted. At the peace of Amiens this recognition was omitted; and, since that peace, for the first time, British sailors have seen the ships of other nations passing by them, as *equals* upon the sea. The effacing of the *Lilies* from the arms of England was another act of the same sort. Those *Lilies* were a memorial, that Englishmen once conquered France; and, what baseness was it in us, or rather in Pitt, to give up this memorial? But, from ministers bent solely upon their own gains, what else is to be expected? Amidst the divers cares of corruption the country is quite forgotten. You have always seen, that, in proportion as the nation has been oppressed at home, its rights abroad have been disregarded by its rulers; and, on the other hand, that the overthrow of corruption and speculation has always been accompanied with a renovation of the spirit and the power of the nation.

To return, for a little, to the dispute with America: I think the ministers will not yield our right to search foreign ships, of whatever description, for British seamen. I think they will not dare to do this; and, I hope, notwithstanding the terrible circumstance of their being the disciples of Pitt, that they are not disposed to do it. But, I am almost certain, that their predecessors would have done it. You saw with what eagerness Mr. Whitbread caught hold of the affair between the *Leopard* and the *Chesapeak*. How, even upon a bare report of that affair, he called upon the ministers to disclaim the order to search, and to express, at once, their disapprobation of the officers, by whom the search had been ordered and executed. Here you had a sample of that disposition, which has always been apparent in Mr. Whitbread and his associates. They gave themselves no time to inquire; no time to consider; forth they came like avowed advocates of our insidious enemies, and their subservient print followed their example. This print is now become quiet

upon the subject. It is waiting to see if no favourable opportunity will offer itself for resuming the pleadings. There is something so unnatural in this conduct, that one cannot help detesting it. It is truly curious, that, during all the disputes that we have had with the Americans, since the end of the war with them, this Morning Chronicle has been steadily upon their side; but, observe, when the Americans were engaged in a quarrel with *France*, then the Morning Chronicle was *against* them! Our concessions to the Americans, our submission to them, have been shameful. The items of our baseness in this way would, line under line, fill this sheet. If our very existence had depended upon their absolute will, we could not have been more submissive than we have been. And, the cause of this has been, not an anxious desire in our several sets of ministers to spare either our money or our blood, but to favour the pursuits of bodies of merchants, manufacturers, and speculators in American funds. If this dispute with America should become a subject of public discussion, I beseech you to mark well who those are, who plead for the surrender of our rights; and, take my word for it, you will find nearly if not quite all of them to be concerned in American trade, American funds, or American *lands*, of which latter there are men in England who have immense tracts. Gentlemen, I could point out to you persons; who, having gorged themselves with public money in England, that is to say, with the fruit of the people's labour, have deposited it in the American funds; and, doubtless, from the base motive of having a last resource, in case their gorgings here should, at last, bring down vengeance upon their heads. Such men have, generally, a brother, or a son, or an agent of some sort, in America, to superintend their property there; and, if a time of pressing danger were to arrive here, they would instantly sail off with every thing they could carry with them. These men well know, that the first act of war, on the part of America, would be to sequester their property; and, they have seen, that, between sequestration and confiscation the space is not very wide. Men thus situated are not few in number, nor are they weak in point of political influence; and the Americans, knowing this, rely upon them for support here, and for the compelling of the government to sacrifice *our rights to their interests*. Proceeding upon this reliance, the American government will, at first, talk stoutly; and, as it will cost them nothing, they may, perhaps, go so far as to pass an act of sequestration; but, if we remain firm, they will yield, and yield they must, for a war for only six months against us they cannot maintain. They already, even at the *name* of war, tremble for their ships, and their harbours, and their towas. Small though Britain is in size, it is, when in good hands, great in power. Being masters of the sea, there is no land that can injure or insult us with impunity. And, if the Edinburgh Reviewers, headed by Mr. Whitbread, should ask me what we *get* by this, my answer is, that I know nothing in this world which is worth so much to me as my share in the renown of my country.

In a future letter I shall lay before you some striking instances of the injuries which we have received from the American States. In the meanwhile I remain,

Your faithful friend,

and obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, Sept. 3, 1807.

## IRISH INSURRECTION BILL.

THIS bill, which was introduced on the 9th of this month, is now upon the point of becoming a law. Its provisions are such as one might expect in a case where the whole, or nearly the whole, of the people are suspected of a wish to avail themselves of the first favourable opportunity of rising in open rebellion. That such a bill is *not necessary* I am far from asserting, or even supposing; but, if such a bill be necessary, what are we to think of those writers of daily papers, and others, who have been continually assuring us, that Ireland "never was more tranquil?" These impudent falsehoods are, however, trifling when compared with another subject of reflection, namely, *that nothing is proposed to alter the state of Ireland*, which unhappy country seems doomed to remain in a state of continual agitation, and of apprehension, that, from day to day, worse and worse may happen to it.—"Hush!" "Mum!" These have been the answers given to all those who have expressed such apprehensions. And, from the people of England, the thing has certainly been kept secret enough. There are, in the kingdom, a hundred and fifty newspapers; perhaps many more; most of them, and especially the fashionable ones, eager to get at news, particularly relating to blood and murder; and, yet, how completely the history of *the fight between the Irish Militia and the Hanoverians* was smothered in its birth! We just heard, that there had been a fight; but, as it were by the pull of a wire, all the mouths of the news-venders were closed up as tight as a bottle. No inquiry about it. Parliament has met twice, and no one asks how many of our countrymen were killed in the fight. The cause, which must be of importance in any state of things, and especially at this time, remains uninquied into. It did not use to be thus. Time was when *some* member of parliament would have inquired into this. But, upon this subject especially, "*hush*" seems to be the unanimous cry.—To insert these bills is not compatible with my space; but they are great curiosities, and such as cannot possibly be done justice to by any abstract. I will, therefore, content myself with inserting the description given of them by Sir Arthur Wellesley (so famous for his military and other deeds in *Oude* and other parts of Hindostan), who brought them forward. I take the report of the Morning Post.

"Sir Arthur Wellesley, in pursuance of his notice, rose to move for leave to bring in a bill, for the suppression of insurrection in Ireland, and to prevent the disturbance of the peace in that country. The House would remember, that the circumstances, which preceded and attended the suppression of the late rebellion in Ireland, had rendered stronger measures than the established laws afforded, necessary in that country. An act was therefore passed by the Irish parliament, in 1796, to prevent unlawful assemblies, and to authorise the lord lieutenant on a report of the magistrates, to proclaim any county where disturbances existed. That law required all persons in such counties to keep within their dwellings between the hours of sun setting and sun rising, and gave to the magistrates the power of sending persons who should be found to offend against it on board his Majesty's navy. The act had proved effectual for the suppression of the insurrection, as appeared from the acknowledgment of the leaders of that insurrection before a committee of the Irish parliament. But though such a law may be necessary, it was the duty of that House to guard against the abuse of the powers which it gave. The bill he proposed to bring

“ in contained the same provisions as the Insurrection Act, with respect to the power of the lord lieutenant to proclaim disturbed counties, and the authority of the magistrates to arrest persons who should be found out of their dwellings between sun setting and sun rising; but, in order to prevent hardships to the subjects, the bill required that persons so arrested should be tried at the Quarter Sessions by the magistrates and assistant barrister, assisted by a king's counsel, a sergeant specially sent down for that purpose. Besides this bill, he meant to move for leave to bring in another to prevent improper persons from keeping arms, by obliging all persons to register their arms, and authorising the magistrates to search for arms. These bills had been prepared by his predecessor, and the only difference was, that the bill of his predecessor gave a negative to the king's counsel or sergeant, which he proposed to take from him, as it appeared to him that such a negative would render the measure nugatory. He meant, however, to substitute a clause, which should, in case of any difference between the sergeant and the bench, suspend the execution of the decision of the magistrates, till the sergeant should have reported the matter to the lord lieutenant.”

Sir A. Wellesley said he proposed *seven years*, as the time of duration of these bills, but *his mind* was not quite *made up* as to that point!—After some observations, from different members, respecting the duration of the bill, Mr. Sheridan rose and said,

“ That he viewed this question in a different light from his friends on the bench near him, and the hon. gentleman opposite (Col. Vereker), had only anticipated an opposition which this measure was to encounter. His right hon. friend had said, that the measure could only be justified by one imperious necessity; now it was *that necessity* which he wished to have *clearly made out to exist before the measure was resorted to*. It was no answer to him that the measure had been prepared by his friends. If it had, the Threshers were then engaged in their disturbances and administering unlawful oaths. Ireland was now on the contrary as loyally tranquil as any part of the empire. Would they state in the preamble to the bill, ‘Whereas a very small part of Ireland was some time ago disturbed by the Threshers, and whereas that disturbance has been completely put down by the ordinary course of law, and Ireland is now completely tranquil, be it therefore enacted, That most extraordinary powers, &c.’ This was the case however, and until it should be shown to him that the necessity for the measure existed, he should oppose it in every stage.”

Upon the bill, or bills, I shall not make much observation, at present, but I may ask the English reader to reflect, for a moment, upon a life led in a country, where, upon the *application of the magistrates*, a county is to be proclaimed as being in a state of disturbance, and where, upon that proclamation being made, every inhabitant is compelled to remain *within his doors*, from *sun-set* until *sun-rise*; the magistrates having power to *search the houses* to see if the law be obeyed! What endless informations must this give rise to! What spite and malice and revenge amongst neighbours! What continual inconvenience, dread, alarm; and what unquenchable hatred!—Yet, I do not *know*, that the bill may not be necessary; but I agree with Mr. Sheridan in wishing to see the necessity clearly made out before the bill be passed.—But, can nothing be thought of to obviate this hard necessity? Is there no way of conciliating the good will of the people of Ireland? Are they such brutes as not to be made sensible of having a good government? Are they to be ruled by nothing but stripes? We must either maintain this, or we must allow, that, some when and some where, there must have been a fault in the government.—When one considers the heart-burnings which exist amongst the Catholics, and which are kept constantly alive, by the collection of *tithes* alone, one is not astonished at the necessity of an insur-

rection bill. The evils of *non-residence* are felt quite sufficiently in England; the flagrant injustice of making the holders of land yield one-tenth part of its produce to persons who perform no duty for it, and who expend it at a distance from the spot; so glaring a violation of the well-known principles upon which tithes were established, and upon which alone the justice of collecting them can be maintained; this has made a deep impression in England. What, then, must be expected in Ireland, where four-fifths of the people yield tithes to an establishment to which they do not belong; and where the residence of an incumbent is looked upon as a wonder?—Mr. DILLON, during a debate, in the House of Commons, of the 15th instant, upon a grant proposed to be made for the education of Irish papist priests,

“ said it was no wonder that the Protestant church was disrelished by the Irish peasant, when the only way through which he knew it was the exactions of the tithe-proctor. He concluded with an earnest exhortation to the House, to adopt some modification of tithes in Ireland, as the best possible way of restoring the people of that country to content.”—Mr. PERCEVAL “ assured the hon. gentleman that the attention of government should be early and anxiously directed to the abuse complained of with respect to the want of glebe houses and sinecure livings. He did think with that hon. gentleman that it was extremely hard that any man *should pass away an indolent life upon an opulent living, while a poor curate was discharging the duties of that office for the year round upon a pittance scarcely sufficient to maintain him.* He (Mr. Perceval) had before failed in two or three instances in carrying through that House a measure for the regulation of rectories and cures; he however now gave notice that it was the intention of his Majesty’s present government to submit to the consideration of the House, a measure for *reducing the opulent livings, and out of their abundance making an allowance for the poorer curates.*”

It is true, that Mr. Perceval did make an attempt or two of this sort, in which he had to oppose, in one of the instances, the late ministry. But, while I do not think, that he went far enough with regard to *this country*, I know of no attempt at all that he made in behalf of Ireland. The state in which Ireland is, as to the established church, will appear from the following facts.

There are in Ireland— <i>Parishes</i>	-	-	-	-	2,436
These parishes have been moulded into <i>benefices</i>	-	-	-	-	1,120
Thereby giving upon an average the tithes of more than two parishes to one parson.					

In the 2,436 parishes there are <i>churches—only</i>	-	-	-	-	1,001
In the 2,436 parishes there are <i>parsonage-houses—only</i>	-	-	-	-	355

Such is the state of the Protestant church in Ireland. I appeal to the heart of any good man, whether it be possible, that the people should contentedly pay tithes in such a state of the church. Tithes are collected, or paid, every where, and they are exacted most rigidly, whether there be church or no church. Does this state of things warrant the notion of *Hypocrisy Personified*, who pretended to hope, in his usual canting style, and with his Lazarus-like look, that, in time, the papists of Ireland would be *converted* to the true faith? The *dirty* Dean may bawl as long as he pleases “ *no popery!*” but, will any man, but such a man, say, that *something* ought not to be done to put a stop to this enormous abuse? Yes, the clergy (I speak with exceptions) and the universities may address the King, and talk about supporting *the church*; but will not every reasonable man call upon them to do *their* part in supporting it? The moment any measure is proposed for abolishing the abuses in the church;

for compelling those who receive its revenues to do the duty for which those revenues were granted, they set up a hue and cry as if you were going to murder them. Their *rights* are indisputable; but, so are their *duties*; and, however law may support the former without the performance of the latter, the mind of man is too truly formed to acquiesce without grumbling.—I must do Mr. Perceval the justice to say, that he is the *only* member of parliament that I know of, who has spoken upon the subject of non-residence, in suitable terms. This is one of the great grievances of the nation here; and, what, then, is it in Ireland? Not an inch do the clergy or the prelates give way as to their *demands*. Where the latter are lords of manors, they are as active as ever in enforcing all their feudal claims, though the corresponding duties have long fallen out of use. Their courts leet and courts baron, all the *utility* of which, to the *vicinage*, have long been unknown, serve the lords as well as ever for the purpose of demanding fines and heriots.—To return to Ireland, if it be *really* intended to do something, in the way now spoken of, for the people of that country, *why is it delayed?* Never, in my opinion, was there a more fit time. There is a constant cry for sacrifices, on the part of the people; but, it is not *the time*, it seems, to make a reformation in their favour. The *exigency of the moment* is pleaded for the introduction of the sun-set and sun-rise bill; and, perhaps, the exigency may exist; I do not say, that it does not; but, then, I ask, is there not an exigency, *equally pressing*, for some measure to *convince* the people, that you mean to alleviate their burdens? This is what they want, and not a fanciful sentimental bill, the only real effect of which would have been to gratify the vanity of a dozen of families. Oh! but you must be very careful how you trench upon the property of the church, which, in many cases, is private property. Well, but ought you not to be very careful, then, how you trench upon the *personal freedom* of the people; how you pass a law to shut the inhabitants of a whole county up within the walls of their houses from sun-set to sun-rise? Only tell them, that you will, *upon such a day*, actually pass a law to redress the grievances they complain of, or any one of those grievances, and you may leave them to go where they please, by night or by day. —“But, what would you do, if you had it in your power, in this case of tithes, for instance?” This is a question which many a reader will put to me; and, my answer is this, that I would abolish tithes in Ireland; I would make each parish maintain its own priest, or pastor; I would remunerate the church by the purchase, at the public expense, and by valuation, of the impropriate tithes in England and Wales; I would compel *every* incumbent here to reside upon his living; and, if, from these alterations, the clergy should suffer inconvenience, or loss, they would only partake, in that respect, with the nation in general. To those, who start at this, I put these questions: Do you think that the Catholics of Ireland will ever become Protestants while the present system is persevered in? Do you think that they will ever be contented, that they will ever love the government, while they are compelled to pay tithes to a Protestant church? Do you think, that, by force, we shall always be able to govern them? If all these questions are answered in the negative, as I think they must be, what remedy is there except the one that I would apply? And, as to *the time*, when will there be a time, if it be not now?—“What!” (some one will say, perhaps, *Hypocrisy Personified* may say it) “would you establish and confirm a crafty de-

luding priesthood?" No. I would soon destroy the wretched priest-craft by *making* the people *pay* the priests, whom they themselves should choose to have. It appears to me, that we have always been working at the wrong end. In order to fell the tree, we began niggling at the top, instead of taking out the earth from the roots; and so we have continued. People are never, in religious matters especially, either *frightened* or *coaxed* out of an opinion. They must be led into a train of thinking for themselves, and if you take care to give them self-interest for an assistant, you need not be in much apprehension for the result. —I should like to hear the opinions of others, upon this subject, *freely* expressed. As the ministry say, that they are *thinking* about something to be done with respect to the church in Ireland, this seems the proper time for men to say what they think thereon. I am by no means wedded to my scheme (except after the American fashion, which leaves to the parties the right of separating whenever they please), and I should be glad to see the scheme of any other man; but, then, I must beg him to consider, that something *substantial* must be done, and that it must, to answer any good purpose, be done *without delay*.

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## SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

(*Political Register, August, 1807.*)

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This bill, this fearful bill, passed through a committee of the House of Commons, on the 24th of last month. The reader was before apprized, that it enables the Lord Lieutenant, upon receiving a memorial from the magistrates of a county, stating that *disturbances* exist therein, to proclaim that county in a disturbed state; whereupon the bill compels every man, woman and child in that county, to remain *within* their houses from sun-set at night until sun-rise in the morning, though it is notorious, that between before sun-rise and after sun-set affords some of the best hours for husbandry labour. Good God! What a life to lead! But, the being shut up in this way is a trifle. The magistrates, that is to say, persons selected by the government, have, after the issuing of such proclamation, a right, either by themselves or their officers, to make *forcible entry*, at any time in the night, into any house, to see if its inhabitants are at home, and to take up and imprison all those who may be caught out of their houses. To this nobody in the House of Commons seems to have objected; but it was proposed so to qualify the clause as to compel the house-searchers to give *ten minutes* to the people within to prepare for the visit. It was stated, that women ought to have a few minutes to rise and dress themselves. But, ten minutes was thought to be *too much*, and the words "reasonable time," a charmingly indefinite phrase, was introduced in the stead thereof.—But, the most strongly characteristic part of this bill is the clause suspending the Common Law, as to *redress against the magistrates and others*, in cases where they may, under colour of this act, be guilty of unlawful violences against the people. As the law, thank God, stands, in this country, *as yet*, every magistrate and other peace officer is liable to be punished for going beyond the law,

under pretence of executing the law, except in cases where the *revenue* is concerned, and there the Common Law, that law by which our forefathers were governed, and of which we have the impudence to *boast*, is, in a great degree, abrogated by statutes, by those statutes, which William the Third's system of funding and taxing introduced. In other matters, however, we have, *as yet*, a *jury* to appeal to against magistrates and other persons in authority, who, under pretence of executing the law, may commit acts of injustice against us; but, how the Irish will now be situated in this respect, the following clause of the bill in question will enable the reader to judge. It is the 5th clause from the end of the bill:—

“ Provided always, and be it further enacted, That when a *verdict shall be given for the plaintiff* in any action to be brought against any justice of the peace, peace officer, or other person, for taking or imprisoning, or detaining any person, or for seizing arms, or entering houses under colour of any authority given by this act, and it shall *appear to THE JUDGE OR JUDGES*, before whom the same shall be tried, that there was a PROBABLE CAUSE for doing the act complained of in such action, and the judge or court shall certify the same on record, then and in that case the plaintiff shall not be entitled to more than *sixpence damages, nor to any costs of suit*: provided also, that where a verdict shall be given for the plaintiff in any such action as aforesaid, and the *judge or court* before whom the cause shall be tried, shall certify on the record that the injury for which such action is brought was wilfully and maliciously committed, the plaintiff shall be entitled to treble costs of suit.”

Thus, as the reader will perceive, though a man, injured by the magistrates, or their underlings, should obtain a verdict from the *jury*, the judge may set that verdict aside, and the injured person, by way of *redress*, may have to pay his own costs! It is really difficult to see how a *jury* can be, in such a case, of any use at all.—There was a debate upon this clause, of which I shall give an account.—Mr. *Brand* moved for the whole clause to be expunged, as being “grossly unjust and unconstitutional.” Mr. *Perceval* admitted that the clause was not one which he could have wished to see introduced,—

“ But, when the *necessity* of the case was considered; when it was recollected that the state of Ireland required that very irksome and disagreeable duties should be imposed on the magistrates, which they would be unwilling to perform, and which, in fact, it would be dangerous for them to perform with the zeal and fidelity required, unless they were protected from the effects of unintentional errors into which, *from appearances*, they might be led; when, in short, it was considered that the very jurors in such actions of damages might be persons against whom it had been necessary for them to exercise the enactments of this act, and whose minds might, on that account, be inflamed against them; when all these things were considered, it was the *opinion of those best acquainted with the state of Ireland*, that the act must be imperfectly executed, unless the magistrates were secured by a clause like the present.”

This is a pretty good confirmation of my Lord Hawkesbury's assertions, respecting “the unanimity that prevails in Ireland, and the well-known readiness of the Irish to join heart and hand, as one man, against the enemies of the constitution!”—Sir *Arthur Pigot*, the late Attorney-General, in answer to Mr. *Perceval*, said,

“ That he was decidedly of opinion, that the provision now objected to, would be a disgrace to the statute book. Were they, by this most extraordinary bill, to give extraordinary powers to magistrates, and then, after they had exceeded even the powers given them, to protect them from the verdict of a jury? If the right hon. gent. was afraid that the persons aggrieved might obtain a verdict while the country



“ was in a state of irritation, *why limit the time for seeking redress to six months?*  
 “ If again he was afraid of the inflammable state of the jurors' minds, and that  
 “ they might even have been parties in the supposed transgression, the remedy  
 “ was plain and easy—to *change the venue to a more distant county*, where no  
 “ dissatisfaction or irritation of feelings had prevailed. It had been said, that a  
 “ similar act had been intended to be proposed by the late ministry. He would  
 “ only say for one, that he had never been consulted on, nor heard of such an  
 “ intention, nor had he ever seen the present bill till yesterday. If the state of  
 “ Ireland was such as the right hon. gent. represented, and that a jury could not  
 “ be had; there whose minds were not in an inflammatory state, why not *take*  
 “ *away the trial by jury entirely*, at least, *suspend* it, till the feelings of the people  
 “ were restored to a greater degree of calmness and composure? It was a *mockery*  
 “ *to continue the trial by jury*, and yet to deprive an injured person of the effect  
 “ of a verdict after it had been given in his favour. It was said, that the judges  
 “ of Ireland were fair, impartial and upright. He should be *sorry to doubt it*.  
 “ He believed, that they *in common with judges of this part of the kingdom*, with  
 “ whom he was more intimately acquainted, possessed *every honourable and*  
 “ *upright feeling and quality*. But this was a power not to be intrusted to any  
 “ man. It was such a power as the law had refused to any judge, or any set of  
 “ judges whatever.”

This answer was complete in all its parts. It left no excuse for the clause.—Now, then, let us hear the defence of it by the present Attorney-General, Sir Vicary Gibbs, who

“ contended, that the enactment now objected to was not so novel as the hon.  
 “ and learned baronet had supposed. He confessed that plaintiffs in the situation  
 “ alluded to were to be deprived of the benefit of the common law; but *was not*  
 “ *this already the case in all revenue questions?* Where an officer of the revenue  
 “ was sued, nothing but the dry damage sustained by the injured party was  
 “ awarded against him. Where it was a question of *intention* in revenue cases  
 “ and *no intention could be shown*, the plaintiff could not recover; and it had been  
 “ determined, in the case of Sutton and Johnston, that the question of ‘*probable*  
 “ *cause*’ was a question for the judge. There the defendant would have an  
 “ acquittal, and of course *his costs from the plaintiff*; here the plaintiff was to  
 “ have a nominal verdict, even although the judge was of opinion that the pro-  
 “ bable cause was with the defendant. The duties which magistrates would have  
 “ to perform in the *present state of Ireland*, were of a *most invidious nature*, and  
 “ he thought that this was not too great an indemnity to allow them in the dis-  
 “ charge of such duties.”

A Mr. Boyle supported the clause, upon the ground, that the same had been enacted before in Ireland, and, indeed, that a similar provision now made part of the statutes of that country; and, he asked Sir Arthur Pigot why he had not, *when in place*, come forward and proposed to do it away. This was a close question. Aye, this is the rub. All these things the Whigs forgot while in place. Mr. Erskine, become Baron Erskine of Clackmannan, forgot, quite forgot those bills against which he had so strongly protested, and so solemnly vowed to endeavour to cause to be repealed. Nay, he gave his vote for making us pay the debts of the man, by whom they had been framed. This is never to be forgotten.—Mr. Whitbread said, that

“ He had indeed heard something like an attempt at a legal defence of the mea-  
 “ sure, by showing that such practices also prevailed in revenue questions. But  
 “ would that render the power more agreeable to law or to the constitution?  
 “ Was it not *known and acknowledged*, that our revenue laws were *infractions of*  
 “ *our constitutional liberties*, and were only tolerated as acts of *necessity*, which,  
 “ indeed, was the only attempt at a vindication of the present measure? The  
 “ necessity of the revenue laws we must all be aware of, *a great revenue could*  
 “ *not otherwise be expected to be levied*, but of the necessity of the present provision  
 “ he confessed he was by no means convinced. An hon. gentleman (Mr Boyle)  
 “ had, however, treated the provision as part of the existing laws of this country.

“and had asked, why, if so obnoxious to his learned friend (Sir A. Pigot), he had not moved to have it expunged from the Statute Book? A provision to the same effect he (Mr. Whitbread) admitted, did make part of a statute of the parliament of Ireland, which would expire on the 1st of August. It would have been *too much* however, he suspected, for his learned friend to have come forward here, and moved to have that enactment expunged. At all events an enactment of the Irish parliament, could not act as a precedent for that House, or afford any such argument for now adopting it, as if they had been re-enacting a former legislative measure of their own. There might be a general conviction of the necessity of the present act, and yet the clogging it with one clause similar to that now objected to, might render it so unpalatable that many gentlemen, who like himself were not otherwise unfriendly to the measure, might rather wish to see Ireland take its chance than thus relinquish one of the dearest and most valuable rights. It was hardly possible but that in the execution of such an act as the present, innocent persons should suffer wrong. Their country, however, would still be naturally dear to them, and they would cheer themselves with the hope that they had still a remedy left; that they had still a jury to protect them and to redress the wrongs they had sustained. If the clause now objected to, however, should pass, they could have no such consolation. They might appeal to a jury; a jury might give them redress; but they might then find the judge interpose, and deprive them of that recompense for their wrongs to which they were justly entitled. He would ask, could a man in this situation have the same feelings towards his country as if no such clause had found its way into the present bill?—Sir John Newport related two cases in which the precipitancy of the magistrates had been the ruin of two worthy individuals, the one, that of a merchant who was taken up on suspicion, 100,000*l.* bail was offered for his appearance at the necessary time; this was refused, the man's business was ruined for want of his own presence to conduct it, and he became a bankrupt. He afterwards went out to America: he carried with him the disease of the mind which had thus been occasioned, became melancholy, his senses were deranged, and he made an attempt upon his life. Another person was apprehended in the county of Tipperary, because he was guilty of having a *piece of French manuscript in his pocket*, and by order of the Sheriff he was *flogged*, because the sheriff in his extreme *loyal zeal* concluded that the manuscript must be seditious, or it would not have been written in French, a language which he did not understand. He therefore entreated gentlemen to look a little at the other side; to feel a little for the injured individual as well as for the erring magistrates.—Mr. Windham always considered the principle of the revenue laws a very deplorable departure from the general principles of British legislation, and could not readily be induced to think that we ought to adopt what must be in some instances an unjust exception, instead of what was an acknowledged, just, and liberal established rule. The case of Sutton and Johnston was a singular exception, not extremely worthy of imitation.”

Col. Vereker was afraid this excellent bill was in danger of being frittered away.—The Solicitor-General said, that “if this clause was omitted all the preceding clauses might be cancelled also.” Well, then, poor Ireland, you are in a hopeful state, since it is held to be absolutely necessary to give such extraordinary, such terrible powers over your people, and since even these powers are of no use, unless impunity be secured to the persons who are intrusted with the exercise of them, and who, upon “probable cause” may surpass them, no matter in what degree!—Yet, I do not say, that, in order to prevent a rebellion in Ireland, such measures may not be necessary; but I say, that the fact of such necessity, but badly accords with the halcyon picture drawn by Lord Hawkesbury, and with the positive assertions, lately made in the ministerial papers, that, at no period, was Ireland ever more loyal or tranquil.—But, there are two or three points in Mr. Whitbread's speech which must not pass unnoticed. The first is the proposition, that “a great revenue cannot be collected without infraction of our constitu-

*Donot liberties.*" Sir Francis Burdett has said the same a thousand times, and in a thousand different shapes, and at every such time he has been called every thing short of a traitor. The fact is, however, exactly so; and, for this reason it is, that I wish to see the taxing system changed. Mr. Windham observed, that the revenue laws were the *exception*, and not the *rule*; but, Sir, it is a fearfully large exception; for these laws completely circumscribe us; they touch us in every part; not a man of us is exempted, or can be by any care of our own, exempted from their operation. More than a *hundred thousand able men* are engaged in executing them upon a population of eight millions and a half of men, women and children; and, I am persuaded, that, if you were to make an accurate calculation, you would find, that out of every *ten* able men in this country, *one* is, in some way or another, empowered to act under the laws of the revenue, and yet you, who dislike these laws, dislike also "the result of the Westminster election," in which a spirit so opposite to these laws was manifested.—Mr. Whitbread said, that "it would have been *too much* for his learned friend, the late Attorney-General, to have come forward, while in place, and propose to expunge from the statute book the clause now re-enacted." But, Sir, *why* would it have been "*too much*"? and, it is this *why*, precisely this *why*, that we want to be informed of. The fact is, Sir, it would have been too much for *Lord Grenville*; and, here is an instance wherein the people were sacrificed to "the compromise of contending factions," for the having said that which was the case you, Sir, attacked, in what you regarded as the most vulnerable part, the Middlesex address of Sir Francis Burdett.—The Honourable House divided, as it is called, upon the clause in question, and, it is hardly necessary to say, that it was carried in the affirmative.—After this the *duration* of the bill was fixed at *two years* and to the end of the next ensuing session of parliament. Upon this *Mr. Grattan* made a speech full of first-rate *loyalty*, inasmuch that he was loudly applauded, it appears, by the Honourable House, and particularly by Mr. Beresford and General Loftus, whose praises he seems most richly to have deserved. He earnestly exhorted the Irish members to inculcate amongst their constituents the fundamental maxim of English policy, namely, *to have nothing to do with France*; which was very patriotic, to be sure; but, after having heard the speech of Lord Hawkesbury, one can hardly conceive that there was much necessity for such an exhortation, seeing that "all the Irish to a man, are ready to join heart and hand against the tyrant, who is subduing the rest of Europe." Upon the passing of the bill, in the House of Commons, on the 27th of July, Mr. Grattan, as is stated in the report of the debate, "declared, that he was informed, that meetings of "a *treasonable* nature were held in Ireland. He did *not mean* to accuse "his countrymen of *treason* or *disaffection*; but he was *certain*, that "there was a *French party* in Ireland; it was against them, and *not* "against *Irishmen*, that the operation of the bill was directed; and "sooner than run a risk of *losing the constitution altogether*, he would "take upon himself his full share in common with his majesty's ministers, of the responsibility which would attach to the measure."—Good! Really Mr. Grattan is in a fair way of securing the praises of the friends of "regular government, social order, and our holy religion," as John Bowles says. No; the Honourable Gentleman did not mean to accuse his countrymen of disaffection; he thought, doubtless, with Lord

Hawkesbury, that they would unite hand and heart against the enemy of their country. He was only quite sure, that there was a *French party* in Ireland; that was all.—Mr. *Sheridan*, whose speech I must insert, made a speech of a very different sort. He said,

“ He could not agree to the bill in any shape; but most particularly the amendments, which would make it in some degree palatable, were rejected. If, said he, the time of reading the bill a third time had afforded me the best possible opportunity of delivering my sentiments on it at such length as I chose, I should not have profited by the advantage. I certainly did wish, and mean, to have selected the fittest occasion for giving fully my reasons for the abhorrence I feel for its principle, and the contempt I entertain for its provisions; but circumstances have since embarrassed my judgment, and I will state them shortly and sincerely. When I find the principle of the bill admitted on the plea of necessity by all those to whose judgment and information I am bound to pay the utmost deference, when I find I cannot oppose their acquiescence without arraying my knowledge of the fact of the real situation and temper of Ireland against their superior means of information, I feel the presumption and hazard of taking upon myself the responsibility of an earnest endeavour to persuade the House to reject a measure which I am almost single in regarding as the worst, the foulest, and the foolishlest measure, that ever solicited the sanction of Parliament; but still more am I influenced by observing in my attendance on the committee, where I avow to have shunned taking any part, washing my hands, and absolving my conscience from meddling with, or tampering in any attempt to mend that which is so hateful in principle, that it is perhaps best that it should carry with it all its unequal proportion of deformity. I say, I cannot but have been induced to forego my first determination by observing that so many efforts at modification, moved by most respectable characters, and supported by the most unanswerable arguments, have been rejected and reprobated by insulting majorities.”

Oh, what a man this might be! Had I such talents, and had but a month to live, the weight of those talents should be felt.—The bill passed by a majority of 106 against eight.—This law is, then, by this time, in operation. It is the law of Ireland; and, though I do not say, that I disapprove of it, because, for any thing that I know to the contrary, it may be necessary to prevent a rebellion, I may, I hope, be permitted to beseech the reader to consider what the state of Ireland must be, if such necessity exists. I know, that Englishmen are too much in the habit of taking no thought about the four or five millions of their fellow subjects who live in Ireland; that they are too apt to say, “ Do what you please with them, so that you keep them from doing that which will endanger us.” But, is this worthy of an English mind? And, if it could be justified upon principles of morality, can it be justified upon principles of policy? We may rail against the Irish as long as we please; we may call them rebels and half-savages till we are tired; no one can prevent us from despising or hating the Irish; but I think, it is too much for us to blame them, if they should happen most cordially to hate us in return. We have before us now some of the effects of the blessed *union*, which Pitt and Lord Castlereagh, through means very little mysterious, effected, and which union, together with the subduing of Tip-poo Sul-taun, Pitt, in his defence of the peace of Amiens, asserted to have given to this kingdom *more additional power than France had gained by all her conquests!* And yet, we are compelled to pay his debts, and to erect a monument to his memory!!

## POOR LAWS.

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**NOTE BY THE EDITORS.**—This question is one in which Mr. COBBETT is well known to have taken peculiar interest, and, therefore, we shall insert here the first articles written by him on the first attempts made in his time to amend these laws. To do this we are obliged to take these articles a little out of their order as compared with the Letters to the Electors of Westminster, which have gone before; but, as the date of every article is always given in the title to the page in which it is found, no inconvenience can arise from this.

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MR. WHITBREAD is coming forward, in grand solemnity, with a new plan of POOR LAWS. Of this plan, as developed in the newspaper reports, I shall have much to say, upon a future occasion; at present I shall content myself with giving it as my decided opinion, that the scheme, except as far as it goes to do away the restrictions as to settlements, has in contemplation regulations the most absurd as well as most unjust that ever were conceived by mortal man. If a plan like this were really to be adopted, I, for my part, should not be at all surprised, if some one were to propose the selling of the poor, or the mortgaging of them to the fundholders.—Aye! you may wince; you may cry Jacobin and Leveller as long as you please. I wish to see the poor men of England what the poor men of England were when I was born; and, from endeavouring to accomplish this wish, nothing but the want of the means shall make me desist. This is, indeed, an important subject; and, I promise, that it shall not be neglected by me.

[Continued.]

The bill for amending the Poor Laws was, on the 23rd instant, read a second time, and ordered to be printed. The bill is then to be sent to the quarter sessions in the several counties, that it may there be examined, and that the several sets of justices may give their opinion upon it. If this be proper, in this instance, why not in other instances? And, if the approbation of the justices be to be obtained, why not appeal to the whole of the people? I dare say, that, in the four counties of Middlesex, Essex, Kent, and Surrey, where the majority upon the several benches consist of police magistrates, who are *paid* for their services, and who are *liable to be removed at the will of the ministry*: in those counties, I dare say, the plan will meet with an instant and cordial approbation. Nor, considering of what description, generally speaking, the other magistrates are, is it to be much feared by Mr. Whitbread, that his bill will be very vehemently condemned.—Mr. Morris, upon the day just mentioned, expressed his disapprobation of every part of the bill, except that which provided for the *education* of the poor; and, he wished much to have an opportunity of speaking upon the subject in this stage of the progress of the bill, in order that his objections *might go to the quarter sessions along with the project*. Thus, then, this is a direct acknowledgment, from a member of the House, that he is speaking to the people out of doors as much, at least, as to those within doors; and yet the House possesses the power of punishing, in any manner they please, any man who shall publish the speeches of the members! As to

what Mr. Morris's objections would be, I shall not presume to anticipate. Mine go to the whole of the plan, as far as I can, at present, understand it, except that part which removes, in some degree, the restriction as to settlements; but, these objections I shall refrain from stating, until I have an opportunity of seeing the bill itself. In the meanwhile, however, I cannot help again reminding my readers, of the curious effect which a change of situation has upon some men's minds. Mr. Whitbread, while his friends were out of office; while they and he (for, though he has not yet touched, he will touch) saw no prospect of getting possession of emolument and power; *then* Mr. Whitbread saw nothing but the parliament that wanted reforming; to the corruption and profligacy of the *great* he ascribed all the disgrace and misery of the nation. But *now* he finds that he was beginning at the wrong end; and that he should have set out with reforming, not the parliament, but the people. Now that all his relations are gorging with the public money up to the very palate, he finds out that a mark of disgrace ought to be affixed upon all those who receive aid out of the parish taxes.

[Continued.]

There is a subject, which came before parliament, during the last session, upon which I think it may be useful to offer a few remarks. Mr. Whitbread had two or more bills prepared for altering and adding to the Poor Laws. There are only two of his intended provisions that it is my intention to notice, namely, the *giving to each parishioner a number of votes in the vestry proportioned to the amount of the rates paid by him*; and, the *taxing of the several parishes for the purpose of providing schools for the children of the poor*. I object to the whole of his plan, as calculated to do no good whatever, while it might, in many cases, tend to evil, by causing it to be believed, that the misery of the poor and the increase of paupers had their rise in causes other than those of taxation and the idleness of the innumerable swarms who live upon the taxes. From the accounts laid before the honourable House, it appears, that the increase in the number of paupers has kept an exact pace with the increase in the real amount of the taxes. Yet, it never appears to have occurred to Mr. Whitbread, that the taxes were the cause of pauperism, notwithstanding the history of all countries might have aided in producing in his mind a conviction of this truth. In the American States there were no paupers previous to taxation; but, they are now found in tolerable abundance; and, we have heard of the soup-shops and other quackery of that sort, even in Philadelphia, where my poor-rates amounted to a considerable sum annually. In New Brunswick, when I was there, there were no taxes, and there were no paupers. Am I told, that there would have been paupers, if there had been a law to relieve them? My answer is, that there is no such law in Ireland; but, that country, heavily taxed, has a population of one fourth paupers, while in England the paupers amount to about one seventh of the population.—But, supposing him to have overlooked what was pointed out by experience, reason alone might have convinced him, that taxation must produce paupers; and, if he himself had wanted the faculty of reasoning, a correspondent of mine has, long ago, reasoned the matter ready to his hand.—I object to the whole of his project, therefore, as totally inadequate to the purposes professed to be in view; but, as the project has been rejected, I shall, for the present, content myself with a remark or two upon the two intended provi-

sions above mentioned, and which, to me, are particularly objectionable.

The first would have changed the mode of voting at vestries. Every parishioner, who pays poor-rates, has now a right to vote, in these parochial assemblies, and the decision, upon all occasions, is by the majority of votes. Mr. Whitbread would have given to each parishioner a number of votes in proportion to the amount of his rates.\* So that a man of large property would have had ten or a dozen votes, while some of the parishioners would have had but one vote; and, in some parishes, a decided majority of the votes would have been in one single person. "Very true," will he say, "but, who should have the votes but those who pay the rates, and who are, of course, the persons solely interested?" If we were speaking of the concerns of a trading company, I should have no objection to this reasoning, though I should advise no one to take a *small* share even in such concerns. But, we are here speaking of an establishment where something else besides the mere interest of the persons paying rates is to be considered. There are here the interests of two parties to be taken care of, namely, those of the persons paying rates and *those of the poor*; and, in order to ensure the best chance of a proper feeling prevailing upon all occasions, you must give to every parishioner, from the esquire to the shoemaker and the little farmer, a right of voting. Many of those who pay rates are but a step or two from pauperism themselves; and, they are the most likely persons to consider duly the important duty of doing, in case of relief, what they would be done unto. "But," Mr. Whitbread will say, "is it right for these persons to *give away the money of others*?" It is *not* the money of others, any more than the amount of tithes is the farmer's money. The maintenance of the poor is a charge upon the land, a charge duly considered in every purchase and in every lease. Besides, as the law now stands, though every parishioner has a vote in vestry, must it not be evident, to every man who reflects, that the man of large property and superior understanding will have weight in proportion? That he will, in fact, have *many votes*? If he play the tyrant, even little men will rise against him, and it is right they should have the power of so doing; but, while he conducts himself with moderation and humanity, while he behaves as he ought to do to those who are beneath him in point of property, there is no fear but he will have quite a sufficiency of weight at every vestry. The votes of the inferior persons in the parish are, in reality, dormant, unless in cases where some innovation, or some act of tyranny, is attempted. They are, like the sting of the bee, weapons merely of defence. If this proposition of Mr. Whitbread were adopted, why not, upon the very same principle, change the mode of voting *for members of a county*? Why not give to the freeholders of ten thousand pounds a year *five thousand votes each*? Mr. Whitbread is, or, rather, was, a parliamentary reformer; and this would be a reform with a vengeance! There needs nothing more, I think, to show, that Mr. Whitbread must have considered the subject very superficially.

The other intended provision, which was framed into a bill of itself, and which bill, after passing the Honourable House, was thrown out by the Lords, is, in my opinion, full as objectionable. I like not the

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\* This was done subsequently by Sturges Bourne's Act, 58 Geo. III. c. 69.—Ed.

ground, upon which it stood, namely, that the poverty of the people arises from their vices. This is first assumed, and then it is asserted, that *education*, as Mr. Whitbread calls it, would *prevent those vices*. It is very convenient for those, who, from whatever motive, are desirous of supporting the taxing system, to take it for granted, that the cause of the increasing wretchedness of the people lies with the people themselves. Government is continually represented as the guide, the guardian, the nursing parent of the people; and, therefore, it is maintained, that its powers ought to be great as they are. But, it is truly curious, that when the people, when these guided and guarded and nursed children, become half-starved and ragged and filthy, the fault is laid solely upon the children, and not upon the guide, guardian, and nurse. I do not say, that poverty and misery do not sometimes, and even very frequently, arise from vice. They are, indeed, the natural and just punishments of vice, in the lower as well as the higher orders of society. "The drunkard and glutton shall come to poverty," is a judgment which applies to all ranks of men. Dishonesty, hypocrisy, laziness and insolence are followed by a loss of confidence and regard; these by a loss of employment and of profit; and these by poverty and misery. But, we have, in England and Wales, 1,200,000 parish paupers; and, that all these have become paupers from their vices is utterly incredible. These paupers are nearly, if not quite, three times as numerous as they were when Pitt, to whom we are to raise a monument, became minister; so that, at any rate, if increase of vice, and not increase of taxation be the cause, the people, under Pitt's sway, have become three times as vicious as they before were. The cruel malt and hop tax has, indeed, driven them from their homes to the public-house, where some increase of vice may have been engendered; but, one would have thought, that, though this terrible tax is a great gain to the brewers, the man, who was shocked at the increase of vice, would have proposed to *remove the cause*, or would have held his tongue. An increase of vice is not, however, the great cause of the increase of the number of paupers. The great cause, is, the system of taxation, which creates such a number of idle persons, which draws from labour so large a part of its fruits, which has an inevitable tendency to reduce the number of *proprietors*, and which, as inevitably, increases the number of paupers; for, when men see not the least chance of obtaining property, it soon becomes a matter of indifference with them, whether the means of their subsistence come to them in the shape of wages or of parish relief.

But, supposing, for argument's sake, that the poverty and misery of the people have arisen from their vices; and, carrying our complaisance still further, supposing, that, somehow or other, the people have, since Pitt became minister, become, all of a sudden, cursed with a vicious propensity; how is this vicious propensity to be removed by sending the children to a parish-school? Let Mr. Whitbread search the records of Botany Bay, of the Hulks, of Newgate, of the County Jails, and he will find, I believe, that for one person incapable of reading and writing, he will there find recorded the names of fifty capable of reading and writing. But, the vice *has increased* of late years. That is distinctly asserted. Indeed that assertion is a necessary part of the ground-work of the proposition. Well, then, has a want of what Mr. Whitbread calls education *increased of late years*? Have schools become less numerous?



Have books, pamphlets, reviews, magazines, newspapers, reading-rooms, circulating libraries, methodist and other meetings, declined in number? Mr. Whitbread well knows, that they have increased tenfold. How, then, can he expect to eradicate vice, and thereby reduce the number of paupers, by adding about twelve thousand to the number of schools already existing?

It is the lot of man, and most wisely has it so been ordained, that he shall live by the sweat of his brow. In one way or another every man must labour, or he must suffer for the failure in health or in estate. Some are to labour with the mind, others with the limbs; and, to suppose what is, by Mr. Whitbread, called education, necessary to those who labour with their limbs, is, in my opinion, as absurd as it would be, to suppose that the being able to mow and to reap are necessary to a minister of state or an astronomer. The word *ignorance* is as much abused by some persons as the word *learning*; but, those who regard the latter as consisting *solely* in the acquirement of a knowledge of the meaning of words in various languages, which knowledge is to be derived only from books, will naturally regard the former as consisting *solely* of a want of the capacity to derive any knowledge at all from books. If the farmer understands well how to conduct the business of his farm, and if, from observation of the seasons and the soil, he knows how to draw from the latter as much profit as therefrom can be drawn; if the labourer be expert at ploughing, sowing, reaping, mowing, making of ricks and of fences, loading the waggon, threshing and winnowing the corn, and bestowing upon the cattle the various necessary cares; if this be the case, though neither of them can write or read, I call neither an *ignorant* man. The *education* of these men is a finished one, though neither may ever have looked into a book; and, I believe, Mr. Whitbread would be greatly puzzled to suggest even the most trifling probable benefit that either could derive from an acquaintance with the use of letters.

“But, men, thus naturally gifted and disposed, might have *risen* in life, if they had been taught reading and writing.” It is very likely, that they might have been, by such means, removed from the fields to the city; but, without allowing that that remove would have *raised* them in life, and positively denying that it would have added to their happiness, I think I may anticipate that Mr. Whitbread will concede, that *all* men cannot be so removed; and then, let it be observed, that his system of education is intended for *general* effect. Would I, then, advise every parent to prevent his children from learning to read and write? No: but, I would leave each parent to his own taste and his own means co-operating with the disposition and capacity of the child. The general taste of parents, and their naturally high opinion of their children's capacities, are quite sufficient to furnish the schools, without the aid of another act of parliament and another *cursed tax*. It is natural to the fondness of parents, it is laudable emulation in them, to endeavour to raise their children in the consideration of the world; and, as no great degree of eminence is to be attained without the use of letters, it is laudable in them to make use thereof, when they can. But, some people must remain to labour; all men cannot attain to eminence in the world; and, therefore, that which is laudable in individuals, is, to say the best of it, foolish upon a national scale.

It is contended, that learning to read and write would *mend the*

*morals of the people.* I have before observed, that the assumed increase of vice has taken place while schools and newspapers have been increasing tenfold. By the help of Mr. Wilberforce, indeed, the word *religious* was to have been placed, in the bill, before *education*; and great care was to be taken to give the parson of the parish sufficient authority in the superintending of the school, without, however, making any provision to ensure even a tolerable chance of there being a parson in the parish, except, perhaps, for a couple of hours of a Sunday. But, though Mr. Wilberforce would easily believe, that, with the help of a little new light, the scholars would have no difficulty in solving those knotty points, arising from the text of the Scriptures, about which so many doctors have been quarrelling for so many centuries, each doctor condemning the other doctor to flames eternal, and that, too, not *ignorantly*, but in good decent Latin and Greek; yet, it does not appear to have occurred to him, that, when they had learnt to read the Bible, they might possibly read something else, and that Grub Street and the novel shops might furnish them with ideas exceedingly well calculated to add to, instead of diminishing, the fearful stock of vice assumed to be already existing. Is it, however, seriously urged; is there a man who will soberly assert, that the people of England, in any considerable number, can possibly be ignorant of their moral duties? Go to the top of any hill in the kingdom, and see how thickly the spires are scattered; consider how easy and how constant is the communication between all ranks of men; how scrupulous men are as to all matters relating to property; how frequent and how regular, and, generally speaking, how impartial, the administration of justice. Do this, Mr. Whitbread, and then say, if you can, that the people of England are *ignorant*, or can possibly be ignorant, of their moral duties; and that they want *reading* to teach them those duties.

"But, the *political effects* of this education!" Mr. Whitbread did not, that I know of, promise any benefit of this sort from his plan; but, the editor of the Morning Chronicle and others have affected to see a prospect of great advantage in "*enlightening*" the people in this way. I, however, can see none. For, what would the teaching of the people to read do? Enable them to read newspapers, those vehicles of falsehood, and of bad principles. That the press, *left to itself*, would enlighten men I allow; that discussion, if *free*, would end in favour of truth I well know. But, of the newspapers, and other periodical publications, and all books, or printed works, treating of politics, *five sixths*, at least, are, by one means or other, *bought*. The writers are, in fact, hired; and hired, too, to deceive the people; to spread falsehood instead of truth, darkness instead of light. Truth is a libel; and, what is the worst of it, fine and imprisonment are constantly dreaded on the one side, and perfect impunity as constantly relied on on the other side. What information, what light are the people to receive from such a press? Do the people benefit from their reading of politics in France? Did they profit from it at Berlin? Do they profit from it in Russia or in Austria or in Holland? Yet there are newspapers in abundance there; and full as free, too, *in fact*, as the far greater part, as nine-tenths even, of our newspapers. Of public men and measures, if you disapprove, you must speak very cautiously; but, if you please to praise them, no matter how bold, how exaggerated, how false your statements. There is no gainsaying this: that where to *publish what is true* may subject a man to fine and imprisonment and pillory, the

press must be *an injury* to political freedom. Some truths, and valuable truths, get abroad through the means of the press; but these are infinitely outnumbered by the falsehoods; and, if the people were left without any press at all, matters would be much better, because they would then judge and act from what they *saw* and what they *felt*, and not from what they *read*. The operations of the press have, every one must allow, increased greatly in their extent within the last twenty-three years. Has political freedom *gained* much during that time? Have men been more secure in their persons and their property than they formerly were? It is my decided opinion, and, I think, that most men of reflection will concur with me, that, without the aid of the press, Pitt never would have been able to do half what he did during his terrible administration. If I am reminded of the *Electors of Westminster*, I say, that their light has not been derived from the press, but from being upon the spot; from *hearing* and *seeing* and receiving conviction of, what the press disguises from other men; and, it is notorious, that, during the last election, they acted in direct opposition to the exhortations of nine parts out of ten of the press. It is not, therefore, because they read more than other electors read, that they have acted virtuously and courageously, but because their knowledge of the truth led them to despise what they read.

There was one argument of *experience*, brought forward in support of this project, which, by way of conclusion, I must take a little notice of, — *the example of the people of Scotland*. The Scotch are never backward in putting forward their claims of any sort, and many just claims they have; but, I am not amongst those who are ready to allow them a *monopoly* either of virtue or of talent; and, I deny that their lower classes afford any example worthy of the imitation of ours. I deny that they are more industrious, more moral, more virtuous in any respect, than the people of England are. I have seen colonies that have been settled by Englishmen, and some by Irishmen, where industry *alone* could have possibly succeeded; but, I never yet saw a country settled and cleared by the *labour* of Scotchmen. The boastings which have been heard about the wondrous *improvements* in Scotland are infinite; but, will any man pretend to say, that the labourers of that country are more moral, more orderly, their habitations more cleanly, their struggles against poverty more unremitting, their labour and their industry greater, than are those of the English labourers? This notion about Scotch example seems to have come up amongst us with the juvenile economists, whom the late ministers drafted from the office of the Edinburgh Review, which is a sort of *dépôt* for speculators in politics, who go off, each in his turn, as he can make shift to write himself into place. The late ministers seem to have been enamoured with the whole corps, and Lord Henry Petty, in his wisdom, is said to have freighted a Berwick Smack with no small portion of it. Some of these cadet statesmen were put into parliament, where (poor lads!) they were never heard of more. Others were made commissioners of divers descriptions. Others wrote pamphlets about the Slave Trade and the Finances and Tithes and Commerce and Agriculture and the Poor, in expectancy of those high offices, the anticipated possession of which, alas! they must now exchange for the gauging-rule and bottle at the button-hole.\* To this importation of speculators, to their assurance,

\* It is curious to trace the change which has taken place in the minds of English statesmen with respect to the policy of the Poor Laws, and the

and to the imbecility of their patrons, we owe, I suspect, all the fine novel projects of Mr. Whitbread and his friends, who seemed desirous of changing every thing but the corruptions, against which they had before so bitterly inveighed. Mr. Whitbread's preambular compliment to the Scotch, containing so gross an insult to us, had certainly its rise in the impertinities of this upstart set, who, I was long ago informed, had

"principle" of population; but, of all those who have taken a part in discussing the matter, this Mr. WHITBREAD seems to have undergone the most thorough change. In 1796 he brought a bill into the House of Commons to fix a minimum of wages for agricultural labourers. He painted their sufferings in very strong colours, and his bill was supported by Mr. Fox. Mr. Pitt opposed the bill, as contrary to sound principle; but admitted the hard case of the labourers; praised them highly; and the Malthusian philosophy not having yet sprung up, he exclaimed: "Let us make relief, in cases where there are a number of children, a matter of right and an honour, instead of a ground for opprobrium and contempt. This will make a large family a blessing, and not a curse; and this will draw a proper line of distinction between those who are able to provide for themselves by their labour, and those who, having enriched their country with a number of children, have a claim upon its assistance for their support." Mr. WHITBREAD seems to have leapt at the suggestion of Mr. PITT; for, in his reply, he says: "As to the particular case of labourers, who have to provide for a number of children, the wisest thing for government, instead of putting relief afforded to such on the footing of a charity, supplied perhaps, from a precarious fund, and dealt with a reluctant hand, would be at once to institute a liberal premium for the encouragement of large families." The bill was thrown out; but we quote this to show how different the policy of 1796 was to the policy of the present day. In 1807 Mr. WHITBREAD saw through the new light. He brought in the bill commented on in the text, and in his speech, he said that "a philosopher has arisen up among us who has gone deeply into the causes of our present situation. I mean Mr. Malthus. His work on population has, I believe, been very generally read; and it has completed that change of opinion with regard to the poor laws, which had before been in some measure begun. \* \* \* Although I believe the design of the author to be benevolent, I think a man who reads it ought to place a strict guard on his heart, lest it become hardened against the distresses of his fellow-creatures." The bill was intended to do away with the poor laws; but by means the mildest imaginable—education; and here its author launched forth into praises of the Scotch nation, who had, he said, set us the example, for that, being formerly a brutish, prowling, mendicant and robbing swarm, they had become sober, loyal, laborious and learned; and that the change had been worked by education: that every poor man's child was now taught reading, writing, some of the sciences, and even "a little latin" if they pleased; and he referred to his friend Mr. HORNER, who sat beside him, to vouch the fact. We cannot help observing here, that, if all this were true, it was a matter of the highest importance that education should never have been neglected in a country which had tasted so plentifully of its benefits; and yet, that it is now neglected, and utterly neglected, and precisely amongst that class of labouring people where it was the most easy and the most necessary to keep it up, we are assured upon the authority of the commissioners appointed by the crown in 1833, to examine into the state of the factories of England and Scotland, in the following passage in page 29 of their report. Speaking of education, they say, "Few will be prepared to expect the statements that will be found under this head in regard to Scotland, where the education of the children is neglected to a far greater extent than is commonly believed; where only a very small number can write; where, though perhaps the majority can read, many cannot: and where, with some honourable exceptions, it seems certain that the care once bestowed on the instruction of the young has ceased to be exemplary. The reports of the commissioners for Scotland, who will be found to have kept this subject continually before their view, are decisive on this head. Many of the persons however could not write nor sign their depositions." And they say that this is more uniformly the case in Scotland than in England.—Ed.

wriggled themselves into such a degree of influence, over even Mr. Fox, as to obtain from him a *pledge* upon matters of great national importance; to them we certainly owe this almost metaphysical project about the poor, and particularly the compliment to Scotland at the expense of our own character. Had the compliment been *true*, I should, I hope have been amongst the last to find fault with it; but I deny its truth; I assert it to be false; and my assertions are full as good as the assertions of Mr. Whitbread. But, I wish the matter not to rest upon assertion. If you try a question by individual observation, there is no coming to a decision, because the assertion on one side is as good as that on the other. Let us appeal, in an instance or two, to acknowledged facts. In general the *resources* of countries, as ascertained by the amount of their taxes, compared with their population, is not a very certain way of coming at a criterion whereby to judge of their industry, either positive or relative. But, where there are two countries, under one and the same government, lying adjoining to each other, having both a due proportion of the offices and emoluments of the state, then the amount of the taxes raised in each, compared with their respective population, is a fair criterion whereby to judge of their relative industry, ingenuity, and enterprise. If this be so, and, I think, it would puzzle the whole corps of cadet statesmen to overset it, let us refer to the criterion here mentioned. The taxes, raised annually in Scotland, amount to something less than *one-seventeenth* of the taxes raised in Great Britain. The population of Scotland amounts to something less than *one seventh* of the population of Great Britain; so that each person in England (including Wales, observe), each of these lazy vicious English, pays to the state annually much more than double the sum that is paid by each of those industrious and moral Scotch, of whom our labourers, in their hard struggles against poverty and misery, are insultingly told to take an example. The Irish, with a population of four millions; that is to say, a population amounting to a *third* of Great Britain; the poor abused, despised, wretched Irish, pay *two seventenths* of the expenses of our army and navy, besides paying the whole of the interest upon their own national debt, and wholly maintaining their own expensive government, civil and military.—Let us not be put off with an assertion that the custom-house is chiefly in England; for the other taxes as well as customs bear the same proportion. Nor will any shuffle about *barren lands* avail the cadets; for, we take not, observe, extent of country, or nature of soil, but *population*, and the amount of the population is always the measure of the means of subsistence.

The other instance, which I shall take is grounded upon facts equally undeniable. It will, I think, be admitted, that when the people of a country are, in times of tranquillity and under no extraordinary circumstances, given to *emigrate*, that people cannot be very industrious, nor have, in any very high degree, the virtues, which we could wish to meet with in the lower orders of society. Savages, who never labour if they can avoid it, are always wandering from place to place. Sturdy beggars roam from town to town and from county to county. Change of place, change of profession, change of employers; “any thing rather than work,” is the motto of every lazy man in the world. Out of Scotland more persons have emigrated to America, within the last ten years, than out of England, in all probability, within the last hundred years, notwithstanding the great superiority in the population of the latter. “They emigrated for want of work;” a certain proof of a want of industry, of ingenuity, or

of enterprise of the industrious east. The people were *there established* or ether. They could, breed, it seems, though they could not live. A very pretty country this for England to take an *example* from! Nay, such influence have the Scotch had, and so foolish has been the government, that, upon a report made to parliament, that there was danger of a whole district of Scotland being depopulated *for want of work, money, large sums of money, were, and still are, annually granted to set them to work in making canals and bridges and draining lakes in their own country; that is to say, to live in idleness upon, or, at the very best, to improve Scotland by, the fruit of English labour,* the fruit of the labour of those, whom the cadet statesmen and their silly patrons, have the insolence to accuse of laziness and vice, and to whom they hold up the Scotch as an *example*.

We are a people that delight in quacks and pretenders of all sorts, otherwise it would have been impossible, that the parliament, however constituted, supposing a majority to be English, should, for a moment, have tolerated the false and insulting preamble, upon which I have been remarking; that they should have tolerated, in any shape, such an outrage upon the orderly and honest and laborious and ingenious and persevering and patient people of England. Where did any man, however far he may have travelled, see such cleanliness, such neatness, such attention to ornament as well as convenience, such care of their animals, such affection and tenderness for their parents and children, amongst the labouring part of the community, as are visible in the dress in the houses in the gardens and in the domestic life and manners of English labourers? There are more objects of this description in Hampshire alone, though Lord Grenville lately told us that it ought to be no more dear to us than Hanover, for which we will remember him; there are more of these delightful objects in this one county, than there are, perhaps, in all the world besides, England excepted. And can I, when I daily see these objects, when I see and admire the dispositions of men, who, though pressed down with poverty, can, at their return from their daily labour, spend the twilight in works of neatness round their cottages; can I, when I see this, refrain from feeling indignation at a set of upstart politicians, who know nothing of England, but what they have seen from the deck of a *smack* or through the pane of a stage-coach window, and who have the audacity to bid these English labourers look for an example to the garden-less and floor-less and chimney-less cabins of Scotland, where the master of the mansion nestles in at night in company with his pig or his cow?

Botley, 27th Aug. 1807.

[Continued.]

When I made some observations\* upon the unjust reflection, which, in the preamble to his bill for the education of the poor of England, Mr. Whitbread had thrown upon this country, I was pretty certain, that those remarks would not be long without calling forth the animadversions of some Scotch correspondent; for, an ardent zeal on the side of their own particular part of the kingdom is one of the laudable characteristics of the inhabitants to the north of the Tweed. My expectations were not disappointed. A letter, which will be found immediately after this,† will

\* See p. 286 of this Volume.—Ed.

† The substance of the letter of *Scoto-Britannus* is given in this answer, so that we need not give any part of it.—Ed.

show {the reader, that what I said has been felt, and that it has kindled some little anger. The writer does, indeed, throw out a sort of *threat*, that, unless I insert his letter, he will cause it to be inserted elsewhere, a threat which has made me balance for some time, whether I should print it or throw it into the fire. A similar *threat*, but more distinct, has been sent me by way of postscript to a most rude and insolent letter, coming evidently from one of the Berwick-smack statesmen, whose letter I will, however, publish, if he will send me, instead of the fictitious name of "ANTI-CAPITOLINUS," his real name and place of abode.—The first of these letters I have inserted, because it contains what one defender, at least, of Mr. Whitbread's project has to say; but, I think it right here to observe, once for all, that, of all those, who choose to make use of threats to "print elsewhere, and shame the rogue," I shall show my contempt by leaving them to execute their threats. If "ANTI-CAPITOLINUS" will send me, post-paid, to No. 5, Panton Square, his abusive letter, leaving out the threats of publication elsewhere, I will publish it; otherwise I shall leave him to his other means of publication.—Before I enter upon my reply to the letter of SCOTO-BRITANNUS, which is the name taken by the Scotch correspondent above-mentioned, it may not be amiss to insert the preamble to Mr. Whitbread's bill, which preamble has given me, and all those who think with me, upon this subject, so much offence: "Whereas the *instruction* of youth tends most materially to the "promotion of morality and virtue, and to the formation of good members of society, whereof we have the most convincing proof, by long "experience, in that part of the United Kingdom, called Scotland; and, "it is expedient, that provision should be made for the instruction of the "children of the poor of England and Wales; may it please your Majesty, that it may be enacted, &c."

Now, if this means any thing describable, it means, that the poor of Scotland are more moral, more virtuous, and better members of society than the poor of England are; and this, I say, is false, and grossly insulting to the people of England.—The observations, which I have referred to, at the beginning of this article, contain my reasons for this assertion, and also my reasons for objecting to Mr. Whitbread's project of parochial schools. Scoto-Britannus differs from me upon both points, as the reader will see, choosing, however, to invert the order, which I followed, and to attack first that which he regarded as hostile to his own country. Indeed, he has followed no order at all; and, really, one might well be excused from replying to any answer, wherein a confusion in the arrangement of the several points necessarily renders the reply four or five times as long as it otherwise might be.—I will follow my arrangement, and will, taking argument by argument, see how each has been answered by Scoto-Britannus.

I. I expressed my dislike to the assumption, that the *poverty* of the labouring people arose from their *vices*, and observed, that no position could be more convenient for those, who, from whatever motive, were desirous of supporting the taxing system. I added, that the paupers of England and Wales had increased three-fold, since Pitt became minister; that, to this argument of experience might be added the undeniable truth, that, if, by any system, no matter what it be called, the fruit of the labour of some be drained away to keep others without labour, the poverty of those who labour must thereby be increased.—Scoto-Britannus says, that I have *admitted* the fact, that vice is the cause of poverty. This is

not true in the way that he represents it. I have not admitted, but have positively denied, that the poverty complained of by Mr. Whitbread has arisen from the vices of the people; and have, in terms most distinct, ascribed it to the other natural and all-pervading cause, the increase of taxation.—In answer to this argument relative to the effects of the taxing system, Scoto-Britannus, first observes, that the taxes bear equally hard upon the people of both countries; then he *asserts*, that the labourers in Scotland are in most delightful condition. This is *his* argument of experience; but, between mine and his there is this little difference, that I, in stating the increase of paupers, refer to documents which have been laid before Parliament, whereas he refers merely to his own observation, confined, in all probability, to a small part of Scotland; and, therefore, here his argument is at once demolished by my denying the fact upon which it rests, and, I think, I am warranted in so doing, when I am able to show, that the Scotch labourers are, in part, fed from the fruit of the labour of Englishmen, sent to them in grants annually made by Parliament. But, aware of the weakness of this ground, he resorts to reasons drawn from the nature of the case, and says, “that the English labourer, if he chooses to be industrious and economical, may make a very comfortable livelihood; and that his profits are *not drained away by taxes*, because his establishment and income are so small, that they do not come *within the range of the taxing system*.” Upon reading this, one might almost be led to hope, that this system, as established here, has not yet reached Scotland; but, as that would be too much to hope, we must conclude, either that the poor in Scotland wear no shoes, no shirts, no hats; that they use neither tea nor coffee nor sugar nor spirits nor beer nor candles nor soap; that, in short, they go naked by day, lay upon the bare ground by night, dig up their food with their snouts or catch it after the manner of the hawk or the fox, and that their drink is pure water; this we must conclude, or we must conclude that Scoto-Britannus, who writes in so dogmatical a style, who quotes Latin, and who, to show his contempt of it, I suppose, does, in several instances, scorn to write English, has never reflected, or is incapable of reflecting with advantage, upon the operation and effects of the taxing system.

II. But, said I, supposing for argument's sake, that vice has greatly increased, amongst the poor, of late years, schools, books, magazines, newspapers, &c. have increased ten-fold since the fatal reign of Pitt began; how, then, can Mr. Whitbread expect to eradicate vice, and thereby reduce the number of paupers by adding about twelve thousand to the number of schools already existing? Scoto-Britannus, with his usual modesty, begins his answer to this argument by asserting, that it is *fallacious*; “for,” says he, “the increase of these publications *has not proceeded from the extension of the art of reading*, but from some of those, who were able to read formerly, reading more than they did; and from a very numerous class, who could read formerly, now using these publications, whereas they never thought of them some years ago.” He seems to have overlooked the great and glaring increase of schools in England and Wales, whence, I think, we may presume that there is a great increase of readers; and, indeed, for a writer seriously to contend, that the readers *have not increased*, does expose him to imminent danger of being set down for a person more intent upon contradiction than upon the discovery of truth. But, at any rate, *reading has*



increased, the mass of reading has increased with the mass of vice ; for, observe, it is he who contends that vice has increased, that being the very basis of the project ; and, then, I repeat my question, if vice has increased with the increase of reading, how are we to hope, that vice will be diminished by a further increase of reading ?

III. I said, that, if taught to read the Bible, the poor would not stop there ; that they would read publications very well calculated to add to the stock of vice ; and that, as to political matters, the little learned *must* derive injury from the works issuing from a press, under laws, by which a man may be put half to death for writing, or publishing, the truth.—To this Scoto-Britannus gives no answer at all ; but, in one part of his letter, he has the following observations :

“ It is very plain, that, in a civilized period of society, as we are, unless a habit of mental amusement is acquired, the only entertainment will consist in animal, and, consequently, vicious gratification. Now, from this *indubitable* principle, it *manifestly* follows, that, even the ploughman, unless he can read, so as to amuse himself when his work is over, the ale-house will be his resort, where he brings himself and his family to beggary. You may say, indeed, that his reading will corrupt his principles, both moral and political ; but, *rely upon it*, his want of reading will lead him farther astray. Pimps and demagogues and hireling declaimers are now too numerous, too anxious, and too successful in deluding ignorance. The peasant’s time would, at least, harmlessly be spent in reading the most immoral and factious publications ; and, *I am fully convinced*, would not be in such danger as if he were left in ignorance” (this is to say, *without reading them*). “ A taste, and a sight, of vice, before the deceiver comes, is the best antidote against it.”

Go, go, thou Scotch Philosopher ! Keep thy pimping books, thy primers of debauchery and blasphemy, amongst the lads and lasses of thy own country ; fortify them against the deceiver by giving them a fore-taste of vice ; but, come not, I pray thee, on this side the Tweed ! As to the ale-house, properly used, it is as good as the bake-house, or bacon-house. The Bible will tell your pupils, that wine was given by God “ to glad men’s heart ;” and, they will readily conclude, that, those who cannot get wine for that purpose, may safely take, beer, without any offence to Him who made it and them. But, upon the supposition, that the poor man’s heart should never even for one moment, be cheered by liquor, and that he never ought to set his foot into an ale-house, what, let me ask, is so likely to lead him thither as *the newspaper* ? And, where will you find an ale-house without one ? Ask the landlord, why he takes the newspaper, he will tell you, that it attracts people to his house ; and, in many cases, its attractions are much stronger than those of the liquor there drunk, thousands upon thousands of men having become sots through the attractions of these vehicles of novelty and falsehood.

The principle, that all *animal* amusements are *necessarily vicious*, though “ *indubitable*” with this northern philosopher, is a little doubtful with me ; and, indeed, if one may venture to express an opinion in opposition to that of a writer, who speaks in so authoritative a tone, I should think, that animal amusements, generally speaking, are the least likely of the two to engender vice ; and, as to the ploughman, sitting down to read his good book, after his labour is done, the idea never could have found its way into the mind of any one who knew what a ploughman was. Take a thousand ploughmen, set them down to their good books, after their day’s work is done, and, in less than ten minutes, the whole thousand will be asleep. Animal amusement is the only amusement that

such men *can* enjoy. They are up long before the sun; and, in the evening of the day, if they are not engaged in bodily exercise, they must be asleep, and asleep they would be, though a torrent of the philosophy of Scoto-Britannus were pouring down upon their devoted heads.—I asked, whether, within these last twenty years *liberty* had increased with the increase of schools? Scoto does not answer this question, but he drops in upon the subject thus: “Would not reading,” says he, “render the poor more *upright*, by enabling them the better to understand those instructions, “which every Sunday the church affords them? Ignorance” (which is a *want of reading*, observe) “has ever been the constant attendant of “slavery and bigotry; and, on this account, universal education” (that is *reading*), “as it would add to the beauty, so it would also add to the “*security of the British Constitution.*”—This word *constitution* is a very fine word. Scoto does not say to the security of *person and property*; because, perhaps, he was aware, that I should ask him what improvement *that* had received from his system of parish schools in Scotland; and that I should have put a question or two about the powers of a *Lord Advocate*, when exercised by a man of “*an ardent mind,*” as Pitt called it. That Scoto, who is, clearly enough, a schoolmaster himself, should see great beauty in the British Constitution I am not at all surprised, especially when I recollect, that the appointment of Scotch Schoolmasters is perfectly a *political* affair, as it would in all likelihood very soon become in England. At the probable effect of reading the Bible I before hinted; and, I think, it must be clear to every man, who attentively considers the matter, that such reading, if universal, could lead to nothing short of universal schism, which at present is prevented only by the general want of what may be called *study* in reading it. Those, amongst *the mass* of the people, who read the Bible, read it because they are told it is their duty so to do. Having gone over the words, they think they have done their duty, without troubling themselves as to the sense. This is an evil, because they are apt to regard it as a *work of propitiation*, and the effect is much about the same as that produced by the Roman Catholic’s bidding of his beads. The Bible is a book for learned historians and profound thinkers to read. It is undeniably a book of *mysteries*, and is it, I ask any man who will speak sincerely, possible for *those who can barely read words*, to derive any real profit from the perusal of such a book? No: it is from the expositions and applications of the contents of the Bible, given by learned men, or by others who make use of those expositions and applications, that the people in general are to profit; these expositions and applications they will hear at church, and, for my part, I cannot perceive how the capacity of reading would tend to make them either more attentive or more docile.

But, if I doubt of the advantages of reading and writing, amongst those of the common people who are destined to labour in the fields, on the shop-board, or in the manufactory, I am quite certain, that, generally speaking, they are worse than useless in the army and the navy. Scoto has a bright idea about the “Sons of Mars and of Neptune rising,” in virtue of their schooling, from the lowest to the highest ranks; but, besides the notoriety of the fact, *that this is not the case now*, is it not evident, that *all* men cannot so rise, that *all* soldiers and sailors cannot become officers, either commissioned or non-commissioned? And, this being the case, would not the “education,” as it is called, of nine-tenths

of them tend to create discontent rather than a cheerful obedience? Upon this part of the subject I can speak with some little experience; and, I appeal to any commanding officer, who has continued long settled with his regiment, or to any captain of a man-of-war, whether your "scholars," as they are called, are not in general the worst of soldiers and sailors. The conceit makes them saucy; they take the lead in all matters of mischief; they are generally dirty and drunkards; and, the lash drives them to desert. So true it is, that "scholars" are not the best soldiers, that, though one third part, at least, of the men of every regiment can read and write, yet you will find in every regiment men chosen for non-commissioned officers who can neither read nor write. Reading and writing and honesty and good behaviour are all wanted in a non-commissioned officer; but, as the two latter are absolutely necessary, the commander is frequently compelled to appoint men who can neither write nor read; though he has hundreds of "scholars" in his regiment or his ship; and, it is curious to observe, that the "scholars" become the clerks of the "ignorant" non-commissioned officers, make out their reports and accounts for them, leaving them the trouble of merely scrawling their name. This practice is universal, throughout the army and the navy, and it is a striking instance of the superiority of intrinsic worth over acquired talent. The man of reading and writing is to be preferred, if he be equally good with his comrade in other respects; and the great convenience of his talents generally procures him a trial, before his comrade be thought of for promotion; but, in the end, the sober, cleanly, punctual, early-rising, vigilant, honest, and unassuming man is sure to be preferred, because these qualities are indispensable, and because reading and writing can be dispensed with.—"But, *somebody* must read and write." Granted; and what I contend for, is, that the number will be quite large enough, if you leave the parents to their own taste and their own means. There will then be as many readers and writers as the state of things calls for; but, if you make *all* men readers and writers, you must produce an unnatural and disjointed state of things.

IV. I said, that the word *ignorance* was misapplied in using it as the opposite of book-learning. Scoto-Britannus, however, insists, that, though a labourer may be as clever as it be possible at all the branches of husbandry, still he is to be accused of ignorance, unless he can read in a book. What, Scoto, would you have him to read about? The lawyer reads his cases; the physician reads medicine; the chemist reads chemistry; the parson reads divinity; and Mr. Whitbread reads the political economy of the Edinburgh Reviewers. These all read of matters connected with their several professions; and, doubtless, they become wiser, or, at least, more deeply skilled in their professions, by reading. But, what reading could possibly render the labourer more skilled in his profession? The old story about the judge and the sailor is quite apt to our purpose here. "Not know the meaning of the *implication*," said the judge, "what an *ignorant* fellow you must be!"—"Well," continued the sailor, after the interruption, "as I was saying, he took hold of the *painter*."—"The *painter*!" interrupted the judge, "what's the painter?"—"Oh, Lord!" exclaimed the sailor, "not know what the *painter* is? what an *ignorant* man you must be!" If this story be true, the sailor, doubtless, was committed to jail; but that did not make his conclusion more erroneous than that of the judge. According to the notion of

Scoto-Britannus; a man may first become completely skilled in all the business of husbandry; he may next learn to fell and hew timber and convert the several woods of the coppices into hoops, staves and shingles; then he may take the corn into the mill and go through the several stages of making it into flour; next he may become a soldier, may learn all the laborious duties of that profession, marching, shooting, riding, sapping and mining; transferred from the army to the fleet, he may learn to hand, reef, and steer, to sound the sea, and to man the guns in battle; in the course of his life, he may see all the quarters and countries of the world, the manners of all the different nations, and may feel the effects of all the climates; and, yet, when he comes home, with his mind necessarily stored with ideas, of which that of his neighbour must be totally destitute, he is to be called *ignorant*, in comparison with that neighbour, if he cannot read in a book, and if that neighbour can read in a book. Such a notion never, surely, could have entered the mind of a man, whose trade it was not to teach reading, and who did not view what he calls education through the deceitful medium of self-interest.

Having now replied to every thing which this writer has said in answer to what I offered respecting the poor-school project; and having, as I verily believe, given substantial reasons for the rejection of that project, I shall now proceed to reply to what my correspondent has said respecting the state of Scotland. And, here I must beg the reader to bear in mind, that my former observations were *provoked*; that the labourers of Scotland had been, in the preamble to an act of parliament, represented as better members of society than the labourers of England; and that herein was contained a *challenge*, on the part of Mr. Whitbread's instructors, against the people of England. A thousand instances of arrogance like this I have seen in Scotch publications, and have passed them over in silence as the effects of that *nationality*, for which the people of Scotland are so renowned, and, which, though a fault, is certainly a fault upon the right side; but, when I found that this feeling was operating in a way to become the foundation of a law materially to alter the parochial laws and the manners of England, it was impossible to remain any longer silent.

Scoto-Britannus begins by giving us a description of a Scotch labourer's dwelling, family, fare, and manners; and, I cannot positively swear that this description is false, because I have never been in Scotland; but, as he refers me to the testimony of those who have been there, I will tell him, that the description which I have received from such persons is nearly as follows: a cabin built of mud and thatch, having no floor but the earth, having no window of glass, but a hole to let in light, stopped occasionally with a board; a hole through one end of the roof to let out the smoke, and a division by a hurdle, to separate the family from the cow, or pig, where either happens to be kept. The bed is made of heath, placed the stems downwards and cut off smooth at the top, the elasticity of which renders it less galling to the body. The whole family have neither shoes nor stockings, and the children neither hats nor caps. The utensils are wooden bowls, horn-spoons, and a kettle or two. There are none of those places near the dwelling which English cleanliness and decency always take care to provide; but a dunghill opposite the door is the receptacle for filth of every description, while a spot of ground, denominated a "*cale yard*" is all you perceive of the nature of a garden. This is the description, which I have re-

ceived, from persons, upon whose word I place reliance; and, though there are many exceptions therefrom, I am sincerely persuaded, that, as a general description, it is perfectly just. I am told, too, that in Edinburgh, that emporium of learning and of virtue, the lower classes of the people throw from their windows into the street all that we send away without offending any one of the senses; and that, if it be unhappily your lot to ascend their staircases, which are very lofty, you must take special care to tread precisely in the middle, each corner of each step being loaded with filth. The old sayings, too, about that tormenting disorder of the skin, which for the sake of Scoto-Britannus, shall here be nameless, seem to correspond with this account of a want of cleanliness in Scotland. When a term of reproach is taken up, it is generally much strained in its application; but, it seldom prevails to any extent, and for any length of time, if it has not *some* foundation in truth. I remember also, that, when Scotch recruits were brought up to Chatham Barracks, it was the *invariable* practice to send them to a particular ward in the *hospital*, there to be anointed and rendered clean, before they were permitted even to set their foot in the barrack rooms. I never saw this precaution taken with respect to recruits of any other country; and, I am compelled to believe, that there was some solid reason for the distinction.—But, if it be really true, that the state of the labourer in Scotland is what Scoto has described it to be, how happens it, that we hear of no emigration to that country? We hear of emigration *from* it, indeed, and of that we will speak by-and-by; but, how comes it, that we hear of no emigration *to it*; plenty and happiness being commodities which are, of all others, the surest to draw customers? The Picts' wall is surely not standing? No: that cannot be, because the Scotch emigrate in great numbers to England, that is to say, according to Scoto and Mr. Whitbread, from plenty and virtue to poverty and vice, a practice wholly at variance with the theory, except we suppose, that they who emigrate hither are all schoolmasters coming from motives of pure philanthropy, to teach us how we may obtain plenty and banish poverty and vice.—Scoto-Britannus tells me, that there are as many Scotchmen as Europeans of all other nations in the West Indies, and more in Hindostan, and this he produces as a proof of the enterprise of his countrymen, owing, as he says, in great part, to their plan of education. I admit it all, without the least reserve; and, in order to convince me, that a similar plan of education is desirable for England, he has only to prove, that England would derive strength from the emigration of her most able-bodied sons, or that, remaining at home, slaves could, somehow or other, be found to work for them. But, he seems here to have forgotten, that Mr. Whitbread's intention was not to educate men for the East or West Indies, not to educate them for East-India collectors or West-India overseers, but for English labourers, upon whom he was for affixing badges. This remark of Scoto confirms, in a great degree, what I have said about the tendency of book education disinclining men to labour; for, while, as I before observed, we can be shown no colony composed of Scotch labourers, we know of many composed, from their first settlement, of English, of Irish, and of Germans; and, it is notoriously true, that, of the American States, those only where the cultivation is carried on by slaves, have for proprietors of the soil, any considerable number of Scotchmen, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> the descendants of Scotchmen; whence comes the saying in America, that "Scotchmen make bad soles but good upper-leathers;" and, as Mr. Whitbread's manufactory was professedly intended for soles only, the

Scotch plan seems to have been the very worst that he could have adopted.—My *two instances* of undeniable facts have, as I anticipated, greatly puzzled the advocates of *Scotch example*. Scoto denies, however, that the criterion, founded upon the relative amount of the taxes, as compared with the relative population, of England and Scotland, is a fair one; for, says he, many of my countrymen pay taxes in London. To be sure they do; but, will you attempt to persuade me, that it is from *Scotch labour* that they acquire the means of paying those taxes? *This* is the point to keep in view; for we are discussing, not whether the parish-school education tends to make good getters of money, but whether it tends to make good labourers, and to make a *country* productive.—As this is all that Scoto-Britannus has offered in answer to argument, founded on the relative amount of the taxes, compared with the population, I think I may leave that argument as it stood before. As to the instance founded on the fact of Scotch emigration to America, Scoto ascribes that emigration to Sir John Sinclair's scheme of moulding small farms into large ones; but, insists, at the same time, that emigration is a proof of *enterprise and industry*. Well, then, as ten times as many Irish emigrate, the Irish must be still more *enterprising and industrious*! Be it so, for argument's sake; but, again, I say, that Mr. Whitbread's plan was not intended to prepare the people for the exercise of industry in foreign countries; but to make them good labourers *at home*.

