

SELECTIONS

FROM

COBBETT'S POLITICAL WORKS:

BEING

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

WITH NOTES,
HISTORICAL AND EXPLANATORY.

BY

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VOL. IV.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY ANNE COBBETT, 10, RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET;
W. TAIT, EDINBURGH; AND W. WILLIS, MANCHESTER.

**London : Printed by Mills and Son,
Gough-square, Fleet-street.**

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KING'S ILLNESS.—THE REGENCY.

(CONTINUED.)

(*Political Register*, February, 1811.)

“ The hope of the HYPOCRITES shall perish.”

I REPEAT my motto; and the denunciation I have no fear of seeing completely verified. The hypocritical editor of the *COURIER* and the crew of hypocrites who approve of his efforts, all this base, canting crew, now driven to their resource, *crocodile tears*, will not find, any longer, a cloak sufficiently thick to disguise them.

Gulls as the people of this country have long been, they are not any longer to be cheated by this hypocrite and his like. It is hypocrisy that has, for years, been the bane of England; but, I do trust, that it will now, by being unmasked, be deprived of its power to do us further mischief.

In my last, I exposed an attempt, on the part of the Editor of the *COURIER* and his brother hypocrites, to make the people believe, that all those, who were for using *extreme caution* in again imposing upon the King the functions of royalty, meant to *dethrone* him. I exposed this attempt pretty well; and showed how base and wicked were the motives from which it had manifestly proceeded. I showed, that the assertions of the hypocrites were false; and that, as a last resource, they had resorted to cant and crying with a view to calumnious insinuations against the Prince of Wales, calculated to excite the foulest suspicions against him, and to render him odious in the eyes of the people. The gist of what they were, and still are, endeavouring to inculcate, is this: That the “*new men*,” as they call them, have discovered a disposition, nay, and a *resolution*, to *dethrone* the King; because they have recommended *great caution* to be observed in calling upon him again to exercise the kingly office. This is the point, at which they are incessantly labouring; with efforts directed to this point, they fill column after column; and, it is easy to see, that they do, and *must* include the Prince amongst the “*new men*.”

That there is ground for *great caution* no one will, I think, deny, after what has recently *come to light*. Nevertheless, this same hypocritical writer and his brother hypocrites, who furnish matter for his paper, are still endeavouring to prevail upon the public to consider as an act of hostility to the King, every effort that is made to provide against a premature resumption of the royal authority on the part of the King.

I shall, in the present Number, notice, in a particular manner, and, I trust, fully expose, another of these attempts to cajole the people; and, when I have done that, I shall examine into the truth of these venal men's assertions respecting the Charges of LORD GREY against the LORD CHANCELLOR. They assert these charges to be *groundless*; and, it, therefore, becomes us to refer to *dates*, and to compare them and the Evidence of the Physicians with the statements of Lord Grey. For, though the speech of his lordship was plain and full, as to all points, still it was impossible for any man (especially under a prohibition to take any speech in short hand) to give it perfectly correct even as to the substance; much less to give it in detail.

With the whole of the Evidence before me, and with the history of the times referred to, also before me, I shall, I trust, be able to give a more full and clear statement of the matter, than has yet reached the public eye.

But, I must first notice the article, above alluded to, in the *COURIER* of the 30th of January; because in this article the reader will have a view of another of the tricks, which the hypocrites are playing off for the purpose of keeping up their deceptions a little longer. They are hard put to it. They know not what to be at; and, though as cunning as Old Satan himself, they do, I verily believe, begin to despair of gulling and cheating the public any longer. The dullest of the people now begin to see them in their true colours. The exposures have been so often repeated, that, at last, they begin to have effect.

The trick which I am now about to notice is an attempt at *alarm*; an attempt to cajole the people into a belief, that those who protest against using the *King's name* before he is restored to a *perfectly* sound mind, wish to set him *aside*; wish to do some violent act of injustice towards him.

"The attempts," says this venal hypocrite, who really appears to me to be pretty nearly a match for an old North-of-England political acquaintance of mine, whom I have, for many years, called *Hypocrisy Personified*, and who, to a Lazarus-like look given him by nature, has added all that art can afford, and who is, even in this age, certainly the most consummate hypocrite in existence. Talk of the *Saints* of the Long-Parliament! There was not one of them fit "to hold a candle to him."—Yet, this creature, the most perfect of his kind, and who has duped nearly as many people as were duped by Mahomet, or any other of the lucky impostors that have lived in the world; even this hypocrite is not far out-done by these venal men, these MEAN, MERCENARY and MALIGNANT men, upon the writings of one of whom I am now about to comment.

"The attempts," says he, "daily making to prepare the public mind for setting the King aside, altogether, cannot fail of exciting alarm. The design was "scouted with indignation by both Houses of Parliament, on the first day of its "meeting, but it has ever since been disclosing itself, and certainly is acting "upon. We have already given very striking proofs of this from the Journals. "Men startled at these things at first, but silence and impunity make them "bold. *The Weekly Register*, and others of the same character, deprecate the "return of the King to power till he is quite well, by which they mean *something* "better than at his age he is ever likely to be, allowing him to be as well in mind "as ever. Out of mere kindness to the King they would not allow him to return "to the fatigues of business. One member of the House of Commons asserts, "that a man subject to harries never can be fit to reign, and Sir F. Burdett last "week roundly affirmed, the King could never be fit to govern at his age; with "his blindness, and liable as he is to derangement. Thus the design proceeds."

What *design*? What design have we? What do we mean, or what can we mean, more than we say? We "deprecate the return of the King to power till he is **QUITE WELL**." And what, then? To be sure we deprecate it; and are we not right in so doing? Ought he, in mere common mercy to himself, to be permitted to resume his authority *before* he is *quite well*? Are we not right to express our opinions, that he ought not to be called upon to resume his authority; to exercise the powers of *life* and *death*; to make *war* and *peace*: are we not right in deprecating the idea of his being called upon to resume such powers until he be *quite well*? Aye, and was I not right, when, about a fortnight ago, I took timely opportunity to suggest the propriety of some measure to prevent him from being so called upon, until there had been *some months*, or *weeks*, at least, of *probation*, after complete recovery? Was not this right? Will any man *now* deny, that the suggestion was proper? Indeed, it arose out of a perusal of the very evidence upon which Lord Grey has made his late statements, in the House of Lords, and upon which Lord King founded his motion for erasing the name of Lord Eldon from the list of the Queen's Council.