One observation of mine, and that the most important of all, Scoto Britannus has quite overlooked; and that was, that at the very time that a law is proposed to be passed to educate the poor of England upon the Scotch plan, with a view of making them as moral, as industrious, and as happy as the poor of Scotland, large sums are annually granted out of the fruit of the labourers of England *expressly* to prevent the Scotch from emigrating, by *making work* for them at home. It is truly surprising, that Scoto Britannus should have overlooked so material a fact; because, without some very satisfactory reasons against it, we must conclude from this fact, that the "flourishing state of Scotland," about which so much has been said, is a pure fiction; or that, from motives none of the best, the several sets of ministers have been guilty of partiality the most shameful. In the year 1806, there was granted, out of the taxes, of which Scotland pays *one seventeenth* part, 70,000 pounds to *make work* upon bridges and canals, in order to prevent the labourers from emigrating; and 17,000 pounds to *send food* to others of them. This is nearly a thirtieth part of the whole of the taxes that Scotland pays; and, observe, that these grants have been going on for years, and are likely to go on for years to come. Now, I should like to see Mr. Malthus apply his principles to this practice of ours; or, to see the Edinburgh Reviewers with Mr. Whitbread in their rear, endeavouring to persuade us, that the labourers of a country, who cannot support themselves without aid from the fruit of English labour, are proper to be held up as an example for English labourers. Nothing, surely, but folly bordering upon idiocy, urged on by importunity and impudence unparalleled, could have produced the insult of which I complain, and which I should be ashamed of myself not to resent.—When we, the lazy and vicious English, want bridges, roads, and canals, we are obliged to make them at our own private expense, and to *pay for acts of parliament* authorizing us so to do; but, the industrious and virtuous Scotch are to be *paid out of the taxes*, that is to say, out of the fruit of Englishmen's labour for making these things for themselves, while others of them

have, from the same source, food sent them to induce them to remain in their country; and to prevent a diminution in its population. Oh, wise system of political economy! A system much more closely connected with that of the Scotch *boroughs* (where, too, *virtue* is most conspicuous) than many persons seem to be aware.—But, Mr. Whitbread must have had knowledge of these grants; he could not possibly have been ignorant of them; and, ought he not, then, to have stopped until he could have reconciled them with the assertion contained in his preamble, before he had advanced that assertion? Was it for a projector of great alterations in the manners of the people; was it for a deep reformer of morals and dispositions; was it for a lawgiver, whose ambition stopped at nothing short of a radical revolution in the public mind, to expose the very basis of his schemes to the hostility of facts such as these, here produced and applied by an obscure individual?—"Believe me, Mr. Cobbett," says Scoto, in conclusion, "the Scotch are an industrious, an ingenious, and an enterprising people." I do believe it, Sir; I know it to be so; I am well acquainted with the talents and the virtues of great numbers of them, and I have always regarded the whole of them as an excellent people. I scarcely ever knew a Scotchman, whose word might not be safely relied upon; I have generally found them, in very trying times, bold, amongst the bitterest enemies, in defence of the character of their country. They are acute, prudent, sober, faithful; though, in general, not adventurous, yet never cowards; and, though cold in their manners, kind in their natures. But, Sir, it is not their parish-schools and their politically appointed pedagogues that have made them thus. This was their character long before those schools were thought of; and, while my anxious wish is, that those schools may not adulterate that character, I shall use the utmost of my endeavours to prevent their example, in that respect, from being followed in that part of the kingdom to which I more immediately belong.

[Continued.]

The only part of Mr. Whitbread's project that much has been said about, is that which related to the establishment of parochial schools, and that too would, probably, have been forgotten by this time had I not thought it right to resent the unjust aspersion upon the people of England, contained in the preamble of his bill. This has drawn forth a good deal of angry language from some of those Scotchmen, whose natural partiality is greater than their justice or their sense, and who, in indulging that partiality, quite overlook the circumstance, that some degree of national partiality, may be expected to be entertained by Englishmen as well as Scotchmen. Amongst the persons here described, my correspondent, "Sawney," is, I think, the most conspicuous. He has now sent me another letter, by way of answer to my short remarks upon his former one, a part of which last letter I shall here insert, leaving out more than two-thirds of it, which consisted of mere effusions of *wit* and *politeness*, which, as my readers have had a sufficient specimen of them, in his former letter, it would be waste of paper to commit to the press.—He appealed to an estimate of Lord Buchan, in order to show, that Scotland had surpassed England in *increase* of population; and, without attempting to stir the question, whether either of them had *really increased*, I observed, that I could not submit to be decided by any loose estimate; and that the Lord Buchan was no better authority than

Gregory King, who, in his famous estimate, preserved with such care in the archives of that wise and useful institution, the British Museum, was so minute as to include the number of *rabbits* in the kingdom.— Upon this “SAWNEY” remarks, that I question the *correctness* of Lord Buchan and Gregory King *only* because they were *too minute*. This is true in words, but false in meaning. I question their correctness because I find a statement in their estimates, of the correctness of which it was *impossible* that they could possess, or come at, any proof; and, finding this, I have a right to conclude, that the whole of the estimate is mere random guess. If, for instance, a man were to tell us, that he had *ascertained* the number of *flies* in this kingdom in the month of July last; should we not laugh at him? Should we cite his estimate as an *authority* wherewith to oppose an argument, built upon acknowledged, well-known, and undeniable facts? And to come at a knowledge of the number of flies is not *more* difficult than to come at a knowledge of the number of rabbits, because both are impossible.—But now for “SAWNEY’S” answer to my argument, founded upon the fact, that large sums of money were annually granted by parliament, that is to say, out of the fruit of the labour of the people of England, for the purpose of *furnishing food and making work* for the labourers of Scotland, in order to *prevent those labourers from emigrating to America*. This, I said, could not be denied, and, then I drew the conclusion, that the state of Scotland, with respect to its labourers, was not such as to be held up as an example for England; adding, that nothing ever was so outrageously impudent and insolent, as to charge the labourers of England with laziness and vice, and to bid to look, for an example, to the industrious and virtuous labourers of Scotland, and that, too, at the very time when the former were compelled to give up part of the fruit of their labour to furnish food for the latter, in order to prevent them from wandering away from their country.—Let us hear “Sawney’s” answer to this:—

“ I come now to the grants of money you speak of, as drawn from the people of England for the support of the Scotch. This, I understand, is your *Crown* battery, from which you are to maul us without mercy—it is a *swart* battery to me” [he will be *witty* still], “ for the deuce take me if I know what you mean. For my part, I am not aware of any annual grants made to Scotland, but what are of a very *trivial* kind indeed.—Do you *allude* to the money advanced by government to further that *important* undertaking the Caledonian Canal, which is to be large enough to *float ships of war* from the Murray Firth to the opposite side of the island? I can only say *I never understood*, that this pecuniary aid from the public funds, was intended for the *advantage* of Scotland in *particular*; but on the contrary, that it was expected, that it shall produce considerable benefit to the whole of the United Kingdom; and although 70 or 80,000 pounds laid out on a work of this sort should afford bread to a few hundreds of *hardy, frugal-living Scotchmen*, it appears to me, that the act is no less creditable to the authors of it than another of the same kind is honourable to the memories of those who bestowed ten times the sum for the building of St. Paul’s Church in London, at a time, too, when money was six times more valuable than it is at present, and all, very probably, for a purpose not more substantial than to gratify the vanity of her *languid, gormandizing Citizens*.—In England, there are grants innumerable of this description; and yet you choose to say, ‘ Nothing, surely, was ever so outrageously impudent and insolent as this.’ Pray, Mr. Cobbett, what is it? You must not expect to tame us into a supple complaisance by merely laying your hand on your haggling rapier; *na, na*, come, sir, draw—and you shall find that we are ready to give you such a reception, as all rude invaders of Old Scotia justly deserve.—I am, Sir, yours, &c.—SAWNEY.”

“ *Peterhead, the 10th of October, 1807.*”



My friend "Sawney" has adopted the mode of his countryman the advocate: "Hoot away, mon! *admet* the foct for the sake of the eargument, an' gin you fail i' th' eargument, *quorry* the foct." But, "na, na," this will not do, "Sawney;" for though you *wittily* say, "the *deuce*" take me if I know what you mean by grants, annually made to support "Scotch labourers, out of the fruit of the labour of the people of "England," the *public* know very well what I mean. I have stated, that 70,000 pounds a year has, for many years past, been granted, out of the taxes of Great Britain, of which Scotland pays less than a *seventeenth* part, to *make work* for the labourers of Scotland; that 17,000 pounds a year has been granted to *send food* to the said labourers in kind; and, that both grants have been made *expressly* to prevent the labourers of Scotland from emigrating, that is to say, from wandering away from their country. Do you call this an "*allusion*," Sir?—As to the "*important*" work of cutting a passage for ships of war *across this island*, if accomplished, it would be an act of national *suicide*; but, there is no fear of that, and, besides, it is expressly stated in the report, upon which the grant is founded, that the *chief immediate object is*, to prevent Scotch labourers from emigrating. Mr. "Sawney" seems to think it no harm for his countrymen to get a little bread out of this 70 or 80 thousand pounds grant; but, Sir, it is that much *each year*; it has been so for several years, and there is like to be no end to it.—What resemblance is there in the case cited by him of the grant for building St. Paul's Church and the case before us? The grant in the former case came out of the pockets of the people in whose country the building was erected, and if the work did gratify the vanity of the "*land-guid and gormandizing citizens*," *they paid* for the gratification.—"In England," he says, "there are grants *innumerable* of this description." I not only *quorry*, but I *deny* the fact; and, let him, if he can, point me out one grant of the kind in England. All our roads, all our bridges, all our canals, are made and repaired by individuals, parishes, or counties; and, indeed, a man must have an uncommon stock of assurance, to assert, that money is granted, in England, that *innumerable* grants are made out of the Exchequer, in England, to make work or to furnish food for the people, in order to prevent them from emigrating, such a thing never having been heard of since England was England.

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## TO WILLIAM ROSCOE, ESQ.

### LETTER I.

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"The waste of War, is not, in its final consequences, so injurious to a state as the luxuries and corruptions of Peace."—ADDISON.

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SIR,—Your pamphlet, published within these few days, under the title of "Considerations on the Causes, Objects, and Consequences of the "present War, and on the Expediency, or the Danger, of a Peace with "France," having fallen into my hands, and appearing to me to express sentiments and opinions, which, if generally adopted, would be greatly

mischievous to the country, I think it my duty to make some observations thereon ; and, as you have evidently pointed at me, in several parts of the pamphlet, no apology will, I presume, be thought necessary for my addressing myself, in this case, more immediately to you.

When one is told of the publication of a book, or paper, the first question which invariably presents itself is, "What is it about?" Your pamphlet is, to be sure, about war and peace ; but, Sir, it is about so many other things as well as war and peace ; it enters upon so many different subjects ; it contains so many opinions unsupported by reasoning, and so many assertions unsupported by proof, that, to answer you upon every point would require a volume of no moderate size. If I were asked, however, what appears to me to be the object, which you have had in view, in writing and publishing this pamphlet, I should answer, that your main practical object evidently is, to induce the people, especially those of the manufacturing districts, to unite in petitions for peace ; and, that your reason for this is, that the war, if continued much longer, will produce financial embarrassments, such as those which led to the overthrow of the monarchy of France, while, on the other hand, there exists, in reality, none of those dangers, which I, amongst other persons, apprehend from a peace, made at this time, and leaving Napoleon in full possession of all the ports and naval arsenals of the continent of Europe.

If you had confined yourself to this one subject, to have answered you would have been plain, straight-forward work ; but, under the pretence of showing, that the war has now no rational object, you have gone into a history (a very partial one indeed) of the alleged objects of both the last and the present war, not only at their outset, but also at the several stages of their progress. Not content with this, which has nothing at all to do with the question of peace or war *now* ; you have given us a history of the warlike operations, interspersed with discussions upon points of public law and of political economy ; with descriptions of the characters of public men ; and with a delineation of the views and motives of political parties. To follow you through all these topics, a sentence of statement demanding, in general, a page of answer, is a task too serious to be thought of : and yet it is, on the other hand, by no means pleasant to suffer any part of your pamphlet, from the sentiments or assertions of which I dissent, to pass off under a silence, which might very reasonably be interpreted into an assent. In this dilemma the course which appears to me the best to be pursued is this : to reserve, for a future letter, all the digressive topics of your pamphlet, and to examine now into the nature of your statements and opinions, I. With respect to the real original cause of the present war between England and France : II. With respect to the breaking off of the negotiation in 1806, and the views then manifested by Napoleon : III. With respect to the relative situation of the two countries, supposing peace to be now made, leaving all the ports and naval arsenals upon the continent of Europe in the hands, or under the acknowledged control, of our enemy.

But, first of all, I think it necessary to state to you my reasons for differing very widely indeed from you, as to the tendency of *war in general*, which I perceive you to consider as a pure, unmixed *evil* ; and which I consider as being, not only necessary, as it notoriously is, in many cases, in the present state of the world, but also as conducive to the elevation of human nature, to the general happiness of mankind, and, of course, as being a *good*, though, like the greater part of other good things, not un-

mixed with evil. I am aware of the force of habit, and men are in the habit of talking, as you do, of the "horrors of war;" but, I can safely defy you, and all the "philanthropists" now in existence, to prove, that there is, as the consequence of war, any thing a millionth part so horrid as a sight of the interior of those receptacles of disease and of infamy, which are tenanted through the influence of that luxury, which it is the natural tendency of war to abridge, and which can be completely destroyed only by war. That war makes a part of the great scheme of the Creator is abundantly obvious from the universal propensity of his creatures; who, from man himself down to the lowest reptile, discover, the moment they have the powers of motion and perception, that to war makes a part of their nature as much as to love. Look, Sir, at all the natural sports of children, and of young animals of every kind; you will find, that they are only so many sorts of sham-fights. And, if you see, that all God's creatures, in the moments of their greatest enjoyment of life; in those moments when they are free from all pain of mind and of body; when they are full of health and of spirits; when they are perfectly unrestrained, and bidden, as it were, to be as happy as their natures will permit: if you perceive, that, in such a state, they all, without a single exception, discover a propensity for war, will you still say, that war is, in itself, and for its own sake, a thing horrid to contemplate? But, not only is to war, to fight (which is the same thing) a passion natural to all the creation; but, it appears to me to be necessary to the elevation of human nature, and to the happiness of mankind; for, if we suppose a state of the world, from which war is completely and for ever banished, not only is there no longer any use for courage, fortitude, emulation, magnanimity, and many other ennobling qualities, but the very words describing those qualities have no longer any meaning; and, if you strip man of those qualities, what is he, as to this world at least, better than a brute? In giving to the different classes of men, which compose the different nations of the earth, languages so different, that the sounds used by the one are utterly unintelligible to any of the other, the Creator seems to have said, "Be you for ever separate;" and, herein is implied the necessity of war; for, without war it is, I think, evident, that to preserve that separation would, unless the nature of man were previously changed, be quite impossible. As to wisdom and science, too, where would be the use of them, if war were banished from the earth? The object of the learned as well as the brave is *distinction*. The source of distinction is public utility. Public utility, after a very little tracing, is found to rest at the point of public safety; and were it not for the occasional existence of wars, and for the continual possibility of their recurrence, public safety would be a mere sound without sense. In like manner patriotism, loyalty, fidelity under all its different appearances and in all its different degrees, would be obliterated from the catalogue of virtues; and, in short, man would, and must, become a stupid, unimpassioned animal, having no care but that of obtaining his food, and no enjoyment but that of devouring it. I am not, observe, contending, that war may not, as well as love, be, in some cases, and even in many cases, productive of mischievous effects; but, if I look back into history, or, if I look around me at the present moment, I am compelled to conclude, that its effects are, in general, the reverse. The Greeks and Romans were renowned for their science and their freedom, but not less renowned for those than for their wars; and, which is well worthy of remark, with

their martial spirit they lost their love of liberty. The two nations of modern Europe the most famed for science, and, in fact, for freedom, are France and England; and that they have been the most frequently engaged in wars is a fact too notorious to be stated. China offers us an example of a nation living in perpetual peace; and, I believe you will not deny, that, as compared with an European, a Chinese is hardly worthy of the name of man. Nearly the same may be said of all the inhabitants of Asia; whereunto may be added, that the internal government of those unwarlike states and empires is uniformly a pure despotism, the life of every subject being at the mere mercy of the prince, whose very pleasures do not unfrequently consist of what we should call acts of deliberate murder, attended with a refinement in cruelty. You, Sir, make a pathetic appeal to your readers upon the horrors of war. "Were we," say you, "to divest ourselves for a moment of that irritation of mind and inflexibility of heart, which blinds us to all the evils and horrors of war, it would be impossible that we should not acknowledge the calamities it introduces, and feel a most sincere disposition to terminate them. If we turn our eyes to the continent of Europe, what devastation and slaughter has it occasioned, from the confines of Russia to the Southern extremity of Italy! If we look to Egypt or South America, we shall find the same cause for sorrow and regret. At no period of society have the contests of the field been more obstinate, or attended with such a profuse destruction of human life. To the sufferings and the death of the thousands who have fallen, we are to add the misery and the ruin of the tens of thousands that survive them, who have to lament the death of their relatives, their protectors, and their friends: and who, amidst grief and hunger and wretchedness, pour forth their curses on the unsparing sword of war, and on those who call it into action." The principle upon which you here proceed applies to *all* wars, under whatever circumstances; for, it is because human misery and a destruction of human life have been produced by the war, in which we are now engaged, that, according to your doctrine, we ought to feel a sincere disposition to terminate that war. But, Sir, though war is certainly the immediate cause of the death of many persons, it does not follow, that it is, for that reason alone, to be held in such abhorrence, seeing, that first or last, all those persons must meet with death in some shape or other. As to the wretchedness produced by war, you will find it very difficult, I believe, to show, by the use of dispassionate reason, that there is much want which arises, or which can arise, to any persons remaining at home, from the death of other persons, who are killed in war, it being pretty evident, I think, that of those who are personally engaged in war, very few indeed have been, previous to their being so engaged, the protectors of their kindred and friends. That war does, in no very sensible degree, tend to enhance the dearth of provisions has been amply proved by reasoning as well as by experience; and, though, in some countries, the suddenly withdrawing of a great number of hands from the field may have the effect of causing a scarcity of grain; yet, in this country, no such effect is to be apprehended; because, if a youth be taken, by war, from the plough to-day, another, who was just quitting the plough for the side-board, takes his place to-morrow, and that, too, from causes arising out of the war. A thousand men are called from the plough, by the war, to garrison the forts at Portsmouth; a thousand others supply their place, coming, through

various channels, from the manufactories, which have been destroyed by the war. The same quantity of food is raised; the same number of persons are fed; but, as the same quantity of manufactures are not exported or made, there is a diminution in the importation and creation of luxuries, and a diminution also in the vices which invariably accompany the enjoyment of those luxuries. This is one of the general effects of war; and, hence it is, that war, in some cases, operates to the good of nations. Hence it is, that the comparatively barren lands of England are covered with rich crops, while the rich lands of Italy scarcely afford bread to its enervated inhabitants. The state of England and France, compared with that of Germany and Italy, is a quite sufficient proof, that the general and permanent effect of war is not to destroy, or even to check, the prosperity of nations; while the history of Holland pretty clearly evinces, that the moment a nation ceases to be warlike, that moment she commences her decline, and has already made some degree of progress on her way to subjugation.

But, Sir, notwithstanding what has here been said, I am not, as you seem to insinuate, and as the Morning Chronicle scruples not to assert, so much in love with war as to think it a pity that there ever should be a cessation of hostilities. To speak of war as being, in all possible cases, a good, would be as absurd, as it is to speak of it as an evil, in all possible cases. I wished to enter upon the discussion with you, relative to the expediency of a peace, at this time, with France, without having against me, from the beginning to the end, the weight of that prejudice, which you have so carefully cherished, that war is, in itself, a pure, unmixed evil; a thing, in all cases, to be held in abhorrence, and, of course, to be, at all times, gotten rid of as soon as possible, without much, or, perhaps, any, consideration as to the terms. And, if I have been so fortunate as to remove this prejudice from the minds of my readers, I have not much apprehension as to their decision upon the points to be discussed.

I. *With respect to the real original cause of the present war between England and France*, you allow, Sir, that there were certain "impediments" relating to the evacuation of Holland by the French troops, and of the Island of Malta by the English; but, that the chief cause of the war, was, the writings and publications of certain "*unprincipled*" individuals in England, who found an interest in the revival of the war. You complain of the conduct of the French emigrants, in this respect, and then you tell us, that "another, and still more formidable party" [of these enemies to peace] "consisted of the innumerable bands of journalists and hireling writers, who feed upon the credulity and fatten upon the calamities of a nation; men who flourish most in the midst of tumult; to whom the disasters of the country are as valuable as her triumphs, a destructive battle as a rich harvest, and a new war as a freehold estate. . . . . Their reiterated clamours," you tell us, "appeared like the public voice. Scarcely were the preliminaries of the treaty concluded, than" [an odd sort of English, this] "new grounds of war were discovered. . . . . By these means the combustibles were prepared for a new explosion." And this, Sir, is, in another part of your pamphlet, what you call "having shown that the present war was instigated by a few interested and unprincipled individuals." This representation of yours, Sir, is not true; and, as you have, from your frequent quoting of them, proved that you have read the several official dispatches, connected with the rupture, in 1803, you must have known,

that it was not true. In no one of these papers is there contained any complaint against the English press, previous to the signing of the definitive treaty; it is notorious, that, at the time of signing the definitive treaty, and for several months afterwards, all those hirelings, of whom you speak, were engaged in praising the then First Consul and his government, and, when, in the month of July, 1802, Mr. Otto made his complaint to Lord Hawkesbury, the only presses he complained of by name were, that of *Peltier*, the *Courier de Londres*, and of *Cobbett*. He did, indeed, add, "and others like them;" but those others it would have been very difficult for him to have pointed out.\* As, therefore, Mr. Peltier and the *Courier de Londres* belong to your class of foreigners, who sighed without ceasing for the return of feudal vassalage (not so degrading, by-the-bye, as the vassalage of our manufactories), you leave to me, of course, the undivided honour of having instigated the war, and of being an "interested and unprincipled individual," a "hireling who fattens upon the calamities of the nation." But, Sir, again I say, that your representation is not true, and that, as you had evidently read the official papers, you must, at the time when you wrote it, have known it not to be true. This will appear from the whole tenor of the papers, but particularly from General Andreossi's letter to Lord Hawkesbury, of 8 Germinal, year 11, that is to say in the month of March, 1803, in which letter he says:

"A few days after the ratification of peace, one of his Britannic Majesty's ministers declared that the peace establishment must be considerable; and, the distrust excited by this declaration, made in parliament, with as much bitterness as impropriety, furnished a commentary for the exaggeration and alarms which were circulated in despicable pamphlets, and in newspapers as contemptible as those libels. Since that time these writers have found themselves invariably supported in their insolent observations by particular phrases taken from the speeches of leading members of parliament. These speeches, scarcely to be exceeded by the news-writers themselves, have, for these eighteen months, tended to encourage insult against other governments, to that degree, that every European must be offended, and every reasonable Englishman must be humiliated, by such unheard-of licentiousness."

In a subsequent part of the same letter, Andreossi tells Lord Hawkesbury, that the wish of the First Consul is, that measures should be adopted in both countries to prevent any mention being made of what was passing in the other; and this prevention he wished to be extended to the "official discussions" as well as to the "polemical writings;" that is to say, to the *parliament* as well as to the *press*. Is it true, then, Sir, as you have represented, that the complaint of France was made against wretched "hirelings" only; that it was a few "interested and unprincipled individuals" who blew up the flame of war? Or is your representation false? Here, in the letter of Andreossi, is a complaint made of the language of the ministry, of the opposition in parliament, of pamphleteers and of newspaper editors. Were all these "interested and unprincipled" individuals, who "fattened upon the calamities of the nation?" It is evident, not only from this letter of Andreossi, but from the generally pervading tone of the correspondence, that Buonaparte aimed at silencing, not only the press, but the parliament, as far as related to him and his actions; and that, first or last, nothing short of this would have satisfied him. You, indeed, appear to think, that there would

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\* See page 262 of Vol. I. of these Selections.—Ed.

be very little harm in the success of an effort of this kind. "To foreign states," you tell us, "that which a country does, or which it permits to be done by its subjects, is the same. With our internal regulations they can have no concern; but, they have a right to expect from us that respect for *their institutions*, which we *claim for our own*." Well, Sir, and what is this respect, which we claim for our institutions? Can you cite an instance, wherein complaint has been made by England of a libel upon her institutions? How many thousands of times has the King of England been loaded, in the American papers, with every epithet and name expressive of what is hateful and wicked; how many thousands of times have all our institutions been treated in the same manner; how many thousands of times have we been called slaves, beasts of burden, journeymen thieves, and all this because we did not rise and overturn our institutions! Yet, have you never heard, I believe, Sir, that our minister in America made, at any time, a complaint upon this score. You can find no "claim" of this sort, that we have ever made; and, whether in a manner "unprincipled," or not, you have evidently invented such a claim, on our part, for the purpose of defending, or of giving the air of reasonableness and fairness to, the claim of Buonaparte, which claim, you leave your readers to conclude, ought to have been granted, in order to prevent the renewal of the war; but, I think, it will not be difficult to convince those readers, that the man who would have granted this claim, would have found no claim too great to be granted. If we are to "respect the institutions" of foreign nations, we are to respect one as well as the other; and, why should we not, then, "respect" the Inquisition in Spain? Volumes have been written by us against that "institution;" and, if we ought to be permitted to write freely upon that subject, why were we to hold our tongues as to the institutions of Buonaparte, one of which was the celebrated "Cayenne Diligence?" Why, Sir, pray tell us why, we ought not to be permitted to speak of the latter "institution" as well as of the former? About the time to which we are referring, Buonaparte, by a sham election, made himself Consul for Life, in direct violation of what was then called "the constitution of France." This must have been a severe mortification to you, and others, whose wisdom had, in 1790, perceived the day-star of liberty advancing "o'er the vine-cover'd hills and gay regions of France;" and, out of compassion for you, we might have disguised the fact, if that had been possible; but it was impossible, and, therefore, we did laugh most heartily at the post-like senate and legislative corps. All the world laughed as well as we, "the only difference was, we dared laugh out;" and, when we were told, that this military despotism, the establishment of which could now be no longer disguised, had been caused by the Duke of Brunswick's proclamation, issued in 1793; when we were told, as you now tell us, that it was from indignation at the attempts to conquer and enslave her, that France became warlike and became herself a conqueror; and that, having, through the courage and exertions inspired by a love of liberty, got rid of, or subdued, all her enemies, she, from the *same cause*, became herself the slave of a single military despot, who kept a Cayenne Diligence continually upon the trot; when we were gravely told this, we laughed still more; and, it was this that you would have prevented by the cutting of our ears off, or the splitting of our noses. If your doctrine be adopted, how shall we dare to write at all respecting foreign nations? Who will dare to say, that the government of France, or Spain, or Russia, or Tur-

key, is not as good as the government of England? Who will dare to describe the character of princes or ministers? Who will dare to write history? Who will dare to write a book of travels? Who will dare, upon subjects connected with foreign princes, or states, to move his pen, or to open his lips? "In war time we may abuse them as much as we please." But, not to dwell upon the baseness of this, upon the total want of principle which it develops, when the war ceases, the newly-invented public law of libel begins again to operate; so that the identical paper or book, which was a lawful publication but yesterday, may, to-day, if a copy of it be sold (every sale being a fresh publication), subject both the author and the publisher to the loss of their ears and to confinement in jail at the discretion of the judge. After broaching a doctrine like this, it is with singular propriety, that you observe, in the true attorney-general-like style, that "to encroach upon the freedom of the press, will never be the act of any real friend to the interests of mankind; but, to restrain its licentiousness is not to encroach upon, but to preserve that freedom." These are almost the very words of Mr. Blackstone, who, soon after he had put them into print, became a judge. This very form of words was used in the case of Mr. Heriot, who was prosecuted by that famous Whig, and "friend to the interests of mankind," Lord St. Vincent, for having published an alleged falsehood relative to his conduct, as Lord of the Admiralty; and, who, in order, I suppose, to prove to all the world as clear as daylight, that the thing asserted by him was false, was brought to trial by a form of process which prevented him from producing any evidence to prove that it was true. Nevertheless, Mr. Heriot was sent to jail for a good six months, in order to "restrain the licentiousness of the press, and there by to preserve freedom." I wonder, Sir, that you, who have made some noise with your talk about liberty, do not feel a little bashful at repeating, as your own, these words of Mr. Blackstone; that you are not ashamed to applaud a form of prosecution, which prohibits the person prosecuted from pleading, in his defence, the truth of the words, to have uttered which is imputed to him as a crime. I wonder you are not ashamed of this; you, who so inordinately rejoiced at the French revolution, as the dawn of liberty upon the continent of Europe; you, who have always belonged to that party, whose claim to public favour was founded solely upon their attachment to the cause of freedom, and whose constant cry, *until they were in office*, was "the liberty of the press." But, this inconsistency does really appear to me, to have arisen, in you, at least, out of an attachment to France generally, and to her ruler in particular. For his sake it is, that you would extend the operation of the law of libel to publications relating to foreign princes and states; for, though you speak of "foreign states," in the plural number, it is quite evident, that your eye is fixed on France alone; and, however angry it may make you, I cannot help expressing my opinion, that the care which you have taken to disguise the fact, that the *speeches in parliament* were complained of by Buonaparte not less than the pamphlets and newspapers, and that the infinite pains you have bestowed in order to produce a belief, that the war had no other efficient cause than the publications of "a few interested and unprincipled individuals," ought to be considered as a strong presumptive proof of your entertaining an unnatural partiality for the enemy, whose cause you have pleaded in the true spirit of a professed advocate.—But, Sir, it is not true, that the publications in England, or that the speeches in parliament, were the



original cause of the present war. Mr. Andreossi says, when speaking of the publications in the *Moniteur* (which, observe, were acknowledgedly the act of the government of France), "they are of an order too secondary to be capable of influencing such a decision" [that of war]. "Are we, then, to return to the age of tournaments? Motives of this nature might have authorised, four centuries ago, the combat of thirties; but, they cannot, in this age, be a reason for war between the two countries." He says, in another part of his letter, after enumerating all the complaints about the language of the parliament and the press, that the First Consul "did not, on that account, entertain a doubt of the continuance of peace." Now, Sir, either Mr. Andreossi, who was charged to express to us the sentiments of the First Consul, must have been wrong, must, in fact, have said what was false; or you must now be wrong. One or the other you must acknowledge, unless, which is not very improbable, you should choose to say, that Buonaparte, upon whose sincerity, on all other occasions, you have an unbounded reliance, did, in this one little instance, play the hypocrite.—I, for my part, scruple not to say, that the attempts of Buonaparte to restrain the liberty of speech and of the press would have been, if not speedily atoned for, a sufficient ground of war; but, our poor tame ministers of that day were very far indeed from demanding satisfaction for so gross an affront upon the country. Nay, they not only suffered him to make his attempts, but flattered him with success, and actually began, in the person of Mr. Peltier, to offer up sacrifices to his arrogance. You, Sir, seem to regret, that they were not more expeditious, and that the war came to rob Buonaparte of a victim. But without a new law for the purpose, they could not proceed quicker; and, it is hardly to be supposed, that he had not some friend in this country to inform Mr. Andreossi, that, as matters stood just then, unfurnished as we were with a *Cayenne Diligence*, the good *Addington* ministry were doing all that lay in their power to accommodate things to his liking. In short, the press was fast falling under the clutches of Buonaparte, and, though you seem to have forgotten it, the members of parliament had received a hint, "that, if such reproachful language, with respect to the head of the French government, were indulged in, it would be impossible to maintain the relationships of peace and amity." So that, if any thing short of the *Cayenne Diligence* would have satisfied him, he was in a fair way of being perfectly satisfied.—It was not the press, then, that was the cause of the war. There were several other causes, though you, Sir, have thought proper to keep them wholly out of sight. You speak of the "impediments" to the evacuation of Holland and of Malta, as if those impediments were the whole that had occurred, as matter of difference, between the peace of Amiens and the breaking out of the war. Is it possible, that you can have overlooked the famous proceeding, called "the German Indemnities," in which France assumed to herself the right of dividing and parceling out the territory and the revenues of the several states of Germany? Is it, indeed, a fact, that you have forgotten, that one of her first acts in peace was to make Savoy, which was to remain independent of France, a department of France? Can you, such an ardent admirer of liberty, have forgotten, that another act of peace, on the part of Buonaparte, was to send an army to invade Switzerland, to place one of his own creatures at the head of the government there, and to make that country, as to all practical purposes, another department of France? Sebastiani's

mission and report you have noticed ; but, you have done it, merely for the purpose of showing, that we, too, could complain of foul language, when directed against ourselves, totally omitting, however, to draw the distinction between publications, in pamphlets and newspapers, by unauthorized individuals, and a report made by an accredited agent of the government, made to the government by that agent, and published by that government, under its own name, having, from these circumstances, just the same character and weight as if it had been a note, delivered by the French ambassador to Lord Hawkesbury. This you have omitted to do ; and, you have, too, whether from want of principle or not, I shall leave the reader to judge, omitted to state, that the publication which gave most offence to Buonaparte, was that of Sir Robert Wilson, whom, though you may, perhaps, include him amongst those " hirelings, who fatten upon the calamities of the nation," you have not, amidst all your avowed contempt for unmanliness, ventured to name, though there was, it appears to me, much more necessity for naming him, than for naming Mr. Peltier. But, it was not on account of the abusive language of Sebastiani's report, that it was made, by us, a subject of complaint. That report disclosed, in the usual way of the French, the views which they meant to act upon, with respect to Egypt. It discovered the intentions of Buonaparte with regard to those territories of the Turks ; and, added to the other considerations of the time, was one principal cause of the renewal of the war. You appear, Sir, to have quite forgotten, too, the dispute relative to Mr. Talleyrand's "*commercial commissaries*," coming from a country, with which we had no commercial connection, and furnished with maps, charts, and mathematical instruments, instead of laws of shipping and tables of custom-house duties. You forget, that, in Mr. Talleyrand's instructions to these curious envoys, one was to ascertain the soundings of the port in which they were stationed and the bearings of the land from the place of entrance ; that another was, to come at the extent of the population near the coast ; another, to take an account of the naval and military force, and to sound the disposition of the people. You forget, that several of these agents were destined for the ports of Ireland, where one of them, if I am not in mistake, had actually arrived, and had begun his "commercial" inquiries, when the whole of them were ordered to decamp. All these things you have forgotten : no, you have not forgotten any one of them ; for you have shown us, that you have recently read the dispatches, and, having read them, it is impossible, that you should not have been reminded of all the causes of war, which I have here enumerated. These causes co-operated in producing the war. There was nothing so near the hearts of the then ministers as the preservation of peace, upon almost any terms. If the silencing of the small part of the press (for it was a mere trifle) which held a warlike language, had been all that was necessary, they would very soon have accomplished that, and would have been applauded for the act by three-fourths of the parliament, by ninety-nine hundredths of the press, and by a like proportion of the people, in their then disposition to sink quietly beneath the domineering spirit of France. But, the ministers, though willing to go almost any length in the way of concession and humiliation, saw that all concession and humiliation would finally fail ; and, day after day admonished them, that time was only adding to the weight of their responsibility. They saw Buonaparte making bolder strides of conquest in peace than he had made in war ; they could look in no direction without

seeing marks of his restless ambition ; and, they justly dreaded, that, taking advantage of some favourable moment, he would, in the midst of peace, accomplish, or, at least, attempt, some act of open hostility against England or Ireland. It was in this state of mind, that they resolved upon war ; and though Malta stood in the foreground, there was a combination of causes, which really produced the event ; a combination not very easy to be described, and, therefore, Mr. Addington, cutting the matter short, emphatically answered those who inquired into the causes of the war, "*We are at war, because we cannot be at peace.*" And yet, Sir, you, by the means of garbled statements and forced constructions, taking advantage of the want of that information which must generally prevail upon such subjects, would fain make the people believe, that Buonaparte was sincerely disposed to preserve the peace, and to desist from all encroachments ; and that the sole cause of the war, in which we are now engaged, arose not from any opinion entertained by our ministers that it was necessary to our safety, but merely from the irritation produced by the "unjust and offensive aspersions against the ruler of France," written and published by "venal demagogues," by "mercenary scribblers," by "a few interested and unprincipled individuals, who fatten upon the calamities of the nation ;" than which attempt to impose upon the unwary and to excite discontent in the distressed, I am inclined to believe that few readers will be able to form an idea of any thing more completely unprincipled, especially when they come hereafter to compare your present exertions with that profound silence, which, while in parliament, you observed, upon the subject of the negotiation of 1806.

II. Before I speak of the *Negotiation of 1806 and of the views then manifested by Napoleon*, I cannot help making a remark or two upon the manner, in which you introduce that part of your subject, reserving, however, the pretty story about Mr. Fox and the assassin for a letter of lighter matter. "The reins of government," upon the death of Mr. Pitt, you say, "fell from the hands of his panic-stricken colleagues in office. A change in the administration of the country took place, and the union of Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox with that of their friends, encouraged the hope, not only of a speedy termination of hostilities, but of that steady and gradual amelioration in our domestic concerns, which, without alarming the fears of the weak, might satisfy the reasonable expectations of the country." Now, Sir, it appears to me, that if your wisdom had, upon this occasion, been equal to your zeal, you would not have said a word about the reins falling from the hands of the panic-stricken colleagues of Mr. Pitt ; seeing that those very men have, and that, too, in a moment of the war still more calamitous than that in which they quitted office, re-grasped the reins of government, and, hoisting the Duke of Portland to the head of the ministry, have not only defeated their political opponents, but have adopted measures, which have made the enemy, though now become the conqueror of all the continent of Europe, lower his tone with respect to England.—You tell us, Sir, that the change which took place, at the time referred to ; that the union of Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox with that of their friends, encouraged the hope of a speedy termination of hostilities ; but, you do not give us any reason, or produce any indication of public feeling, upon which this assertion is founded. Difficult indeed would it be for you to do either. The new ministry was composed of Mr. Fox and three others, who had approved of the peace of Amiens, besides Mr. Addington and Lord Ellenborough, who were in

office when that peace was made ; but, in this same ministry were Lord Grenville, who was at the head of the whole, Mr. Windham who was at the head of the war department, and, in one post, or another, every lord and every commoner, with, I believe, the sole exception of Lord Folkestone, who had voted against the peace of Amiens, your delightful peace of Amiens, the non-preservation of which you so pathetically lament. Nay, Sir, in this ministry were, without exception, all those noblemen and gentlemen, whose speeches in parliament had given so much offence to Buonaparte, previous to the commencement of the war ; and who, moreover, had, from time to time, taken special care to convince the nation, that their opinion of his character and views had undergone no material change. Pray, tell us, then, Sir, how their elevation to power (of which, observe, they were at the very head) could, in any sane mind, "encourage the hope of a speedy termination of hostilities." Yet, when you come afterwards to speak of the termination of the war between France and Russia, and of the second change in the ministry, which had taken place in the interim, you again advert to this disposition in the late ministry and that, too, for purposes so evidently of a factious nature as not to leave them the possibility of their being misunderstood. "In the mean time," say you, "a change had taken place in the British ministry, "founded on one of the most extraordinary popular delusions ever practised on the credulity of a nation. As the new ministers consisted chiefly of those, who had supported, with undeviating pertinacity, the "war system, it was not to be expected, that any change of measures, "favourable to a pacification, was likely to take place." Then you proceed to speak of the offer of Russian mediation, and to ascribe its rejection to this pertinacious love of war, in the present ministers. This is a point of great importance with you ; it is the foundation work of the false notions, which your pamphlet is calculated to inculcate ; and, therefore, it is necessary to remove it. The persons now alive, who had most pertinaciously supported the "war system," were Lord Grenville, late first lord of the treasury, Mr. Windham, late secretary of state for the war department, Mr. Grenville, late first lord of the admiralty, Lord Fitzwilliam, late president of the council, Lord Spencer, late secretary of state for the home department. Here were five cabinet ministers, all of whom had voted against the peace of Amiens ; all of whom had undeviatingly contended, that no peace with Buonaparte, under circumstances, such as existed at the time when that treaty was made, could be safe ; all of whom had contended, that, merely as a trial against time, the chances of war were better than the chances of peace. Now, look at the present cabinet, and, you will find, Sir, that there are some who were in office when the peace of Amiens was made ; that almost the whole of them, not then in office, spoke in favour of that peace ; and that there is not amongst them, nor, I believe, in any of the subaltern post of the ministry, one single man, who either spoke or voted against that peace. I do not say this in commendation of their conduct ; for, my opinion is, that that peace was injurious as well as disgraceful to England ; but, I say it for the purpose of showing, that the cause, to which you are desirous of attributing the rejection of the offer of Russian mediation has no foundation in fact, and is a pure invention of your own. I must say, too, that I look upon it as an invention proceeding from a motive, which, without the least exaggeration, may be called "unprincipled ;" for, that motive evidently is to endeavour to obtain vengeance on the ministers for your defeat at Liver-

pool, by representing them as being so pertinaciously attached to a system of war, that, *while they remain in office*, the country, whatever its sufferings may be, and however useless and hopeless may be the continuation of the contest, has not the smallest chance of a restoration of peace.— Having cleared up this point, I should now proceed to the Negotiation of 1806; but, not having room to conclude it in the present sheet, I shall postpone it to my next, remaining, in the mean while,

Yours, &c.

Botley, 11th Feb. 1808.

WM. COBBETT.

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## TO WILLIAM ROSCOE, ESQ.

### LETTER II.

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SIR,—Upon reverting to the subject of the Negotiation of 1806, I cannot, upon reading your remarks a second time, forbear taking some notice of the curious "incident," which appears to have led to the opening of that negotiation, namely, the tender of his services made by an assassin to Mr. Fox. This was, indeed, a curious "incident;" and yet, somehow or other, it has happened, that there never was an incident that gave rise to less conversation, in public, or in private. It was a thing, which, as it were by compact, all men were in the mind to pass over in silence. As to myself, I will tell you flatly and plainly, that I looked upon the whole as being a matter of mere contrivance, as completely as any "incident" of a play-house piece; and, the reason why I never said this before, was, that Mr. Fox being dead, I felt a repugnance at commenting upon the part, which he had had the weakness to act; which repugnance is now outweighed by the considerations arising from the evident motives, whence you have set forward this almost forgotten incident. The story of the incident is this: a person makes shift to get from France to England "without a passport," a very extraordinary thing in itself; but hither he comes, and, going to Mr. Fox, tells him, that a scheme had been formed for killing Napoleon, at Passy, attended with neither risk nor uncertainty. Mr. Fox drives him from his presence; but orders him to be kept in custody of the police, until the French government be informed of the matter, which information is given by Mr. Fox to Mr. Talleyrand, in a letter dated on the 20th of February, 1806; and, when it becomes pretty certain, that the information is received in France, and, of course, that measures are taken to defeat the intention of the assassin and his colleagues of Passy, the assassin is sent off out of the kingdom. This letter of Mr. Fox brings him one from Mr. Talleyrand Perigord, formerly Bishop of Autun, and one of the guardians of the holy oil, which had been kept in a bottle at Rheims, ever since the coronation of Charlemagne. The Bishop conveys to Mr. Fox the thanks of his imperial and royal majesty, Napoleon, and, at the same time, gives him, in the way of "news," an extract from the Emperor's speech to his legislators, about peace; this, accompanied with a hint from Mr. Talleyrand, upon the same topic, leads to a negotiation in form. But, first let us, since you will have it so, inquire a little into the probabilities of the plot at Passy. First, it is, as was before remarked,

not a little extraordinary, that any one should, without the consent, or connivance, of the French government, get from France to Gravesend. Where was he to embark? On board of what? How was he to pass unmolested? Secondly, upon the supposition, that the plot was really formed, the house taken at Passy, and the preparations for the murder all duly made, how came Mr. Talleyrand not to let Mr. Fox know whether the thing had been discovered, or what had been the result of that inquiry, to which Mr. Fox's letter would naturally have led? Thirdly, how comes it that we have never heard the *Moniteur* say any thing upon the subject, which was one of great public interest; and how comes it, too, that neither the envoy of the assassins, nor any one of the band, has ever been brought to justice? Mr. Fox certainly did not act as I should have done. I should have looked upon the man as sent from France, in the same manner that *Méhée de la Touche* was;\* I should have had him confined, and strictly examined; and, should, in the meanwhile, have informed the French government, that, unless it could be clearly proved, that preparations for assassination had actually been made at Passy, the envoy would be considered as a spy, and very soon hanged in that capacity. This is what I should have done in a like case, and should never have thought of availing myself of such an opportunity to give a mark of my "attachment" to Mr. Talleyrand. I see much of a want of presence of mind; much of weakness, in this proceeding, on the part of Mr. Fox; but, it will, I believe, require a pair of those party spectacles, that you seem to have on your nose, to see any thing of "noble-mindedness" in it. Mr. Fox, disguise the fact how you will, must have seen through the trick that was attempted to be played him; or, at any rate, the best that can be said of him, in this case is, that he was the dupe of Mr. Talleyrand. And, Sir, you gravely retail to us the recognition, on the part of Talleyrand, of "those principles of honour and virtue, by which Mr. Fox had always been actuated, and which," as Talleyrand said, "had already given a new character to the war," thereby intimating, that theretofore, our government had carried on the war like assassins, though it should have been remembered by Mr. Fox (if forgotten by Mr. Talleyrand), that the war had theretofore been carried on by persons, then composing two thirds of the cabinet, of which Mr. Fox was a member. But, at the close of this your eulogium on Mr. Fox, you have a most unworthy insinuation. You say: "Even the political opponents of Mr. Fox ought to have felt rightly upon such a subject. They ought to have known, that it was no effort to his great and generous mind to reject the proposals of an avowed assassin." And, how do you know, Sir, that they did not feel rightly upon this subject? What warrants you in supposing, that they would have employed the assassin? And, if this be not what you mean to insinuate, to what rational purpose does your observation, with respect to them, tend? For my part, when I came to see the papers (*Parl. Debates*, Vol. VIII., p. 91, and the following pages) I thought the conduct of the then opposition remarkable for forbearance; and, if Mr. Fox had been alive at the time when the discussion upon those papers took place, I am inclined to think, that the assassination plot at Passy, which certainly equals the "Meal-Tub Plot," or any of the other plots of the reign of Charles II., would have been made to afford, at St. Stephen's, where you then were,

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\* The affair of Drake and *Méhée de la Touche* took place in 1804.—ED.

a good deal of merriment ; especially if you had taken it into your head to describe the conduct of Mr. Fox, upon that occasion, as “ exemplifying, in the most striking manner, one of the most important maxims of morality, and exhibiting to the world a noble proof, that, amidst the rage of national and individual animosity, the eternal laws of justice and of virtue were neither overthrown nor shaken.” The horse laugh, which would have drowned your voice long before you had arrived at this period, would have convinced you, that if you chose to be the dupe of the Bishop of Autun, there were not many others disposed to follow your example.

Mr. Talleyrand, as if he had been a little ashamed of the miserable trick he had resorted to, got rid of the subject in great haste, and proceeded to that of peace. The negotiation was opened, and that, too, at the very place which the French must have wished. In speaking of this negotiation, you appear to be sadly divided between your anxiety to vindicate the conduct and the motives of France and your fear of throwing blame upon your own party ; but, after long apparent struggles in your bosom, the former gains the preponderance, and you make a very decent sacrifice of your friends upon the altar of your country's enemy. You tell us, that, in the first place, England insisted, that Russia should, as an ally of hers, be a party to the treaty ; that, while a debate was going on about this, Russia, though in spite of our remonstrances, entered upon a separate negotiation ; that, being now at liberty to treat for ourselves, a dispute arose about the basis of the treaty, and that, “ unfortunately,” we insisted upon the state of actual possession, as a basis, though neither the language of Mr. Talleyrand nor the circumstances of the case could warrant us in so doing ; that, while this dispute was going on, the treaty between Russia and France arrived at St. Petersburg, where it was refused to be ratified, which induced us to return to our first resolution of not negotiating but in conjunction with Russia, though “ the terms were such as might have satisfied both the honour of the sovereign, and the expectations of the British ministers ; that, ‘unhappily,’ the negotiation was thus broken off, and the contest continued for interests not our own.” We will speak of these “ satisfactory terms ” by-and-bye ; but, here we must stop to ask you, who it was that conducted this negotiation on the part of England ? Why, those very men, whose departure from office you have, in another place, told us, deprived the nation of all hopes of peace. But, there is a question, in which you, Sir, are more nearly concerned. There were, in parliament, two discussions, relative to the negotiation of 1806, the principal one on the 5th of January, 1807 (See Parl. Deb., Vol. VIII., p. 505), when Mr. Whitbread moved an amendment to the address proposed by Lord Howick. After an eulogium on Mr. Whitbread's speech, upon that occasion, you say, in a tone of lamentation mixed with anger, “ yet, the motion of Mr. Whitbread ” (which softened the asperity of that of Lord Howick) “ was negatived without a division.” And, whose fault was that ? Why, it was the fault of your pacific ministry. It was the fault of those very men, whose elevation to power you tell us gave the people a confident expectation of peace, and whose fall you tell us, deprived the people of all hope of peace. Not altogether, indeed, was it their fault, for, though they had a decided majority in St. Stephen's, yet, the “ negative without a division ” was not their fault, but *your* fault, and every man's fault, who disapproved of breaking off the nego-

tiation. It was in your power to divide the House. It required no knack at speaking for an hour at a time. A single syllable, distinctly pronounced, would have been sufficient; and, if you refrained from making so slight an effort to serve the cause of peace then, when your party was in power, what credit is due to your professions now? A negotiation is broken off upon grounds, which you represent as feigned; the enemy, you say, offers satisfactory terms of peace; our ministers come to parliament with an assertion that a continuation of the war is rendered unavoidable by the injustice and ambition of the enemy; you now say that this assertion was false; and yet, oh, patriotic gentleman; "real friend of mankind;" and great enemy to "the tragedy of war!" what do you do? Sit, at the back of the minister, like a mouse in a cheese; say not a word; give your silent assent to what you now say was a false assertion; but, the ministry being changed, and the new ministry having ousted you from your seat in parliament, you come forth in a pamphlet and say that, which you ought to have said in your place in parliament; you now address to faction and distress, that which you ought to have addressed to the public spirit and reason of the nation. Upon the supposition that you were incapable of speaking (which is not, however, the fact, you having spoken, in all, six times); upon this supposition, or upon the supposition that your talents and faculties are of that peculiar sort which are not to be brought to bear against a minister, to whom you are looking up for emoluments or honours; upon this supposition, which is the most favourable to you that I can conceive, why did you not bring out your pamphlet at an earlier period? The time for it to have been useful was immediately after the parliamentary discussion, above referred to; and, if that had been, from your great duties as a lawgiver, let slip, you surely might have published it after you were happily disburdened of that charge. But, no; you stop till the rupture of the negotiation has produced all its mischiefs; you stop, in short, until the very hour, when you think that your pamphlet, joined to the distresses in the manufacturing districts, will have a chance of producing an effect hostile to the party, to whose superior cunning you owe your fall as a public man. You now affect to lament the consequences of the rupture of the negotiation; you now display before the public its terrible effects upon the North of Europe, seeming to suppose, that we should forget, that no small part of those effects had been already produced, when the discussion in parliament took place. In short, it is as clear as noon day, that of what you have now said, against the breaking off of the negotiation, not one word would, in any way, have been said by you, if the late ministry had remained in power, and if you had remained in parliament. Such a person it becomes to be cautious how he accuses others of a want of principle.

It is true, however, that what has here been said has little to do with the question itself, though it may, by exposing your conduct and motives, be useful in counteracting your designs. The ministers might be much to blame for breaking off the negotiation, though you could not discover it, until they were out of place, and though, so far from appearing to discover it in due time, you, with all the information before you, gave your silent assent to a solemn proceeding, the purpose of which was to give to their conduct the stamp of public approbation. To come to a decision upon the merits of the case itself, we must now take a view of those "satisfactory terms," which were offered by France, during the



negotiation of 1806. These terms were : that Hanover was to be restored to the King, Malta, the Cape of Good Hope, the French possessions in the East Indies, and Tobago in the West Indies, were to be left in our hands ; while the only condition which France asked in return was, that we should leave her the absolute mistress of every port upon the continent of Europe, those of Russia, Sweden, and Denmark excepted, the island of Sicily being to be surrendered to her, and the king of that country being to be made a pensioner of Spain. " Hanover for the honour of the crown, Malta for the honour of the navy, and the Cape of Good Hope for the honour of commerce." This was the ingenious arrangement of Mr. Talleyrand, of whom you seem to be an humble pupil ; for you, too, tell us, that the terms offered by France were " such as might have satisfied both the honour of the Sovereign and the expectations of the British ministry," had not their " determination not to desert our Russian ally prevented such terms from being accepted." As a proof of the truth of this assertion of yours, you refer to the declaration of Lord Lauderdale, that the arrangement contended for, by us, in favour of Russia, " was considered as an object, *more interesting, if possible,* to England, than those points which might be considered as peculiarly connected with her own interests ;" and, in confirmation, you quote the King's Declaration, recently made with regard to Russia, in which the Czar is reminded, that " the negotiation of 1806 was broken off upon points, *immediately* affecting, *not his Majesty's own interests,* but those of his imperial ally." Upon the strength of these declarations you assert that the war, after the negotiation of 1806, was " continued for interests *not our own,*" leaving out, with your usual fairness, all the qualifications accompanying the expression, in both declarations. Lord Lauderdale only says, that the arrangement desired for Russia was an object " *more interesting,*" than those points peculiarly connected with our own interests ; and he adds, "*if possible ;*" clearly implying that those points were of themselves of very great interest. And, in the King's recent declaration, the word "*immediately*" so qualifies what follows, as to give to the declaration a meaning not at all different from that of Lord Lauderdale, which meaning plainly is, that, though, as to the interests of England, there were great differences, yet, it happened, that it was upon points more immediately connected with the interests of Russia, that the negotiation was broken off. But, to have adhered to the fair construction of these declarations would not have suited your purpose, which was to bring your readers gradually to the following clenching argument : " That, as the non-compliance by France with our demands, on the part of Russia, was the *only* reason for continuing " the war, there exists not *now,* when that reason is effectually removed " by the avowed hostility against us, either any just ground of offence " against France for her conduct in this transaction, or any difference of " interest between the two countries, which can now be alleged as a " motive for continuing the war ;" an argument, which might have done honour to Counsellor Bramble or Counsellor Botherem, but which one would have expected to be scorned by a man putting forward such high pretensions to fairness and integrity ; for, to say nothing more of the false premises upon which you proceed, who, above the level of a journeyman callico-weaver, does not perceive, that, though the reason for beginning a war, or continuing a war, may be removed, in the course of the war, there may be other reasons arise, in the course of the war

for its continuance, or prolongation; and that the same set of terms, which would have been desirable at the former stage of the war, would be totally inadmissible at the latter? Your enemy seizes your county of Lancaster; you go to war in order to recover it; you succeed, but he gets possession of Somersetshire; and, are you to cease the war, because the original reason of it is removed? This part of your argument is, therefore, worth nothing; and, as to the proposition, that "we have no just ground of offence against France for her conduct in the negotiation of 1806, because Russia has now openly avowed her hostility against us," it is too miserable a mockery of reasoning to merit serious remark. Not only may it happen, that a new reason for continuing a war may arise, during a war; but it may happen, that the new reason may arise out of the removal of the original reason; and this has been the case in the present instance; for, if we were now to negotiate, the basis and the terms ought to be very different indeed from what they might have been at the period of the negotiation of 1806. And, yet you tell us, that the war is now continued "without an object and without a cause," merely because we have lost the ally, for whose sake we, more immediately, broke off the negotiation conducted by Mr. Fox.

The terms, as above stated, would, in my opinion, have given to this country, in the state in which it was in 1806, not a moment of real repose. Hanover is set in the foreground, though it would be very difficult to show how the restoration of that electorate could have been an honour to the "crown" of England. That France would offer to restore it was foreseen and foretold, long ago; and, the mighty sacrifice she therein would have made must be evident, when we recollect, first, that she has stripped it of its very skin, and next, that she could, at any time, have re-occupied it at her pleasure. It was one of the sins of the late ministry to demand the restoration of Hanover, their motive for which was evident to all the world, namely, that of flattering certain prejudices as the sure means of keeping their places; and, it is not a little surprising, that you, Sir, you who clearly wish to pay your court to the people, should have held forth, as a great concession to us, the restoration of that, which the whole nation regards as a mill-stone about its neck. But, the truth appears to be, that you were divided in your hopes and fears here again. You must have perceived, that the restoration of Hanover was not a favourite object with the nation; but, on the other hand, your anxiety to justify France induced you to make the most of the offer with respect to that miserable electorate. She offered us, however, the Cape of Good Hope (a possession of Holland), Malta, her colonies (or rather factories) in the East Indies, and the island of Tobago, of all which we were in actual possession, while there existed not, in the world, the means of taking any one of them from us; and, if you do not perceive the fact, Mr. Talleyrand did, that the perpetual possession of all these, and of all the colonies of both hemispheres, would not have tended, even in the slightest degree, to the security of England, in which respect they were, all taken together, of far less importance than that little dot in the map of Europe, called the island of St. Marcou. You pass over, with great cautiousness, what France would have retained, in case we had made peace upon the terms proposed. You tell us that the King of Naples was to have had "the Balearic Islands and an annuity from Spain, to enable him to maintain his dignity;" but you omit to state, that he was to have been deprived of the island of Sicily,

by the peace, which Napoleon had not been able to take from him during the war; and, you also omit to state, that Sicily and Italy in possession of France, Malta must be given up by us for want of the means of feeding its inhabitants. In short, there appears to me to have been offered by France nothing that would have enabled us to dismantle, without abandoning all ideas of safety, a single ship of war, or to disband a single regiment that was, at the time the negotiation began, necessary for our defence; and, the whole of the negotiation only tended to confirm men in their former opinion, that Napoleon would consent to no peace, that should not work more rapidly than war towards his grand object, the conquest and complete subjugation of England. You, however, think very differently. You think him perfectly sincere in all his pacific professions; and, as the reason you give in support of this opinion may be comprehended by others, though it is not by me, I shall here state it in your own words.

“Whether the ruler of France was or was not sincere in his professions for peace, I shall not undertake to judge. There is, however, *one circumstance which strongly favours the idea that he was so*, and which may, therefore, be allowed to stand against the vague assertions so generally made to the contrary.” [Now, reader, watch narrowly for this circumstance.] “As Hanover was to be immediately and unconditionally restored to its elector, an application appears to have been made, during the negotiation, by Buonaparte to the king of Prussia, to whom the possession of it had been ceded by France as a conquered province, to deliver it up to its former sovereign.” [Have you found out the circumstance yet, reader?] “This application excited no small share of indignation on the part of the king of Prussia, who is said to have expressed his determination, not to allow himself to be divested of his dominions at the will of the French ruler.” [Have you got it yet?] “The consequence of this was a most singular complication of affairs. We were already at war with Prussia, who had also refused to divest herself of Hanover, although she had not the slightest pretensions to the sovereignty; and though the establishment of peace between England and France might have depended upon it.”

Have you found the “circumstance” yet, reader? If you have, you will do me the favour to lend me a little of your sharp-sightedness; for, after having read the paragraph over twenty times, with the utmost anxiety to find the statement of a circumstance “strongly favouring the idea that Buonaparte was sincere in his professions for peace; and that was to be allowed to stand against the assertions, so generally made to the contrary;” after all this anxious perusal, I can find, not only no such circumstance stated, but nothing at all that has any connection with the subject. Perhaps, however, Mr. Roscoe, you may mean, that the application made to the King of Prussia, for the surrender of Hanover, was a proof that Napoleon confidently expected, that he should soon have to restore it to the elector, and, of course, as confidently expected that a treaty of peace would grow out of the negotiation then going on. Aye: but this, Sir, is quite another thing. He might confidently expect, and sincerely wish for, a thing called a treaty of peace with England; and yet, at the same time, entertain towards her, views the most decidedly hostile. It was some circumstance such as would have favoured the idea of his being really peaceably inclined towards us, that I was expecting to hear you state; such, for instance, as an offer to set Holland and Spain free. This would have been something; this would not only have stood against “vague assertions,” but against that chain of reasoning and of facts which have been advanced as the foundation of the opi-

nion that he was not sincere in his propositions for peace ; but, the offer of Hanover to us, so far from standing against such reasoning and facts, tends only to confirm us in the conclusions drawn from them.

Upon this part of the subject more will be said in my next letter, when I come to examine into the nature of your statements and opinions with respect to the relative situation of the two countries, supposing peace to be now made, leaving all the ports and naval arsenals upon the continent of Europe in the hands, or under the control, of our enemy. The present I shall conclude with a remark or two upon the notions which you seem to entertain respecting the rights of sovereignty. You tell us, in the passage above quoted, that "Hanover had been ceded by France to the King of Prussia, as a conquered province." Presently after you have to speak of the King of Prussia's refusal to deliver it up again, upon the application of France ; whereupon you observe, "that Prussia had not the slightest pretensions to the sovereignty ;" though the country (a conquered country) had been ceded to her by France. You acknowledge the right of conquest in France ; you acknowledge her right to cede the electorate to Prussia ; and yet you assert, that Prussia had not the slightest pretensions to the sovereignty of it, when France chose to command her to give it up ; and, moreover, you justify France in demanding it without any equivalent, acknowledging that France has still a right to consider it as her own, and so to estimate it in the terms of a treaty, which she is making with us. Any thing so decidedly, so undisguisedly, French as this, I never before met with in any English writer ; and nothing so impudently profligate in any of the reports of the Bishop of Autun. In vain would you save appearances by the paltry misrepresentation which follows : "Yet Prussia was now to be our ally ; and this country had to defend her in a war occasioned by her unjust refusal to restore to their lawful sovereign the patrimonial and long-descended dominions of the House of Brunswick." No, Sir, it was not a refusal to restore them to the elector, it was a refusal to give them up to France, and that, too, without any equivalent, that France might have them as an article of cession to us in the treaty that was, as was then expected, about to be made. You, all along, speak of Hanover as something, and, indeed, as a great thing, which France had to restore to us ; before she could restore it she must possess it in right of conquest ; that right she had ceded to Prussia ; the right of Prussia must have been just as good as the right of France ; and yet you contend, you flatly assert, that to the sovereignty of Hanover Prussia had not the slightest pretensions. There may possibly be some few persons, in England, who have, through all the transformations of the French government, from a simple democracy up to a simple military despotism, retained their original partiality for the rulers of that country ; and these persons may applaud your present efforts ; but, if I am not the most deceived of men, those efforts will, by every other description of persons, be considered as proceeding from a want of principle as flagrant as any that has been witnessed for a long series of years.

I am, yours, &c.,  
WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 16th Feb., 1803.

## TO WILLIAM ROSCOE, ESQ.

## LETTER III.

SIR,—Before I enter upon the matter proposed to be treated of in this letter, give me leave to request your attention to the letter of a correspondent, which I shall insert by way of postscript to this, and in which, as you will perceive, the “incident” of the assassin is regarded as an invention of Mr. Fox himself. I do not say, that I adopt the opinion of my correspondent; yet, I must confess, that he has staggered me; and, however reluctant my readers may be to acknowledge an English statesman to have been guilty of such an act of meanness, they will, doubtless, be more reluctant to shut their ears against the truth. The matter ought to be cleared up. It was strange, that the assassin should be taken to Mr. Fox’s house; that he should not have been talked with in the presence of any *third* person; that police-officers, and not king’s messengers, should have to deal with him; that there should have been no talk about the matter, at the time when he arrived, or when he was sent away; and, that the whole should remain a profound and impenetrable secret, till the very moment that the negotiation papers were laid before Parliament. I should like to have this matter inquired into. The messenger, or police-officer, who brought the assassin up from Gravesend, and who took him to and from Mr. Fox, will be able to say that he did it. Some of the police-magistrates will be able to say, that they committed the man to prison; or, at least, the jailor will be able to produce some record of the receipt and delivery of this famous person. Some inquiry of this sort is necessary, not only to the vindication of the conduct of Mr. Fox, but also to that of the character of the English government; for, what can be more injurious to that character, than the supposition, that the minister for foreign affairs, by collusion with his colleagues, had recourse to such a stratagem for the purpose of opening the way to a negotiation with the enemy? Pray, Sir, think of this; and, be assured, that, until the matter be cleared up, there will generally prevail most serious doubts, not as to whether there was any reality in the plot at Passy, but, as to whether the honour of the invention belongs to the late ministry, or to Mr. Talleyrand; for, as to its being an invention, by one or the other, there is no doubt at all. This is a subject, which, in all likelihood, would never have been agitated, had it not been for your meddling indiscretion; and, therefore, upon you it devolves as a duty to clear the matter up, so as to remove the impression which your revival of it has produced.

Now, for the remainder of your pamphlet. In describing the events of the last continental war, you have occasion again to speak of the conduct of Prussia, and you call her taking possession of Hanover “an *indecent seizure*;” but, we never hear you talk of any act of indecency committed by France, though you had before spoken of the “*cession*” of that electorate to Prussia by France. How could it be an “*indecent seizure*,” if it was a “*cession*?” All, however, are criminal in your eyes, except Napoleon. If he put a king in possession of an electorate, the act is “a *cession*,” on his part, in virtue of his “*right*,” as conqueror; but, on the part of the power who receives it from him, if that power fall under his displeasure, the act of receiving is “an *indecent seizure*.” Well might you,

in your preface, make an attempt to ward off the charge of partiality for France.

Having brought us down to the treaty of Tilsit, you say, "Of the part which Great Britain acted in this dreadful struggle, it is not necessary to say much. The inefficiency of that union between her and Russia which had been so triumphantly dwelt upon, as likely to restrain, or overturn the power of France, soon became manifest." And then you proceed to state, that we were utterly unable to send a single man to assist her, or to make any diversion in her favour. Upon this latter point there are two opinions; and, you will observe, that the Emperor of Russia, that famous Autocrat, whose offer of mediation you choose to regard as sincere and equitable, has declared to the world, that your friends, the late ministers, might have sent him men and money and have made diversions in his favour. I, for my part, am of a contrary opinion; and, if I blame them at all for their conduct in that war, it was for sending money to Prussia, and for attempting a diversion in Egypt. But, who was it that "dwelt so triumphantly" upon the union of England and Russia? Not I. Not the nation, who never expected any good from it. Not the then opposition; because, whatever they might think, they would take excellent care to say nothing, that might run the risk of implying approbation of the conduct of their rivals for power and profit. Who was it, then? Why, the late ministers; those men, for whom, upon every occasion that offered, during your short-lived senatorship, you voted. It was they who triumphed; and you, Sir, were one of those, who, tacitly, at least, joined in the triumph, while I was using the utmost of my endeavours to guard the nation against being deceived by the hopes and expectations, which you held forth, as the consequence of the union, of which, now that it has failed, you stand forward to speak so contemptuously. I thought, that the union was a wild project; I thought, that the states against which France was drawing the sword, were rotten to the core; I thought, that there was a moral cause, more powerful than her arms, working for France; I thought, that Napoleon would "reach Petersburgh by May day," unless the Emperor submitted to his terms of peace. All this I thought; but, all this I *said*, even before the French troops began their march against Russia; and, if you had thought the same; or if you had anticipated the consequences of that union, at which you now laugh, why did you not say so, at the time and in the place, when and where your opinions might have been adopted by others? A person, not then in Parliament, may, with perfect consistency now, for the first time, express his disapprobation of the refusal of the terms of France in 1806, and tell us to look at the consequences of that refusal, connected as it was with a new coalition project; but you, who were then in Parliament, who said not one word in the way of disapprobation of the rupture of the negotiation or of the forming of the new coalition, stand now self-accused of a want either of spirit or of principle.

The Danish Expedition is a most copious topic with you, as, indeed, might have been expected; and, to say the truth, if you have failed in making your readers believe, that it was marked with every character of atrocity, the fault is not in your want of good will to that purpose. According to you, the Danes have, all along, observed a wise and temperate policy (not excepting their league with Russia and Sweden in 1801); they have maintained a firm and undeviating independence; neither influenced by intrigues nor intimidated by threats (not excepting the plea

which they made of the threats of Russia for entering into the coalition of 1801); they were, indeed, "naturally devoted to our interests." These are falsehoods so notorious, that one is surprised how you could have expected them to pass for truths amongst any portion of even the least informed of the people of England. The Danes themselves acknowledged, nay, they pleaded in justification of their conduct, in 1801, when they joined in a coalition to compel England to give up the exercise of the right of search, that they were unable to resist the commands of Russia; and they have since acknowledged, that they withdrew their troops from the frontiers of Holstein upon the threats of France; and, with these facts, so well proved, so completely undenied, you coolly assert, that they have undeviatingly preserved a dignified independence, unmoved alike by blandishments and by threats. With a like adherence to truth you proceed through a detail of the several circumstances of the expedition, the merits of which having been so amply discussed already, shall now be passed over.\* But, there is one passage in this part of your pamphlet which deserves particular attention. In speaking of the doctrines, which have been held, upon this occasion, you tell your readers, that a reverend divine had lately asserted, from the pulpit, in the face of a learned university, "that the nations of the earth have no laws in common, and that, where there is no law, there can be no transgression. "That they are to be considered as so many wild beasts, and that the strongest, when it has the power, has also the right to destroy the weakest." Now, Sir, my firm belief is, that this is a falsehood of your own inventing; and, if there were no other reason for this my opinion, the false statements which I have already noticed, in other parts of your pamphlet, would be sufficient; but, why did you not name this reverend divine? Or, if that would have been to show a bad taste, why not point out the particular occasion? Why leave the designation so very bald, if not for the obvious purpose of avoiding detection? That some such words may have been made use of, by way of illustration, and explained by the context, is possible; but, that any gentleman of the university has declared, from the pulpit, that the nations of the earth are to be considered as so many wild beasts, and that the strongest, when it has the power, has also the right to destroy the weakest, is what I do not believe, and what, I am convinced, will not be believed by any one of your readers, whose ignorance, or whose sectarian prejudice and bitterness, do not disqualify him for the forming an impartial judgment in the case. Of me, you say that I have dared to insult the common feelings and the common sense of mankind, by "asserting that *might constitutes right*." This, in the naked way in which you state the assertion, is another falsehood. I asserted, and still assert, that there is no law, to which nations implicitly bow; that there is no rule by which they are bound; that there is no common tribunal amongst them; that there is nowhere any judge to decide between them, and no where any power to enforce obedience to any decision; and that, therefore, it is, after all, amongst nations, *might* which constitutes right, and must constitute right in all cases, where the sword is the judge. But, is this a general and sweeping assertion that "*might constitutes right*?" And is it *moral* right that is here spoken of? You must certainly know better. I use the word *right*, in the sense, in which you use it, when you tell your readers, that Hanover was ceded to Prussia by France, "who possessed it by the *right of conquest*." That is to say,

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\* The Danish fleet was seized by Lord Gambier in 1807.—Ed.

by the right of *force*; that is to say by *might*; and, when you are speaking of the rights of France, dear harmless France, you seem to have no objection to the application of this doctrine, though it would, perhaps, be very hard to imagine any case wherein right has been more completely founded upon mere might than in that of Hanover. But you proceed to complain of me for saying, that, "with the maritime power, which this country now possesses, not a ship belonging to any other nation should be suffered to pass the seas, but upon conditions prescribed by us." You are, Sir, without exception, the most flagrant misquoter, the most barefaced garbler, that ever appeared in print. Just as if I had founded the proposal of exercising this rigour at sea upon the sole circumstance of our having the *power* to exercise it. Just as if I had said, "Now, my boys, it luckily happens, that we are able to oppress and insult all the world, therefore, let us do it." But, my readers will remember, that, in the first place, I claimed for my country no rights upon the seas, which had not been claimed by her in the best times of her history; and, that, in the next place, I stated the exercise of a rigorous maritime sovereignty of the seas to be necessary to our *defence*, as long as Napoleon should insist upon an absolute control over all the sea-ports and naval arsenals of the continent of Europe; and added, that, in proportion as he was disposed to let go his hold of those sea-ports and arsenals, in proportion as he was disposed to grant the former freedom to the land, we ought to be disposed to relax in the exercise of our sovereignty upon the waters. Was this a recommendation to our government to shut up the channels of the sea, against all other nations, *merely because we were able to do it*? Equally gross is your misconstruction of the meaning of that passage, in the King's declaration against Russia, wherein he says, that "it was time that the effects of that dread, which France has inspired into the nations of the world, should be counteracted by an exertion of the power of Great Britain." "Thus," say you, "after having poured out accusations against the policy of Buonaparte, we are, at length, become converts to it, and confess it to be right." Is there, Sir, in the declaration, which you have quoted, any such confession? On the contrary, is not the merciless policy of Buonaparte complained of, in that declaration? The meaning of the words quoted is this: "that France having, by the dread which she has inspired, caused nation after nation to become the enemies of England, whose lenity towards such nations had only tended to induce others to follow their example in yielding to France without resistance, it was time to put a stop to this, it was time to counteract the effects of a dread of France, by showing to such nations that they had something to dread from the exertion of the power of England." And this you call a confession that the tyranny of Buonaparte was right. My neighbour, who is my enemy, has, by divers acts of severity, inspired such a dread amongst the cottagers of the manor, that they are induced, one after another, to assist him in his projects for my total ruin. I perceive, and say, that his conduct towards them is unjust, and wicked to the last degree; and I myself, though I have the power, refrain from using it against them; till, at last, their accumulated hostility threatens even my existence. There is one, who lives just close by me, who has more power to injure me than any of the others, who has, upon every advantageous occasion, shown a hostile disposition towards me, who has very recently apologized for his hostility by alleging that he was unable to resist the commands of a neigh-



bour less strong than my chief enemy (and who is now leagued with my chief enemy); to this cottager, now quite exposed to the power of my chief enemy, who having long set all law at defiance, openly threatens that he will make him use his axes and bill-hooks and scythes for my destruction; to this cottager I go, and demand the surrender of these instruments of mischief, accompanied with a promise to return them to him, as soon as I have settled matters with my principal enemy. He refuses; talks of his independence, which he has before shown to be nothing; talks of the law, which he knows to be a dead letter. Well, say I, if you will not surrender without force, I must and will force you, for my very existence depends upon these your arms being kept out of the power of my great enemy. I lament the necessity, but this I must do, or I perish. Now, is this to follow "the *example* of my enemy?" Is this to confess that his conduct towards the other cottagers "was *right*?" We are now, you say, "apostates to the cause of virtue, independence, and integrity, " which we pretend to have so long supported, and openly acknowledge, " that it cannot contend with that of iniquity and oppression." If a man attack me with a knife, and I, for the purpose of preventing him from destroying me, have recourse to my knife also, I thereby certainly acknowledge, that my naked hands are unable to contend with a knife; but, am I, for that, to be called an apostate to the principles of fair boxing? The difference between us is, that he, by choice, resorts to his knife, and I to mine from necessity; he for the purpose of destroying me, and I for the purpose of preserving myself. You have here the argument of my Lord of Clackmannan\* (whose son is our Envoy in America), that is to say, that we began the war with revolutionary France upon the ground of her having set the law of nations at defiance, and that, therefore, we should, by no means, have acted in violation of those laws. But, Sir, in the course of this war, we have seen the several nations of the continent quietly submit to this violation of law on the part of France; we upheld what was called the law, as long as we found any nation willing to uphold it too; but, when we saw them all submit to its violation by our enemy, and even join their forces to that enemy against us, or, at least, refuse to join us against that enemy, or even to remonstrate against his aggressions, were we still to adhere to the law? When we saw him respect no law, either of neutrality or of war; when we saw almost every nation in Europe, and the American States too, bow to his will; when all that had been called public law was, in fact, at an end, were we alone to be bound by it, merely because we began the war for its support? If a general be ordered to quell a rebellion, is he to be bound down to the letter of the settled law of the land, while his opponent sets it at defiance? But, as if you were afraid of leaving it to be supposed, that you attributed criminality to Napoleon, you hasten to let us know (or, rather, perhaps, to let *him* know), that though you have for a moment supposed "iniquity" in him, in order to impute iniquity to us in following his "example," you yourself are by no means satisfied, that he has ever done any thing wrong, with regard to neutral nations. The passage I allude to is curious:—" *Conquerors*, in open war, have, " indeed, been cruel and unsparing to their enemies; *governments* which " have displayed an open hostility to more powerful states, or which, after " repeated remonstrances, have persevered in maintaining alliances sup-

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\* Lord Erskine, who was made Baron Erskine of Clackmannan.—ED.

"posed to be injurious to a belligerent and successful power have been changed, or extinguished; but.....;" and, then follows your assertion that the affair of Copenhagen is infinitely worse than any thing of this sort. That you allude here to Buonaparte and his remonstrances there can be no doubt, and that, by the "persevering" government you mean particularly that of Portugal there can be as little doubt. Not a word of disapprobation escapes you. You do not justify Buonaparte in his seizure upon Portugal and his extinguishing of the government, merely because that government would not obey his orders in confiscating English property; in words you do not justify this act; but, your tone and manner are justificatory.\* You wanted the courage to say, that which your unnatural partiality could not refrain from insinuating. He made "repeated remonstrances" did he, Sir, against the alliance between Portugal and England? What "alliance" was there? None. A treaty of peace and commerce, but no treaty of alliance whatever. Nay, the Portuguese were willing to shut their ports against English ships. This even was not enough; and the government was extinguished, the country seized upon, because the government would not consent to commit an act of fraud upon England. This you term "*persevering* after repeated "*remonstrances*, in alliances supposed to be injurious to a belligerent "and successful power." Well, but, there was just the same sort of "alliance" existing between Denmark and France as between Portugal and England. We remonstrated with Denmark repeatedly, as will be seen by a reference to the dispatches; but, we could not prevail on her to break with France. At last we see her completely at the mercy of France and our new enemy Russia. And what do we ask her to do? Not to confiscate French and Russian property; not to give us a farthing; but to place in our hands, until the end of the war, that fleet, which, as she had before asserted, she was obliged to employ against us, when Russia alone commanded her so to do. She refuses, and we seize the fleet, making war upon her for the purpose. But, we attempt not to change or to extinguish the government, as France did in the case of Portugal, though, in this case, we might take to ourselves the title of "conqueror" and "successful belligerent" with full as much propriety as you have applied those titles to Napoleon. Add to this, that we are notoriously in a state of great peril from the combination formed against us, and that France is in no peril at all; that we act from necessity and she from choice; that we seek for safety, and that she openly declares her intention to destroy us. Yet, you say not one word in disapprobation of her seizure upon Portugal, you allude to that act in a tone apologetic; while you ransack your poetical vocabulary for terms of reproach wherewith to describe our seizure of the Danish fleet. After this, nothing that comes from your pen need surprise us, and we naturally look for passages such as the following. "That, if Denmark was weak, we should have supported her." But, she would not let us support her. Read the dispatch of Lord Howick, and you will find, that she would, upon no account, suffer us to send to her assistance, which we repeatedly offered to do. "Thus we should, at the same moment, have converted a neutral "into an ally, and raised that ally to importance, a part of the policy "of Buonaparte, which it would be much better for this country to have

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\* The proclamation of the Prince Regent of Portugal, on quitting his country, is dated 27th November, 1807.—Ed.

“ imitated, than to have contended with him in that course of conduct; “ by which he *is stated* to have inspired so much dread into the nations “ of the world.” Why do you say “ *he is stated?* ” Is it *not so*, my good attorney? Or, are you afraid, that he will take the law of you? I observe, that, all through your pamphlet, when you have to speak of his acts of violence, you always put the assertion into the mouth of somebody else. He “ is accused ” of so and so; it “ is pretended ” that he has done this and that; “ we impute ” such and such motives to him; “ the supposed ” views and conduct of Buonaparte. But, from the beginning to the end, not one bad act or bad motive do *you* impute to him. Leaving you, however, to hug yourself in the imaginary safety which conduct like this will provide for you, in case the worst should happen, let me ask you, Sir, where you have been able to discover those neutrals, whom, “ *by supporting them,* ” Buonaparte has “ converted into allies? ” And where have you found out those allies, so converted, whom he has “ *raised to importance?* ” Have you found them in Holland, in Prussia, at Hamburgh, in Switzerland, at Genoa, at Naples, in Portugal, in Spain? Good God! What an impudent assertion! and that, too, from a person, who quotes Scripture as glibly as a Methodist preacher, and who, therefore, ought to have remembered, that “ lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.” Austria, you tell us, was so indignant at our proceedings against Denmark, that “ she is said to have declared war against England.” This was very unfortunately chosen as one of the consequences of the expedition, seeing the fact is now notoriously false, though you might not be apprized of it. The correspondence between Prince Stahremberg and Mr. Canning fully proves, that the Emperor of Austria (poor man!) did not only not declare war on account of the Danish expedition; but that he has, since that event, been made the miserable instrument, in the hands of France, to propose an opening of a negotiation for peace between us and the latter power, in order to save that power the mortification of having made the proposition itself. Our ministers treated that proposition in the manner that it deserved. They did not sneak into a negotiation under beggarly pretences of “ attachment,” either to Napoleon or Mr. Talleyrand. They expressed their readiness to treat, but they would correspond upon the subject with no one but the enemy; and despised the trick of an invented assassin. You, however, are so fond of this invention, that in winding up your attack upon the Danish expedition, you once more bring the assassin on board, and that, too, in a manner which is worthy of particular notice. Having spoken of the principle, upon which the ministers, in their declaration, justified the Danish expedition, you proceed thus: “ The assertion of such a principle is the “ more unpardonable, in the British ministry, as they had before them “ the recent example of one of their predecessors, who, in rejecting the “ proposition made to him to assassinate the ruler of France, has placed “ *this important subject in the most striking point of view.* It was, indeed, *but too apparent,* from the observations to which this circumstance gave rise in the House of Commons, on the part of some of “ those who now direct the affairs of this country, that the conduct of “ Mr. Fox on that occasion was *beyond their comprehension,* and consequently *not likely to be the object of their imitation.* ” Why, no. The sham assassin had not succeeded in imposing upon any person of common sense, and, therefore, it was not likely that the trick would be imitated. But, you, Sir, who anticipate complaints against you upon the

score of partiality towards France, because you have used no harsh language towards her or her ruler ; you, who beg to be excused from joining in the abuse of Napoleon ; you, mild and modest gentleman, scruple not to accuse your political opponents of a disposition to employ assassins, if the occasion were to offer itself, though those opponents are the persons to whose hands the affairs of the country have been committed by the King, for whose person and authority you profess so much respect. " It was but too apparent, that they would not have imitated Mr. Fox." That is to say, that! it was but too apparent, that they would have accepted of, and rewarded, the services of the assassin. Now, what were the circumstances that made this so very apparent? Why, Mr. Perceval blamed the word " attachment," which Mr. Fox made use of in his letter to Talleyrand. That was all that was said about the assassin part of the correspondence ; and, as no one, whose heart is not made of the very basest materials, can, in my opinion, entertain any sincere " attachment " towards Talleyrand, I must, of course, believe that Mr. Fox was not sincere in his use of the word ; and, so believing, I also blame him for using the word. I am not speaking of personal affection. That was out of the question between Mr. Fox and Talleyrand. It must, if existing at all, have been an attachment from a similarity of thinking ; an attachment founded upon Talleyrand's character or conduct ; and, if Mr. Fox did entertain such attachment, I am sure he was unfit to be entrusted with the confidence of either the King or the people of England. And yet, according to you, Mr. Perceval's having expressed his disapprobation of this phrase is to be considered as a proof, that he and his colleagues would, if the occasion were to offer, hire an assassin to take the life of the Emperor of France. Here you are excessively bold ; here there are no marks of the meek, unoffending philanthropist. You are timid and tender-hearted only towards Napoleon and his allies. The poor King of Prussia you abuse without mercy ; the Prince Regent of Portugal you represent as "*persevering*" in his attachments hostile to France, " in spite of all remonstrances ;" the editors of the English press you call " interested and unprincipled individuals ;" and the ministers you clearly accuse of a disposition to employ assassins to take off their enemies. It is not, then, your want of the faculty of abuse ; it is nothing of mildness and moderation in your nature that disqualified you for joining in " recrimination against the French people and their ruler ;" but, the cause is to be sought for in your partiality for that people and their ruler, of which, indeed, you appear to have been conscious, when you were protesting, by anticipation, against such a charge. And, Sir, if it be glaringly inconsistent " in those who have been uniformly hostile to the " cause of rational liberty, and the constitutional rights of the subject in " this country, now to abuse the despotism of France," is it not equally inconsistent in you, who have been so loud in your professions in favour of liberty here, and who, with such unbounded joy, hailed the dawn of liberty in France, now to discover so decided a partiality for the despotism established there? You do not say, indeed, that you love that despotism ; but it is quite impossible that you can have any great aversion to it, otherwise you could not discover such cautious tenderness towards the person, who is known to be its founder. Not only do you discover a tenderness towards him ; but you miss no opportunity of bestowing your praises on him ; and, though all that you have said of him were true, instead of being, for the most part, false ; or, supposing

you to think it true, still, had you been a hater of despotism, at the bottom of your heart, you would have been more sparing of those praises. We are often struck with admiration at the bravery and hardihood of highwaymen. There were few persons who were not so stricken, upon reading the account of the man lately killed in the woods in Sussex, who had lived in those woods, in the dead of winter, many days and nights with scarcely any covering upon any part of his body, who, when hard pursued, and, at last, closely beset by a troop of horsemen, sunk himself under the water all but his head and one hand, there remaining, for several hours, keeping his fire-arms ready to discharge upon his pursuers, and who, when finally overpowered by numbers, rejected the offer to spare his life, and was killed in the act of defending himself to the very last extremity. There were few persons who could read this account without feelings of admiration; but, I will venture to say, that, in the thousands of conversations, to which it gave rise, there was not one, wherein detestation of the robber and the murderer was not almost the only feeling that was expressed. You, however, a philanthropist by trade, seem to be of a different taste. You are lavish in your praises of the valour, the skill, and the wisdom of Napoleon; upon all these topics you *speak for yourself*; but, when you have to speak of any of his misdeeds, though the fact be notorious, you take care to put the words *into the mouth of somebody else*; and, in all cases, where it is possible to make an Old-Bailey-like defence for him, that defence is made by you, with as much apparent earnestness and zeal, as if, at the several paragraphs of your pamphlet, you had received a refreshing fee. I do not mean to insinuate, that you have received, or that you expect, any fee at all; but, I think, the public will agree with me, that this conduct of yours is a pretty good proof, that you have no very deeply-rooted hatred to despotism, and that all your cry about liberty must be regarded as merely poetical.