But, this venal man says, that, by the words *quite well*, we mean "something better than the King, at his age, *is ever likely to be*." His *age*! Age does not naturally deprive men of the use of their senses. The age of the King is not very great. There is Mr. **BARON MASEFIELD** at the age of *eighty*, writing with as much clearness and strength as he did at the age of *forty*. We say nothing about the *age* of the King. His is by no means an age to produce mental feebleness. But, we see, in the evidence upon oath, that he is in a state of *mental derangement*; that he has been in that state now *three times within eleven years*; and, we also read in that evidence, that he was in that state while his assent was given to many acts of parliament, some of them *granting away crown lands* and imposing *penalties of death*; this we see, and seeing this, are we to be accused of designs to set him aside; because we wish, that there should be clear proof produced of his being *quite well*, before he is again called upon to exercise the Royal Authority?

All this is equally false with the former. Mr. Wood gave no prefer-

"Another most unconstitutional doctrine," continues this venal writer, "advanced in many quarters, but particularly in the Common Council by Mr. **ALDERMAN WOOD**, is, the *preference* given to the Prince of Wales as our Chief Magistrate in consequence of its being known, that he will adopt measures *different from those of his father*, that he will grant Catholic emancipation, conciliate Ireland, &c. For these and similar reasons they express a wish that his Royal Highness should *wield the Sovereign authority instead of his Majesty*. To proceed on such principles is to do neither more nor less than to elect a King. The Prince is to be chosen in *preference to George the Third*, because he will do *better things*. If such atrocious doctrines as these are to be listened to, there is an end of our Constitution! It may be discovered that Sir Francis Burdett would do better things still than the Prince of Wales, and, upon the same principles, propositions might be entertained of vesting him with the *sovereign authority*. Such language tends to bring upon us the evil of an elective monarchy like that of Poland, which no doubt would speedily involve us in a similar destruction with that which has annihilated Poland as a nation. ~~At this~~ erroneous view of things arises from the very false grounds upon which ~~the~~ restrictions on the Regency have been debated by the Opposition, ~~they wishing~~ to act as if they were appointing a King, instead of appointing a *deputy for a King* during a temporary indisposition, as if the Throne were vacant, not as it really is, full. Such doctrines are *truly alarming*. They tend strongly and rapidly to a *Revolution*, to scenes of *confusion* and *anarchy* long unknown in this *happy land*."

ence to the SON before the FATHER. He imputed no *wrong* to the King ; but he censured the measures of *his ministers* ; and he expressed his hope, that such men would be chosen to succeed them, as would adopt *better measures*. It is false, therefore, to say, that the Prince was set up in *preference* to the King. But, let the reader bear with me while I once more remark, that this is the constant practice of those hypocrites who call themselves "*the King's friends*." Every thing you say against the measures of the government, they immediately apply it to *the King* ; and it cannot be forgotten, that they have *invariably* acted thus.

As to what this hypocrite says about the dangers of making this an *elective monarchy*, what a fine slap in the face he gives here to all those, and to himself amongst the rest, who have contended for restrictions, and have denied the *right* of the Prince to be sole Regent ! This charge, if due to any body, belongs to them. If there really be any *danger* in the notion of an *elective monarchy*, on their heads be the consequences, and not on ours, who have all along, contended, that the whole of the Royal powers and prerogatives, without any dividing, chipping away, or reserving, ought to have been, at once, and without any delay, given to the Prince, who is the undoubted heir to the throne and to every thing attached to it.

But, the truth is, that the hypocrites know not what to say ; they are at the last gasp ; even lying and crying begin to fail them ; and it is little wonder, that they forget what they are about. The wonder, and, to the country, the shame, is, that they should not, before now, have been sunk quite into the earth ; that they should still dare to show their faces above ground ; much less to send forth their verbose columns of cant, in various shapes, and under various names, as they have yet the assurance to do.

We now come to the other subject of which I proposed to treat ; namely, *the state of the King in the years 1801 and 1804, at times when several very important acts were performed in his name, and, apparently, with his approbation and authority*.

The public need not be told what has recently passed upon this subject in the House of Lords ; for, certainly, never was there any thing that attracted more general observation, or that excited a more general or higher interest. It has, since it took place, been the great topic of conversation with every body.

In my last, I inserted the speeches of Lords GREY and ELDON and the motion of Lord KING. These were all less full than was to be desired ; but, I took the fullest reports I could find, and the substance was pretty nearly, in all probability, preserved.

Nevertheless, it is possible to put the matter in a *plainer* light than it there appears ; and, this it shall now be my endeavour to do.

But, I have first to observe, that in another part of *this Number*, I have inserted the *whole* of the Evidence of Drs. WILLIS and HEBERDEN, as given upon oath before the LORDS' COMMITTEE a few weeks ago. These two persons attended the King upon the former occasions of his mental derangement.

This Evidence should be *carefully read*, particularly that of Dr. HEBERDEN, upon which the charges of Lord GREY were founded.*

I have also inserted, in this Number, a *Protest* of certain Lords, upon the subject of the motion for erasing LORD ELDON's name, in

* These documents are too long to be inserted here ; but they are to be found in the Parliamentary Debates for the year 1811.—ED.

which Protest the charges against him are distinctly stated. This also should be read with care; and I have thought it right not to lose a moment in giving it as wide a circulation as it is in my power to give it; because it appears to me, that the matter is of the greatest importance to us all; or, at least, to all those who wish to see the English constitution not totally annihilated.

From the same motive it is, that I am now induced to add some observations of my own, by which I hope to make the matter so plain as not to leave the smallest chance of being misunderstood.

There were *two occasions* mentioned by Lord Grey, and some confusion of dates and other circumstances has been made for want of a sort of history of each. The *first* was in 1801, at the time Mr. ADDINGTON (now LORD SIDMOUTH) became Prime Minister; the *second* was in 1804, he being still Prime Minister. The transactions, connected with the *former* we will treat of hereafter; for, if possible, they are even more important than those connected with the latter. But, *at present*, we will confine ourselves to the latter epoch; and, it will be useful, here, to give a list of the *Ministry*, as it then stood, namely, in *February, March, and April*, 1804, when the King was afflicted, as will be seen by Dr. HEBERDEN's evidence, with the very same malady that he now is afflicted with.

Cabinet Ministers.

Duke of Portland	President of the Council.
Lord Eldon	Lord High Chancellor.
Lord Westmoreland	Lord Privy Seal.
Right Hon. Henry Addington (now Lord Sidmouth)	{ First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. (Prime Minister.)
Earl St. Vincent	
Earl of Chatham	First Lord of the Admiralty.
Right Hon. Charles Yorke	Master-General of the Ordnance.
Lord Hawkesbury (now Earl of Liverpool)	{ Sec. of State for the Home Department.
Lord Hobart (now Earl of Buckinghamshire)	
Lord Viscount Castlereagh	{ Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
	{ Secretary of State for the Department of War and the Colonies.
	{ President for the Board of Control for the Affairs of India.