I should here have proceeded to the concluding and most important subject treated of in your pamphlet, the main object of which might be dismissed in a few pages; but, there are so many misrepresentations and falsehoods to expose, as I proceed, that another letter will be necessary for the purpose.—In the meanwhile, I remain,

Yours, &c.

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 23rd Feb. 1808.

POSTSCRIPT. The following letter, Sir, it appears to me to be your duty to answer; for, again I beg you to believe, that this letter expresses the opinions of the public in general.

“ Sir, in your last, you have some pertinent remarks, respecting the assassin who offered to Mr. Fox to put Buonaparte to death. On this point both Mr. Fox and Mr. Roscoe attacked you, as instigating the assassination of Buonaparte, in saying, that, ‘ if you were a Frenchman, you would attack him by another instrument than a pen.’—The writer of this has heard, that a king’s messenger, a chief, or favourite, and well-informed person, did say, soon after the publication of the Negotiation Papers of Mr. Fox with France for peace, about a year ago, that no one ever could discover, that there was any such person as the one described by Mr. Fox; that he, the messenger, had inquired of all the other messengers, and that they had made every inquiry, but that no one could find that such a person had been in custody, and they were all persuaded that no such person ever appeared before Mr. Fox. Neither at the Alien Office could any account be found of such a person. It would, indeed, have been strange, if any such person had offered himself to Mr. Fox, after,

" the notoriety of Mr. Fox's abuse of those, whom he, by a strained construction, pretended had excited assassination.—Mr. Fox, I am persuaded, fabricated the story, in order to commence a correspondence with the French government for a negotiation for peace; and had he succeeded in making peace, and the fact been known, he would have been praised for his ingenuity, as he is now, by Mr. Roscoe, for his humanity. In either case, the trick was to tell to his advantage.—Mr. Fox was sworn Secretary of State, Feb. 7, 1806, and gazetted the 8th. On the 20th, he wrote the letter to Talleyrand about the assassin, saying 'a few days ago' the assassin came, &c. &c. Mr. Fox could not have been a week in office when the assassin addressed him; and it is singular, that during the half year he afterwards lived, though his conduct to this assassin was a *profound secret*, no other assassin offered his services. But, pray look at the letter! The assassin came to his *house*, not to the *office*, and was with Mr. Fox *alone* in his *closet*. He would not be in custody of a *police* officer, but a King's messenger, as it is such the Alien Office employ.—How far did Mr. Fox, by this step, reflect on the general character of the English government? And what becomes now, of Mr. Roscoe's half-dozen pages on Mr. Fox's humanity and morality? I repeat my belief, Sir, that the whole story was a pure fabrication; if it was not so, the contrary not only admits of *proof*; but of easy proof, unattended with any circumstance that can possibly be injurious to any one upon earth, not excepting the assassin himself, who seeing that he was so very lucky in escaping from France to England and from the justice which he ought to have had dealt him here, need, surely, not be afraid of any consequences which can result from the desirable and desired proof of his having been here. *Who* took him away? *Where* was he landed upon the continent? Why such squeamishness about keeping him here, until M. Talleyrand's answer was received? 'Our laws did not permit us to keep him long in prison.' No? They *have* permitted men to be kept a good while in prison, Mr. Cobbett, without any trial or examination.—Were I to state all the suspicious circumstances that present themselves to my mind, I should extend this letter to a length that might be inconvenient to you, and that certainly would be useless.—I am, Sir, your friend, and NO SHAM PHILANTHROPIST.—Feb. 22, 1808."

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## TO WILLIAM ROSCOE, ESQ.

### LETTER IV.

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SIR,—The part of your pamphlet, which remains to be examined, is, as you state, intended to show, that a peace with France, to be made as soon as possible, upon the terms before proposed by her, is absolutely necessary to the safety of England, and that "nothing but a political suicide, a total incapacity to meet the bounties of Providence and to improve its blessings, can induce us to hesitate for a moment, as to the course we ought to pursue." If you had, by any regular chain of reasoning, founded upon admitted, or notorious, facts, endeavoured to make the truth of these assertions apparent, it would have required but a short space wherein to answer you; but, you have mingled, or, rather, mashed up, so much of history and of other matter along with the argument which you employ, that, after much pains taken to pick out the latter from the former, I find myself obliged to follow you through thick and thin.

Amongst the fatal consequences of the Danish expedition, you mention our loss of all continental allies. "In every contest," say you, "that may henceforth take place between France and England, British courage alone must be employed, and British blood must flow. We are now effectually deprived of those powerful allies, who hitherto engaged

“ the attention of our enemies, and rendered the continent the theatre of “ war.” Sentiments of the same turn are expressed by you elsewhere, and, it must not be forgotten, that you set a high value upon Hanover (a thing which France has to offer us), and tell us, that, if we had but accepted of Napoleon’s terms of peace, we might have had our share of influence upon the continent. This is your language, and these are your sentiments, when you are endeavouring to impress your readers with an idea of the evils of the Danish expedition, and to induce them to believe, that the terms of peace, which were offered by France, were such as we ought to have accepted of. But, by-and-by you have to say something about continental connections, as considered with regard to the peace that may now be made; and then, it being your object to induce us to insist upon nothing that Buonaparte is likely to wish not to grant, your sentiments are quite altered; and you tell us, that you hope, that “ foreign subsidies will never again be adverted to, but to be execrated.” In another place, that, “ if, instead of *blindly aiming at continental influence and connections*, we duly estimate our own interests, importance, “ and security, we may regard all the efforts of France to rival us, as a “ maritime power, without dismay. The balance of power, that *chimerical source of war and bloodshed*, now exists not even in name. Let us attend “ more to ourselves and less to our neighbours.” All this would have been very well, if it had stood by itself; if it had not appeared in the same pamphlet with your affected lamentation at the fatal consequences of the Danish expedition, amongst which you number the *loss* of our “ powerful allies upon the continent,” which loss has left us, for our defence, “ British courage and British blood *alone*.” But, you had two purposes to answer, and but one matter to work upon. You wanted to persuade us that the Danish expedition had produced a fatal consequence to us; and you also wanted to persuade us, that leaving the whole of the continent with all its ports and arsenals, in the hands of Napoleon, would not be at all dangerous to us. To effect the former purpose, it was necessary to set a high value upon the aid we derived from continental connections; to effect the latter purpose, it was necessary to decry those connections, and to represent England as self-dependent for her safety. You wanted to blow both hot and cold, and, if you had (poor gentleman!) but one mouth, it was nature’s fault, and not yours.

But, we are now coming to a passage, at the penning of which you must certainly have invoked the genius of the great Talleyrand, and at the conclusion of which you must have bridled up your head, with a self-congratulatory smile, saying, “ There, pettifoggers, match that if you can.” It has been thought, and said, by many persons, that the French aim at the destruction of our constitution, liberties, and religion; and, as the destruction of them would naturally be included in the conquest of England, the French do, in my opinion, aim at that destruction. By way of combatting this opinion, you ask, “ At what period, since the revolution of France, has the French government *proposed* to us, that “ we should relinquish, or divest ourselves of, our constitution, liberties “ and religion?” To whom did you address this, Sir? Certainly you must have supposed, to the most base or the most stupid of mankind. You are a fit person, indeed, to complain of insults to the common sense and common feeling of the nation; you, who have the impudence coolly to desire us to believe, that the French do not wish to destroy us as an independent nation, *because* they never have made to us a formal proposi-

tion to give our consent to such destruction. Verily, if your verbal discourse be like your written, the rabble of Liverpool treated you with unaccountable forbearance. You proceed to tell us, that "neither in the negotiations of 1801, 1803, or 1806, do we find traces of any proposition on the part of France, which could infringe, in the slightest degree, upon the *independence*, the *interest*, or the *prosperity*, of this country." You may know, though I do not, how to distinguish between national "interest" and "prosperity," or you may, from your intimacy with John Doe and Richard Roe, think, that tautology is a beauty in composition; but, as to the substance of what you say, it is this, that, from the beginning to the end, France has not, in any of the three negotiations, *proposed any one thing*, to which we had any solid ground of objection; an assertion, which, from my soul, I believe, Arthur O'Connor himself would not, for his character's sake, venture to make in the face of the world. You appear to be aware of an exception that even your political friends (if you have any) might wish you to have made with respect to the propositions, made through Andreossi, relative to the press, and the speeches in parliament; but, say you, "even the complaints made by the French ruler against the *licentiousness* of the British press were abandoned, and eventually formed no part of the discussions;" though you had, before, taken infinite pains to inculcate a belief, that the present war arose *wholly* from the publications in England against Buonaparte; that "it was instigated by a few interested and unprincipled individuals;" that "it is *demonstrated*, that the disagreement arose from publications in this country." But, here again, niggardly nature has refused you the two mouths. When you wanted to cause it to be believed, that England began the war without any reasonable cause, and that there existed, in reality, no grounds of hostility, and no grounds of alarm as to the designs of Buonaparte, then it was necessary for you to find out *the real cause of the war*, and that cause was, the offence which Buonaparte took at the publications in England; but *now*, when your object is to persuade us, that your great friend (I must call him so, however it may shock your modesty) has not the least desire to do any thing that can, "in the slightest degree, infringe upon the independence of England," you find it necessary to speak very lightly of the complaint about our "licentious press," and to tell us, that, before the war broke out, those complaints were abandoned, and, at last, "formed no part of the discussions:" in other words, that the publications from the press were *not* the cause of the war, and that what you have before asserted, upon that subject, was a wilful falsehood.

Barefaced and disgusting as these contradictions are, however, they are quite equalled by some which are yet to be noticed. You tell us, that the cause of war now alleged is, that "if peace were once established, it would enable France to *create a marine*, by which she might "overpower the British navy and subjugate the country." These words you insert as a *quotation*, but *without reference*, for a reason best known to yourself. No, Sir; this also is false. It is not thus, that the objectors to peace express themselves; for this would be to declare for "*perpetual war*," a declaration, which, with your usual attention to truth, you have ascribed to us. We say, or, I do, at least, that, if we were now to make peace with Napoleon, leaving him in possession of all the ports and naval arsenals upon the continent, and without making any stipulation to prevent the creation of a marine, that he would, in a very few years of



peace, create a navy sufficient to overpower us ; and, that, therefore, we ought to keep on the war, till we can obtain the separating of some of the maritime states from him, or a stipulation such as I have mentioned ; because, in the case of a peace, now made, without such stipulation, we could not dismantle a ship or disband a regiment ; that the expenses of peace would be equal to the expenses of war, and the danger infinitely greater ; that he would obtain repose, and that we should receive an augmentation of inquietude ; that he, never having any apprehensions of us, would have leisure to mature his maritime projects, while our navy must from the very nature of its constitution become, day after day, in a state less formidable than it now is. This is what I have, over and over again, stated ; and, if you had taken this statement, you would have had *something to answer*. But, now, let us hear what you say in order to convince us of the absurdity of the alarm arising from the notion, that peace, now made, upon the terms proposed by France, will enable Napoleon to create a marine. You tell us, that France is, by nature, not a naval power ; that, in the most prosperous days of her navy, she was unable to cope with the fleets of Holland ; that those persons are almost insane, who seem to imagine, that, because Buonaparte has been so successful by land he must, if he turn his attention that way, be equally successful by sea ; and that, therefore, we may safely make peace, leaving dreams of alarm to the unmanly creatures who entertain them. But, lest your powers of *soothing* should fail, you, a little further on, try the effect of threats, and tell us, that, if we will not make peace, then Buonaparte may, and, in all likelihood, will, beat us by sea. You say, that, in the commencement of the French revolution, France was not military ; that the attacks made upon her made her military ; that, if she had been left *quiet*, she would not have become formidable to her neighbours ; that she was compelled, in her defence, to take a government purely military ; that, “ *in like manner,*” France is not now a naval power (though she has been “ *attacked*” by a navy for many years), and, if left in a state of *tranquillity* would not be at all likely to attempt it ; but, “ *if compelled*” to assume it, if *threatened* with perpetual war, if *harassed* from year to year by protracted hostilities ; if compelled to become naval for her own *safety* ; then it is impossible to say that the same spirit which has been manifested by land may not be excited by sea, an event greatly to be dreaded, and the more to be apprehended, as she is now associated, in the *same cause*, with almost every maritime state in Europe.” Poor, injured, “ *harassed*” France, “ *compelled*” to become naval for her own “ *safety* !” Never was there any thing uttered so devoid of principle as this. I defy the Old Bailey to produce such an advocate. And so, Sir, you wish to tame us as they do elephants ; stroke us with one hand, and cudgel us with the other ? When it is your purpose to soothe us into peace, we are told that it is a mark of insanity to suppose that France can ever rival the naval power of England ; but, when you take up the cudgel, we are warned to take care how we provoke her to become a naval power. While the former scheme is in your mind, you tell us, that France, even in the best days of her navy, was unable to cope with Holland, quite forgetting to tell us that Holland *now* makes part of France ; but, when you come again to your cudgelling operations, you do not forget this circumstance, but remind us that almost every maritime state in Europe is now under the absolute control of France, or, as you, with your accustomed candour, choose to express it, “ *associated* with her in the

same cause." But, Sir, as to your argument, there is a little deficiency in point of analogy, to which, in your next edition, it may not be amiss for you to attend. Give me leave to place it before you in as clear a light as I can. France (*you say*), at the beginning of her revolution, was not military (*false in fact*); the attack upon her made her not only military but a military conqueror, and that because "the nations of the continent became her instructors in military tactics." France (*you say*) is not now naval; but a perseverance in a naval war, on our part, will, or at least may, *as in the other case*, make her not only naval, but a naval conqueror. No, Sir; and if you have deceived yourself by this sort of logic, your brain is of that kind which Swift describes as not capable of bearing many scummings. You quite overlook the want of similarity in the circumstances. It was (*taking your fact for granted*), at the *beginning* of her war that she was not military; but it is at the *end* of fifteen years of war that she is not naval, though the war has, all along, been naval as well as military, as the total destruction of her fleet, old as well as new, is, to her, at least, a convincing proof. For your argument to have been worth any thing, as applied to the purpose which you had in view, there should have been *no naval war* all this time; or, you should have been able to say, that France was destitute of a navy in 1792, and that now, in consequence of our "attack" upon her, she had drilled herself into a formidable naval power. "The nations of Europe," you tell us, have been her *instructors* in military affairs," and you express your fear, that, unless we make peace, we shall, in like manner, "*become her instructors in naval affairs.*" Become! Now, really, Sir, I must charge you, in your capacity of pleader for France, as being very ungrateful; for, have we not been endeavouring to instruct her these fifteen long years, in all sorts of naval affairs, in battles of all sizes, and in all parts of the world, not forgetting to give, as it were purely for her sake, here and there a lesson to her allies, even unto those nations, who "are now *associated with her in the same cause*" (*say good cause in your next edition, to make the thing complete*); and, if they have, not one of them, profited from our instructions, in all that time, what reason is there to suppose, that they will begin now to profit from them? This is your main argument; upon this argument you ring all the changes; and in this argument, which is one of experience, you are completely beaten, fifteen years of experience having proved, that, *in war*, France, though having for her principal object, the destruction of England constantly in view, and though having at her command almost all the naval force of the continent of Europe, has been daily sinking as a maritime state; and, yet you would fain make us believe, that the only way to prevent her from becoming formidable at sea is *to make peace* with her, and that, too, upon terms, which shall leave her in quiet possession of all the means which the continent affords for the creation of a navy. Your proposition, stripped of all its useless words, and connected with undeniable fact, is this: The only danger which we have to apprehend from the hostility of France, is, that she may create a naval force; she has now, and has had for some years, almost the whole of the naval means of the continent at her disposal; we have been at war with her for fifteen years, and she has been daily sinking in naval power; *therefore*, in order to prevent her from rising in naval power, let us make peace with her as soon as possible, and insist upon no stipulation that shall prevent her from making use of the absence of our naval force for the creating of a naval force of

her own. This is, disguise it how you will, the advice which you give to your country; advice which no man would give, who was not the enemy of his country, or, at least, who, from want of real patriotism, had not suffered his spite against his party opponents to get the better of every higher consideration.

You admit, Sir, for argument's sake, that France would, in case of peace, increase her navy so as to threaten the independence of England; and, under this admission, you ask, "What is our remedy against it?" "The answer," you continue, "is ready from the whole tribe of alarmists: PERPETUAL WAR. This is the avowed object of all their exertions, the sole preservative against their terrors. Continually haunted in imagination by the spectre, Buonaparte, they cannot sleep in peace, unless the blood of their fellow subjects be daily and hourly flowing in their defence, in every part of the world." For malignant aspersions there is nothing like a philanthropist by trade; but, Sir, while you were drawing such a hateful picture of the cowardice of others, you certainly forgot those symptoms of unfeigned fear, which you exhibited at Liverpool, where you retreated at the very sound of the voice of your opponents, crying, if we are to believe the published reports, like a stout Italian, when a little blackguard of a dozen years old has given a hoist to his board of brittle images; you must have forgotten this, or you would have shown some compassion for the cowardice of us, who are, at least, your countrymen. But, Sir, where is it that you have to refer to what you have here given as the answer of those whom you (brave man!) term the alarmists? *Who has ever said*, that "perpetual war is the object of his exertions, and the sole preservative" against the dangers which he apprehends? I believe, that no one has ever said it, in print or out of print. But, I will tell you what we say: we say, that a war to last until our grand-children are fathers of families; that a war for a hundred years to come, would be preferable to the subjugation of our country by France; and, preferable, too, to a peace, which, in our opinion, would speedily lead to such subjugation. Whether the sort of peace which you recommend would have this effect, is a question which has before been discussed by me, and which I shall not discuss again here; but, that you feel conscious of the badness of your cause is pretty evident from your having recourse to such flagrant misrepresentations as that which I have just noticed. Perhaps, however, it is in the way of induction that you have made this statement of our sentiments. We insist, that perpetual war is preferable to subjugation by France; we insist that perpetual war is preferable to such a peace as would speedily lead to subjugation; we say what sort of peace we should think preferable to war; you are, I suppose, of opinion, that we shall get no such peace as this latter; and, hence you conclude, that we are for perpetual war, which, in this way, you take us to have openly avowed, as the sole preventive for the evil which we dread. But, observe, you take it for granted (for argument's sake) that our apprehensions are well founded, as to the means that it would put into the hands of our enemy; and how do you console us? Why, by telling us, first, that we have not the power, by continuing the war, to prevent the operation of those means; but, next, that the "immense preparations for subduing us are *not* the voluntary act of our enemy, who has, *probably*, other objects in view, but are forced upon him by the persevering hostility of this country, and the declared purpose of waging against him perpetual war; or, in other

“ words, of contending with him, till one of the two countries be destroyed as a nation and subjugated to the will of the other.” It is useless to repeat the accusation of falsehood, so often before proved upon you ; it is useless to express one’s contempt of your misrepresentations ; but, it is still more useless to ask you where you have ever seen such a declaration on the part of England against France. You do, indeed, quote a passage from the author of *War in Disguise* : “ He (Buonaparte) says “ there is room enough in the world for him and us. ’Tis false ; there “ is not room enough in it for his new despotism and the liberties of “ England.” Whereupon you, like a true pettifogger, ask : “ How did, “ then, the liberties of England exist so long in the same world with the “ *ancient government* of France ? Or, why were Mr. Pitt and his friends “ so anxious to establish that government ?” What a miserable quibble ! Is it not evident, that the author of *War in Disguise* was not talking about the *internal* despotism of Buonaparte ? Is it not manifest that he was speaking of his *universal* despotism, and particularly of the effect of his power over the maritime states of the world, to induce England to set about counteracting the effect of which power was the avowed object of the pamphlet in question ? A man who can be guilty of such glaring misconstruction ; who can wilfully expose himself to the imputation of ignorance, rather than forego the advantage to be derived from falsehood, is well worthy of being the advocate of the cause you have espoused ; but, he might, methinks, have spared us his moral reflections and his references to holy writ. There is, indeed, one way, in which we may be said to *force* Buonaparte to make vast preparations for invading us, namely, in *refusing to put on his yoke quietly.* “ It is the *second* blow that makes the battle,” say the Quakers ; and, as towards the Emperor Napoleon, you, Sir, appear to be a perfect “ Friend.” The refusal of the Prince of Portugal to make a fraudulent seizure of English property, held under the sanction of the law, you term a “ *persevering*, after repeated remonstrances, in the maintaining of alliances supposed to be injurious to a “ belligerent and successful power ;” and our conduct you describe by the words “ *persevering* hostility :” that is to say, that by our persevering in a refusal to submit to Napoleon’s terms, we *force* him to make vast preparations for invading and conquering us. “ Under *such* circumstances,” you proceed, “ there can be no doubt that every effort will be made by him for the invasion of these islands.” And then you go on again with your threats. But, Sir, why do you not address yourself to *him* ? Since you find us so “ *persevering* ;” so mulishly obstinate in our reluctance to put our heads into the yoke, why do you not ask him to think of some terms of peace that we shall look upon as safe ? This is a way of putting an end to the war, that has not, it would seem, come athwart your mind ; and yet, there appears to be nothing unnatural in the idea ; unless, indeed, you regard it as the height of presumption in us to think of any terms not strictly conformable to the dictates of his promulgated will. In that case your conduct is consistent, whatever people may think of you as a legislator and a patriot.

suspecting, apparently, that the infallibility of your own judgment may be doubted by some few persons, at least, you appeal for a presumptive proof of the inoffensiveness of the views of France, to the opinions of the several sets of ministers, under whom negotiations have been carried on with her for the termination of war. You tell us, that Lord Sidmouth and his colleagues, in 1801 ; that the same ministry, in 1803 ; that Lord

Grenville and Mr. Fox, in 1806; perceived no such objections to a pacification as the fears of the alarmists have now discovered; and that even the present ministers "have acknowledged, in the face of Europe, that there was no substantial cause for hostility between France and this country, either from apprehensions of this, or of any other, nature; but, that the war was continued on account of Russia *only*, and that his Majesty was contending *for interests not his own*." This falsehood I have exposed once before; but, in this place, it is stated still more distinctly, and, therefore, shall again be pointed out. The words of the declaration were, that "the negotiation was *broken off* upon points, *immediately* affecting, not his Majesty's own interests, but those of his imperial ally." Now, was this a declaration, in the face of Europe, that his Majesty, in continuing the war, was "contending for interests not his own?" And, that "there was *no substantial cause* for war between England and France, but that the war was continued on account of Russia *only*?" What an impudent misconstruction! What a scandalous attempt to mislead the uninformed! Besides, what was this famous negotiation of 1806? To hear you, Sir, would not any one suppose, that it was a negotiation, just upon the point of ending in a treaty of peace, when some demand of ours in favour of Russia came, unfortunately, and broke all off again? To hear you, who would not imagine that this was the case? But, the fact is, as the fact pretty generally is with respect to your representations, completely the reverse; for this promising negotiation, instead of being upon the point of ripening into a treaty of peace, had scarcely begun to show blossom, when it was blasted by a dispute about the *basis*, that is to say, about the foundation upon which the negotiators should *begin to talk about terms*. The negotiation, in truth, never really began, it never existed; and we call the silly thing, which was going on in 1806, a *negotiation*, only because we have no word whereby to characterize it. Yet you speak, all along, of the negotiation as an affair of great importance; you speak of the parties as being *agreed as to terms*; and you express your approbation of those terms, as well you may, for they are the dear offspring of your own prolific brain. Such a way of representing transactions, may do very well for the Lives of Lorenzo de' Medici and Pope Leo the Tenth; but with regard to transactions of yesterday a little more fidelity is required. The several sets of ministers, to whose opinions you have appealed against "the alarmists," all bear witness against you. In 1801, Lord Sidmouth and his colleagues expressly declared, that they had made peace "by way of *experiment*," and accompanied this declaration with another, that a large peace establishment would be necessary, in order to keep us upon our guard against probable dangers; which declaration, as you well know, was complained of by Buonaparte. In 1803, the same ministers declared, that we were at war with Buonaparte, *because we could not live in peace with him*; and they repeatedly stated their suspicions of his hostile designs even during the short interval of peace. After breaking off the negotiation of 1806, the late ministry solemnly declared, "that the restoration of the general tranquillity was retarded only by the *injustice and ambition of the enemy*." These are excellent authorities for you to appeal to in corroboration of your opinion, that the views of France are just and moderate; that, the manner in which the last negotiation was put an end to is a proof, that there is now no rational object in continu-

ing the war, and a ground whereon for the people to proceed in petitioning the King to hasten negotiations for peace.

Thus, Sir, have I had the patience to go through the whole of your pamphlet; and, I must say, that so much misrepresentation, misconstruction, and falsehood, accompanied with so little truth and sound reasoning; so much assurance with so little candour; so much malice with so little wit; so much profession of morality and religion with so little of the practice of either, I never before met with in any one of the hundreds of political publications whereon it has fallen to my lot to remark. You appear to me not only to have laid aside, or set at nought, that conscience, of which you speak so feelingly in your preface, but also to have been so infatuated as to suppose that there was not, in the whole English nation, one single person capable of detecting your miserable attempts at deception. As to your partiality for France, which is too glaring to be denied, I do not impute it to a desire on your part to see that country conquer your own. You do not proceed that length in your wishes. That is a state of things, which, indeed, you do not at all contemplate. You have a liking for the rulers of France, partly because they are the enemies, not of your country, but of the politicians you hate in your country; and partly, I am afraid, because they are triumphant. You owe the French rulers a grudge and the French people too, for having, by their actions as well as their solemn declarations, so completely belied your opinions and predictions; but, you have not the courage to acknowledge your error, and you therefore still have an attachment to them, while you throw the blame upon the powers by whom they were, as you call it, attacked. Your excuse is, that they were compelled to adopt a simple military despotism in their own defence, forgetting, apparently, what is notorious to all the world, namely, that, it was not till after they were out of danger, nay, after they had brought their enemies to their feet, and trampled them under their feet, that they adopted a simple military despotism. This you must know as well as the rest of mankind; you must be satisfied, that the French are, by nature, disqualified for the enjoyment of what we call freedom; that their minds are as much averse from entertaining the idea as oil is averse from mixing with water; that, in short, a Napoleon, or some such master, they not only must have, but will have from choice. All this you must now clearly perceive; you must, in your heart, despise the French for it; but, the worst of it is, that, take away the French as objects of your admiration and applause, and your soured temper leaves you no object at all, which is a state of existence too dreary for any man to endure. There is another feature in your pamphlet, which I dislike; and that is, that you never, by any accident, suggest a saving of the public money, though one would think that it must have occurred to you, as being likely to contribute towards the lightening of those burdens, of the weight of which you fear the fatal consequences. The vile jobbing of the ministers; their greediness; their uniform propensity to screen speculators; their waste of the public money, in all manner of ways; none of this do you blame. You hate them only as bitter enemies of the French, and, in that light only it is that I view them with approbation. The late ministers were full as bad as the present, as to the management of the public money; and, they were, besides, very cold indeed in their feelings for the honour of the country. These present ministers have done more for

the maintenance of that honour than has been done before, since the year 1792; and for this reason I prefer them. You would prefer them too, if you were not actuated by feelings of revenge, joined to your partiality for France; and, at any rate, if they have nothing more formidable than your pen to resist, they are secure in their places for life; for, the effect of every word, which you utter against them, is totally destroyed by your evident partiality towards your country's enemies. You hate your dog for devouring your eatables, but when you perceive that others hate your dog *because* he keeps the thieves from breaking into your house, you not only keep him, but your resentment against him is a good deal softened by the discovery; and do you not think that the nation will be actuated by similar motives?

I am, Sir, yours, &c. &c.

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 1st March, 1808.

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## “ PERISH COMMERCE.”

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NOTE BY THE EDITORS.—The reader will find the origin of the phrase, “*Perish Commerce*,” explained at page 17 of this volume. In the following articles a good deal is said as to the comparative importance of *commerce* and *agriculture*. Before and at the time when Mr. COBBETT wrote these articles, there was the same kind of variety in opinion existing as that which we now (1836) hear expressed by some of the leading men of our day. Mr. BURKE called “the agriculture of the kingdom the first of all its concerns, and the foundation of all its prosperity in every other matter by which that prosperity is produced.” (*Thoughts on Scarcity*, Vol. vii. p. 381, Edit. a 1815). See, also, Mr. JEFFERSON's arguments against manufactures and in favour of agriculture (*Life of Jefferson*, Vol. i. p. 291), and see *Query 19*, in his *Notes on Virginia* (quoted, Vol. i. p. 52, of these *Selections*). Yet the *Courier*, representing the views of the monied men of 1806, observes, that “to nothing is this nation so much indebted for its greatness as to its commercial system. Every commercial nation in the world has been powerful as well as rich. There never was a commercial nation in the world the twentieth part so powerful or so rich as England now is; nor was there ever one the twentieth part so formidable as a *military state*.” (See this Volume, p. 18.) The newspaper press of the present day (1835-6) exactly agrees with the *Courier* of 1806. The *Morning Chronicle* and the *Times*, though at daggers drawn on party questions, cordially pull together in favouring our “commercial system” against the “landed interest.” Thus we now find these two answering the complaints of the landlords and farmers by telling them to give up their luxuries, to stop the fingers at the piano, and turn those fingers to the butter-churn, and to put an end to circulating libraries, novel-reading, &c. (*Morning Chronicle*, Nov. 18, and *Times*, Nov. 19, 1835.) Then, again, it is curious to observe that portion of the press which has to keep in with both parties, to protect the interest, not only of the landed aristocracy, but also of the class in which we see country gentleman and Jew combined. The *Morning Post* reproaches the *Times* for going so far against the land, and asks (Nov. 20, 1835) what right those in *trade* have to the *refinements of civilization* more than the *farmers* have?—A recent debate in the House of Commons shows us what are the notions now entertained by the “economists.” On the 27th April, 1836, the Marquis of CHANDOS moved a resolution for “relief to the agricultural interest.” On a division, there were 172 for and 208 against the resolution. The speech of Mr. HUME upon this occasion is well worthy of note, and we cannot help recording a portion of it in this place. The hon. Member began by saying that “he was anxious to take an opportunity of showing that the agricultural, although they might have equal, had no superior claims to the other interests

"of the country. When the subject came to be fully discussed he should be prepared to show that the agricultural interest paid no more than their fair share of the general taxation." Mr. HUME then went on to say, that "there was not a single tax bearing heavily upon them which had not been taken off in consequence of their influence in that house. The *Poor-Law Act* had relieved them from the burden of a large portion of poor's-rates. He highly approved of *that measure*; but it was certain that while it improved the condition of the *great body of the people*, it relieved the landed interest to the amount of a million and a half." Then, Mr. HUME "adverted to the absurdities which had emanated from several agricultural meetings, and more especially to the attacks which had been made at those meetings upon the *great capitalists of the country*," and went on to say:—"To the capital of England, England owed her prosperity. *Attack capital! Lucky was it for us that we were not all spend-thrifts,—that there was some accumulation. It was that which enabled us to hold our heads highly in the world.* For his part he should heartily rejoice at agricultural prosperity; but, if the agriculturists sought that prosperity at the expense of their neighbours and the community, he felt it to be impossible to concur in their views. The Honourable Gentleman then entered into a variety of calculations, founded on the population returns and the average prices of grain, to show that since the year 1829 the agriculturists of England had derived at least an equal share of advantage with the other classes of the community, by the general reduction of taxation. *He maintained that too much stress was laid upon the supposed importance of the landed interest. Landed proprietors imagined that the country could not do without them; the fact was, that they could not do without the country.* (A laugh.) *For his own part, he believed that if in this country we did not grow a single grain of wheat, of oats, of barley, or of rye, England would still be as great and as flourishing as it was at present.* (Oh!) *The greatness and wealth of the country depended upon its manufactures.* (Hear!) *In the cotton manufacture alone, there was constantly employed a mass of capital amounting to not less than 34,000,000*l.*; and of the whole produce of this enormous manufacture, the agriculturists consumed only one-thirtieth. The rest was exported or consumed by other classes of the community.*" The *Morning Chronicle* (of April 28) compliments Sir ROBERT PEEL for the part he took upon this occasion, and treats the noble mover with the utmost contempt. Sir ROBERT's leaning towards the "great capitalists of the country" is called "the most interesting feature in the whole business," and a "manly and prudent course;" while "the poor Marquis" is compared to "a yelping fool of a hound that had lost the scent." Though we cannot presume here to offer any thing in refutation of the wild theories laid down in Mr. HUME's speech, we may remark, that the admirers of that gentleman's "economy," and the readers of the *Chronicle's* compliments to Sir ROBERT PEEL, should take care how they let themselves be carried away by the idea of our "*holding our heads highly in the world.*" When Mr. HUME made this boast, he could hardly have forgotten those anxious, and begging, and beseeching articles of the *Chronicle*, on a late occasion, when there was reason to expect a war between France and America. (See *Morning Chronicle*, Nov. 20, Dec. 31, 1835; Jan. 1, 1836, and intervening numbers.) It is true, that our "economists" declared that England would benefit by the war; but they were kneeling for peace when declaring this. And how can the *Chronicle* claim so much credit for Sir ROBERT PEEL's "lashing" of the Marquis of CHANDOS, if it do not forget the appeal in vain to that same "manly and prudent" statesman which was made, but a short time since, by Lord DUDLEY STUART. "I trust," said Lord DUDLEY STUART, "that the Right Hon. Baronet, the Member for Tamworth (Sir R. PEEL), whose opinion has so deservedly so much weight in the country, that the Noble Lord, the Member for Lancashire (Lord STANLEY), will not shrink from declaring their opinions "on this important subject." (*Speech on the Policy of Russia*, Feb. 19, 1836, published by Ridgway.) In this speech the Whigs are charged with being "blotted" and "stained," and the country is charged with "disgraceful pusillanimity;" and, yet, "manly" as Sir ROBERT PEEL might be, he was, by the *Chronicle's* report, too "prudent," when thus called upon, to venture out with his weighty opinion.

The motto, which I have chosen for this sheet\*, will supply the place

\* The two words, Perish Commerce, were the motto.—Ed.



of a title to the article, upon which I am now entering, and which, I foresee, will be the only one, that I shall find room for in the present number.

The event, just happened in Portugal, has completed Napoleon's round of coast, and our set of enemies. I always thought what the *expatriation* project would come to; and I am very far from pitying any of those who have been deceived by it; for, none but sheer fools ever gave credit to it, and none but sheer knaves ever pretended to give credit to it. The Prince Regent has outwitted the wiseacres. He has given proof that *all* the cunning is not possessed by either the English or the Hanoverians. He has played a clever trick; and, I dare say, he will obtain a comfortable settlement for it, which is, probably, all that he desires. The cares of government will be taken off his hands; he will have as much to eat and drink as he had before; he will have as good a bed to sleep upon; as good, or at least, very good, horses to draw him about; he will, in short, have all the *enjoyments* that he had before, without any of their concomitant vexations. Really a very happy change; a change to which many other persons would, in all probability, have very little objection, except, perhaps, as it might deprive them of the privilege of being dishonest, profligate, insolent, and tyrannical with impunity. The Prince Regent has seen what befel *other* sovereigns, who fled from their dominions; and, from their example, he wisely concluded, that it was impossible for him to be worse off at home than abroad. He did not determine, indeed, precisely as *we* could have wished; but, we are always falling into the error, that what is for *our interest* ought to be adopted by every power in the world.

It is, however, useless to waste our time in reflections of this sort. The thing is done; our ancient ally, her most faithful Majesty, is become our enemy; and all the coast of Europe, from Petersburg to Constantinople, both inclusive, contains not one port friendly to English commerce.

It is to me evident enough, that, in spite of all Napoleon's decrees, we shall still find an outlet for more of our manufactures than I think it good to export; but, there can be no doubt, that the affairs of commerce will experience great annoyance; that, in fact, there will be a great diminution in those gains, to which commercial men, generally speaking, have long been accustomed; and that, as a natural consequence, the profession of the merchant and manufacturer will become of less importance than, for many years heretofore, it has been. We may, indeed, now say, that commerce will "perish;" so that, what was regarded as a most impious wish in Mr. Windham is about to be realized; and, the good of it is, that we find those who abused him most (and that, too, for a wish that he did *not* utter) are now beginning to tell us, that we may see the wish accomplished without much dread.

The public will remember how often I have been reproached for speaking irreverently of Sir Baalam; and what curses the sons of Baalam bestowed upon me, when I told him that "the *soldier* was abroad," and would, before he returned home and laid up his sword, have his share of the good things of the world. Baalam was in a rage at the prediction; but, he will see it verified; and, what is more, he will find nobody to pity him. Pitt is gone; commerce, as the foundation of a system of

politics, will soon follow him, and, let us hope that Englishmen will once more see their country something like what it formerly was.

I know, that there are many persons, very worthy persons, too who are somewhat shocked at this satisfaction, which I express at the prospect of a diminished commerce, which satisfaction they attribute to some spite that I entertain against commercial men. But, so far from entertaining any such spite, I owe great good-will to *all* the commercial men that I am personally acquainted with; and, though I am convinced, that commerce has been the great cause of our national decline, I attribute no blame to those engaged in commerce, the carrying on of which is, as to the persons concerned in it, just as laudable as the sowing of corn or the planting of trees. It is the *thing* that I dislike, and, if it has gained an undue pre-eminence, the fault has been solely with the government. There is one light, indeed, in which I have viewed commercial men with an evil eye; and that is, as the constant supporters and applauders of Pitt, whom I regard as the author of all the evils that we suffer and that we dread, and whose supporters, therefore, it is impossible for me to like.

My satisfaction at the prospect of a great diminution in our commerce arises from a conviction, long entertained, that such a diminution would be a great benefit to the country. This appears to be the time to obtain a patient hearing upon this important subject; and, therefore, I shall resume my extracts from Mr. SPENCE's pamphlet, accompanied by such remarks as appear to me likely to be of use in producing a general conviction of the soundness of our doctrine. Before I proceed any further, however, I must beseech the reader to bestow a *patient* perusal upon these interesting extracts, and not hurry them over in a superficial way, which can be attended with no benefit whatever. This is a subject that requires *thinking*. Mr. Spence's pamphlet is the result of long and profound thinking, and it is not to be read like one of Pitt's speeches or Lord Wellesley's letters, that is to say, with a continual anxiety to come at the end.

" In this country, where commerce has been carried to a greater extent than  
 " in any other country of the same size, it is the opinion of almost all its  
 " inhabitants, that its wealth, its greatness, and its prosperity, have been  
 " chiefly derived from its commerce; and, that these advantages can be con-  
 " tinued, and increased, only by its continuance and extension. That these  
 " opinions, as far as they respect this country, are founded in truth, I cannot  
 " bring myself to believe, and I proceed to state the grounds of my conviction of  
 " their fallacy. As all commerce naturally divides itself into commerce of  
 " import and export, I shall in the first place, endeavour to prove, that no  
 " riches, no increase of national wealth, can in any case be derived from com-  
 " merce of import; and, in the next place, that although national wealth may,  
 " in some cases, be derived from commerce of export, yet, that Britain, in con-  
 " sequence of particular circumstances, has not derived, nor does derive, from  
 " this branch of commerce, any portion of her national wealth; and, con-  
 " sequently, that her riches, her prosperity, and her power are intrinsic, derived  
 " from her own resources, independent of commerce, and might, and will exist,  
 " even though her trade should be annihilated. These positions, untenable as at  
 " first glance they may seem, I do not fear being able to establish to the satis-  
 " faction of those, who will dismiss from their mind the deep-rooted prejudices  
 " with which, on this subject, they are warped; and who, no longer contented  
 " with examining the mere surface of things, shall determine to penetrate  
 " through every stratum of the mine which conceals the grand truths of political  
 " economy.

" Every one must allow, that for whatever a nation purchases in a foreign

" market, it gives an adequate value, either in money or in other goods; so far,  
 " then, certainly, it gains no profit nor addition to its wealth. It has changed  
 " one sort of wealth for another, but it has not increased the amount it was  
 " before possessed of. Thus, when the East India Company has exchanged a  
 " quantity of bullion with the Chinese for tea, no one will say, that this mere  
 " exchange is any increase of national wealth. We have gained a quantity of  
 " tea, but we have parted with an equal value of gold and silver; and if this  
 " tea were sold at home for exactly the same sum as had been given for it, it  
 " would be allowed, on all hands, that no wealth had accrued to the nation from  
 " this transfer. But, because goods, bought at a foreign market, and sold at  
 " home, have their value considerably augmented by the charge of transporting  
 " them, the duty paid to government, the profit of the merchant, importer, &c.,  
 " it is contended, by the disciples of the mercantile system, that this increased  
 " value is so much profit to the nation; so much addition to the amount of  
 " national wealth. Thus, a quantity of tea, say they, which has cost in China  
 " 1000*l.* will, by the charges and profits which have occurred upon it, previous  
 " to its exposure for sale in England, have its value augmented to 1500*l.* and  
 " will be sold for that sum at home. Since, then, the tea cost but 1000*l.*, and  
 " it has been sold for 1500*l.*, is not this 500*l.* an addition to national wealth? To  
 " this question, I answer, no; certainly not. There is no doubt, but the persons  
 " concerned in this transaction have gained a profit, and have added to their  
 " individual wealth. The ship-owner has added to his wealth, by the freight of  
 " the tea; the under-writer by his premiums of insurance upon it; the govern-  
 " ment has increased the revenue by the duties of customs and excise; and the  
 " East India Company has augmented its dividend by the profit gained upon  
 " this article. But, the question is, from whence have these profits of the  
 " ship-owner, the underwriter, the government, and the East India Company  
 " been derived? Have they not been drawn from the consumers of this tea; and  
 " is it not as clear as noonday, that whatever the former have gained, the latter  
 " have lost: that the latter are exactly poorer in proportion as the former are  
 " richer; and, in short, that a transfer, not a creation, of wealth has taken  
 " place. If this tea had been sold for 1000*l.*, the bare sum which it cost, would  
 " the nation have been poorer, than if it were sold for 1500*l.*? Certainly not.  
 " In this case, the consumers of the tea would have kept in their pockets the  
 " 500*l.*, which, on the other supposition, they transferred to the pockets of the  
 " ship-owner, the insurer, &c.; but the national wealth would be neither  
 " increased nor diminished.

" The same reasoning is applicable to all commerce of import. In every case,  
 " the value of an article is what it has cost in the foreign market, and whatever  
 " it is sold for, more than this, is a transfer of wealth from the consumers of the  
 " article to those who gain a profit by it, but in no instance is there any addition  
 " to national wealth created by this branch of commerce. A gamester, who is  
 " not worth sixpence to-night, may, by to-morrow, be possessed of 30,000*l.*  
 " which he has won from the dupes of his knavery; but who would not laugh  
 " at him, that should imagine this transfer of individual fortune an accession of  
 " national wealth? Yet this opinion might, with every whit as much justice, be  
 " maintained, as that the honourable profit of those concerned in importing  
 " articles of merchandise is a creation of national riches.

" The arguments made use of to show, that no national wealth is derived from  
 " commerce of import, will serve also to show the absurdity of their notions who  
 " talk of the importance of such and such branches of commerce, because of the  
 " great duties which are levied on them at the Custom-house or Excise-office.  
 " Such reasoners will insist upon the vast value of our East India trade, because  
 " of the three or four millions which the public revenue derives from the duties  
 " imposed on the articles imported from thence. They do not consider, that all  
 " such duties are finally paid by the consumers of the articles on which they are  
 " laid, and that these consumers are equally able to pay the sums they advance,  
 " whether or not they consume the articles on which they are levied.—Thus, an  
 " individual who annually consumes 10*l.* worth of tea, contributes to the  
 " revenue 4*l.*;—but, surely, it is not essential to his capacity of contributing  
 " this sum, that he should consume a certain quantity of tea yearly. Since he  
 " possesses funds adequate to the payment of 10*l.* for tea, if no duty were  
 " charged on this tea, and he could purchase it for 6*l.*, he would still be able

" to advance the additional 4*l.* as a direct tax. Indeed, if he were entirely to cease consuming tea (though I do not advise that he should do so), and were to substitute in its place the equally nourishing, and far more wholesome beverage water, which he might have without cost, he would have the power of much more considerably contributing to the public revenue; for in that case, he might afford to pay, as a direct tax, the whole 10*l.* which he had been accustomed to spend in this luxury, and of which, before, 4*l.* only went to the Exchequer, the remainder being divided between the Chinese, the ship-owner, the East-India Company, &c. On the same mode of reasoning, it would be preposterous to maintain, that he who can afford to drink a barrel of ale, on which the duty is 10*s.* could not afford to advance this 10*s.* without drinking the ale. The fact is, that it is a convenient way of raising a revenue, to tax consumable articles at the Custom-house, or the Excise-office; but, if the consumers of the articles can afford to consume them loaded with taxes, they certainly can afford to advance these taxes, even though they did not consume the articles upon which they are levied; and hence there is no necessity whatever, that the articles in question should be imported for the mere purpose of aiding the revenue of the country."

This is so clear, that no remark of mine would be necessary; but, justice to myself urges me to show, that this reasoning is not new, and that it was made use of by me long ago. I do not pretend to call Mr. Spence a plagiarist; but, I must show, that, contrary to his supposition, this doctrine has been, amongst many persons, pretty familiar for some time past; and, if he has read the Political Register, I have, I think, some little reason to complain of his want of due acknowledgment, as will, I am convinced, appear from a comparison of the extract just given with the following extract, taken from the Political Register of March 1st, 1806, Vol. IX., page 308. There had been a debate, in the House of Commons, upon India affairs, into which had been introduced the circumstance of the Company's having failed in their engagement to pay half a million annually to the nation as the price of their monopoly, which monopoly costs the nation so much in troops, and in fleets. Whereupon Sir Theophilus Metcalfe (an East India Director, I believe) said, that "His chief motive in rising was, to show, that though the Company had not paid the annual half-million to the public, the public had derived *other advantages* from the Company more than equal to it. The duties," said he, "upon tea, at the time that the charter was granted, amounted to no more than 12½ per centum; but, they have since been augmented to 95 per centum. The conclusion is, that, if the duties had remained at 12½ per centum, the sum paid into the Exchequer, supposing the half-million to have been regularly paid, would have been five millions; whereas, in the increased duty upon tea imported by the East India Company, the sum *actually paid into the Exchequer is seventeen millions!*"

Not a soul in the Honourable House said a word in answer to this. It seemed to be acquiesced in, with a sort of sapient silence; at which I was so indignant, that I could not refrain from making the following remarks upon it, in my next number.

"Who is this gentleman? What is he? A logician, perchance; but certainly no politician. In the first place, I would ask Sir T. METCALFE, in what part of the act of charter he will find the government restricted as to the amount of duties to be laid upon tea; but, does he really think, that any human creature, not to say any member of Parliament, is so shallow, so stupid, so totally devoid of all the powers of perception as well as of deduction, as to believe, though but for a single moment, that this additional duty upon tea has come into the Exchequer *from the pockets of the East India Company!*"

" Does he think, that it will ever be believed, that the East India Company  
 " have *themselves consumed all the tea* that has been thus loaded with additional  
 " duties? And, if he does not, does he not know, that all taxes, and all taxes on  
 " consumable commodities especially and obviously, fall solely upon the con-  
 " sumer? If he could, indeed, prove, that the additional duties had *diminished*  
 " the consumption of tea, then he might urge it as an injury to the affairs of the  
 " Company; but never can he make anything with human reason in its brains  
 " regard the amount of additional duties upon goods as money given to the  
 " nation by the original owner of those goods; for, if I, for instance, who pay  
 " into the Exchequer, four or five thousand pounds a year for the stamps upon  
 " my Register, were to pretend that I gave the nation so much annually, would  
 " not my readers, who know that *they pay me* the amount of those stamps, look  
 " upon me as the most impudent, or the most foolish of men? No, Sir T.  
 " Metcalfe; no, it is not the East India Company; it is *the people*; the people of  
 " England and Scotland and Ireland; it is that burdened people, to whom the  
 " East India Company owe about seven millions of money (to say nothing about  
 " the addition to the nominal sum caused by depreciation), and to whom they  
 " are coming for more, instead of paying what they owe; it is that same deluded  
 " people, who, about twenty years ago, were, by the craft of the commercial  
 " hypocrites and their abettors, induced to set up such a senseless bawling about  
 " 'chartered rights,' protected by 'a heaven-born minister;' it is this people  
 " that have, as they richly deserved, been compelled to pay the seventeen  
 " millions in additional duty upon tea."

This extract does, indeed, apply to that part only of the extract from  
 Mr. Spence, which treats of the effect of duties levied upon tea; but, as  
 to the other part, how often have I insisted, and *proved*, that the profits  
 of the East India Company made no *addition* to the *national* wealth? How  
 often have I shown, that the addition of wealth arising from "our  
 Empire in the East," was an addition to the wealth of the Company and  
 their servants, *at the expense of the people of these kingdoms*? How  
 often have I shown, that the "*fortunes brought from India*," which some  
 of the Nabobs represented to be an addition to the wealth and prosperity  
 of the nation, were the result of an operation, half parliamentary and  
 half commercial, which conveyed the amount of those fortunes from the  
 land and labour of England into the pockets of East India adventurers,  
 who came home, and with the very money which they had drawn from  
 our land and our labour, obtained the estates of those who had paid away  
 the value of them in taxes, and became the lords of the labourers, who  
 had, substantially, been rendered slaves by the same operation? How  
 often have I lamented, that the people of this kingdom, especially the  
 land-owners, would not be convinced of these truths; and how provoked  
 was I, in 1802, to hear them chuckle, between a laugh and a cry, when  
 the shallow-headed Pitt asserted, that the overthrow of Tippoo Sul-  
 taun, and the consequent establishment of our power and extended com-  
 merce in the East Indies, had added more to our resources and our safety than  
 all the conquests of France, than all her additional millions of subjects  
 and acres of land, had added to her resources and her safety? In short,  
 when have I missed an opportunity of promulgating opinions like these?  
 I must, therefore, confess, that it is with some little displeasure, that I  
 now see Mr. Spence giving them, and to the same public too, as some-  
 thing *perfectly new*, or, at least, never before conveyed to the British  
 public in print. Mr. Spence, it is *possible*, has never read, or heard of,  
 any of my remarks upon the wild wars of Pitt and Dundas for the preser-  
 vation of India; upon colonial expeditions in general, and particularly  
 upon the capture, re-capture, and unsuccessful attack upon, Buenos  
 Ayres; upon the childish notion, that we should be all ruined, if the

paper-money were annihilated; upon, in short, first or last, every topic that he has touched upon relative to the importance of commerce. It is barely possible, that Mr. Spence has never read, or heard of any of these remarks; and, for two reasons, I hope he has not: first, because he is not, in that case, chargeable with plagiarism; and, second, because the doctrine proceeding from two minds, between which there had been no communication, is, of itself, no bad argument in support of its soundness. Mr. Spence may, by bare possibility, never have read, or heard of, any of the numerous articles, in which, for the sake of illustration, I have laid money out of the question, and have supposed a state of society, wherein commodities of real value were bartered; any of the many, many essays, in which I have requested the reader to put money out of his mind, when he was talking, or thinking, upon the subject of national riches. It is possible, that Mr. Spence may never have seen, or heard of, this; but, I frankly confess, that I do not think it likely. It is not the *author* that breaks out in me here; but the man of fair-dealing, who never, in all his life, wittingly availed himself of the ideas of another, whether friend or foe, without explicitly acknowledging it.

But, let us now proceed to the hearing of Mr. Spence upon the subject of *export* commerce. And, I must once more beg the reader, not only to go on slowly and attentively; but also to advance with a firm resolution to dismiss from his mind the prejudices there existing with regard to the importance of foreign trade. For, unless he can do this; unless he can say to himself, "*I will listen to nothing but reason,*" he would do well to proceed no further. It has been very common for me to be answered, in questions relating to matters of political economy, with a, "*So, you would persuade us, that such and such is the case.*" My reply has been; Yes, I would, indeed, fain persuade you so; and I am sorry to perceive, that you are pre-determined not to be so persuaded. If the reader be of the temper of these answerers, he would do well to lay down the Register: for, it is impossible for him to read to any profit. But, if, as I hope is the case with a vast majority of my readers, his mind be open to conviction, I am well persuaded, that it is now about to receive conviction of the truth of this important position, that this kingdom derives no addition of wealth from export commerce.

"We should laugh at or pity as insane, the proprietor of a landed estate of 10,000*l.* a year, on which there was a stone quarry, producing him annually 500*l.* profit, who should continually be dwelling on the amazing importance of this quarry, and be miserable when he sold a few cart-loads of stones less than usual; and, at the same time, should pay no regard to the infinitely greater revenue arising from his land, and should consider it as by far the least important part of his riches. With equal justice might the economist laugh at our folly, or pity our insanity. "These people, these Britons," he might say, "have a territory the most productive, in proportion to its size, of any in Europe. As their island contains twelve millions of inhabitants, and each person on the average annually consumes food to the amount of at least 10*l.* they must derive from their soil a gross yearly revenue of 120 millions. Their surplus produce, too, is greater than that of any nation in the world; for, in the raising of food for twelve millions of people, there are not occupied more than two millions, and, consequently, the remaining ten millions may be employed in fabricating manufactures of use, or of luxury; in defending the state; in communicating religious, moral, or scientific instruction; in administering justice, and in contributing most essentially, in a thousand other ways, to the happiness and prosperity of the community. And yet, strange infatuation! these islanders, notwithstanding their riches and their greatness are so incontestably derived from intrinsic causes, not to be affected by any

" thing external, notwithstanding they draw a gross revenue, an absolute crea-  
 " tion of wealth annually, to the amount of 120,000,000*l.* from their soil ; regard  
 " this true source of their wealth with indifference ; with unaccountable delu-  
 " sion fancy all their riches have been derived from commerce ; from a source,  
 " the national profits of which cannot be more than a twelfth part of their whole  
 " revenue, and are miserable at the idea of having a few ports shut against their  
 " trade ! And still more strange is the consideration, that not only their mer-  
 " chants, whose self-interest might blind them on this point ; not only their ig-  
 " norant vulgar have raised this cry of their dependence on commerce : even  
 " their land-owners, their statesmen, whom, of all men, it behoved to have had  
 " right notions on such an important subject, have re-echoed the senseless delu-  
 " sion. Well might ARTHUR YOUNG indignantly exclaim, on reading a speech  
 " of their favourite minister (Pitt), on the state of the nation, in which agricul-  
 " ture was scarcely deemed worthy of notice, as a source of national wealth ;  
 " " This the speech of a great minister at the close of the eighteenth century !  
 " —No: it is a tissue of the common-places of a counting-house, spun for a  
 " spouting-club, by the clerk of a banker :—*labour of the artisan—industry of*  
 " *manufacturers—facility of credit—execution of orders—pre-eminence in foreign*  
 " *markets—capital—compound interest*—these are the great illustrations of  
 " national felicity ! This the reach of mind and depth of research, to mark  
 " the talents framed to govern kingdoms ! These big words, to paint little  
 " views,—and splendid periods, that clothe narrow ideas ! These sweepings of  
 " Colbert's shop.—These gleanings from the poverty of Necker !

" If we examine a list of the amount of our imports, we shall find, that more  
 " than half the value of all that we import, a much greater amount than any  
 " thing we can possibly gain by our commerce of export, is made up of wealth of  
 " the most fugitive and evanescent kind, of articles no way necessary for even  
 " comfortable existence, and which are wholly consumed before the end of the  
 " year, in which they are imported, leaving not a vestige of their having ever  
 " existed. Thus we import annually tea to the amount of four or five millions  
 " sterling ; sugar and coffee for our own consumption to a larger amount ; and  
 " we may fairly estimate the value of the wine, rum, brandy, geneva, and to-  
 " bacco, which we consume, as equal to eight or ten millions more. Twenty  
 " millions, then, and upwards, do we pay for these articles, of which there is not  
 " one, that we could not do very well without ; of which there is not one (if we  
 " except sugar), that we should not be much better without, and the whole of  
 " which are speedily consumed, leaving ' not a wreck behind.'

" This being the case, with what propriety can we be said to derive any ac-  
 " cession of wealth from our commerce ? We do, it is allowed, gain annually a  
 " few millions by our export trade, and if we receive these profits in the precious  
 " metals, or even in durable articles of wealth, we might be said to increase our  
 " riches, though still comparatively but in a slight degree by commerce ; but  
 " we spend at least twice the amount of what we gain, in luxuries which deserve  
 " the name of wealth but for an instant,—which are here to-day and to-morrow  
 " are annihilated. How then can our wealth be augmented by such a trade ?  
 " how will such a negative source of riches suffice to be referred to, as creating  
 " the immense positive wealth which we enjoy ?

" We are so much accustomed to the error of considering two things, that can  
 " be sold for the same money, as equally valuable to the nation which consumes  
 " them, because they are equally valuable to the individual who sells them ; that  
 " we do not by any means estimate with accuracy, the different value of differ-  
 " ent kinds of wealth, in a national point of view. Yet a case may be imagined  
 " in which this difference would be intelligible to every one.

" Suppose, instead of indulging in the luxuries of tea, wine, and spirits, that it  
 " were the fashion for every inhabitant of Britain to inhale, once a-year, a quart  
 " of the aeriform fluid, called, by chemists, nitrous oxide ;—that this air was to  
 " be obtained only from France, and that the price of it was one guinea a quart.  
 " Suppose also, that we paid for this 10,000,000*l.* worth of gas, by sending  
 " woollen cloth to France to that amount, importing in return this invisible and  
 " elastic wealth, in a proper contrivance of bladders, casks, balloons, &c.  
 " Would not an unprejudiced observer laugh at our extravagant folly, if we  
 " should make a clamour about the profit which the nation gained by this trade,  
 " because it took off our woollen cloth to so large an amount ? Would he not

" justly say, 'These people are infatuated. Because the individuals concerned  
 " in exporting this woollen cloth, and in importing this gas, gain a few hundred  
 " thousand pounds profit, they fancy, that their nation gains by this trade, not  
 " considering, that they are giving away ten millions of permanent wealth, which  
 " may last for years, and might have been hoarded to an immense amount, for  
 " —what? for air; for mere indulgence of a moment, which is of no earthly  
 " benefit to its consumers, and which in one day is expended, and rendered of  
 " no value whatever? They do not see, that if they were without this trade,  
 " and kept all their woollens, they would be much richer than by exchanging  
 " them for such a fleeting substance; they do not perceive, that though *their*  
 " *merchants* may draw to themselves a million per annum profit from this trade,  
 " *the nation* loses by it ten millions per annum.'

" If the considerations just adduced serve to show the folly of the opinion,  
 " which should conceive any national wealth to accrue from such a ridiculous  
 " traffic as that alluded to, they will equally prove the fallacy of the belief, that  
 " this nation gains great wealth by its commerce. For, though the tea, sugar,  
 " wine, &c. for which we pay annually so many millions in more permanent  
 " wealth, are not of quite so volatile a nature, as an equal value of nitrous  
 " oxide would be; yet they are fully as unnecessary for all the purposes of com-  
 " fortable existence, and when consumed leave no more traces of their having  
 " ever been. And, inasmuch as we pay for them, an amount much greater than  
 " the whole of any profit that we can possibly derive from trade, it is clear, that  
 " it is from some other source that our wealth is created,

" If we would know who it is, that really get rich by British Commerce, we  
 " should inquire into the qualities as to permanency and necessity of the  
 " articles which we export, and compare them in these respects with the articles  
 " we import; and having made this comparison, we shall find, that it is Eu-  
 " rope, Asia, America,—all the countries with which she trades,—not Britain,  
 " that is enriched by her commerce. Thus, we supply the inhabitants of Ame-  
 " rica with clothes, with hardware, with pottery; with a thousand articles of  
 " the most pressing necessity, and of the greatest durability; and as we thus  
 " prevent the need of any great part of their population being engaged in manu-  
 " factures, nearly the whole of it can be employed in the infinitely richer source  
 " of wealth, agriculture. And what do we receive in return for these benefits?  
 " Why, a vile weed, tobacco, which, doubtless, when it has gratified our gusta-  
 " tory organs in its original form as tobacco, or has deliciously stimulated our  
 " olfactory nerves, in its pulverized and more refined form, snuff, has most  
 " marvellously added to our stores of national wealth! The case is the same  
 " with all the other countries with which we trade. We supply them with com-  
 " modities of absolute necessity to comfortable existence, and we receive in  
 " return from them such precious articles as tea—which debilitates us, without  
 " affording an atom of nourishment: as wine, rum, brandy, which do us the  
 " favour of shortening the days of a great proportion of our population. It is  
 " the countries we trade with, and not we, that get rich by our commerce.

" Since, therefore, no nation can export her commodities, without importing  
 " other commodities in exchange for them; since these last are consumed by  
 " the home consumers; and since, except they consumed them no considerable  
 " export trade could be carried on, it follows, that it is the consumers at home  
 " that actually are the means of creating all the stimulus which improves and  
 " extends agriculture, whether this stimulus arises from manufactures sold at  
 " at home, or exported. That this is an accurate statement, will be still more  
 " evident, if we consider, that at the very commencement of our commerce, and  
 " at every period since, the consumers of the foreign commodities imported, in-  
 " asmuch as these commodities have never been the necessaries of life; have  
 " never been food or raiment; *might* have consumed to the same amount of  
 " home manufactures, and thus have directly supported the manufacturers em-  
 " ployed in fabricating the articles destined for export. Just now, for instance,  
 " if the consumers of the articles, which we import and sell at home, to the  
 " amount of fifty millions, were to resolve no longer to consume them, is it not  
 " self-evident, that if they chose, they might take the place of our foreign cus-  
 " tomers, and purchase with the fifty millions thus saved, the goods to the same  
 " amount which we now export?"



Mr. Spence, in conclusion, states several advantages that would arise from our entertaining just notions upon this subject, amongst which are 1st, We should no longer give ourselves up to degrading terror (as we do at this moment) at the idea of losing an old mart for our manufactures; nor to infantine and irrational joy at the prospect of acquiring a new one. 2nd, We should look forward without dismay to that total loss of foreign commerce, which, from various causes, is likely to happen. 3rd, A cessation of the jealousy and envy, with which we are now regarded by the rest of the European powers; and a consequent diminution of future wars.

He states some other advantages; but, I was sorry not to meet with the mention of one, far greater, in my opinion, than all those which he has mentioned; namely, that we should no longer have any temptation to clamour for peace, upon any terms, for the sake of a revival of trade; that we should no longer be tempted to barter our honour for the gains of commerce; that we should no longer be under the sway of Lloyd's and the 'Change; that we should never again be ruled by a talkative counting-house clerk, the eulogist and the companion of Jews.

Upon the subject of export commerce, I should stop here, did I not hope, and believe, that, by inserting my own former remarks upon the same subject, an additional chance will be obtained of producing a general conviction of the truths so ably maintained by Mr. SPENCE, and which truths are, at this time in particular, of the greatest importance.

I shall, at the head of each extract, mention the date, under which it was published.

*December 6th, 1806.*

Of the consequences, which the subjugation of the continent by our enemy must naturally produce with respect to England, we have already, in the transactions at Hamburgh, seen a trifling specimen. Often, as the public can bear testimony, have I reminded the Baalams of the city, that the soldier was abroad, and that, rail and curse and cry as much as they pleased, he would, I was afraid, before he sheathed the sword, have his share of the good things of this world. They may now, probably, begin to believe me; and, when they consider, that at the very moment when their goods were seized at Hamburgh, they were exulting in their triumph at Brentford, they will certainly excuse the people, over whom they triumphed, for being too much absorbed with their own chagrin to have time to break their hearts with sorrow for that seizure. For my own part, events of this sort do, I will freely confess, give me very little uneasiness; because I am persuaded, that, with respect to the general and permanent interests of the kingdom, the seizure of mercantile property, already deposited in foreign states, can be productive of very little injury. I know well enough, that the merchants and the daily press will set up a most lamentable outcry upon this score; and they will accuse me of rejoicing, or, at least, of not weeping, at the success of the enemy; but, this will not deter me from expressing my opinion upon the subject; and, they cannot, in this instance, at any rate, accuse me of magnifying the power and success of that enemy. I will go a little further in this way, and say, that, *were the French to succeed in seizing all the English goods and property in every port and place in Europe, and if they were to prevent such goods from being sent thither in future, I do not believe it would, even in the smallest degree, tend to disable England either for*

*the defending of herself or for the annoying of her foes.* That it would shut up a great number of commercial houses, I allow; that it would lower a great number of merchants and bankers; that it would *diminish the means by which the Shaws and the Mellishes have been put into parliament*; that it would do much in this way I am ready to allow; but, I am by no means prepared to allow, that it would be injurious either *to the liberties and happiness of the people, or to the permanent security and dignity of the throne.*

There is a strange perversity, which, upon matters of this sort, appears to have taken possession of men's minds. "*How are we to live,*" say they, "if we cannot get rid of our manufactures?" They regard the nation in the light of an individual shopkeeper; and then they run on reasoning upon all the consequences of a *total loss of customers.* But, they forget, that the individual shopkeeper must sell his goods in order to obtain food and raiment and money to pay for his goods, whereas the nation has nobody to pay for its goods, and can never receive an addition either to its food or its raiment for the sale of its goods. The fact is, that exports of every sort, generally speaking, only tend to *enrich a few persons,* and to cause the labouring part of the people to live harder than they otherwise would do. We have seen, that many other nations have arisen to the highest pitch of greatness without the exporting of a single article of merchandise; and we have, I think, a pretty satisfactory example, at this time, in the situation of France. Yet, our eyes are not opened. We are not, indeed, so stone blind as we were some few years ago, when, in answer to those who dwelt upon the dangers to be apprehended from the increasing power of France, the conceited and shallow-headed Pitt talked of noting but the inexhaustible resources of our commerce, and of that poverty and bankruptcy, which must, he said, end in the total destruction of the power of the enemy. You well remember, Sir, that, at the peace of Amiens, your apprehensions of the still further increasing power of France were, by that enlightened statesman, Lord Hawkesbury, answered by a constantly repeated appeal to our *Capital, Credit, and Commerce,* to which he as invariably and triumphantly pointed, as the no less profound Mr. Mellish lately did to the state of the poll. But, if one were now to go and ask that famous possessor of a four-thousand-a-year sinecure what Capital, Credit, and Commerce, have been able to do in arresting the progress of French power, and how they are likely to operate in the preserving of England from the lot of Prussia, he would, methinks, be puzzled for a reply.

*December 20th, 1806.*

At no time, under no circumstances that the imagination can form to itself, would it be prudent or safe for us to concede any point connected with the maintenance of our power at sea; but, at the present time, and under circumstances that I have endeavoured to describe in the foregoing article, concession would be the beginning of annihilation to the only force, on which we have now to rely for keeping the enemy from our doors. Give up the right of search, and to give up a part expressly will be giving up the whole by implication, or, at least by interpretation; give up that, and, in the space of two years, France will beat us in that which has hitherto been called the English Channel.

Refuse, and what is the consequence? The execution of a *non-impotation act,* passed in America, suspended now, perhaps, but ready to be

put in rigid execution the moment the final refusal is made known. And what will be the effect of this terrible act, which is to awe England into compliance? Into a surrender of rights, undisputed by the public law of Europe, and exercised by all nations, except those whose *interest* it has been not to exercise them, or who had not the *power* to exercise them? What will be the effect of this act, supposing the American government to have passed it with any other view than that of exciting the fears of timid commercial avarice? The effect would be, if it were *possible* to execute the act, to prevent large quantities of goods from being carried to America from this kingdom, which, as the phrase usually is, would *greatly injure our commerce and manufactures*; for, as to our *navigation*, it would not injure that at all, it being very material to observe, that not one English ship would thereby be thrown out of employment, because not one English ship nor one English sailor (except, perhaps, some deserters from our colliers or our fleet) is ever employed in the transport of English goods to the American States. But, what is the meaning of this phrase, "injury to our commerce and manufactures?" It is certainly figurative. It would say, that by injuring our merchants and manufacturers, the measure would injure our country. But, those merchants and manufacturers must excuse me if I regard not this as a legitimate conclusion; for, numerous are the cases, real as well as supposed, in which a measure, which is injurious to particular classes of men, may be, and are, not only not injurious, but beneficial to the community in general; and, though this may not be a measure of that description, I am fully persuaded, that, if it *could* be strictly executed, the injury to the general interests of the nation, the injury to her power, to the means of defending herself, to the means of her maintaining her consequence amongst nations, would, if any at all, be very small indeed.

I made, in my second letter to Mr. Windham, when touching upon the consequences of the seizure at Hamburgh, some observations respecting the effect, in a national point of view, of excluding our manufactures from foreign countries, to which observations I beg leave to refer the reader, as applicable to this case; and, let me add here, that no abusive paragraph from a Treasury scribe, such as John Bowles or Redhead Yorke, will, either by me or my readers, be taken as conclusive proof that those observations were erroneous.

But, would the injury, supposing it to be an injury, be all on one side? Would the Americans themselves experience no injury from this same measure? To hear some men talk upon this subject one would imagine that to *get rid* of goods, the produce of sheep's backs and of our mines and of the work of our hands, was a positive good that nothing could counterbalance. If this be the case, why not throw them into the sea, instead of putting them on board of American ships, for the privilege of doing which we are to pay so dear? To hear some men talk upon this subject, one would really imagine, that it was purely to oblige us, out of mere compassion and Christian charity to us, that the Americans wore our cloth, and cut their meat with our knives. It may be the opinion of some, that they have proved themselves to be affectionate children; but, God preserve, I say, the parent from being reduced to a reliance upon their affection or compassion! God preserve the country I love from a dependence upon American generosity, charity, or even American justice! The fact is, that the Americans purchase our goods because they *want* them, and cannot do without them. Their whole dress, from the

chin to the ankle, goes from England, Ireland, or Scotland. From the swaddling clothes of the baby to the shroud of the grandsire, all is supplied by us; and it is in my power, at any time, to show that, in return for English materials and English labour, England receives but, comparatively, a small portion of food or of raiment, the far greater part being a mere vehicle for enriching the few who profit from the trade. Can the Americans do without our goods? This is to ask, Can they go naked; for in the whole world, this kingdom excepted, there exist not the means of covering their backs; of keeping them from the inclemency of the weather, either by day or by night. To say nothing, therefore, of the numerous useful and necessary articles of hardware, and goods, indeed, of all descriptions, how are they to supply the place of English goods? "Other countries." What other country is there upon earth? Even before the French revolution commenced its havoc upon the manufactories of the continent, all the other countries in the world did not supply them with as much of the articles of indispensable necessity as Gloucestershire did; and, it will, I hope, not be forgotten by Lords Holland and Auckland, that Napoleon, in his Northern conquests, must have broken up the small source of supply there afforded to America. But, "shall we not drive the Americans to manufacture for themselves?" This is a horrid possibility to be sure; but, we must first drive two other things amongst them, namely, *sheep*, and *downs* for the sheep to feed upon, and (I had like to have forgotten a third) a *sun* under which sheep can live and thrive. These are physical obstacles, which are not to be overcome, believe me, by a petulant act of Congress, though preceded by six weeks or two months of dull debate, in which, perhaps, fifty lawyers were exercising their lungs for the bar, to the great annoyance of a hundred honest farmers, who had, at last, not a more correct notion of the consequences of the act, than Mr. Spankie (the Editor of the Morning Chronicle) now seems to have. It may seem incredible to some persons that there should be *no sheep* in America; and, there are many superficial observers, who will be inclined to dispute my opinions upon the fact of their having frequently eaten lamb and mutton there. But, it will be quite sufficient, in answer to all such, to state, that for *every man* in the United States, *five pounds* sterling's worth of woollens is annually imported from England. What, then, do they do with their own wool? The truth is, that they grow scarcely enough to answer the demand for stuffing saddles and such-like uses; and they never can; both soil and climate being hostile to the breeding and the keeping of sheep. Supposing, therefore, that the people, almost all of them bred to agricultural pursuits, could, before their present stock of cloths is worn to rags, be collected together from their thinly scattered plantations, and moulded into manufacturers; supposing persons there ready to teach them the art of manufacturing; and supposing that un-supposeable event, the transmutation of some of their lands into workshops, still the materials, whereon to work, are wanting; and, if ever they are obtained, from England, dear England, however they may hate her, and affect to despise her, those materials must come.

August 22nd, 1807.

Leaving this worst of all aristocracies to enjoy its day, and waiting patiently for the arrival of our day, let us examine a little, Gentlemen,

into the grounds of the alarm, expressed by the Independent Whig and the Chamber of Commerce, at the probability of seeing the American ports *shut against our goods*.

Gentlemen, part of the wool (one article is enough, for the same reasoning applies to all), which grows upon the backs of sheep, which feed upon the grass, which grows upon the land of England, is made into cloth of various denominations, which cloth is made by English labour, and is afterwards sent to clothe the Americans. Now, does it appear to you, that it would do us any great injury, if the Americans were to refuse to wear this cloth; if they were to refuse to receive the benefit of so much of the produce of the soil and of the labour of our country? *They must go naked and absolutely perish without this cloth; but, that I lay aside, for the present, as of no account.* What injury would it *do us*, if they were to be able to prevent our woollens from entering their ports? Why, my assailant of the Independent Whig will say, perhaps, that such prevention would be the ruin of thousands; that it would break up our cloth manufactories, and produce starvation amongst the cloth makers. This sweeping way of describing is always resorted to in such cases; but, Gentlemen, though we actually clothe the Americans, they do not take off one *tenth* part of our cloth. And, supposing it possible for them effectually to put a stop to this outlet, how would it injure us? The consequence would be, that cloth would be cheaper in England; the consequence of that would be, that wool would be cheaper; the consequence of that would be, that sheep would be less valuable; the consequence of that would be, that less of them would be raised. But, the feed which now goes to the keeping of part of our sheep, would go to the keeping of something else, and the labour now bestowed upon part of our woollen cloths, would be bestowed upon something else; in all probability upon the land, which *always* calls for labour, and which never fails to yield a grateful return.

There is, Gentlemen, as it were by pre-concert, by regular system, a loud cry, upon all occasions, set up about our *loss of commerce*. Wars have been made, over and over again, for the sake of commerce; and, when the rights and honour of the nation are to be sacrificed by a peace, the regaining or preserving of commerce is invariably the plea. To hear these merchants and their ignorant partisans talk, one would almost suppose, that, if sincere in their expressions of alarm, they must look upon commerce as the sole source of our food and raiment, and even of the elements which are necessary to man's existence. Commerce, they tell us, is "essential to the *vital* interests" of the country. Who would not suppose, that commerce brought us our bread and our water? Gentlemen, to support commerce, the wars in Egypt were undertaken; the wars in India are carried on without ceasing, the wars in South America and in Africa are now undertaken. Oh! What English blood and English labour and English happiness and English honour has not this commerce cost! But, "without commerce how are we to defray the expenses of government, and the interest of the national debt?" This is a question that every frightened female puts to one; and, really, notwithstanding it is well known that England has been upon the decline of power ever since she became *decidedly* commercial, and that France has grown in power in the same proportion as her commerce has declined, till, at last, having lost *all* her commerce, she has become absolute mistress of the whole of the continent of Europe; notwithstanding this, the commercial tribe, with Pitt at their head, have so long and so impudently assumed,

that it is commerce that " supports the nation," that it is not to be wondered at, that a man who is foolish enough to have his all in the funds, should be alarmed lest he should lose his dividends with the loss of commerce. The merchants would fain persuade us (perhaps they may really think so) that their goods and their ships pay the greater part of the taxes. " Look, here!" say they, pointing to their imports and exports. That is very fine, for a few hundreds of them; but what is it to the whole of the nation? " But," say they, look at the Custom-house duties." Yes, and *who pay* those duties? It is *we*, Gentlemen, who pay those duties. The payment comes out of *our labour*, and from no other source whatever. The people of America have been cajoled by this sort of doctrine. " We pay *no taxes*," says one of their boasting citizens, " *except* such as are imposed upon *foreign* commodities." That is to say, except such as are imposed upon *Rum*, which is to them what beer is to us; *Sugar* and *Coffee*, of which, in part, the breakfast of every human creature in the country is composed; *Woollens* and *Linens* and *Cottons*, without which the people must go naked by day and be frost-bitten by night? But, what is the difference, Gentlemen, whether they pay a tax upon their coats, or whether they pay it upon their candles?

But, Gentlemen, bearing in mind, however, that we pay the custom-house duties, let us see what proportion those duties bear to the whole of the taxes raised upon us. The whole of the taxes, collected last year, amount to about 50 millions; the custom-house duties, exclusive of coals, and goods carried from one part of the kingdom to another, to about five millions. *Supposing, therefore, that, if we did not pay these five millions in this way, we should not possess them, to pay in any other way, if called upon*; supposing this, is there here any falling off to be alarmed at? Why, Gentlemen, the *Barley* alone of England pays, in malt and in beer, more clear money into the Exchequer than all the shipping and all the foreign commerce put together; and, as to the revenue arising from the trade with America, it is less than what arises from the porter which you drink in the city of Westminster alone. The fact is, Gentlemen, that the means of supporting fleets and armies, the means of meeting all the squanderings that we witness, the means of paying the dividends at the Bank, *come out of the land of the country and the labour of its people*. These are the sources from which all those means proceed; and all that the merchants, and ministers like merchants, tell us about the resources of commerce, means merely this, that while we are sweating at every pore to pay the taxes, we ought to believe, that the taxes are paid by others. I will tell you, Gentlemen, who would be injured by the shutting of the American ports against our goods. A few great merchants and manufacturers, and, observe it well, some hundreds of men, and some of those very great men, who have their money in the American funds.\* These, and these alone, be you well assured, would suffer any serious inconveniences from the shutting of the American ports; and these men are amongst the very worst enemies that the people of England have to overcome.

Nothing is more convenient for the purpose of a squandering, jobbing, corrupting, bribing minister, than a persuasion amongst the people, that it is from the *commerce*, and not from *their labour*, that the taxes come; and, it has long been a fashionable way of thinking, that, it is no matter

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\* See Vol. I. p. 328, and note (\*), p. 329.—ED.

how great the expenses are, so that the commerce does but keep pace with them in increase. Nothing can better suit such a minister and his minions than the propagation of opinions like these. But, Gentlemen, you have seen the commerce tripled since the fatal day, when Pitt became Minister; and have you found, that *your taxes have not been increased?* The commerce has been tripled, and so have the *parish paupers*. Away, then, I beseech you, with this destructive delusion! See the thing in its true light. Look upon *all* the taxes as arising out of *the land and the labour*, and distrust either the head or the heart of the man who would cajole you with a notion of their arising from any other source.

Here, in this last extract, there is, as a "learned" man would say, *multum in parvo*. This little extract does, indeed, contain every important idea contained in Mr. Spence's pamphlet, as far as relates to the national inutility of export commerce; and, hasty as the writing of it evidently was, I do really believe, that it is even better calculated to produce the desired effect, than the very elaborate work from which I have taken so many extracts.

"But," some one will say, "you are only claiming a pre-eminence *in folly*." May be so, but let it be *proved*. I am aware of the power of deep-rooted prejudice. I am aware of the influence of commerce. I am aware that it will be very difficult to induce the Spinning-Jenny Barons and Lords to give up the importance of commerce. I am aware, that all those, who, either from knavery or folly, still remain attached to the memory of Pitt, will, if they have sense enough to perceive that if our notions relative to commerce were adopted by the nation in general, his speeches would become a subject of endless ridicule; I am aware, that such men will not be convinced, or, at least, that they never will confess their conviction. But, in spite of prejudice and of vanity and of faction, if events proceed as, thank God, they are now proceeding, this so-long-deluded people will think rightly upon the subject of commerce, and when they do, away go, in a very short space of time, all the locusts that now eat up our substance; that now degrade the country; that now barter its happiness and its honour for their own villanous advantage.

England has long groaned under a *commercial system*, which is the most oppressive of all possible systems; and it is, too, a quiet, silent, smothering oppression, that it produces, which is more hateful than all others.

Napoleon is deceived in supposing, that the measures, which he has adopted against our commerce, will ruin *us*; but, he is right, if he means to break up the commercial system; and he thinks, perhaps, that, rather than suffer that system to be broken up, our government will yield to any terms that he may dictate, in which opinion I will not say that he is wrong.