Law Officers.

Mr. Spencer Perceval	Attorney-General.
Sir Thomas Manners Sutton	Solicitor-General.

Thus was the ministry composed. Here we have them all before us. 'This is of great use, because the people are apt to forget. They have confused ideas of *who* and *who* were together.

Well, now to the point. Dr. HEBERDEN, being upon his *oath* before the Lords' Committee, on the 18th of December last, gave the following evidence:—

"Will Dr. Heberden state to the Committee what was the whole duration of "his Majesty's illness in 1804?—I was first called upon to attend his Majesty "on the 12th of February 1801; and I believe his Majesty presided at Council "on the 23rd of April following; *I should consider the interval between those "periods as constituting the duration of his disease at that time.*

"At what time did Dr. Heberden's attendance on his Majesty cease?—After "the period when his Majesty was so far recovered as to be able to transact "business at any period of any day: he still retained *such marks of indisposition* "about him, as made it expedient that some one of his physicians should be

"about his person *for some months afterwards*. In this situation I was in attendance upon his Majesty so late as to the *end of October*.

"Between the 12th of February and the 23rd of April did not the appearances of disorder continue more or less?—I believe that for *some days* previous to the 23rd of April they had so far ceased as to make his Majesty's physicians conceive him competent to exercise all the usual functions of his high office."

Thus, then, quibble to eternity, if you will, one of these two things must be; either the King was in a state of *mental derangement* (for that is the term now given to the malady) from the 12th of February to within *some days* of the 23rd of April, or Dr. HEBERDEN has taken a false oath, which latter is not to be believed, especially as, in the reports of the speeches of Lord Eldon, in answer to Lord Grey's charge, no insinuation of the kind was thrown out, and, as Dr. HEBERDEN gave his evidence *in the presence* of Lord Eldon and Lord Sidmouth, and most of the rest of the ministry of 1804, who might, if they had chosen, have contradicted or cross-examined him.

The public must well remember, that, in 1804, Dr. SIMMONS of St. Luke's Hospital, and his *men*, attended the King; and Lord Grey asserted, and *challenged contradiction*, that these persons remained with him until the *10th of June of that year*! Nobody accepted Lord Grey's challenge. Nobody attempted to *contradict* him. But, I will, if the reader chooses, leave this circumstance wholly out of consideration; and stick to the facts stated upon *oath* by Dr. HEBERDEN, according to whom the King's malady continued from the 12th of February to within *some days* of the 23rd of April.

Now, then, what can have been meant by the words "*some days*?" The hypocrite, who writes in the *COURIER*, says it may mean *any time*; any *length* of time; that it may mean "*a fortnight*, at least." But, is this the interpretation that *sound sense* and a love of *truth and justice* will allow of?

No: it is clear, that Dr. Heberden meant a *few days*; some number within a *week*: but, even in those days, his words by no means admit, that the King was perfectly recovered; and, after all, we find that the Doctor, or another physician, had to remain *constantly* about him even to the month of *October* afterwards, on account of the *still remaining appearances of indisposition*.

Leaving out of the question, therefore, Earl Grey's uncontradicted assertion as to the attendance of Dr. SIMMONS and his *men*, until the *10th of June*, Dr. HEBERDEN's evidence is full as to the point, that the malady continued from the 12th of February to the 23rd of April.

What, then, was *done* during this time, in the *name* of the *King*, and as by his *express authority*? Whether any commissions may have been granted, any leases of crown-lands let or renewed, any titles or honours bestowed, any sentences of death confirmed, during that time, are particulars that I have not, at hand, the means of ascertaining; but, I have the means of ascertaining in what cases the very highest functions of royalty, the giving assent to Acts of Parliament, the *making of laws*, affecting the property, liberty, and lives of fifteen millions of people, were exercised, and these I shall accurately state.

Remember, that the space of time mentioned by Dr. HEBERDEN, was, from the 12th of February to the 23rd of April, 1804.

On the 9th of March of that year, the *King's assent* was given by Commission under *his hand*, and signed with the great seal, to *seven public*

Acts of Parliament, being the Acts from Chapter 19 to Chapter 25 of the 44th year of GEORGE III.

On the 23rd of March, the King's assent was, by a like Commission, given to six public Acts of Parliament, being the Acts from Chapter 26 to Chapter 31.

This was still very far from the 23rd of April. It was more than *some days*. It was more than the *fortnight* which the hypocrites of the COURIER contends for. It was, in fact, a full *Calendar month*.

The Acts thus assented to were some of them of a nature *peculiarly* important. Some of them contained *penalties* of death; others imposed taxes; others authorised the raising of soldiers; one was a continuation of the Bank Restriction; Chapter 25 *granted away from the Crown the fee for ever of certain manors, lands, and houses*; and Chapter 30 was a *bill of indemnity*, relative to acts done *without law*, in pursuance of certain Orders of Council.

All this was done in the *King's name*, and as by his *express authority*, at a time when, according to the evidence now given upon oath by a physician who attended him, the King was in the same state of incapacity that he is now.

Nay, on the 26th of March, that is to say, twenty-eight days before the 23rd of April, Mr. ADDINGTON (now Lord Sidmouth) brought down to the House of Commons A MESSAGE *from the King!* It related to a measure of great importance, namely, the bringing of the Irish militia into England. It had the *royal signature* to it, and began in these words: "*His Majesty thinks proper to acquaint the House of Commons, &c. &c.*"

This, even *this*, was done on the 26th of March, that is, twenty-eight days before the 23rd of April.

And yet, with these facts before us; with all this before us, we are not to be allowed to express our opinion, that great caution ought to be used in the resumption of the royal authority by the King; we are not to be allowed to say, that care ought to be taken to *prove* that he is *quite well* first; we are not to do this, upon pain of being marked out by the impudent and venal editor of the COURIER, as men who wish to *dethrone* the King, to throw him into a corner, to pluck the crown from his head and to bind it with thorns! But these are the *last* struggles of knavery and hypocrisy combined; and they will not succeed.

Thus stands the case up to the 23rd of April. I beg the reader to bear the *dates* in his mind. Thus stands the case up to the 23rd of April; but, as the reader may attach great importance to the assertion of Lord Grey respecting the attendance of Dr. SIMMONS and *his men* till the 10th of June, it is proper to inform him, that, between the 23rd of April and the 10th of June, 24 public Acts of Parliament received the *King's assent* by Commission, as in the former cases. And, by the 30th of July, 36 more public Acts; thus making the number 91 Acts, receiving the *King's assent*, by Commission, after the 12th of February in that year; and, *July*, the reader will bear in mind, was still long before the month of *October*.

There are still some circumstances to notice, in order to make the history of these transactions complete. A *change of ministry* took place between the 23rd of April and the 10th of June.

Mr. Addington, Lord St. Vincent, Mr. Yorke, and Lord Hobart, went out of the cabinet; and Mr. Pitt, Lord Melville, Lord Harrowby, Lord Camden, and Lord Mulgrave came into it. The others remained; and

the law-officers also remained. This change was completed on the 18th of May: so that Lords Eldon, Castlereagh, Hawkesbury, Westmorland, and Chatham were in both cabinets.

Nothing more need be said. The thing is so plain; the chain of facts so complete; the statement so incontrovertible, that it sets all pettifoggery at defiance. There are, however, two points, upon which I shall just say a word or two; namely, the *declaration* of Mr. ADDINGTON (now Lord Sidmouth), during the King's malady in 1804; and the *individual responsibility* of Lord Eldon.

As to the former, it was called forth by a question, and afterwards a motion, of Sir ROBERT LAWLEY, in the House of Commons, on the 27th of February, 1804. Sir Robert Lawley asked the minister for an explicit statement as to the state of the King. To this Mr. Addington answered, that no such statement was necessary in the opinion of his Majesty's confidential servants. Whereupon Sir Robert Lawley moved an adjournment of the House. This produced a long debate, which was very interesting at that time, and certainly not less so now. In this debate Mr. Addington spoke no less than *five times*. He made explanation upon explanation; and at last it came to these words:

"The hon. Gentleman has stated, that I have set up my own opinion in opposition to that of his Majesty's Physicians. All I can say on this part of the accusation against me is, that I have stated nothing as matter of speculation, or opinion, of my own, but *upon authority of the physicians*. I wish to be distinctly understood here to re-state, that there is not, *at this time*," [27th of February mind] "*any necessary suspension of such royal functions as it may be necessary for his Majesty to discharge at the present moment.*"

He was pressed further by Mr. Grey, and he then said: "I meant *distinctly* to state, that there is not at this time, any *necessary suspension* of the royal authority for any act which may be *necessary to be done.*"

This was what Lord Grey alluded to the other night; and, if it had *any meaning at all*, it meant one of these three things: that it was *not necessary* that the King should be deranged in mind; or, that it was not, at that time, necessary for him to have the use of his senses; or, that his faculties were not so much impaired as to render him unfit for business.

The two former it cannot be supposed that any man could mean; and, therefore, we must take the latter; and, then, all we have to do, is, *to compare it with the Evidence of Dr. Heberden.*

I should now enter upon the subject of *individual or collective responsibility*; but as my space is so narrow, and as I see, that the subject will demand room, I must defer it till my next.

WM. COBBETT.

State Prison, Newgate, Friday,
February 1, 1811.

KING'S ILLNESS.—THE REGENCY.—*Continued.*

(Political Register, February, 1811.)

THIS subject is now drawing towards a close; but, like most other pieces of the kind, it grows more and more interesting, or, at least, more and more curious. The *people*, in general, appear to be resolved to be merely *spectators*; but, at any rate, let us hope, that they will well observe, and *bear in mind* what passes. The scenes now exhibiting are wholly without an equal. They have the decided merit of originality; though, it must be confessed, that they are not calculated to excite surprise in the reflecting mind, seeing that they are the natural produce of the *system* that has existed for the last 26 years.

I shall, in this article, begin again with some observations upon the writings of the venal man of the *COURIER*, who, in the passage that I am about to quote, has actually verified the soundness of the opinion expressed by me, in a previous article, respecting *praises* of the King, brought forward *in support of an argument* against his son, and, indeed, against the rights and liberties of the people.

I there observed, that it was base in the extreme, and that it was always so, to introduce, in the way of argument, praises of those *whom no man dared attack*; and, on the praises of whom no man *dared put a negative*.

And what *answer* does the venal man give to this? How does he attempt to refute me? You shall hear:

“RESTRICTIONS ON CALUMNY.—The *Weekly Register*, of Wednesday, “contains a passage *plainly avowing* how much it *would contradict all the praises of the King, and hold him up to execration upon a review of his conduct, if it dared, if it was not restrained by the fear of the law*. This passage is written too no doubt by the Editor of the “*Weekly Register*, who two years ago publicly and personally at a “County Meeting at Winchester, praised the King to the skies on “account of his amiable qualities, whether viewed as a man or as a “king. Most honest and consistent Editor of the *Weekly Register*!”

Now, what an *answer* is this! Thus, you see, that I was either to *admit* his argument, founded on praises of the King; I was to admit it, expressly or tacitly; or, I was to be charged with a *wish* to hold the King up to public execration; and that I was only restrained from so doing by a dread of the law. This is the way, in which this venal man *answers* an argument. His language, and that of the whole of the hypocritical tribe, to which he belongs, is, in fact, this: “We rest our conclusions upon the assertion of the virtues of the King; we say, that “this or that ought to be done, or not to be done, because the King has “such and such virtues; if you *contradict* us, you are *calumniators of the King*; and if you *refuse to assent* to our assertions upon which “our conclusions are grounded by *waving the discussion*, you prove, that “you would hold the King up to *public execration* if you *dared*.” This is, in fact their language; so that there is no escaping them. They

have their net so set for you, that to escape it is absolutely impossible. You must either yield to their argument ; you must admit their conclusions ; or, according to them, you are, either in act or wish, *a calumniator of the King*.

As to the words imputed to me, as having been spoken at Winchester, they are by no means a correct representation of what I then said ; but, what if they were ? How does it show any *inconsistency* in me ? It was not to the *praise* that I objected ; but to the *use* that was made of it. I objected to its being brought forward in the way of argument ; to its being made a *ground* in a controversy ; because, as I said before, no one who was on the other side in the controversy, would if he could, *dare*, contradict it ; and, for this reason, to bring it forward, in such a way, was, I said, extremely base ; an opinion, of the correctness of which, if there could have been any doubt, this venal man has now, by his own act completely confirmed.