There are three objections to these our doctrines relative to commerce; 1st, That, by putting an end to all foreign commerce, thousands of manufacturers would be thrown out of employment; 2nd, That we should not be able to obtain naval stores in sufficient abundance; 3rd, That we should lose the nursery for seamen, with whom to man our ships of war.

These objections are worthy of attention, and shall be duly attended to in my next.

Micheldever, 19th Nov., 1807.

## SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

(*Political Register, November, 1807.*)

There are three objections, usually urged against those, who, like me, contend, that commerce is of no service to this country.

FIRST, that, by the cessation of commerce, would be thrown out of employment a great number of persons, who now subsist by commerce, and, particularly, a great number of men, women, and children, now employed in the manufacturing of goods for exportation.

SECOND, that, if commerce, or trade with foreign nations, were put an end to, we should not be able to obtain certain articles, which are of the first necessity, especially such articles as are required in the building and the rigging and the fitting out of ships.

THIRD, that, as the mercantile marine is the nursery of seamen for our ships of war, if commerce cease, the mercantile marine ceasing, of course, along with it, this nursery is destroyed, and, in a short time, though we shall have ships of war, we shall have no sailors.

In answer to the first of these objections, Mr. Spencer has the following passage.

“ All sudden changes in the system upon which a country has been accustomed to act, must be productive of some inconvenience; and there can be no doubt, that the loss of any extensive branch of our export commerce, would for a while be heavily felt, by that proportion of the manufacturing class, which had been employed in fabricating goods for that particular market. (We may observe, hy-the-bye, that the sticklers for the importance of commerce, do not particularly lament the loss of it, because of the inconvenience which such a revolution occasions to a large body of people, but because of the diminution of national wealth which they fallaciously fancy ensues.) The remedy, however, for this evil, is in our own hands. When, in consequence of the caprice of one nation, or the envy of another, the export of our manufactures is materially lessened, we have but to lessen our imports proportionably, and to spend the money which we usually had consumed in the produce of other countries, in purchasing an additional quantity of the manufactures of our own. Thus, if the Americans persist in acting upon the non-importation law, which their pettish folly led them so hastily to pass, and in consequence, throw upon our hands the two or three millions' worth of woollen cloths &c. which they have been accustomed to buy of us, we have but to prohibit the importation of tobacco, and the other articles which we get of them, and we shall speedily see them upon their knees, requesting us to let things go on in their old train. And the consumers in this country, who will then save the money they had before wasted in tobacco, have but to expend the sums so saved, in a new coat or two additional for each of them, and our manufacturers will not be sensible of the change, nor have occasion to regret, the substitution of a British, for an American, market. If Buonaparte succeed in his paltry scheme of preventing our trade with the continent, a scheme which abundantly evinces the miserable littleness of his views on matters of political economy; we have but to abstain from importing a proportionate quantity of the luxuries we indulge in; to increase our consumption of home manufactures, and, far from being diminished, our wealth will be increased, and the prosperity of our manufacturers no ways affected by this master-stroke of policy, as its sage author doubtless deems it.

“ It may be urged, that though this plan, if acted upon, might answer the proposed end, yet it does not follow, that our consumers would be inclined to expend the money with which they had been used to purchase foreign luxuries, in articles which they could scarcely be likely to want, even though they were prevented from obtaining these luxuries; and consequently, if this were not



" done, that great distress would unavoidably ensue, amongst the manufacturers  
 " of exports, from the loss of their market. It must be allowed, there is some  
 " force in this objection, when we recollect, that serious inconvenience has some-  
 " times ensued, to particular branches of the manufacturing class employed in  
 " fabricating goods for home consumption, when, by the caprice of fashion, a to-  
 " tal cessation of demand for their manufacture has taken place; as in the case  
 " of the button and buckle manufacture, &c. But admitting the force of this  
 " objection, still a remedy for this evil may be found. In all such cases, the go-  
 " vernment of the country should interfere; and these are perhaps the only in-  
 " stances in which it should interfere in matters of trade. It seems only just,  
 " that every industrious branch of the community should be protected from ex-  
 " treme misery, consequent upon sudden changes, like those in question; and it  
 " certainly can never be right, that the parishes of any particular town or towns  
 " where any branch of manufacture fails, should bear the whole burden of sup-  
 " porting those who are thereby thrown into distress. Whenever, then, any  
 " large body of the manufacturing class is deprived, whether by the caprice of  
 " fashion in our own country, or by our quarrels with other nations, of the usual  
 " market for their manufactures, it seems proper, that the state should support  
 " them, employing them in works of public utility, such as making roads, canals,  
 " &c. until, by the gradual demand for hands, from old branches of industry, or  
 " the institution of new ones, there is found for them independent and profitable  
 " employment. By this plan, the temporary inconveniences, inseparable from  
 " a system of policy, in which manufactures form a prominent feature, is borne,  
 " as it ought to be, by the whole community, and not by a single portion of it."

I, for my part, see no necessity for any charge upon the national re-  
 venue, for the purpose of *making work* for manufacturers thrown out of  
 employment by a cessation of export commerce. For, let things alone  
 to work their own way, and the consequence will be, not that manufac-  
 turers will, perhaps, become agricultural labourers; but, that they will,  
*indirectly*, add to that class, by filling, at the side-board, at the back of  
 coaches, in the ranks of the army, and elsewhere, the places now filled  
 by persons taken from the agricultural population. Manufacturers would  
 not, all at once become expert ploughmen, but they would soon learn  
 to do many things appertaining to agriculture; and, as I observed in a  
 former article, the land *always* calls for hands, and always yields a grate-  
 ful return. After all, however, it is not to be doubted, that there would  
 be many persons, who would fall upon the parish in consequence of such  
 a change as is here contemplated, and that the augmentation to the poor  
 rates would be partial; but, it would be necessary that it should be so;  
 because that it would be the only means of effecting a dispersion of the  
 persons now congregated together by the calls of export commerce; and,  
 if the poor-rates were augmented, in some degree, the other taxes would  
 be diminished by the same cause, commerce being one of the greatest  
 drains upon the land and the labour, as has been proved in the case of  
 the East India territory and its inseparable and never-ceasing wars.

Mr. Spence's scheme of employing the ousted manufacturers upon  
 "works of public utility" he has not, I am sure, duly considered; or else  
 he would have perceived, that that was the most effectual way of prevent-  
 ing them from finding out new sources of livelihood. To *make work* for  
 people is to war against nature as well as common sense; and when this  
 is done by a *nation*, and that too with a view of preventing a part of its  
 people from being miserable, it is a mark of downright insanity. Let us try  
 it a moment. "Works of *public utility*" Mr. Spence talks of. Has the  
 nation not already every thing that it *wants*? As fast as its wants, in the  
 way of roads and canals, increase, does it not, in its own natural mode,  
 take care to provide them? And, does not the provision keep an exact  
 pace with the want? Surely it does, and always will. "Aye, but, sup-

" posing a canal, for instance, not to be necessary; yet, if the money expended upon it go to support ousted manufacturers, who would otherwise be upon the parish books, it is a good to make such a canal." No more a good than it would be to give the ousted manufacturers money for throwing stones against the wind; and, it would have this mischievous effect, that, while the present cost of maintaining them would be the same, or greater, than if they were upon the parish books, it would be much *more durable*; because, in the latter case there would be much more powerful motives for the finding out of new sorts of employment.

This idea of *making work* for people Mr. Spence has certainly borrowed from that wise practice of the parliament of making work for the people in Scotland, where, however, (observe it well!) it is not pretended, that any branch of manufactures has failed, that any want of prosperity is to be found, the work being made for the express purpose of preventing *agricultural* people from emigrating; that is to say, one part of the people is taxed to pay another part for throwing stones at the moon.

I should like to hear Mr. Spence (who, I am pretty certain, is a Scotchman) give his opinion upon these *make-work* grants to his countrymen; and I am the more anxious upon this point, seeing that the work pretending to public utility is, in this case, a canal to unite the Eastern with the Western sea, for the *advantage and extension of commerce*! I should like to have Mr. Spence's ideas upon this topic.

We have proved, in the former articles, written upon this subject, that whatever *taxes* seem to arise from commerce do, in fact, arise from our own internal resources, commerce being merely the channel through which those taxes are collected. But, as appertaining to the objection, which we are now answering, we must notice the alarm which some persons feel, lest, commerce being destroyed, there would be an absence of all that wealth, which we now see individuals gain by commerce, and which is expended by them in taxes and in payments to various individuals. This wealth ceasing to be gained by commerce, many people ask, How are we to make up for the deduction which this loss will make from the taxes, and from the sums expended in the employing of tradesmen and labourers? This alarm, to those who look not beneath the surface of things, is natural enough; for to such persons, who form a great majority of the nation, the money, gained and expended by the merchant, or exporting manufacturer, is regarded as so much wealth, which he, by his commerce, *brings into the country*; and, of course, the cessation of commerce must, to all persons seeing the matter in this point of view, appear to be the certain forerunner of a great defalcation in the taxes, and also of a great falling-off in the custom to tradesmen, and in the employment of servants of every description. But, let us try this by a close examination into the real state of the case. *John-a-Nokes*, for instance, is a great seller of tea (would he were always as inoffensively employed); he supplies the race of *Timkins* (a thousand in number, all gentlemen of estates in land) with this article; and his profits, at ten pounds from each customer, amount to ten thousand pounds a year. From these profits Mr. Nokes, if he make true return, pays one thousand a-year in income-tax; with the other nine thousand he does various things; but, let us first pursue the income tax. Our pursuit is not very long; for, who is so short-sighted as not to perceive that this income tax is, in fact, paid by the race of *Timkins*, who, if commerce were put an end to, would, of course, get no more tea, and who would have the ten pounds

a year in their pocket (supposing them to expend it upon nothing else) which now go to the making up of the income of our friend Nokes. But, as their income would still be the same, how would the Government be able to make up for the loss of Nokes's income-tax? Why it would, to be sure, make such an addition to the income of the Timkinases as would render the total amount of the tax just what it was before; and it certainly would make no difference at all to the race of Timkins, whether they paid ten thousand pounds a year in tax to the Government, or in profits upon tea to Mr. Nokes. But, Mr. Nokes, who is a very liberal and spirited man, spends the other nine thousand a year of his income amongst tradesmen and servants, and in largesses to the poor. Well! and if these nine thousands a year remained with the race of Timkins, would not they expend it, too, amongst their tradesmen and their servants, and in largesses to the poor of their several neighbourhoods? They might not perhaps expend it precisely in the same way, in goods and in services of precisely the same sort; but, as no man but a madman attempts to hoard up his income, as it is, indeed, impossible for him so to do for any length of time, the race of Timkins would, by the end of the year, have expended, in one way or another, the whole of the nine thousand pounds, which, together with the former thousand paid in income-tax, they before paid in tea profits to Mr. Nokes; and though Mr. Nokes and his family would be seriously affected by the change (for which one must feel some degree of regret), other trades and persons would derive the profits which he had lost; and, therefore, to say nothing about the total uselessness of the article in which he dealt, his ruin could not possibly diminish, either the source of taxation, or that of the income of tradesmen and agriculturists.

But, Mr. Nokes's fine house and park and gardens and hot-houses and carriages, would they ever have existed, had it not been for commerce? Certainly not. The race of Timkins would have scattered the profits of Mr. Nokes in a way so as to prevent its producing such effects; and, to those who see any degree of *national power* and *security* likely to arise from the use of silk instead of woollen, marble instead of stone, fallow land instead of corn-fields, pine-apples instead of cabbages and potatoes, coaches instead of waggons and carts, French valets instead of English labourers; to all such persons the decline of Mr. Nokes's commerce must, I allow, be matter of deep regret.

Now, the doctrine which I am endeavouring to maintain is, I think, by this illustration, made as clear as noon day. There will be enough to differ from me in opinion, and I shall be ready to convey their arguments to the public; but, I beg leave to request them, beforehand, not to state, as *something new*, objections which I have myself anticipated, and endeavoured, at least, to answer; because, if they should do this, I must reject their communications; it being quite preposterous to suppose, that I can waste my time and weary the patience of my readers with a repetition of what I have already advanced. I would further beg of some one of those who may differ from me, to confine himself entirely to what has here been said about Mr. Nokes and the race of Timkins; and, generally, I would beseech those, who may honour me with their thoughts upon this important subject, not to expect to produce conviction in my mind by a display of fine high-sounding phrases about "commercial opulence; emporium of commerce; capital, credit, and commerce." I say, that, I am of opinion, that all these tend to weaken, rather than strengthen our

country; tend to produce her subjugation, rather than to preserve her independence; and that, therefore, I see their approaching cessation with pleasure, rather than with sorrow. My *reasons* for this opinion and for this feeling I have given and shall give; and, if I am answered at all, I will be answered with *reasons*, and neither with declamatory phrases, nor with appeals to the opinions of others.

We now come to the SECOND OBJECTION, which is, "that, if commerce, that is to say, trade with foreign nations, were put an end to, we should not be able to obtain certain articles, which are of the first necessity, especially such articles as are required in the building and the rigging and the fitting out of ships."

I shall first, as before, give Mr. Spence's answer to this objection, and then add such remarks as appear to me likely to be useful.

"It will be said, that though we might give up some of the luxuries which we import, without great inconvenience, yet a very large portion of what we import is absolutely necessary to us, and could not be done without. This may appear, at first glance, to be the case; but if any one will examine a list of our imports, he will be surprised to find how few of the articles we get from other countries, are necessary even to comfortable and luxurious existence; and of how comparatively small value these are, when compared with the immense amount of what we consume. We could not well do without some of the drugs used for dying and for medicine; we should want olive oil, perhaps, in the preparation of our woollen cloths; saltpetre (if we had not the art of the French chemists, to form it from its principles) for our gunpowder; turpentine, and the various denominations of wood, of which we do not grow enough for ourselves. Of all the rest of our imports, I can see scarcely one, that we might not very well do without, or find fully as valuable succedaneums for, from our own productions. Barilla, Turkey carpets, China ware, silk, fruit of all kinds, grocery of every description (except, perhaps, pepper, bar iron, linen of all kinds, skins of every sort, tar, in fact every thing besides the articles which I have pointed out (which no power on earth could hinder us from obtaining, and of which a few cargoes of broad cloth would annually purchase all we can possibly have occasion for), seem by no means necessary to us. Some may be of opinion, that we could not do without hemp, flax, and tallow, which we import from Russia; but there seems no reason why we might not grow a sufficient quantity of the two former articles for our consumption, and whale oil, of the fishery producing which we have a monopoly, will always abundantly supply us with the means of obtaining light, if our own produce of tallow be insufficient.

"With respect to hemp, it is infinitely desirable, that we should raise as much in our own country, as would be sufficient, at least for the supply of our navy; and probably no mode of effecting this, would be equal to the prohibition of its importation, which would at once create a demand for it, adequate to raise its price to the point, at which land could in this country be profitably devoted to its cultivation. The bounties already allowed for effecting this end, deemed by the legislature so important, are evidently inadequate to its accomplishment, since but little hemp is grown in this kingdom. It might cost five or ten pounds a ton more, if produced at home, than if imported from Russia; but this difference, or twice this difference of price, would be well sacrificed for the sake of our being independent of the world for this article, so essential to the existence of our navy. We are now at peace with Russia, and, it is to be hoped, may long continue so; but if another Emperor Paul ascend the throne, or if we have a quarrel with this, or with any future sovereign, we shall lie entirely at his mercy: for, without cordage, we cannot have ships, and at present all our hemp is received from Russia. In fact, until we grow as much of this article as is sufficient for the use of our navy, it is perfectly idle to talk of our being an independent maritime power.

"It need not be apprehended, that we could not spare the quantity of land required for the cultivation of hemp and flax. About six acres of land are required for producing a ton of flax, and five acres for a ton of hemp; so that, supposing we consume 10,000 tons of the former, and 40,000 tons of the latter, which is quite as much as we do consume, it would require only 200,000 acres

“ to be applied to the cultivation of these articles : an extent which we can very well spare out of the twenty-two millions of acres of waste land which are to be found in Great Britain. All the hemp, however, requisite for the independence of the navy, might be raised from 20,000 acres; and if, after the narrow escape we once had of being excluded for years from Russia ; and after the possibility which we have just witnessed, of our being shut out from all commercial intercourse with a whole Continent ; if, I say, we do not take immediate steps for the cultivation of this most indispensable of all our imports, to at least this extent, we shall be guilty of folly the most egregious, of im- providence the most culpable.

“ That it is desirable we should grow the whole of the hemp and flax which we make use of in every way, I do not mean to assert ; nor, indeed, that it is either necessary, or to be wished, that we should give up the consumption of all the foreign commodities, which we import, except the few above enumerated as particularly essential to us. All that I assert, is, that by far the greater part of what we import, we could do very well without, and consequently, that in every point of view, whether considered as sellers or as buyers, we are independent of commerce.”

Of turpentine, pitch, and the various denominations of wood, of which we do not grow enough for the use of our navy (for all others we could do without), we can always, at a little additional expense, obtain an abundance, even from those parts of America which are unsettled, or, at any rate, in those parts, where no power yet upon the earth would be able to prevent us from obtaining them, we having a decided superiority of maritime force. We now lazily obtain the greater part of what we consume of these materials from the continent of Europe ; and this is the effect of commerce ; but, supposing it possible that a complete exclusion should exist for years, in Europe, the North of America opens and tenders her inexhaustible stores of turpentine, pitch, masts, yards, and ship timber of every description. So that here is no difficulty in the way of a nation, situated as we are, if under wise and courageous rulers. These materials would cost more than they now cost ; but, what would that be to a nation just released from the burthen of supporting the East India commerce, which now draws from the land and the labour of England millions annually. As to hemp, where is there any difficulty in obtaining it ? The *whole* that the nation would want might be grown by the year after next. Only apply to this purpose the amount of the sinecure places and pensions, and you will not only have hemp enough for yourselves, but enough to supply one half of the world, if that were desirable. “ But, the *land!* how can we spare the land ?” I am not much for a talk about *new enclosures*, which, in general, are wild schemes ; but, I am well satisfied, that if the already enclosed land were cultivated here as the land is in Flanders, we should have enough for wheat and for hemp and flax besides, and a great deal yet to spare. The reason why it is not so well cultivated here, is, that so large a portion of the population is taken up in manufactures ; these being somewhat diminished, as they would be by a cessation of commerce, there would be, very soon, a great improvement in the cultivation of the land. The land, in its natural state, bears, generally speaking, but little. The first thing necessary is *labour*. From labour comes an *increase of produce*. From an increase of produce comes, in various ways, *manure*. From manure comes an *addition* to the increased produce. And so on ; not forgetting, that, with the increase of produce, or subsistence, men, the hands to labour, do also necessarily increase. Having, then, an addition to our labour ready at hand, we have nothing to do but to give it a proper direction. A law is not required. Only let hemp and flax cease to be imported, and you will soon see, that

those who are now employed in making cloth and cutlery *to be sent abroad to be exchanged for hemp and flax*, will be busily engaged in the tillage of the plants from which those materials are drawn ; and that, while the nation will be a great gainer, the only persons who will lose by such a change, will be the great manufacturers for exportation, the merchants trading to Russia, and the Russians themselves, who cannot make cloth or cutlery so well as we can. Thus, then, we should not need those *roads and canals*, " those works of *public utility*," of which Mr. Spence speaks, as the means of employing the ousted manufacturers ; we should not need to raise taxes to pay them for throwing stones at the moon ; but, there would at once open itself to them an employment of real public utility, without the accompanying curse of premium, pension, poor-rate, or job.

Mr. Spence is, indeed, mistaken in supposing, that hemp and flax would grow in our *waste* land. It requires very good land to produce a good crop of either ; but the addition, which a check to the export of manufactures would make, either directly or indirectly, to our agricultural labourers, would enable us to bring new lands into tillage, or rather to restore to tillage the lands *formerly cultivated*, and now lying waste, which, in spite of all our boasted modern improvements, and pretended increased population, consist of millions of acres, as any one may be satisfied, who, like me, has attentively surveyed the wastes of the western counties, Hampshire included, and who has perceived, that the plough formerly went upon the sides and to the very tops of hills, where, now-a-days, nothing ever ventures but gray-hounds and hares. The restored lands would, under good cultivation, bear corn, while some of the lands, now cultivated, would produce hemp and flax ; and thus would this difficulty, so terrible to persons enervated both in body and mind by luxury, be speedily surmounted.

And, as to *corn* : Do we not grow enough now ? Perhaps not. But, the remedy is the same. Diminish commerce and manufacturers, and we have more labour for the land ; and that will, I warrant, bring us more corn. We now employ a certain number of men, say a hundred, in making knives and scissors and razors and buttons and locks and keys and candlesticks and watches and kettles and pots and spoons and porringers and the Lord knows what, for a certain portion of the people in Prussia and America, and they, in exchange, send us wheat and oats. Put an end to this traffic, by which a couple or three merchants and manufacturers are growing rich, and what is the natural consequence ? Why, that our hundred knife-makers go, either directly or indirectly, to raising corn here in England, where corn will then be wanted in lieu of that before brought from Prussia or America in exchange for the hardware which they before manufactured to be sent to one or the other of those countries.

It is not so with *all* countries. America has not wool, nor has Holland, nor have many other parts which we supply with that article of prime necessity ; but, England has plenty of land for the raising of every thing which she really *wants*, and which she gets from abroad, turpentine, pitch, and some timber excepted, and these she can obtain in abundance by the sole effect of her maritime power. Rich in mines of Iron, Tin, Lead, Copper, and, above all, *Coals*, with lands three times as extensive as her present population requires, and, at the same time mistress of the sea : and yet she trembles ! Trembles for her life, at a custom-house decree,

which life she regards as dependent upon that commerce, which has been the great cause of all those internal corruptions, the effect of which has been to besot, enervate, degrade and enslave her.

The **THIRD OBJECTION** is, *that, as the mercantile marine is the nursery of seamen for our ships of war, if commerce cease, the mercantile marine ceasing, of course, along with it, this nursery is destroyed, and, in a short time, though we shall have ships of war, we shall have no sailors.*

First, let us hear Mr. Spence's answer to this objection.

"Every Briton must be of one mind with respect to the Infinite importance of every mean by which our naval superiority is kept up; and as there can be no doubt, that our trade *has* been one grand cause of our eminence at sea, we are certainly therefore, in this point of view, highly indebted to it. But the question we have now under consideration is, whether we are *now* independent of commerce; and, surely, there can be no reason why the superiority of our navy should not be continued, even if all our trade were this instant to cease. It has been shown, that the *wealth* necessary for keeping up either a naval or a military force, is not derived from commerce. We *have* ships, and we *have* sailors. What then should hinder us from increasing the number, both of the one and the other, as well without, as with commerce? Our shipbuilders will not lose their art, if they are employed in building men-of-war; and a landsman may be educated into a sailor, as well, surely, on board a seventy-four, as on board a merchant-ship. It may be said, 'But what becomes of our navy in time of peace; and how is it to be supplied with men on the recurrence of war, without resorting to that nursery of seamen, commerce?' There is no absolute necessity, I reply, that our navy should ever be dismantled, or our seamen ever disbanded. Other nations think it necessary, to keep a standing army in time of peace. We, if we were to lose our commerce, might maintain a *standing navy*; and a fertile imagination may easily conceive and point out abundance of important and rational occupation for such a fleet, even when not engaged in war. It may indeed admit of doubt, whether it would not be politic for this nation, even if she had more extended commerce than she has, constantly to maintain a fleet in time of peace; and, in fact, it would be madness, in the present state of Europe, not to do so. Let it be considered also, that we shall at all events retain our *coasting trade*, and that this trade is of as much importance, as all other branches of commerce collectively, as a nursery for seamen."

To hear some people talk about the necessity of commerce in order to create sailors for our ships of war, one would almost imagine, that they regarded merchant ships as the females, or breeding ships, of our navy. Sailors, if they enter grown men, may as well enter at once, as thousands of them do, into ships of war, where they will learn their business much sooner and better than on board of merchant ships; and, why boys should not be taught on board of men-of-war, as well as on board of merchant ships, I should be glad to know the reason. "But, on board the merchant ships, they are always at hand, in cases of emergency." This would imply, that merchant ships are *always in port*. Some of them, are; but there are a much greater number that are not; and, of course, all the seamen, on board of them, are not at hand in cases of emergency. There is one thing, however, which seems to be completely forgotten by all those who raise the objection which I am here combating, namely, that a very considerable portion of our ships of war, and, of course, our seamen, are, during every war, employed, not in defending the country or in assailing the enemy, but in *defending commerce*. Nay, I believe, that, at this moment more than one half of our astonishing maritime force is employed in objects, which, well examined into, will clearly appear to be purely commercial; and, we have proved, over and over again, that

commerce adds nothing, does in nowise contribute to the real wealth or power of the nation. Commerce a *nursery*, indeed, of British seamen ! Go, examine the dismal returns from our ships stationed in the East or West Indies, and you will say, that commerce is their *grave*. It is on board of our coasting vessels ; the vessels which carry things from one part of these islands to the other ; it is on board of our vessels kept at *home*, that seamen are raised. This has always been the nursery for British seamen, and from this nursery the graves of foreign climates are fed, and that, too, owing exclusively to commerce. These vessels, unlike those employed in foreign commerce, are *always* within reach of our ships of war ; their crews are ready upon *every* emergency ; and, from the nature of the trade in which they are engaged, they are readily replenished with hands.

From this view of the matter, it is evident, I think, that the dread of losing our sailors with our foreign commerce is a mere bugbear, and, like all the other subjects of alarm, which we have noticed in the course of these observations, has arisen from the erroneous notions respecting the importance of commerce, so long and so industriously inculcated from the press, the bench, the senate, the pulpit, and the throne.

" And *who are you*," as the Attorney General, now Chancellor of the Exchequer, said of me, in *Latin*, when he was pleading against me, in the court of King's Bench ; " *Who are you*, that presumes to tell us we are all in error ? " Why, what signifies it who I am ? The only question is, *am I right* ? If I am not, upset my arguments, and show the world that I am wrong. Neither your *Latin* nor your gown nor your wig will weigh aught against these arguments, any more than against the decrees or the sword of Buonaparte.

I can easily excuse an erroneous way of thinking, upon subjects connected with commerce, seeing that for a long time I regarded commerce as the life-blood of the nation. The state of things has made me reflect ; it has set me to thinking upon the cause of my country's danger and the means of her salvation ; and the result of that reflection, as far as relates to commerce, is, that it is injurious in place of being, as is generally thought, beneficial to the country.—Viewing commerce in this light, with what indifference might we behold the attempts of Buonaparte to ruin us, by such means as he is adopting, and as our wise ministers are working tooth and nail to *counteract* ! There are several countries, under the control of France, which are dependent upon commerce for their means of subsistence. It was, therefore, very right to put a stop to their commerce ; but, even that should have been done in another manner. The *dominion of the seas* should have been explicitly asserted ; and, the vessels stopped, or brought in, should have been made to pay a *tribute*. The effect upon commerce would have been the same, but the effect upon the minds of mankind would have been very different. What have we now done ? We have gone solely upon a principle of *retaliation* ; we have said, You have injured our commerce, and we will injure yours ; we have acted under the evident hope of being able to give new life to our declining commerce ; we have, in short, proclaimed to the whole world, that we sorely feel the effects of the conqueror's edicts, and that we are making a desperate attempt to obtain vengeance.

The London prints seem to be almost ready to cry, when they give us an account of the "*severe and cruel decrees*" of Napoleon against our commerce and merchants. As to the merchants that may fall into his



clutches, I shall be sorry to hear of their suffering, in any way; but it should always be recollected, that they went abroad for their own interest's sake; that they were in pursuit of no public benefit; and that they will reap only the fruit of their adventuring, which *might* have turned out very much to their advantage.

“The correspondence of England with every part of the Continent is intercepted; we have, in consequence of the blockade, in our hands, more than a hundred thousand English letters and bills of exchange to the amount of several millions sterling. These measures must reduce the English to a desperate situation.”

This is the language of the last-received French official print, the *Moniteur*, whose editor appears not to yield, in point of profundity, to any of the sages, by whom the people of England are taught and ruled. But, if Mr. Spence's and my doctrine be sound, instead of joining the London prints in crying at this news, may not the public well laugh at it, as I do at this moment? What are the letters and bills of exchange to us? To the nation, I mean? One half of the bills of exchange are, I dare say, payable in London; and, it must certainly “reduce us to a desperate situation,” if the said bills should not arrive! This interruption to commerce will, no doubt, reduce many *individuals* to a desperate situation; but, what is that to the nation? Suppose it to *ruin*, in the common acceptance of that word, a hundred thousand persons, there will be, in the kingdom, fifteen millions as well off as they were before. But, when we talk of effects, of all sorts, we are apt to exaggerate greatly. Thus, a diminution of wealth is often called ruin; and, indeed, an obstruction to the further accumulation of wealth is frequently designated by that desponding term. If Mr. Nokes, for instance, be, all at once, reduced from ten thousand a year income to the one or two hundred a year which his goods and chattels will yield him, we call him a *ruined man*; though, for my part, I see nothing that he wants to make him happy, and to bring up his family. To be sure he cannot keep his boxes at the opera and the playhouses; he cannot purchase tickets to hear the squalling and squeaking and piping of the Italian singers; he can no longer keep French cooks nor Swiss valets; he must cease to drink wine, and his wife and daughters must cease to wear velvet and silk and jewels and spangles and ostrich feathers and paste and paint; and, so much the better. His reduced income, *aided by industry*, will furnish him and his family with plenty of food and raiment, while the nine thousand eight hundred pounds a year, which he has ceased to receive, will, in all probability, be scattered about in such a way as to cause a proportionate decrease in the demand for Italian singers, French cooks, Swiss valets, and paint and paste for the face, arms, neck and shoulders. The singers and such people would, doubtless, suffer from the change here contemplated; but, I think, it is clear, that nobody else would; and that, as to the nation suffering from it, the fact is, evidently, the reverse. May we not, then, laugh at the predictions of the *Moniteur*, if we are convinced that our government is in the hands of wise and incorrupt men? Aye, let this be as it may, we ought to laugh heartily; for, out of the present state of things, good, in one way or another, must come.

Now, I am well aware, that I shall, for a while, make but few converts. The doctrine I preach is so contrary to the settled opinions of the nation, generally speaking; it is so hostile to the feelings of numerous persons; it includes such a fearful fall of those who have, in fact, ruled the nation

for so many years ; that I am satisfied, that, comparatively speaking, few people will, at first, listen to me. But, I am equally well satisfied, that it only requires time, and not a very long time, to work a general conversion, especially if the joint endeavours of Buonaparte and our ministry should effect the destruction of any considerable part of our commerce. We shall then have the proof, the experimental proof, that all our alarms, upon this score, were groundless. We shall find, that, upon a general scale (and that is the way to estimate), the loss of commerce will produce no diminution of our public resources, no diminution of the comforts of the people ; while, on the other hand, it must break up those combinations, which have been, and are, the most convenient instruments of corruption. We have a convincing proof, that the loss of commerce has not weakened France. Why are we, then, to suppose, that it will expose us to subjugation ? Let the *Moniteur* answer this question. In short, we have, within ourselves, every thing necessary to our comfort and our defence, and, if we do not make use of the means which a bountiful Providence has placed in our hands, we shall, and we ought to, perish as a nation.

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## SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

*Political Register, December, 1807.*

"The wealth of climes, where savage nations roam,  
Pillaged from slaves, to purchase slaves at home."—GOLDSMITH.

Upon this subject several letters have been addressed to me, under the different signatures of A., B., and C. To answer the arguments and objections of several writers at the same time, some of them naturally using, in different words, the same arguments, must, as the reader will perceive, be, upon almost any subject, a work of no little difficulty, especially when it is considered, that, in their arrangement, scarcely any two will be found to have chosen the same order. Nevertheless, such is my opinion of the importance of the subject, which I have assisted in bringing before the public, that I think it a duty which I owe to my readers, to endeavour to remove all the objections, which these several writers have urged, and all the doubts which they have started, against what has been written by Mr. Spence and myself relating to the commerce of England, that is to say, its *trading connections and intercourse with foreign nations.*

These objections appear to me to be all included under the following heads : that is to say, I. respecting the time, at which we have chosen to promulgate our opinions ; II. respecting the invidious distinctions said to have been made by us between persons employed in agriculture and persons employed in manufactures and commerce ; III. respecting the relative importance, or value, of agriculture and manufactures ; IV. respecting the basis of Mr. Spence's doctrine, to wit, that agriculture is the real and only source of all national wealth ; V. respecting the wealth which the nation derives from commerce ; VI. respecting the injury which would arise to the nation from a cessation of its commerce, especially as a numerous class of persons, who are engaged in manufacturing for exportation, would, by such cessation, be thrown out of employment ; VII. respecting the effects upon the navy ; VIII. respecting the necessity of luxury ; IX. respecting the effects of commerce upon the civil and political liberties of England.

"Here," the reader will say, "is a table of contents to a folio volume;" and, were I, indeed, gifted with the amplifying powers of Pitt or Lord Wellesley, I should not despair of spinning ten folio volumes out of such materials, the only difficulty to be apprehended, in such case, being, where to look for readers of sufficient means to purchase my work (not having, like them, a king's printer to resort to), and of sufficient leisure and patience to sift the two grains of wheat from the bushel of chaff.

The 1st objection, that is to say, *respecting the time at which we have chosen to promulgate these opinions relative to commerce*, is one which I should not have expected to hear from any body; yet, B., in the first paragraph of his letter, says, that "to promulgate that Britain is independent of commerce, at this time, when our commerce is attacked by Buonaparte, must be of a pernicious tendency." He has not, indeed, made even an attempt to prove this by any sort of argument; and he has totally overlooked, it seems, that Mr. Spence had given at large his reasons, why such a promulgation must be greatly advantageous instead of pernicious. I had added other reasons to those of Mr. Spence; and, therefore, I was not a little surprised to see a writer of some talent enter upon the dispute with a bare assertion opposed to conclusions founded upon argument, without even deigning to notice the argument. As to the point itself, it must, I think, be pretty evident to every man, that it can do no harm to promulgate opinions, tending to convince the enemy, if they have any effect at all, that what he is doing with an intention of doing us injury, will not injure us; that, if he were to succeed in annihilating our commerce, he would not have made one inch of progress in the way of subjugating our country. Suppose him to find, by experience, that he is in a fair way of accomplishing his object of destroying our commerce, and suppose him to know that we look upon such destruction as ruinous to our power; will not his terms of peace be made accordingly? Will he not treat with us as with a town besieged, which, sooner or later, must yield? Will not the peace be what the peace of Amiens was, a capitulation? And will it not be a capitulation upon still harder terms? But, if, on the contrary, the enemy be convinced, or if he find that we be convinced, that his war against our commerce, though it may produce partial individual distress, will in the end render our country more powerful against her enemies and more prosperous at home; will he not be inclined to listen to terms of peace such as a powerful nation has a right to propose? Such as a nation that fears him not, and that has no reason to fear him, ought alone to submit to? The French politicians say, that we derive from the East Indies the means of subsidizing the kings and princes of Europe; that is to say, the means of carrying on war against France upon the Continent; and, they are not much to blame for saying so, seeing that we ourselves have taught them the creed. But, if Mr. Spence and I have proved, as I think we have, that we derive no national wealth from the East Indies; that our means of carrying on war, of granting subsidies, and the like, are all derived from our land and our labour; then the French politicians will entertain no hope of conquering us by the destruction of our Indian domination; and we shall entertain no fear upon the subject. The East India Company, with their locust-like swarm of unfledged nabobs, may, indeed, derive little consolation from the conviction that England would be happier and more powerful without commerce than with it; but, it

certainly will not be so with the nation at large, which must derive satisfaction at being convinced, that the means, by which the enemy is endeavouring to bring us to his feet, will do us good instead of harm, will raise us instead of sinking us. Either our opinions will be adopted, or they will not. If the latter, then they will do no harm, and the time of their promulgation is of no consequence: if the former, then they will tend to abate the hopes, which our enemy entertains from his present attacks upon our commerce, and also to abate our fears upon that score; and, therefore, this time is better than any other, at which to promulgate such opinions. This is so obviously true, that I cannot help thinking, that my correspondent B., whose letter will be found below, must have a feeling here of a private nature; that, like the East India Company, he must perceive, that, though the destruction of commerce might be a good to the nation, it would infallibly be what he would think ruin to himself. As if he had said, "What! would you, at this time, when "Buonaparte is attacking our commerce; would you avail yourselves of "this favourable time, to convince the people that our profitable trade is "injurious to them?" I cannot say, that I much blame him. It is perfectly natural for every man to think of himself; but, being myself convinced of the truth of the opinions promulgated by me, it behoves me to point out the probable motives which lead to the opposing of those opinions.

The 2nd objection, namely, *that we have drawn invidious distinctions between persons employed in agriculture and those employed in manufactures and commerce*, is not founded in fact. My correspondent A., whose letter will be found below, says, "You will not deny, that the labourer of the plough and the loom are brethren of the same family." When have I said any thing, whence such a denial could be inferred? When have I attempted to ascribe exclusive merit to persons employed in agriculture? When have I said, or insinuated, that persons employed in arts, manufactures and commerce were less to be esteemed? There are, indeed, certain descriptions of men, who have grown out of commerce as weeds grow out of a rank soil, of whom I have spoken with every mark of disrespect; but, this has been, because, from their *public* acts, it was manifest, that they were actuated by motives hostile to the happiness and honour of the country; and, in other cases, because their prosperity as necessarily implied the decline and the approaching fall of the country, as the prosperity of the fox implies the destruction of the sheep. When I reflect, I cannot say that I blame the fox; but, I would get rid of him if I could; and, in the meanwhile, it is not reasonable to expect me to speak of him in those terms wherein I speak of the sheep. Let us suppose two men, Tom and Dick, both in the same circumstances, and each having a son. Tom destines his to follow the plough, as his fathers have done before him; but Dick, hearing that fortunes are made in India, without care, labour, talents, or virtue of any sort, packs off his son to Bengal. Now, it is impossible for me not to speak of Tom with more respect than I do of Dick; and, it is equally impossible for me to like the son of Dick, with all his wealth, half so well as I do the son of Tom; especially when I reflect, that the latter, by his labour, or care, or talents, has contributed towards the real wealth of the nation, while the former has been doing nothing but enriching himself out of the labour of others, those others, too, being his own countrymen, and, amongst the rest the son of Tom, who, all the while, has perceived nothing of the operation,

by which a part of his earnings have been converted into parks and coaches for his old playmate.

These distinctions I cannot help making. They are naturally made in the mind of every man; and, if I am at all singular, in this respect, the singularity consists in this, that, while, from various causes, others do not utter their sentiments, I freely utter mine. But, never have I, upon any occasion, claimed exclusive merit for those who are employed in the cultivation of land, knowing, as I do, that they form not one fourth part of the nation, and knowing also, that their occupation is not less necessary than the occupations of others; that the coat is as necessary to me as the loaf, and that, once out of a state of mere nature, the weaver is as useful as the cultivator of the land.

As to Mr. Spence, he has expressed himself very explicitly upon this point. "Let it not be imagined," says he, "from any thing which has been observed, that it is meant to be inferred, that the character of a merchant, individually considered, is not as estimable and as honourable as of any other member of society. Though it is the farmer who brings into existence all wealth, and the land proprietor who dispenses the greatest share of it; yet, as the views of both are private advantage, not the public good, neither the one nor the other, is on this score entitled to any merit. Self-interest is the impulse which directs the industry of every branch of the community, and, in general, honest obedience to this guide, will most effectually promote the advantage of society."

One of my correspondents remonstrated with me, some time ago, as with a *farmer*; it may, therefore, be of use to observe here, that I am not one; that, in all likelihood, I never shall be one; and that, of course, I am perfectly disinterested upon that score.

The 3rd objection, that is to say, *respecting the relative importance of the value, in a national point of view, of agriculture and manufactures*, seems to me to have originated in a misconception of what has been said by myself, and by the author from whom I have, in former articles upon this subject, so liberally quoted.

My correspondent A. asks, in his 4th paragraph: "Will any rational inquirer say, that riches, greatness, and happiness depend upon agriculture only? Would agriculture have made such a place as Manchester? Will you again assert, that taxes are the fruit of land and labour? Is there no fruit, or revenue, raised from the manufacture of cotton?" My correspondent B. says, in his 2nd paragraph, that "agriculture itself is only a species of manufacture; that the manufacture of the spade and the plough must even precede agriculture; that nothing is more absurd, than to give one species of manufacture a preference before another; that it is evidently more advantageous to society to employ part of the people exclusively in manufactures." In his 3rd paragraph, he says, that "tools are as necessary to the husbandman as bread to the smith." In his 5th paragraph he says, "that did we exercise every other species of manufacture, the total loss of agriculture would be of little consequence."\* This last proposition is so monstrous, that I cannot bring myself to give it a serious answer; and, shall only bestow a remark or two upon the examples quoted by B. of the Syrians, who lived in plenty upon a barren rock, and the Italians, who, if Smollet may be believed (which is not always the case), were

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\* See our extract from Mr. HUME's speech, *ante*, p. 313.—ED.

starving amidst fields, which, to produce plentiful crops, required merely to be *scratched*. B. need not have gone to Tyre; he might have stopped at Gibraltar, where, upon a rock of sand-stone, the people live in great abundance and even luxury, through the medium of commerce. But, is it commerce that *creates* what they live upon? No: it is the land and the labour of England. Some of their provisions go directly from England and Ireland in kind; others are brought from the states of Barbary, purchased there with the amount of goods made by persons who have lived upon food raised here; and, if these persons had been employed in raising food to send to Gibraltar, instead of making goods to send to Barbary, the only difference would have been, that we should have had here so many more agriculturists and so many less manufacturers, which, as the former would have been a more hale and stout sort of men than the latter, and also less exposed to those vices which the congregating of men never fails to produce, would have been a desirable thing, would have rendered the nation better and more powerful than it now is.

Now, to take the other propositions in their due order, when have I said, that all riches and greatness and happiness depend *solely* upon agriculture? Nowhere. I have only said, that agriculture is the *only source* of national wealth; and, I think, it is pretty evident, that, if we had *nothing to eat*, we should soon have nothing else, in this world, at any rate.

No, agriculture, *alone*, would not have made such a place as Manchester; but, supposing such a place to be a national good (which, however, I deny), it could not have been made, unless people had first *eaten*.

I do say "again," that taxes are the fruit of the land and labour of the nation. But, did any one, except A., imagine, that I meant agricultural labour only? I never said so; and, the coupling of the land along with the labour as a source of revenue arose from this circumstance, that the land, of itself, without any labour at all, produces many things for the subsistence of man.

There certainly is fruit, or revenue, arising from the manufacture of cotton; but, this is answered in the preceding sentence.

As to B.'s saying, that the manufacture of the spade and the plough must precede agriculture, I may say, that the smith *must eat*, before he can make the spade and the plough. But, indeed, this is mere trifling; and I have given no provocation for any of these rather petulant remarks; for, I have nowhere given a preference to one species of labour over another; nothing so absurd ever fell from my pen, as that a part of the people ought not to be exclusively employed in manufactures; nothing so intolerably foolish, as that tools and cloths and houses were not as necessary to the husbandman as bread to the smith and the weaver and the carpenter. Nothing was ever said by me, that could have been tortured into such a meaning. The object contended for by me, was, that we stood in no need of *commerce*; and, special care has always been taken to define what I mean by that word, namely, a trade with foreign nations; and, in order to make this position clear, it was necessary to show, that our resources were within ourselves, and, in order to do that, it was necessary to trace back every species of wealth to this land, which we inhabit, and which will lose none of its qualities by the loss of commerce.

But B., after having insisted upon what nobody denied, that manufactures and agriculture were necessary to each other, drops down upon us,

all at once, with these propositions, to wit : " the relations between nations and individuals are the same : the more extensive the exchange " the greater the advantage." I should not deny the sequel, perhaps, if confined to individuals ; but, I flatly deny the first proposition, opposed to which, as connected with the previous undeniable assertions of B., is every sentence and word, that I have quoted from Mr. Spence, and that I myself have written upon the subject. Therefore, previous to the making, in answer to us, of assertions like those last quoted, B. should have made an attempt, at least, to refute our doctrine, and which attempt he has not made. The exchange between individuals is absolutely necessary to their existence ; for the farmer *must* have cloths and tools and buildings, or he ceases to farm, and to live. But, is there this absolute necessity with respect to wine, tobacco, coffee, sugar, cotton, brandy, or any other thing which we import ? It is evident, that there is not ; and, that, therefore, the relations between individuals and nations are *not* the same.

What B. says, in his 6th paragraph, except as far as relates to the navy, requires no answer, consisting, as it does, of mere assertions, unsupported by any show of argument, and which assertions, if our reasoning be sound, are, of course, erroneous. I am of opinion, that, greatly to diminish our commerce, would give new life to useful industry, and would cause many to labour who now live in idleness ; that it must tend to elevate agriculture and every species of useful manufacture ; and that it would exalt human nature itself, by banishing from amongst us a part, at least, of that effeminacy, and of those corruptions, which now issue from the metropolis and other trading places, as from another Pandora's box, to vitiate the country. These my opinions, if unsupported by reasons, are full as good as B.'s assertions ; but, I have given my reasons, and of those reasons he has not attempted to show the erroneousness.

We now come to the 4th objection, to wit ; *respecting the basis of Mr. Spence's doctrine, that agriculture is the real and only source of national wealth.* This was attacked by my correspondent WROC. He has been answered, as to this point, by my correspondent C.

5th. *Respecting the wealth which a nation derives from foreign commerce.*

But C., who clearly enough perceives and shows, that, in the making of the coach to be used by the land-owner, no creation of wealth would take place, yet imagines, and endeavours to prove, that, if exported by C. (who supposes himself a merchant for the purpose), and producing a profit to him, in consequence of his bringing back tea, sugar, and wine in exchange, a creation of national wealth would take place. The case supposed is this. There is no coin nor any other representative of valuable things in the country. All is done by barter. The Coachmaker makes a coach for the Landowner, and receives 60 quarters of wheat for it. He barter another for 60 quarters to the Merchant, who sends it abroad and barter it for 80 quarters ; and, bringing home the proceeds in wine (let us take only one article for the sake of clearness), is, of course, the richer for the operation. But, is this the case with the nation ? Has its wealth been increased ? C., the merchant, says, that it has ; because there are clearly 20 quarters, in property of some sort, no matter what, brought into the country, 10 of which he expends, and 10 he has in clear profits to lay out upon objects of per-

manent national wealth. Observe, that it has required 10 quarters to keep himself, family, mariners, and so forth; but, he has still his 10 quarters in clear profit, and thus, he says, he has caused, by his mercantile transactions, an *addition* to the national wealth to that amount. But, has he not stopped rather too soon in his researches? *From whom* does this profit come? Suppose he barter his wine with the *Landowner*, does not the *Landowner* give him the profit? And, that which he gains does not the *Landowner* lose just the same as in the case of the *Coachmaker* and the *Landowner*? Yes, just the same, with this exception, that the *Landowner* gets from him a perishable, not to say pernicious commodity, instead of a commodity, which, though not contributing much to national strength, is not nearly so perishable.

But, says C., the merchant, I have clearly effected a creation of national wealth, because the *Landowner* would have given 80 quarters to any foreigner for the wine. Very well, but what would that foreigner do? Why, take away a coach to the amount of 80 quarters, leaving, in the former proportion, a profit of something more than 13 quarters to the *Coachmaker*, and carrying the rest away. Well, then, says the merchant, those 17 quarters, after keeping himself and family and paying his mercantile expenses, will go to the making of houses and other objects of national wealth in his country, instead of remaining here, in my hands, to make an addition to the wealth of this. Yes, Sir, but what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. You would do the same with respect to his country. What one country got the other would lose. That you and your brother merchant would grow rich by this traffic, that your profits, drawn from the *Landowner*, would put you upon a level with him, enable you to vie with him, and even surpass him, in riches, and, in time, with the aid of taxation, make you the owner of his estate, I allow. Whether this be a good or an evil shall hereafter be discussed; but, I think, it must be evident, that neither of you can, by any of your operations, produce, in a country, whose soil affords a sufficiency of subsistence, any *addition* to the national wealth, seeing that whatever you gain, the *Landowner* (to keep up the illustration we started with) must lose.

B. says, in his 6th paragraph, that nations cannot *now* be powerful without riches. I do not very well comprehend the object of this remark; and, it appears to me to have been useless, until it was shown, that our doctrine, respecting national wealth, was not sound. Nations *never* could be powerful without riches; but, power is a relative quality; and we contend, that commerce does not add to our national riches.

"What great sums," exclaims A. in his 4th paragraph, "have been raised from the market of America and Africa! And who will say, that the foreign consumer does not contribute to our taxes?" I have shown, [see page 358 of the present volume.—ED.] that it is but a trifle comparatively speaking, that is raised, upon the whole, through the custom-house, and that that is raised upon ourselves. To make this matter a little plainer, suppose woollen cloth to the amount of a hundred pounds, prime cost, to be exported to America, and a return to be made in tobacco. The exporter gets, for his hundred pounds worth of cloth, as much tobacco as he sells in England for three hundred pounds; but, of this three hundred, one hundred and eighty is paid at the custom-house in duty. And do not we, who consume the tobacco, pay, in the end, the whole of the three hundred pounds? This is a pretty way of



making foreigners contribute to our taxes! This is the way of "raising taxes from the American market," and this answer will, I hope, serve for all the rest. But, A. will say, perhaps, that he does not mean woollens, which are not taxed here, but *cottons*, which are taxed here, and which are exported, after they have paid the tax in England. This would be a very ingenious way of raising taxes upon foreigners; but, besides, that, if carried to any length, competition must very soon render it abortive, the exporter must bring back goods surpassing in amount the cottons exported, which goods are taxed at the custom-house; so that, in the end, we pay all the taxes imposed, upon the exported as well as the imported goods.

The 6th objection, which is suggested by W. F. S., *relates to the throwing out of employment, a great number of persons, who now find employment through the means of commerce.* An answer to this objection will, I think, be found, in the preceding number of the Register, [see page 361 of this volume.—Ed.] and, I am not without some hope, that, if W. F. S. had read that answer (indeed he could not, for it appeared in the same sheet with his excellent letter), he would have been nearly satisfied upon this point. But, there is one error of his, which I am certain he will thank me for correcting, and the correcting of which will, I am disposed to think, remove all his apprehensions upon this score. He thinks it probable, that the number of persons, thrown out of employment by a stoppage to all export of manufactures, would be *four or five millions*, and that all these would be added to the present lamentable list of mendicants. Were this the case; were there any such probability, I should not, I hope, ever have uttered, with satisfaction, the words "perish commerce!" The fact is this, that of the 10,942,646 persons of which the population of Great Britain consists, there are only 2,136,726, employed in *trade, manufactures, and handicraft*, including, observe, not only the actual workers, but their *wives and children also*. Now, then, go into any village or town, look about you, see how many persons there are employed as smiths, carpenters, bricklayers, masons, tailors, shoemakers, wheel-wrights, mill-wrights, and so forth; then deduct these, together with all the persons employed in *trade for home consumption*; do this, and you will find, that the population employed in manufactures for exportation is a mere trifle compared with the whole population. Observe, that all the grocers, all the linen and woollen-drapers, all the *shopkeepers*, in short, of every description, are included. I could *prove* this from the returns given of twenty inland towns and villages that I am intimately acquainted with. The population of the village of Botley, for instance, is stated at a total of 614, and the number of persons chiefly employed in trade, manufactures and handicraft is stated at 420, when there is not one man, woman, or child employed in any thing relating to manufactures, nor to foreign trade, except, perhaps, about a dozen men, who make, in the coppice-cutting season, hoops for the West Indies, there to be used in making sugar and rum casks. This is a strong instance to be sure; but, in looking at the returns of all the villages that I am well acquainted with, there are many persons put down under the head above-mentioned, though in scarcely any one of these villages is there a single person whose employment arises from commerce, by which I always mean, trade with foreign nations. I have made an average of ten villages and two towns of this description, and, I find, that the numbers, thus returned, make a *sixth* part

of their *whole population*. Supposing this to be the case all over the kingdom; and, I dare say it is, for it is the invariable custom to call shopkeepers *trades-people*, the fact will appear to be, that, out of a population of nearly eleven millions, there are not above 1,400,000, including the wives and children, employed in *manufactures* and *merchandise*; subtract from these five-sevenths, at least, employed in *manufacturing for home consumption*, and there are, including merchants and their wives and children, 400,000 persons subsisting through the medium of *commerce*, instead of the *four or five millions*, supposed by W. F. S. so to be subsisting. Indeed, one has but to think for a moment to be convinced, that this must be the case; for, how numerous are our mutual wants; how vast this field of employment amongst ourselves; and, what could become of goods if *millions* were employed in making them to be put into ships? How seldom, comparatively speaking, do we see a manufactory, if we travel through the *whole* of England? The truth is, that manufacturers, like merchants, *congregate*, those who congregate always appear the most numerous, while those who estimate are too often, indeed almost always, guided by that appearance. We hear, too, of Sir Robert Peel with his thousands of spinners; of some other great manufacturer with his thousands; then we are told of Manchester and Birmingham; and then, totally forgetting home consumption, we cry out, "Such is the effect of commerce, and, if commerce go, all these persons are starved." But, above all, we forget how long it is before thousands amount to millions, and how trifling every single description of persons is, compared to that mass which constitutes a nation.

Pitt, whose glory it was to extend our commerce, added more than 400,000 to the list of our paupers: but, I cannot coolly look forward to such an addition; and, I have endeavoured to show, in the pages above referred to, that there would not, upon a general scale, be any considerable addition to the paupers, or, at least, to the poor-rates. Commerce cannot go *all at once*. One branch would die at a time. Manufacturers would first *cease to increase*; those who were but in their beginning would turn from that employment to others; others would open almost as soon as the old ones were closed; and remember, that there are in the 400,000 more than 200,000 of children who have scarcely any employment, for all are included, down to the very cradle. Is this not, then, a bugbear? And is it not painful to hear men of real talents, like W. F. S., expressing alarm for the fate of a country like this at the prospect of a loss of her commerce! Let the hood-winked follower of the Pitts and the Roses suck in the deception, that it is commerce which maintains our fleets and our armies, and pays the interest upon the enormous debt which prodigality and corruption have created; but, for the honour of human intellect, let not men of sound understanding and minds independent partake in the degrading belief, when the fact may, by any one, be ascertained, that, as I have once before stated, the barley of England yields, in malt and in beer only, more, in the shape of taxes, to the national treasury, than all the commerce put together, and which commerce, were it annihilated, would, as has been clearly proved, leave the present means flowing from it, to flow through other channels, and that, too, unpolluted by the political corruptions now inseparable from them.

The 7th objection, to wit, *respecting the injury which the country*

would sustain in the way of supporting its navy, has been anticipated, and, I think that my correspondents A. and WROC will, by this time, supposing them to have read the last number of the Register, [see page 364 of this volume.—ED.] be nearly at their ease upon this score. There is, however, an idea of WROC, at the close of his letter, which I cannot refrain from noticing. Having laid it down as a maxim, that commerce is the nursery of the navy, he says, "If I even thought, that, abstractedly considered, manufactures and commerce were rather *prejudicial* than of benefit to the country, still should I think it wise to cultivate rather than check their growth, being firmly convinced, that our naval greatness is inseparable from our commerce, and, consequently, that commerce is of vital importance to the country." I have, at the pages referred to, shown, that the supply of our navy does not at all depend upon that part of our mercantile marine which is employed in commerce, but, that our home trade, our coasting, and especially our coal trade is the nursery of seamen, not only for the navy, but, for the mercantile marine also, which latter, together with the convoys and ships stationed for the sole purpose of protecting commerce, cost the lives of many more seamen than are lost in the navy employed in the defence of the country or in attacking the enemy. But, upon a supposition that our coasting trade be not a sufficient nursery for the navy (a supposition which I make merely for the sake of the argument), and that commerce be prejudicial to the country, would it not be as well to nurse up seamen in ships employed for that express and sole purpose? A merchant ship of 500 tons does not contain more than about 17 seamen; but, such a ship of the same size fitted out as a nursery ship would very nearly contain two hundred seamen, whom, observe, you would always have at command. It would surely be as well to employ one ship in doing nothing, as ten ships in doing mischief. I am not proposing any such scheme as this; but, if commerce be *prejudicial* in other respects, and this is the case supposed by WROC, I say that this scheme would be much more rational than that of continuing commerce.

So wedded, however, are men to these opinions about commerce being the nursery of the navy, that my correspondent A. seems to think that even wars, when carried on for commerce, are a great blessing, because, as he supposes, they add to the strength of our navy. "Had commercial wars never existed," says he, in his 4th paragraph, "we never should have had such a navy as we now have." To which he might have added, that we should not have had any occasion for a navy one third part so large. At this moment all the ships employed upon the American station; in the West Indies; in South America; in the East Indies; at the Cape of Good Hope; at Gibraltar and in the whole of the Mediterranean; together with all the ships employed as convoys, or in waiting for that purpose; all these are devoted to commerce. They contribute not at all to the safety of the country; they cannot be employed to attack the enemy; they are just so much of national expense, without affording the nation any one benefit. If we had no commerce, or but little, what nation, who was foolish enough to be greatly commercial, would be able to withstand us for a moment? We maintained the DOMINION OF THE SEA when we had *no commerce*, and when our neighbours had much; and why should we not do the like again?

The 7th objection relates to the necessity of luxury; and W. F. S. expresses his persuasion, that luxury is, in great states, an indispensable

law. That it is so, there can be no doubt; for, when the land and labour have produced more food than is necessary to the subsistence of those who till the land, the superfluous food will naturally and necessarily be used in feeding some of them in making things for convenience; from convenience, the next step is neatness; from neatness and ornament men proceed to what may be called luxury. But, we are not to reckon as luxuries all those things which are not absolutely necessary to the preservation of life and health. Castles and churches and large houses are not luxuries, in the sense in which I use the word. Neither are fine horses and carriages. Neither are many other things which arise from the surplus food of the country. But, the evil of commerce, and of its inevitable accompanying financial operations, is, that they assemble men together in large bodies, and shut them up in a narrow compass, in which state their taste and manners become effeminate.

To expend the surplus produce of the earth is necessary; but, it does not follow, that it should be expended in effeminating luxuries. If, for instance, the two or three thousand quarters of corn, which have, this year, been eaten by the Italian singers and their retinue, had been eaten by men employed in the digging of clay, in the making of bricks, and in doing, in short, every thing appertaining to the making of buildings for the silly boobies who have been following those squeaking wretches from cathedral to cathedral, there would have been something produced in return for the corn; we should have something to show for it; instead of having to reflect, that it had been totally annihilated. The men employed in the buildings would have been better men; and would have constituted part of the national strength; whereas the singers and their crew are not only useless themselves, but spread about at large their contagious effeminacy.

This misapplication of the surplus produce of the country proceeds from commerce; from that intimate connection and almost intermixture with foreign nations, which our extended commerce has produced, and, above all, from the assembling of men together in large bodies, which never fails to enervate the mind and to produce an effeminacy of taste and manners, not to mention the numerous vices, which now disgrace this country, in which, before the *reign* of commerce, they were scarcely known, or known only to be abhorred, though they now excite no particular abhorrence. In London and its vicinity there are, probably, half a million of persons, who are constantly employed in nothing but the *annihilation of the produce of the land*; and, in place of producing any object of national wealth in return for it, are themselves kept in such a state of effeminacy as to be of no more use in the way of national strength, than so many lap-dogs. The surplus produce of the earth must be consumed, or it would cease to be raised; but, the question is, whether it be not better for the nation that it should be consumed by men than that it should be consumed by lap-dogs? whether men be not better than lap-dogs as the population of a state? whether the state be not stronger, better able to defend itself and to attack its enemies, with half a million of men than with half a million of lap-dogs? It is precisely in the same way, that a prodigality in the public expenditure operates against a nation. It creates idlers. It creates *annihilators of corn*. The surplus produce of the land is taken from those who labour, and given to others to maintain themselves without labour. If it were not so taken, it would go to the producing of something in its stead. There would be more,

or better cloth ; more, or better, houses ; and these would be more generally distributed ; while the growth of vice, which idleness always engenders and fosters, would be prevented. By the gripe of taxation, every grain of the surplus produce of the country is taken from the lowest class of those who labour ; they have the means of *bare existence* left. Of course, their clothing and their dwellings become miserable, their food is bad, or in stinted quantity ; that surplus produce which should go to the making of an addition to their meal, and to the creating of things for their use, is *annihilated* by those who do nothing but eat.—Suppose a community to consist of a farmer, four cottagers, a tailor, a shoemaker, a smith, a carpenter, and a mason, and that the land produces enough food for them all and no more. Suppose this little community to be seized with a design to imitate their betters, and to keep a sinecure placeman, giving him the tenth of their produce, which they formerly gave to the shoemaker. The consequence would be, that poor Crispin would die, and they would go barefooted, with the consolation of reflecting that they had brought themselves into this state from the silly vanity of keeping an idle man.

But, suppose the land to yield enough food for all ten of them, and enough for two persons besides. They have this, then, besides what is absolutely necessary to supply their wants. They can spare one of their men from the field, and have, besides, food enough to keep him in some other situation. Now, which is best, to make him a second carpenter, who, in return for his food, would give them additional and permanent convenience and comfort in their dwellings ; or to make him a sinecure placeman or a singer, in either of which capacities he would be a mere annihilator of corn, at the same time, that, in case of emergency, he would not be half so able to defend the community.

Suppose *two* of the cultivators become sinecure placemen, then you kill the carpenter or some one else, or, what is more likely, all the labouring part of the community, that is to say, all but the sinecure placemen, live more miserably, in dress, in dwellings, and in food.

This reasoning applied to *tens*, applies equally well to *millions*, the causes and effects being, in the latter case, only a little more difficult to trace ; and, therefore, though luxury be an inevitable law (if we mean by that word the possession or enjoyment of every thing beyond absolute necessaries), the existence of that sort of luxury, which arises from a misapplication of the surplus produce of a country, is an evil that admits of an effectual remedy ; and, for the reasons, which I have before given, I am satisfied, that, with us, a remedy would be found in a great diminution of commerce, which has been, and is, the main moral and political corruption, of a wasteful expenditure of the public money, and, of course, of that system of taxation which is without an example in the annals of Europe, and hardly surpassed under the Aumils of Hindostan.

The 8th objection, to wit, *respecting the effects of commerce upon the civil and political liberties of England*, I have not left myself room to answer, in a manner proportioned either to the importance of the matter (to which my *motto* applies), or to the respect which I wish to show my correspondent W. F. S. who so urgently requests me to give him a convincing answer as to this point, and which answer I shall, I flatter myself, be able to give him in my next.

## SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

*Political Register, December, 1807.*

### 9. *Respecting the effects of commerce upon the civil and political liberties of England.*

"Here is a specimen of the new and pure Aristocracy, created by the Right Honourable Gentleman, as the support of the crown and constitution, against the old, refractory, natural interests of this kingdom. A single Benfield outweighs them all; a criminal, who, long since, ought to have fattened the region kites with his offal, is by his Majesty's Ministers, enthroned in the government of a great kingdom; and encoffed with an estate, which, in the comparison, effaces the splendour of all the nobility of Europe."—BURKE; on the Nabob of Arcot's debts, 28th Feb. 1785. See his Works, Vol. 1V. p. 308.

My correspondent W. F. S., whose letter will be found in page 854, expresses his fears, that if commerce were annihilated, we should fall back into that state, when the population of this kingdom consisted of *Lords and Vassals*. After having described the rise of civil liberty, he puts his question to me thus: "*Do we not, by annihilating commerce, retrace the steps, which brought us from feudal tyranny?*" My answer is, that, while by annihilating commerce, we should not retrace one of those steps, we should cut up by the roots that political corruption, which, in a thousand ways, has operated to our oppression at home, and has been the chief cause of all the dangers with which we are now menaced from abroad.

This is my opinion. I now proceed to offer the reasons upon which that opinion is founded.

*Liberty*, by which I always mean *freedom from oppression*, did not arise, in this country, from the operation of *commerce* (that is to say, trade with *foreign nations*), but from the conflicting interests and passions of our ancient kings and their thanes or barons. The church had something to do in the matter; but, it was chiefly the work of the kings, who, in order to free themselves from the tyranny of the barons, called in the people to their aid; and, that this aid might be efficient, they did, by degrees, arm them with political privileges, after having emancipated them and enabled them to possess property. But, this was wholly a work of *internal regulation and enterprise*. The people, as fast as they became free, as soon as they could call their *persons* their own, naturally became proprietors; from free *men*, they became *freeholders*; and, with the aid of the numerous measures, adopted from time to time, the land of England, which, at the Norman conquest, was in the hands of, perhaps, not more than seven or eight thousand persons, became divided amongst hundreds of thousands. Power followed property, or, rather, they went hand in hand; the dispersion of the one naturally produced the dispersion of the other; and thus was the partial and capricious sway of the feudal lords made, by degrees, to give way to the operations of general laws and fixed principles of jurisprudence, leaving nothing of the old system behind, except that which was deemed useful, and which really was, and still is, useful, as to the distinction of ranks, the ascertaining of local limits, and the tenure of property.

What part of this great change was, I would beg to know, the effect of commerce? The effect of trade and connection with *foreign nations*, not one of whom could afford any example whereon to frame that constitution which arose in England, and all of whom have remained, until within these very few years, under the sway of feudal or royal despots?

As fast as the people of England became free, they became possessed of property; they enjoyed not only food sufficient for them, but also a share of the surplus produce of the soil, which would naturally increase from the same cause. Hence, and not from foreign trade, arose arts and manufactures; and, that the persons, thus employed, might have their due share of political power, corporations and boroughs were established. Men in *trade*, that is to say, engaged in *buying and selling*, would naturally arise as arts and manufactures increased. In all these divisions of the population, some would naturally acquire great riches, without any aid at all from *foreign trade*; and, if we have proved, that, upon a general scale, the nation can acquire no wealth from foreign trade; if we have proved, that, if commerce were to cease, all those who are now employed in manufacturing for foreigners, would be employed in contributing to the national wealth at home, what reason is there to fear, that the loss of commerce would throw us back under a feudal tyranny? If commerce were destroyed, the persons now employed in manufacturing for foreign nations, would be employed in something else. The *profits*, arising from their labour, would, in that case, indeed, certainly not go to the enriching of *merchants*, but, they would as certainly go to the enriching of some other description of persons engaged in trade; and, therefore, the change could have no tendency whatever towards a restoration of the feudal system. Suppose the silk trade to cease. The landowners, who have heretofore expended a hundred thousand pounds a year in silks for their wives and daughters, would, you will say, apply that sum to the purchasing up of the property of those, who, on account of the cessation of the silk-trade, are obliged to sell; and thus, branch after branch of trade failing, the property of traders, piece by piece, would fall back again into the hands of the landowners, until, at last, we should come back again to the feudal system. But, I have, in my former sheet, [page 378 of this volume.—ED.] shown W. F. S. that there are, out of a population of about 11,000,000, no more than 400,000 persons now employed in manufacturing for commerce and in carrying on commerce. Supposing, then, the cessation of the silk and other foreign trades to work in the way above described, we should make but a very trifling retrograde movement towards the feudal system. But, I am sure W. F. S. is too wise to suppose, that the wives and daughters of the landowners would suffer their husbands and fathers to appropriate the silk-savings to the purchase of lands and tenements. In some way or other, they would obtain satisfaction for the loss of their silks. Woollens, for instance, would be made (as, indeed, they now are) to rival silks. Some fineries or other would be made out of our home-produced materials; and, the traders in these fineries (many, and, indeed, most of them, the very same persons that before traded in silks) would possess the profits, and, of course, the riches and the power, before derived from the trade in silks; the balance of property, and of the political power, growing out of property, would continue the same, with this difference, that they would not then, as they now do (as far as commerce is concerned), tend, as I shall now

endeavour to show, to oppress and enslave the people, instead of preserving their liberty.

The idea of Goldsmith, as expressed in the verses taken as a motto to my last sheet, that is to say, *that slaves are purchased at home by the wealth pillaged from savage nations*, is not fully enough explained. To be sure those savage nations are pillaged and most cruelly treated by those, who, through the means of commerce, purchase slaves at home. But, it is we here in England (I use this word because I hate a long compound name for a nation) who, in fact, pay the amount of the pillage. We pay armies and fleets, and we make direct grants of millions, for the maintenance of colonies. The people there are oppressed and pillaged; but we pay the amount of the pillage. Suppose a parish were wicked or foolish enough to raise within itself a thousand pounds, and give it to an expert and gallant gentleman to go and raise contributions upon the next parish; that the various expenses which he should be at for the hiring of subaltern ruffians, for the obtaining of arms, and for food and lodgings, cost him a thousand pounds; and that, finally, he comes back with a thousand pounds worth of pillage. *He* has gained a thousand pounds; but the individuals of each of the parishes have lost to that amount, and, the only difference between them, as to the consequences, is, that the parish which has sent him out to plunder, has the satisfaction to see him raised above the heads of his former fellows, and making some of them, in fact, his slaves. Thus, does this sort of commerce, at any rate, deal its curses double-handed.

But, the political effects of commerce are so glaringly injurious, that it is matter of astonishment, that any sensible and honest man should not perceive them and dread their final and inevitable consequences. One would think it impossible for any such man, recollecting the facts detailed in the speech, from which I have taken my motto, not to abhor the very name of commerce. Mr. Burke states, in that speech, that Benfield *had eight members in the House of Commons*. Now, if the wealth, which, by that corrupt transaction, had been heaped upon him, had been divided amongst a thousand or two of traders at home, is it not evident, that it would have had no such effect as this? If the million of money (I believe it was more) that he received out of the taxes, had not been raised in taxes, it would have been distributed about in supplying the wants and luxuries of those who paid those taxes; but, it would no where have had, either in the beginning or the end, the corrupting consequence so clearly proved by Mr. Burke. A hundred particular instances might be quoted of this corrupting effect of commerce; but, one has only to reflect a little to be convinced, that commerce *must* have a corrupting tendency. It forms men together in large companies, or bodies. They soon acquire great pecuniary powers; and they as soon perceive, that the Minister of the day, be he who or what he will, has great control over their interests. Hence they become his own faithful adherents upon all occasions; and, when the Government becomes interwoven with a funding system, the commerce and the Minister can, at any time, set the country at defiance. By the debt due from the East India Company to the public, and the demand of payment of which depends solely upon the Minister, he holds that body in a string. The merchants and planters of Grenada he holds by a loan made to them out of the taxes, and the re-payment of which loan he can at any time demand. The Sierra Leone Company, finding themselves engaged in a losing concern, wished to throw their



debts upon the public. That is, if I recollect rightly, now effected by an act of Parliament; and, before it was effected, the Company received a large annual grant from that Parliament of which some of them were members. The Company of Merchants at the Bank of England have a law passed to protect them against the demands of the holders of their promissory notes; and, in short, every thing connected with commerce is *necessarily* on the side of the minister of the day.

The commercial and the funding systems are inseparable. One cannot go to any mischievous length without the other; and, by the latter, that is to say, by rendering a considerable part of the population mere state annuitants, the nation is made to be even zealous in promoting its own ruin.—It is to be noted, too, that men engaged in commerce, that is to say, in close and interested connections with foreign countries, must have their local affections divided; and, it would be marvellous, indeed, if *some* out of a great number did not prefer the safety of another country to that of their own, especially when their profession is such as necessarily to have narrowed their minds to questions of individual and immediate profit and loss. These are very fit advisers in matters relating to war, or to treaties; and yet, it must be pretty evident to every man, of only common observation, that, for many years past, they have been the principal advisers; and, the result is now, and long has been, before us. Commerce, therefore, so far from operating beneficially, with respect to civil and political liberty, appears to me to have been, in this country, their greatest enemy. Had it not been for commerce, the accursed system of funding never could have existed to any extent. Commerce, by the means of its attendant assemblages and incorporation of rich and active men, has destroyed the natural influence of the proprietors and cultivators of the land, as well as of persons in trade, if unconnected with those assemblages. Commerce has given rise to, and established, beyond the reach of every thing but national desperation, that system of taxing, which has made a burlesque of the maxim, that “Englishmen’s houses are their castles.” Commerce has erected a sort of under-government, to which official reports, not only of important occurrences, in war and in peace, are made, but also of intended measures; the heads of that affiliation being consulted with as regularly as if they were of the King’s council.\* Commerce, by the creation of such a power in the state, has caused the national character to be degraded, it being notorious, that, upon almost every occasion, the question has been, not what is just, but what is expedient, the expediency turning solely upon the interests of commerce. Commerce has debased the naval service by giving to the whole of it a trading cast and complexion. Endless is the list of evils which commerce has brought upon England; but, there needs nothing else than to say, that it has reduced her to *her present situation*, in which the highest hope she entertains is that of being able to prevent herself from being conquered by France.

To those persons (for I am confident there are many) who think with me upon this subject, how contemptible must appear all those laboured addresses to the public, which have, of late, appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* newspaper, under the signature of A. B., whose object is to persuade us, that there is scarcely any sacrifice of honour or of permanent safety, which we ought not to make, *rather than risk a war with*

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\* See our note, *ante*, p. 22.—Ed.

*America*, a war, in which we could not *possibly* receive any injury from the arms of the enemy! I have thought it my duty, at this time, to read the whole of the letters of this canting, whining, shallow-brained writer; and, without looking into the book which I see advertised as a compendium of the "*Miseries of Human Life*," I venture to affirm, that to be compelled to perform this task, is well calculated for the winding up of the melancholy catalogue. There is, however, one passage, which, by way of specimen, and as applicable to the subject of which I have been treating, that I shall here insert, begging the reader to observe, as he proceeds in the perusal of it, how the American foot peeps from beneath the English cloak. I do not take it upon me to assert, that this writer is really of American birth; but, when we consider, that, in funds, goods and debts, Englishmen have, probably, two millions worth of property in that country, we may easily suppose the existence of American motives with the honour of American birth.

This writer, after pretending to wish to see England and America united for the sake of opposing Napoleon, proceeds thus:—

"If he could bring America into his vortex, his triumph would be complete; without it, in the end, he will be nothing. There are, nevertheless, madmen walking about our streets, who have probably broken loose when Bedlam was lately repairing, who consider a war with America as rather to be courted than avoided; we should, according to them, 'blockade all their ports, and take all their ships.' It would be a notable exploit, to be sure, in the greatest WHOLESALE DEALER in London, to succeed in nailing up the retail shops of all his customers in town and country, and to procure the seizure of all the waggons and lighters, conveying his own goods to every corner of the country and of the world! To whom, pray, are we to sell all these American prizes, and our own manufacturers' produce? And from whom, in the event of scarcity, are we to import flour, or tar and timber for our marine, if we are at war with the whole world? But would it be only a present loss? Recollect, that the population of America is already eight millions, and that the portentous state of Europe is a hot-bed to her. She doubles her numbers every sixteen years. If peace and harmony are preserved, you will soon want no other customers. She already takes ten millions, annually, of your exports. In twenty years, which is but a day in the period of a nation, she will take twenty millions; and in twenty more, which is but as another day, forty millions; and in twenty years more, which is but as a third day, you cannot clothe her, or administer to her wants and luxuries. You may blot the Continent of Europe out of the map, and yet your trade and consequent revenues would overflow. If you continue to cultivate peace, she will not manufacture for herself, so as to interfere with you, until her boundless deserts are cultivated; a period incalculably distant."

Now, who is the madman? He very coolly calculates upon a sixty years' duration of the American Republic; very seriously supposes, that a government like that, of which Mr. Thomas Jefferson is the head, will bear away over sixty millions of souls! If grasshoppers had souls, it might; but never will it hold together, even nominally, ten millions of human beings: and, if there should be a war between this country and that, well managed on our part, the far-famed constitution, of which so many well-meaning men have pronounced the eulogium, has not many months to live.

But, let us not pass over the argument that this pleader for America makes use of, in the passage above quoted. It comes upon us in the shape of a comparison, about a great wholesale dealer in London and the shops and waggons of his customers; but, this writer forgot, that, in order to give force to the comparison, he should, first or last, have shown

that there existed a similarity in the circumstances relating to the objects compared; for, it clearly appears to me, that there does exist no such similarity. The wholesale dealer in London must sell his goods, or he must be ruined. He has bought them, and in order to be able to pay for them, he must sell them again. This is not the case with the nation. It has not bought the goods of any body. It has nobody to pay. It fears neither duns nor bailiffs. It has a hundred bales of cloth; but they are objects of *exchange*; and, if it cannot be indulged in obtaining tobacco for this cloth, the consequence will be, that there will not be so many hands required in the making of cloth, and those hands will (a very few in all) turn to other employments in such a way, that, either directly or indirectly, they will in a short time produce, from our home produce, something to please idle people full as well as tobacco, without which, I take it, a nation might very well subsist. I love this wholesale dealer too well, however, to quit him yet. Let us suppose a state of barter instead of a state of money, for that will greatly simplify our view of the matter.

The wholesale dealer, who shall have nothing, must exchange his cloth for food, and raiment, or he dies; but, let him have raiment and every thing else but food; he must have that, and he must exchange his cloth to get it. But the *nation* has the food that it wants; it has already had a *surplus* quantity of food wherewith to feed the people who were making the cloth, and it was willing to give it (I might say *throw* it) away for the purpose of obtaining, in exchange, the luxury of tobacco. It has the same surplus now that it had before the cloth was made, and if it give it away in exchange for superior fineness, or for some ornament in its cloth, is not that luxury as good to it as the luxury of tobacco?

For the argument of this profound politician, whom the editor of the Morning Chronicle, for the sake, I suppose, of teaching the virtue of patience to his readers, invites to a continuation of his labours; for the argument of this profound gentleman to have been good for any thing, except that of misleading those who do not reflect, it should, somewhere or other, have been shown, *that we drew the necessaries of life from America*, as the wholesale dealer *must* draw them, however circuitously, from his customers. There does, indeed, lower down, drop in, incidentally, a slight attempt towards the establishing of this similarity, in certain cases, which, as always existing, ought to have been the basis of the argument. We are asked how, *in times of scarcity*, we are to get *corn*. Now, not to mention, that, from authentic documents, it appears, that during no one *year* of the late scarcity, the corn imported, from all the foreign nations put together, was more than enough to supply our wants for *one week*, it happens, unfortunately for the argument of this wholesale politician, that, to whatever amount the imported corn might be, we *must* have, first or last, produced, on that account too, a *surplus* of corn here, else we could not have fed the people while working upon the manufactures, for which that corn was exchanged; and, whatever effect he may hope to produce upon the minds of unthinking persons, by a display of the horrors of scarcity with closed ports, he may be assured, that men of common sense and reflection will never be scared at this idea, knowing, as they do, that less than two millions and a half of us now produce, upon this land of ours, enough food for eleven millions; that part of this food now goes, in the end, to be exchanged for tobacco; and, that, when we want corn, it is because we employ men in manufacturing goods to

exchange for tobacco instead of employing them to raise more corn here, for which purpose we have an abundance of land already enclosed, and that waits only for more hands to render it more productive.

I will pass over the notions, that Napoleon wants only America on his side to *complete his triumph*; that, without her, he, in the end, will be *nothing*; that, taking care to secure her continued custom, we may *blot the continent of Europe from the map*: all this I pass over as the natural offspring of that disgusting vanity, which, next after meanness and fraud, is the prominent feature in the American character, excepting, as, in such cases, I always do, the inhabitants of *New England* and the *Quakers of Pennsylvania*.

Having gone so far in the sin of noticing this writer, I am induced, like sinners of another description, to go a little farther, hoping that the reader, when he considers the present state of our connection with America, will not think his time entirely thrown away in hearing what her adherents have to urge in behalf of further concession to her.

"This view of the subject" [the looked-for sixty millions of customers] "should never be lost sight of for any speculative temporary loss or inconvenience. In all our transactions with America, we should look to the America of fifty years, or a century, to come. The policy of a nation should be prospective, extending to the contemplation of future ages, and not like the prudence of a transaction between man and man, which is properly contracted within the narrow span of individual existence. America also should reason upon the same principle.—She is now in her infancy, and, if not checked in her growth by an unnatural struggle with her parent, will arrive sooner at maturity and greatness, than any nation of antiquity; because she started into life in the meridian of civilization: but if, from her highly Republican constitution, she acts in her great political character, from the sudden impulses of the multitude, and not from the mature considerations of a regular Government, she may throw away, in a rash moment, all the advantages which her firmness and virtue, in the storm of her revolution, has so eminently entitled her to enjoy.—But to return to the interests of our own country.—It is said that our losses and privations, which it is admitted must follow from a war, would come back again with fresh advantages with the peace, which our arms would speedily enforce. Nothing can be more fallacious than this expectation. If the present dispute should ferment into national hostility, America will manufacture immediately for herself; and it will be extremely difficult to prevent the emigration of your spinners, whilst the stagnation of your trade continues, even supposing it to be but temporary. The raw material she has already, the rice plantations in Carolina have to a great extent been converted to the growth of cotton, and Louisiana alone would grow enough to manufacture for the whole habitable world. But, supposing her manufactures not to reach at first to supply luxuries (which they certainly would not), she would manufacture cheap goods—would make it a national distinction to wear them, and penal to wear any other. I know that this was contemplated during the American Revolution, if the independence had not taken place; and that it is talked of now from one end of America to another. This is a most serious consideration. The effect of such a spirit of industry, turned suddenly on manufacture, would not cease again upon any peace which the pressure of our arms might produce. When the ordinary course of human luxuries and necessities is stopped up, so as no longer to run habitually upon the fabrics and commodities of particular nations, who have enjoyed a kind of prescriptive monopoly in the commerce of the world, no man living can anticipate its return, or know what course it will take. Like the sea or mighty rivers, which, when forced by floods or tempests out of their accustomed directions, seldom come back again to their ancient beds.

"Before I leave this subject let me warn his Majesty's present ministers to beware how they try any rash experiments upon the trade of this country by an universal blockade, in consequence of the attempts of France to obstruct it. Let them not wean Europe from our manufactures, by attempting to shut them

“out altogether, lest new habits of luxury and new channels to supply them should start up. Let them take their chance of finding their way till the storm is overblown, and by a manly policy, as it regards America, let us break the French party there, and look to the infinite resources, which, almost from pole to pole, the new Western world presents to us. The late ill-contrived, abrupt, unauthorized landing in La Plata, proves nothing against the probable success which may be expected hereafter from the meditated plans of a vigorous and prudent government. We should have looked merely to commerce, and not to settlement. We should have held out to the inhabitants the safe pursuit of their own interests, and not have attempted to plant the standard of conquest in such distant regions, which, with our limited population, it was impossible to maintain by force. This mistake may, and I hope will, be corrected hereafter. The people of England ought more cheerfully to subscribe to the expenses of such plans, however unsuccessful in the beginning, than to the visionary attempts of weighing the powers of Europe in an imaginary balance, which, after the labour of a century and a half, has ended in our scale being kicked up into the air, with the loss of five hundred millions of our money, whilst all the nations of the earth have descended together in the other. Who knows, but that, by this wiser policy, the Divine Providence may be preparing the light of the Gospel, and all the blessings of civilized life which follow in its train, for nations in the shadow of darkness; and that this favoured nation may still be made the day-star (as she so long has been) of the most extensive human blessings? Who knows, but that thus the emperor of France may live to see, that instead of obtaining universal empire by ways that are unjust and unwarrantable, his ambition is only raising up more numerous and more virtuous communities to balance his power, and in due time to break it into the atoms which compose it? But the age of miracles is past. It is only by human means that human advantages are to be obtained, and we must do our parts. We stand upon the vantage ground. Nothing conceded by Great Britain can be imputed to fear—she will only rise in dignity by the mildness and moderation of her councils.”

Here, again, is another of the “Miseries of Human Life.” We are here led, or rather tossed away from America to the continent of Europe, and thence to South America; and, from the propagation of trade we are tossed to the propagation of the Gospel; and, what is worse, we must take notice of every point, or be thought to admit the truth of what is said upon it. As to the propagation of the Gospel, I do not believe, that that **Being**, in endeavouring to form an idea of whom, the greatest of minds shrinks back with the perception of nothing but its own littleness, ever made any of his creatures with a view to punish them for not believing in that which they never have heard of, or, hearing of, have not capacities to understand; and, when I consider the abominations, which, under pretext of carrying the light of the Gospel, have been committed by Spaniards in South America and Englishmen in Hindostan, I am rather disposed to invoke Divine Providence to prevent any farther progress in that way. I am for “raising up no more *new communities*,” guided, as I am, in my wishes by experience of the past; and, I cannot help suspecting, that the world has not been much improved by the exchange of inhabitants, which has taken place in the United States of America. But, to finish this peroration, since we have begun upon it, is it not kind in this ill-disguised American to send us to find new markets in South America, and to carry on the work of religion there, while his country is to be left to carry on a free trade with our enemies in Europe? “Let us,” says he, “by a *manly policy* towards America, break the French party there, and look at the infinite resources, which, almost from pole to pole, the Western world presents to us.” And what is this “manly” policy? Why, *concessions*, to be sure. “We stand,” says he, “upon the vantage

"ground. Nothing *conceded* by Great Britain can be imputed to *fear*. "She will only rise in *dignity* by the mildness and moderation of her "councils." If this writer had not in his memory the dialogue between JOHN BULL and NIC FROG, wherein the latter wheedles the former to ruin himself that Nic may be the gainer, this passage is only another proof, added to the many already existing, that great wits often fall upon the same idea. Of one thing I am pretty certain, that the late ministers, were they in power, would follow the advice of this writer; for, the person who has the control over the pages of the Morning Chronicle, would not, otherwise, have given such unqualified praise to these letters, which have evidently been published with a view to the producing, in the public mind, an effect in favour of concessions to America. But, how impudently false is the assertion, that concession to America, at this time, would not only not be imputed to *fear*, but would raise Great Britain in *dignity*! Was there ever any thing so impudent as this! It *must* be imputed to fear, because it could be imputed to nothing else; and what but an enemy, an enemy base and hypocritical, could give such advice? If these concessions are made, there is, at once, an end of the struggle. We give up. We acknowledge ourselves beaten. We declare ourselves a set of traders, who must starve if their trade be considerably diminished; and, our enemy, who waits for the confession, will give us back our beloved trade, upon the sole condition, that we give him up the country. The treaty will be short and pithy, and, from the bottom of my heart, I believe, that there are many persons in the country who would hail it with joy, if they could obtain security for the peaceful continuation of commerce.

But, let us, since we are so far in, examine a little into the further consequences, which this writer apprehends from a rupture with America. She will (dreadful thought!) *manufacture for herself*. We have proved, that it would be a change *advantageous to us* to cease to supply her with manufactures, but, at this time, it is worth while to see what her advocates say, as to the effect of that change upon her. We are told by this writer, that she would make it a national distinction to wear goods of her own manufacture, and would make it penal to wear any other, such regulations, to his own knowledge, having been in contemplation during the rebellion, and, as he also knows, are now again talked of from one end of the States to the other; that this is a matter for most serious consideration with us, because the effect of such a spirit of industry, turned suddenly on manufacture, would not cease again upon any peace, which the pressure of our arms might produce; that she has the raw material in abundance, being capable of growing *cotton* enough to supply the whole civilized world.

What, then, is cotton all that we supply her with? It does not make a *tenth* part of her imports from England. By descending to almost a savage state, she might do without our hardware and some other branches of manufacture; but, without our wool, she could not exist even in that state. It is as necessary to her as food. Without it life cannot be preserved; and, were I minister of England, I would soon convince her, since she has begun to be so insolent, and to treat us as shopkeepers, that she held her life at my mercy. America is a country which has an average *hard* winter of *seven months*. There needs no authority to convince us, that she *must* want a great quantity of woollens of every description, and that she *cannot* produce, proportionately, much wool; be-

cause, as to the first, the bodily sensations of every man will lead him to a right conclusion, and, as to the second, it requires, but a very slight degree of observation to convince one, that, in a country which has such winters, sheep cannot be raised to any extent. Add to this the three circumstances, that the winters are always accompanied with deep snow; that the summers are as much hotter than ours as the winters are colder; and that the untilled land is covered with impenetrable woods, instead, as here, with grass or heath. There needs nothing more to convince the reader, that America not only cannot produce woollens enough for her now, but that it is absolutely impossible that she ever should.

Mr. Spence has, I perceive, been deceived by one of those deceivers, the American land-jobbers, upon whose authority he states, that the Kentucky farmer, "makes even his own clothing at home, and sells no more of the produce of his land, than will serve to buy him salt and a few other articles," amongst which few articles he includes, of course, his coat, waistcoat, flannel shirt, stockings, overalls, and blankets; for these he *must* have, and he must have them from England. And where does this Kentucky farmer get his *hardware*? Good God! what silly lies do these fellows put into print! And yet they find even sensible men ready to believe them. Mr. Spence has, I should think, in his single head, more real wisdom than all the "New Amphyctionic Council" (as poor Mably called the Congress) put together. But what the Americans want in wisdom and in wit, they amply make up for in impudence; and experience teaches us the great utility of that endowment in obtaining belief to falsehood. What always surprised me most, was, how they could look *one another* in the face after having published their lies. But, it seemed to be a thing understood amongst them; as if they had entered into a compact, as if they had promised and vowed at their baptism, to humbug the whole world, and especially England. I really am not quite in charity with Mr. Spence for having given currency to this representation; for, what sort of pots and kettles and candlesticks and locks and keys and plates and dishes did he believe it *possible* for a Kentucky farmer to *make at home*? What sort of shoes? Nay, though he may grow the *flax*, what sort of *shirts* and *handkerchiefs*? What sort of *caps* and other things for women and for young children? I'll tell Mr. Spence what an American farmer makes at home. Most things in wood, except what is called furniture, and that he buys. Coarse aprons; coarse linen for summer trousers; bed-ticking of a coarse kind; and in families abounding in females, some coarse shirts to work in; as also a little of a sort of stuff called linsey woolsey. But, even this practice is far from being general, there not being, perhaps, one farmer in ten who is able to adopt it to any extent worth mentioning. This is the real state of the case. I know it to be so from having not only lived many years in America, but from having passed a considerable part of my time in the houses of farmers. From this statement is it not clear, that the people cannot exist without imported woollens, and that, too, in great quantities? The country never could have been settled without the aid of the wool of Europe; and, for the reasons which I have given, it cannot now exist without it.

But, this writer, of whose lucubrations the Morning Chronicle is so anxious to obtain a continuation, tells us, that, by making it a *national distinction* to wear home manufactures, and *penal* to wear any other, the thing would be *easily* accomplished. Very easy indeed, to hang a man

or woman, or, according to the *old practice*, to ride them naked upon a three-sided rail having first dressed them in a garment of tar and feathers; or, not having a jail at hand, to shut them up in their own houses, or townships, denying them all communication with friends or relations, and denying them, at the same time, *all medical assistance*: by hellish means like these, which none but Americans ever practised, they might prevent people from wearing many articles that they now wear; but, not English woollens; for them even the tormentors themselves must wear, or they would be frozen too stiff to be able to inflict their torments. However, supposing the Devil to come to the aid of the fraudulent debtors to English merchants (for those are the great enemies to England), and to furnish each of them with a garment from his own manufactory, frost and snow proof; and supposing, that, by one means or another, a state of things is brought about, in which even English woollens can be dispensed with, the consequence to us, we have shown, would be beneficial. But, in order to show that this profound gentleman has, if he be sincere, taken a false alarm, let us apply what he says of America to ourselves. He tells us, that the agricultural industry of America would *suddenly be turned on manufacture*. Well, then, I think our manufacturing industry might, without any riding upon three-edged rails, be as suddenly turned upon agriculture; for, it is pretty evident, that a man weaver will learn to thresh quite as soon as a thresher will learn to weave; and that a boy or girl spinner will learn to weed or to tend sheep quite as soon as a boy or girl shepherd or weaver will learn to spin. They will require the same quantity of food in one situation as in the other; and, if the loss of American commerce had this effect, the change would produce no other consequence, than that of an addition to the good morals, the health and bodily strength of the people here, while the change in America would produce a contrary effect, except as to *morals*, for, in that respect, with the exceptions before made, it may safely set all change at defiance. But, the truth is, as has been before amply proved, that the cessation of commerce altogether, and, of course, with America, would produce in England, the effect here contemplated only in part, and that, perhaps, a very small part. We now raise, upon our own lands, food to keep, say a thousand, manufacturers to make goods to be sent to America, there to be exchanged for tobacco, for instance; if we did not give them the food for this purpose, we should give it them for some other purpose, and, as tobacco is a pure luxury, though, it must be confessed, a very strange one, we should, if we could no longer get tobacco, give these thousand persons food to make us some other luxury, and, perhaps, it might be a luxury contributing more towards what may be called national wealth than a thing which we send upwards in smoke or downwards in something still more offensive to the beholder; and, as to *revenue*, of which also this gentleman is pleased to speak, as arising from commerce, we have proved, I trust, to the satisfaction of every man capable of putting two ideas together, that *all* revenue, in this country, is paid by the *people here*, and that the ability to pay it comes from resources inseparable from the land. In this instance of the tobacco, who pays the revenue? The Parson, who smokes it; and the Parson is enabled to pay for it by the produce of his living, and that produce comes from the land. A newspaper publisher, in imitation of his betters, smokes it too. Here the operation is a little more intricate; but, if we trace back the money, which the publisher gets by his newspapers, to the pockets of those who



read them, we shall find that they, too, are the representatives of something which the land has produced.

Thus, then, in whatever light we view the commerce of America, its cessation can be no injury to us as a nation; but, on the contrary, must, if the thing can be accomplished, be finally a permanent benefit. We are so situated as to want nothing but what our land produces, with the exception of the few articles of naval stores, of which, too, our marine, a marine naturally growing out of and supported by our own mines and domestic trade, will always ensure us an abundance, in spite of the world combined. We want no "*national distinctions*" to induce us to wear cloths of our own manufacturing and produce; much less do we want, for that purpose, the three-edged rails, or any of those infernal transatlantic inventions, by which murder is committed with the levity of a wake. We have no need to have recourse to any violent or unnatural means. The surplus produce of our soil will still feed all those whom it now feeds; and, though, doubtless, for a short time, there will be some individual inconvenience and distress arise from the changing of the channel through which it now reaches that part of the people who are employed in making manufactures for exportation, we have only to let the thing alone, new and regular channels will open, and we shall have the experimental proof of the truths for which I have been contending, and from my anxiety to establish which, I have, I am afraid, put to too severe a trial the patience of the reader.

In taking leave of this subject, for the present, I must point out to the reader a letter from Mr. SPENCE (which will be found below), complaining of my insinuations against him, in the making of which he has convinced me that I was wrong, and I therefore beg his pardon. I do not, however, allow, that I was a plagiarist either from Aristotle or Bishop Berkeley; for, though it now appears (what I did not know before) that they inculcated the same principles, which I have been endeavouring to inculcate, the application of them to a state of things like the present is new. I felt, before receiving his letter, great admiration of the talents of Mr. Spence, entirely unmingled with any thing like literary envy; but, I must confess, that there is one honour, which, as I have hitherto enjoyed, so I wish always to enjoy, undivided with any mortal breathing, and that is the honour of being abused by the hirelings of the press, those enemies of truth, those darkness and pestilence-shedding stars, those curses and scourges of the community. This wish is, perhaps, a weakness; but, who has not his weakness? Mr. Spence makes but a poor apology, or rather none at all, for putting F. L. S. to the end of his name. Plain WILLIAM SPENCE would have answered every useful purpose; and, I venture to say, that he is, in his own mind, convinced, that the society to which he belongs, wherever and whatever it may be, is unworthy the honour he has done it. Men who are nothing of themselves naturally wish to crowd into a society or party. "What are you?" said a friend of mine, one day, to another person. "A staunch Pittite," answered he. "That's well for you," replied my friend, "for now you are *something*." But, Mr. Spence is not one of those nothing-men. He had no rational temptation to add any initials to his name; and, besides, it was imitating those impostors, who cheat the unwary by practising the trade emphatically called *book-making*, which is entirely an operation of the hand and scissors. I declare with perfect seriousness, that my insinuations, of which Mr. Spence so justly complains, arose, in great part, from the prejudice excited by

those unfortunate initials; and, when one starts with a prejudice, it generally sticks by one to the end of the journey. When I see LL. D. in a title-page, if I am not well acquainted with the name that precedes it. I instantly throw down the book, as the work of one who has obtained his certificate of learning from our "well-educated" neighbours to the North, at the price of a second-hand wig.

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## SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

*Political Register, March, 1807.*

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Under this head I must place the little which I think it necessary to say, at present, upon the subject of Mr. Arthur Young's letters. The statement in this second letter, respecting the consequences of a total stop to the *importation of corn*, is, at the first glance, truly alarming, so that I, who am not very apt to be scared by battalions of figures, have really started back at the array of Mr. Young. Having taken time to rally, however, I find that my alarm was groundless; and, as the matter is of great public importance, I cannot let it pass without some few observations respecting it — I had said, upon a former occasion, that, compared with the annual consumption of the nation, the importation of food was a mere trifle; and that I believed, that, in no one year, did the importation amount to more than sufficient to feed the people for *one week*.\* This Mr. Young says he was astonished at; and he has now shown, that the average annual importation of corn, for 26 years last past, has amounted to nearly, or perhaps quite, two millions of pounds sterling. Now, the population of Great Britain is 11 millions, and, if we allow the food of each individual, taking one with the other, to cost about 4s. a week, one week's food amounts to the two millions of pounds; so that, if this rate of subsistence be admitted, I was not much out in my reckoning, and that the average consumption of individuals surpasses four shillings a week there can, I think, be very little doubt. It will not do to tell me, that it is only *corn* that we are here speaking of, and that individuals do not consume 4s. worth of corn weekly; for, though this fact be correct, I answer, that, if we have a plenty of every thing else but corn, we can do with less of that; and that, the only way of estimating is, to speak of *food* altogether.

I wish Mr. Young had informed us what quantity of provisions of various kinds is annually *exported* from Great Britain and Ireland; for, I am inclined to think, that the amount of it would surpass that of the imports. The shops in America, strange as it may seem, are tolerably well supplied with *English cheese*, which, of course, would remain at home, if we ceased to receive American corn. Mr. Young does, however, say, that the supplies of corn from America are not worth speaking of; and I was glad to hear him say so, because, as the public will have perceived, the American clan have been endeavouring to frighten us with the spectre of *famine*, to arise out of the cutting off of these "abundant supplies."

Great praise is due to Mr. Young for his researches, for his accuracy

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\* See page 387.—Ed.

in detail, and for the ability with which he discusses all the subjects of which he treats; but, I do think, that he leaves the arguments of Mr. Spence wholly unanswered, it being impossible that any combination of facts can overset a principle, supported by reasons which cannot be shown to be erroneous. Besides, what has Mr. Young's experience proved? Only this, that, at a particular period, when manufactures were languishing, *wheat was cheap*, and agriculture upon the decline, as, indeed, it must necessarily be. I see no great evil in this, being anxious only, that the point may be settled, that England can exist great and free, independent of *commerce*, by which, observe, I always mean, trade with *foreign nations*.

There is one other topic, touched upon by Mr. Young, which I wish to advert to for a moment: I mean, his proposed *General Enclosure Bill*. That such a bill would be like the bed of Procrustes; that it would be an outrageous invasion of private property; that it would fall upon title deeds and records with teeth as unsparing as those of a paper mill; that it would give rise to confusion and litigation without end, must, I think, be evident to every man at all conversant in the divers tenures and claims appertaining to the unenclosed lands of this kingdom. But, what good would it produce? Would it cause more corn to be raised? If it would, it would be a calamity; for, corn is now *too cheap*; at least, so have said the Parliament, in their acts for exportation. Would it cause more persons to be born and raised up? Why, then, increase of consumption would go hand in hand with increase of production; and no increase of abundance would take place. But, my opinion is, that it would cause no increase at all in the quantity of food raised; and this opinion I shall retain, until I see *all the lands now enclosed* producing, *every year*, a crop more than sufficient to pay all the expenses of rent, taxes, and tillage. When I see such an accession of hands as to have brought out manure, and to have worked all the land, now enclosed, into this state; then I shall say, "Enclose more land, for we cannot make this more productive;" but, while I see one third part of the enclosed land producing annually nothing at all, or, at most, not half enough to pay the expenses of rent, taxes, and tillage, I shall continue to think, that a *General Enclosure* bill would be a wondrous monument of national folly.

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## SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

*Political Register, December, 1807.*

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NOTE BY THE EDITORS.—The following was published in the *Register* of Dec. 26, 1807, under the same head as the foregoing articles. We insert it here, by way of Appendix to what has gone before.

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At the late Smithfield meeting of cattle showers, the following proceedings are said to have taken place:—

"The DUKE OF BEDFORD rose, and said, that we had heard much of a late pamphlet, entitled, '*Britain Independent of Commerce*;' while '*Perish Commerce*' had been the language of others: *happily*, the present company were not called upon to decide between the different branches of our national industry; but while they knew agriculture to be the fountain of plenty and virtuous industry, they were so fully impressed with the importance of commerce

“ and manufactures, as heartily to concur in—*The union of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures.*”

“ LORD SOMERVILLE then rose, and, after acknowledging the propriety of confining the business of the present meeting, as much as possible, within its original objects, begged to call the attention of the land-owners present to the great importance of *supplying our navy with hemp*, the importation of which, from the Baltic, is now unhappily interdicted; and that, although an excellent substitute is known in the Bengal sun hemp, should this fail of hereafter fully supplying the want of our navy, he trusted, that as hemp is proved to be an excellent preparation for a wheat crop, and to interfere little with the established system of husbandry upon strong soils, except in the growth of beans, for which it must be substituted, that the land-owners would be found ready in forwarding the views of government, in raising this most essential article upon our own soils, by relinquishing the restrictions in their laws, against the growth of a vegetable, which is now proved by experience not to exhaust the soil, more than other crops, when not left to ripen its seed.”

After this, there was read, it seems, for the benefit of the company, an essay upon the buying and selling of *Scotch Cattle*, though I should have thought, that most of the persons present knew pretty well the nature of that traffic, of which England has now felt the blessed effects for somewhat better than a century.

As to “*perish commerce*,” his Grace the Duke of Bedford is, I should think, better skilled in *Scotch Cattle*, old and young, than he is in matters relating to commerce, as connected with politics; he may have experience for his guide in the former; but, he has not, in all probability, had much experience in the latter. At any rate, if his grace means to controvert our doctrines; if he means to honour us by entering the lists of controversy with us, he should be apprized, that we shall hope to be met by something more and better than a *toast*.

What LORD SOMERVILLE said is worthy of notice, though the meaning in the conclusion is not very clear. No reliance should be placed upon India. We have plenty of land in England to grow *hemp* upon. *Low* land is best; but, his Lordship says, and I dare say he is well informed upon the subject, that it will grow very well as a preparation for wheat. Only let the hemp importation be stopped, and we shall grow enough; and, as Mr. Spence says, until we do grow enough, it is absurd to call ourselves *independent*.

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## THE POOR.

*Political Register, July, 1808.*

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NOTE BY THE EDITORS.]—See this subject treated of before, in these *Selections*, Vol. I. p. 209, and p. 297, note (+); and also in this volume, p. 285.—In the following article Mr. COBBETT suggests to the owners of land how they should proceed in order to remedy the evil of enormous poor-rates. This view is much the same as that which appears to have been taken by BLACKSTONE, who, in speaking of the statute 43 Eliz., as intended to provide work for the able-bodied and unemployed, as well as maintenance for the impotent, complains of the “shameful neglect” of their duty by the overseers in not obeying the statute. He observes:—“The two great objects of this statute seem to have been, 1. To relieve the impotent poor, and them only. 2. To find employment for such as are able to work: and this principally by providing stocks to be worked up at home, which perhaps might be more beneficial than accumulating all the poor in one common work-house; a practice which tends to destroy all domestic connections (the only felicity of the honest and industrious labourer), and to put the sober and diligent upon a level, in point of their earnings, with those who are dissolute and idle.”—*Commentaries*, Vol. I., pp. 360

361. And he adds, further, of this same statute:—"When this excellent scheme was neglected and departed from, we cannot but observe, with concern, what miserable shifts and lame expedients have from time to time been adopted, in order to patch up the flaws occasioned by this neglect. (p. 365.) "The farther any subsequent plans for maintaining the poor have departed from this institution, the more impracticable and even pernicious their visionary attempts have proved."—Vol. IV., p. 432. A scheme for altering the poor-laws, something similar to the act now in operation (4 & 5 Will. IV. cap. 76) was invented in 1759; and an act of parliament was brought into the House of Commons, and passed; but the Lords threw it out. SMOLLETT, in approving of this scheme, says:—"It can never be expected that the poor will be managed with economy and integrity, while the execution of the laws relating to their maintenance is left in the hands of *low tradesmen*, who derive private advantage from supplying them with necessaries, and often favour the impositions of one another with the most scandalous collusion. This is an evil which will never be remedied, until persons of independent fortune, and unblemished integrity, actuated by a spirit of true patriotism, shall rescue their fellow-citizens from the power of such *interested miscreants*, by taking their poor into their own management and protection."—*History of England*, Vol. IV., p. 463.—Mr. PARKER, M.P., who seconded the Address in answer to the King's Speech on opening Parliament (Feb. 4, 1836), would seem to have imitated SMOLLETT's tirade against those shopkeepers with whom the poor deal; for that gentleman, while he spoke of the new poor-law as working well, is reported to have asserted that it was objected to by none but "*petty and interested shopkeepers*." If by "*petty*," Mr. PARKER meant *despicable* or *insignificant*, that term was any thing but appropriate; for, surely, there can be no tradesmen of more importance or more essentially useful than those who supply the poor with what little they enjoy. One might suppose from SMOLLETT, that to deal in a small way is the same as to be a miscreant. He could not mean, that the merely being interested causes miscreancy, any more than Mr. PARKER could mean that it causes pettiness; or else, what must be thought of those who call themselves "*the landed interest*," and "*the commercial interest*?" The "*landed interest*" has lately given such proofs of attachment to its own self as are, perhaps, surpassed by nothing of the kind that ever yet occurred. As the present session of Parliament (1836) was approaching, great stir was made among the landlords to force the case of their distress upon the attention of the legislature. They unanimously declared that prices were too low. The majorities, at their meetings, were not against bringing down the poor's-rate by the means of starving the poor here; yet, so bent were they on whatever tended to their own advantage, that they decided that Ireland should have poor-laws given to it, in order that the poor of that country, by being allowed to eat the produce of their own labour, might prevent that produce from coming over here and keeping down English prices! There was an account of one of these Agricultural Meetings, at Aylesbury, the Marquis of CHANDOS in the chair. And at this meeting Sir WILLIAM YOUNG, Bart. M.P., was reported to have said:—"It was justly complained of that there was a depression of prices; and no great surprise, so long as Irish produce came in so very abundantly. (Hear, hear.) But how was it to be controlled? It could not be prevented by legal enactment, because Ireland was as much a part of his Majesty's dominions as the county in which the meeting was now assembled. Steps, however, might be taken to *raise up the peasantry of Ireland*, so that they might consume more of the food which was produced in that country (hear), and he therefore thought, if poor-laws were introduced into Ireland, that object would in part be attained."—*Times* newspaper, Nov. 14, 1835. Remarks of the same kind were published, as made at meetings of the Agricultural Associations of Yorkshire and Shropshire.—*Times* newspaper, Nov. 17, 1835.—Ed.

I WAS, some little time past, put in possession of a statement, relative to the expenditure, on account of the poor, in the parish of ENFIELD, in Middlesex, which statement I deem worthy of general notice, and which, therefore, I shall insert here:—

"ENFIELD, April, 1808.—The following Comparison of Parochial Expenditure

" between the time when we were in the Road to Ruin, and the present Year, is drawn for the information of the inhabitants of this parish by PETER HARDY.

" By introducing a regular and known Table at the workhouse (by which the people are better fed than before); by substituting economy for waste; by obliging those to work who were able; and by refusing the able and healthy, but idle, drunken, and dissolute, admittance into the workhouse (which ought only to be a refuge for infancy, the sick and the aged), society in general has been benefited, and the inhabitants of this town relieved of a very enormous burden.

" At that time as much meat was destroyed at the workhouse in one week, as is consumed *now* in three months. That article cost us *then* at the rate of 600*l.* per annum. It *now* costs us 60*l.*

" At that time we consumed of bread 90 half-pecks per week. We *now* consume on an average 16.

" Bread and flour alone cost us in a year *then*, double what the whole house costs now.

" We paid *then*, for cheese only, double what we pay now for every article of shop goods.

" We *then* consumed 100 cart-loads of wood and 18 chaldron of coals in a year.

" We *now* consume only 12 chaldron of coals without any wood.

" At that time we raised 3,900*l.* poor's rates per annum. We *now* now raise 1,900*l.*

" We *then* had above 2,000*l.* by sale of timber from the Chace, in addition to our rates. We *now* have 400*l.*

" We were at that time very deeply in debt. We *now* do not owe any debts."

This reform was, it appears, effected by the activity, good sense, and public spirit of this Mr. Hardy, to whom the parish have given, I believe, some mark of their respect and gratitude.

Of all the numerous symptoms of national decline in England, none is, perhaps, so strong, so completely indisputable, as the rapid increase of our paupers. There are, out of nine millions of people, one million and a quarter of paupers; that is to say, of persons, who *cannot* have any motive whatever for wishing to preserve the government and the laws. Nearly a *seventh* part of the whole population of England and Wales is of this description. As to the great cause of this increase of pauperism, it evidently is the corresponding increase of taxation, through the means of which so many are maintained in idleness upon the fruit of the labour of others. I have, I think, upon a former occasion, clearly shown, that taxes, if carried to a certain extent, *must* cause some of the people to be so poor as to be unable to maintain themselves; but, at present my object is to offer a few observations as to what might now be done, with a view of checking this lamentable evil, if only one or two of the principal persons, in each parish, would heartily set about the work.

Until of late years, there was amongst the poor, a horror of becoming chargeable to the parish. To become chargeable was a reproach; and never to have been chargeable was a subject of proud exultation. This feeling, which was almost universal, was the parent of industry, of care, of economy, of frugality, and of *early* habits of labour amongst children. But, this feeling is now extinguished; the barrier, shame, has been broken down, and in have rushed for parish aid all those, whether young or old, who are not of a turn of mind which must always be rarely met with.

The parishes, instead of endeavouring to check the evil by a vigilant attention to the different earnings and means and manners of the poor, have, in general, adopted the easy course of giving *wages* in the shape of relief. For instance, the week's wages is, in some places, ten shillings, and, in order to put the labourer with a family upon a par with the

labourer without a family, the former receives, in the shape of relief, a certain allowance for each child above two. So that as a *matter of course* every labourer, who has more than two children, becomes, with all his family, paupers; they sink quietly and contentedly into that state, from which their grandfathers, and even their fathers, shrunk with horror. Nay, when a labourer, in such a state of things, marries, he counts the pauper chest among his ways and means; and even his hours of courtship are partly spent in anticipating the receipts from that never-failing source. That man should possess *spirit*, that there should be any independence of mind, that there should be frankness, amongst persons so situated, is impossible. Accordingly, whoever has had experience in such matters, must have observed, with deep regret, that instead of priding himself upon his little possessions, instead of decking out his children to the best advantage, instead of laying up in store the trifling surplus produce of the harvest month, the labourer now, in but too many instances, takes care to spend all as fast as he gets it, makes himself as poor as he can, and uses all the art that he is master of to cause it to be believed, that he is still more miserable than he really is. What an example for the children! And what must the rising generation be? It used to be the boast of the labourer, that he could mow or reap or hoe so much in a day; that he could earn so much money by his labour; but, now, if he does earn great wages, his first and greatest care is, to disguise the fact; and, it frequently happens, that he will change from master to master, and from one sort of work to another, for the express purpose of preventing the parish from being able to ascertain the amount of his earnings. When part of his children become able to assist in maintaining the family, he takes care that the amount of their earnings shall never be known; and as he still gains by counting them amongst the number to be maintained, he keeps them at home, in preference to sending them to annual service, where they would, under the command of others, contract those habits of industry, regularity, and obedience, which, in very few cases, in any rank of life, children contract at home. So that this system operates in producing a twofold mischief, 1st, in encouraging the labourer to rear his children paupers, and 2ndly, in preventing them from ever shaking off their pauper-like habits. When children, thus reared, do become servants, they are generally the very worst of servants. Bred up in dissimulation, no word that they utter can be believed; they are totally unworthy of confidence; and, as is universally the case with slaves, they are sure to be insolent when they can be so with impunity.

It is very right, that some power should stand ready to decide between the pauper and the parish; but, even this institution, so benevolent in its intention, has its evils. To resist, by a formal process, the claims of a pauper has always the appearance, or, at least, is liable to the imputation, of hardness of heart; and, especially when the expense of yielding does not fall upon themselves, this is an imputation which few men are willing to incur; yet, it is easy to conceive, what shocking abuses must arise from a general yielding to claims of this sort. Parish aid has this peculiar defect in it, that it *never excites gratitude*, and, of course, produces none of those amiable effects, which naturally flow from gratitude. Upon the parish the pauper makes a *demand*; he comes, like a dun, with a threat of the law ready to apply in case of refusal; and whether he obtain his ends or not, his feelings are nearly the same.

There is another terrible consequence of this system of general pauperism, and that is, that it withholds from the cripple, from the orphan, from the helpless widow, from the aged, and from all those who are really objects of compassion, and who ought to be comfortably supported and tenderly guarded; from all these it withholds a part, at least, of what they ought to receive. It confounds these with those who have brought themselves into misery by their laziness, or their vices. I know an instance, in a parish which has now a work-house, of two men, one about forty, who lost his two eyes in two drunken brawls, and who scarcely ever did a day's work in his life; the other, upwards of fourscore, who fought at the battle of Minden, and who worked, I think, till his eighty-fourth year. What could be more unjust than to couple these men together under the general name of paupers, and to treat them alike? Yet, until they had a work-house, the parish, though very desirous to do it, were unable to discriminate; were unable to give any visible and solid proof that they looked upon one man as being more entitled to their compassion than the other.

I have introduced the statement respecting the workhouse at Enfield, for the purpose of showing what abuses work-houses are exposed to, when left in common hands; but, I am satisfied, that, if the *gentlemen* of the parishes, whether in town or country, were to take the superintendence, or control, upon themselves, such establishments would become of the greatest utility. To the farmers who are the *payers*, the task of refusal is always an ungracious one; being parties, and parties refusing to pay, the magistrates hear them, and ought to hear them, with some suspicion, unless under particular circumstances. Besides, the farmers *have not time* to attend to any concerns but their own; and, unless they are of the superior order of farmers, they cannot be expected to be proper judges of all the various matters upon which they have to decide. Gentlemen are seldom payers of poor-rates to an amount that can produce a temptation to do what is cruel or harsh; they are better qualified for making representations to the magistrates; they stand as umpires between the farmers and the poor, with a little harmless bias towards the latter; and, it would happen but in few cases, that there would be any appeal from their decision. An instance of the effects of an interference of this sort may be witnessed in the parish of Droxford, in this county, where one gentleman has, by his sole exertions, reduced the poor-rates to one half of their former amount, and is, I am told, able to say, that now there is no such thing as misery in his parish, where it was formerly visible in numerous families. For my part, I know of no greater blessing to a parish than such a man; and, I wish he had more imitators, amongst those who run from the misery of their neighbourhoods to the gayeties of the metropolis. The parish rates, all together, of England and Wales amount to nearly, if not quite, *six millions* annually. Look at *Enfield* and *Droxford*; and ask yourself why, under the zealous efforts of only one or two men in each parish, a *general* effect of the same sort, and in the same degree, might not take place? The poor-rates in general, *amount to one half as much as the rent of the land*. Is this an object beneath the consideration of the proprietors of the land? Or, is it of less importance to them, than the babble about what they call politics, which so many of them help to keep up in London? But, the most weighty consideration of all, is, that, by neglecting to perform this, their natural duty, they suffer those who are real



objects of compassion and of tenderness to be confounded with the lazy, sturdy pauper, and they leave the rising generation to come up to man's estate, with minds divested of even the idea of independence. If a gentleman talks to me of love of country, of public spirit, I would ask him how he can so effectually and usefully evince it, as in this way? His efforts in almost all other ways may be useless; but, in this way, they are not only certain to be attended with utility, but immediate utility.

The numerous general regulations that have been made by parliament, without producing any good effect, the paupers having, notwithstanding all of them, continued to increase in number, prove, that, while the present system of taxation lasts, it is in vain to seek for any general remedy for this great and disgraceful evil. The remedy, or the mitigation, at least, must come from individual exertion, or the whole evil must not only remain, but must receive daily addition. It appears to me, that country gentlemen should lay it down as a rule never to have a pauper in their employ; and that, according to the quantity of their work, they should select men of the largest families and *pay* them for their labour a sufficiency for their maintenance. This would be giving an example to the farmers, and would, at the same time, be fixing a mark of disgrace upon pauperism. I cannot endure the idea of the labourer's receiving regularly, while he and his family are all in good health, a part of his subsistence in the character of a pauper. Nothing does good but that which is *earned*. There are particular cases when acts of charity (properly so called) are useful; but, I like not the system of *presents* and *rewards*. The labourer, like other men, will do little for himself if he be coaxed to do it; and, like other men, he will not, if he can avoid it, have any one to watch over him, or pry into his concerns. I am for giving him his earnings, and, that he may set a high value upon them, say not a word which shall lead him to believe, that I do not regard them as his own. If I had a labourer, who was to become a notorious drunkard, I would dismiss him, because it would be my duty strongly to show my disapprobation of so beastly a vice; but, after a good deal of observation, I am thoroughly convinced, that, as a "watched pot never boils," so a watched penny never breeds. The lending of cows to cottagers, and all that system of superintendence, including child-bed linen and the like, though arising, in most instances, from amiable motives, has, I am persuaded, never done any good; and, I make no doubt, that, if the fact could be ascertained, fifty pounds expended in *good cheer* of the old fashion, would not only excite more gratitude but would work more solid advantage to the receivers, than ten thousand pounds expended in "*comforts*" and spelling-books. The "*comforting*" system necessarily implies *interference* on one side, and *dependence* on the other; and, if these exist, it matters not whether you *call* the "*comforted*" family paupers; for, they will feel themselves dependent, and will have no other than the mind and character which belong to the pauper state, the most prominent feature of which is dissimulation, or, what is vulgarly called "*making a poor mouth*." I do not think that ladies visiting poor families is at all useful. When any part of a family, particularly the mother, is *ill*, then, indeed, such visits are proper; but, I have no opinion of the visitings, which, in some places, are in vogue. They savour too much of ostentation; and, whether they be really so, or not, ninety-nine times out of a hundred they are so considered by the visited party. In short, I am for giving the labourer a sufficiency, in the shape of *wages*, to maintain his

family, and leaving him to live and manage his affairs entirely in his own way.

The great obstacle to the restoration of the labourers to their former independence of mind, is, that their wages, generally speaking, are partly paid in the shape of parish relief. A man, with a wife and three children, cannot possibly keep body and soul together upon ten, or even twelve, shillings a week; and, how then is he to labour upon the food which that wages will supply? Well, say the employers, we will, then, give him a little more wages in the shape of relief; because, if we make an addition to what he receives in the shape of wages, we must raise the wages of single men also. And, why not? Would you have no soul of them all earn a penny more than what is barely sufficient to sustain life? Would you have them to be, in effect, slaves from the cradle to the grave? Of what avail is it for a man to be industrious, if his industry will neither enable him to lay something up in store, nor enjoy a day of leisure or recreation? What motive has he to keep from the parish list, if he be certain, that a cut in the hand in whetting his scythe, will make him a pauper?

To those whom I may have wearied with these desultory remarks, I would beg leave to repeat, that the paupers of England and Wales are nearly a million and a quarter in number, and that, by the exertions of individuals of weight in their several parishes, this shameful evil may, in some measure at least, be removed.

Botley, 14th July, 1808.

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## LIBEL LAW.

*Political Register, July, 1808.*

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“By the law of England, there is no impunity to any person, publishing any thing that is injurious to the feelings and happiness of an individual. . . . .  
 “ . . . . No man has a right to render the person or abilities of another ridiculous.  
 “ . . . . . It has been observed, that it is the right of the British subject to exhibit the folly or imbecility of the members of the Government; but, gentlemen, we must confine ourselves within limits. If, in so doing, individual feelings are violated, there the line of interdiction begins, and the offence becomes the subject of penal visitation.”—Report of Lord Ellenborough’s charge to the jury, upon the trial of Mr. Cobbett for a libel, in May, 1804.

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NOTE BY THE EDITORS.]—The following article contains a discussion of an interesting question connected with libels, namely, how far a man renders himself liable to prosecution for merely wounding the feelings of another whose conduct he has criticised. The case of *Sir John Carr v. Hood and another*, which Mr. COBBETT here mentions, is reported in *Campbell’s Reports*, vol. i. p. 355. That report contains the observations of Lord ELLENBOROUGH upon this question generally; but the report gives too much for us to insert the whole here, and the whole need be read by those who take an interest in the question. We may, however, just remark, that there does appear to be some inconsistency between the almost unqualified dictum contained in the above motto, and the doctrine afterwards laid down by his Lordship in *Carr v. Hood*. The above motto is taken from the report of the first of two trials, which took place in the King’s Bench at Westminster before Lord Ellenborough. The first was a criminal prosecution, by information, for certain libels published by Mr. COBBETT upon the Earl of HARDWICKE, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord REDSDALE, Lord High Chancellor of Ireland, Mr. Justice OSBORNE, one of the Judges of the Court of King’s Bench in Ireland, and Mr. MARSDEN, Under Secretary of State in Ireland. The information was

tried on the 24th May, 1804. The second case was also one of libel; and in this Mr. WILLIAM CONYNGHAM PLUNKETT, then Solicitor-General of Ireland (afterwards Lord PLUNKETT), was plaintiff, and sued Mr. Cobbett for damages; and this cause was tried on the 26th of the same month. The two trials are reported in the *Register*, vol. v. pp. 801, 865. Mr. COBBETT was evidently regarded as a person whom it was necessary to *pull down*. "Who is Mr. Cobbett?" said the Attorney-General, in conducting the criminal prosecution,— "Is he a man of *family* in this country? Is he a man writing purely from motives of patriotism? *Quis homo hic est? Quo patre natus?* He seems to imagine himself a species of censor, who, elevated to the solemn seat of judgment, is to deal about his decisions for the instruction of mankind. He casts his eye downward, like the character represented by the poet of nature, from Dover-cliff, and looks upon the inferior world below as pigmies beneath him." It was not in the case of the criminal information only, but also on the trial of Mr. PLUNKETT'S action, that Lord ELLENBOROUGH gave importance to the injury to *feelings*; for, in his charge in Mr. PLUNKETT'S case, he said:—"The only way of measuring the extent of the injury done to a man's fame is, by asking yourself, what would make my *mind* and my *feelings* an adequate compensation, if such a libel as this were true? . . . . . I would ask, what would give more *pain to a virtuous mind*, than to insinuate that he had acted like our common enemy, &c."—The reader will see some notices of Lord ELLENBOROUGH'S doctrine on the subject in *Holt's Law of Libel*, 2nd edit. p. 114, note (u). And see *Starkie's Law of Slander and Libel, Preliminary Discourse*, pp. 51, 55; and *Plunkett v. Cobbett*, 5 Espinass's Reports, 136.

After the trial, mentioned in my motto, took place, there were, as the public will remember, several papers published in the *Morning Chronicle*, showing the dangerous tendency of the doctrine laid down by the Lord-Chief Justice. A great orator and statesman observed to me, at the time, that neither I, nor any other writer, could now, with impunity, mention the name of any man, unaccompanied with *praise*; "for," said he, "to name him without praise may injure his *individual feelings*; to injure his individual feelings is to pass the line of interdiction, and to expose yourself to *penal visitation*; therefore, you are reduced to this simple alternative: name no one, point out no one; hint at no one; or, bestow upon him positive and serious praise." That this was the case is evident; for, how is it possible to *ridicule* the folly or imbecility of any man, without violating his feelings? and, if this be a necessary consequence with individuals in general, must it not be so with those persons, who are members of the Government, and who have the eyes of the whole nation fixed upon them, while they have, at the same time, rivals for power, who are anxiously watching for every opportunity of exposing and exaggerating their follies and imbecility, in order to oust them, and to get their power and their emoluments? Upon the effects which doctrine like this, must have upon the interests of a nation I will speak by-and-by, after having introduced a recent trial, which will be found I believe to have originated in this very doctrine.

It was observed, at the time, that the *Reviewers* were in a very perilous way; for, that, if "no man had a right to render the person, or *abilities* of another ridiculous," it was clear that the reviewers of books ought to have a bit of their ears taken off once a month, at least, and that, in general, they would be exposed to a double or a triple cropping. What a glorious doctrine for dull and senseless authors! And, what abominable what atrocious unchangeable libellers, were the Popes and the Gays and the Swifts! What a misfortune for the poetasters and sycophants of their day, that they did not live in ours! This is the light in which a person, named Sir John Carr, appears to have viewed the doctrine. He is, it

seems, the author of a work called, "*The Stranger in Ireland*," which, as is stated in the report of the trial, was published, some time ago, by Sir Richard Phillips, one of the present Sheriffs of London. He has another work in manuscript, entitled, "*A Tour through Scotland*," which work also had been carried to the same shop; but, Sir Richard declined purchasing the Tour, because he thought its sale would have been prevented by the effect of a work, published by Messrs. Hood and Sharpe, booksellers, in the Poultry, in which work the *abilities* of Sir John Carr were ridiculed and exposed to contempt. Well, then, said this knight of the quill, finding myself injured, not only in my *feelings*, but in my *interests* too, by this critical work, in which my folly and imbecility are exposed, I will e'en apply to the law; these men are libellers i'faith, and I will have ample damages from them. On the 25th of this month the trial came on, and the following is the fullest report that I can find of it in the newspapers:—

"Mr. Garrow stated this was an action for damages. The plaintiff (Sir John Carr) was a gentleman who had been originally intended for a barrister, but on account of ill-health was advised by his physicians to travel. He did, and thought proper to make his travels useful, by taking notes of whatever he saw remarkable, and afterwards publishing them for the amusement of the public; and he also derived a considerable emolument from the sale of those publications. The defendants are booksellers, who had published a book called '*My Pocket Book, or Notes for a right merrie and conceyted Tour through Ireland by a Knight Errant*,' for the purpose of ridiculing the works of the plaintiff. They were not satisfied with attacking one of the books that he had written, but the whole, viz. *Stranger in France, Northern Summer, Tour round the Baltic, Stranger in Ireland, and Tour through Holland*. Another work, written by Sir John Carr, viz. *A Tour through Scotland*, never had been published, in consequence, as he would prove, of the book published by the defendants. In the front of that book, which they entitled '*My Pocket Book*,' is a frontispiece representing the departure of the plaintiff from Ireland; and in page 29, preface, an explanation of that frontispiece, which commences with 'You shall see what you shall see, the knight-errant's regret at leaving Ireland,' a grotesque figure, with a handkerchief to his eyes, a number of ridiculous figures, following him, setting up the Irish howl; a huge porter, carrying his MS. travels, which are so heavy, that the weight of them obliges him to bend under them; in one hand he carries the wardrobe of the knight errant, encompassed in a small pocket handkerchief, &c. The publication itself commences by observing, that the writings of the plaintiff consisted of nothing worth paying for, except the fine binding, the fine paper, and the goodness of the print; and there was nothing to recommend them except the wideness of the margins. The defendants had not been satisfied with publishing one edition of this book, but they had published three, and had advertised and circulated it most industriously. This morning there was one purchased at the defendant's shop, entitled '*a third edition*.' If this was not the case, it was for the defendant to prove it; for he understood it was often advertised to be the tenth edition of a book when there were not fifteen copies of the first disposed of. He would prove that the publication complained of had injured the plaintiff as an author; that he would have got 600*l.* for the Tour in Scotland, if it had not been for this book. There was no man that would wish to give the reviewers a greater scope than he would; but he could not justify them in making a mischievous attack on an author; they might as well attack his person; for when they scurrilously attacked his works, it was injuring him in the most essential point. He did not doubt but there might be some foolish passages in it, but, when the reviewer criticises, he ought to pick out those passages, and not condemn the whole for perhaps one mistake or improper expression. His learned friend, as well as himself, had often, unfortunately, during their professional life, said foolish things, and he should be sorry if they were to be silenced ever afterwards, and deprived of the benefits of their profession, for a foolish expression. He would prove that the defendants had gone

“ the length, in private conversation, to say, that they would exterminate the plaintiff as an author. If he proved this case, he had not a doubt but the jury would give a verdict for the plaintiff, and damages, not only to the amount of the loss sustained, but to deter others from sending forth such scandalous and scurrilous publications. He then proceeded to examine his witnesses.

“ Mr. Hunt proved that he purchased at the shop of the defendants, on the 14th March, 1808, a book entitled ‘ My Pocket Book,’ which he produced, and another on this morning, which was stated to be a third edition. He had inquired from the person who sold him the books, who was the author; but he would not inform him. He also purchased a Monthly Review, called ‘ The Mirror,’ for April and June last, which had the advertisement of ‘ My Pocket Book’ inserted in them.

“ Lord Ellenborough here observed, that if a man published a foolish thing, every person had a right to say so. The liberty of the press would be completely done away, if it was not the case.

“ Mr. Johnson, bookseller, St. Paul’s church-yard, deposed, that he purchased the manuscript of *The Stranger in France* from the plaintiff for 100*l.*

“ Sir Richard Phillips deposed, that he purchased from the plaintiff his *Northern Summer Tour round the Baltic* for 500*l.*; *The Stranger in Ireland* he gave him 700*l.* for; and for his *Tour through Holland*, 600*l.* He had seen the manuscript of the *Tour through Scotland*, and would have given 600*l.* if it had not been for ‘ My Pocket Book,’ which he heard had depreciated the works of the plaintiff so much, that it deterred him. The witness met the defendant, Hood, one day, who asked him, had he read his ‘ Pocket Book.’ Witness told him he had not, for he never read such scurrility. Hood replied, ‘ Lord help poor Sir John, we have got a rod in pickle for him, we will do for him.’—On his cross examination by the Attorney-General, witness said he never read books of a scurrilous nature; he considered all anonymous publications as libellous and scurrilous. He printed as many books as any man in London, but never published any without the name of the author. Although he might have read one or two numbers of ‘ *The Edinburgh Review*,’ when it was first published, he did not recollect having read any other. When he was first in the trade, he used to attach to his advertisements the criticisms of reviewers on books which he published, but for the last six years he had ceased to do so. As they crept into vice, he crept into virtue. He left it off, as he thought it was only encouraging scurrility. He had printed and published ‘ *Anecdotes of the Founders of the French Revolution*,’ It was an anonymous publication, that is, it was a detail of facts, without any author’s name. There was nothing libellous, nothing scurrilous, in it; he never published a libel in his life; if he had, he would be ashamed to come into that court to give evidence. He did not know that every thing it contained was fact, but it was given by the author as a plain narrative of facts. He had published ‘ *The Oxford Review*:’ that was also an anonymous publication, but he did it that there might be one honest review.

“ Lord Ellenborough here interrupted the witness, and said, that the questions put to him did not tend to make him commit himself. If they had, he would have protected him; but the voluntary evidence, or, rather, that wish to show the pureness of his morals, had committed him; for if he, the jury, and the public, were to belittle him, all other reviews were dishonest, except his own. He was laying ground for the same charge to be preferred against him that was alleged against the present defendant.

“ Sir Richard Phillips then proceeded, and said, he was actuated by the wish that there should be one honest review, when he consented to be the publisher of ‘ *The Oxford Review*.’ He was obliged to his Lordship for his kind interference; for although imposed on by the usage of the trade, when he first commenced business, for six years it had been his study to check the scurrility of the press. He could not say that his sentiments were very refined as to honesty, but he trusted he had a little common honesty in this respect, and he hoped, while he lived, it might remain with him. He never read anonymous publications, whether reviews or not; for he considered them all scurrilous; but if he published any thing anonymous, it was as clear from scurrilous matter as crystal water. He discontinued publishing ‘ *The Oxford Review*,’ as he found it did not answer; as nothing but scurrility met with encouragement from the public.

" Mr. Leigh, of the house of Mathews and Leigh, deposed, that Sir John Carr had offered to him the 'Tour in Scotland' for sale, which he would have bought, and given him 400*l.* for if it had not been for the unfavourable impression " ' My Pocket Book ' had made on him.

" Lord Mountnorris deposed that he had read 'The Stranger in Ireland,' and ' My Pocket Book,' chapter by chapter, and he had no doubt in his mind but that ' My Pocket Book ' was written to ridicule ' The Stranger in Ireland.' The plaintiff had been recommended to him as a gentleman, and he was pleased to have found that he had spoken so handsomely of his native country, Ireland; and would have purchased a copy of the book, if it had not been so much depreciated by the publication of ' My Pocket Book.' The noble lord was cross-examined by the Attorney-General, who observed, that he was happy to have the honour of addressing a nobleman of letters, instead of the knight who lived by letters, and knew nothing more of them than the livelihood which they afforded him. His Lordship said, that he had read the books over with great attention, and thought ' My Pocket-Book ' was a fair and just criticism on the other.

" Lord Valentia corroborated the evidence of his noble father.

" The Attorney-General, counsel for the defendant, stated, that he never found himself more perfectly happy than in addressing the jury in defence of his clients. His mind was perfectly at ease as to the verdict they would give. His learned friend, in the opening, had charged him, by anticipation, with what was charged against his client. But he would assure him he was mistaken; for whatever foolish expressions he had made use of, he would not criticise or comment on them. In the first place, they had the evidence of Sir Richard Phillips. The knight had either given false evidence, or he was the greatest fool that ever walked over earth. [Lord Ellenborough observed that he thought ' the weakest man ' would be more appropriate.] The Attorney-General then continued. He had said ' the greatest fool,' but his lordship thought ' the weakest man ' was the more proper; then let it be ' the weakest man;' if Sir Richard Phillips had been living when Erasmus was writing, he would have given any money for him. The book published by the defendants had done nothing more than it ought to have done, and what an honest criticism ought to do. This had been proved by the Earl of Mountnorris, who was going to purchase 'The Stranger in Ireland,' until ' My Pocket Book ' had shown him its real merit, when he very properly declined to purchase it; and had not his lordship given it in evidence, that he thought it, after comparing them both together, a fair criticism? The plaintiff went to Ireland; he was knighted there; and this he thought was sufficient to make him commence author. His name was to sell the book, and he dressed it out in red morocco, with a wide margin, superior print and paper, and this was thought by the plaintiff sufficient to ensure a sale? And what had ' My poor Pocket Book ' done? Nothing more than what itself would have done—shown its true merits. It was like a coal porter in a fashionable suit of clothes; his outside was genteel, but the moment he opened his mouth to speak, you discovered the cheat. So with ' The Stranger in Ireland'—the moment you opened it, your expectations were disappointed. There never was an author of merit whose works were not attacked, but the merit of the work silenced the attacker. Socrates was a great author, and he was reviewed by Aristotle, who was also a great writer; yet it did not affect the merits of the works of Socrates. In the present case, if it was a work of merit, ' My Pocket Book ' would not have injured it. He was sorry to have taken up so much of the time of the court and jury; still he wished to speak to them on the subject; for the action appeared more grotesque than the frontispiece complained of. What could be more ridiculous? A book is published, open to the inspection of every person, containing the most nonsensical ideas that could enter the brain of man: another person criticises it; he turns it into ridicule; and prevents a portion of the public from throwing away their money upon nonsense. In doing this, the critic had done public service, and he trusted the jury would feel it as such, and give a verdict for the defendants.

" Lord Ellenborough said, that every man who wrote committed himself to the judgment of the public, and every one might comment upon his work. If the commentator did not step aside from the work, or introduce fiction for the purpose of condemnation, he exercised only a fair legitimate right. In the

present case, the plaintiff had embodied himself in his work; the principal part of his tour was concerning himself, and, therefore, placing him in Dublin, and the long coach waiting for him, was not irrelevant to the subject. Had the party writing the criticism followed the plaintiff out of his book into domestic life for the purposes of slander, that would have been libellous; but not otherwise. *To repress just criticism would be extremely injurious to society.* If a work was sent into the world that was likely to disseminate a bad taste, or was destructive of public morals, *it was of the first importance to correct and expose it.* Society, in that case, was indebted to the critic.—His lordship then alluded to the advancement of philosophy and science by the opposition one great man had offered to another, and repeated the observations of the Attorney-General on that subject. If an individual, he said, presented the public with an outline sketch of himself, *that public had a right to finish the picture;* and if the criticism was a fair one, the author must take the consequences of it. His lordship added, that he *did not know of any thing more threatening to the liberty of the press, than the species of action before the court;* and he would again repeat, that if the publication complained of was a fair criticism, and the author had not travelled out of the work he criticised for the purpose of slander, the action would not lie; but if the jury could see any thing personally slanderous against the plaintiff, unconnected with the work he had given to the public, in that case, the plaintiff had his right of action, and they would find accordingly.

“The jury consulted together a few minutes, and found for the defendants.”

This is all very true, though I do not like the words *fair* and *just*, as used here to qualify the term criticism. The distinction between the man's domestic affairs and his book is clear enough; but, as long as I write about the book and the abilities of the author and the motives, or probable motives, of his writing, and the disposition of mind which the book displays, I cannot safely trust any one to decide, whether my criticism be fair or unfair, just or unjust; that is to say, if the decision is to affect my person or property. The critic is an author as well as the writer of the book. The criticism may be criticised; and, in both cases, the public are the sole judges of what is fair, or unfair, of what is just, or unjust. Otherwise, and if these qualifications are admissible, the courts of justice are to be looked to in matters of taste; they are to decide every literary dispute; and here, as well as elsewhere, we shall be unable to open our mouths without having a lawyer for our guide and assistant. I will not answer for the correctness of this report of the Chief Justice's speech. He might not mean, that a man was punishable, by law, for unfair or unjust criticism; and, I am in hopes, that the decision, upon this occasion, will make the stupid authors feel, that they cannot worry a man of talents to death merely because he has exposed their stupidity.

It does not appear, from this report, whether Sir Richard Phillips came forward voluntarily, or was forced forward, in behalf of his brother knight; but, to be sure, it was quite good to hear him say, that he never read scandalous or anonymous publications, when he was the sole or part owner of so many works of the latter description; when he was part owner of a *Review*, and the sole owner of the “*Anecdotes*,” than which there is not, perhaps, a more false and scandalous book in the English language, that is to say, if falsehood and scandal do not lose their nature when applied to French men and French women, and when they obtain circulation because they are calculated to gratify preconceived malice and hatred. The work of Messrs Hood and Sharpe not only injured Sir John Carr, but Sir Richard Phillips also; for, observe, he is the proprietor of Sir John's first work, *the very work that was criticised*, and the sale of which must, of course, be greatly injured, if not totally stopped, by a criticism, which had stilled the second work in its shell. So that Sir

Richard Phillips was, in fact, a person deeply interested ; and, though this circumstance would not alter the *fact* which he had to state, it would naturally give a tinge to any *sentiment* that he had to express. I am, however, utterly astonished, that any word should have dropped from him calculated to throw odium upon those who endeavour to make a free use of the press. What would it have been to him, if those bundles of trash, labelled "The Stranger in Ireland," had been sent, as they now, in all probability, will be, to the trunk-makers, or the pasteboard mill ? Was this vile rubbish worth the risk of his being exposed to the imputation of wishing to see a brother bookseller suffer for having published a book operating to his injury ? I do not impute this wish to him. On the contrary, I sincerely believe him, who is a very kind and good as well as a very clever man, to have entertained no such wish ; but, certainly, his evidence, as stated in the newspapers, is likely to make the public infer such an imputation. The fact, I would almost lay my life, was this : between a bookseller and an author there necessarily arises, particularly if the latter be a person of some consequence, a greater or less degree of that sort of intimacy, which, as the fashion of the world goes, is denominated friendship. Sir John Carr appears to be a man not likely to lose any thing for the mere want of asking for ; and, he would easily find the means of committing Sir Richard so far as to bring him into court with sentiments favourable to his cause. The moment a man is lashed, or exposed, he, according to the cant of the day, cries out *libeller*. Libeller is echoed by his friends ; and, after hearing this in half-a-dozen places, he naturally begins to turn himself towards the law for redress, especially if he find himself incapable of defending himself with his pen. It was thus that the quack in America acted towards me. He began the publications. He issued his destructive prescriptions through the newspapers. I answered his publications ; I reduced him to silence, and finally drove him and his death-doing practice out of the city. Unable to defend himself, he had recourse to the lawyers ; and, with the assistance of such judges and jurors as are to be found in great abundance in his country, gave me a dose almost as injurious as he would have sent me from his own shop. Of all the acts of which a man can be guilty, none is so mean, none is so base, none is so truly detestable, as that of seeking, through the law, vengeance for a literary defeat. If this were to be tolerated ; if exposing a man's *abilities* to ridicule were to be deemed libelling, and to be punished as such, who, unless he had a long purse, and a body of iron, would dare to attempt the task of criticising the works of a rich man ? Every wealthy fool might publish his trash in perfect security, and that, too, without being under the necessity of treating and bribing the Reviewers. No man would dare expose his folly or imbecility ; for, at any rate, the tormentors of the law would be set upon the critic, who, as his least punishment, would be half-ruined in his defence. There would be nothing, however infamous as well as foolish, that a poor writer would dare to comment upon with freedom. He must write in trammels so tight as to render his efforts of little or no effect. There would, in short, be a general license for folly and wickedness, when backed by wealth ; and still there would be scoundrels so impudent, as to call upon us to deny ourselves almost the necessaries of life, and to expose life itself for the purpose of preserving, what they would still call *the liberty of the press*. The evil would go yet further ; for the rich bookseller would become a persecutor as well as the wealthy fool who writes. His



purse would be a shield for a dozen or two of dull doctors whom he keeps in his pay, and by the means of whose imposture-like performances he increases his fortune. Well might Lord Ellenborough say, that, "he knew of nothing more threatening to the liberty of the press than this "species of action."

But, how stands the case with regard to publications touching the words or conduct, of persons in general, and particularly members of the government? Is it not dangerous to the liberty of the press to lay it down as a maxim, that their *abilities* are not to be ridiculed; that you are to say nothing at all which hurts their *feelings*, without exposing yourself to punishment? Reports of trials are, in general, not very correct; the whole of the places where trials are held are so crowded with lawyers, to whom, indeed, they are almost exclusively appropriated, that it is extremely difficult for any reporter to obtain the accommodation necessary for the making of notes. I do not, therefore, give the words of my motto as words actually uttered by Lord Ellenborough, but merely as words published in the several newspapers, as having been uttered by him, upon the occasion alluded to. As such, they must have produced a great deal of effect; and, there is no doubt in my mind, that the doctrine they contain has encouraged Sir John Carr, knight, to bring the action, the fate of which is above recorded. Let us hope, however, that this dangerous doctrine is now exploded as completely as if the Whigs had kept their words after they got their places, and made it a subject of discussion in parliament; for, I believe, it will be very difficult to produce any solid reason, why a man should have the liberty to hurt the *feelings* of an author any more than to hurt the feelings of a minister of state; why he should be allowed to ridicule the *abilities* of the former any more than the abilities of the latter; why it should be an offence worthy of *penal visitation* in the former case any more than in the latter case. I cannot discover any grounds for a distinction; and, therefore, I conclude, that if we should, by any accident, see a fool in office, we are at liberty to expose his folly, and to convince the nation, that the management of their affairs is in bad hands. Indeed, the real use of the liberty of the press is to cause the exposure of weak and wicked public servants. It is of comparatively trifling consequence what men publish in books. Five hundred people, perhaps, never saw, or heard of, Sir John Carr's trash; and, if it could have been read by the whole nation, it is not likely that it would have done either harm or good. But, in the ability and honesty of men in office, every person in the country is deeply interested, and therefore ought to be regularly and minutely informed upon the subject. Upon matters of *taste* in books, of what consequence is it whether the people are well-informed or ill-informed? But, upon matters closely connected with the prosperity and honour of the country, it is of great importance that they should lack no information that can possibly be communicated to them. Well, then, how is this information to be given? How, if not through an unshackled press, a press restrained only from uttering *falsehood*, according to the old language and practice of the law? Suppose I had been in battle with a general, and had seen him run from the enemy, beating him in swiftness as shamefully as a March hare beats a lurcher; suppose I had seen this, or received good information of it, would it not be very necessary to make the fact known, in order to prevent such a winged-heeled fellow from again exposing the lives of the army and bringing disgrace upon the nation? Suppose I had an oppor-

tunity of knowing several men, pretending to office and power, to be totally unqualified for any business, and totally unworthy of any trust; would it not be very useful to communicate my knowledge to the public? Or, suppose me to have merely an *opinion* relating to public men, how do we arrive at the best chance of forming correct notions as to things unknown, except it be by expressing our opinions to one another?

Nor, can I see what mischief could arise from carrying the same liberty into the discussions relative to the private affairs of men. Suppose, for instance, I say, that Mr. such a one is a contented cuckold; that he has received proof quite sufficient that his wife has had a child by another man; but that, in consideration of a good sum of money, paid him by the principal cuckold, he holds his tongue, and, as the old saying is, puts his horns in his pocket. This is, indeed, to suppose a strong case; but, such a case may *possibly* exist; and if it does, should not such a man be pointed out? Ought not the mean scoundrel to be held up to the ridicule and scorn of the world? What other way is there of correcting such disgraceful and pernicious vices? Suppose me to know a man upon the point of becoming a bankrupt, why should I not state the fact? What harm can arise from it? And if, upon any occasion, I speak what is *false*, there is the law to punish me, and to make compensation to the person whom I have slandered.

It is said, that you would, by allowing a liberty like this, set every neighbourhood together by the ears. Why should it be so? I can discover no reason for it. It is to deny the excellence of *truth*, to suppose that an unrestrained expression of the truth could be productive of injury. It is fitting that all men and women and actions should be generally known for what they are; and, it appears to me, that to express a fear at the promulgation of truth, is to foster falsehood, and to offer a screen for all sorts of vices. There are many vices and crimes, too, that the law will not reach, yet they ought to be repressed, and how are they to be repressed unless men dare communicate freely their knowledge to one another? I publish that such an one is a liar. If what I assert be false, my falsehood can be made appear, and I am punished in one way or another; but, if what I assert be true, is it not useful, that it should be known?

Upon this principle the law of England formerly proceeded. The indictment of a person for a libel always stated, that he had uttered what was *false*; falsehood was essential as a ground-work of the charge. As we have grown in refinement our ears have become more delicate, and it is now sufficient that the words are *scandalous* and *malicious*, qualities which it is not easy to define, and which are, indeed, mere matter of opinion. What one man thinks scandalous and malicious another man does not think so; but, all the world are agreed with respect to falsehood and truth. These admit of *proof*; the others do not. Against a charge of falsehood evidence can be brought; but, as to *scandal* and *malice* they must be left to surmise, to the *opinions* of a jury; and thus a salvo is provided for the consciences of men who would be afraid of point-blank perjury. As the law now stands, you may not *speaking the truth*, for fear of *doing mischief*. There is something so repugnant to reason in this, that I cannot be brought to consider it as wise. We all pretend, that to obtain truth is our great object. We all pretend to detest disguise, hypocrisy, and all the various sorts of falsehood. If we have servants to hire, tradesmen to employ, acquaintances to form, our first step is to

obtain a true account of them ; and why, then, should the law forbid us to communicate to the public at large all the information we possess ? In order to make out a defence of the contrary doctrine, some have supposed, that, if every one were at liberty to publish all the truth that came to his knowledge, the prints would be filled with anecdotes of domestic occurrences, with which the world have nothing to do. Either such occurrences are interesting to the world, or they are not ; if the former, they ought to be known ; if the latter, the world would not attend to them, and the promulgation of them would soon meet its just punishment in the contempt which would fall upon the promulgator. To prevent the publication of truth is to confound, the wise with the foolish, the honest man with the rogue, the brave man with the coward, the virtuous with the vicious. Where there is no press, or no show of freedom allowed in using it, the people expect to hear no truth through that channel ; but, where the liberty of the press is a subject of boasting, they may well expect to hear the *whole* truth, and, if they hear it not, they are deceived with a shadow.

Nothing can be more worthy of punishment than the publication of wilful *falsehood*. I would, with all my heart, make this crime transportation, where it seriously affected the reputation of any man, in whatever rank of life. To the *feelings* of a person, *falsely* accused, ample vengeance is due ; but, if I speak no more of a man than I can *prove* to be *true*, am I to be branded as a ruffian who has no regard for the feelings of my neighbour ? Shall a fool be looked upon as having the feelings of a wise man, a peculator the feelings of a man of integrity, a reprobate the feelings of a saint ? Aye, say some persons, you think then that it is only the innocent whose feelings are to be considered, but, you cannot wound the feelings of the innocent ; it is *only the guilty that feel*. Hence Lord Mansfield's maxim, I suppose, " The greater the *truth* the greater the *libel*," according to which maxim it is a greater libel to call a highwayman a highwayman, than to give the same appellation to a person perfectly free of every crime.\* This is the unavoidable consequence of making it a crime to publish truth ; and, in my opinion, of all the means of debasing and corrupting a people, none is more efficacious or more speedy, than that of giving them a press, through which truth has not a free circulation.

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## SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

(Political Register, August, 1808.)

Before I proceed to make some further remarks upon this subject, in continuation of what was said last week, I think it proper to quote, from the Courier newspaper, an article relating to the way in which libellers are *handled* in Ireland. It is as follows :—

" In the Dublin paper, which we received a day or two ago, we found an article to which we think it necessary to direct the attention of the public, premising that we know nothing ourselves of the circumstances there stated. We

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\* See *Starkie's Preliminary Discourse*, as before referred to, in Note, p. 403.—Ed.

“ take the account as it has been published in the Dublin papers.—‘ The editor  
 “ of a paper printed in Kerry, called the Kerry Dispatch, asserts that ‘ while  
 “ inoffensively walking the street, he was called off by a common serjeant, and,  
 “ after being assailed with most opprobrious language, and the most criminal  
 “ imputations, was made a prisoner, and paraded under a military escort through  
 “ a crowd of at least one thousand people! He was proclaimed through that  
 “ crowd as a public disturber of the peace, as a fomentor of Whiteboyism, and  
 “ a leader of Whiteboys!’ This conduct towards him the editor attributes to a  
 “ paragraph in his paper of the 5th instant, under the head of Anniversary  
 “ Display of Orange Colours.’—The paragraph to which it alludes we never  
 “ saw, nor do we recollect ever to have seen the paper in which it was publish-  
 “ ed. But it is not necessary either to have seen the paper or the paragraph to  
 “ be able to pronounce a most decisive opinion with respect to the transaction  
 “ in question. It requires the most serious investigation. What! when Kerry  
 “ is not a proclaimed district, and martial law consequently does not operate in  
 “ it, is the subject to be seized and made prisoner by a military escort? Sup-  
 “ posing even the Kerry editor to have been guilty of the greatest offence in his  
 “ paper, still there were civil laws by which he might have been punished, and  
 “ civil officers by whom he might have been taken up, and carried before a  
 “ magistrate. But here (supposing the account published to be correct) we  
 “ never once see the civil laws, or the magistrate or the civil officers—we see  
 “ nothing but the military. If an editor of a paper, or the author or publisher  
 “ of any work, may be laid hold of by the military, the freedom of the press  
 “ would be merely nominal—*stat nominis umbra*—the parent and the child of  
 “ liberty would be destroyed, and that great weapon, which has assisted so ma-  
 “ terially in establishing the freedom of Great Britain, and which is assisting so  
 “ powerfully in the rescue of Spain and Portugal, would be no longer formidable.  
 “ *Let us take care to prevent any encroachment upon the liberty of the press.*  
 “ The first step against it that is taken with impunity is the first step towards  
 “ slavery.”

So, this gentleman of the Courier is for *more law!* The poor printer was seized hold of, abused, and paraded through the streets. The Courier would have preferred an indictment, or information, it seems. Every one to his taste! “ *Let us take care to prevent any encroachment upon the liberty of the press!*” These are bold, or rather, big, words; but, *how* will you take care of it? and what have *you* ever done to assert that liberty? I never remember any thing, in this way, done by you; but, I well remember your taking infinite pains to furnish a beforehand justification for an infernal act of oppression which you strongly recommended to the attorney-general; namely, the prosecution of the author who wrote an essay, published in the Morning Herald, upon the *Potsdam oath* of famous memory. This I remember, and I do assure you, that I think your conduct towards that author was much worse than that of the soldiers towards our Irish brother of the press.

A correspondent, whose letter will be found below,\* has given me an explanation of the principles, upon which the charges, in case of libel, proceed. I was quite aware, that, in a *civil action*, the *truth* of the assertions published might be proved, and that a justification might be set up on that ground. I thank him for his information respecting Sir Fletcher Norton; but, I believe, that he will find, that the example, contrary to his wish, *has* been followed. This is, however, of little importance, as long as the jury are told, that, though the charge (the *truth* of which they are sworn to decide upon) alleges the words called a libel to be *false*, they are, nevertheless, in certain cases, to find the charge *true*, even if the words called a libel are *not proved* to be false, and even if the defendant is refused permission to prove them to be true. As long as this is the case, it matters little, indeed it matters not at all, whether

\* See Note, p. 414.—Ed.

the indictment charges the supposed libeller with falsehood or not. This I knew very well; but, I referred to the language of indictments to show, that, formerly, *falsehood* was essential, as the ground-work of a charge of libel; and that, *of course*, the charge fell to the ground, *if the defendant proved the truth* of what he had said or published. Had not this been the law, and the actual practice, at the time when indictments for libel, in the present form, were first preferred, the word *false* would not have been inserted in them. If the law had been content with *scandalous* and *malicious*, it would have said nothing about falsehood. But, the fact is, I believe, that, until of late years (within fifty), no one ever dreamt of maintaining a charge of libel, but upon the ground of falsehood. To promulgate truth never was, formerly, held, *by the law*, to be a crime. Tyrants frequently punished men for speaking or writing the truth, and they had the ready aid of their courts and juries. But, then, these were, at the time, regarded as acts of tyranny; as such, they excited hatred, and in the end brought, in one way or another, their proper punishment. Since the time of Lord Mansfield, inclusive, to promulgate truth is *coolly* and *gravely* laid down to be criminal. It is become a settled maxim, that *falsehood* is *not* an essential quality in the crime of libel; that every word of a publication may be true; that all its sentiments may be in strict unison with morality and religion; and yet, that it may be a libel, punishable by fine, imprisonment, pillory, and, if Lord Grenville's act be not repealed, by *transportation*, for the second offence. Where, then, is the *standard*? Who is to know how far to go; for how can he tell what a jury will think scandalous and malicious, and what they will think not to possess those qualities? In *what way* is that freedom (of which the Courier talks so glibly as owing its birth to the press) to be assisted by the press? Let us try it a little: suppose there to be a king upon the throne, who is bent upon establishing despotic sway, and that, aided by ministers who are of the same disposition with himself, he sets about the work without any disguise. A writer calls upon his countrymen to be upon their guard, and gives a true description of the several despotic acts which the supposed king and his abettors have been guilty of. The writer is indicted for the offence; he is not allowed to prove his innocence by proving the *truth* of what he has written; and, if the matters published be thought by the jury to be scandalous and malicious, slap goes the writer to jail, where he has plenty of time to ruminate on the blessings of that freedom which comes from the use of the press.

To drag in libels amongst *breaches of the peace* is an ingenious device of lawyers. "They *tend* to a breach of the peace, and are, *therefore*, criminal," whether they contain truth or falsehood. But, how could Mr. Peltier's libel upon Buonaparte possibly produce a breach of the peace in *England*? Yet was Mr. Peltier convicted by a jury in the court of King's Bench.

Well, but how will this square with the notions of the Courier, in the case above supposed? The writer, whom we have supposed to exist at a moment when an absolute despotism is about to be begun, publishes his sentiments respecting the minister who is at the bottom of the scheme. This must necessarily highly provoke such minister, and, according to the maxims now received, must as necessarily *tend* to a breach of the peace. Consequently, the writer goes to jail, and there end the powers of the press in protecting freedom.

This doctrine of libels is, to be sure, the most whimsical thing that ever

was heard of in the whole world. The reason for punishing libels criminally, is, that they *tend to a breach of the peace*; so, the prosecutor comes and puts you in jail, lest he himself should be provoked to break the peace by beating you, or shooting at you! If your libel be upon the ministers, supposing you to speak the truth; that is to say, if you find just fault with the servants of the public, you are liable, according to this doctrine, to be put in jail, or to have your ears cropped off, for having, by truly stating their faults to those whom you help to pay, provoked them to commit a breach of the peace upon your body! Good Lord! is this the sort of liberty of the press, which JUNIUS, whom every body but me reads, calls the "Palladium of free-men?" Is this the thing, which the Courier relies upon for the maintenance of freedom? Is it this, to "prevent any encroachment" upon which he so earnestly calls upon us?

The plain truth is, that, except in matters of little public importance, we dare not plainly state in print, any truth that is unpalatable. There is ONE SUBJECT, which, at this moment, engages the attention of every man, who is conversant in public affairs, or, in the slightest degree, accustomed to turn his thoughts that way. Amongst all men of all parties there is but *one opinion* upon this subject. The nation has an unanimous wish; and feels the greatest alarm, lest that wish should be set at nought. Almost every public print in the country has, after the Eastern manner, hinted its feelings and supplications, by way of supposition, or by way of fable; but, there is no one that has dared to *say* what it thinks, though its thoughts are those of fourteen millions of people; and, what is more, there will not be one of these prints that will dare to ascribe the calamities and disgrace, which will inevitably follow the contempt of this national prayer, to the right cause; but, every one will again have recourse to hints and allusions and fables, or, not being bold enough for that, will hold its peace.

Reader, is not this the real state of the press?

I hold to my opinion, that nothing ought to be deemed libellous which is not *false* as well as *malicious*. If a man be a coward or a fool, he ought to be known for such. If he be an adulterer or a rogue, why should he not be called an adulterer, or a rogue? Why should not men be known for what they are? If the person described be an obscure individual, why, the exposure of him will reach but a small distance; and, if he be in a public capacity, the exposure *ought* to reach far and wide. Only make the publisher *prove the truth* of all his censorious words, and, I'll warrant that he takes care what he states. But, while truth as well as falsehood may be punished as a libel, writers will naturally endeavour, by insinuations, to obtain vengeance for the restrictions, under which they labour, and which are a continual thorn in their side. "I refrained from speaking even good words, though it was pain and grief to me." We all wish to speak our minds. It is the great mark of distinction between slaves and freemen, that the latter dare utter their sentiments, when the former dare not.\*

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\* Mr. COBBETT has referred above (see page 414) to the letter of a correspondent. The writer of that letter (J. T.) says:—"I believe you are warranted in asserting that even in indictments and informations for libels, it was formerly the practice to allege that the libels were *false*, as well as scandalous and malicious; and I have been informed that the first Attorney-General who ventured to leave out the word *false* in an information for a libel, was the late Sir FLETCHER NORTON, about the year 1764."—Ed.

## CRIM. CON.

(Political Register, August, 1808.)

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“Leaves the dull cite, and joins, to please the fair,  
“The well-bred cuckolds of St. James’s air.”—POPE.

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It is not of the sin and shame of the acts of adultery, which are now daily coming before the world through the courts of justice, that I mean to speak upon this occasion. They are the natural consequence of the manners of the times, and those manners as naturally proceed from the size and luxury of the metropolis, which draws together, through the means of taxation, all the wealth and all the vices of the country. It is not, therefore, from any feeling of compassion towards the cuckolds that I am led to offer a few observations upon the subject; for, nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of every thousand, the man who is known for a cuckold *ought* to be one. The law gives him so much power over the poor feeble-framed creature whom he has married; he is so completely the master of her and of all she has; he has, if he be worthy of a wife, so decided an influence over her mind, that his cuckoldom appears to me to be almost impossible, unless from his own fault. It is a man’s own business to take care of his wife. Judges and juries are not, and never were, intended, to be the guardians of any woman’s chastity; and, it is the modern fashion of making them *moral censors*, which I am desirous of pointing out for public disapprobation.

A cuckold comes into court and asks for *damages*. There are, then, two dry questions of fact before the jury: 1st, Whether the act of adultery have been committed; and, 2nd, What is the amount of the *real damage*, which the complainant has sustained from that act. As to the first, circumstantial evidence may certainly be sufficient; but, then, it ought to be as good as is required in cases of treason, or murder. No loose tales about dishevelled hair and ruffled clothes and the like, ought to satisfy any juror. Appearances are so often deceitful, that the very strongest should be viewed with distrust. Appearances may satisfy me, that the parties were willing and intended to commit the act; but, unless I am fully satisfied that the act has been *committed*, I am guilty of false-swearing if I give my assent to a verdict of guilty. According to the new doctrine, however, this fact of actual commission of the act would seem to be of little consequence; for, the great burden of the pleading against the defendant, is, that he has “seduced the *affections*” of the plaintiff’s wife, which may be no crime at all, either legal or moral, no man being able to prevent a woman from liking him better than she likes her husband. Only tell a man that he is not bound by his oath; tell him that he is to decide upon *opinion* and not upon *evidence*; and you have no longer any hold upon him; all is left to fashion and to chance; or, rather, the plaintiffs in such cases, have for their jurors, a set of men who, from a reason founded in human nature, are decidedly in their favour. It was the old practice, to stick to *fact*; and, it was necessary to bring good substantial proof of the act being committed, before there

was the smallest chance of obtaining a verdict of guilty. Without insisting upon this, what woman's reputation or fortune can be safe? Suppose a scoundrel wishes to get rid of his wife. He may, with the assistance of a brother scoundrel, easily obtain very specious circumstantial proof, that his wife has been guilty of adultery. Nothing is easier either to conceive or to execute. The parties accused of the crime are incapable of being examined in evidence; the woman is no party in the cause; and, in the case supposed, she may be branded as an adulteress and sent to starve, being all the while conscious of perfect innocence.

Then, as to the amount of the *damages*. The word *damages* seems, of late years, and especially as applicable to this sort of charge, to have quite lost its original legal meaning. The compensation for damage is *pecuniary*; and, therefore, the pecuniary damage should be made appear; for, is it not a most shameful abuse of words to talk of *paying* a man for his *mental sufferings*? And, I should be glad to be informed, by any of the experienced cuckolds of the day, what great difference there is between *receiving payment* for the chastity of a wife, and *selling* that chastity. When the poisonous transatlantic quack brought an action of damages against me for taking away his reputation, though the perjured jury did not require proof of the *falsehood* of what I had published, they did ask for proof of the *damage* sustained by the plaintiff; or, at least, such proof was given by producing witnesses to show that his patients had left him. This was a very good thing; it was doing right to withdraw his patients from him; and Dr. Rowley, who wrote upon the subject of the quack's practice, says, I merited a statue of gold for my achievement. But, the damage to the quack, the *pecuniary* damage, was *shown*; as, in such cases, it certainly ought to be. Now, what damage is sustained by the cuckold? It is *possible* that there may be some damage sustained, in certain peculiar cases; but, it is the fashion now-a-days, not even to ask for any proof, or to produce any *evidence* to show, that damage has been sustained, though damages, in case of guilt, always make part of the verdict. If a man, being blind and being assisted by his wife in managing his business, were to lose her through the means of a seducer, it would be easy for him to make his damages appear. But, what damages can be made out by the far greater part of those who apply to the law? They have been robbed of their wives' *society* and *conversation*. These they may still enjoy, if they please; for, I'll warrant a wife of this sort *talks* none the worse for her adventure. Aye, but then comes that indefinite thing called *comfort*, which, if one can, in any case, affix any meaning to it, means, in this case, *the pleasure of being deceived*. Still we come back again to the point whence we started: the award is for *compensation*; for something to *make up* for what has been lost; and, the cuckold having lost the "comfort" he derived from his wife's society, receives from a court of law the "comfort" which is to be derived from a sum of money.

But, the fact is, that the award has, in general, according to the present practice, nothing at all to do with real damages. It is a sort of *fine* inflicted; and, in some cases, a late judge openly directed the awarding of *exemplary* damages; that is to say, the punishing of a man by way of fine, under the form of making compensation to another man for a pretended loss that he has sustained; and the language of the fraternity of "learned friends" has been, that the jury are the "guardians of the public morals." If a man were indicted for the crime of adultery, then,



indeed, the jury would be invested with a character somewhat of this sort; but, no man is, and no man can be, indicted for the crime of adultery. It is a crime of which the courts of law cannot take cognizance; but, the truth is, that we are a people completely lawyer-ridden; every thing is drawn to their shop; the press and the pulpit, which were formerly looked to as sufficient for the checking of numerous vices, are now, it seems, hardly worth notice; and, the former of the two has, by the lawyers, been so shackled, that it is, indeed, not to be trusted to for any useful purpose. Though you know a man to be a rogue, you are not to call him so, you are not to caution your neighbours against him; because, say the lawyers, "you should bring such a man to justice." That is to say, "you should bring him to our shop." But, to bring a rogue to their shop is an expensive affair; and, if the rogue be rich, it is odds but the real punishment fall upon yourself. Into the places where justice is administered, scarcely any but lawyers are permitted to enter. The great halls of Winchester and Westminster, for instance, which were evidently constructed for the purpose of receiving a large number of persons, that, according to the maxim of our constitution, justice might be administered *in public*, are now parcelled off. The places where the trials are held are boxed up with mean-looking boards to the very summit of the roof; little passages, or rather holes, are left for people to creep in and out at; a man stands at each entrance to select the persons who wish to enter; and the inside is filled with lawyers, or retainers of the law. From *the public* the hearing of the trials is as completely kept as if the trials were held in a room locked up. Over the several passage-doors, at Winchester, are written, in order to prevent confusion, "Court;" over another, "Counsellors;" over another, "Attorneys;" over another, "Witnesses;" over another, "Jury." But, no where do you find a door for *the public* to enter. Is this *administering justice in public*? Can this be called an *open court*? Even the information which, at last, the public get in print, respecting trials, they are compelled to purchase from lawyers; for it is generally some briefless "learned friend" that supplies the newspapers with the reports of trials. It is the accursed funding and taxing system, which has given rise to such immense volumes of Acts of Parliament, that has caused so fearful a predominance of this wily and yet daring profession, and that has brought so many persons to pine away their lives in hunger, under a bob-tailed wig and a black gown. Parents, tempted by the brilliant success of comparatively a few, and by the riches which many more acquire, through the means of the law, send up their sons in swarms to be "*bred to the bar*;" but, could they see the hungry threadbare troops that cling about Westminster Hall and the Houses of Parliament, like half-perished flies, in the month of October, about the windows of a seller of sweets, those parents would rather send their children to be bred to the making of shoes. Poor souls! I know of no sight more painful than to see forty or fifty dozen of them squeezed into a half-circle, with visages clearly indicating want of necessary food, each anxiously looking forward to catch the eye of more fortunate brethren, and having his lungs upon the cock, ready to let off in a laugh the moment a pretence is offered, however miserable that pretence may be. Poor souls! to see them bustling along, in the morning, breakfastless to court, as if anxious thousands waited their arrival, and the fate of whole families and classes depended upon their tongues; when, at the same time, both their backs

and bellies can witness, that a gipsy fortune-teller surpasses them in the receiving of fees!