But, the great objection that I have to the using of the King's name in this way, is, that it is part of a system of making the King *a screen for his ministers*. The doctrine of the Constitution is, that the King can do *no wrong* ; and, if he is to be *blamed* for nothing, is it not base to put forward assertions as to *his good qualities* in defence of any measures that have been adopted ? Is not this, in fact, making *him* responsible, instead of his ministers, as far as it is possible for a public writer to make him responsible ? However, this is the course, that the whole of that venal and corrupt and hypocritical crew, who call themselves " King's friends " have pursued for many years past ; and in spite of all the exposures of them, this is the course, that they will still pursue. But the imposture has, daily, less and less success. The powers of cant daily diminish ; and when one considers how *long* the nation has been humbugged ; when one considers what a regular system of cheatery these venal men have pursued ; when one considers what complete masters of their art these our English hypocrites are ; when one considers that hypocrisy has been studied and taught by them with as much labour and pain as Newton pursued his discoveries ; when one considers how numerous are the teachers and practisers of this art ; when one considers all these things, one can hardly expect the cloak to be completely pulled off in a day, however resolute the hand that attempts it. But, imposture has, as I said before, less success than it had. Scarcely a day passes without stripping it of some part of its garments ; and, *events, events*, those powerful co-operators of *truth*, are steadily at work to destroy this bane of the country. There are no tricks that will finally keep up the imposture. They will serve for awhile ; they may *defer* the complete destruction of it ; but destroyed it must and will be ; and we shall at no great distance hence, hear thousands of people, who are at this moment the dupes of the venal men, expressing their surprise that they ever could have been so duped, and venting their just resentment against the cheats. They will then be just as much distinguished by their resentments as they now are by their credulity ; they will flock round the venal imposture like the dupes in the play, each one heaving his blow.

This is an object of interesting observation with the philosophical mind. The man of sense will not be *disturbed* by the tricks of these venal men and the cullibility of their readers. He will coolly look on, and see the thing *work* ; being quite sure, that, in the *end*, truth and justice will prevail, and that he shall see hypocrisy receive its reward.

All that such a man has to do, is, to lend a helping hand in the way of exposure, whenever occasion serves, and according to the best of his means ; and without feeling any great degree of *anxiety*, wait the natural effect of time. But he ought to *miss* no such occasions ; miss no occasion of *sowing the seeds* of truth ; having done that, he may be *sure* the harvest will come ; and, he has only to guard against the indulgence of *impatience*. He must not stop to see the actual effects of one truth, before he inculcates another. He must like the provident and steady cultivator, prepare for a second sowing the moment the first is in the ground. His calculations of produce ought to embrace *years*. Truths, like trees, are of various *speed* in their progress ; and it not unfrequently happens, that the slower the progress, the more durable and more valuable the result.

I never liked your *despairing* gentry ; your gentry that throw up in *disgust* ; which, to say nothing else of it, is sure to bring somewhat of ridicule upon those who fall into such a course of proceeding ; for, the world wags on without them ; and, if they cannot change the world, why, they must still take it as it is.

The way to succeed in *any thing* where success merits praise, is, to *keep steadily on* as long as it is possible ; and, if the endeavours thus made have *truth* on their side, it is very seldom that they will fail of success.

So with respect to the imposture of these venal writers, what has been for years and years growing together is not to be destroyed in a moment. But, dropping, incessant dropping, will wear away the marble ; and if one once makes a fair opening into this hollow, rotten, vile imposture, away it goes into a million pieces. Within the last six months ; since I have been in this jail, see what has been done ; See what a change ! See the many many things, which the people behold in their true light, and with regard to which they were before wholly in the dark, or rather under the grossest deception. Only reflect for a moment ; look for six months and see the progress that *truth* has made ; and then despair if you can.

My attention is now called from these venal men and their hypocritical cant by a measure, which has excited more surprise in the public, I find, than it has in me ; I mean, *His Royal Highness the Prince having chosen Mr. Perceval* and his colleagues for his ministers. More than *four* persons ; or, four, at least, could now produce letters from me, foretelling, nearly *a month ago*, that such would be the case.

And, says the reader, how did you, shut up in a jail, come to *know* it ? Why, a jail only shuts up the *body*. It leaves the mind at liberty ; it leaves reason at large ; and, reason told me, that in this way the struggle would end.

Upon what grounds my opinion was founded I will by-and-by state ; but, we will first hear what has been said of this measure by the prints of the contending parties. This is a most curious affair altogether. It will make a great figure in the history of these times. It behoves us, therefore, to put upon record what the leading advocates of the two parties say upon the subject.

Yesterday (Monday, the 4th of February) was the day, when the public were, through the press, to have the matter *broken to them*. Till Saturday the public were full in the expectation of a change of ministry ; a total change. After what had passed ; after the manner in which the

Prince had received the proposition of Mr. Perceval; after his declining to see him; after the Protest of his Brothers; after the speeches of Mr. Sheridan; after the Answer of the Prince to the Deputation from the two Houses; after all this, and especially after the charges of Lord Grey against Lord Eldon, the public could not believe it possible, that the present men would be retained by the Prince. Alas! those who thought thus, knew little of the matter. They did not reflect at all upon the motives of action in such a case. They did not see into the nature of the Prince's situation. They knew that it required only a *word* to dismiss the ministers, and another word to choose others; but, they did not consider any further; they did not take into their consideration the *difficulties* that would attend the pronouncing of these two *words*, or, rather, that would instantly grow out of the pronouncing of them.

Therefore, the news, when it came out, produced universal astonishment.

The MORNING CHRONICLE, which may be regarded as speaking *officially*, the sentiments, and uttering the assertions, of the OUT party, who expected to come in, endeavours to put a good face upon the matter. It represents the Prince as having taken this unexpected step from motives of *filial affection*, and the persons kept out as having *highly approved of his conduct*.

But, we must read this most curious article, before we make any further remarks upon it. The reader must, and will, regard it as the *Official Declaration* of the OUTS, especially of those persons, who were embodying themselves under Lords GRENVILLE and GREY, who have been aptly enough termed the *Twins* of the Political Zodiac. I beg the reader to mark well the contents of this article, which is matter for *history*; and the substance of which must have a prominent place in the historian's account of this matchless intrigue.

"The reports made to the Prince of Wales of the progressive amendment in
 "the King's health, and the hope that the Physicians give of his re-establish-
 "ment, have made a deep impression on the breast of his Royal Highness, whose
 "feelings of affection and reverence for his Father and Sovereign are necessarily
 "combined with the sense of obligation which he owes to the public. He had
 "thought it his duty, in the contemplation of having the affairs of the Realm
 "committed to his charge for a length of time, and in a way which might have
 "enabled him to exercise his judgment in the administration of the Royal Au-
 "thority for the honour of his Majesty's Crown, and the best interests of the
 "people, to lay his commands on Lord Grenville and Lord Grey, to make an
 "arrangement for a Council that should possess his entire confidence; and it is
 "known that these noble Lords undertook the task; fully sensible of the irksome
 "and arduous labour they had to fulfil, but feeling that it was only left for them
 "to meet the awful and accumulated difficulties of the crisis, with a confident
 "expectation that their exertions, under the restraints which had been imposed
 "on the Regent, would be duly appreciated by the country; and at the same
 "time with an earnest hope, that the prospect of a speedy return of his Majesty
 "to the personal exercise of his Royal functions would make their services un-
 "necessary.