This multitude of lawyers is a monstrous evil. Than a man really learned in the law no one can in point of rank be more respectable. The profession of the law is not only necessary, but honourable, and ought to be held in honour. It is when this profession draws every thing to itself; when it swallows up every thing; when it confounds and destroys that which is necessary to public happiness, that it becomes hateful; and to that point it is very fast arriving in England. It is for the *Spiritual* court, or, which is still better, an unshackled expression of private and public opinion, to check and to punish the crime of *adultery*, which, in returning to my subject, I repeat it, is not cognizable in a court of law. Sir JAMES MANSFIELD, who, before he was made a judge, had long been considered the most learned lawyer in England, has lately told the jury, that they are *not* to look upon themselves as being in the capacity of *moral censors*. This is, I hope, the beginning of a change in the practice, which has, for some time, prevailed; for if "*exemplary*" damages are given in cases of *crim. con.*, why should not exemplary damages be given in cases of *trespass, assault, &c. &c.* and, then, what man would be safe? Damage is a specific thing; a thing to be ascertained; and though not to a nicety, in all cases, yet so nearly as to leave but little room for the doing of injustice to either party. The amount of damage done, can, in no case, depend on the rank or means of the party doing it. If a man be knocked down by a shoeblack, the damage is full as great as if he had been knocked down by any of the ant's hill of knights about London; and, I should be glad to know, from some thorough-paced cuckold, whether his footman is not as able at the work of depriving him of "comfort," as any of the young lords, whom his wife retains or withdraws from the stews. If the footman deprives Sir Baalam of his comfort, why should not the footman have as heavy damages to pay, as if he had been a lord? *Why* should he not? I should like to have an answer to this question. If a footman maliciously kill your horse, worth a thousand pounds, is not an award of a thousand pounds made against him? If, in like manner, a lord kill your horse, is not the award the same? *Damage* is a word always bearing the same meaning; and, upon what principle of our law is it, then, that the award, in cases of *crim. con.*, is made according to the rank, or pecuniary means, of the defendant? Were I upon a jury, in a case of *crim. con.*, I would eat my boots, soles and all, before I would award to a cuckold one single penny more than I believed him to have *lost* by the act of the defendant.

By a contrary practice, what a field is opened for the vilest of all robbery! For my part, I can see nothing easier, if a rogue and a handsome and a cunning woman are agreed, than to make a very pretty fortune by a *crim. con.* speculation, and that, too, with such evidence as is now received, without the help of the sin of adultery. The jilt has nothing to do but entice a rich man into her trammels; and, without communicating the plot to any one, the husband will soon obtain evidence sufficient for the purpose of obtaining damages to the amount of thousands of pounds. The pair may then live together upon the fruit of their plunder; or, if they like it better, they may separate, and each take a share. The law of this land, which had foreseen every thing else, had foreseen this also; therefore, in speaking of damages, it means *real* damage, damage that can be *proved* to have been sustained; and not *imaginary* damage,

damage that exists in the fancy; damage purely mental, and which, therefore, it is impossible to ascertain; because, though the fact be proved, one plaintiff will be deeply afflicted at what will be with another a subject of joy. A law, or a practice, therefore, which tolerates these awards of damages for the loss of "comfort," must necessarily be the most uncertain and capricious of all things. The doctrines we have heard upon this subject, and the verdicts we have witnessed, cannot fail to have a tendency to render wavering the conduct of jurors in general; to wear away those notions relative to *evidence* and *law*, which ought ever to remain indelibly imprinted on the mind of the juror; to put men of small capacity and little knowledge up with the idea, that they are judges in *equity*; to make a jury a mere instrument, the sport, the plaything, of hired advocates; to expose property, character, and life, to the effect of circumstances not at all under the control of the possessor; and, to convert the whole society into dependants, into very slaves, of the professors of the law.

LIBEL LAW.—Continued from p. 414.

The trial, in the case of Carr against Messrs. Hood and Sharpe, is one of the most important, nay the most important, that has taken place in my memory, and I am glad to see that it is fully and ably reported. According to the doctrine here laid down, both by the Chief Justice and the Attorney-General, one man may, not only innocently, but *laudably*, ridicule the person and the talents of another. Not only freely examine them and criticise them, but ridicule them. The whole of the trial is important. I do not mean as an exposure of Carr and Sir Richard Phillips, but as containing the principles of the Judges and the Attorney-General respecting libels; and it will be matter of wonder with me, if the Booksellers do not form a FUND for the circulation of it *all over the kingdom*. An edition might be printed for *three-pence* each; each bookseller might take a number proportioned to the extent of his business; some copies, or one at least, might be put into every parcel sent off from every shop; and thus, in the course of a year, every man who can read would have read it. This is no loose essay upon the libel law. It is the practice of the law. It is what the Attorney-General and the Chief Justice have said and what they have laid down as law. Towards a fund for this purpose I shall be very happy to contribute my share; for I am certain that there has not, for years, any publication appeared calculated to do so much good.

To fall upon a man already down, or to join in a general outcry, is not my practice; nor have I any desire, in what I recommend, to annoy Sir Richard Phillips. I think it of great public consequence, that this trial should be universally read. As I observed before, the action, out of which this trial grew, was founded upon the new principle, namely, that *WHATEVER HURTS A MAN'S FEELINGS is to be considered as libellous*. The trial has completely set this principle aside; and, in fact, we are much obliged to Sir John Carr for having put the principle to the test. Until Sir John did this, there was no man who could tell whether he dared criticise the works of any author. Indeed, according to the principle laid down, and acted upon, he did not dare do it, without running a risk of punishment. Good God! What would have been said by POPE and SWIFT, if any one had said to them: "It is well for you, that you live in this age; for, in that which will succeed, to ridicule a fool or

“ a knave, will subject men to all the torments of the law ; and, there is scarcely one single sentence, that either of you have written, especially where you touch upon the character or conduct of public men, that would not, to a certainty, shorten your lives, and, perhaps, your ears, before you died.” What would Gay have said, had he been told, that his Fables, in the next age, would have subjected him to ear-cropping? Yet, the nation was as well governed then, as it is now, and, as to matters of literature, it was far greater than it now is. Were a man to write now as Pope and Swift wrote, he would have the full cry of Bond Street and St. James’s against him. He would be called ruffian and assassin. He would be accused of coarseness, grossness, personality. He would be called an enemy to politeness, taste, refinement, and human happiness. I have often wondered, that some of the descendants of the rogues and fools whom they lashed, have not prosecuted the reprinters and the sellers of their admirable satires, which, were they written in the present day, would be deemed infamous libels. They had no idea that to write and publish *truth* was a crime. The whole tenor of their works proves, that, so long as they confined themselves to the stating of what was *true*, they entertained no apprehensions as to the consequences. Upon the topics connected with *royalty*, too, they were no more squeamish than upon others. They were afraid of no *constructive* libels ; nor, if they chose to express their disapprobation of the conduct of kings and princes, did they fear the accusation of *disloyalty*. Why, if either of them, had written, in the present day, what both wrote at the beginning of the last century, he would long ago have been transported, under that act of parliament, for which we have to thank, principally, Pitt and Lord Grenville. Yet, as I observed before, the times they lived and wrote in were very glorious times for England ; such times as England has not since seen ; times in which she shone more, both in arms and in letters, than she ever did before, and than she is likely to do again.

The rogues and fools in public life have powerful motives for cramping the press, and all the rogues and fools in private life are naturally of their party. It must be so. Vice and folly, of whatever description, hate the light. Publicity is their natural enemy. Public prosecutions lead to private prosecutions ; and why not ? If a man is to be punished for exposing the vices or follies of a person whom the public employs, why should not the exposor of a private person be punished ? It is detestable to tell us, that regular government cannot be supported without this sort of prosecutions. To tell us, that a government cannot subsist without laws to punish the publication of *truth*, is, in fact, to tell us, that that government subsists by falsehood and fraud.

Besides, if a government cannot subsist without such prosecutions, it never can *long* subsist with them, unless it becomes a complete despotism, which is a state of constant warfare between the government and the people, and which, as we have recently seen in many instances, will subsist no longer than the people are without an opportunity of casting off its authority. If the government subsist with the wishes of the people, what need has it of prosecutions for any animadversions upon its conduct ? And, of what *use* are the prosecutions ? Suppose, for instance, some one accuse the government of tyrannical conduct. If his assertion be unsupported by proof, none but the very ignorant part of the nation will believe him ; and, even on their minds, he will produce no lasting impression. If he speak *truth*, it is not only proper that he should speak

freely and without danger; but, the prosecution of him, in that case, and by a form of process which does not admit of his pleading the truth in his defence, must have, as to the government, an effect ten thousand times worse than if he had not been prosecuted; such a prosecution proving, not that the government was innocent of the charge, but, tending to prove that it was guilty, and that the person prosecuted has been the victim of vindictive guilt. And, in cases, where his assertions are void of proof; assertions which hardly any one will believe; such assertions gain credit from the mere circumstance of their author becoming an object of prosecution. Nothing can, by what is called a criminal prosecution, be obtained *favourable* to the reputation of the prosecuting party. His innocence cannot be proved. The form of proceeding, according to the present practice, does not admit of it. What does he get, then? A glutting of his vengeance, a gratification of his vindictive feelings, and the hope of being able to prevent future detection and exposure. But, those who, perhaps, only despised him before, will now hate him; and this hatred, justly sticking to him through life, will amply supply the place of future exposures. His escaping censure will ever after be attributed to the dread of punishment in those who are able and willing to censure him. Thus, he will always be regarded as guilty, even to a degree, perhaps, beyond the truth; and every just man will see, with pleasure, the hour of his misfortune and destruction.

It is now rather more than a year ago, since a gentleman, who had been most shamefully misrepresented and belied in the newspapers, and who had, indeed, been distinctly accused of very heinous offences, wrote to me an explanation of the circumstances of the case, and intimated, in conclusion, his intention of appealing to the law. I participated in his indignation against the publishers; but, conjured him not to appeal to the law; because, now, or in a short time, the whole nation would be convinced of the falsehood of what had been said against him, whereas, if he prosecuted, the whole nation would have *doubts*, at least, upon the subject. He followed my advice. He suffered the web of falsehood to be spun out, and he has found, that not a human creature in England believes one of them. It is in reason that it should be thus. Truth, give it fair play, will always triumph over falsehood. Pit them against one another, giving them both the free scope of the press, and there is no fear but the former will prevail. Every man does, every man must, know this; and, as every man is quite at liberty to answer those who attack him in print, and as every man has the ability to state plain facts in his defence, his appealing to the law always is, and always must be, a circumstance conveying suspicion, that *he wants truth* wherewith to repel the attack.

As to *ridicule*, good Lord, what would DRYDEN, POPE, and SWIFT, have said, had they been told, that, in their country, it would become a crime to wound men's feelings by holding them up to ridicule! Ridicule is a thing that *will not attack where it ought not*. I defy Mr. Gillray to turn Lord Nelson's skill and courage into ridicule. You may *attempt* to ridicule any thing. This master of the art has tried his talents upon Sir Francis Burdett and his Westminster procession; but, if he would make a candid confession, he would tell us, that that was amongst the most unsuccessful of his efforts; he would tell us, that not a soul, except, perhaps, Mr. Baldwin, to whose name the folks at Whitehall prefix the infantine appellation of *Billy*, ever thought this piece worth carrying

home. There must be the ingredients of ridicule in the thing ridiculed, without which, to attempt to ridicule it, is like attempting to strike fire out of clay. Well, then, ridicule is, in all cases, not only innocent, but laudable; because, that which is ridiculous ought to be ridiculed. What must the world think of the man, or set of men, who can come into a court of justice and demand reparation, or vengeance, for having been *laughed at*? Who, like CALIBAN, can come and say, "Mark how he mocks me; I pray thee, my lord, bite him to death?"

*Continued.—September 17.*

TO THE RT. HON. LORD ELLENBOROUGH,  
CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE COURT OF KING'S BENCH.

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"We must allow a latitude to the free discussion of the merits and demerits of authors and their works; otherwise we may talk, indeed, of the liberty of the press, but there will be, *in reality*, an end of it."—Report of LORD ELLENBOROUGH'S Charge.

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MY LORD,

Either that *liberty*, of which we have boasted, and do boast, so much, is a mere sound, invented by politicians for purposes resembling those for which priests invented relics and penances, and for which Methodist preachers pretend to inspiration; either the whole thing is, in short, a specious and delusive fraud, or the result of the Action, recently tried before your lordship, in the case of Carr against Hood and Sharpe, is not only of greater importance to the nation than the recent victories over the French, in Portugal, but of greater importance than would be a series of victories, by which Buonaparte should be overthrown. For what do we promise ourselves, as the fruit of such victories? Why, the secure enjoyment of our lives and property; security from that oppression, which we should, in all probability, experience at his hands. This, after all, is the sole end of all our sacrifices, and of the dangers and sufferings of our countrymen who are in arms. There is no other rational purpose that we can have in view. This being the case, I am pretty confident, that the public, when they duly reflect upon the matter, will be convinced, that, on the 25th of July last, a greater victory was gained for England under your lordship, than has been gained, by land or sea, for many years past.

The doctrines, laid down by your lordship, upon this memorable occasion, seem, indeed, to have been restricted as to their application. They seem to have been, rather carefully, confined to "*authors and their works*;" but, in pursuance of the purpose for which alone I now address you, I shall, I think, succeed in convincing your lordship, that this restriction cannot subsist, consistently with reason and justice. I have, below, given an abridgment of the Report of the Trial, in which I have retained *all* that was said by your lordship; but, that we may have the matter fairly before us, I will here shortly state the substance of your doctrines, supposing what you said to have been correctly reported; for,

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as to myself, I, of course, who was not present at the trial, can state nothing from my own knowledge. I take this report as I find it; I lay it before my readers as being a report given, in print, by another person; I take it up, I treat it as a book; and, if it be what it professes to be, it contains the words uttered by you upon the occasion referred to.

The first of these words I have taken for my motto. The next time you speak, you say, that we must really not cramp observations upon authors and their works; that they should be liable to exposure, to criticism, and even to ridicule, if their works be ridiculous; that, otherwise, the first who writes a book upon any subject, will maintain a monopoly of sentiment upon it; that thus vice and error will be perpetuated, and so we should go on to the end of time; and that you cannot conceive that an action is maintainable on such ground. Upon Mr. Garrow's observing, that though an author's book might be ridiculed, the critics had no right to endeavour to destroy him altogether as an author, your lordship said, that you did not know that; that (speaking in the interrogative form), suppose a man published a book injurious to public morals, of infinite mischief to the public taste, containing bad maxims of government, or any thing else that ought to be decried, are we not at liberty to expose that work? Aye, and expose the author of it too, as far as he is connected with the work, and that in the most pointed language of wit, humour, or ridicule; that, a critic, in such case conferred a benefit on the public; that the destruction of the author's reputation was nothing; that it was a reputation which ought to be destroyed; that it was idle to talk of the liberty of the press, if one man might not write freely upon the work of another; that, if there had been an attack upon the moral character of the author, or any attack on his character unconnected with his work, the law would have afforded him protection. Upon Mr. Garrow's saying, that the defendants had not destroyed Carr's reputation *fairly*, your lordship said that *he* must show that it was *not fairly* done; and, upon his replying, that the *caricature* was a proof of unfairness, your lordship bade him go on with his case.

In your charge, after having repeated your sentiment respecting the public utility of writing down bad books, you said that this, however, was applicable to *fair and candid* criticism; that as to the *loss* sustained by an author from such a cause, it was what you, in the law, called *damnum absque injuriâ*, a *loss which the law does not consider as an injury*, because it is a loss which he ought to sustain, a loss of fame and profits to which he was never entitled; that, if it were otherwise, you did not know where we were to stop; that you knew of nothing that more threatened the liberty of the press, in the days in which we live, than to give encouragement to this species of action; that, however, you wished not to be misunderstood, for that, if there had been any thing in the criticism, of a libellous tendency, *wholly foreign to the work*, or unconnected with the author of it, as *embodied* in it, the action was maintainable; that neither yourself nor the jury had ever appeared before the world in the character of an author, or at least you never had; that, if you had; you should not think yourself entitled to maintain an action against any body else, who ridiculed your work, and proved it to be ridiculous; that, in fine, if the jury thought, that the criticism was upon the work, and upon the author as connected with the work, and not written by way of calumny upon him *as an individual*, you were of opinion that the action was not maintainable; that if, on the contrary, they

should be of opinion, that the criticism was written against the author, *as a man*, and unconnected with his work, then you thought the action was maintainable.

*After the verdict was given*, your lordship (a thing not very common, I believe) thought it necessary to caution the audience against a misunderstanding of what had passed. "I hope nobody will understand, from the result of this trial, that there is the least countenance given to *slander*, or to ridicule any author, any more than *any other individual*, unless such ridicule be *connected with his works, and the author is embodied with his work*; for courts of justice are as tender of the moral characters of all men, whether they be authors or not, as they are firm in the maintenance of the right of every individual, to give a free opinion, on *every publication of a literary work*."

It is, my lord, into the reasonableness and the justice of these *reservations and restrictions* that I now propose to inquire. FIRST, as to the qualification of the word "criticism." Your lordship would have it to be *fair*, and, in one place, it would seem, that you insist upon its being *candid* as well as fair. I always thought, that the words were synonymous; but, whatever be their meaning, they express that quality which you hold to be necessary, in order to justify the criticism, though the author be embodied in his work. But, my lord, be this quality what it may, *who* is to tell us whether it exist or not? Evidence can be given as to *truth or falsehood*; as to the obedience or disobedience of any law; as to the performance or breach of any well-known moral duty; as to any thing, in short, that is clearly defined and settled. About what is *fair*, who can say that any thing has been settled? Where is the standard whereby we are to judge of *fairness*? It is evident, that there can be no such standard, and that the point must always turn upon mere opinion. What would this question of fairness come under, then, the *law* or the *fact* of the case? Who would settle the point, the judge or the jury? "*One of the jury*" upon this trial, appeared to have a great desire to show himself learned in the law; but, it will hardly be contended, that juries, or that courts of justice, can be, or ought to be, made into supervisors of the *taste* of the press. A tyrannical judge in America added the quality "*decent*," as essential to publications to be tolerated. Who was to be the judge of the decency? There is a maxim, which says, "Miserable are those who are subjected to laws of *uncertain operation*." Indeed, where the operation is not uniform, and where the principle is not clearly laid down and well known, it is an abuse of words to call the thing *law*, which always implies something whereby a man's duties or rights are defined. About this reservation, however, I think we need not be very uneasy, as the result of the trial, together with the opinions of your lordship, decidedly in favour of that result, enables us to proceed to the length of imputing to a man (no, not a man, *an author*) all sorts of folly; to exhibit him as a fool, a lunatic and a vagabond in point of property; and lest our pages of letter-press should fail, to call in the distorting aid of the pencil to effect our purpose. This has been deemed *fair* criticism; and, therefore, it will, I imagine, be very difficult for us to make use of any, that can, without departing from the principles, upon which this case was decided, be deemed *unfair*.

But the person ridiculed must, it would seem from this report of your lordship's language, be not only an author of a written and published work, but, he must also *embody* himself in the work. What is meant



by this embodying work I do not very clearly perceive. In other places it is said, that he is to be ridiculed no farther than he appears in *connection* with his work; and that, unconnected with his work, he is to be treated with all the tenderness which the law takes care to provide for the individual. But, my lord, who is to settle these nice points of connection and incorporation? How am I to know what is meant by this connecting and embodying? Suppose I were to take up a book written for the purpose of persuading me, that I am very wrong indeed in objecting to the ministry of the day; suppose this work has for its author some man who lives upon the taxes and whose wife lives upon them too; suppose the whole family to be chin-deep in sinecures and reversions; must I not speak of these; must I not expose the author's motives for his work; must I not, if my pen fail me, call in the aid of the pencil to exhibit this author in the act of picking John Bull's pockets with one hand, while he holds up, in the shape of a pair of winkers, his book in the other hand; must I not hang a label, marked *plunder*, out of his pocket; and must I not put his wife and children in the character of sturdy paupers, jeering those from they receive their daily bread? Assuredly I ought to do all this; and yet this author might so write his book as not to *embody* himself with it, in any shape whatever; and I might be told, perhaps, that his places and pensions had nothing at all to do with the merits or demerits of the ministry; that I had gone into a subject foreign to the book; and that, therefore, I ought to be punished as a libeller; whereas it would appear to me quite necessary to go into these matters in order to show the *motive* of the author, and that for the purpose of preventing his book from doing mischief.

It is not at all necessary for an author to *connect* himself with his book. He need not write in the form of such connection. He may, like the newspaper people and the reviewers, write in the style royal, and call himself *wg*; or, he may write in the impersonal altogether. There are very few instances, in which an author can be said to embody himself in his work. It can, indeed, only be when he relates his own adventures, or gives an account of transactions in which he has personally borne a part. And why, my lord; *why*, I beg leave to ask, should this particular description of authors be exposed to ridicule more than any other description? *Why* is it so very necessary to expose their folly and destroy their reputation? Of what particular harm is their success? In what way is it entitled to any extraordinary quantity of legal reprobation? Why should these fools be outlawed any more than the rest? Your lordship may see a very sufficient reason for the distinction; but, I confess that I can see no reason at all for it. Every man, who writes and publishes, challenges the criticisms of the world. The very act of writing the book embodies him with it. It is his act. It belongs to him. It is the picture of his mind. It is a part of himself. The critic has a right to take the man and the book together, and to criticise them and if he pleases, ridicule, or endeavour to ridicule them both. If he has not this right, he has no right at all; he is never safe; and he had better lay aside his pen. If he himself be foolish in his criticism; if he be unfair, or malignant, why, the world, who will soon perceive it, will not fail to punish him in the only suitable manner, without any of the aid of judges and juries.

There was a still further qualification, too; not only must the man have published his acts, or his work; but, he must have embodied him-

self with the work, and the work must *be ridiculous*. All this must be seen to exist before the ridicule could be justified. But, here again we have our old difficulty; *who* is to determine, whether the work be ridiculous or not? The jury are to judge of the alleged offence under the direction of the judge; but it will not be pretended that this is a tribunal, wherein to try the merits or demerits of a literary work. What, then, becomes of this qualification? The critic will say, that the work is ridiculous; the author will say that it is not; even the public may be divided upon the point; and who in all the world is to settle it? Your lordship says, and very truly, that it is of great public utility to expose ridiculous works, and to destroy the reputation of their authors; but, if I should be engaged in an act of great public utility of this sort, how should I fare if your lordship and the jury should happen to think that *not ridiculous*, which I took for ridiculous? How am I to know that you will be of my opinion? And must I not, then, be continually in a state of uncertainty; and must not a press, thus shackled, be infinitely worse than no press at all? The fool or rogue runs no risk, either in his writings or publishings; while his critic is never safe for a moment. Sir John Carr saw this, and, therefore, he thought to terrify his critic into silence. Your lordship has now set your face against this species of action; and it was high time; for if it had succeeded, even the most stupid part of the people would have laughed at the talk of "*the liberty of the press*." That talk would not have deceived any creature capable of counting his fingers.

The most important restriction, however, relates to the quality, or, rather, the *profession*, of the person censured, or ridiculed. Sir John Carr had evidently conceived, that the *feelings* of an *author* were no more to be hurt with impunity than the feelings of any other sort of man; and as he had heard, that it was a libel to hurt the feelings of any person, by the means of the press, he expected, of course, to hear your lordship reprobate the conduct of his critics. He could not have anticipated what took place. It was quite just and reasonable, to be sure, that he should be told, that his work was liable to ridicule; that the ridicule naturally grew out of the demonstrations of his own want of talent; that if it were forbidden to ridicule such a work and such an author, great public mischief would therefrom arise, and that the liberty of the press would be a farce too contemptible to be borne. All this was very right; but, he had heard it laid down, that *the line of interdiction began when the feelings of any person were hurt*. No matter *who* or *what* he was. No matter what his actions or his character. He had heard of no restrictions, reservations, or qualifications; he had been told; he had heard it laid down as a maxim of law; he had heard it so laid down in a charge to a jury; he had seen a verdict of *guilty* given upon the principle; and that principle, without any qualification, was, that *no person* had a right to use the press for the purpose of turning into ridicule either the *talents* or the *person of any one*; and that, wherever a publication wounded the feelings of *any person*, there the line of interdiction began. He had heard of no exception with respect to authors and their works. He had proof that both his talents and his person had been turned into ridicule. He had proof, that, in a picture as well as in words, he had been exhibited to the public as a man of most despicable talents, as a frothy fool, as a lunatic at large, as a sort of literary vagabond. He had clear proof of all this; he had proof besides,

that he had, from this attack, sustained a special damage to a considerable amount; and it was quite impossible for any one not to be convinced, that his feelings had, by the alleged libel, been severely wounded. Well, then, as he had heard it laid down as a maxim of law and justice, that it was a crime to ridicule the talents or wound the feelings of any person, why should not he bring his action *as well as another*?

Why, for the reasons stated by your lordship. Most excellent reasons you have given us, why his action should not be maintainable; but none at all, that I can discover, why the complaints of persons, *not authors*, should be any more attended to than his. None, that I can discover, why the act of book-writing should be more exposed to criticism than any other of the acts of men; none; no, none at all, why authors should not have feelings as well as other people; nor any reason whatever why the talents of others should not be exposed to ridicule as well as the talents of authors. It is necessary, as your lordship well observed, to expose and destroy a silly or wicked book, and the reputation of its author along with it, because such books do great public mischief, and because, if not put down by exposure, they would continue to do mischief to the end of time. But, my lord, there are *good* books as well as bad ones; there are authors whose works do good instead of mischief; and therefore I can see no reason whatever why the act of book-writing should be more exposed to public censure and ridicule than any other act of man.

Your lordship was so good as to signify that *the liberty of the press* was something very valuable to this nation. Not in direct terms, indeed, but by implication your lordship certainly did say this. Now, may I take the liberty of asking your lordship *in what way* you think it can operate to the advantage of this nation? In the way of *praise*; in bedaubing all the rich rogues and fools of the time with praise as well as all the wise and virtuous men? Hardly this. In confining its praises to the wise and the good? This would be very laudable, and might be of some little use; but, then, the word *liberty* would be without a meaning; for the devil is in it if we need ask for leave to praise any one, particularly if he be in a public capacity, or in any capacity, which must make him desirous of possessing the good opinion of the world. If your lordship means, as I think you must, that the *liberty* of the press is valuable, as the means of detecting and exposing vice and folly; then, give me leave to say, that it cannot, consistently, I will not say with justice and reason; but it cannot, consistently with *common sense*, with bare common sense, be restricted to authors and their writings; for what would the thing then amount to but this: a *liberty* possessed by the press of combating *its own* vices and follies, and of doing nothing more. Such a press would be totally unworthy of praise, or of protection of any sort. To speak of such "*liberty*" as a valuable thing; to make it a matter of boast; to hold it up as one of the means of preventing the people from being enslaved, would be an instance of absurdity surpassing any of those pointed at in the works of Sir John Carr. Why, my lord, this is a sort of liberty that the Emperor Napoleon grants to his press; and, why should he not? He would be a fool indeed if he cared what authors said of *one another* and of *one another's books*. It may be an amusement to him to witness their quarrels; and, in this way, the press may be, with the public, as useful as a puppet-show, or any thing else that serves to produce a momentary oblivion of their cares and their sufferings. All that Napoleon forbids his press to do is, to meddle with him, his government, his army,

his navy, or any of his family. That is all. The press may *praise* all these indeed ; it has full *liberty* to do that ; but, it must neither *censure* nor *ridicule* any one of them ; it has no liberty to do that ; and it is honestly told so : there is no sham in the case ; no delusion ; no talk about liberty of the press : those who write and publish are plainly told, that if they meddle with these matters, they shall be punished ; and, accordingly, they do not meddle with them, nor are they guilty of the base hypocrisy to *pretend* that they have a free press.

It must, I think, my lord, be quite evident, that, if censure and ridicule, if exposure of vice and folly, if depreciating talents or character, were to be allowed only in cases where the party assailed was the author of a book, or a public writer of some description, the *liberty* of the press could, at the utmost, effect no other good object than that of counteracting the vices and follies of the press itself ; it could not possibly produce any balance in favour of the press, which, in that case, could, as far as related to *freedom*, be of no possible use. Suppose, for instance, that I write a book, containing principles subversive of the constitution, and that some critic exposes both me and my book to such contempt, that the book is at once destroyed, and my reputation is ruined, I am rightly served, and the critic is, it now would appear, not exposed to the fangs of the law ; but, it would be quite silly, upon an occasion like this, to boast of the liberty of the press as a public good ; for, supposing the critic to have completely succeeded, all that he has done is to place matters *where* they were before, and *where they would have remained if no press at all had existed*. Your lordship very judiciously cited the instance of Mr. Locke and Sir Robert Filmer, and observed that the former did great good in writing down the latter ; though, between you and I, my lord, I much question, whether, if Mr. Locke lived in the present day, he would be much of a favourite. But, what mighty thing did Mr. Locke do here ? He answered Sir Robert Filmer ; he put him down. I doubt the fact ; for Filmer's principles are much more in vogue than those of Mr. Locke. But, admit the fact, all that Mr. Locke did, with the aid of the press, was to prevent Sir Robert Filmer from doing *harm* with the press. Between them the press, at the very best, could do *no good*, and it might do some harm. Who would not think the man foolish, aye, "the greatest fool that ever walked the earth without a leader," who should keep a fox in his poultry-yard, and a dog to watch the fox ; and who should boast of the valuable services rendered him by the dog ? "Why, you stupid ass," his neighbour would say to him, "for what do you keep either dog or fox ?" "Why not hang them both up at once, and give to some really useful animal the food by which they are sustained ?"

I shall be told, perhaps, that the press is of great public utility independent of this sort of use of it ; that it communicates a great deal of knowledge to the public at large, which would, were it not for the press, be confined to the possession of comparatively a very few persons. This may be true ; but, this is not our subject, my lord. We are talking about the *liberty* of the press. It is not the right to write and to print and to publish, upon which I am taking the liberty to address your lordship, but *the right to censure and to ridicule*, by the mighty means of writing and printing and publishing. There are a multitude of books, as connected with which the *liberty* of the press has no meaning. In lifting up my eyes, the first books I see before me are, Marshall's Gardening, Pontey's Pruner, Bonnycastle's Algebra, Code Diplomatique, Vauban's Fortifica-

tion, and Daniel's Rural Sports. Why, my lord, the *liberty* of the press has no more to do with books like these than it has to do with the making of shoes or the blacking of shoes; and, as I have, I think, pretty clearly shown, that it is to prove oneself void of even common sense to set a value upon the liberty of the press, if that liberty is to extend no further than the censuring or ridiculing of productions of the press itself, there must, it appears to me, be another meaning attached to this word *liberty*, as connected with the press. By the word *liberty* we always conceive a something, to which there are some persons who have a dislike. When we talk of securing our liberties, we should talk downright nonsense, if our hearers did not suppose, that there were some persons, somewhere or other, who were likely to be enemies to those liberties. The two ideas are inseparable. You cannot talk of liberty, without supposing the fear, nearer or more distant, of slavery. What other sense is there in the word liberty? Why talk about any such thing? In short, political liberty has these two meanings: *freedom from oppression*; and, *the legal right of doing certain things, which may be displeasing and even injurious to others*. The great end is freedom from oppression; but, to secure this, it is indispensably necessary that men should be legally protected in doing certain things that may hurt the feelings and injure the fortunes of other men. This implies a natural and a necessary opposition of interests as well as of feelings. One part of the community are necessarily opposed to another part; and, are we to be told, that if one part *feel wounded* at the censure or the gibes of the other, that the latter is to be liable to legal punishment? All our notions about the liberty of the press, the whole history of it, tell us, that it means a legal right, in any man, freely to examine, in print, into the character, talents, and conduct of any other man (especially if that other be in a public situation), and, if he please, to censure or ridicule such character, talents, or conduct. It has *now* been decided, that this is the meaning, as far as relates to authors and their works; but, I have, I think, proved, that if this be all, the liberty of the press could not possibly be of any public advantage, and that to boast of it would be to hold ourselves up to the scorn and contempt of the world. The press is daily boasted of as the great instrument in the cause of political and religious freedom. But, my lord, I am in a fever to know *how it can possibly be so*, if writers are to be punished every time they *hurt the feelings* of another man? To the press is ascribed the reformation of the church in this kingdom. Now, my lord, do you not think, that the authors of that day *hurt the feelings* of the monks and friars, whose tricks they exposed to the deluded people? Well, then, if those authors had been legally punished the moment they began their exposures, do you think that the Reformation would ever have taken place? Nay, is it not impossible that it should have taken place, through the means of the press, or, that the press should have at all contributed towards that great and memorable event? "Aye, aye, very true," some precious speculating, corrupting, double-distilled knave may tell me, "but there is *now* no Reformation wanted; there is now no delusion, no trick, no hypocrisy, no "humbug, going on, either in religion or politics." Well, then, if this be the case, of what can any body be afraid? If there be nothing to expose, there can be no exposure. If all our ministers are wise and able, all our senators incorrupt, all our generals brave, all our priests pious, and all our princes exemplary in their conduct, how is it possible for any man to hurt their feelings by remarking upon their talents, their

character, or their conduct? What a thing it would be, my lord, for a government to say to the people: "You have a right to freedom; to secure your freedom it is essential that you should enjoy liberty of the press; by the liberty of the press you will check, in time, every encroachment on your freedom; but, *our feelings* must necessarily be hurt by a disclosure of the fact that we are making such encroachments, and, by the Lord! if any of you hurt the feelings of any one of us, you shall be thrown into jail, and, perhaps, have your ears cropped off into the bargain?" What a thing would it be for a government to say this to a people! And what a people must that be, to whom a government would venture to say it! Is there a man in the whole nation who believes, that the Emperor Napoleon would dare to say such a thing to any of those nations, whom we, with perfect truth, call his slaves? No; even that master in the arts of tyranny would not, at the head of his army, tell the most crouching of his slaves, that they had *liberty* to do that, for which, if they did it, he would chop off their ears and make them end their days in prison. This is a pitch, my lord, at which no openly avowed despotism ever yet arrived.

In certain observations, which, upon this subject, I offered to my readers at page 422 of this volume, I stated, that, as to *the injury* which is done to any one by exposing him to ridicule, it ought to be considered as no objection to the ridicule; because, the injury to him might be a *great advantage to the public*. I was much pleased to see this stated by your lordship, who described it, in the case in question, as a damage which the law did not regard as an injury. You said, that it was a damage which the exposed author ought to sustain; that the critic had taken from him gains and reputation to which he was never entitled; and that, though it was a damage to him, it was, as in the case of Sir Robert Filmer, a great advantage to the public. Your lordship did, indeed, clog this excellent doctrine with the words *author* and *literary work*; and, in the charge, you observed to the jury that neither they nor you had appeared before the world, in the character of an author, or at least, that you never had; which observation came immediately after you had been laying down the right to censure and ridicule *authors*. But, my lord, we shall find, I think, from the *reason*, upon which this right was founded by your lordship, that the right must apply to all other persons as well as to authors. The doctrine was this: men have a right to expose and to ridicule published works and the authors thereof as far as connected with such works; they have a right to proceed so far as totally to destroy the reputation and the means of livelihood of such persons; and, instead of being legally punished for it, are entitled to commendation. Now for the reason why: *because, if this were not the case, bad morals and bad principles of government and other bad things might be taught, and might be established and perpetuated, to the great and lasting injury of the public*. Well, then, my lord, censure and ridicule, through the means of the press, are here justified, because they are useful in *preventing injury to the public*. That is the reason why they are to be tolerated, and even highly commended; and, it appears to me utterly impossible for the most ingenious man alive to assign a reason why the press should not be employed to censure and ridicule those acts of other persons, as well as of authors, which tend to produce an injury to the public. It is but a very small part, comparatively, of public mischief that proceeds from the press; the far greater part of it comes from those who

have the miserable press under their control; and shall not they be exposed as well as a poor silly writer of travels? My Lord Mountnorris, who very wisely read the Knight's book previous to a purchase of it, was, by the "Pocket Book," induced not to complete the purchase. Now, my lord, if I should hear that it was intended to make a commander of some stupid fellow who was also a coward, would it not be right in me to expose his stupidity and his cowardice, and thereby prevent, if I could, his being made a commander, and his bringing injury upon the public? Suppose me to see a man appointed to any office, who, in my opinion, is totally unfit for it, and who, of course, must produce an injury to the public by remaining in it; should I not, upon the principle laid down by your lordship, have a right to censure and ridicule him, to endeavour to bring others over to my opinion, and thus to put him out of his office, and to destroy that false reputation, by the means of which he obtained it? Yes: I am sure your lordship will, and must, say yes; for you must perceive, that the higher the office, the more necessary it is that it should be faithfully and ably served. What was the work of this wretched knight? What was it to the public whether his trash continued to be circulated or not? Mr. Garrow, who seems to have been almost in as piteous a plight as his client, told the jury that Sir John had not meddled with politics, or parties. I'll be sworn for the poor soul, that he had no earthly object in view other than that of gaining a comfortable livelihood; and, his works could not have made a very great noise in the world, as even the bare name of them or their author never reached me, until I read the account of the trial. Now, my lord, of what importance was this work to the public? Not a millionth part of so great importance as one single word in any one of the dispatches or proclamations or speeches of any one of the ministers; and, if we are not *freely* (that is to say without being *liable* to be *tried* for it) to censure and ridicule them, when, in our opinion, they merit it, of what service is it to the public that men of sense and wit are allowed to fall upon a poor defenceless thing like Sir John Carr? Would it not be a sad mockery to call that *liberty of the press*? Liberty of the press means liberty of opposing, as far as the press will go, the views of those who are in power. It has been called "an arm in the hands of the people," it has been called "the guardian of freedom;" but, how in all the world is it to guard freedom, if it be allowed to touch nothing but acts like those of poor Carr?

I trust, my lord, that the consequence of this trial will be, a right way of thinking with regard to the use of the press. Your lordship has got through a great part of the difficulty, and I am confident, that another decision or two of this sort, will make the rogues and fools shy of courts of law. Their pretensions were at war with nature. All honest men hate rogues, and all men of sense laugh at fools. It always has been so; and it ought always to be so. It is the only means of preventing roguery and folly from becoming predominant. The practice of the law of libels has given rise to a sickly taste. It is impossible to give a true description of a fool or knave without exciting a cry of *illiberality*. Every thing, not conveyed in dark hints, or the meaning of which is not spread out till it be lost in a multitude of words, is called *personal*. The shopkeeper, the half-sexed thing that stands behind the counter, echoes the charge preferred by the painted coxcombs and strumpets that lounge about the streets; nay, the very chambermaids, who, not unfrequently represent their mistresses in more characters than one, mimic up their

mouths, and exclaim against *personal reflections*. Good Lord! What shall we come to at last! Of all the enemies of "personal reflections," however, I know of none so zealous, as your old fat steady fellows in and about town, who, after having spent three-fourths of a life in back-biting, fraud, and money-getting, are cajoled into the snares of some pennyless syren, with whom they retire to finish their days under the torments of jealousy. These grave gentry, who have nothing to do but render all the world as cursed as themselves, are generally great readers of newspapers and great babblers about *law*, to assist in the administration of which they have a constant desire. Whoever calls fool, knave, or cuckold, they take for an enemy; they make common cause against him; for, upon their devoted foreheads the next blow may fall. Your lordship said truly, that it was good policy to resist this species of action. It was indeed; for, if Carr had succeeded, I should not have been at all surprised to see actions brought, bills of indictment preferred, and informations laid, for libels upon cats and dogs.

With great gratitude towards your lordship for the promulgation of your doctrine of the Liberty of the Press, as applied to authors, and with a sincere wish that you may live to apply it to all persons and all cases whatsoever,

I am,  
Your Lordship's most humble and  
most obedient servant,  
WM. COBBETT.

## SPANISH REVOLUTION.

*Political Register, August, 1808.*

"Lion feeders, lamb-like fighters....."—DRYDEN.

On Friday, the 5th instant, a grand dinner was given by the merchants and bankers, to the Spanish Deputies, at the City of London Tavern, at which, it appears, that the King's ministers attended. At this dinner, there were, it is said, 400 persons present; and that they had upon the table, *two thousand five hundred pounds weight of turtle*, that being merely *one* article of their food, another article consisting of *forty or fifty haunches of venison*. How many hundreds of wretches have worked like galley slaves, upon bread and water, to supply this gluttonous repast! It was a feast well calculated to inspire the sentiments, which were uttered in the form of toasts, and, through which toasts, the fact has been published to the world, that we are to be taxed for carrying on a war in Spain, not for the sake of giving liberty and happiness to the people of that wretched country, but for that of restoring the hateful despotism that had so long prevailed, and the last act of which was, to introduce a French army, and to give up the royal authority to Frenchmen.

In any other light than as the vehicle of this declaration, the gluttonous meeting would be unworthy of notice; for, of what consequence is it to Buonaparte what we say, or think, about his attempts upon Spain?



And, especially, of what consequence is it to any one, what the London gormandizers say, or think about it? Napoleon would laugh at the idea of an attack from the *turtle patriots*, who, like the animal from which they take their name, would be easily caught napping, and, if once overthrown, would quietly lie till he should find it convenient to destroy them. If we could beat Napoleon with toasts and songs and tunes and doggerel and with the hoisting of flags, we should have beaten him long ago. The last time I saw the English flag hoisted in union with that of any other nation, it was intertwined with that of France, and, in the Guildhall of this same city of London, they waved over the heads of the Mayor, the Aldermen, and Mr. Otto! Upon that occasion Buonaparte's health was, I think, the second toast, and, in point of satisfaction, given by it to the company, it hardly seemed to yield to the cart-loads of sweetmeats, which the tawdry wives and daughters of the citizens were, with both hands at once, cramming down their throats; and, who will lay me a guinea, that, if Napoleon were to give peace and security to us, upon condition that we would leave him to work his will with Spain, a very great majority of those who devoured the 2,500 pounds weight of turtle would not jump at the offer, and express great anxiety and uneasiness for the sending away of those very Spanish deputies, who have now to support the calamity of their caresses?

The fourth toast was, we are told, "*King Ferdinand VII.*" which was, the reporter says, received with loud applause, and even with enthusiasm. To give this toast was, it is very probable, the *principal object* of the meeting. In the King's speech, at the close of the last session of parliament, there was a talk about *loyalty*, but nothing was hinted as to whom it was the object of this country to set over Spain; in the King's answer to the address of the city of London, he is more explicit, declaring that his *sole* object is to restore the *ancient* government of Spain; but, still there was room for doubt. This meeting seems to have been regarded as the best vehicle of conveying to the public, in the first instance, the fact, that we are to pay and to fight for the Bourbons. The King's ministers were present; one of them was the orator for the Spanish Deputies; and, we may, therefore, safely conclude, that they approved of the toast. Indeed, it is well known, that, upon such occasions, the toasts and all the proceedings are generally laid down in writing, beforehand, and are submitted to the ministers, without whose consent not a sentiment is publicly uttered.

We may, therefore, I think, look upon it as a settled point, that the object of our government is to restore the House of Bourbon to the throne of Spain, and that, too, without any limitations whatever. This I think a very unjustifiable enterprise. So far from its doing good, supposing it to succeed, I am convinced it will do harm to every nation in Europe, and particularly to *this nation*. We shall, moreover, if it be the object to place Ferdinand upon the throne, be engaged in supporting an *usurpation*; for, is it not notorious that he *deposed* his father, and that the father has formally protested against the assumption of the royal authority by his son? "The father was an *idiot*," say some; but, is that really a sufficient reason for his son's pushing him from the throne? Kings would be in a perilous way, if, upon a pretence of their being idiots, they could, at any moment, be deposed. But, we are told, that the old King *abdicated* his throne in favour of his son Ferdinand. And, has not Ferdinand since abdicated that same throne in favour of the emperor Napo-

leon? If one was a forced abdication the other was not less so; and, in the latter case, there has been no protest at all, while, in the former case, there was a protest. So that, if any body be rightfully King of Spain, it is the old king and not the young one, unless we allow of the validity of the several acts of abdication; and, then, Joseph Buonaparte is the rightful King of Spain.

The fact now appears to be, that there were two parties in Spain, one for the old King and the Prince of Peace, and one for the young King, then the Prince of Asturias; that the latter did, at last, prevail; that they caused the old King to abdicate his throne; and that, after Ferdinand had been frightened away by Murat, they rose in arms to resist the French and for the purpose of causing Ferdinand to be restored. It is, therefore, this party only who are fighting and writing against the French; and, I am much afraid, that their object is not that of establishing freedom in Spain. If this be the case, Napoleon will be very little affected by the surrender of DUPONT and his army. He has not a *people*, but merely a faction to contend with; a faction has, and can have, no fixed principle of action; difficulties will produce disagreements amongst the leaders; and, one sweeping defeat puts an end to the insurrection. The war now appears to be not for freedom from oppression; not for the purpose of keeping out a conqueror, not for the rights of the people; but merely for a choice of despots. It is a war, in which two rival kings are contending for the mastership over an enslaved nation; and, as to the people of Spain, they have, if this be the case, really no more interest in the issue, than the sheep or the swine of Spain. These latter will not, I warrant them, be killed unless they have good flesh upon their bones; and the former will not be robbed, unless they possess something worth the taking away. If a man, or a nation, be enslaved, it is no matter who, or what, is his master. What signifies it to a Spaniard, whether his dinner be taken from him by order of Joseph Buonaparte, or by order of Ferdinand VII.? Why, the man that will fight for the sake of a choice between the two must be a downright brute.

We have all along been expressing our hopes, that the *example* of Spain may have a powerful effect in *France*, that the French people may catch the flame, and finally shake off the yoke, which Napoleon has had the address to put upon their necks. But, if the war in Spain be carried on for Ferdinand, and, even if it should restore him to the throne, what good is that likely to do in France? What *flame* will there be for the people of France to catch? How are they to profit from *that example*? Or, is there any one so very very stupid as to suppose, that the people of France, who, in spite of all Napoleon's acts of despotism, do now possess the lands and houses of former nobility, clergy, and rich men, will, for the mere pleasure of having a change of masters, give up all those extensive and valuable possessions? If, indeed, the Spaniards were to beat Napoleon, and establish a new government, promising the enjoyment of liberty and property, then their *example* would be powerful with the French, and might lead to consequences the most important, in all the nations of Europe.

The turtle-patriots, while they are toasting King Ferdinand VII., very consistently toast Ferdinand IV., King of Sicily; but, upon such an occasion, and in such a company, what had a toast in behalf of *liberty* to do? They toasted success to "our brave associates in liberty and arms." If we are to be the *associates* of the subjects of Ferdinand, in *liberty* as well as

in arms, we want no conjuror to tell us what degree of liberty the turtle-patriots would suffer us to enjoy. The turtle-patriots do, in fact, wish for none of us to enjoy any thing worthy of the name of liberty. They would execrate the cause of the Spaniards, if they thought them engaged in the cause of liberty; and, if they wish success to the arms of those who are opposed to Napoleon, in Spain, it is because they dread the effect of an overthrow of that system of government, by which the people were held in slavery the most disgraceful. If the contest is to be between Ferdinand and Joseph, my decided opinion is that the latter will remain King of Spain; and, whatever *my* wishes may be, the turtle-patriots would rather that Joseph should be King, than that the war should terminate with the establishment of a free constitution.

In toasting Ferdinand the turtle-patriots were toasting an *enemy* of their country; a King, if they insist upon his being one, who is at war against England; for, no treaty has been made with him; no peace has been made with him, or with any person acting under his authority. It has been declared, that we are at peace with the Spanish *nation*; but, not a word has been said about peace with a *King* of Spain. Ferdinand is in France, and the last act which we hear of, as his, was a declaration that he had made a voluntary surrender of his authority as King of Spain, and as heir to the Spanish throne. But, the turtle-patriots wanted a something to set up against Buonaparte, and it mattered to them, very little indeed who, or what, it was. It was a dread of Buonaparte, and not a love of freedom, by which they were inspired. They will not, however, get the nation to adopt their sentiments. Hundreds and thousands would willingly venture even their lives in the cause of Spanish freedom; but the turtle-patriots will find nobody fool enough to hazard any thing for the sake of Ferdinand VII., whom there is no man, not a speculator in one way or another, that does not wish to keep where he is, as being the fittest place for him, who gave up the sword of Francis I.

The victory of CASTANOS and DE TILLY over DUPONT is of great importance, be the object of the war what it may; for, it will tend to *lengthen* the contest; and, if there be a long contest, let us hope, that new men will arise, and, by degrees, extinguish the miserable tools of the despot. If the people have to bleed for what they win; if they suffer severely for the purpose of keeping out a foreign despot, let us hope, that they will not again yield their necks to a despot of native growth.

This COUNT DE TILLY is, I believe, a *Frenchman*, a circumstance, which, I suppose, the newspaper editors thought of too little interest to notice. In 1798, or 1799, he was amongst the emigrants in Philadelphia, where he was married, by a Methodist preacher, to a daughter of the late Mr. Bingham, and which daughter, after having been divorced from the Count by an act of the legislature of the State, was, I have heard, married to a son of Sir Francis Baring. The Count, from precisely what *consideration* I know not, left Philadelphia, soon after the marriage, and it was said, that he went to Spain. If it be the same man, and I see no reason to suspect the contrary, he is now about forty years of age, a very gay and very clever man, and a man likely to be engaged in dashing enterprizes. If the Count and I were to meet again, we should hardly forbear expressing our admiration of the freaks of Madam Fortune, who chose to send him to fight the battles of the Spaniards, while she set the family of Baring, at the head of the turtle-patriots, to celebrate his deeds in arms, and to number him amongst "our gallant associates in

liberty." This shows, that, as Rosseau observes, "we are all good for something or other." Some for fighting, and some for having wives.

*Continued—August 20.*

If it be true, that Joseph Buonaparte has quitted Madrid, there is one rascally government at an end, at any rate. There is no longer any *consolidated* despotism in Spain, and, let us hope, that there never will be again.

It being reported, that the vile nobility, who attended Joseph to Madrid, have, upon perceiving that he was likely to fall, deserted him, some of our despotism-defending prints, particularly the Morning Post, says that it thought, all along, that these nobles had been entrapped at Bayonne, had been forced to publish sentiments foreign from their hearts, and that this desertion of Joseph is a proof that the opinion here stated was correct. Now, it occurred to me, that this desertion was a proof of consummate baseness, if any such proof had been wanting; for, if the nobles had been *entrapped* at Bayonne, if they had actually been forced to go there, and when there to make speeches against the Bourbons and in favour of the Buonapartes; if this had been the case, they would have deserted Joseph the moment they got into Spain; but (if it be true that they have now deserted him), they stopped, we find, till they have reason to believe, that he will be worsted. But, the fact is, that there was no *force* employed to get them to Bayonne, any more than to get the royal family there. The whole tribe went upon a summons, which took the name of an *invitation*. There was not a French soldier employed to escort them to Bayonne; and, as to the nobles, they were not even summoned, or invited. One or two of the Bishops sent their professions of allegiance to Napoleon, without being asked for any; nay, is it not notorious, that the putting of Joseph upon the throne was preceded by applications to that effect, made by persons in Spain and not at Bayonne?

The truth is, that the wretched defender of despotism, to whose print I have referred, perceives, or has been told, that it will be impossible for time even to wear away the infamy of the Spanish nobility assembled at Bayonne, and afterwards becoming the servants of Joseph Buonaparte, while the *people* of Spain are fighting for their freedom against this same Buonaparte. This writer foresees, that men in general will ask why English blood should be shed for the purpose of restoring to splendour so vile and rascally a crew. Therefore it is, that he is anxious to make his readers believe, that the Spanish nobles did all under compulsion. To be sure, it is a most confounding fact, that a whole royal government, King, Prime Minister and Nobles, all go off upon an invitation, and make a surrender of the kingdom to the enemy, while *the people*, the moment they are gone, take up arms to meet that enemy, and are actually proceeding in a way that would encourage one to hope, that they may not only beat that enemy, but, finally, secure the freedom of their country. This is a confounding fact indeed. It is impossible to deny it; and, therefore, all manner of shifts and tricks are resorted to, for the purpose of keeping it out of sight. Either the royal family and nobles were *forced* from Spain, or they were not. If the latter, then all the pretexts about compulsion vanish into air; and, if they were forced away, they were forced away in the presence of that very people who have now risen in arms to defend themselves and their country, but which people,

and no part of which people, attempted to take up arms for the sake of the royal family and the nobles.

This writer, and several others of the same stamp, hardly excepting the Morning Chronicle, unwilling to utter a word that shall seem to favour the notion of Spaniards being fighting for the purpose of establishing a free government, and yet not knowing very well how to write upon the subject without now and then introducing the object of the glorious efforts which the people of Spain are making; these writers, thus embarrassed, do, I perceive, until they see which way things are likely to go, which way Whitehall and Lloyd's may settle the point, talk about the people of Spain fighting for their *independence*. They reprobate the idea of a nation's giving up its *independence*. The people of Spain, they say, are engaged in the glorious cause of *independence*. Not a syllable do they say about the *freedom*, or the *happiness*, of the people of Spain. Not a word about their throwing off the yoke of oppression, which they have so long worn, and which oppression has, in fact, been the only cause of, first, their degradation, and secondly, the invasion of their country. Not a word do these writers say upon these heads, but, they ring the changes, over and over again, upon the very equivocal word *independence*.

But, what do they mean by *independence*? Do they mean, that state in which a nation or people is not dependent upon the will of another nation, people, government, or chief? If so, it appears to me, that the people of Spain, unless they are bent upon establishing an entirely *new government*, are acting very inconsistently, and are, indeed, shedding their blood for a purpose precisely the contrary to that which they wish to accomplish; for, as to their old government, it was always in a state of dependence upon France; and, the government which Napoleon has proposed to them seems very well calculated to provide, in time at least, against any such dependence in future. To be sure, the Bayonne Constitution, *like most others in the world*, will, I dare say, admit, upon a pinch, of a little alteration; but, in the meanwhile, it is impossible that King Joseph can make the country more dependent upon France than it was before; and, in words, at least, this constitution does restore to the people of Spain something like an enjoyment of freedom, something like security for property and life.

The Morning Post exclaims, "What a disgrace, what an infamy, to submit to a *foreign yoke*!" and, he most severely reproaches even his friends, the Bayonne Grandees, for having, even under *compulsion*, given the sanction of their names to the bringing in of a mean, beggarly, *foreign family*, and placing them upon the throne. But, surely, my friend of the Morning Post suffers his zeal to get astride upon his reason. Surely he does not take time to reflect; if he did, he would certainly have been cautious how he had condemned, in terms so unqualified, the introduction of *foreigners* and the placing of them upon the throne; for he must have recollected, that in certain cases, such events, though accomplished, too, by the aid of foreign troops, brought in through the instrumentality of domestic nobles, are termed "GLORIOUS REVOLUTIONS." We are here neither saying nor supposing any thing, one way or the other, about the characters of the parties introduced, or of the cause of introduction; but, we may, I think, venture to say, that the simple fact of a foreigner's being placed upon the throne of a country, and of foreign troops being brought into it, cannot, *by Englishmen*, be

very decently urged as a decided proof of a *loss of independence*. Nay, I am of opinion, that it would be full as well if the Morning Post and his fellow-labourers would refrain from uttering such vehement Philippic against the introduction of foreign princes and troops. One of the standing charges against Buonaparté is, that he is *not a Frenchman*; and that he prefers having *Corsicans and Italians about his person*. This may as well remain unsaid, and I beg the writers in question duly to weigh the thing in their minds.

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## AUSTRIA.

*Political Register, August, 1808.*

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If war take place between Austria and France, and we carry on the war in Spain for the restoration of the old family, then the old game is beginning again. More subsidies, more lies from Whitehall, and a result much about the same as the last.

Our villanous newspapers express a most anxious hope, that Austria is bent upon war; that, stimulated by the "glorious example of Spain," she is resolved to make one more effort against the tyrant of the earth. The example of Spain! Why, man, do you consider what she must do, in order to *begin* to follow that example? She has an *Emperor*, an *Empress*, a whole *royal family*, with all the old set of courtiers, male and female; all her panders and parasites; and every thing, of which Spain has not a fragment left. The example of Spain, indeed! Why, the Spaniards suffered a French army to come to their very capital without an attempt to resist them, and, according to *your* assertion, they suffered the French to *force* away their king and queen, and all their princes and ministers; and, that being done, they began to *fight* the French, and to endeavour to eject them from their country. Now, do you really wish the Austrians to do the same? I imagine, that what you wish is, that the Austrians may follow the example of the Spaniards merely in resisting the French, leaving all things just as they now are in their government, in which wish I am decidedly of opinion you will be disappointed. I can, for my part, discover, in the people of Austria, no motive for resisting the French, which they had not previous to the battle of Austerlitz. I can discover no reason for supposing that Austria should be more fortunate now than she was then; and, I am fully persuaded, that whatever money may be sent her from this country, will do us no more good than was done by any and all of the immense sums which she has heretofore received from us.

The Austrians are composed of materials very different from those which go to the making up of a Spaniard. The Germans do not easily *catch fire*. They look well and long at danger before they encounter it. They act upon the wise maxim, that "the better part of valour is discretion." It was an observation, in America, that the Hessians always smoked their pipes as they went to the *attack*, but never in a *retreat*. They are certainly, the whole of the Germans, not less prudent, at any rate, than they are courageous; and, indeed, the whiskers, which seem to have a natural fitness to their faces, denote, like those of the cat, a characteristic cautiousness.

For these reasons, and some others that I shall not now mention, I do not think that the Austrians, if war should take place, will follow the example of the Spaniards, in making a gallant resistance to the approach of the French; and, in short, my opinion is, that if Austria now suffers herself to be hurried into a war, her royal family will share the fate of the House of Bourbon.

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## PORTUGAL.

*Political Register, September, 1808.*

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“Curls are not cannons; hair-powder is not gun-powder; tails are not bayonets. Are these the arms and ammunition, by which the enemies of Russia are to be defeated!”—SUWAROFF.

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OF the victories obtained over the French, in Portugal, by the English army under the command of Sir Arthur Wellesley, it is unnecessary to attempt to speak in praise; but as far as we can judge from the accounts yet received, they certainly reflect the greatest honour on the army as well as on the commanders of every rank. It was, in my opinion, fully proved before, that our troops, when well commanded, were far superior to the French troops. I never regarded the assertion of that superiority as an empty boast. There were always reasons why our troops should be intrinsically better, and there was abundant experience to verify the theory. But, now, I should imagine, it will be very difficult for the French, though masters of the press of Europe, to prevent that fact from being acknowledged all over the world. In this point of view alone, then, our success is of vast importance. The victory, though not more glorious to the nation, is, in this as well as in other parts of its consequences, near and remote, of far greater importance to us than the victory of Trafalgar, which gave no new turn to the war, excited no great degree of feeling in the nations of Europe, and did not, in the least, arrest the progress of the French arms or diminish their fame or that dread of those arms which universally prevailed.

The consequences of this victory will be, first, a thorough conviction in the mind of every man in this kingdom, that the French, when met by us upon any thing like equal terms, are pretty sure to be beaten, which conviction will produce a confidence in our means of defence which did not unequivocally exist before, it will dissipate all the unmanly apprehensions about the threatened invasion, and, of course, it will, in a short time, relieve the country, in great part at least, from the inconvenience and distress, which, in so many ways, arise from the present harassing system of internal defence. Secondly, this victory, gained under such circumstances, will take off from that dread, in which the French arms have been so long held in other nations, and particularly in the southern parts of Europe. Thirdly, it will confirm the confidence of the Spaniards, will make them even bolder than they were, will make them despise as well as hate the French. Fourthly, it will not only diminish the military and pecuniary means of Napoleon, but will render him timid; it will make him hesitate; it will fill him with apprehensions; it will enervate

his councils; the consequence of which may be his total overthrow; particularly as his rigorous maritime and commercial regulations are so severely felt in all the countries under his control. Amongst the minor consequences of this victory (taking for granted that it will lead to the total evacuation of Portugal by the French) will be a speedy and bloodless settlement of our dispute with America, which is costing us something in precautionary measures. The American trade to Spain and Portugal was very great; and to trade thither *now*, as well as with the colonies of those countries, we can, if they behave well, give them leave.

The merit of the ministers in sending out this expedition, in their plan of operations, in their choice of a commander, and in every part of the enterprise, no man of a just mind will, whatever be his sentiments in other respects, attempt to deny. They would, if the thing had failed, have been loaded with no small share of the blame; it would, therefore, be the height of injustice to withhold from them their share of the praise. Indeed, it cannot be denied, that almost the whole of their measures, with respect to foreign countries, have been strongly marked with foresight, promptitude, and vigour. Their Orders in Council, against which Mr. Whitbread, Mr. Roscoe, and the Barings, so bitterly inveighed, have been one cause, and not a trifling one, of the events in Spain and Portugal, into which countries we could not have entered had not *the people* been with us, and that the people were with us, arose, in great part, from those despair-creating effects, which were produced by the Orders in Council, which orders they could not fail to ascribe to Napoleon, nor could they fail to perceive, that, while he possessed their country, there was not the smallest chance of their being relieved from those effects. How false, then, have events proved to be the reasoning of Lord Grenville and Mr. Roscoe and Mr. Baring, that the Orders in Council would make us detested by all the suffering nations, and would tend to strengthen the power of Napoleon over them! I could easily refer to the passage, wherein I contended, that the Orders in Council would naturally have the effect of shaking the authority of Napoleon in the conquered or dependent, states, by producing unbearable distress. I, indeed, wished for a still greater stretch of maritime power. I wished an interdict to be issued against all those not in alliance with us. I wished the whole world to be told: "As long as you suffer France to command all the land, England will command all the sea, and from that sea, she will permit none of you to derive any, even the smallest advantage, or comfort." But, without this, the ministers really have done what they said they would do; they have brought things to a *crisis*; they have got rid of that benumbing, death-like lingering, which had been the characteristic of our warfare for so many years, and, if they follow up their blows, it is not impossible, that, after all the senseless admiration which has been bestowed upon speech-making ministers, we may see the conqueror of Europe, the king and queen maker, toppled from his stool by the Duke of Portland.

Now is the time to recal the public attention to the doctrines of Mr. Whitbread and Mr. Roscoe. I should now like to see, from the pen of the latter in particular, an essay on *the wisdom of making peace in 1806*, and another upon *the moderation of Napoleon*, both of which were the subjects of his dull pamphlet. I should like now to see him attempting to convince the manufacturers, that they would have gained by a peace made in 1806, and that they would have enjoyed their gains



in peace and safety. His doctrines, luckily for the nation, did not prevail. The common sense of the people taught them that his doctrines were false. He could not make them see any prospect of real peace; and, though the conqueror was still borne upon the wings of victory; though a refusal to submit to his terms was followed by a still greater extension of his power and of our danger, yet the nation said, "Go on he must if he will, for until the state of Europe be changed, England cannot enjoy a moment's real peace." By the measures of the present ministers, the great question, whichever one was afraid to moot, was at once clearly put: Can England exist independent, and in defiance, of all the civilized world, or can she not? This question, the most interesting that ever was started, has now been decided, and for this decision, so glorious to us and to our country for ever, we have to thank the men who are at present in power.

But, if these victories, and if a continuation of success, are not to have the effect of diminishing the sacrifices that the people make; if they are not to put an end, in time, to the system of red-coat arming and forts and barracks, in England, I shall regard them as being of little use. I do not expect or wish, that these precautions, little as I may think of their efficacy, should *all at once* be thrown aside; but, I do hope, that, as soon as all reasonable men are perfectly satisfied, that there is no longer the smallest danger of *invasion*, the ministers will begin to show a disposition to restore the country to its former state of confidence in itself, to abridge the enormous expenses of an establishment which now costs about twenty millions annually, and to render the ruling influence less of a military nature. The army, or at least the part of the nation under military rule and influence, is too large to be consistent with the principles or the practice of freedom. Regarded as the means of an *emergency*, it is not so odious; but, if it were to be attempted to keep such a force on foot as a permanent establishment, we might, at once, bid adieu to the hope of ever being a free people and, in fact, we should have made all these sacrifices, and our countrymen would have bled, only for the purpose of forging and rivetting our own chains. By degrees, which succeed each other very rapidly, a *military nation* gets into a *military government*. It is quite impossible to separate the things in idea, and as impossible to separate them long in fact. They are interwoven in their nature.

The expense, too, is enormous. Every parent who leaves a hundred pounds in legacies to his children, has to reflect, that six or seven of those pounds are now deducted for purposes of a military nature. To maintain such an army, with all its numerous retainers, and all its pretences for expenditure, must alone, in time, leave the individual proprietor little to call his own. In short, it must eat him out of house and home.

Therefore, in rejoicing at the success of the army, in applauding the wisdom and bravery of all concerned in the enterprise, I must say, that no small part of my satisfaction arises from the hope, that, in the end, this success, with the others, by which I trust it will be followed, will produce a diminution of the army and its expenses.

That we should continue a military nation, as long as the necessity exists, there can be no doubt; and, that we should afterwards have a general and permanent plan of military defence is what I wish for; but, that we should have a large permanent army, commanded by officers appointed and cashiered at pleasure; that we should have such an army

an hour longer than is absolutely necessary to our security from the attacks of a *foreign* foe, I hope no man will be found to assert; especially after the glorious example given us by the patriots of Spain, who have proved to the whole world, that a people rising in defence of their country, though without discipline and without appointed leaders, are more than a match for the bravest and most skilful enemy.

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## SPAIN.

*Political Register, September, 1808.*

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In speaking of the probability of Buonaparte being overthrown, and in expressing satisfaction at that probability, I must always be understood as including the condition, that his sway is succeeded by a free government; because, if people are to be slaves, it is a circumstance of no consequence at all whom they are slaves to, except that it is less dishonourable to bend the knee to a famous conqueror than to a silly creature, who has never done any thing but eat and drink. If the nations, who, to all appearance, are breaking his chains, have the wisdom and the virtue to drive out despotism of every sort along with him, then they will and ought to succeed; but, if the wars against him be carried on by a cabal, by a faction whose object is to exalt themselves, they not only will fail, but they ought to fail. The work of opposing him is but just *begun*. What is done is nothing, if not well followed up. To be sure, a defeat of him who has so long been accustomed to meet with uninterrupted success, is an excellent beginning. He has, however, been defeated before now; and his army, under other commanders, has been defeated: yet, he recovered that; it produced little injury to him in any way. What line of conduct he may adopt with regard to Spain and Portugal, whether he may send large armies thither, or may leave them for a while to see the result of those internal differences which he may naturally expect to see arise, and which he will not fail to endeavour to foment, is quite uncertain. It will, however, be a great error in us to act as if we supposed, that he had given up the idea of placing kings of his own family upon the thrones of Spain and Portugal. He is not easily turned from any of his projects; and it would be a dreadful mistake to suppose, that, because our newspapers laugh at him, he is really, all at once, in consequence of the loss of thirty or forty thousand men, become an object of contempt. The internal affairs of Spain cannot be easily arranged and settled. The patriots have pronounced their old government an *infamous* one; they have stipulated with the people for a *reform of abuses*; they have demanded an *assembly of the Cortes*. If there are no interested motives to come athwart the intended reformation, the little confusion that will arise will be of no consequence; but if there are; if private interest and not public good be the object of the leaders, Joseph Napoleon will yet be king of Spain and the Indies, in spite of all that we can do to the contrary. I am, I must confess, sorry that Napoleon does not seem disposed to send armies into Spain. I wish the war there to be long and arduous; for, if it cease now, *the people* will have gained very little indeed, especially if any of the rags of the old govern-

ment are brought back again. Nay, it is very probable, that they may be worse treated than they were before. The despots will conclude, and with reason, that the people are fashioned to despotism. They will have got a new lease of their enjoyments and their abuses; and the people will be more wretched than ever. All the old corrupt crew will be in power. There will be no example given to the enslaved nations of the world, except that of a people having shed their blood for the apparent purpose of perpetuating their own slavery; of calling back despotism amongst them, after they had got rid of it. A struggle of some length would have made the people of Spain think no more of FERDINAND than they would think of a fly. Such a struggle must have called up hidden talents and virtues. Now there appears to be a sickliness in the councils of the Juntas; and of this, it is very probable, Buonaparte may take advantage. What we ought to wish for is a new and vigorous government in Spain; a government upon principles precisely the opposite of those whereon Napoleon's government is built and maintained; a government that would be a living example to all the nations whom he has enslaved. He has in his clutches the chief of that government which we seem to desire for Spain. Who is to make him give that chief up; and, if he does it, upon what *conditions* will he do it? It is easy to see what a turmoil must arise out of this single circumstance. While Ferdinand is in France, unless all idea of making him king be abandoned, there never can be any peaceable settlement of affairs in Spain. If, in the midst of those divisions of opinion that will inevitably arise, as to what ought to be done, Napoleon send an army of a hundred thousand men, his brother will be seated upon the throne with very little difficulty. It appears to me, therefore, that the thing to be desired, is *a new government*, established as soon as possible, unless Buonaparte immediately send his armies; for, in that case, there will want very little of government until the war be over, and then it will be found, that the talents and virtues of the nation have, of their own accord, formed the sort of government required by the state of the country. There are some who talk of FERDINAND as if he had been fairly chosen by the people of Spain, who had first put down his father. The Morning Chronicle, of the 2nd instant, has upon the subject, a long-winded article, which concludes thus:—

“The Spaniards are fighting for their national independence, and for their legitimate sovereign—but what constitutes the *legitimacy* of FERDINAND VII.? That which made WILLIAM III. the legitimate sovereign of this country, ‘*the choice of the people*.’ They have set aside his father by *forcing* him to abdicate his throne, because he was incapable and unworthy to reign. Instead of embarrassing themselves, like the French with speculative theories of government, they have chosen his son as his successor, as the English chose the son-in-law of JAMES II.; and we have not a doubt, that their privileges will be assured, as ours were, by a Bill of Rights. Their conduct ought to operate, both as a warning to kings, and an encouragement to every people; and if princes do not profit from the lesson, their subjects will, we trust, follow the example of the Spaniards.”

Now, I should like to know what evidence there is of *the people* of Spain having given their voice for the young king. Never has there appeared the slightest foundation for the assertion. The people had nothing at all to do with the matter. The old king was turned out by a band of armed men; he was, indeed, *forced* to abdicate his throne; but it was by a cabal at court, and with which cabal the people of Spain had

nothing to do. The son, having assumed the kingly office, afterwards abdicates it in behalf of Napoleon; so that, if he really was chosen by the people, he gave up what the people had given him, and Joseph went to Spain in virtue of the people's choice. With those who stick to Ferdinand there must always this embarrassment exist: they must either acknowledge in him *a want of legitimate right to reign*, or they must openly avow the doctrine, that the people have, at all times, *a right to cashier their kings*. As to saying, that the Spaniards chose the *son* of the old "unworthy" king, as the English chose the *son-in-law* of their unworthy king; the very existence of such persons was a matter of accident. Suppose these kings had had neither sons nor sons-in-law, were the people to have gone to the more distant relations? Suppose they had been able to find no distant relations; what was then to have been done? Does this right of cashiering kings, or, to use the more gentle phrase of the Morning Chronicle, this right of "*forcing kings to abdicate*," exist only in cases where the said kings happen to have relations? Will the people at Whitehall admit the right of cashiering kings? If they do not, where will they find a justification for any attempt that may be made by us to place Ferdinand upon the throne, during the life of that father, who protested against the violence which compelled him to abdicate? But, coupling the cause of Spain with that of this man; we get ourselves into difficulties, from which it will not be easy for us to get clear. Nor should I be at all surprised, if, by-and-by, we should see all our present hopes blasted in consequence of some act of pertinacity relating to the sort of government which we, or our rulers, desire to have established in Spain.

*Continued.—October 8.*

Upon the affairs of this now most interesting part of the world, there is a letter, written by Major Cartwright, and published in the last number of the Register. It is there shown how the people of Spain formerly thought and with what spirit they acted, in matters relating to domestic freedom. It is surprising how strong a resemblance there is between what they sought to establish in the reign of Charles V., and what was established in England a century later. I sincerely wish, that Major Cartwright, who with the experience of threescore, writes with the clearness and the vigour of the prime of life, and whose reasoning and eloquence come recommended by unquestionable disinterestedness and integrity, may succeed in his zealous and unwearied endeavours to rouse the feelings and direct the judgment of the present patriots of Spain.

I am not, nor can any rational man be, without some very serious apprehensions as to the result of the contest that is now about to begin; but, if a provisional government, capable of calling out and directing the force of the country, be speedily organized, I shall have great hopes of final success, notwithstanding any reverses that may, at the outset, be experienced by the Spaniards. For, we seldom have heard of a whole people being subdued, if they were animated with one soul, and if that soul was bent upon obtaining freedom. The thing to be most feared is, that this all-powerful motive may not universally prevail; that the nobles, or the priests, or both, may look beyond the immediate object of the struggle, and may be grudging in their offers to the people, and also in point of confidence in their intercourse with them. If this should

unhappily be the case; if the people should be treated with coolness, disgust will speedily succeed, the cause will soon fall to ruin, and those attacks, which, in the other case, would have called forth the latent fire of patriotism, talent, and valour, will, at once, extinguish every motive of resistance. It is quite shocking to think of an ancient nation consisting of so many millions of people being made over to, and taken possession of by, a man who was, but yesterday, a person unknown in the world; but, he comes backed with terrible power, and to resist that power there must be a motive, and an adequate motive too.

In speaking of the operations of the war, the Fabian example of the Americans has been cited. But, we should bear in mind the vast difference in the circumstances. The nature of the two countries is, in the first place, very different. America was assailed by an enemy, who had all his troops, his horses, and his artillery, to send across the sea, a distance of, at least, a thousand leagues, and, it sometimes happened, that five or six months elapsed between the embarkation and the landing. Besides, the enemy whom America had to resist was of a very different character. We used no *fire*; we sacked no towns; we did not carry the torch in one hand and the sword in the other. Our generals were not Massenas and Junots. A standing toast at our head-quarters used to be, "A long war and a merciful one." The Lanneses do not give such toasts. No: the Spaniards will want men very different from the Washingtons and the Lees. They will have to fight day after day and every day, and to withstand that terror, which the destructive progress of an army, accustomed to pillage and to all sorts of cruelty, cannot fail to inspire in the minds of the weaker part of the nation.

We must not, therefore, conclude, that the Spaniards will succeed, because the Americans did. If, indeed, we could prevail upon Buonaparte to send against them such generals as we sent to America (and *we* might be able, perhaps, to point out *some such* for the service), the Spanish cause would be safe; but, as things are, it must be confessed, that the struggle is an object of the utmost anxiety; and, it behoves us to think betimes of what *our* measures ought to be, if the result should seat a Buonaparte upon the throne.

I like not, I must confess, the seeming hankering after FERDINAND VII. The Spaniards have declared the late government to have been an infamous one. What sense is there, then, in their talk about a man, in whose person they must intend (if they intend to do any thing with him) to restore that government? I do not understand this. He has abdicated the throne; he has given up his claims to the sovereignty of Spain, in terms as explicit as a man can possibly use. There appears to be something like infatuation in carrying on a bloody war for him, or in making his restoration any part of the objects of such a war. This is, with me, a chilling circumstance. It takes largely from the ardour I should feel in the Spanish cause; for, after all, it is the good of the world in general, and of Spain and of England in particular, that one ought to have at heart. I observe, that in several of our writers, a *hatred of Napoleon* is the predominant feeling; and, what is the worst of it, the far greater part of them do not discover hatred of him in his character of *despot*, but in his character of *conqueror*. Now, it is, I presume, in the former character, that he is the most decidedly entitled to *our* hatred; but, then, the difficulty is, that there are *other* despots, whom we profess not to hate at all. We ourselves have been great conquerors in our day.

- There are the Nabob Viziers, the Nizams, the Sultauns, and a long list of sovereigns of one sort and another, whom we have conquered, whose territories we have invaded, and whose subjects we have taken to ourselves, not forgetting some small portion of their *property*; and we have seen, that, instead of curses upon the head of the divers conquerors, we have heaped thanks, praises unbounded, and pensions and titles not a few. Come, come, then; let us not be so unjust as to hate and execrate this man in his character of conqueror. In his character of despot, with all my soul; in his character of despot-maker; in his character of ally of Russia, of the rabble of rascals upon the Rhine; in this character I agree to hate him as much as any man living.

If we hate him as a despot, we cannot wish to see a despotism, of any sort, re-established in Spain. The name of the man who is to be at the head of the despotism, if a despotism it is to be, is of no consequence to the Spaniards, nor is of but very little consequence to us. People have often carried on bloody wars for a choice of despots; but, then, each despot was present and active himself. In short, it is absurd to suppose, that, at this day, any nation will undergo fire and sword for the sake of an absent person, whose former government they have called infamous; and, if this absurdity should be attempted to be persevered in, I think, it is very clear, that the Spaniards will be subdued.

This, it seems to me, is the point, upon which the fate of Spain will turn. Uncommon, unheard-of, exertions are required; new courage, new talents, new genius, are demanded. To call these forth, powerful motives must exist, and these motives must make their way, at once, to the hearts of even the lowest orders of the people. A choice of despots; a mere choice of persons to whom the people are to be slaves, appears to me to be no motive at all; and hence I conclude, that, if the leaders in Spain persevere in professing to make war for the restoration of their former despot, they will be defeated, and that Joseph Napoleon, though the son of a green-grocer, will stand at the head of their new family of sovereigns. God forbid that this should be the case; but, if the struggle be made for no better purpose, the failure of the Spaniards will be a subject of regret with those only, whose fears of the conqueror have deprived them of the power of reflection.

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## CONVENTION IN PORTUGAL.

*Political Register, October, 1808.*

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In the London Gazette Extraordinary, in which were published, by the Government, the several documents relating to the late Conventions in Portugal, the Armistice, which was the basis of all that followed, and which, as far as it was departed from, in the subsequent negotiations, was rendered less injurious and disgraceful; this Armistice, which was, on our part, negotiated by Sir Arthur Wellesley, and which bore his signature, this armistice was published, was, by the government, communicated to the people of England, in the French language only, while all the other documents were, in the very same Gazette Extraordinary, published in the English language only.

THE fact, a statement of which I have placed at the head of this present Number of my work, should be constantly borne in mind by every man

in this disgraced and abused country. It has been the subject of much conversation and inquiry; it was a thing, of which the ministers must have been desirous to give, or cause to be given, a satisfactory explanation; it is notorious, that a whole month has now elapsed without the appearance of even any attempt at such explanation; and, therefore, the public are justified in concluding that their intention, from the first, was to do all in their power to screen Wellesley, let what would become of his associates in the never-to-be-forgotten transaction. Whether they will persevere in this their evident intention we shall soon see; probably I shall be able to perceive it even before this article be finished; for, the hero of Oude being arrived, his newspaper will be long in making known to us what we have to expect with respect to him.

In the meanwhile, let us attend to some points which have escaped us.

The dispatch, giving an account of the victories in Portugal, were dated on the 22nd of August; the bearer of that dispatch could not have come away before that day; on that very day the armistice was negotiated and concluded, and yet the bearer of the dispatch brought no account of the armistice. Was not this something very singular? Say, that the bearer was ready to come off in the morning, and that the armistice was not concluded until night. But, if there were no vessel ready to send off with another messenger at night, why was not the bearer kept until night, that the consequence of the victory itself might have been announced to us at the time? What injury to the service could possibly have arisen from the delay of a few hours in the departure of this messenger? Nay, what possible inconvenience could have therefore arisen? Sir Arthur Wellesley would not, indeed, have enjoyed the praises of this gullied nation for the space of a week; a strong and unjust public persuasion, in his favour, would not have been excited; but that is all, that is all the mischief that could possibly have arisen from the delay.

But, was there a delay? I doubt it. Did not the bearer of the dispatch bear also the account of the armistice, in substance if not in form? It is my opinion that he did. Ships do not move off at a moment's warning, like post-chaises. The armistice must have been concluded before the bearer of the bragging dispatch left Portugal; and, though it would have been of little use, perhaps, to send forward the document in due form, yet the substance of it might have been added to the dispatch, and it is not credible that it was not added. My belief, therefore, is, that the substance of the armistice was made known to Lord Castlereagh through the bearer of the dispatch; and that he, not being bound to communicate that substance to the public, suffered us to go on, for as long a time as possible, applauding the conduct of Wellesley.

I do not wish to strain any thing. I have no other motive; I can have no other motive, than that of a desire to see impartial justice done; but, this appears to me to be the fact, and if it be so, the public ought to bear it in mind; because it is a circumstance strongly corroborating the opinion, now generally prevalent, that the ministry, or a part of them at least, have intended, and probably do intend, to screen Wellesley at all events.

From motives, which will, by-and-by, become apparent enough, the friends of Wellesley are now questioning the practicability of reducing Junot within any reasonable space of time; and a correspondent of mine sets himself seriously to work to controvert the opinion which I

gave, to wit, that, after reading Wellesley's dispatch, we had a right to expect, by the *next arrival*, an account of the unconditional surrender of the French. Did any one imagine, that, by the "next arrival," I meant, or could mean, the very next vessel that should come into port from the shores of Portugal? I meant, by the next bearer of dispatches from our army; the next bearer of any intelligence of importance; and, I appeal to the language of the press, at the time Wellesley's dispatch was received, for a proof that such was the expectation generally entertained.

But was it a *reasonable* expectation? That is the question; and it is observe, a question which lies entirely between *Wellesley* and the public—the other commanders having had no hand in the bragging dispatch.

My correspondent now tells me of *twenty* or more than twenty thousand men, whom Junot had under his command. But, Wellesley told us, that, with *half* his force, before he was joined by Burrard, he beat "*the whole* of the French force, commanded by the *Duc d'Abrantes in person*." I should like to have seen him when he penned this last-quoted sentence. "*By the Duc d'Abrantes in person!*" How he braced up, I dare say, and repeated the words to himself, with an air of pomposity so inseparable from his sect! "*In person!*" Why, if there had been an army of a hundred thousand men, commanded by emperors, the language and manner could not have been more pompous. Some one has observed, that the giving of this title to Junot proceeded solely from the vanity of Wellesley; as if nothing short of a Duke were worthy of the honour of measuring swords with a Wellesley; and, indeed, it seems difficult to attribute to any other motive, this cutting and flagrant insult to a prince and a people, whom we went out to rescue from insult and oppression.

To return from this digression: It matters little what were the *numbers* of Junot's force at the date of the negotiation; for, whether many or few, "*the whole*" of his force had been beaten by "*one half*" of the force of Wellesley, and we know, that the force of the latter became double, previous to the signing of the Convention. It is a fact pretty generally known, that when transports are demanded, *double tonnage* is expected. Besides, the number is now swelled out with all sorts of persons, persons, who, observe, shut up in forts, would have been a dead weight upon him; and yet my correspondent chooses to believe, that Junot could have brought twenty thousand men into the field, though it was positively stated, that he retreated with his whole force before one half of Wellesley's army; that is to say, before less than nine thousand men. After all, however, we return to the point: be his force what it might, the whole of it was beaten by about one-third of the force that we had at the time of making the Convention; the whole of it was beaten but the day before by one-third of that force, amongst whom were the very men who had beaten him; this is the fact, or. . . Wellesley told this nation, this credulous and abused nation, a shameful lie.

Well, says this new defender of Wellesley, but of what avail would have been a superiority of force? We should not have made Junot surrender any thing the sooner on account of great superiority of numbers.

No? Why, then, the complete power of cutting off succours and of preventing the chance of sallies would, in the hands of our generals, have been useless? Besides, what are this gentleman's ideas of a siege?



It is, for the most part, a very vulgar affair; an affair much more resembling ditching and draining than any thing else; and, as two labourers will do twice as much at ditching in a day as one labourer will do, so thirty thousand men will, in the same space, do twice as much at making trenches, approaches, and batteries, as fifteen thousand men. We have, moreover, the authority of that great man, Sir Hew, one of whose motives for coming to terms with Junot was, that there was a *doubt*, whether Sir John Moore's division could be landed at the time. Now, acceding to the notion of my correspondent, more men were not only not necessary, but absolutely useless for the purpose of any operation that could, at the time alluded to, be in contemplation.

But for the purpose of *storming*, would not superiority of numbers have been an advantage? Or has not this mode of attack yet found its way into the practice of our armies? Why do we raise all these men; why do we pay *ten thousand officers*; why have we a staff superior in numbers, and very far superior in expense, to Buonaparte, if we are never to hear of any enterprise of this sort? The greater part of the forts in Portugal, if my information be correct, were things to be taken by storm, with the loss of perhaps a thousand men for each attack of this kind; and, it will require very ample and very credible evidence to convince me, that, with such an army, with thirty thousand men, so able-bodied and so accustomed to labour, with such a train of artillery, and with the whole of the strength, labour, and resources of the country at our disposal, not to mention a considerable army of Portuguese actually embodied; it will require much indeed to convince me, that, with such means, our generals might not, *in the course of one week*, have carried a mine under the rampart of Junot's strongest fortress. There would have been no regular investiture necessary; no line of circumvallation; none of the precautions usually adopted in cases of regular siege; because *sallies* and *succours* were out of the question. Did ever man conceive, that, under such circumstances, a breach could not be made in six days? Never; and, when my correspondent reminds me of Saragossa and other open towns, which have exhibited to the world instances of long and successful resistance, my answer is, that it has not been owing to the strength of the *place*, but to the strength and courage of the defenders. Let him show me an instance, wherein the assailant had, with a third of his force, beaten the assailed but the day before, and had all the country around for friends, while his enemy had nothing but enemies within and without; let him show me an instance like this, wherein a successful, or a long, defence has been maintained, and I will say, that he has advanced something worth listening to; but, for an instance of this sort he will search history in vain.

As if for the purpose of furnishing us with a striking instance of the miserable shifts, to which the partisans of Sir Arthur Wellesley are driven (for *he* must, at last, stand responsible for the Convention), this writer reminds me, that the people of Lisbon, the dear good folks of Lisbon, were at the mercy of Junot; and, that it was our duty to prevent him, by any means whatever, from committing any cruelties upon them, which cruelties he might have committed, if we had refused him such terms as he demanded. It is pity that this argument has been so long delayed; for it would have applied equally well against sending the expedition to Portugal, where it has, at an enormous expense, purchased us deep disgrace, and done infinite injustice and injury to our allies of

Portugal, Spain, and Sweden. Indeed, it would apply against every attempt to drive the enemy out of any town or place. It is a sweeping argument; the universal argument of the coward: "I would attack you, but I am afraid of the consequences." What! did not Junot well know that, at last, he must become really responsible for all the cruelties he committed upon the people of Lisbon? Did he not know, that we had cords to hang with and muskets to shoot with? Or, was he apprized, by any means, that we were so gentle a people, or had committed our armies to the care and command of generals so gentle, that he had only to play the bully, the robber, and the murderer, and had nothing to apprehend in the way of retaliation? Judge, reader, of the badness of a cause, in support of which such an argument is resorted to.

But, as the reader will perceive, we are now, it seems, to answer those who defend the *Convention*, not those who execrate the *Convention* and defend Wellesley. Reader, we have heard the Defenders of Wellesley assert, in the most positive manner, that he *protested* against the *Convention*, and against any compromise at all with the French; that he had nothing to do with negotiating the armistice which he signed; that the French general wrote it out with his own hand; that Dalrymple, at Kellerman's request, *commanded* Wellesley to put his signature to it; and, that, after very earnest remonstrances, he finally yielded obedience to the hateful command. Those defenders have plied us with dissertations upon military discipline; they have told us, that absolute power in the chief and implicit obedience in his inferiors are the soul of an army; and, calling in the terrible to the aid of the persuasive, they have reminded us, that if poor Sir Arthur had disobeyed the mighty Sir Hew, the latter might have run him through the body! Did they not assert and reason thus? Nay, the gaudy, chariot-lounging, the painted and piano-playing strumpets about town, who, as part of their regular calling, deal in the pathetic as well as in lies, trumped up a story of Sir Arthur's going on his knees to prevail upon Sir Hew not to bring such a disgrace upon his country. Did not his defenders say, that he was to be considered, as to the Armistice, as no more responsible than the clerk of an attorney or a banker, who signs a document or draft in the name of his master? Did they not throw all the blame, all the responsibility, upon Sir Hew, whose fame they blasted, and whose carcass they threw down before us, to be trampled and spit upon? Did they not, in support of their great assertion respecting the Protest, first publish and then quote, as from vouchers of undoubted authenticity, numerous extracts of "*letters from the army*," the whole of which extracts spoke of the famous Protest, blamed Sir Hew and Burrard, but were particularly strong and clear as to the Protest? Every sycophant in London had this Protest upon his lips. Protest, Protest, "*the gallant Sir Arthur's Protest*," the "*Conqueror of Vimeira's Protest!*" This was the cry through the regions of Whitehall, and was faithfully echoed by the punks of the squares.

Well, then, now he is come; not *recalled*, but *come*. He is come home to tell his own story. We, before, called upon his defenders to produce us his Protest; but we now call upon himself. Now, then, Mr. "*conqueror of Vimeira*;" now, then, "*gallant Sir Arthur*;" now, then, you whose friends have hazarded political infamy for your sake; now, then, produce this Protest to us; and, if you cannot, tell us, whose labour, whose sweat and pain and misery have supported the vast expense

of the expedition; tell us *why* you signed the armistice of the 22nd of August, after having beaten with "*half*" your force, "the *whole* of the French force, commanded by the Duc D'Abrantes *in person*." Come, Sir, none of your haughty Eastern airs. None of your disdainful silence. That will not serve your turn. Your friends have asserted, that you made a *Protest*. Where is it? Show it us. Tell us of what it consisted; or acknowledge that those friends, in wittingly asserting what was false, with a view of saving your reputation at the expense of your associates, have proved themselves to be the very greatest scoundrels that ever infested the earth, and that they merit the gallows and the gibbet more than any malefactor, whose name and deeds stand recorded in the annals of Newgate. "Letters from persons of *high honour* in the army!" Vile miscreants! To go thus coolly and deliberately to work in the hatching, the completing, and the publishing of a set of corresponding lies! It is impossible to proceed. No words can do justice to conduct like this.

The reader will perceive, that the same set of worse than felonious villains are now at work upon "further letters from the army and navy." The *protest* is not now spoken of. The tone is softened. *No great blame* upon any body, except the poor Portuguese. Take a specimen.

"Extract of a letter from an officer of *distinction* on board one of his Majesty's ships, just arrived from Lisbon.—Yesterday I got some papers, in which I perceive Sir A. Wellesley's conduct in the suspension of arms, is most unjustly confounded with the final treaty. The first, he signed *at the immediate desire of Sir Hew Dalrymple*; but with the latter he had nothing to do at all. The whole was *contrary to his opinion*. The motives by which he has been influenced, are *highly honourable to his feelings*. In short, your newspapers are *all ill-informed* of the state of affairs at the time; and I believe most persons will be astonished when they know that the French embarkation, after all their losses, amounted to 25,000 men. And you may depend upon it, *the Portuguese army availed ours nothing*; and there *never was a symptom of revolt in favour of us*. I mean not to defend the treaty—it is a disgraceful and an infamous one; but as the *principal object* was obtained, there need not have been the *ouster* which appears to have been made in the country. As to the Russian fleet, that is in our possession. I think, if Sir C. Cotton had not orders from home, he has done wrong; but if our generous conduct is the means of forwarding *our negotiations* for a peace with Russia, it will be hereafter considered as a good act."

I beg the reader to look upon this as a sham letter; but, what a pretty fellow this officer of "*distinction*" must be, if the letter be real! You see, the fellow, who has been base enough to palm this letter upon the public, dares not *name* either the writer, or the *ship* that he is on board of. All that is here said about *fine feelings*, an *ill-informed press*, and the *policy of not fighting* is, to be sure, but too characteristic of but too many "*officers of distinction*;" yet not of the navy. The slander upon the Portuguese, however, is worthy of marked reprobation. It was exactly thus that the Pittite crew uniformly treated the French royalists. They first inveigled them into a state of dependence; and then they belied and betrayed them. Does the man, who has published this pretended letter "from an officer of distinction" in the navy, think that such statements will not be resented by the Portuguese? But, what cares he? He has his pay for the use of his dirty columns, and that is all he wants.

Well, but what are *we* doing? What part are we acting? We, the people of this fine "*free country*," who live under a constitution that is, as Pitt used to say, at the end of his speeches, "the greatest blessing that a bountiful Providence ever bestowed upon man." Upon himself, I sup-

pose, he meant. But, what are we, free fellows as we are ; what are we doing ? We have been talking for a long while ; we have been fretting and fuming and scolding and crying like women, or rather like Italian men, like Jews and Genoese, who, when they are kicked and cuffed, scold and run and run and scold. Here it will end, and that our masters well know. There has been a little stir, owing to Mr. WAITHMAN, in the city of London ; but, we shall not *now* see the example followed, as it was, the other day, when the object was to *praise* the conduct of those in power. Then we had Old Rose galloping down into Hampshire, calling meetings, and assembling his sycophants from far and near. Now, they are as still as mice. Over a bottle, the servants being gone and the doors shut, they look wise, shake their heads, assume a bluff countenance, and begin to talk big ; but, the reptiles dare not stir an inch. One wants a sinecure, another a pension, another a place for his son, another a contract, another a living, another a ribbon or a star. They dare not stir. They are the basest slaves that ever disgraced the earth. Let them be told, that the ministry wish them to address, or petition, against the Conventions in Portugal, and you will see them pouring forth in hundreds, as bold as heroes, looking as big and talking as bold as if every individual of them felt himself strong enough to upset a church steeple. Oh, the base wretches ! Well, they suffer for it. They are pretty decently speculated upon, and their continual anxiety, their constant fear of displeasing, their perpetual dependence, is a sort of hell upon earth. Yet, now, you shall hear these miserable slaves talk about freedom, about the birth-right of Britons, and about our glorious constitution, in as good terms as you could wish to hear. This is a part of their punishment. They are compelled to belie their hearts. They are slaves, and compelled to assume occasionally the appearance of being free.

This does not apply to Hampshire alone. It is, with very few exceptions, applicable to the whole kingdom. There is, it appears, to be a meeting in *Essex*, and, if it produce a good, plain, manly complaint, unaccompanied with nauseous common-place flattery of the King and his family, which would be not less dishonourable in him to receive than in the county of Essex to offer, it will be a fit subject for commendation ; but, it will not, I am afraid, meet with much imitation. The same influence that sent Wellesley and his comrade Convention-makers to Portugal ; that influence which has done so much upon other occasions, will not fail to be exerted now. Indeed, it exerts itself. It is sown all over the country, as regularly as corn is sown in a field. Seventy millions a year are, in one way and another, spent by the government. The government employs and pays all, and it receives all. There is a chain of dependence running through the whole nation, which, though not everywhere seen, is everywhere felt. There is not one man in one thousand who does not feel the weight of this chain. Army, navy, church, the law, sinecures, pensions, tax offices, war and navy offices, Whitehall, India-house, Bank, contract, job, &c. &c. Who is there, who is not himself, or who has not a son, a brother, or some relation or other, employed and paid by, dependent for bread upon, the minister of the day ? Those means by which men formerly maintained their sons and relations, and by which a country gentry were supported in a state of independence, are now drawn away in taxes ; and, in order to find a maintenance, those sons and relations must now go and serve the ministry, in some capacity or other ; must go and crouch to them, and receive from them, in the shape

of pension or of hire, a share of that income, which has been drawn, in taxes, from their parents, or other natural supporters. This is the state in which we are. There needs no trouble, on the part of the ministry, upon an occasion like the present. They know well, that the country *cannot* stir; because they know that, generally speaking, he who stirs must, if they please, starve. Hence it is, that our anger seems always to evaporate in noise; that, like a mob, we halloo and bawl and threaten *when no one can distinguish one of us from the other*, and that, the moment we are put individually to the test, we, by conduct, if not by words, deny having had any share in the clamour. And, does it become us to scoff at the slavery of other nations? We are exceedingly bold in reproaching the French with their abject submission; but, let me put this question to you, reader: What do you think the French government would have done, had its generals made such a convention as ours have made? Pause a little, and then answer that question. Well, now for another. Suppose, that the French government had not discovered any anger at such conduct in its generals, but seemed, as far as the people could judge, to be resolved to screen them; what do you think the French *people* would have done in that case? "Held their tongues," say you. So they would, and so shall we. That is to say, they would have gabbled about the disgrace in their coffee-houses and at their tables, but would have said not a word to their government; and what have we done more? And, if our conduct be, in effect, the same as theirs, under similar circumstances, would have been, of what consequence is it, what difference is it as a question of *freedom*, whether men be kept in awe by the terrors of the naked sword, or by the terrors of starvation? Of all the proofs of a state of slavery, none is so complete as that of *not daring to complain when one is aggrieved*. The French, we say, dare not complain, and therefore we call them slaves. Well, then, if we *do not* now make our complaints, we are in this dilemma: either we dare not complain, or we dare; if the former, we are slaves; if the latter, we are the basest of hypocrites. Who will believe in the *reality* of our sorrow and indignation at the Conventions in Portugal? What Portuguese or Spaniard or Swede will be fool enough to give credit to any of our noisy professions of regard for the interests of our allies? No one. Not a man of the three nations. We must *do something*; or, whatever we may think of ourselves, they will look upon us as a people pretty fairly represented by the convention-making generals. To this we may make up our minds. The world will hear none of our excuses. They will not be able to hear the piteous stories of those who have places and pensions and contracts and jobs, who have sons to push forward, who have manifold dependants for whom to provide. Of all these the world will hear nothing. The world knows that we have made a great, a loud, a furious clamour against the Conventions in Portugal; that world has been told that we are a people perfectly *free*; and, if we do not *act* as well as make a mob-like noise, the world will have the good sense and the justice to regard us *as slaves, or as hypocrites*.

It is said, that Sir Hew is arrived. It was time; for, in my opinion, his *proclamation* is even worse than the Conventions. What! take upon us to rule the country and *punish the people*, unless they submit to men set over them by us! But, I have not time to go into this subject at present.

## SPAIN.

(*Political Register*, October, 1808.)

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We have, then, at last, sent an *envoy* to Spain. In the first place, we have sent the very man, Mr. John Hookham Frere, who was there when the last quarrel with Spain took place, and when we attacked and seized their richly-laden ships, before a declaration of war had been made.

In the next place, *to whom* do we send him? Why, the Gazette tells us, that "the King has been pleased to nominate and appoint the right hon. John Hookham Frere to be his Majesty's envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to his catholic majesty Ferdinand the VIIIth, and has been pleased to direct him to reside in that character at the seat of the central and supreme Junta in Spain." So. We do acknowledge, then,—that a man may be legally unkinged, and that another may be put up in his stead? Thus is the doctrine of cashiering kings, which gave so much offence, some years ago; and the promulgation of which, caused so many persons to be punished in England, openly recognised by a solemn act of the government of England. Ferdinand and Charles are both alive; they are both out of Spain; they are both in France; both have abdicated the throne in favour of the Buonaparte dynasty. Now, why do we prefer Ferdinand to Charles? Why simply for this reason, because *the people*, or some of them, say that they wish to have the former, while none of them say that they wish to have the latter. It is pretended, that Ferdinand's right to the throne is founded upon the abdication which Charles made in his favour; but, Charles, the moment he was out of the hands of Ferdinand and his partisans, *protested* against that abdication, and declared that it was extorted from him with the knife at his throat. Upon that abdication, therefore, we can build no right for Ferdinand, without, by the same act, destroying the superstructure; for, if Ferdinand, by the abdication of Charles in his favour, became rightful sovereign of Spain, Joseph Buonaparte became the rightful sovereign of Spain in virtue of the abdication of Ferdinand. Both abdications I believe to have been extorted; but, while we have a protest of the abdicating party against the former, we have none against the latter. Were he at liberty, we should, I dare say, have it; but, we are not quite sure of that, while we are in actual possession of the protest of poor old Charles. It is clear, therefore, that, in point of hereditary right, Charles is king of Spain; and that, in acknowledging the latter to be king, we have acknowledged a right in the people of Spain to cashier their kings.

But, the most interesting point is this: Why do we choose to send an envoy to *any king* of Spain? From the first I have feared, I have expressed my fears, that the contest, as far as we were concerned, would be another contest for a *king*; and, who can say how far the leading men in Spain may, by *our interference*, have been induced to make it a war for a choice of kings, instead of a war of freedom against despotism? It was not, observe, until after *our agents* went to Spain, that there was much talk about Ferdinand. Until then a *reform of abuses* was the main object which the people appeared to have in view; and the public will

recollect, that they spoke of their "late infamous government," unculpated with any exceptions whatever.

It must be acknowledged, that an English minister is to consider, how, in this war, the exertions of England are to be made most effectually to contribute towards the permanent safety and greatness of England, provided no wrong be done to any ally. If, therefore, it appeared, that to make war for Ferdinand was the most likely way of succeeding in this object, it was right to make war for him. But, I do not think, that this *did appear*. To me it has always appeared, that, for Spain to frustrate the views of Napoleon, to baffle and to mortify and to humble him, and to give an encouraging example to the rest of Europe, the war should have been a war of freedom against despotism. Between Joseph and Ferdinand many people will see but little difference; and many more will ask, what government could have been worse than that which the Spaniards themselves have declared to have been infamous?

It seems to me, therefore, that the English ministry ought to have wished that the names of Ferdinand and Charles should be totally left out of the contest.

It is not to be believed, that *the people* will fight and endure for the sake of either of their kings. They *must* perceive, that the result of the contest is of comparatively little importance to *them*; and, the moment they do so view the thing, there is an end to their exertions.

But, so think not Lloyd's and Whitehall. They are for a war for a king. Good luck to them; but, they will be kind enough to excuse me, if I feel a little less anxious for the fate of the man, who surrendered the sword of Francis I. to "His Serene Highness the Grand Duke of Berg," than I felt for the fate of so many millions of men, who appeared to me to be fighting for that freedom, which a set of degenerate despots had so long withheld from them.

There has appeared a paper, entitled an EXPOSITION OF FACTS (relating to the usurpation of the crown of Spain by Napoleon), from the pen of DON PEDRO CEVALLOS, who, it must be confessed, has been most advantageously situated for the purpose, having been Secretary of State for foreign affairs, to the three kings, Charles, Ferdinand, and Joseph, and who is now in high favour, it would seem, with the Junta and with our people. Mr. Pedro tells a tough story. Much too tough to be examined in the time that I have, at present, to spare for the purpose; but, I must say, even now, that there wants a good deal to convince me, that it is that "*true and artless tale*," that the London newspaper editors appear to think it. "A man cannot serve *two* masters," says the Gospel; but, Don Pedro has served *three*. Bother me not, ye whining calumniators, with your insinuations that I dislike this man because he has exposed Buonaparte; insinuate or say or swear what you will, you shall never make me affect to believe what appears to me to be incredible, merely because it comes from a man who attacks Buonaparte. Falsehood is falsehood, if spoken of the Devil himself.

Don Pedro not only served three masters, but was confided in by all the three. He gives us an account of some conversations between him and Napoleon, and the Courier (I believe it is) observes, that we cannot have a better *proof* of his integrity, than the fact, that Napoleon reproached him for having too much of that quality. May be so; but, we really are, as yet, destitute of any *proof of that fact*; unless we take Mr. Cevallos's assertions for proofs, as the country folks in the House used to do with

those of Pitt. Of one fact, however, we are quite certain, and that is, that Mr. Cevallos was chosen by this same Napoleon to be a confidential servant of King Joseph; and, I ask the reader, whether he believes, that this choice would have been made, if Napoleon had found the person chosen to be so firmly attached to his honour and to the welfare of Spain.

Mr. Cevallos will have very much to answer me; but, for the present, I shall content myself with a question or two. 1st. Was he carried *by force* to Bayonne? 2nd. If he was not, how came he to repair thither at the request of Napoleon, after having been so intimately acquainted with all the previous machinations and detestable perfidies of Napoleon? 3rd. How came he, who was the confidential minister of Ferdinand, to suffer that king to go to Bayonne without using his utmost endeavours to prevent it? 4th. How came Ferdinand to give up the sword of Francis I. to the "Grand Duke of Berg?" And, 5th, how came Mr. Cevallos himself to write and publish paper upon paper, addressed to the people of Spain, assuring them that all their jealousies of the French were groundless, for that the views of the Emperor were of the most friendly and affectionate sort: and this, too, at a time, when the "machinations" were going on, and when he was intimately acquainted with those machinations?

When Mr. Cevallos, or any one for him, has answered these questions, I have some more ready to put to him. But, whatever may have been the conduct of Buonaparte; however wicked and perfidious that may have been, I think, that it is evident enough, that Mr. Cevallos has all along had a desire to be upon the *strongest side*; that he deserted Joseph, because he was persuaded that he was become the weakest; and that the whole story, some falsehood some truth, was written for the purpose of making his peace with the Spaniards, and of again getting possession of power and emolument.

Now, reader, divest yourself, for a moment, of the desire to hear Buonaparte accused of infamous acts, and say, whether this be not, to all appearance, the real truth; and, if that should be your opinion, you will not, I am persuaded, think that there is virtue enough in this EXPOSITION to make it "a lever wherewith to raise the world against the Corsican Usurper;" but will, perhaps, think with me, that the principles of political freedom, laid down as the basis of the cause in Spain, is the only lever, by which that nation, and, by their example, the rest of Europe, can be raised effectually to oppose a military despot.

Aye, the truth is; the truth that speaks with "voice trumpet-tongue," though those in power will not hear it, is, that to raise the world against the despotism of Napoleon, you must show the world, you must give the world to see and feel, *something better than the despotism of Napoleon.*

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## CONVENTION IN PORTUGAL.

(*Political Register, October, 1808.*)

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SIR HEW DALRYMPLE is arrived. He landed at Portsmouth on Tuesday last, the 18th instant; and, if I am rightly informed, his reception was



not a bit more favourable than that which the citizens of London lately met with at St. James's. The reader knows, that Portsmouth abounds in government dependants of various sorts and sizes; yet, Sir Hew had to pass through hisses more loud and general than ever assailed the actors of a damned play. It is said, that so great was the indignation and so violent the apparent intentions of the populace, that it was thought necessary to surround the general with men, armed with pistols and swords. This was but a scurvy reception for a commander of an expedition; and, I must say, that I give the populace but little credit for it, seeing how *silent* they have been upon former occasions, when a similar feeling was called for. Sir Hew Dalrymple is looked upon as a man without powerful friends. Therefore it is that he is assailed. It is base to complain of him without, at the same time, complaining of those, whose example he has followed as closely as circumstances would permit. There is, it seems, to be a meeting in the county of Hants; but, no address, or petition, will have my vote, unless it point at *all* those, whose deeds have brought disgrace upon the arms of England.

Sir Arthur Wellesley came to Plymouth, and he had the discretion not to make any great noise upon his landing. He snugged it in, in the Plover sloop, and off he went, as fast as post-horses could take him, to that place where one man is not known from another; and where a man may walk about, and be hidden at the same time. This must, however, have been a little mortifying to the high Wellesley. It was not thus that he used to enter Calcutta. He must, upon hurrying out of the wherry, at Plymouth, in order to bundle himself into the post-chaise, have looked back, with longing eyes, to the triumphal arches in India, and to the hundreds and thousands of gilded barges, that used to attend him and his high brother, in their excursions upon the rivers of "our empire in the East." I dare say, that he began to wish himself back again in that country of "*glorious wars*;" in that country where we always come off victorious; in that country where we are great conquerors; in that country where there are *no Frenchmen* to fight against; in that country where there is no "*licentious*" press, and whence any man, be he who he may, is liable to be transported, at a moment's warning, if he dare to print or speak any thing displeasing to the Commander-in-Chief. If the late Convention, or one like it, had been made in that country, no man would have dared to utter even a whisper of disapprobation. In a country so situated as to its laws, it is very easy to be a great commander. The newspapers, and all the things printed in that country, are, before they are struck off, taken to a person appointed by the ruler, who strikes out with his pen all that he disapproves of, sometimes inserting other words in the stead, and, in short, leaves not one word, even in the *advertisements* of books, or of any thing else, that he thinks will be displeasing to the Governor General. Oh, what a fine thing it is to be a hero in that country! But, I think it may be as well for us not to expose ourselves to the contempt of the world by talking of the "*glory*" which our armies acquire in India, especially now that we have seen one of these Indian heroes pitted against a general of France.

Nobody has inquired, how Sir Arthur, how the "*Chevalier du Bain*," who beat "*Monseigneur le Duc d'Abrantes en personne*;" how this gallant gentleman came to come home; how he came to quit the field of glory. Nobody has made this inquiry, and yet it is an inquiry very necessary to be made. We were told, that one great object of the Conven-

tion was, to "*gain time*;" to get our army, as soon as possible, into "the passes of the Pyrennees," there to meet the French and to stop them in their way to Spain. Has a man of our army yet moved in that direction, though it is now two whole months since the Convention was signed, and though it was not pretended, even by Sir Hew, that Junot could have held out more than two or three weeks? Has a man of our army moved in that direction? No; and this, at a time, in my very first article upon the subject, I said must and would be the case. I knew that we should not send away our army if we could. I knew, that we should not leave the Portuguese *people* to do any thing in the way of settling their affairs; and, besides, it was easy to foresee, that a sea conveyance would be wanted for the troops, which conveyance we had made over to the French. There the army is, then, at the end of two months, just where it was the day after Wellesley's "glorious victory." What *time* has been gained then? How has the Convention answered the purpose of hastening our army towards "the passes of the Pyrennees?" But, how came Wellesley to *come away*, when it was so necessary to push on to meet the French? "He is not *recalled*." O, no; he is upon "*leave of absence*." What! get leave of absence, at the very moment when the army was to be pushed on towards the passes of the Pyrennees! "The conqueror of Vimeira" get *leave of absence*, at such a time! Leave to be absent from fighting! No: he will not like this ground. Well, then, will he say, that there was no prospect of the army's marching towards the passes of the Pyrennees, or moving towards any other point of real war? Will he say this? If he do, then we ask him what was meant by *gaining time*, in making the Convention, and what that same service was, which was in contemplation at the time when the Convention was made? Admitting, then, that he is come home simply upon *leave of absence*; that, the fact is as his partisans say; he stands in this dilemma; either he is come home for the purpose of avoiding another meeting with the Tartar Duke, or any of his like; or, the pretext of *gaining time* by the Convention was a false one.

The real truth, however, I take to be, that the ministers, or some of them, when they found that nothing could reconcile the country to the Convention, they, knowing (what the public did not at first know) that Wellesley had been the chief instrument in making the Convention, sent off, with all possible speed, an order to Sir Hew to give him a leave of absence. To keep him there they would not venture, and to *recall* him they did not like. The middle course was determined upon; and, it was, too, of great importance, that he should have an opportunity of telling *his* story first. This accords with all the rest of the proceedings. There has been, from the first, an evident intention to screen Wellesley, let what would come of the other parties concerned; and this intention becomes, every day, more and more certain.

As to our army in Portugal, so far from being disposed of in the way that was expected, and that it was pretended it would be, it is, it appears, taking possession of different towns and districts in *Portugal*; seating itself quietly down as in a country that it has *won*; while our generals are issuing proclamations for the *keeping of the people in order*. It is said, that we have *forty-seven* generals there. What a deal of wine they will drink! What a fine expense they will be to us! General HOPE (of the "*ardent-minded*" family) has issued a proclamation that would not have disgraced the late Lord Advocate of Scotland himself. The fact is, that

our whole army in Portugal is now employed in keeping *the people* of Portugal in order; that is to say, in preventing them from forming assemblies of representatives and choosing men to conduct their affairs, as the people of Spain have done. Who did not suppose, that, as soon as we should have beaten the French in Portugal, and relieved that country from the presence and the oppression of its invaders, we should have left the Portuguese to take care of their own affairs and marched off to the assistance of the Spaniards? Was not this what we all supposed? And was it not under the pretence that our army would be set loose to march into Spain: was not this the *sole* pretence under which a justification, or an excuse, was found for the Convention? Now, it appears, however, that our army has got into such snug quarters, that it has no desire to move. It has been moulded into a superintendent of the police; a sort of Gendarmerie, or of Holy-brotherhood established in Portugal. Are we told, that the security of the *monarchy* of Portugal requires this; for that the people, if left to themselves, might fall to work to make a government of their own? Let us be told this *plainly*, then. Let us be told, if this really be the motive, that we are fighting and labouring merely for the support of the old royal families against the new royal families, and not at all for the freedom and happiness of any people in any part of the world. Let us be told this, in so many plain words, and then we shall know how to think and to feel.

The King's reception of the city of London *Address and Petition* has excited a little discontent in the minds of many persons, even in this humbled country. But, before we proceed to make any remarks upon this, let us insert the documents themselves.

“ TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY. The humble and dutiful  
“ Address and Petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the City  
“ of London, in common council assembled.

“ MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN :

“ We your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the city of London, in common council assembled,  
“ most humbly approach your Majesty, with renewed assurances of attachment to your Majesty's *most sacred* person and government, and veneration for the free principles of the British constitution; to express to your Majesty our grief and astonishment, at the extraordinary and disgraceful Convention lately entered into by the commander of your Majesty's forces in Portugal, and the commander of the French army in Lisbon.

“ The circumstances attending this afflicting event cannot be contemplated by British minds without the most painful emotions; and all ranks of your Majesty's subjects seem to have felt the utmost concern and indignation at a treaty so humiliating and degrading to this country and its allies. After a signal victory gained by the valour and discipline of British troops, by which the enemy appears to have been cut off from all means of succour, or escape, we have the sad mortification of seeing the laurels so nobly acquired torn from the brows of our brave soldiers, and terms granted to the enemy disgraceful to the British name, and injurious to the best interests of the British nation.

“ Besides the restitution of the Russian fleet upon a definitive treaty of peace with that power, and the sending back to their country, without exchange, so large a number of Russian sailors, by this ignominious Convention, British fleets are to convey to France the French army and its plunder, where they will be at liberty immediately to recommence their active operations against us or our allies. The guarantee and safe conveyance of their plunder, cannot but prove highly irritating to the pillaged inhabitants over whom they have tyrannized, and for whose deliverance and protection the British army was sent, and the full recognition of the title and dignity of Emperor of France, while all mention of the government of Portugal is omitted, must be considered as highly disrespectful to the legitimate authority of that country.

" We therefore humbly pray your Majesty, in justice to the outraged feelings of a brave, injured, and indignant people, whose blood and treasure have been thus expended, as well as to retrieve the wounded honour of the country, and to remove from its character so foul a stain in the eyes of Europe, that your Majesty will be graciously pleased immediately to institute such an inquiry into this dishonourable and unprecedented transaction, as will lead to the discovery and punishment of those by whose misconduct and incapacity the cause of the country and its allies have been so shamefully sacrificed.

" We beg to assure your Majesty of our unalterable fidelity, and earnest desire to co-operate in every measure conducive to the peace, honour, and security of your Majesty's dominions.

" Signed by order of court,—HENRY WOODTHORPE."

To which Address and Petition his Majesty was *graciously* pleased to return the following answer :

" I am fully sensible of your loyalty and attachment to my person and government.

" I give credit to the motives which have dictated your Petition and Address, but *I must remind you that it is inconsistent with the principles of British justice to pronounce judgment without previous investigation.*

" I should have hoped that recent occurrences would have convinced you, that I am at all times ready to institute inquiries on occasions in which the character of the country, or the honour of my arms, is concerned, and that the interposition of the city of London could not be necessary for inducing me to direct due inquiry to be made into a transaction, which has disappointed the hopes and expectations of the nation."

They were, as the newspapers state, all *graciously* received, and had the honour TO KISS HIS MAJESTY'S HAND. What *all*? All a kiss a-piece? Mr. Waithman, who moved the Address, and who, in making the motion, talked about *Dunkirk* and the *Holder*; did he get a kiss too? I would give a trifle for the ascertaining of this fact. They *kneel*, I think I have heard, when they kiss. This must have been a highly diverting scene to Sir Arthur Wellesley, who was at court, and who, as appears from the newspapers, was the first person presented to the King on that day, "upon his return from Portugal on *leave of absence*." He must have enjoyed this scene. The thing was perfect in all its parts. Nothing ever was more so. The Londoners "*most humbly approach*" with a "most humble and dutiful" expression of "assurances of attachment to his Majesty's *most sacred person and government*;" but, then, immediately afterwards, they fall to expressing opinions relative to the Convention in Portugal, and to pray, that something or other may be done about it. Whereupon they get a good hearty slap; and then, being of the true breed, they all kneel down and fall to kissing the hand by which it has been bestowed. Towards such people the King certainly acted with great propriety; for, if not only his person was the "most sacred" person, but his government also the "most sacred" government; if this was the case, what presumption was it in these citizens to interfere in the exercise of the functions of either! And, if this was not the case, then the citizens told a barefaced lie, and, as having done that, were well worthy of the rebuke they received. They first say: you are the most sacred of human beings, and your government is as sacred as you; they appear to approach with fear and trembling not to be described by words; and then, all of a sudden, they begin to sport their opinions about the operations of the army and the conduct of the generals, seeming to forget that the army is under the absolute command of this "most sacred" of persons, and that all the generals have been selected by this "most sacred" of governments.

I am glad, however, that they kissed the King's hand after he had given them what they deserved; because it showed, that they were penitent; that they were come to their senses; that they had seen the folly, not to say the impiety, of presuming to dictate to beings the "most sacred" here below.

The Morning Chronicle has taken part with the citizens, who, *after they got a great way off*, seem to have grumbled at the King's answer, notwithstanding they had kneeled down and kissed his hand. This print has quoted some instances of the conduct of the late King, upon similar occasions. The passage is as follows:

"A very strong Petition was presented by the Corporation of London to the King, in the year 1756, respecting the affair at Minorca, 'praying for such an inquiry as may lead to the discovery and punishment of the authors of the late losses and disappointments,' almost the same words of the prayer of the Petition presented on Wednesday; the words of which are, 'to institute such an inquiry as will lead to the discovery and punishment of those by whose misconduct and incapacity the cause of the country and its allies has been so shamefully sacrificed:' the answer to the Petition of 56 was as follows:

"I thank you for these professions of your duty to me; *my concern for the loss of my island of Minorca is great and sincere*; my utmost care and vigilance have been and shall be exerted to maintain the honour of the nation, and the commerce of my subjects. The events of war are uncertain, but nothing shall be wanting on my part towards carrying it on with vigour, in order to a safe and honourable peace, and for recovering and securing, by the blessing of God, the possessions and rights of my crown.—*I shall not fail to do justice upon any persons who shall have been wanting in their duty to me and their country*; to enforce obedience and discipline in my fleets and armies, and to support the authority and respect due to my government.'

"In the year 1757, when the immortal Chatham was at the head of affairs, after the failure of the Rochford Expedition, a member of the common council had given notice of a motion for 'an address and petition to his Majesty on the miscarriage of the late expedition to the coast of France.'

"The Lord Mayor acquainted the court, that 'on Monday the 1st day of October, 1757, William Blair, Esq., one of the clerks of his Majesty's most honourable privy council, came to the Mansion House and acquainted the Lord Mayor, that he waited on his Lordship to let him know, *his Majesty had given proper directions for an inquiry to be forthwith made into the behaviour of the Commanding Officers in the late expedition against France, and the cause of the miscarriage of the said expedition, and that such inquiry would be carried on and prosecuted with the utmost expedition, vigour and effect.*

"Now, why it should be more inconsistent with the principles of British justice, to petition for an inquiry of this kind in 1808, than in 1756 and 1757, it is impossible to conceive, unless indeed we should suppose, that Lord Hawkesbury is a much better judge of the principles of British justice than Lord Chatham. The Address presented on Wednesday, and that of 56, are the same in spirit, and almost in terms. How then are we to account for the difference of their reception? Why should the one be considered as perfectly just and proper, while the other is reproved as having 'pronounced judgment previous to investigation?' We have not now, however, to learn with what a total disregard of delicacy and propriety the ministers can occasionally conduct themselves towards their Sovereign. When they have any favourite object to accomplish, they, without the least scruple, advise his Majesty to contradict and stultify his own acts and expressions. Is this decent? Is it to be endured either by the King or the nation? Can it fail to remind us of the infamous administration of the prince of the peace in Spain? The gracious reception met with by Sir Arthur Wellesley, at the very moment the Corporation was admitted, leaves little doubt as to the design of this proceeding. But we trust that a British public will not tamely see their Sovereign abused, and themselves checked in the exercise of their constitutional privileges, without the strongest marks of indignation at such mischievous practices."

Now, as to these instances, to make them applicable, the *Morning*

*Chronicle* should have shown us, not that the form of the constitution of the country was the same that it was in the years 1756 and 1757, but that it was in substance the same, and, above all, that the *people* were still the same sort of people. At the former period the taxes raised upon the labour of the people amounted to about five or six millions a year, and they now amount to fifty millions; that is to say, the ministers of that day had five or six millions a year to expend, while the ministers, now-a-days, have, in loans and all, about seventy millions a year to expend. At the former period, the standing army did not amount, perhaps, to more than thirty or forty thousand men, in time of war; now, the *staff* and *foreign troops* exceed that number, while the whole of the commissioned officers, *cashierable at pleasure*, amount to about fifteen thousand persons, and while, in one way or another, the relations of all these, as well as themselves, are, in some measure, dependent upon the ministry. At the former period a thing like the income tax had never entered the mind of man, and, if an Englishman of that day had been told, that his children would have such a tax imposed upon them, he would have clenched his fist and knocked down the asserter. At that period the East India Company were mere merchants and not sovereigns; not a body so powerful as to be able to draw from the people of England million after million of the fruit of their labour. At that period the doctrine that truth was a libel, and that to hurt a man's feelings was libellous, had not been promulgated and acted upon, much less was there any law for *transporting* persons convicted of libelling the ministers. At that time, the *Habeas Corpus*, or *Personal Security Act*, had never been suspended except in case of actual rebellion or commotion, much less had it been kept suspended for several years together. At that period there was no instance of a minister's having been detected in lending forty thousand pounds of the public money to two members of parliament, without interest, without any authority for so doing, and without the consent or knowledge of even his colleagues; and, upon proof of this being laid before the parliament, of such minister's being screened by a bill of indemnity.

Now, whether the change is for the better or for the worse; whether the people have acted wisely in lending their aid, or giving their silent assent, to this change, let the citizens of London decide; but, that the change has taken place is certain; that they have, tacitly at least, approved of the change, is also certain; for it is notorious, that they have, more than any other part of the people, supported the funding and taxing system, which has naturally produced all the rest of the change; and, therefore, they have no reason at all to complain that the present King does not speak to them in the language in which his predecessor spoke to their fathers. What! they now whine and snivel because they are not treated as their fathers were treated. Their fathers were a different sort of men; their fathers would have demanded inquiry upon *other* occasions than the present; their fathers knew, felt, and would have urged, their *rights*, at a time when they were talking of their *duties*; their fathers knew how to *demand* as well as to *implore*; their fathers were men widely different from them, and, therefore, they merited and received a *treatment* widely different. What! is it till now that they have waited to discover that they are not what their fathers were? Do they now complain of the Pitts and the Hawkesburys; they, who have supported them in *every thing* for so many long and fatal years of decline of national

pride and independence! They, who have set up the howl of Jacobin and traitor against every one, who dared to move his tongue or his pen in opposition to the acts and designs of the minister of the day? They, who have voted and speechified and subscribed against every person, who talked of freedom? They, who, whether in his making peace or in making war, approved of all, aye, all and every individual act of the late Pitt? Do they now complain of the operation of his principles, acted upon by his legitimate heirs and successors? "Inquiry"! What right have such men to ask for inquiry? They, who have, a hundred times, voted against the principle of inquiry; they, who have been maintaining, for more than twenty years past, the doctrine of *confidence* and *irresponsibility*; they who have, upon all occasions, represented as disaffected to the *country* every man who has wished for inquiry into the conduct of the government? What right have such men to ask for inquiry *now* in particular; and with what face can they complain, that they are sharply rebuked for so doing? Pity them, indeed! Not I. They have their just reward. If they had not acted a base and degenerate part, for so many years, that which has now happened, that which has now at last urged them to ask for inquiry, never would have happened. It is "in themselves, and not in their stars, that they are underlings." Their humiliation is the work of their own hands. To such men the King's answer was perfectly proper; and, as the rest of the nation has invariably followed their example in acts of submission and subserviency to the ministry of the day, the answer to them will very properly become a general one. The years 1756 and 1757, indeed! Remind the King of what was the language of the King at that time! As well might he remind them of what was the language and what the conduct of the people at that time, or in former times. When it has been urged to this same corporation of London, that such and such acts were a glaring violation of the constitution of England, has not the answer constantly been, that *the times were changed*; that the present situation of the country warranted, and demanded, that which formerly would have been unjustifiable; and, have we not recently seen, from the pen of those who are well known to be the avowed advocates of the Opposition party, a justification of what was formerly called "bribery and corruption," a justification of the purchase and sale of seats in parliament, as being suitable to this new state of things? And, are we, after this; after having lived so long in this state, to be called upon to bestow our compassion upon those, who, having been most instrumental in producing it, now complain, that they are not treated as their fathers were? But, the chief objection to their complaint is this: why did they not petition for inquiry upon *former occasions*? Is this the *first* military failure that this poor nation has experienced? Is this the first disgraceful Convention that has been made? Is this the first instance, of late years, in which English treasure and English blood have been expended in the purchase of national dishonour? If it be, then these people might have some ground for complaint; but, if it be not, and if this be the first time of their petitioning for inquiry, the answer they have received, so far from being harsh, was much milder than they had a right to expect. They complain of the omnipotence of "a certain great family," dealing, as slaves must and do, in inuendo and insinuation, not daring to name those whom they hate. But, is not the "omnipotence" of this family their own work? Have they ever stirred an inch in the inquiries moved for with respect to the Wellesleys? Have

they not set their faces against all those who did? Have not both parties; have not the nation, with here and there a solitary and insignificant exception, given their sanction to what has been the natural cause of what they now complain of? Whimpering, whining creatures, as they are, it is truly a pretty jest to hear *them*, at this day, calling for inquiry! No, no: they must not hope to succeed in this way. It is too late for them to assume a new character. Oh, the base flatterers! It stirs one's gall to hear their complaints. Is there a man or a woman or a child, in power, or belonging to any one in power, whom they have not eulogized to the skies? Have they not praised *all* that has been done, and all that has been intended to be done, by every set of men who, for the time being, had the expending of the taxes! Is not this the case? No man can deny that it is. Away with them and their complaints, then! Let them howl to the winds. There is a part of the observations of the *Morning Chronicle*, relating to the King himself, which deserves notice. It blames the answer, but chooses to suppose, that the ministers *forced* the King to give such an answer, and expresses a hope, that "the *British public* will not tamely see *their Sovereign thus abused*." I am at a loss to know, whether this be meant as irony, or not. If it be, it is much too grave; for certainly the far greater part of readers will take it as serious, and if so, they must suppose, that the *Morning Chronicle* pays no great compliment to the intellects of the King. "The King can do no wrong;" but, the meaning of this is, not that he can wittingly and willingly do nothing which is wrong itself, because, being subject to passion like other men, he might knock a person down; but, that he can do nothing *which shall subject him to the operation of the criminal law*. In any other sense, the words are an absurdity. They would suppose the King to have neither will nor judgment of his own; to be a mere state puppet, whose situation might be filled by an idiot or a log of wood. To that sort of courtesy, which imputes to the ministers all that one disapproves of in the language and conduct of the King, there is no objection; but, to carry this so far as to call upon the people to *avenge* the King on account of what he, from his own lips, has uttered, is really an insult upon the understanding of the public, and would be practised by no one, whose views were not much more of a *party* than of a public nature. BERKSHIRE has come to a resolution to follow the example of the City of London, and, as I fear the instances will be rare, after the rebuke which the city received, I shall, as far as I am able, perpetuate the memory of these instances. The following is an account of the proceedings in Berkshire:

"Reading, Oct. 18.

"Pursuant to a requisition signed by a number of the freeholders of our county, and an order issued in consequence thereof by the high sheriff, a most numerous and respectable meeting of the nobility, clergy, and freeholders, was this day held in the town-hall, for the purpose of taking into their consideration the terms of the late Convention in Portugal, which has been acceded to by the British general officers commanding in that country, and for expressing to his Majesty their sentiments on the occasion. After the usual form of opening the court, it was moved and seconded, "That an humble and dutiful address be presented to his Majesty, praying that he may be graciously pleased to order that an inquiry should be instituted with respect to the cause of the late disgraceful Convention in Portugal, and also beseeching his Majesty that he may be graciously pleased to order that such steps may be taken, as will ensure the punishment of the guilty person or persons in that disgraceful transaction, however high his rank in society may be."



"The motion was made by G. Mitford, Esq. and seconded by C. Dickinson, Esq. It was opposed by Mr. Nares, one of the *British Critic* parsons, the other being the famous *Mr. Beloe*, who was, some time ago, at the *British Museum*. Mr. Nares was seconded by a Mr. Cobham.

"The opposition rested not only on the idea that judgment would by this motion be pronounced before trial, but also on the principle of its being *improper to offend the royal ear by a subject presuming to give his advice in a manner which was known to be contrary to the declared sentiments of the royal mind*. In reply to both these points, it was argued by Lord Folkestone, Henry Marsh, Esq, Dr. Valpy, and other gentlemen who signed the requisition, that no individual was implicated, either by the words or tenor of the motion; it pointedly, no doubt, censured the thing; but it, at the same time, called for inquiry as to who may be the guilty person, and expressing the anxious hope of the freeholders, that exemplary punishment may follow this trial and conviction. With respect to the second point which had been advanced by some of the opposers of the motion, it had been so repeatedly urged, and refuted in the most able manner, that it was thought hardly worth a comment: it was a fact which was notorious to every Englishman who ever consulted a page of his own history, that, however correct the motives of the gentlemen who opposed the present motion might possibly be, and most probably were, yet it was a most unquestionable fact, that the 'danger of offending the royal ear' has been urged by the most abject slaves, and most time-serving sycophants, in the worst periods of our history. On the other hand, the fact was as clearly ascertained, and as generally known, that at the periods of our history which excited the universal admiration of the world, the constitutional language of Britons was held to be this—that every subject, however humble his station in life might be, had, by the peculiarly inestimable blessings of the British constitution, a most unquestionable right, and that, in fact, it was his bounden duty, to approach the throne, on any great public emergency, by which the national character, interest, or honour, may appear to him to have been compromised, and state his sentiments thereon in respectful but in manly terms; it was his duty to do so, in order that the parental attention of the sovereign might be more immediately, but with humility, called to a point in which bad advisers had previously had access to the royal ear.

"The motion was then put, and carried by a majority of *six to one*."

The Corporation of Winchester have addressed the King upon the subject. "Tread upon a worm and it will turn again." This is really creditable to Sir Henry Mildmay, who, though in a very bad state of health, did, I believe, attend the meeting in person.

The inhabitants at large, of the city and suburbs of Winchester, have also sent an Address, of which a copy is here inserted. I have heard, too, that the names, signed to this address, were, many of them, such as might have been expected to be withheld, upon such an occasion. Really, if *Winchester* acts thus, there may be something like *soul* yet left in this county. The account is as follows, and it is with unfeigned satisfaction that I put it upon record.

"On Monday sennight the corporation of Winchester held a meeting, at the Guildhall, for the purpose of considering the propriety of addressing his Majesty on the convention lately entered into by the officers commanding his Majesty's forces in Portugal, H. C. P. Mildmay, Esq., the mayor, in the chair. An address was proposed by Mr. Alderman Earle, and seconded by Mr. Alderman Silver, and unanimously agreed to, *praying his Majesty to institute an inquiry into their conduct*. Sir R. Gamon, Bart., and H. C. P. Mildmay, Esq., the representatives of this city, were desired to present the same, attended by Mr. Alderman Earle. And on Thursday following, a meeting of the inhabitants at large of the city and suburbs of Winchester was held at the same place (by permission of the mayor) for the like purpose, when Dr. Littlehales was unanimously called to the chair, and the following address was proposed by W. F. Bury, Esq., and seconded by J. Woolla, Esq., and unanimously agreed to:—

"TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.—*May it please your Majesty,*

" We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, inhabitants of the city and suburbs of Winchester, beg leave to approach the throne to express our sincere attachment to your royal person and family, and being sensible that your Majesty's true glory is inseparable from that of your people, we humbly presume to pray that your Majesty will be pleased to order a full, free, and effective inquiry to be made into the causes and circumstances of the convention of Portugal—a convention which has caused general mortification and disappointment, and deprived your brave soldiers of the expected result of their good and honourable exertions—the unconditional surrender of the whole French army. Your petitioners cannot but deeply lament that such an opportunity was lost; but as we do not presume to anticipate conviction, if, upon mature investigation, it shall be found that your commanders were compelled by insurmountable obstacles to conclude such a treaty, justice demands that they should be reinstated in the good opinion of their country; but, on the other hand, if they were actuated by any thing less than imperious necessity, we are fully persuaded, from the interest which your Majesty must ever feel in the fair fame and honour of your kingdom, that they will experience such marks of your royal displeasure as may prove a severe example to others, and deter them from tarnishing, in the cabinet, the glory acquired in the field."

This Address is very good indeed. There is none of that spaniel-like humility in it that we see in the London Address. The people do not seem to speak as if they were approaching the throne of a life-and-death sovereign. Upon reading the London Address, one cannot help figuring to one's self a parcel of crouching creatures with knees knocking together and teeth clattering in their head, as if waiting the crash of a roof or the fall of a thunderbolt. No man living would suppose, that they were the descendants of the men who obtained the *Bill of Rights* and the *Act of Settlement*. I hear that the county is to have a meeting; but, whether the answer to the city will put a stop to this, is more than I shall pretend to determine.

Essex is about to meet, and I am happy to perceive, that Mr. Burgoyne is taking an active part; for, if I am to judge from what he has written and published, he is as sensible and sound a man as any in the kingdom, though, as to some particular points, I differ from him in opinion. That county has been, as to representation in Parliament, a *nullity*, for many years. The two factions, as they did in Westminster, have, to save trouble and expense, made an amicable arrangement, by which they name each a member, the chief persons in the county have a good dinner once in six years, toast the British constitution, and *the people* have just as much to say in the matter as the good people of Russia or Turkey or Germany have in choosing their representatives.

Aye, *here* is the source; *here* is the real cause of all our failures abroad and of all our misery at home. There should be no Address, or Petition, upon this occasion, uncoupled with a declaration as to this fertile cause of mischief. It is idle to talk about reformation any where else, till a reformation take place here.

As somewhat connected with this subject of the Convention, I cannot refrain from noticing a dispute that is going on about which part of the kingdom has the misfortune to have given birth to Sir Hew Dalrymple. The *Irish* must own to the Wellesleys; we here in *England*, and even in Hampshire, I believe, to Sir Burrard; and, from a very natural motive, we gave Sir Hew to the *Scots*, but they have thrown him back, with both hands, upon Yorkshire. A Yorkshireman has, however, come forward, and, in a letter which I here insert, from the *Morning Chronicle*, has given us what we were so desirous to obtain, some account of the origin and progress of this convention-making general:—

“ **Sir**: Having mentioned Sir Hew Dalrymple, though it is certainly a matter altogether indifferent to the public, whether that officer be a native of Scotland or of Yorkshire; yet as a correspondent, a SCOTSMAN, has thought proper to assert, formally, in contradiction to truth and fact, that he is an *Englishman*, born in the county of York, I shall state such particulars as may defy contradiction. His father was of the county of Ayr, and rose to the rank of lieutenant in the British service. The present Sir Hew is about 57 years of age, and first entered the army as an ensign in the Royals, where he remained many years. His mother's name was Ross; and she having, as was before observed, married for her second husband General Sir Adolphus Oughton, he, in some measure, adopted, befriended, and brought forward in life, his wife's son. Sir Hew had no patrimonial inheritance, except a small fortune; but he married a lady who brought him a considerable accession to it. She was a daughter of the late General Leighton, I believe the youngest. These circumstances may challenge implicit belief.

Yours,

“ A YORKSHIREMAN.”

There have been men, for the honour of whose birth, cities and countries have contended, and others for the honour of their burying-place; but, as far as I know, it was reserved for the list of English generals to possess men, whom countries contended in disowning. The Scots are to be applauded for their motive; but, there is another way, in which for them to show and to *prove*, that they feel as they ought to do about the Convention, and that is, in *sending up petitions for inquiry*; and, unless they do that, they will, in the end, obtain little credit from their disowning of one of the men, by whom that disgraceful instrument was framed and ratified.

Wellesley is, it seems, gone to *Ireland* to fill his post of Chief Secretary, and it will be worth while just to inquire, whether his salary of *five or six thousand pounds a year* has been going on all the time he has been making armistices in Portugal. He is, if this account be true, now a minister again, and a minister, too, having the management of the affairs of a great part of the kingdom. I'll warrant it that the *Irish* do not petition against the Convention! There is a pretty little act of parliament existing with respect to that country, which will have a wonderful effect in keeping the several counties in a *state of perfect tranquillity*. What a pity it is that we have not such an act here! “All in good time,” the reader will say; but, how *quiet* we should be!

While all this is going on, without doors, the ministers are said to have their different opinions about the inquiry. This is likely; and I should suppose, that Mr. Canning, who is their prop, would be for the inquiry. I think so for this reason; that he, feeling strong in his own talents, is not, at his early time of life, likely to risk his future prospects by taking a side, which, though it may obtain a momentary triumph, or rather, impunity, will assuredly, first or last, meet with due execration and punishment. Mr. Canning has sense enough to perceive, that things cannot *always* go on thus; he must be pretty sure, that a change, and a very material change, must, in the course of a few years, take place; and, therefore, to say nothing of *justice*, which I still look upon as having some weight with *him*, policy would point out the path I have described. There are others, who are the creatures of mere court intrigue, whose power has no other basis, and who, were they not courtiers, would be nothing; but, it certainly is different with him; and, if the resolution should be to screen and support the Convention makers, I should not be at all surprised to see him, at least, quit the ministry. There is one objection to it indeed, and that is, his connection with the *Grenvilles*; but he has now tried his own strength, and if, notwithstanding all that has passed, they should still ad-

here to the Wellesleys, he cannot fail to foresee, that they, who never were favourites with the nation, will not be a body of which he need stand in dread. These are my opinions. I may deceive myself; but, if justice should be done to the insulted and injured nation, I shall certainly give to him the greater part of the credit.

It was my intention to have made an *exposure* of DON CEVALLOS'S *Exposition*, which I look upon as the most prime piece of imposture that has appeared in print for many years, but I have not time; and, besides, nothing should be mixed with this discussion relative to the Convention. It is what is doing and to be done *here*, here, here at home, that ought to engage our great care and attention. What care I about Ferdinand and Joseph. I am not to have my wits drawn away by this tub to the whale.

Little room as I have, however, I cannot help pointing out to the attention of the reader, a pamphlet, just published, under the following title: "*An appeal to the Public and a farewell address to the Army, by BREVET MAJOR HOGAN, who resigned his commission, in consequence of the treatment he experienced from the Duke of York, and of the system that prevails in the army, RESPECTING PROMOTIONS.*" This I scruple not to say, is the most interesting publication that has appeared in England for many years. It should be read by every individual in the nation. Oh, what a story does this gentleman tell! What a picture does he exhibit! What facts does he unfold! If *this* produce no effect upon the public, why, then, we are so base and rascally a crew, that it is no matter what becomes of us. We are unworthy of the name of men, and are beneath the beasts that perish.

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#### CONVENTION IN PORTUGAL.—Continued.

(*Political Register, November, 1808.*)

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"It is true, that some men have been kicked into courage; and this is no bad hint to give to those who are too forward and liberal in bestowing insults and outrages on their passive companions."—BURKE: Letter I. Regicide Peace.

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FROM a question of a mere military nature, embracing the conduct, the merits, or the demerits, of Sir Arthur Wellesley, Sir Harry Burrard, and Sir Hew Dalrymple, this has, in consequence of the subsequent conduct of the ministers, grown into a question of great political importance. From the first, from the tardy reluctant publication of the Extraordinary Gazette, and especially from the partial manner in which that publication was made, it became evident, that the ministers, though they had not the courage to defend the Convention, had determined to screen, if in their power; had determined to endeavour to screen, their colleague, Sir Arthur Wellesley; and, from the moment that the citizens of London received the rebuking Answer, all men were convinced, that the King had been advised to act in conformity with that determination. It then became a clear question, whether the ministry had the power of defeating the wishes of the whole nation, or not. The nation, with voice unanimous; with an unanimity as perfect as that of their sorrow for the death of Lord

Nelson ; with such an unanimity, the nation declared the Convention to be *infamous*, and with a like unanimity, they called for a speedy, fair, impartial, and open trial of those, who had made that Convention, who had done the deed, which they deemed to be infamous. Such, and no man will attempt to deny it, were the feelings and wishes of the whole nation ; feelings and wishes entirely unconnected with any motives of a party or political nature. Having but too much reason, however, to suspect, that the ministers, from motives of their own, wished and intended to screen one, at least, of the parties concerned in making the Convention, that part of the nation, which generally takes the lead upon such occasions, appealed to the justice of the King himself ; laid before him, in language and manner the most respectful and humble that could possibly be conceived, a statement of the nation's wrongs, to which they added a prayer, that he would take measures to do it justice. To this they received an answer of rebuke for what was called their unnecessary interposition ; and, they received no positive assurance, that even an *inquiry of any sort* should take place, much less an assurance, that such an inquiry, that an inquiry of a kind calculated to ensure them *justice*, should be instituted. Here, then, the ministers and the people were at issue. The question now became, whether the ministers were able to do that which the whole nation disapproved of, or not ; which question still remains to be determined.

A COURT OF INQUIRY is, indeed, said to have been ordered ; that is to say, an inquiry to settle the question, *whether there be any grounds for putting the parties upon their trial*. This is something gained by the people and *the press* from a ministry, who had caused a firing of cannon and an illuminating of houses at the receipt of the intelligence of the Convention ; this is something gained from those, who, from the outset, appeared resolved to screen one, if not all, the parties, concerned in making the Convention. But, it is not what the nation wished and expected. It is only in cases where there exist *slight* grounds to presume guilt, that Courts of Inquiry are held ; and the only use of such courts, is, to save unnecessary *trouble* ; to save the trouble of putting upon their trial persons, against whom there appears to exist no evidence of guilt worthy of attention. In the case of SIR ROBERT CALDER, who with an inferior force, beat the enemy and took two of their ships, the delicate mode of a previous inquiry was not adopted. In the case of COLONEL COCHRANE JOHNSTONE, against whom not a particle of evidence tending to criminate him was produced ; who was not only not proved guilty of any, even the slightest offence, but who *proved himself to be innocent* of every charge that had been hatched and bred up against him ; in the case of this gentleman, the Duke of York did not advise the King to institute a previous Court of Inquiry. Colonel Cochrane Johnstone, who proved *all* and every one of the allegations against him to be false and malicious, was sent, at once, before a COURT MARTIAL, where the members are *sworn* and where witnesses are examined upon their *oaths*. The delicate, honour-saving mode of a Court of Inquiry was not, in this gentleman's case, thought necessary ; and, I should be glad to know what there is to justify this mode of proceeding in the present instance. It was made evident in the sequel, that there was *no wish to spare* Colonel Cochrane Johnstone ; it was equally evident, that there was no wish to spare Sir Robert Calder ; and, indeed, unless there be a wish to spare, there appears, in cases of importance, no reason whatever for a previous Court

of Inquiry. Of such a court the members are not sworn; the witnesses are not sworn; the public are not admitted; all is secret; and, at last, a report, decided on by the majority, without liability to public protest, is drawn up and laid before the King, upon which report a Court-martial is ordered, or the whole proceeding is at an end.

I do not know how others may view this matter, but to me it appears, that a man, conscious of innocence, would not be contented with a trial of this sort, being convinced, as he must, that, if an open trial does not follow, the world will always have its suspicions of his guilt. It was said, that Sir Hew Dalrymple would not submit to any thing short of a Court-martial; and, if he was misled by the information of the person previously in command; if he be able to prove that, as I am inclined to think he is, there was a very solid reason for his objecting to a mode of proceeding, by which his comparative innocence could not be established, or, at least, by which the knowledge of it would be kept from that public, whose resentment has hitherto been directed chiefly against him, and who, for a considerable time, were, through the abominable arts and audacity of the partisans of Sir Arthur Wellesley, induced to regard Sir Hew as the person who alone was guilty.

We have before had to remark upon the circumstance of the *Armistice* (the only document, relating to the transaction, bearing the name of Sir Arthur Wellesley) being published by the ministers in the French language only; we have remarked upon the circumstance of Sir Arthur's coming home, upon *leave of absence*, while Sir Hew was *recalled*; we have remarked upon the gracious reception which Sir Arthur Wellesley met with at *St. James's*, and we have heard nothing of Sir Hew being received there at all; and, if what has been published, as a copy of the Order, for holding a Court of Inquiry, be correct, the same spirit and motive still actuate those, who have the assembling of that Court. "That an Inquiry shall be made into the conditions of the *Armistice* and Convention, and into all the causes and circumstances, whether arising from the previous operations of the British army, or otherwise, which led to them; and into the conduct, behaviour, and proceedings of *Sir Hew Dalrymple*, and of any other commander or commanders, or of any other person or persons, as far as the same were connected with the *Armistice* and Convention."

Wellesley, you see, though he negotiated the *Armistice*, and though he had had the previous command of the army, is not named. His conduct is, doubtless, included, in the description of the subjects of inquiry; but, why not name him? Why name Sir Hew Dalrymple; why hold him up to the world, as a person accused, any more than Sir Arthur Wellesley? Sir Arthur fought us the famous battle on the 21st of September, he negotiated us the famous *Armistice* on the very next day, and yet he is not named as a person whose conduct is to be inquired into! It appears impossible; to me, at least, it appears impossible, that Sir Hew Dalrymple can be so much to blame as Sir Arthur Wellesley; and yet the name of the former is held up to public notice as that of an accused person, while that of the latter does nowhere appear. The motive for this is too evident to need being pointed out to the reader; and I hope that it will not fail to produce a proper impression, and lead to a strict attention, on the part of the public, to every thing, relating to this transaction, that is now going forward. I do hope, that the public will not suffer its attention to be diverted by the numerous stratagems, which will be resorted

to for the purpose. All manner of tricks will be played by the partisans of the high Wellesley. The thing will *drawl* along like a snail. Misrepresentations will be made day after day. In the hope that the public will be wearied, its patience will be assailed in all manner of ways, while other topics will be pressed upon its attention, new alarms will be raised, and the passion of fear will be pitted against that of resentment. But, if the people have one grain of sense left, they will, in answer to all these attempts at diversion, say: "Stop; for, till we have settled the affair of the Convention in Portugal; till we have clearly ascertained, whether such an use can, with impunity, be made of the blood and treasure of the nation, it would be folly in us to take an interest in any thing that is liable to happen." This is the answer which every man should give; for, what is it to us that we make exertions and sacrifices, if they are to be of no avail? No: let us have no diversion. Let us have this matter fully and fairly settled; and then we shall know what to wish for and what to hope for and how to act.

While this *Inquiry* is going on, endeavours are not wanting to *reconcile* us, little by little, to the terms of the Convention. There will be found, in another part of this number, a *defence* of the Convention, and of Sir Arthur Wellesley, at the same time. The reader will see how pitiful it is; he will see that all its arguments have been long ago refuted; but, I beseech him to bear in mind the fact, that Sir Arthur Wellesley's friends, asserted, at first, that he was quite *innocent* of any, even the smallest, share in the transaction; that he, as an inferior officer, was *compelled* to sign the Armistice; that he remonstrated against the order so to do; that he was, at last, induced to do it for fear of exciting a mutiny in the army; but, that he privately *protested* against it in the strongest terms. Now, however, when these abominable falsehoods can no longer hope to obtain belief; now, when it is evident that he must come in for a large, and even a principal, share of the blame; now, the Armistice and Convention are things to be defended, and are defended, by the very same persons, who swore that he had protested against those acts, and by this very writer, who accused me of harshness, because I asserted, that the story of the Protest was a miserable fabrication: I do beseech the public to bear in mind this fact, than which I remember nothing exhibiting a more complete proof of a want of principle.

The opposition, which, at any place, has been made to petitioning the King upon the subject, has been made, not upon the ground of *justification* of the act. No man has, until now, attempted to set up such *justification*. In the county of Berks, the Address and Petition was opposed upon the sole ground of their not being necessary; and, even that opposition was confined almost exclusively to Mr. NARES, who is one of the editors (along with Mr. Beloe of *Museum* memory) of the British Critic, who has recently received a fat living from the hands of Lord Eldon; and to Mr. COVHAM, late a purser in the *East India Company's* service, and who is closely allied to persons dependent upon the government. In Essex, where the meeting was so abruptly dissolved, and where a second requisition has been rejected, the High Sheriff is also a person, who was, I am informed, very recently in the *East India Company's* service. Now, though we are not justified in imputing motives to either of these men, still the knowledge of these facts should be circulated, especially as the partisans of Sir Arthur Wellesley have endeavoured to make the world believe, that the opposition, in the places above-men-

tioned, arose from motives of *pure loyalty*. But, at any rate, no *justification* has, until now, been attempted. Many have been the attempts to shift the blame from the back of Sir Arthur to those of Sir Harry and Sir Hew; but, until now, when the hour of exposure is approaching, no one has attempted to justify the act itself. Such justification, however, we must now expect, in all manner of shapes. The evil consequences of the Convention, which daily become more and more manifest, will, as in the following paragraph from the Morning Post (the Nabob's newspaper) of the 8th instant, be imputed, not to those who made the Armistice and Convention, but to those who reprobate them, and who call for the punishment of their authors :—

“ The French writers are naturally delighted at the proceedings of the English Addressers, which we regret to find, have excited the flames of discontent and disorder in Portugal, to a most alarming degree, though in the first instance all was joy and ecstasy at the result of the campaign in that country.—‘ The Convention of Lisbon,’ says the Argus, ‘ continues to occupy the minds of the people ‘ in London. It is not only individuals among the lower classes who loudly ‘ deprecate that Convention; even the common council of London presented to ‘ the King an Address against the generals who signed it. We are sorry to be ‘ unable to give our readers the details of the long debate which took place ‘ upon that occasion. It is the finest eulogium of the courage of the French ‘ and of the ability of their general.’—*The present alarming situation of Portugal ‘ affords the best elucidation of the mischievous consequences of the recent proceedings in this country; nor was it difficult to foresee that those ill-judged proceedings, in the very face of his Majesty’s promise of due investigation, must ‘ tend to create dissensions between Great Britain and her ally, to sow the seeds of ‘ jealousy and distrust, and give the Portuguese an unfavourable opinion of British ‘ honour and integrity.*—Such, in fact, has been the consequence of the outcry, which, without waiting for the promised inquiry, has been factiously raised among us. We sincerely regret to find that many highly respectable, and most worthy individuals have, by the wiles of party, been seduced to give on this occasion a temporary countenance to the designs of a faction, whose prime object it is to discredit his Majesty and his government in the estimation of the country and of its allies, and to bring back to the council of the nation a set of men, who have proved themselves altogether inadequate to direct the affairs of a great nation, under any circumstances, much less to conduct to a happy issue the glorious struggle in which we are at present engaged.”

This is an old, well-tried trick of Pitt, who, upon pressing emergencies, always resorted to it.

The French writers, we are told, are delighted at the proceedings of the Addressers in England. They do not, by-the-bye, express much delight at our proceedings; nor is their reasoning correct, that, because our generals are accused of not doing their duty, we are of opinion that the French generals were superior in ability, and their soldiers in bravery. The *contrary*, as to the soldiers, is not only the obvious conclusion, but has been, and is, the express assertion of the Addressers. And, I leave the reader to say, whether the fact, that the people of England, of all ranks, are discontented, because our generals did not send Junot and his army prisoners to England; whether our all being discontented *because enough has not been done against the enemy*; I leave the sensible reader to say, whether the knowledge of this fact is likely to give “ *great delight* ” to that enemy, and to encourage him in the hope of succeeding in his hostile designs against this country.

But, suppose the affirmative of this question? Suppose a case in which our discontent should be goaded on to the pitch of actual insurrection? That would certainly please the enemy, because he might hope therefrom to profit. Yet, the conclusion insinuated by the Morning Post might be



false ; because the fault might originate with the ministers ; with those whose conduct drove the people to insurrection. Suppose a proclamation were issued to compel us all to wear whiskers, upon pain of forfeiting our goods and chattels. Suppose we were, under a similar penalty, to be ordered to burn off our fingers, to tear out our nails, or knock out our teeth. Would you accuse *the people* of giving pleasure to the enemy, if they rose in opposition to such a proclamation ; or, would your accusation be levelled against those who advised the proclamation to be issued ? According to this doctrine of the Morning Post, which is only the old hackneyed doctrine of Pitt revived, we are to bear anything, resent nothing, to keep silent, though we are expiring under the lash, lest, by uttering our complaints, we give pleasure to the enemy. In the present case, as I have shown, our complaints must necessarily give pain to the enemy ; the enemy does us the justice to say, that *we are all discontented that more has not been done against him* ; and yet these vile defenders of Sir Arthur Wellesley, these base hirelings of the press, would fain persuade us, that to express our discontent upon this occasion, is to excite doubts of our attachment to our country and its cause !

Now, to "the *alarming* situation of Portugal." For this, too, it seems, that, not our Convention-making generals, but the people of England, are answerable. I say, *the people of England*, because, whether Addressers or not, *all* have expressed their dissatisfaction at the Convention. *We*, it seems, and not those who made the Convention, are answerable for the "*dissensions, the jealousy, and distrust,*" now existing in Portugal. What, then, such is the *fact*, is it ? Such is the state of Portugal. The Portuguese are dissatisfied with what our generals have done and are doing ; this fact is now acknowledged ; but, the cause of their dissatisfaction is the Addresses of the people in England. They were very satisfied with the Convention, at first ; they thought it a very good Convention ; but we, by our Addresses to the King, and by persevering in these Addresses, "in the very face of his Majesty's promise," have made them believe, that it is a very bad Convention, and, accordingly, their country is in a most "*alarming state of discontent and disorder.*" This is all true, is it ? Well, but how does this bear upon the advisers of the King (for we will keep clear of the King himself), if the Portuguese are really in such a situation, and from such a cause ? The people call for inquiry ; they are rebuked ; they appear to distrust the sincerity of those who advised the answer ; but, how could this "*influence*" the Portuguese, *unless they distrusted too ?*

But, it is wrong to waste one's time in this way. It is rank absurdity to suppose, that, if the people of Portugal had "*exulted* at the result of the campaign," they should have been made discontented by our Addresses and Petitions. It is a barefaced and a base falsehood to say, that they ever rejoiced at that result. On the contrary, it is notorious, that their general remonstrated against the Convention, the moment he heard of it ; that the Portuguese caused our flag to be pulled down as soon as our generals had had the folly and the arrogance to hoist it ; that great delay in the embarkation took place owing to the opposition which the Portuguese gave to the French being allowed to carry off their plunder ; that a board of commissioners was formed in consequence of that opposition ; that afterwards, when a part of the French were driven into Oporto, the people seized upon their baggage and plunder, in contravention of the terms which our generals had agreed upon. All these are notorious

facts; and yet this wretched East India hireling has the impudence to assert, that the people of Portugal were very well satisfied, and even delighted at the terms of the Convention, till they heard of our Addresses to the King! So far from tending to create dissension in Portugal, the Addresses of the people of England must naturally tend to produce a suspension of discontent. The Portuguese would naturally say: "Though we have been injured and insulted by the English generals, the people of that country have taken up our cause, and we shall have justice done us upon the heads of those generals, therefore we must not confound the nation with its commanders." I leave it to the judgment of the reader, whether such would not be the probable effect of our Addresses. When, indeed, the Portuguese shall see how these Addresses have been received, I will not say, that our addressing may not tend to inflame them; but, then the fault will rest with those, from whose council that reception proceeded. If the answer had been, that such an inquiry would be made, such a mode of proceeding adopted, as would ensure ample justice to us and to the Portuguese nation; then, indeed, there would have been good reason for the latter to suspend their resentment.

Who, after we heard of the remonstrance of the Portuguese general, and of the general indignation of the people, expected to see them tranquil? "Rejoice!" Aye, they did, poor creatures, illuminate their houses in Lisbon; but, it was *after our generals had established their military police!* It was after our army had been converted into a Holy Brotherhood. I, better than any man living, know how easy it is to inspire a city with joy; and our generals, our WELLESLEYS and our HOPES, seem not to be great masters in the art of producing this sort of disposition to illuminate, indeed! Poor souls! What a shame it is thus to insult them! Read General Hope's proclamation; and then say, whether they were likely to refuse to do *any thing* that might be hinted to them as being the wish of our commanders.

Discontent and disorder never appeared in Portugal, till *after the Convention was concluded*; and though, in that bare fact, we have not conclusive evidence, that the latter was the cause of the former, it is not bad presumptive evidence, and, when we take into view the facts before-mentioned, the unequivocal marks of disapprobation bestowed upon the Convention, there can remain but little doubt of the present dissensions and calamities having arisen entirely from the Convention. Ten or fifteen thousand men, who ought now to be in Spain to meet the French, are, from this cause, kept in Portugal. The friends of the French would naturally recover their boldness upon finding the people discontented with our conduct; comparisons would not fail to be made, and, as the French were gone, it would not be at all surprising if our army supplied their place, in the opinions and wishes of the people as well as in the forts and barracks. The great object should have been so to act as to be able to leave Portugal to itself. We should have so conducted ourselves as to have had Portugal for a *friend* and not for a *dependant*. Give to the thing whatever *name* we please, the Portuguese nation cannot help perceiving, that, as the matter now stands, they have made merely an exchange of masters. We are disposed to act justly by them, I believe; there is, I think, no doubt, that our object is to secure Portugal for the Prince Regent; but, in the meanwhile, we are *masters of the country*; we seem to be afraid to leave it to itself; and, this fear arises solely from those indications of hostility, which the Convention has brought forth:

And, if this be the case in Portugal, what must be the effect of the Convention upon the feelings of Spain? The Spaniards have all along shown great suspicions of us. They have heard of our conduct in Portugal; they have seen General Hope's Proclamation; they must know all about our Holy Brotherhood; and, can any man imagine, that they will not be shy of us? The Spaniards, if they succeed, must have no sparing of the French; they must have no Conventions of Cintra. This they know well, and, therefore, they must be satisfied, that our commanders will act no such part as that acted in Portugal. They must have no vain blown-up fellows to talk about "Ducs d'Abrantes in person." To give them this satisfaction; to give them an assurance that they would be in no danger from such a source; to excite in them a perfect confidence in the future conduct of our generals; to do this, it was necessary to convince them, that the *government* as well as the *people* of England, held in abhorrence the transactions in Portugal. But, what have they now before them? A Petition of the people to the King, praying that the causes of that transaction may be inquired into, and that the guilty may be punished; and an Answer of the King, advised by his ministers, rebuking and reproving his people for making the application. This is what the Spaniards have before them; this is the security which they have for the good behaviour of our generals, and for their heartily co-operating with them against the Duc d'Abrantes and the other potentates and nobles of Buonaparte's creation. Since one of our generals has acknowledged the emperor Napoleon I. (whom the Spaniards call an *usurper* and a *robber*), how shall they be sure, that another of them, acting under the same ministry, will not, upon the first fair occasion, acknowledge Joseph Napoleon king of Spain? They have seen Sir Arthur Wellesley, after acknowledging the Duc d'Abrantes and the Emperor Napoleon, graciously received by the King, in a few minutes after the petitioners against him had been rebuked by the King. This they know, if they know any thing that passes here; and will this encourage them to expect from our generals that determined hostility, that implacable hatred, against the French, without which no one can be zealous in *their* cause?

An appeal, in behalf of these generals, has been made to the *compassion* and *gratitude* of the people. It has been said, that we should consider, that the army *venture their lives for us*, while we remain at home in security; and that, therefore, we ought not to act too strictly towards the army.

It is, I hope, far from me to be wanting in any of those feelings, which are due to the soldier or the sailor. But, I consider, that, from them, something is *due to us*; I consider, that, after having been *paid for years*, the soldier actually serves but comparatively a short space of time. If I were to go to the parade at St. James's, or to any of the numerous, the fearfully numerous military stations in this country, and were to say: "What are you all doing here? What use are you of? Here we are taxed to our last shirt to maintain you, a parcel of fellows, who do nothing in this world but prune and black-ball your whiskers, hang monkeys' tails to your backs, pipe-clay your belts and your breeches, strut about during the day, and get drunk at night." If I were to say this; if I were to complain of being taxed to support the soldiery in idleness, or in useless parade, the answer would be this: "It is true, that, just at this time, we are of no use; it is true, that, in this situation,

“ we are a mere burden, and something worse ; but, sir, recollect, that “ we are here merely in a state of readiness ; and, that when we are “ called upon actually to serve the nation, *ours* is a service wherein we “ *venture our lives for you*, which consideration ought to prevent you “ from complaining that we are not *always at work*.” Nothing would be more reasonable than this answer ; but, then, this venturing of lives is clearly the nation’s *due*. Besides, as to the *officers*, and more especially the *generals*, and other considerable commanders, not only do they, in venturing their lives, do no more than render the nation what is its due for having maintained them, for years and years upon the staff without any danger to even a hair of their heads ; but, they have, moreover, honours and rewards awaiting them for every distinguished service that they, or the soldiers under them, perform. Is all this nothing ? And, shall military officers not be as strictly accountable for misconduct as other men ? Shall there be honours and rewards for glorious deeds, and no punishment for disgraceful ones ?

When the question of *flogging* the soldiers was before parliament, I did not observe that either the ministers, or the military officers present, urged this feeling of compassion, or gratitude. If the soldier acts amiss, he is flogged : and, punished, in that, or some other way, he ought to be, and must be ; but, then, is there no punishment to await the misbehaviour of generals ? Are we, when their conduct is in question, to hear of appeals to our compassion and gratitude, because they venture their lives for us ? Does not the private soldier venture his life too ? Ayè, and that without any hope of obtaining honours or rewards. Yet, if a private soldier, after twenty battles, and covered with scars, were found sleeping on his post, or were to suffer a prisoner to escape, would he not *instantly* be brought to trial, and, if his life were spared, would there be an inch of skin left whole from his nape to his waist ? Such punishment would be necessary, though terribly severe. But, then, is not severity equally necessary in the case of the general ? Divers lectures have been read, in the parliament and elsewhere, upon the *absolute necessity of strict discipline*. Such opinions are become fashionable, and have been maintained by no set of men with more earnestness, than by the present ministers and their military adherents. But, *now*, it seems, we are to reprobate these notions of severity ; or, at least, we are to entertain them as applicable to the *soldiers* only. Oh, this is shameful ! This is base to the last degree.

There is, in this appeal, and the nation will not fail to perceive it, something strongly indicative of conscious criminality. When a man, accused of theft and threatened with prosecution, reminds you of his distracted wife and starving family, what is your conclusion ? And what are we not to think of those, whose partisans make this appeal to our compassion and gratitude ? No : we are not to be diverted from our demand of “ strict discipline,” our demand of justice, by any such puling appeal. We gave most liberally. We grumbled not at these generals being kept upon the staff for so many, many years, without running the smallest risk of hearing a ball whistle by their heads ; we grumbled not that the harvests have partly rotted upon the ground for want of the hands, which were kept in inactivity ; we said, take our last penny, but, fight, when the day of fighting comes. That day has come ; and, from an expedition, which has probably cost us more than the whole of one year’s poor-rates, we have derived nothing but injury and disgrace. And,

shall we not now look for *strict justice*? Shall our demands of strict justice be answered by appeals to our compassion and our *gratitude*; gratitude towards those, from whom, in return for our unsparing liberality, we have received nothing of which we are not ashamed?

In another view of this matter, who can fail to foresee, that if justice be now denied, or withheld (which is exactly the same in effect), the people will, or can, continue cheerfully to contribute towards the means of supporting the war? If they see expedition after expedition fail; if they see one year's taxes wasted after another; if they see, battle after battle, and even victory after victory, lead, in the end, to nothing good, but uniformly to something bad; if they see that, having now reached what appears to be the lowest stage of the military bathos, justice is withheld from them: if they see this, is it, I ask, possible, that they should still cheerfully contribute to the continuation of military expenditure; an expenditure amounting to nearly one half of the taxes now raised?

Before I conclude this article, it occurs to me, that some notice is due to the argument, grounded on the assertion, "*that our main object was to get the French out of Portugal.*" This argument is plausible, because it evidently was one of our objects to get the French out of Portugal; but, the conclusion, at which this fact points, is not the less fallacious. It was our object to get the French out of Portugal; but, the *means* were to be taken into view; for, it was not our object to accomplish that purpose with a total disregard of the means. Suppose, for instance, our wise and valiant commanders had got Junot to quit Portugal, in consequence of a Convention, that should have sent him, at once, by the nearest cut, to Bilboa; would that have been to attain the intended object? Suppose such Convention had put him in possession of our fleet off the Tagus and had put Cadiz harbour into his hands; or suppose it had stipulated for the surrender to him of Guernsey, Jersey, and the Isle of Wight. There can be no doubt, but Junot, for either of these, would have consented to leave Portugal, particularly as he was to have ships to carry him away. *The French would have been got out of Portugal*; but, will any man say, that it was our intention, that it was our "*main object*," to get the French out of Portugal upon such terms? No: it is a crafty, catching sophism, invented to prop a vile cause. To get the French out of Portugal was regarded as the proof of the success of our efforts; but, our main object was, *to defeat the French*, to humble them in the eyes of the world, and, at the same time, to raise our own character for good faith as well as for military prowess and skill. This was the main object; and does not every man's common sense tell him, that no part of this great object has been accomplished?