"It had accordingly been their uniform advice to his Royal Highness (and in
 "which he most cordially concurred) that when the time should come for his
 "being called on to take upon himself the duties of the Regal Office, in the
 "name of the King, he should examine the Physicians to satisfy his own mind,
 "and be governed accordingly, in the full conviction that there might be more
 "detriment to the public interests in a temporary change of system, than even
 "in the continuance for a short time of an erroneous system. This examination
 "has actually taken place at Carlton House. The physicians have been seve-
 "rally and successively examined by the Prince's Chancellor, in the presence of

“his Royal Highness; and we understand, that the result of that inquiry is, that though they cannot speak with any greater degree of certainty than at their examinations before the two Houses, as to the precise time when it may be expected that his Majesty could safely return to the exercise of his Royal functions, whether it is probable that he should be able to return at the end of two months or of three months, yet they all concur in expressing their confident belief in his ultimate recovery.

“In consequence of this opinion, we understand, the Prince sent a message to Lord Grenville and Lord Grey, at a late hour on Friday night, announcing to them his determination not to make any change of Ministers at this time. The message was conveyed by Mr. Adam and Lord Hutchinson, and was expressed in the most handsome terms of approbation of their conduct, and of thanks for the readiness with which they had yielded to his request to form an arrangement, if circumstances should make it proper for him to interpose his own judgment, as to the fit and wise system of measures to be pursued on the present alarming condition of our affairs; and concluding with a declaration of his unabated confidence in their wisdom and ability, to conduct the Administration upon principles the most advantageous to the Crown and People. This intimation will be received with real satisfaction by the friends of those noble Lords, who must all feel with them that nothing but a sense of imperious duty could have induced them to enter into office in the dilemma created by a temporary defect in the Royal Authority. Three months, the most important perhaps that have ever occurred in our history, have already passed under a total suspension of the functions of Government—and another month must necessarily have been added to the delay, if the Prince had yielded to the patriotic sentiment of his mind, and recurred all at once to the principles upon which he thinks the Administration would be most beneficially conducted. So much time would have been required for the re-election of those who must have vacated their seats, and for the re-establishment of the routine of office—a delay which certainly might be productive of more serious calamity than what can be conceived probable from the perseverance in the system, until the hopes held out by the physicians shall be realized; or until time shall have destroyed these hopes. It is a moment, too, when public business of the most urgent nature calls for instant prosecution—and we need not add that it is a moment when, whatever may have been the rashness or the folly of embarking in the career of the present system, it is too late to interrupt its march, or even to avert its issue—and above all, we are sure the whole nation will concur in respecting and applauding the filial and affectionate motives of reverence to his Royal Father, which have influenced his Royal Highness to take this step. —The noble Lords, we understand, received the intimation in a way corresponding with their high character and their just sense of the public interests. They had the honour of a long audience of the Prince at Carlton House yesterday, when he was graciously pleased personally to renew the assurances of his perfect esteem and confidence.

“We have uniformly stated to our readers, that if circumstances should force his Royal Highness to call upon the noble Lords to take upon them the administration, they would not shrink from the duty, however arduous,—and that they would be prepared with an arrangement that would give equal satisfaction to his Royal Highness, and the people of the United Kingdom. All the stories in the Ministerial papers of cabals and differences about the adjustment of places are totally false. There was no contention whatever: indeed, the minds of men must be singularly composed, who, at such a period, should be ready to jostle for situations. In fact, however, it was an arrangement to be made of one united compact body of men, all holding the same principles, and all animated by the same views; there was no contrariety of sentiment whatever; and an Administration of more internal strength, by the ties of mutual friendship—of more public influence by talents, integrity, and stake in the country, never has been submitted to any Prince. We say so much from what we hear of the public functionaries; for we believe that the arrangement did not go lower, and that it was never formally presented to the Prince for his approbation.

“The proceedings which remain to be pursued on the Regency Bill are few. The Resolution for putting the Great Seal to the Bill, though unwarranted by any precedent, or by any analogy in the books, will pass the two

"Houses this day; and the Regent may be sworn in before the Privy Council to-morrow. It will be then for Mr. Perceval and his friends to submit to his Royal Highness their further plan of proceedings; but whether they will propose to him a short prorogation, or only an adjournment for a day or two, we shall not, from obvious motives of delicacy, presume to anticipate.

"It is certain that up to four o'clock in the afternoon of Saturday ministers had made preparations for their retreat, and with some of those preparations the public will in due time be made acquainted. Whether they will still retire, notwithstanding the determination of his Royal Highness to keep them, if they think proper, we shall probably learn in the course of this day or to-morrow."

Reader, was there ever so miserable an attempt as this to disguise a defeat? The tale is perfectly piteous. It is lamentable. One almost feels compassion for the persons who could condescend to dictate or to pen it.

Let us, however, as being a tale of woe, as being the defence of the unfortunate, hear it with patience, and so far treat it with respect as to bestow on it a few short observations, though, in reality, it stands in need of none.

We are first told, that the Twin Lords received the commands of the Prince to form a ministry for him, and that they had done so; but, that, at the same time, they *earnestly hoped*, that the King's *speedy* recovery would prevent the necessity of their coming into office.

Well, now suppose this last assertion to be true, in the face of all the earnest endeavours that have been used to inculcate the notion (and a very proper notion), that, even in case of a recovery, the King ought not to be called upon to resume the royal authority for some time; in the face of the charges against Lord Eldon; in the face of all that we have seen, supposing it to be true, that these two Lords *earnestly hoped*, that the King might be brought out again to business *speedily*; suppose this; still, it seems, they had *got their new ministry ready*, and had been commanded to get one ready, and, we shall see, by-and-by, how this squares with the rest of the tale.

An examination of the Physicians, by the advice of these Lords, took place. The result was, that there was no *certainly* when the recovery would take place; it might be *two months*, or *three months*, or longer; and, *this being the case*, the Prince *resolved to keep in the present ministry*, which was very wise, and was highly approved of by these Lords, because it would have taken a month to settle the new ministry, and it was better to let a bad system go on uninterrupted than suspend it for a short time, and because the keeping in of the King's servants was a mark of filial affection in the Prince towards his father, which all the nation must approve of.

Aye, this is a very pretty story; but the worst of it is, it will not bear the test of dates; for, as to the result of the examination of the Physicians at Carlton House, as here stated, it is *precisely the same as that of the Examination of them by the Lords' Committee*, which took place six weeks ago. How, then, could *this examination* have produced any *change* in the intention of the Prince as to the forming of a ministry? The Examination before the Lords' Committee, as will be seen in the Report (See Part I, of Vol. 18, of the Parl. Debates, p. 202) amounts to precisely the same as the examination is said to have done at Carlton House. In both, the opinions of *all* the Physicians went to *ultimate recovery*; and, as to the *time*, they are no more precise in the latter case than they were in the former.