As to the *now* magnified numbers, which the French army in Portugal has assumed, it is such a slavish imitation of Falstaff's lying story of the men in buckram that it were a shame to waste one's time in a refutation of the falsehood; but, I will just put this question to my reader: whether he believes, that, if Junot had had 25,000 fighting men in Portugal, he would not have been instantly shot, upon his arrival in France?

There is yet one topic remaining.

I beg the public to note the arts, which are now making use of, to excite doubts, at least, in the public mind, with regard to the conduct and merits of Sir Arthur Wellesley.

Scarcely a day passes, but we see some paragraph, in the Nabobs' newspaper, having evidently this object in view. Take the following

two for instance, from the Morning Post of the 8th instant. "Sir A. Wellesley had a party of his friends at a grand dinner at his residence in the Phoenix Park, on Tuesday last, being the *first general invitation given by him since his return from Portugal.*" "The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland gave a grand military dinner in honour of Sir A. Wellesley, at the vice-regal lodge, yesterday sennight, to which *all the general officers were invited.*" Now, whether the facts be true or false, the *intention*, obviously, is, to make the public believe, that Sir Arthur has done nothing that he is ashamed of, and that the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and "all the general officers" are of the same opinion. But whatever this Lord Lieutenant (the Duke of Richmond) may be, in other respects, we all know, that he is *one of the ministry*; and therefore, his *honouring* of Sir Arthur Wellesley ought to have no more weight with us, than if the honour had been bestowed by Lord Hawkesbury or Lord Castlereagh. These lords *honoured* him by presenting him to the King, on the very day, and in the very room, when and where a petition was presented to the King against an act, in which he had a principal share; but, that *honour* did not silence the nation, who still continue to censure that act, and to express their indignation that any attempt should be made to screen its authors from justice.

But, the most barefaced trick of this sort, is, the Address, which has been published, as presented to Sir Arthur Wellesley, by *the officers of the army in Portugal*, eulogizing his character and his conduct. There are persons, who have had the impudence to appeal to this Address as a *proof* of the meritorious conduct of Sir Arthur Wellesley, and even as a *proof* of his innocence of the misconduct, which the nation imputes to him.

In the first place, this is something quite *novel* in the army. The army has not been looked upon, since the days of Cromwell, as a body proper to *deliberate*, and especially as to matters relating to the merits of those who are to command it, or who have commanded it.

Next, we may be pretty sure, that where such means of obtaining praise are resorted to, there exists a consciousness of a want of what is really deserving of praise. We see how easy it is for the ministers, at any time, and upon any occasion, to obtain flattering Addresses from their creatures: and, let it be remembered, that Sir Arthur Wellesley was not only known to be *one of the ministers*, but one of the most powerful of them. People in the army are, as well as other people, sagacious enough to discover which is the road to promotion, and if the reader should happen to think, that none of the officers of our numerous army, have any thoughts about any thing but *fighting*, he is egregiously deceived. We never heard of any Addresses or *pieces of plate* being presented, by *their officers*, to the Duke of Marlborough or Lord Nelson, or to any other of our justly renowned commanders. They left it for the *nation*, the counties, the cities, the boroughs, and other bodies of the people at home; they left it to the admiration and gratitude of *those whom they had served*, to present them with Addresses and tokens of regard. The Addressers in Portugal did not think of a *sword* to present to their hero. A *piece of plate* they seem to have thought more appropriate; and, to say the truth, their taste was not a little commendable, though a man of the right stamp would assuredly have used it for the purpose of knocking their teeth down their throats. Had they, indeed, presented him with any of the *standards*, which, doubtless, during such a *victorious battle*, they took from the enemy, the example of a great captain of the

last century, who, with such trophies, made a bed of honour for the king of France, might have been cited; but, to present him with a piece of plate, bought out of their pay, that is to say, out of the taxes; to come to him with a thing, the like of which is given by underwriters to a master of a vessel, who has saved a cargo from the waves; a thing which is given to a meritorious sheep-feeder, or a discoverer of the means of killing the fly in turnips; to furnish him with an article symbolical of thrift, a commodity for a pawnbroker's shop; thus to fit him out! Why, it was very well for them and for him; but, let them not imagine, if another thought of the same cast should come athwart their brains, that the people of England are thus to be duped. No, no, gentlemen, we beg you to leave to us the agreeable task of making due acknowledgment of the merits of your commanders. We, who have long and most patiently been paying you, desire to be left to judge of your merits by your deeds, and not by your words. We wish to hear less of your writing and more of your fighting. Send us home standards; club your swords for that purpose, and do not club your shillings to buy pieces of plate for those who are able to obtain you promotion. We have sense enough left to perceive, that that general, who is least fond of dangerous enterprises, may frequently be most in favour with his officers. And, as a closing hint (in case this sheet should reach you) you may be assured, that much more acceptable to us, than your endless list of endless letters, *abusing* the French, would be one single letter of three lines, letting us know that you had *beaten* them.

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## SPAIN.

(*Political Register, December, 1808.*)

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THERE appears to be some reason to fear, that Napoleon is in but too fair a way of finally accomplishing his accursed purposes, with regard to the Spaniards. I was, but a few weeks ago, reproached by a correspondent for having, at first, expressed my fears, that the Spaniards would be subdued: I wish with all my heart, that this ground of reproach, if it be one, may hold good to the end. I would much rather be regarded as a fool for the rest of my life, than that tyranny, in any shape, should, in a nation like Spain, triumph for a single day.

The Morning Chronicle has an article complaining of the conduct of the GENERAL JUNTA in Spain: and, though one does not like to begin to blame, at a moment when the blamed party appears to be experiencing a reverse of fortune, it must be acknowledged, that as far as we can judge at this distance from the scene, and with means of information so imperfect, there is, as the Chronicle observes, but too much reason to look back with regret to the Junta of Seville.

The General Junta may be composed of wise and good men; but, it does not breathe the *spirit* of the Junta of Seville. It does, perhaps, contain more of *rank* than the Junta just named: but more rank and title will, I should think, do, in such circumstances, little, or nothing.

The General Junta appear to have directed their attention chiefly to

the keeping of the people *quiet*; to the maintaining of "*order and tranquillity*;" to the repressing of all violences proceeding from popular commotion. But, with their leave, this is not the way to oppose Buonaparte and his daring legions. The object of the Junta is, doubtless, to nip, in time, the bud of insurrection; lest, in the end, the people, proceeding from one step to another, overturn the whole system of the government, in church as well as in state, as was the case in France. But, the question is, Is Buonaparte to be resisted by any means other than those of a general insurrection; a general letting-loose of the people? I think, that he is not; and that the nobles of Spain have to choose, whether they will see King Joseph upon the throne, or see the people left to act as they please. There wanted, in Spain, a renovation of character; an entirely new spirit excited; new talents called forth from obscurity. Therefore, if the nobles have assembled in a Junta, and are endeavouring to keep the people quiet; to preserve "*order and tranquillity*," they, in my view of the matter, are taking precisely the wrong course. It is, in that case, little more than the *old government*, administered by deputy, under which, it is my decided opinion, that, sooner or later, Spain must fall. It is not *cautiousness* that is now wanted in Spain. It is vigour; it is activity; it is great daring; it is enthusiasm. Anger, resentment, revenge; every feeling that leads to violence. These are wanted in Spain. With these Buonaparte may be resisted; but, without them, it seems to me that he cannot.

There is one decree, or edict, of this General Junta, from which, if it be authentic, it is impossible not to forbode great evil. I mean that, whereby they attempt to put a stop to what they call "*the licentiousness of the press*." If the press assault only Buonaparte and his friends, it is evident that it cannot be too unshackled. Why attempt to check it, unless it be feared, that it will produce what is thought to be mischief, in Spain? And if, so soon, the Junta itself be afraid of the press, the reader will easily suppose, that much of a change is not in contemplation, a fact which, the moment it is discovered by the people, will admonish them not to be very lavish of their blood. I must confess, that this little circumstance, this decree, for which the Junta will be, I dare say, greatly applauded by many, has, in my mind, excited very serious fears for the Spanish cause; because, if authentic, it argues a *distrust of the people*, and an opinion, on the part of the Junta, that the country is to be defended by the *old ordinary means*; than which, I am convinced, the result will prove nothing in the world to be more erroneous.

As to the check, or the defeat, for such I fear it is, that General Blake has received, I think nothing at all of it. How many such defeats did the French experience, at the outset of their revolutionary war? They rose more powerful after each defeat. It is true, that there is some little difference between the *assailants* of the Spaniards and those of the revolutionary French. Yet, this I do not value, if the Spaniards have a spirit like that of the French; if they are animated by motives like those by which the French were animated. I cannot help thinking, that it was very unwise in us to send an envoy to the *king* of Spain. This was, in fact, one way of pointing out to the people of Spain the object, which we thought they should have in view, and for the effecting of which we would give our aid. I am afraid, that this tended to damp the rising spirit of the people. There are persons, I know, who, rather than see the French resisted by a *patriotic insurrection*, would see Joseph Buona-



parte in safe possession of the throne. This is a fact, which has been all along evident enough, and which was, long ago, dwelt upon by me. But, such persons must be very unwise, very short-sighted; for, in the end, all the evils, which they may apprehend from the success of a patriotic insurrection, must come, and come swifter too, through another channel.

As to *our armies*, in Spain, they really appear to be in a rather "unsatisfactory state," at present. They are, however, under experienced commanders; and, let what will be their fate, they will have done their best to assist the cause. It is impossible, that either ministers or commanders can foresee every thing: something must be left to *luck*; and, therefore, if the expedition should fail, under Generals MOORE and BAIRD, I should not, *from the bare circumstance of failure*, be disposed to blame the ministers.

In the two Morning Chronicles of Tuesday and Wednesday last, there appeared some very spirited and able articles upon the conduct of the ministers, with regard to the war in Spain and Portugal. They are well worth reading; but, I do not agree with the writer, that it was so easy a matter to know precisely what ought to be done, at the time when the expeditions were first sent out. Let the ministers have all the blame that is their due, but no more. It is the fashion, because it accords so well with *party* motives, never to blame the commanders, but always to blame the ministers. This is not only unjust in itself, but it has a very mischievous tendency, as to the conduct of those commanders, who, be that conduct what it may, are sure to meet with, at least, an indirect defence, from one party or the other. It is not so in the French service, where the commander is looked to, and nobody but the commander. There is nobody found to accuse the war-minister of not sending him to the right point, or of not supplying him with horses or provisions. The fact is, we have nothing but the parade of military service. We have no really military notions; for, if we had, we never should endure complaints against the ministry for "having exposed a general to *difficulty and danger*," the existence of which is always implied when men talk of *war*.

That *ten thousand* English troops should, at a moment like this, be, as the Morning Post states, necessary to "*curb the refractory disposition of certain classes of the Portuguese*," is, indeed, matter for serious reflection; for, in the first place, the "*refractory*" must, if this necessity do really exist, be the most powerful part of the nation; otherwise they might be "*curbed*" by the part, who are *not refractory*. Then, what is the mark of this refractoriness? Is it a disposition favourable to the French? Is it a spirit of hostility to the Prince Regent or the old government? Or is it a dislike to the English authority? One or the other of these, I think, it must be. If the latter, it is quite evident that to withdraw our troops and our authority is the only effectual way of removing the necessity of keeping troops locked up in Portugal; and, if either of the former, it would, I think, puzzle the Morning Post to assign any probable good that will arise from keeping them there. To cherish, or defend, a people *against their will*, is a most difficult as well as a most ungrateful task. It is a task, which, from the nature of things, can never be attended with success.

Is it not a strange thing, that amongst all the numerous nations, who have been subdued and plundered by the French, there has never yet appeared one, that has demonstrated any great degree of anxiety for the return of their former rulers? Some few have fought a little to keep the French

out; but, when once in, there is scarcely any *people* that have discovered any very strong wish to get them out again. Who would not have supposed, that the people of Portugal, for instance, would have been half mad with joy at their "deliverance?" Who would not have expected to see them vie with each other in eagerness to obtain a return of the ancient order of things? Who would have imagined it likely to be necessary for *us* to keep ten thousand men in the country, "to curb the refractory disposition of certain classes" of a people, just delivered from the grasp of the French, and restored to the rule of the representatives of their "beloved sovereign?" I should like to hear the sapient editor of the *Morning Post* explain this political phenomenon; for it is a matter of vast importance with all those who study the science of government.

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## SPAIN.

*Political Register, December, 1808.*

....."of rascals, who gloss over their treasons to their country by high-sounding declarations; raising one hand with energetic enthusiasm, vowing their eternal vengeance on the French tyrant; while the other is actively employed in rummaging the Public Pocket."—POOR WATCHMAKER'S LETTER.

I HAVE, for some time past, left off the title, "*Spanish Revolution*," because I perceived, that nothing worthy of the name of revolution was intended. I do not say, that the reverses, which the Spaniards have experienced, have proceeded wholly from their new Junta having discovered no disposition to suffer any change to take place in the form or system of the government, or to cause a radical reform of abuses; but, it cannot be denied, that it was, by many persons besides myself, feared, that unless the people of Spain were let completely loose; unless they were convinced, that the war was *for themselves*, and not for any *single person or single family*, they would not make much exertion against the French. The example of other nations was added to the reason of the case, in order to convince the public, that such would be the effect of obstinately adhering to a war in the name of Ferdinand VII.; but, the hirelings of the press vociferated; the London merchants and the King's ministers dined and toasted; and the fatal measure was resolved on, to make war for *the king of Spain*.

I shall be told, perhaps, that it was the choice of the people of Spain to fight for Ferdinand. In answer to this I say; that, when the Spaniards first took up arms, their declarations against France were little less vehement than their declarations against their "*late infamous government*," and against the numerous "*abuses*," that it engendered and maintained. While the people were in this mind, Spanish deputies came to England, and, soon after, at a public feast given to them, the King's minister for foreign affairs gave, in the way of toast, "*His most Catholic Majesty Ferdinand VII.*," which, as I remarked at the time, amounted, considering from whom it came, to a declaration, that, if we gave any aid to the Spanish cause, it would be upon the condition of that cause being the cause of kings in general, and of the king of Spain in particular. That this, or something very much like this, was the language of the Deputies, or whatever else they might be called, who were sent to Spain, with a

view of offering the people assistance, there can be little doubt; and, when our King came formally to appoint a representative of himself to go to Spain, that representative was appointed, not to the Spanish *nation*, or to the *Junta*; Oh, no! to nothing short of "His Most Catholic Majesty, Ferdinand the VIIth." It does, and it did at the time, appear clearly to me, as, I think, it must have appeared to the public in general, that all this amounted to a declaration, on our part, that, unless the war was a war for the king, we would have nothing to do with it; and, that we would, by no means, have any hand in aiding and abetting a democratical revolution. The reader will judge, whether our conduct and language did amount to this; that may be a question; but, if it did, there can be no question, that we were principally instrumental in making the cause a kingly instead of a popular one. The proclamations of the Junta are now styled "*Royal Proclamations.*" They breathe no longer that popular enthusiasm, which characterized the Addresses of the several separate Juntas. They talk of little but the ill-treatment and the rights of that "beloved sovereign Ferdinand VII." whom to restore to the throne appears to be the principal object of the persons in power. They declare, in one of these "*Royal Proclamations,*" that they *never will make peace with Napoleon*, until their "beloved sovereign Ferdinand be restored to the throne," than which, I think the reader will allow, nothing could, at such a crisis, be more impolitic; that is to say, supposing long-continued despotism not to have totally deprived the people of their senses; for, with what heart could they possibly go to the war, if they were never to have peace but upon conditions, which, however beaten by them, Buonaparte, unless they conquered France itself, might refuse them? The people of Spain, when they took up arms against the French, while they were engaged in expelling the French, declared against their "late infamous government;" and, was it to be supposed, that they would be urged to shed their blood by a declaration, on the part of those who now manage the affairs of the nation, that the object, the ultimate object, of their toils and dangers is to restore that government?

In the midst of all the melancholy relations that are daily reaching us from Spain; while we see Buonaparte, like the destroying angel, sweeping away armies and spreading desolation over the land, and while we are trembling for fear that the next mail may bring us the sad assurance, that the bodies of some of our own countrymen, friends, and relations, have been trampled beneath the hoofs of his horses: in the midst of these tidings, is it not enough to sting one to madness to be gravely informed, that, on the 14th of November, "his excellency DON JUAN HOOKHAM FRERE," upon being introduced to the Central Junta, delivered a speech, in which "he stated the extraordinary complacency and flattering satisfaction, which he felt in the honour granted him by the "king, his master, in appointing him his representative *near* the august "person of his most Catholic Majesty, Ferdinand VII.?" It really makes one's feet and fingers itch; it sets one all in a twitter, to read this, at a time like the present. "*Near* the august person," indeed! Why, what more could we do, were we to study for years how we should furnish food for ridicule in the French newspapers?

Of a piece with these proceedings was the proclamation to check "the licentiousness of the press," of which proclamation it is by no means difficult to guess the origin. It was so exactly according to the taste of

certain people; it was so like them; it was the very thing one would have expected from them. Keep the people down. Keep their tongues and pens in order. Don't let them talk too much. Well, according to all appearances, the Junta may now issue as many proclamations as they please against "the *licentiousness* of the press:" for, it is to be feared, that they will soon have little else to do.

My decided opinion is, that the present disasters in Spain have chiefly, if not wholly, proceeded from the change of feeling in the people, produced by the change of language in their leaders. It was always obvious, to those who reflected upon the matter, that Spain, to avoid the embraces of the Buonapartes, must be thrown into a state of revolution; *revolution* or *King Joseph* appeared to be the only choice for the nation; and, unfortunately, those who obtained the lead, resolved, *not, at any rate, to have a revolution*. They resolved not to suffer "the *licentiousness* of the press." I, for my part, shall always think of that. I know what sort of folks those are, who talk about "the *licentiousness* of the press" in this country and in America; and upon this knowledge I do, and must, form my judgment.

As to the conduct of our ministers, in their *military* arrangements, I am not disposed to find fault with it. The Morning Chronicle does, indeed, use some very powerful arguments to show, that they might have acted more for the benefit of the Spanish cause; but, the worst of it is, these arguments come after the event. It was all along quite clear, that *we* could do nothing, unless the Spaniards themselves were in great force, as to numbers at least; but, it would now seem, that the French have the superiority even in that respect. Therefore, the accounts, which we before received, about their numbers, were false, or those numbers have, *of late*, diminished, which diminution, if that be the case, must, I think, be attributed to the change, which, by the altered language of the Junta, has been produced in the minds of the people. The blame, due to the ministers, appears to me to be that of having *royalized*, if I may use the word, the Spanish cause. This is a subject well worth the serious attention of Parliament; but, as to the military part of their measures, it will be very difficult, I imagine, to make any blame *stick* to them.

I could not help observing, in the Courier newspaper of Saturday last, a letter, said to come from one of our officers in Sir David Baird's army, who after complaining of the *lukewarmness* of the Spanish people, and their backwardness to make exertions against the enemy, says, "This is a miserable people, *the French must do them good*." I really did wonder to meet with a sentiment like this last, in a ministerial newspaper. You see, how things strike even our officers. This gentleman seems to have a high opinion of the *benefits* of French fraternization. Is it any wonder, then, if great numbers of the Spaniards are of the same opinion? No, no: say what we will, it does not necessarily follow, that the French must be hated by the Spaniards, because we wish it to be so.

I do not yet give up the Spanish cause as lost, because the great dangers of the country may rouse the *people*; a truly revolutionary spirit may arise, and, in that case, the French may be defeated; but, if a king at all, there is, I think, but little doubt, that Joseph Napoleon will be that king.

## SPANISH REVOLUTION.

(Political Register, December, 1808.)

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“ This, it seems to me, is the point, upon which the fate of Spain will turn. *Uncommon, unheard-of, exertions are required; new courage, new talents, new genius, are demanded.* To call these forth, powerful motives must make their way, at once, to the hearts of even the lowest orders of the people. A choice of persons, to whom the people are to be slaves, appears to me to be no motive at all. Hence, I conclude, that, if the leaders in Spain persevere in making war for the restoration of their king, they will be defeated, and that Joseph Napoleon, though the son of a green-grocer, will stand at the head of their new family of sovereigns. God forbid that such should be the result; but, if the struggle be made for no better purpose, the failure of the Spaniards will be a subject of regret with those only, whose fears of the conqueror have deprived them of the power of reflection.”—POLITICAL REGISTER, Oct. 8, 1808.

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YES, for a revolution it will be, in spite of all the efforts of the Central Junta and of John Hookham Frere.

Upon this subject there has been published in the Courier newspaper, of a few days ago, a long letter signed X. Y., containing accusations against Mr. Waithman, the Edinburgh Reviewers, and myself. The two former need no defence, seeing that the writer has inserted a passage from Mr. Waithman's speech, and also from the Review, which passages will do great good, and will be remembered to advantage when the accusation against the authors are forgotten.

As to myself, I notice this writer because his letter opens the way for an exposure of those, by whom in all probability he is paid, and affords me an opportunity of placing in a new light many things, which cannot be too strongly imprinted upon the public mind.

The accusation against me is this: That though I might like well enough to see the Spaniards in a state of revolution, I could not wish them success, when I considered that they were opposing Buonaparte, who had so often humbled the English government, and all the friends of the English constitution; that it went against me to applaud those who were hostile to one, who had so often gratified the feelings of the opponents of the English ministers, and especially, as the Spaniards were fighting for their lawful sovereign, and not for a rights-of-man government; that, accordingly, I set to work, on the 24th of June last past, to alarm weak persons in this country, lest England should associate herself with a new race of Robespierreans; that, thus, at a moment, when all ranks and all parties were enthusiastic in the Spanish cause, when the few, who, from party feeling, were less warm than the multitude, dared not even murmur dissent, “ that good patriot Mr. Cobbett, truly instigated by the devil, stepped forth, with a hellish spirit, to throw the apple of discord amongst us;” and, that, if this writer *could suppose it true*, as he is *firmly persuaded it is utterly false*, that any person in this country, from the king to the cobbler, dreaded the success of the Spanish patriots as tending to excite a spirit of revolution in this country, he should set down the shame of that delusion to the Patriot William Cob-

bett, who was the first to engender a factious feeling on a cause, respecting which this whole nation was unanimous; a cause, on the success of which depended the dearest interests, not only of England, but of the world.

Now, supposing, for argument's sake, all this to be true. Supposing, that, with the devil at my back, I did use, on the 25th of June last, and have continued ever since to use my utmost endeavours to persuade the people of England, that, to carry on war for Ferdinand was the way to fail, and that, by a different way of proceeding, something would be brought about that I wished to see brought about. Supposing this, and all the rest of it. What *harm* have I done? My advice was not followed. The ministry, and all those whom, upon such occasions, they call forth to address the King, and praise them, have set their faces against my wicked counsel. They have made war for Ferdinand; they are still at it; and, as they will have all the benefits of such a line of policy; as the cause will not have been injured by me and the devil, why set up a whining complaint against us? Had we, indeed, succeeded in persuading the ministry, or any part of this besotted nation, to follow our hellish advice, and had the cause then failed, there would have been some ground of complaint against us; but, the wise and godly were upon their guard against us; they have made, and are making, war for Ferdinand. "Great luck" to them, again I say; but, if they fail, let them not throw the blame upon the devil and me.

I feel little disposition to justify myself against the false charges of this assailant; for, any one, who can believe me to have a friendly feeling towards Buonaparte, and that I mourned at the thought of seeing him defeated; any such person is beneath my notice, and must be too foolish and insignificant a creature to have any weight in society, more than a mouse.

But, there is one passage of this charge that I cannot refrain from noticing in a manner somewhat more particular; and that is, the passage, wherein this writer speaks of the "English constitution," which he, according to the invariable custom of the hirelings, identifies with the English ministry, and which constitution it is my wish, and my constant endeavour, to assist in restoring and preserving. But, I must be excused, if I differ from this writer as to *who* are the great enemies of that constitution; he will, I hope, have the goodness to excuse me, if I do not clearly perceive any harm that Buonaparte has done to it, while I can see, that much harm has been done to it, and is now doing to it, by the corruptors, the corrupted, the speculators and plunderers, in England, Ireland, and Scotland. These appear to me to be the best friends that Buonaparte has in this kingdom; and, of these I am a bitter, and would fain be, a mortal enemy. It is to persons of this description that Buonaparte owes all his conquests; and it is from them, that we every where hear charges of disloyalty preferred against those, who complain of their infamous robberies and oppression. Year after year the work of conquest goes on. Every Christmas sees a kingdom or two fall beneath the conqueror. Still the hireling crew change not their tone. Still they can discover no fault in the old system of opposition to him. Still they cling to the rotten stump that is crumbling away before him. Still they continue to excuse all those, who recommend that, out of which alone could spring the means of effectual resistance of his terrible power, and still more terrible policy. And, still the cowed-down, the con-

foolish, the besotted nation, lends but too favourable an ear to their crafty misrepresentations.

Nothing can better discover the character of this writer, than a complaint, which he makes against the Edinburgh Reviewers, on account of what he calls "their infamous attack upon Cevallos." I am obliged to the Courier for the extracts from this Review, my copy of the number which contains it not having yet reached me. I do not, therefore, know what these celebrated Reviewers have said of Cevallos; but, I am not a little pleased to find, that men, of such talents as they are, should have taken up an exposition of him, and his barefacedly lying publication. No matter with the speculators, however. Cevallos is now for the scheme of things that suits them; and, therefore, though he served the three kings successively; though he deserted each of them, the moment they were deserted by power; though he was, by Buonaparte, thought worthy of the highest confidence; and though he actually took a post under, and went to Madrid with King Joseph: notwithstanding all this, he is, amongst the speculators, a most respectable person; every word he says is to be believed; we are to look upon him, and speak of him, as a pattern of loyalty and fidelity; and, if we dare to think or act otherwise, we are to be set down as men "truly instigated by the devil," and, which is worse, as men "who do not sincerely hate Buonaparte."

Verily, this *loyalty* of Cevallos is a pretty good specimen. Under similar circumstances, in other kingdoms, there would be a great plenty of Cevalloses. It has always been so; and, I dare say, that the writer of the letter, upon which I am now commenting, would, as far as his station and capacity would allow, be a faithful imitator of that *legal* gentleman, though he would now assist to imprison or to hang any man, who should call for a reform of abuses, and whom, for that reason alone, he would accuse of *disloyal* intentions.

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## PORTUGAL.

(Political Register, December, 1808.)

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From a proclamation, which will be found in another part of this Number, it appears, that our troops, in Portugal, have become an object of *dislike*, at least, if not of *hostility*, with the people of that country. The proclamation fairly warrants this inference; for, otherwise, why call upon the people to restrain their *fury*, and assure them, that the English are *not become French*.\*

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\* This official curiosity runs as follows:—*Proclamation by the Intendant-General of Police of the Court of Justice District at Oporto.*—Portuguese! Where does your fury transport you? Do you suppose that the English are become French? No, my dear countrymen, the English are not come here in the character of conquerors as the Frenchmen did; they come to free us from the slavery that oppressed us. If we deny this truth, we must be reproached as an ungrateful people. The English did not enter Portugal from any motives of ambition; the motives are more generous, wise, and politic; they know very well, that views of aggrandizement always tend to destroy the equilibrium that forms the fundamental law of nations. What Great Britain aims at, is only the restitution of all

The INTENDANT, whose name is to the proclamation, assures the people, that the English are *not* come in the character of conquerors; but to free the Portuguese from slavery; and, then, he enters into some general reasoning, in order to show, that what he states must be true.

Now, though I am not at all disposed to controvert the statements, and still less the reasonings, of the Intendant, I must be allowed to ask, how it came to pass, that any such assurances were thought necessary? How the Portuguese, or any considerable part of them, came to *suppose*, or to appear to suppose, or act as if they supposed, that the English were come as conquerors? Or, how they came to *need any assurances*, that the English came to free them from slavery? I should, I must confess, like to have an answer to these questions; because, to me, it appears to be of vast moment to ascertain the causes, which led the people to be in a state of uncertainty as to these very material points. There were persons in England, who, the moment they saw them, apprehended serious mischiefs from our "ardent-minded" proclamations in Portugal, and amongst these persons were the editors of the two principal English daily prints, the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Times*; but, there must, I think, be some cause more remote than this; for, those proclamations would hardly, one would suppose, have been issued, unless something like discontent had already made its appearance. At any rate, we appear to be in a difficulty; for, if the proclamations, just referred to, were not necessary, then, there is room to suppose, that they have led to the present state of discontent; and, if necessary, that necessity, considering the tenor of them, is a proof, that we were not at any time, or, at least, after the Convention, very welcome guests in Portugal.

It is, I fear, in Portugal, as we have seen it everywhere else, the fact, that the great mass of the people feel little concern about the ejecting of the French, to whose wild and heroic sway they submit with more patience than to the sway of their old governments, which sway I need not describe.

Need we ask what is the cause of this? Need we ask, why Napoleon meets with little or no resistance; and that, when once he has got possession of a country, the people, notwithstanding all the pillaging that we hear of, make no efforts to get rid of him, and, if delivered by a third power, appear to feel very little pleasure at the event? Courtiers affect

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countries to their lawful sovereigns. Ah, incomparable George! How great will be thy glory in future times! Where is the sovereign in Europe that does not, at present, owe his crown to thee? Thy name shall for ever shine in the Portuguese annals. Excuse, then, O mighty King! the indiscreet zeal of a people who love their sovereign, and whose feelings are partly analogous to thy views. Remain quiet, then, O ye inhabitants of the most faithful and loyal city in Portugal! It is to you, ye inhabitants of Porto, that I speak, for those honourable epithets are indisputably your right. Consider that the glorious cause which you have undertaken, can only be obstructed and retarded by vain and tumultuous mobs. This is what the common enemy wishes for; and a civil war would only retard their total destruction. Let us then unite ourselves to our faithful allies, the English and the Spaniards, in order to overthrow that hellish monster. The union of these three nations will scorn all Frenchmen's threats, their intrigues and perfidy. We shall then have the glory of being instrumental in the speedy overthrow of the tyrant, in bringing about a general peace, and in restoring our august prince to his lawful throne. This is the just cause that calls aloud for your vengeance, and in which you ought to display all your courage, your love, and your fidelity. Long live Portugal! Long live Great Britain! Long live Spain!—J. F. R. G.—Ed.



to be surprised and indignant at this. "Curse on the base rabble, not draw a single trigger against the Corsican!" Not so passionate, Gentlemen. Base rabble will do nothing that is high-minded, so long as they are base rabble. Buonaparte, believe me, has no secret allurements. He does not, like POINS, carry love-powder about him; or, if he does, why do not you order your famous Apothecary-General to send out a large packet with each of your generals? You scorn, I suppose, the use of such means? You prefer making love after the manner of the Muscovites? No: there is no witchcraft in the matter. Napoleon has no trouble but to enter the several countries he means to conquer. The rest is done ready to his hands.

Here I shall insert a short paragraph from the *Morning Chronicle*, and another from the *Courier*, the latter being an answer to the former, and this latter requiring some observations from me, containing, as it does, some of those wicked opinions, which have already produced so much mischief, and which, I fear, will finally lead to something bordering upon total ruin.

"This state of things suggests the most serious reflection. If we have not only to deliver the subjugated nations from the yoke of France, but afterwards to employ our army in forcing them to submit to a government of our establishment, which they detest equally with French domination, no wonder that the work of deliverance advances but slowly. So the secret comes out at last, why, to the astonishment of every one, our army loitered so long in Portugal, after having apparently achieved the purpose for which it was sent; and the *Morning Post* seems for once to have let out the truth. It was because an army of 35,000 men were necessary, to borrow the words of the Ministerial Journal, to constrain the refractory classes of the Portuguese, that that lamentable delay took place, which has brought every thing to jeopardy, perhaps to ruin. And it is not, it seems, in the cause of the people of Portugal—it is not in the cause of liberty and independence, nor for our own security, nor even for the diminution of Buonaparte's power, that the people of England have expended their blood and treasure. We have been spending our money and shedding our blood for a Regency—for a Regency which the Portuguese detest, and which they detest us for supporting!"

Thus far the *Morning Chronicle*, who adds, that this is, for us, "a miserable policy; a vile occupation." In such a light, the thing must, one would think, appear to every unprejudiced mind.

Now let us hear what the *Courier* has to say, preparing ourselves for the disgusting cant about party and opposition, to motives of which every thing unpleasant is attempted to be imputed.

"It will perhaps puzzle most of our readers to discover in the above events cause for censure against this country.

"But what is too difficult for Opposition ingenuity? They consider these disturbances as having been produced by the establishment of a Regency, which we are said to have forced upon them. The Regency was appointed by the Prince Regent himself.

"As soon as Portugal was released from the French yoke, we, who came to assist the Portuguese against the French, who had put down the ancient and legitimate Government, did that which, as the friend and ally of the Prince Regent, it was our duty to do; we recognised the authority which the Prince had appointed to govern the country in his absence. What would the Opposition have had us do? Would they have had us tell the people to throw off their allegiance, put themselves in a state of revolution, and new cast and model the whole form of government? They might then have exclaimed indeed with some justice, 'Oh miserable policy! most vile occupation!'

"But we are told, that were the whole British army to be sent, it would be insufficient to defend Portugal till we had first gained over the people to our side—and therefore it is meant to be recommended, we suppose, that we

"should abandon Portugal altogether—for as to gaining over the people, if delivering them from the French does not produce that effect, nothing that we can do besides is calculated to produce it—though the Opposition seem to think that if we were to take part against the Regency, that is against the authority of the legitimate Sovereign, we should attach the people amazingly to us.

"These revolutionary counsels our Government, we do not think, will be much inclined to follow.

"But the people of Portugal are said either to dislike or to be indifferent about their government.

"It may be so, and we shall not inquire at present whether they have or have not reason—but we should have thought, that any dislike or indifference they may feel would have disappeared, nay, would have been converted into love and attachment, when the question was, whether they should submit to such a Government, or to the Government of the French? Why have Prussia, Naples, and Italy been conquered? we are asked; and we are answered that it was because the people either felt dislike or indifference about their governments! And what has been their reward? That they have been placed under a government compared to which their own was perfect happiness and freedom. So far then from Prussia, Italy, and Naples furnishing examples which the Portuguese might be desirous of following, we should have thought they would have afforded incitements to them to cling to ANY government, rather than, by being indifferent to it, suffer their country to fall under the yoke of France.

"Since writing the above, we are informed that the affairs to which the proclamation of the intendant general of police refers, was by no means a very serious affair, and was soon put an end to.

"It was occasioned by some regulation adopted respecting the market."

What a falsehood is here, as winder-up! A trifling regulation about the market! Could that have called for such a proclamation as the one, which has given rise to this discussion? Common sense forbids us to believe it; and the man who makes the assertion must look upon his readers as downright fools. Discontents on account of a regulation about the market call for a proclamation, assuring the people, that the English are not come as conquerors, and that they are come to free the people from slavery! Detestable falsehood! But, such are the means, by which this nation has long been deluded from one stage of danger to another. What connection was there, or could there be, between the political views of the King of England and a regulation about the market at Oporto? Shameful falsehood! The Intendant issues a proclamation to stay the "fury" of the people, to whom he speaks about the political views of the King of England, whom he describes as too wise to think of enslaving them. And, it is a proclamation like this, that the shameless hireling holds up to us as the consequence of disturbances arising out of a regulation about the market at Oporto! It is seldom that I have met with any thing so impudent as this.

This writer tells us, that we recognised the government of the Prince Regent; that we re-established that government; and asks, what the Morning Chronicle would have had us do. Why, I know what I would have done. I would have ascertained what sort of thing, or state of things, the people were willing to fight for; and, if I found it inconsistent with my engagements, or promises, to give them that, I would instantly have withdrawn my troops, being, as, I think, every man, in his senses, must be, convinced, that, seeing the geographical situation of Portugal, it is impossible to defend the country against the French, unless these are beaten by the Spaniards, without the hearty co-operation of the people of Portugal.

This writer, in answer to an opinion, similar to the one just expressed, asks, if it be meant to recommend the abandonment of Portugal alto-

gether? for, says he, "as to gaining over the people, if delivering them from the French does not produce that effect, nothing that we can do besides is calculated to produce that effect." Well; but, we *have* so delivered them, and that effect *has not* been produced. Will you, then, persevere in defending Portugal without the aid, and even against the will, of the people? Will you attempt to keep out Buonaparte with one hand, and to keep down the people of Portugal with the other? The minister who should so apply the lives of an English army, would deserve to be hanged.

This writer next tells us, "that *he* should have thought, that any dislike or indifference the Portuguese might have felt respecting their former government, would have disappeared, nay, been converted into *love and attachment*, when the question was, whether they should submit to such a government, or the government of the French." Aye, *he* might think so; and many others might think so, and so they may think with respect to the people of other countries, where the French have not yet been. But, what says *experience*? Alas! that which has, heretofore, made fools wise, has now, as far as relates to governments, lost its power of inculcation! Experience has proved, has proved in numerous instances, that the sway of France has no such terrific power; and that, where the people dislike, or are indifferent about their old government, they are not to be made to love it by a dread of its being succeeded by the government of France. The Morning Chronicle did not hold up the conduct of the people of Prussia, Hanover, and Italy as an *example to those of Portugal*; but, as *examples*, whereby we might judge of how the people of Portugal were, under similar circumstances, likely to act; but, indeed, we wanted no other example than that, with which we were furnished by Portugal herself.

We need not inquire into the truth of the assertion, that "compared with the French government, established in Hanover, Italy, and Naples, their own was perfect happiness and freedom;" because, whatever may be the fact, we know that the people have made no exertions in behalf of their own government against the French. "*We* should have thought," says this writer, "that the fate of Hanover, Italy, and Naples would have afforded incitements to the people of Portugal to cling to ANY government, rather than suffer their country to fall under the yoke of France."—Aye, *this*; this; this is the pernicious; this is the execrable opinion, that has so long and so widely and so fatally prevailed. Oh! then you think, do you, that, as long as there can be kept up, in any country, a dread of the French "*yoke*," the people may be harassed and insulted, that their very entrails may be squeezed out, without danger to their rulers? This is your opinion, is it? Others have proceeded upon it, and they are now smarting under the richly deserved consequences. Others have said: "No; there is no occasion for a reform of abuses; a dread of the French will do; we can go on in the old way; a dread of the French is your only true specific for silencing all complaints, for keeping all quiet." Others have thus thought, and they have been most justly punished. This has been the doctrine, which has bent the continent beneath the feet of Buonaparte; and this doctrine, persevered in, will yet lead him to conquests, of which the editor of the Courier does not appear to have dreamt.

## SPANISH REVOLUTION.—Continued.

(Political Register, January, 1809.)

ONE of the newspapers has observed, that the intelligence from Spain is of a "mixed nature; a good deal *chequered*." I must confess, that I can, after a pretty attentive perusal of all the public, and of some private, intelligence, perceive none of this chequer-work. It all appears to me very plain; and much too plain to give me any portion of that "*sincere satisfaction*," which an editor of last evening appears to have felt, or, that he has, at least, done his best to make his readers feel.

In ROMANA's powers and proclamation I see much of dread and of despair, but not a glimpse of confidence or of hope; and, I see still less of either in the "*oath*" not to surrender Cadiz and the fleet. I remember the *oath of Potsdam*, and, remembering it, I must beg to be excused, if I entertain a strong suspicion of the efficacy of oaths as opposed to the arms of Buonaparte.

The *stories*, indeed, from Spain are of a "mixed nature;" for those which come from Corunna widely differ from those which come from other ports not in the hands of the enemy. But, why should we *deceive ourselves*? This is the foolishness of all things; and I am utterly astonished, that such prints as the *Times* and the *Morning Chronicle*, for instance, should publish as intelligence, unaccompanied with suitable comment, statements of facts, which their editors must know to be false, the effect of which must be to aggravate the public disappointment.

The news from Corunna talks of a *desperate defence of Madrid*, and gives us the detail, with all the coolness imaginable, just about a week after we have received the account of Madrid's having surrendered at discretion.

"Oh!" says the *loyal man*, "what, you believe the Corsican's bulletins, do you?" Yes. I do believe them; and you shall have my reason for it, in a few words. I have read these bulletins during three wars; not three campaigns; but three distinct wars, each of them ending in the conquest of kingdoms, or principalities; and, though, as to little matters of detail, they have sometimes been incorrect, or false, if you like that word better, they have uniformly proved, *substantially true*, to the woful experience of those, who, as well as ourselves, have affected to treat them as lies. *Loyalty*, as was observed a week or two ago; your true modern loyalty, consists, in part, of a little fingering in the public purse; but another essential ingredient of it is, a total disbelief in any of the victories of Buonaparte, till, like a thunder-clap, they break over our heads, after having been kept off as long as possible by means, such as those used by Messrs. Ward and Huskisson previous to that terrific clap, the battle of Austerlitz.

I am satisfied that we are the most credulous nation, particularly the Cockney part of us, of any at this day existing in the world. The Spanish peasants, it is true, believe that the Dolls, stuck up in their village chapels, work miracles in the cure of toothache, rheumatism, incontinence, sterility, and other cases; but, then, those Dolls are made in Holland;

whereas we swallow the barefaced lies, which are fabricated here at home, and fabricated, too, in so slovenly a manner as not to cover any part of the hook. Fish in the river St. John are so eager for the bait, that, after the first time, they will bite at, and swallow, the naked wire; but, we, still more eager, want no bait at all. We take in, with great self-complacency, lie after lie during the whole of a campaign; and when, at last, by a long series of defeats and disgraces, Buonaparte has conquered another kingdom, we talk about the result with just as little surprise as if it had come gradually upon us through the channel of truth. Now, what sense is there in this? A great deal of *modern loyalty* there, doubtless, is; but, what *sense* is there in it?

To give any opinion as to what will be the result of the engagement or engagements towards which, apparently, our army in Spain, was, when the last intelligence came away, fast approaching, would be foolish; because, in fact, we *know* just nothing at all about either the relative strength, or relative position of the hostile armies. All that I can decidedly express upon the subject is a wish, and that wish is, that whenever and wherever and against whomsoever Englishmen fight they may be victorious; but, I must confess, that this wish is accompanied, in the present instance, with most serious apprehensions. The movements of our troops have hitherto, if our intelligence be correct, been quite unaccountable; and, as to Sir David Baird's Proclamation of the 1st of December, I trust it will prove to be a forgery; for, if true, it will require more than a whole life of glory to wipe it away. There are, perhaps, few persons who have stronger reasons than I have to be anxious about the safe return of the individuals composing that part of our army; but, much rather than hear of their sneaking out of Spain without daring to look the French in the face, I would hear of their being, to the last man, cut to pieces upon the plain. "No tears are so sweet as those which bedew the unburied head of the soldier;" and no stain so foul as that of military cowardice. To draw off, leaving the Spanish peasants, whom we had encouraged to take up arms; to skulk away at the approach of the French, still encouraging those poor creatures to expose themselves to the sabres of which we were afraid, and to do this, too, under a false pretence! Oh, God! it would have been an act of infamy, the very thought of bearing a share of which would turn one wild. I hope, nay, I trust I may say, that I am sure, that there is not one single native of this kingdom, who does not contemplate such an act with inexpressible horror. Every other evil, when compared with this, is a blessing. Therefore, let what will happen else, slaughter, capture, total destruction; any thing is consoling in exchange for this. The country may lose the flower of its army, and individuals amongst us may lose brothers and sons and fathers and friends; but, neither the dead nor the living will be stained with that dishonour, which, to a mind rightly constructed, would have rendered life insupportable. The very worst of all our acts, during the last war, was the abandonment of the French Emigrants at Guadaloupe. I trust we shall never see the like repeated. I know not their philosophy at the Horse Guards, or at the Military College; but, I know that it ought to teach, that one part of the duty, which a soldier owes his country, is, *to die*, and that, too, at any time when his death will be more serviceable than his life, which is always the case when the choice lies between death and the chance of dishonour. If a man cannot sit down, by the side of his wife surrounded with his children, and coolly screw his mind up to this

pitch, his money, intended for the purchase of commissions, he would do well to apply to the purchase of "consols," or of sugar and plumbs, to be sold by retail.

I hope, there will come some circumstance to explain; satisfactorily to explain, the cause of Sir David Baird's Proclamation, if it should prove to be authentic; but, I must confess, that it is with extreme reluctance, that I admit even the possibility of its being genuine.

If our army should gain a battle, though against only a comparative small part of the French force, it may have a wonderful effect upon the Spaniards, and may lead to important results; but, unless the people be completely *let loose*; unless the war assume a revolutionary turn, still, in my opinion, Buonaparte will prevail. It appears to me to be morally impossible, that he should be beaten by any other means. The only article of really cheering news that I can collect out of all that I have lately read about the operations in Spain, is contained in one of Buonaparte's bulletins. It is that in which he says, that all the *respectable*, or *genteel*, people are for him, and none but the *rabble* against him. This language of his being exactly like that of our speculators and plunderers, there is some ground to hope, that he has all these on his side, in Spain, and, of course, that the people are against him. The Morning Chronicle has, with much acuteness, noticed this exhilarating circumstance, and has observed, that, if the fact be so, it is a little awkward for the doctrine of those amongst us, who are so eager to contend, that the people, or rabble, as they call them, are every where the allies of Buonaparte. But, my great fear is, that the speculators are against him, and that the "rabble" are for him.

Some persons, anticipating a failure in Spain, are making for themselves a consolation in the new possessions and sovereignty, that we shall, in that case, have in the Spanish colonies, including, of course, all the gold and silver mines. I beseech them to dismiss this busy devil from their thoughts; for, in the first place, we should not get those possessions and that sovereignty without long and bloody wars; and, in the next place, they would, if we had them, be an addition to the many burdensome colonies we already have. They would, in short, be *another East-Indies*, and that is, in one compound word, to express all manner of national corruptions, calamities, and curses.

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#### SPANISH REVOLUTION.—Continued.

(*Political Register*, January, 1809.)

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WITH respect to Spain, the interesting question now appears to be, not what will be the conduct of the people of that country; not what will be the result of the war; not whether Joseph or Ferdinand will be king; not whether despotism, in one shape or the other, will be re-established, or long-lost freedom be restored. Neither of these is *now* the interesting question, with regard to Spain. The interesting questions are: 1st, What is the fate, that will probably attend our army in that country? and, 2nd, Whether our ministers, and especially the War-

Secretary, be not to blame for the injury and the deep dishonour, arising from a retreat, or rather a flight, before the enemy, without having stricken a single blow, without having so much as drawn a trigger, offensively, against the armies of Napoleon?

With respect to the first question, much need not be said, it being next to impossible, that a knowledge of the event should not, in a few days, have rendered all discussion unnecessary. I shall, therefore, as far as relates to this, confine myself to a few remarks upon the delusion which has been practised, and is still practising upon this credulous nation. We have been led on, by lie after lie, till we are upon the eve of having the truth *forced* upon us. All that Napoleon said, in his bulletins, was "false;" all were falsehoods that came through that channel; while, on the other hand, we were desired to believe, that our army, stated at 45 thousand strong, were upon the point of driving the French out of the Peninsula. The strength of the Spanish armies was carried to 150 thousand. An affected laugh was set up at the threats of Buonaparte. In short, just the reverse of the truth has, from first to last, been promulgated amongst us; so that, had it not been for the bulletins of Napoleon, we should, up to the hour when Sir John Moore's dispatches, or, rather, a few parts of those dispatches, were published, have been in the confident hope of a successful issue to the campaign. Now, indeed, the truth is pretty well known, in spite of the garbling of the General's dispatches. There is nobody, who, at best, expects any thing better than the escape of our *men*, with the loss of stores, ammunition, wagons, cannon, and horses; and I, for my part, shall think that we are very lucky, if we avoid a capitulation, far, very far less favourable to us, than the Convention of Cintra was to the French; a capitulation, negotiated, perhaps, by that very Junor, who, together with his army, ought now to have been prisoners in England. It is difficult to say, whether our commander, in Spain, has had it in his power to prevent this danger, and this probable result; but, I must express my opinion, that his marches and counter-marches do appear to me quite unaccountable. I do think, nay I am nearly sure, that, if a man like my Lord Cochrane; nay, if Lord Cochrane himself, though not a military officer, had had under his command an army of 28 thousand men, in Spain, he would have done *something* with them; or, at any rate, that he would not have remained, *doing nothing*, till he was half surrounded by a force, before whom he knew he must flee. "A *diversion*," indeed! What diversion has Sir John Moore made, in favour of the Spaniards? Where are we to look for the evidences of that diversion? Our army, without marching to meet the enemy, sees him come into Spain, and take the capital. It then remains inactive, or, at best, marches about without attacking the enemy; and, having waited in this situation, till the enemy has half-surrounded it, runs away. This is not the sort of diversion that Lord Cochrane has been making. "Nothing," says Lord Collingwood, "can exceed the activity and zeal, with which his Lordship pursues the enemy. The success which attends his enterprises clearly indicates with what skill and ability they are conducted; besides keeping the coast in constant alarm, causing a total suspension of the trade, and harassing a body of troops employed in opposing him, he has, probably, prevented those troops, which were intended for Figueras, from advancing into Spain, by giving them employment in the defence of their own coasts." Here we have evidences of a *real* diversion. Such is the

effect of command, when in the hands of a man of skill and indefatigable attention to his business, and, besides, of undaunted bravery. One frigate; only one frigate and about 300 men, under the command of such a person, is worth an army, aye, and a fleet into the bargain, committed to the hands of loungers, milk-sops, or, what is full as bad, boozing companions. I do not know, that Sir John Moore answers to either of these descriptions; but, it does appear to me, that, if he had possessed any great degree of energy, he would not have been in the situation, described in his last dispatches. A commander should be equally distinguished for his *enterprise* and his *prudence*; he may possess one and not the other; but, in the conduct of Sir John Moore, I, for my part, can discover no satisfactory evidence of either. He knew that the French armies were in Spain; it is not to be believed, that he was ignorant either of their strength or their distribution; and, therefore, if he found himself too weak for attack, or resistance, he should have *retreated in time*, from doing which there was nothing to prevent him. There may be some circumstances, of which we yet are ignorant, and which, when explained, may fully justify this commander; but, with my present information, this is my view of the matter.—As to the 2nd question; whether our ministers, and especially the War-Secretary, be not to blame for the injury and the deep dishonour, arising from a retreat, or, rather, a flight, before the enemy, without having stricken a single blow, without having so much as drawn a trigger, offensively, against the armies of Napoleon? as to this question, the first thing to be noticed; the first fact to be stated, is, that our army, exclusive of the expense of transports to carry it about, costs us 23,000,000 of pounds sterling a year, money enough to maintain more than *half a million* of men, allowing for each man *double* what he receives in subsistence. The next fact is, that the regular infantry, at home, in the month of July last, amounted to not less than *a hundred thousand*, and the regular cavalry to not less than *twenty-five thousand* men. Now, then, let us bear in mind, that it was early in July, that the King, in his speech to the parliament, promised us that he would give assistance to the Spaniards, having before solemnly made the same promise to the Deputies from Spain; that, at this time, or soon after, Napoleon's decree, relating to the new constitution of Spain, was received in England; that, in the middle of the same month, Joseph Buonaparte set out on his way to Madrid; that, early in August, Joseph Buonaparte was driven from Madrid; that, it was not till after this, that Buonaparte, who was then at Paris, set out to the North of Europe; and that, it was not until about *the 1st of November*, that any part of the French army entered Spain, except that part, which had been either beaten or put to flight, or besieged, by the Spaniards, and that the whole of the coast of Spain and Portugal was at our absolute command.

Along with the intelligence, that Joseph had been driven from Madrid, we received the intelligence, that Napoleon had taken measures for drawing an immense army from Germany, and other parts, in order to send it to Spain; so that, so early as *the second week in August*, we had to prepare for meeting the French in Spain. I have before shown, that we had the means of meeting them; and, now, every man in England has a right to ask, to demand, to insist upon knowing, why those means were not duly and effectually employed; why this immense army has been raised, and is kept up, if, upon this occasion, it was not proper to make



use of it; *what this army is for*, if not for the purpose of meeting, and fighting with, that enemy, who seems to have sworn our destruction.

It is now stated, as correct, that we have about 28 thousand men in Spain; 25 thousand foot and 3 thousand horse. Where are the other 70 or 80 thousand foot and 22 thousand horse? *Why* are they not in Spain too? An army of about 60 thousand men, one-fifth horse, is as great as is necessary for almost any enterprise; it is as great as can be well brought into one engagement in any part of the world. But, it appears to me, that there was nothing that ought to have prevented the ministers from having an army of 70 thousand foot and 15 thousand horse at, and in the neighbourhood of Madrid, early in the month of October last, weeks before the French army set foot in Spain. Having collected a great force at the capital of the kingdom; having made all due preparations as to supplies of every kind; having put arms into the hands of the Spaniards, and amply furnished them with necessaries for the field, we should, supposing the *people* to have been on our side, have been ready to meet the French, not only with a fair chance, but with almost a certainty of victory; if, indeed, they had dared to approach, which, it is more than probable, would not have been the case.

But, "it was thought unwise to leave a French army in our rear in *Portugal*." Well, even supposing it to have been wise to clear Portugal first; Portugal was actually cleared early in September; and, at most, it required but thirty thousand men to do that. Nay, *after* the Convention of Cintra; after all the blundering and confusion arising from the ever-famous trio of commanders; even after all that, there was plenty of time to send a complete army into Spain, to face Buonaparte on his way to Madrid, without reckoning upon the assistance of a single Spanish soldier. But, (as was foreboded, "the precious hours were wasted in suspicions and delays;" in hesitations and bickerings, in the conflicts of hostile interests and hostile caprices.

It will be pretended, perhaps, that the JUNTAS in Spain, did not, at first, wish for our assistance; that they kept aloof, until they saw Napoleon approaching. But, the answer to this is, that an English ministry having the interest and the honour of their country at heart, would have well weighed the question, whether it was not then *too late* to do any thing effectual; whether it was not, then, too late to send an army capable of meeting that of the French; and, if they found that to be the case, they would have sent *no troops at all*. The fact is, however, that, when the application was made, it was *not* too late; for, it was not too late even when our army was ordered to march from Portugal into Spain, which orders must have gone from Whitehall early in the month of September, full two months before the French re-entered the Spanish dominions; so that, there is not the smallest excuse as to want of time.

But, "our ministers were deceived as to the amount of the Spanish force, and the disposition of the Spanish people." This has not, that I have heard of, been, as yet, openly asserted; and whenever it is asserted, there ought to be no dispute about the fact: but, we shall have a right, a full and complete right, to ask, *how they came to be deceived* with respect to either of these most important points. So early as the month of July the Spaniards had Deputies here, and we had Deputies or Agents, in Spain, whose *expenses* will not fail to make a respectable figure in the next account of the distribution of the public money. Since about the middle of October, still weeks before the arrival of the French army in

Spain, and still time enough for us to send out troops, we have had Mr. JOHN HOOKHAM FRERE in Spain. Could not *he* send correct information, respecting the force of the Spaniards and the disposition of the people of Spain? Besides, in answer to all pretences and excuses of this sort, we have a right to say to the ministers, "You charge us, and you make us " pay, from 50 to 100 thousand pounds a year, for *secret services* abroad, " and as much for secret services *at home*; and, though we have not " had the soul to ask you what you do with either, and for *what purposes*, " what purposes indeed, you *can* want the latter; yet, surely, you cannot " with the charge of 50 or 100 thousand a year in your hand, for secret " services *abroad*, have the impudence to plead want of correct informa- " tion, as to the strength of the Spanish troops and the disposition of the " people of Spain?"

There is, and there can be, no maintainable justification for the measures, or the inactivity, which have led to the known dreadful situation of our army. We know, that our government had in its hands, two months before Napoleon set foot in Spain, an army quite sufficient to meet him there; to meet him in a country, whence, by the people of that country, his brother, and his troops had been driven in disgrace; we know, that they had the means of sending this our army to Spain, and even to the passes of the Pyrenees, long before he, with his army, could *possibly* arrive at that point; and, we know, that they have so managed matters, that there is only about 28 thousand English troops in Spain, to make head against a French army of, at the very least, 100 thousand men. These facts are undeniable. If we are told of *difficulties* in the transporting of so large an army, we ask, what you do, then, with the 23 millions of pounds sterling a year? What is the *use* of this immense army, if you cannot, at two months' notice, send it to a spot at the distance of ten days' sail? For *what reason*; from *what motive*, do you keep this army on foot, and make us pay so dearly for it? For what reason do you strip the country of its most able labourers, leaving to cultivate the land few but the aged, the children, the halt and the lame? For *what reason*; tell us for what reason you do this, if you are unable to bring to the striking place men sufficient to cope with the enemy? Is it "to defend this country?" Why, those against whom you would defend it, are now in Spain. Besides, has not the pretence for keeping on foot this terribly large army, always been, that you wanted a *disposable* force; a force to send abroad; and, if you now plead difficulties in sending that force abroad, what becomes of this pretence?

As to the ground that may be taken by a set of persons wrangling for place, it is a matter of indifference to me, and to every man who wishes well to his country. The ground that we have to take, the ground that the nation has to take, is described in a very few words: either the ministers were duly informed of the internal state of Spain, or they were not. If they were not, they have, in that way, shown their want of zeal or of capacity for great affairs; and, if they were, they have knowingly sent an army of 28 thousand men, to sneak away at the approach of the enemy, to be captured, or to be cut to pieces; to be placed in a situation leaving it no choice but that of *death* or *dishonour*.

To the individuals, and to the army, as a body, *we*, indeed, cannot well attach any dishonour; but, that is not the point. The point is, what the *world* will say of the conduct of this nation, during this struggle respecting Spain. That is the point; and, the judgment of the world must be,

that the cause in which we engaged was (if Napoleon finally succeed) lost; and that we were beaten and disgraced. And, have not the people of this kingdom; the people who pay 23 millions of pounds sterling for the support of an army, and who are yearly called upon for fresh sacrifices; have not this suffering people a right to demand a knowledge of the cause of this great injury and disgrace? What to us; what, to this nation, are all the boasts about the "flourishing and improved state of our military establishment?" What are these, to us, if the army produce no effect upon the enemy? The excellence of armies, like that of every thing else, is proved by their utility; by the good effects which they produce. There is a man, taking the name of a "PATRIOT LOYALIST," who is about to publish, "THOUGHTS ON LIBELS; and an Impartial INQUIRY into the PRESENT STATE OF THE BRITISH ARMY: which will contain Considerations on the *Difficulty of convicting* notorious "Defamatory Writers; and on the Effects which arise from *delay in making them the subjects of a Prosecution*; also, a Convincing Explanation of the flourishing and improved State of the Military Establishment of England, under the actual Commander-in-Chief; and Reflections on the *Danger with which the Constitution* is threatened by "systematic printed Attacks upon the Public and Private Characters of "Princes, and the High Officers of the Executive Government.—Inscribed (without permission) to his ROYAL HIGHNESS, FREDERICK, DUKE OF YORK AND ALBANY, and published by T. EGERTON, at the Military Library, *Whitehall*."

Why, you ass; you thick-brained sot; you stupidest of all mortals; why did you fix upon this moment, of all others, to write upon such a subject? Generals and armies, who gain victories, need no pamphlets written in their praise; and those who gain none will be praised in vain. "Libels" indeed! "Prosecutions," you empty-headed, malignant wretch! "*Difficulties of convicting!*" Oh, it is truly decent, at such a time, and under such a dedication, to address the public! Fool; convict us Buonaparte, fool! Prosecute, arraign and convict *him*. That is the man we want to see put down. Read *his* "libels;" his speeches and bulletins. Attack *him*; face *him* with your "thoughts" on libels. When you have done this, then come and tell us your thoughts, and, perhaps, we may hear you; but, at present, we think it something a little suspicious when we see the eulogist of military character appeal to the law of Libel for proofs of the truth of his assertions.

Recollect, that the SUPREME JUNTA of Spain began their labours by an edict for limiting the press. They have, at present, I presume, but little leisure for "Thoughts on Libels," and for the removing of the "difficulties of producing conviction of writers." Recollect that, beast; and keep your "thoughts" to yourself.

For my part, I wonder, that no one has yet hit upon the scheme of trying the force of the law upon Buonaparte. He is a sad libeller, and particularly of our army, besides being a most atrocious violater of property, and especially that of "princes." What think you, dolt, of an ejectionment against him for Hanover and Mecklenberg Strelitz and the Duchy of Brunswick? Is there no action, whether of trover, or of detainer, or of any other queer name that would lie against him? Do, try if you can find out some way of coming at him. Of assault and battery you would have no "*difficulty* in convicting" the fellow, and, in that way, you would come at him in the king's name, and might have a

whole rookery of silk gowns arrayed against him. All you have to do is to catch him. That indeed, may be "difficult;" but, until you can do that, you may as well hold your stupid tongue, and not pester the public with dirty pamphlets, about libels, "inscribed to Frederick, Duke of York and Albany."

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## SPANISH REVOLUTION.

(*Political Register*, January, 1809.)

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"The Right Honourable Secretary then congratulated the House upon the temper with which *the Campaign* in that House had commenced."—Report of Mr. Canning's Speech, 19th Jan. 1809.

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THE dismal news is, at last, arrived. The truth of the abused Bulletins is, at last, established to its utmost latitude. The pledge of throwing the English into the sea is, almost to the literal meaning, fulfilled. All the falsehoods of all the hired writers are, at last, completely exposed.

*My* readers, at any rate, have, from the first, been prepared for what has happened. That is now come to pass; all those truths are now apparent, which, if they had been acted upon by our ministers, would have prevented those calamities, which have now plunged the nation, the buoyed-up and cheated nation, into mourning; and, for the publishing of which truths, the hirelings of the day charged me with being "instigated by the devil."

For my own part, I, who, free from the buzz of report and from the influence of other men's opinions, had taken a calm view of the Spanish nation as it was previous to the revolution; who had followed the *known* events of that revolution with an impartial eye; and who have never suffered myself to be carried away by any statements, not well authenticated: I could never see the smallest chance of beating Napoleon in Spain, unless the *people* were let loose; unless the country were thrown into a complete state of revolution; unless all the bands of despotism were burst in sunder. From the moment that the health of "His most Catholic Majesty Ferdinand VII." was toasted, at the London Tavern, by our Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; from that moment, I clearly saw, and as clearly said, that the war was to be carried on for the interests of a faction. From that moment, I said, that the *people* would not stir; that they would be cool and indifferent spectators of the contest, and that our army, if one should be sent thither, would be very lucky not to find enemies in those, in whom they would be taught to expect the warmest of friends. How many men, how many of our unfortunate countrymen, have, since that day, had the woful conviction of these timely truths! How many bodies are now left to fertilize the soil of Joseph Buonaparte's kingdom, who, if my advice had been taken, would have been living for their country's defence!

If to the just anger and indignation of the people of this country, who have seen their means so wasted, their character so tarnished, their name become such a reproach amongst nations; if, to this anger and in-

dignation, any addition could be made, it would, assuredly, be found in the flippancy, the jocular, the gayety, of the publications, which have been made in the *Courier* and the *Morning Post* newspapers, under the title of speeches made by *Lord Castlereagh* and *Mr. Canning*, and of the last of which I have taken the closing sentence, by way of motto to these remarks. The authors of these publications must have known, that, in all human probability, our army, in Spain, was, at that moment, suffering every species of pain of which the mind can form an idea. When making these publications, could they have dismissed from their imaginations, the many and cruel torments into which that army had been plunged? When discussing the war in Spain, and gaily alluding to it in a figure representing the wordy wars of the House of Commons; when jocosely alluding to "the campaign," could they have forgotten that it was the campaign in Leon and Galicia? Would not men, in whose breasts only a scanty portion of mercy or compassion existed, have, upon the bare mention of the word "campaign," been carried, in idea, to the scene of anxiety, danger, fear, confusion, distress and misery, in those provinces? Would they not have seen wagons and magazines a prey to the floods and the flames, destroyed by the hands of those to whom they ought to have been a comfort and a defence? Would they not have had before their eyes, the trooper butchering the faithful sharer of his toils, when no longer able to accelerate his flight; and the poor exhausted wretch, unable to keep pace, no longer to be propped up by the assistance of his comrades, drop by the way, following those comrades with longing eyes, eyes destined never more to behold comrade, kindred, or country? Did the pale, the woful, the heart-piercing visage of one of these unfortunate creatures never come athwart the minds of the authors of these jocular speeches? Did they never think of the hundred and fifty miles of road strewed with stores (the fruit of English labour), with the carcasses of English horses, and the bodies of Englishmen, perishing from wounds, fatigue, or hunger?

But, while Rome burnt, Nero *fiddled*; the bloody head of John the Baptist was presented to a damsel at a *dance*; and it is universally true, that the Monkey and the Tiger meet in the same mind, or, in other words, that the most complete want of feeling is inseparable from levity, a maxim more emphatically expressed by our great poet, when he says, that "a man may smile and smile and be a villain."

Now, mark me, reader; I do not pretend to ascribe these speeches, such as I have found them in the newspapers above-mentioned, to Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning. All the exceptionable parts of them may, for aught I know, have been foisted in by the reporters. I find them printed and published; and, as printed publications, I express my abhorrence of their unfeeling contents, which, at a moment like that when these publications were made, when, besides the general fear and sorrow that prevailed, there must have been two or three hundred thousand individuals in this kingdom half frantic with anxiety for the personal safety of their kindred and friends, were an insult to public opinion and feeling of which, I hope, no one but the authors of these publications could possibly have been guilty.

The reported debates in parliament, upon the subject of the Spanish Revolution, present us with very little that is new. The only excuse for not anticipating Napoleon is, that, until October, the Central Junta was not established; and that, before it was established, it would not have

been prudent to send an army into Spain. Now, the public will recollect, that the Convention of Cintra, which took place in *August*, was justified upon the ground, that any sacrifice ought to be made, *in order to hasten the march of our army into Spain*; and, Sir Hew Dalrymple says this in his dispatch, where he speaks also of the vast importance of getting possession of the passes of the Pyrenees before the French army should arrive. Sir Hew Dalrymple would hardly have talked in this way to a ministry, who had given him no authority to march into Spain; and this, observe, was on the *22nd of August*. But, be this as it may; whether or not, the ministers knew it to be imprudent to send an army into Spain, until the Central Junta was established, their conduct still retains its blamable character; for, when the delay had continued so long, *they should have known*, that it was *too late* to send an army into Spain. It was their business to know this. We pay Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning *six thousand pounds a year each*, besides numerous thousands to their relations, for attending to such matters; to obtain and make use of such knowledge; and, for them now to tell us, that they fear no censure, that they do not look upon themselves as culprits, because they have done *their best*, is something that, in better times, would not be borne with patience. Nations whose affairs are well managed, do not pay any man 6,000 pounds a year for doing *his best*. Where they pay such a sum, in the way of salary, they expect, and demand, corresponding services. For persons, in such situations, to commit blunders is to commit crimes. What responsibility is there, or can there be, if the accused is to be acquitted upon the plea of having *meant well*? Sir Robert Calder, who, with an inferior force, beat the enemy, and captured two of his ships, was disgraced upon the express ground of an *error in judgment*. And shall no disgrace attend those, who, having all the means of the country, and all the means of correct information, in their hands, planned the campaign of Leon and Galicia; where an army, one of the largest ever sent from England, had no chance of safety but in flight; where, to save *a part* from being captured, the rest were compelled to expose themselves to inevitable destruction?

From what was said, in the debates, about waiting for the formation of a Central Junta, it appears evident enough, I think, that *we* shall be found to have been at the bottom of the scheme of a war for Ferdinand VII., "His Most Catholic Majesty," who offered to marry one of Buonaparte's relations. Of this bright scheme it will, I am fully persuaded, finally appear, that we were the authors. This is a point of vast importance. Of much more importance than all the rest; because upon it turns the question, *for what* we are expending all this blood and treasure. Mr. Robinson (I wonder who *he* is) that moved the Address, in answer to the Speech from the throne, threw out some hints, that there *might* be certain persons, who wished us not to assist the Spaniards, unless they first resolved to change their government. I was one of those persons; and my wish was founded upon these two reasons; first, because it was sheer folly to suppose, that those, who were content with the old order of things, without any reform of corruptions and abuses, would ever fight manfully against Napoleon; would ever succeed in resisting his dukes and his legions: and, second, because, for the sake of the Spaniards themselves, and for the sake of other nations, and England in particular, it was not desirable that they should succeed, if such were their object. I have, all along, expressed this opinion; and, if it had been entertained

by the ministers, we should not now have to mourn over the sufferings and death of so many valuable men. It was notorious; it was a fact known to every man, of any information, in all Europe, that the Spaniards were so degraded by their government, that they had none of the feelings of a people left in them. What was to be expected from such a population, unless some *grand convulsion* could have been effected? Such a community, if it be worthy of the name, must be turned up-side-down; must be shook to pieces and new moulded, before any thing like military exertion can be reasonably expected from it. This work of renovation was, *by the help of the press*, going on, till the Central Junta was formed, and began to preach up tranquillity and put a stop to "*licentious publications.*" After this we heard no more of "*a reform of abuses,*" and of "*the late infamous government.*" Nothing now was to be heard but of "*our lord and sovereign Don Ferdinand the VIIth,*" and of sober lectures, not unaccompanied with dreadful denunciations, issued in his name. These had no effect; or an effect the contrary of what they were intended to produce. Read the proclamations, the terrific menaces of Romana and Palafox, and then believe, if you can, that the *people* of Spain were enthusiastic in the cause of "*His Catholic Majesty Ferdinand VII.*" Men, whom, to draw out in defence of their country, it is necessary to threaten with the gallows, cannot, I think, be looked upon as very enthusiastic in his cause. The numerous falsehoods of our newspapers, respecting the dispositions of the Spanish people, can no longer be disguised. Every officer, every soldier, who returns, will have his dismal tale to tell. I shall, probably, see none of them; but, many of my readers will; and to them I leave the decision upon the correctness or incorrectness of my opinions, which, to say the truth, were entertained by every *politician* that I have ever conversed with upon the subject.

These opinions I expressed to an officer of great merit and sense, just before his departure; and, if he has lived out the campaign, he will, I am sure, have had thousands of opportunities of witnessing the truth of what I said.

It was impossible; it was not in nature, that such a people should be roused to battle by such means. Buonaparte now laughs at our folly in supposing the thing possible, in engaging in such a wild scheme. Well he may. And why did not our ministers know this before? Why did they not tender to the people of Spain those things which Buonaparte has tendered to them? It is false; grossly false, to say that the Spanish nation did not wish to be freed from oppression. We never made them the offer. We never encouraged them to break their chains. We took part with the adherents of one branch of the late royal family; we royalized the cause of Spain; we made it a contest between King Ferdinand and King Joseph; we fought for a king and an aristocracy, whom the people *knew*, against one whom they knew not, and who, at any rate, *promised* them better days than they, or even their fathers, ever saw.

This has been our conduct, and this conduct has led to failure, accompanied with every possible circumstance of national mortification and disgrace. This, therefore, ought to be the first object of inquiry; but, as the public will see, it will never be an object of inquiry at all.

Let us now look, a little, at the dismal close of the campaign. I believe, that our soldiers behaved well before Corunna; I have no doubt that they did, and that they beat equal numbers opposed to them; but, I cannot agree with General Hope, in calling it a "*victory*;" and, I do

beseech the public not to give way to any *boasting* upon the subject. Our army *fought for their lives*, let it be remembered. All that were not killed may be said to have *escaped*. Under such circumstances, to talk of a "victory" is to make a quite new application of the word, and, upon other occasions, to render its meaning dubious.

Of poor General Moore, the end, at any rate, was becoming. The enemy had him at bay; but, there he showed himself to be a brave man; he did not, *as generals sometimes have done*, make a disgraceful capitulation, and slink home himself to be the bearer of the news, leaving the wretched companions of his flight exposed to danger and hardship. He, at any rate, saved, by his valour, the remnant of his naked and famishing and lacerated army; to the disgrace of flight, he did not add that of base capitulation. Rather than do this, he bravely met almost certain death; and, therefore, whatever might be the errors of his conduct during the campaign, his fall will be deeply and universally regretted, and his memory held in honour. Great praise is, on this account, due to Generals Baird and Hope; because it is certain, that if any one of them had, *as some others have done*, shunned personal danger, the far greater part of the remains of our army would have gone to a French prison, instead of coming to England.

It is impossible to form an idea of a state of existence more painful than that of poor General Moore must have been for the last six weeks. He found himself unsupported by the people of Spain; he found half-enemies where he had been led to expect enthusiastic friends; he saw the Spanish levies, at the approach of the French, melt away like new-fallen snow before an April sun; and, yet, hearing the English newspapers continually vomiting forth the numbers and the enthusiasm of "the noble and valiant" people of Spain; the glorious efforts of the "*universal Spanish nation*;" hearing this, and knowing well how easily the faults of ministers are thrown upon commanders, he must naturally have dreaded a return to England without *doing something*. That something he attempted, and hence all his and his army's calamities.

But, shall we not be informed of the purport of the orders that were given him from home? Shall we not know, whether he was ordered to advance, when he was about to retreat? I doubt it. The nation seems to be dead. There is no spirit remaining in it. If there had been, indeed, this great calamity never would have happened. The scene exhibited at Portsmouth, this very day, where officers have been carried on shore, one after another, upon hammocks; where the hospitals are crowded with the sick and wounded, and where, such is the condition in which the poor wretches of soldiers are, that it can scarcely be distinguished to what corps they belong; such scenes would, one would think, fill the people with indignation against the authors of all this misery and disgrace. But, no: like Jews, we confine our feelings merely to *sorrow*; we are become a *crying* nation. A poor, spiritless, cowed-down, abject race. Cry! The time was when Englishmen would have cursed as well as cried. So do they now, indeed, in *secret*; but not one man, who has the power to enforce his demands; not one man of this description, will openly call for redress.

The public will remember (but will not resent, or profit from) the train of lies, which has been dealt out to them, from time to time, since the commencement of the war in Spain. Forget them, however, they cannot. They cannot have, already at least, forgotten how flatly the



statements of the French bulletins were contradicted; and how greedily they gave in to the contradiction. From lie to lie we have been led on, until, at last, we see the remnant of our fleeing and perishing army land upon our shores. It is only four days since the Courier newspaper told us, and, apparently, under high authority, that our army had reached Corunna in *safety*; that the Spaniards had defeated Joseph Buonaparte, killing 15,000 of his men; and that the Duke de l'Infantado was in pursuit of Buonaparte. Now; now, when the half-dead remnant of the army has actually arrived to tell its own tale; now the lie of the day is of a new sort. Now the *numbers* are nothing like what they were thought to be. Once our army in Spain was 45,000 strong; when the first retreat was sounded, it fell to 35,000; when the dispatches of Sir John Moore came from Benevente, it came down to 28,000; and now (oh, the infamous liars!) they have brought it so low as 24,000, and the Courier, who only backs a brother liar, says, that "*it is said* our army, in Spain, never consisted of more than 24 thousand men. *We thought it had been stronger.*" Aye, or else you deserve to be kicked back all the way to John o' Grote's house; for you, scores of times, positively stated it at above 40 thousand. The scheme now is, however, to lessen the numbers as much as possible, and for more than one motive too evident to mention. But, if there were a member of parliament, who would call for the detailed Returns of the corps sent to Portugal and Spain, we should soon see this scheme blown into the air. In the meanwhile, we *know*, that there were 35 thousand men in Portugal, at the time when the Wellesley Armistice was signed; we knew that 10 thousand men went out with General Baird; that makes the amount 45 thousand men, exclusive of those, since gone out under General Cradock, and, still more recently, under another General, whose name I have forgotten. Well, now; what is become of the *forty-five* thousand men? How many of them remained in Portugal? Let us but know that, and also how many have escaped, through Corunna and Vigo, and then we shall know how many have perished in Lord Castlereagh's Campaign. This is the proper object of inquiry. What is the use of declamatory speeches? Let us have some *facts*, and leave us to judge for ourselves. Let us have a Return of the killed, wounded, and missing, from the time that the regiments *left England*. That is what I want to see; but, it is what we never shall have. By one of *our* bulletins, published on Saturday last, the credulous public were informed, that "*it was apprehended*, that "*a sacrifice of some horses, baggage, and stores, would be unavoidable, but there was no doubt that nearly the whole of the troops would be got off;*" leaving that word *whole* to be applied to the army as it *entered Spain*. "*Some horses,*" indeed! *How many* will come back in all? Buonaparte, who, when he sent off his last bulletin, had pursued our army as far as Astorga, says that "*the road was strewed with dead horses belonging to the English, with travelling carriages, with artillery, with covered wagons, and warlike stores.*" He says, that he found, at Astorga, magazines of sheets and blankets and pioneering implements; that the Duke of Dalmatia found 2,000 sick in Leon, either of Romana's or our army; that we burnt immense magazines at Benevente; and, that, upon the road between Benevente and Astorga, a distance of about 20 miles out of from 150 to 200, he picked up two hundred wagons of baggage and ammunition. And yet we are told, in one of our government bulletins, that "*it was apprehended, that a sacrifice of some horses,*

baggage, and stores *would be unavoidable!*" The public will not believe these bulletins again; but, *as a cover for its baseness in not showing its resentment*, it will pretend to believe them, and to believe, too, all that is now said about the small original amount of our army. Nothing is easier than to ascertain the amount of our loss, in every way. Let some one call for the returns, from every department, of what was sent out, placing the *cost* against each article. *This*, indeed, would be fit and useful employment for "a guardian of the public purse." Declamation, and even reasoning, are, in such cases, a waste of words and time. Facts speak for themselves, and carry conviction not to be shaken.

Amongst other Returns, which this burdened public ought to be made acquainted with, is that of the *Deserters*; especially as we read, in all the newspapers, that the Emperor Napoleon says, that "all the *Germans*, in the pay of the English, are *deserting*." The cost of the "*Foreign Corps*," last year, is stated in the public accounts, to be more than *one-fifth* of the cost of the *whole of the British regular army*; and it, surely, becomes the "guardians of the public purse," to ascertain, whether troops, maintained at so enormous an expense, have deserted, as the Emperor of France, in the face of his army and of the world, declares they have. If the fact be true, it is of great importance to us, that some measure should be taken in consequence of it, not only in a pecuniary point of view, but as the example may operate upon our own army; and, if it be false, justice to these foreigners demands an unequivocal and speedy contradiction of the Emperor's assertions. But, it must be observed beforehand, that assertion, unsupported by *proof*, and the very best proof that the case admits of, will not satisfy the world, and ought not to satisfy any man. The Emperor's assertion *may* be false; it may be totally groundless, though it is not very easy to conceive a reason for his publishing such a falsehood; but, at any rate, the assertion has been made, and the truth, or falsehood, should be ascertained by detailed returns and reports. It is quite in vain to abuse Napoleon, to call him a liar and a calumniator. He has made a distinct assertion, of which assertion we have it completely in our power to *ascertain* the truth, or the falsehood; and, if we, or rather, the parliament, decline doing it, the world will be at no loss what to believe upon the subject.

There is another assertion in the bulletins well worthy of formal and authentic contradiction. We were informed, that *General Stewart*, a brother of Lord Castlereagh, when the horse under his command took Gen. Lefebvre, was *greatly*, nay, four or five to one, *inferior* to the French in point of *amount of force*. Now, let us hear what the Emperor has said upon this affair.

"The English had reported throughout the country that they had defeated 5000 of the French cavalry on the banks of the Ezela, and that the field of battle was covered with their dead. The inhabitants of Benevente were much surprised upon visiting the field of battle, to have found there only three Englishmen and two French. That contest of 400 men against 2000, does great honour to the French. During the whole of the 29th, the river continued to swell considerably, so that at the close of the evening it became impossible to ford it. It was in the middle of the river, and at the moment he was on the point of being drowned, that General Lefebvre being carried away by the current to the side occupied by the English, was made prisoner."

Which are we to believe? "Our own story," to be sure, say the "loyal;" but which will the world believe? It is easy for us, however, to get at some *proof* upon the point; and we ought to do it; for, if we

do not, we may be sure, that the opinions of mankind will, at best, be divided.

As intimately connected with this, the following paragraph, from the *Courier* of the 24th instant, is worthy of being put upon record :

“ It appears that Buonaparte ceased superintending in person the operations against us, after the arrival of the French army at Astorga, on the 2nd. He says in his last bulletin, dated Astorga, that he left the charge of pursuing us to the point of embarkation, to the Duke of Dalmatia.—Probably he had received information that rendered it necessary for him to return to Madrid, though we fear the report transmitted to Government, of the French having been driven from the Capital, is unfounded. There is an account circulated UPON GOOD AUTHORITY that Buonaparte was, at one time, in a situation of some peril. When Gen. Lefebvre was taken prisoner, Buonaparte was himself on a height on the other side of the river, about two miles from the scene of action. Gen. Stewart was apprised of the circumstance, and had he not been RESTRAINED by the POSITIVE orders which he had previously received, he would have endeavoured to have got in the rear of Buonaparte, and have made a dash at him. His orders however, being positive, and the risk considerable, he did not think it proper to make the attempt.”

Now, what is the “ good authority,” upon which this Bobadilian story rests ? It is evident, that no authority, with regard to what General Stewart thought about it, can be good, unless it come from Gen. Stewart himself ; and, the inevitable conclusion is, that the General has himself spread this vain-glorious, this Bully-Bluff-like report ; or, which one must hope to be the case, the editor of the *Courier* has, here again, as it were to mock the grief of the nation, promulgated an empty boasting falsehood.

Hundreds and thousands of stories, of this stamp, will, however, now be resorted to, with a view of amusing the public mind, of drawing it off from contemplating the loss, the misery, and the disgrace, the numberless national disgraces, of this campaign. But, when we see the remnant of the army tumbling, helter-skelter, on board the first vessel they can reach ; when we see the balls and bomb-shells falling thick as hail-stones around and amongst the fugitive ships ; when we see the poor creatures, who have finally escaped, who have survived this complication of dangers and of miseries, creeping to our shores, one after another, in a state worse than that of mariners after shipwreck ; when we see all this, when we actually, with our own eyes, behold the half-naked, emaciated, ghost-looking, remains of our once stout, well-equipped, and gaily-dressed army, is it possible that we can be such senseless animals, such brute beasts, as to give into a train of boasting about “ victories and laurels ?” Oh ! this is not the way to recover our character. This is not the way to prevent such calamities in future. It is a deep sense of our loss, and our national disgrace, that should now have possession of our minds ; never, for one moment, losing sight of that important truth, of which every soul in our unfortunate army has now had such woful experience, that, to induce a people to rise in arms against a powerful invader, they must first, not be told, but made to feel, THAT THEY HAVE SOMETHING TO FIGHT FOR.

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