Now, then, let it be observed, that the Resolutions relative to the plan of a Regency were not presented to the Prince till long *after* the Examination before the Lords' Committee, which took place on the 17th of December; and, of course, the Prince could not give his commands about a new ministry, until he had accepted of the Office of Regent; so, that, it follows, of course, that, when he gave his commands to form a ministry for him, he had *just the same prospect before him as to his father's recovery that he had on Friday last.*

This at once knocks up all the miserable pretence about a change of views in the Prince proceeding from the examination of the Physicians at Carlton House. The examination upon oath before the Lords' Committee represents the King as *getting better*, as *improving*, all the Physicians say, and swear, that they look confidently to *ultimate recovery*, but that the *time* required for it may be longer or shorter. And, is not the same result said to have appeared at Carlton House? Is there any thing *new* that has come out of that examination? And, who, then, can be so very stupid as to believe, that the change in the Prince's intention as to his ministers has grown out of the examination at Carlton House?

These same facts, and precisely the same reasoning, apply to what is said by the Morning Chronicle with regard to the motive of "*filial affection* in the Prince towards his father." If this motive has *now* induced him to keep in the present men, how came it to have no weight with him a fortnight or a month ago? The motive is childish. It might do well enough in common life, where a man has nothing but his family's interest to set against any supposed predilection of his father; but, in the case of the Prince it is something a great deal worse than childish to suppose that it could have any operative effect; for, if he did, as we are here told he did, look upon Lords Grenville and Grey as the fittest persons to advise him in this "*awful crisis* of the country," what are *the people* to think of his setting those Lords aside, and keeping in the present men, because the putting of them out would be likely to give offence to his father; especially after he himself, has, in so solemn a manner, declared, that all the powers and prerogatives of the crown are vested there for the *benefit of the people*, and in that light *only* are sacred? Oh, no! This will never do; and, therefore, this notion of the motive of "*filial affection*," must be regarded as a mere invention for the purpose of accounting for the change in the Prince's choice in a way the least humiliating to those, whom he has, at last, rejected, and whose chagrin it is the object of the Morning Chronicle to disguise, not considering, perhaps, that, in ascribing such motives of action to the Prince, inferences very injurious to him, as regards *the people*, are clearly conveyed.

But, if we were to admit, for argument sake, that such motives have produced this change in his choice, how unaccountable does his conduct then appear, seeing that the same motives ought to have operated, if at all, at *every stage* of the proceedings? If he is *now* induced to keep in the present men because the putting of them out would be offensive to his father, would give pain to his father, why did not this motive weigh with him *before*, and prevent him from giving his commands to the Twin Lords to form a ministry for him? The hopes and expectations of recovery were *the same* a month ago that they are now. They were *sworn* to before the commands to form a ministry could possibly have been given by the Prince. But, at any rate, what no one will attempt to

deny is this: that, from first to last, *all* the Physicians, in *all* their examinations, have distinctly declared their confident opinion, that the King will **ULTIMATELY** recover. Now, this being the case, what becomes of the motive ascribed to the Prince by the Morning Chronicle? What becomes of this motive which the Chronicle says will be applauded by the whole country? At every stage, *all* the Physicians declared, in a manner the most decided, that they relied on *ultimate* recovery; therefore, as the Prince must be well aware, that the King's feelings would be hurt, if hurt at all, by the dismissal of his servants, and that this pain would take place *whenever the recovery came*, is it not most pitiful to pretend that the change of intention has arisen from the motive of "*filial affection*?" Just as if that motive would not have restrained him from giving *his commands* to form a new ministry, if it has now restrained him from putting out the King's servants. What had *time* to do with the matter? What was the consequence whether he gave his father pain at the end of two months or at the end of six months? The nature and the quantity of the pain would have been exactly the same. What! will the Morning Chronicle accompany with *praises* of the Prince an assertion, that he would run the risk of giving, nay, that he would actually give, his father that pain at the end of *a year* which he would not give him at the end of *a month*?

No: this is too palpable. This pretence; this attempt to break the fall of the rejected party is too grossly absurd to be entertained for a moment.

With regard to the *real motives*, by which the Prince was, in all probability, actuated in the change of his intention, we will, by-and-by, offer an observation or two; but, we have not yet done with the Morning Chronicle.

The Prince, we are told, notified this change of intention to the two noble Lords, "*in the handsomest manner.*" Oh, ay, I'll warrant him he has not lived *forty-eight* years in the Court of George the Third without knowing how to do such a thing *handsomely*. Earl GREY (then Lord Howick), when he announced his own dismission to the House of Commons, also spoke of the *graciousness* of the King to him personally. Ay; but the *dismission* took place. Words cost nothing. It is from *acts* that we ought to judge.

But, we are told by this writer, that the Prince has assured the two noble Lords, that he will, if the King's illness should be of long duration, avail himself of their advice; that is to say, that he will have them for his ministers, and of course will turn off his father's servants.

As to their *ever* being the ministers of the Prince we will inquire into the probability by-and-by; but as to his having assured them, that he will have them, in case of a *lengthened duration* of his father's illness, the supposition, especially when taken into view along with the other statements in this article, is an outrage to common sense. What! "*filial affection* for his father" restrains him from turning out his servants at *this moment*; but, it does not restrain him from telling the world, and, of course, that same father, that he will do it, if he has a prospect of possessing the *power* of so doing for any *length of time*! And this, if the declaration were made, the father must know the moment he is restored to the use of his reason, and, perhaps, before he is so perfectly restored to it as not to be in imminent danger of a relapse. The father, that father towards whom the Prince, as we are here told, has so

much of "*filial affection*," is, upon his recovery to find, what? Not that his son has turned off his servants. No: he is to be spared that pain. He is not to find that. But, according to this writer, he is to find, that his son has declared, that he would have turned out these servants if he had had the power for any length of time; and, he is to find too, that his son would have taken in those whom his father lately turned out, because *their principles* are best calculated to rescue the country from the perils with which it is surrounded; aye, he is to find, clearly recorded by inference in a declaration of his son, that it would be good for the country if he had not recovered.

Was there ever any thing more monstrous than this? Was there ever anything more revolting to all just sense of feeling? Is it possible to place his Royal Highness in a worse light than he has here been placed by this writer? And for what? What have these pretended motives been conjured up for? For what but to *palliate the humiliation of the party rejected*. The *real motives* of which we will speak by-and-by, would not answer this purpose. Others, therefore, were to be discovered; and I am persuaded the reader will agree, that, in the selection, it was almost impossible to show less regard for *the character of the Prince*.

Now, before we come to our observations upon the *real cause* of this alteration in the Prince's intention as to a change of the ministry, let us put upon record the answer which the COURIER gives to the article above quoted from the MORNING CHRONICLE, which article it very properly styles the *Manifesto* of those, who have had the delicious cup of place and power and profit and patronage dashed from their lips. This article of the COURIER is a *stinger*. The writer speaks in the voice of triumph; he laughs and scoffs at his opponent, and well he may. The victory is so clearly on his side. It is so complete; that if he did not exult, he would exhibit an instance of magnanimity by no means to be expected from him.

"We stated on Thursday that the dismissal of the present Ministers was intended as soon as the Regency Bill had received the Royal Assent.—Something like an official notification to that effect was conveyed to them, and they had made the necessary preparation in their respective offices. 'The Prince had laid his commands upon Lords Grenville and Grey to make an arrangement for a Council that should possess his entire confidence, and these noble Lords undertook the task.' This has been officially stated to-day. In consequence of his Royal Highness's commands an arrangement was formed. Lord Grenville was to be the Prime Minister, Earl Grey holding the same situation he did before. Lord Grenville, however, is said to have at first expressed his doubts whether so immediate a change of Ministers would be advisable. But the Foxites, always rapacious and thirsting for place, maintained a contrary opinion—they were for immediate dismissal, and Lord Grenville's doubts were removed. But the Regent, escaping on a sudden from that baneful advice that would have made him dismiss his father's Ministers, merely because they were his father's, and select others who were known not to be in possession of his father's confidence, has adopted a determination that will entitle him to the thanks of the whole country. He has resolved not to make any change of Ministers at this time. This resolution was formed after an examination of his Majesty's physicians by his Royal Highness's Chancellor, Mr. Adam, in the presence of his Royal Highness, at Carlton House, on Friday last. The public have seen the attempts made of late to throw discredit upon the bulletins, and to insinuate that his Majesty was not so well as they represented him to be. His Royal Highness has ascertained the contrary to be the fact, and the physicians all concurred in their examination before him, in expressing their confident belief that his Majesty's health will be completely restored, and in all probability at no distant period. This unanimous declaration of the physicians convinced his Royal Highness of the detriment that

" must accrue to the public interests from calling men to his Councils who were known to possess principles so diametrically opposite to those of the present Ministers, and who would in all likelihood adopt a total change of system. Soon after the examination, therefore, of the physicians, and at a late hour on Friday night, his Royal Highness sent Mr. Adam to Lord Grenville, and Lord Hutchinson to Earl Grey, with a message (most unexpected, no doubt, by them), announcing it to be his Royal Highness's determination not to make any change in the Administration. His Royal Highness expressed his thanks for the readiness with which they had acceded to his request to arrange a new Ministry, 'if circumstances should make it proper for him to interpose his own judgment, as to the fit and wise system of measures to be pursued on the present alarming condition of our affairs; and concluding with a declaration of his unabated confidence in their wisdom and ability, to conduct the Administration upon principles the most advantageous to the Crown and people.' This intimation of his Royal Highness's determination to persevere in the present system will be received with real satisfaction, not as the Morning Chronicle says, by the friends of the noble Lords, or the noble Lords themselves, but certainly by the whole country. But it is not a little curious and ludicrous to hear the supporters of those personages now applaud the Prince for rejecting the advice they gave, and for declining to proceed in that career which they had marked out for him. 'So much time,' they say, 'would have been required for the re-election of those who must have vacated their seats, and for the re-establishment of the routine of office; a delay which certainly might be productive of more serious calamity than what can be conceived probable from the perseverance in the system, until the hopes held out by the physicians shall be realized; or until time shall have destroyed these hopes.' Is this a new discovery? Has not this been obvious from the commencement of the business? If delay would have been so calamitous to the public service, why did not they state it to his Royal Highness? Why did not they declare that the public business demanded instant prosecution, which a change of ministers must necessarily prevent? Why did they place it upon record as they have done, that desire of power and place was more powerful in their minds than the good of the public service, which they now avow, now when their assistance is not wanted, would have been exposed to serious injury by the dismissal of the present ministers? These are questions which we leave for them to answer in that leisure and retirement to which, happily for the nation, they are doomed to remain. But they affect to be quite pleased with the Prince for his message; they are not disappointed, not angry; no, not in the least. Like Sir Fretful Plagiary, each exclaims, 'I'd have you to know, Sir, I'm vastly satisfied; not at all angry, quite happy and contented.' The Prince, who was the theme of their panegyric when he was going to take them in, is equally the theme of their panegyric now that he is determined to keep them out. They are 'fit for either field.' They blow hot and cold at once. And above all, they add 'we are sure the whole nation will concur in respecting and applauding the filial and affectionate motives of reverence to his Royal Father, which have influenced his Royal Highness to take this step.' We are sure of this also, and that while the country will loudly and universally applaud this determination of his Royal Highness, it will view with abhorrence and indignation the conduct of those who would have had him follow a different line of conduct. What answer the noble personages returned to the Prince's message we know not.

" The Morning Chronicle has thrown a veil over it, only assuring us briefly that they received the 'intimation in a way corresponding with their high character and their just sense of the public interests.' Both Lord Grenville and Earl Grey had long audiences of his Royal Highness yesterday.—But if the Prince is convinced of the danger and injury that would arise from a change of ministers, why cannot the party suppose that his Majesty's ministers are equally sensible of it themselves? The Regent of course would have had the power to deprive them of office, and to call others to his Councils, but their retirement would not have been their own act. This was explicitly stated when their dismissal was determined upon and made public. *A fortiori*, they will not think it their duty to resign, now that the Regent has notified his sense of the danger that would accrue from a change of men and measures.—This resolution of the Regent to walk in the steps of his father has brightened

"the prospect before us. It has placed his character, both public and private, in the most amiable point of view. He feels that it is only by keeping the principles of his Father steadily in view that he can preserve the nation in its present situation of unequalled pride and glory and power, commanding the world.—The Regent will be sworn in before the Privy Council to-morrow, and it is probable that both Houses will adjourn to Monday next, when his Royal Highness will go down in state, and open the Session. In the *acclamations* that will be bestowed upon him in his procession to the House, he will find the recompense and the approbation of the conduct he has determined to adopt."

In the hey-day of his triumph, one must excuse a little bombast, and, therefore, the idea of the country being now placed in a situation "to command the world" may be passed over. But, what he says in some other parts is delicious. It must be to the balked party as pleasant as hot lead poured down their backs. Yes, yes. "The Prince has age and experience;" the Prince is "capable of forming a right judgment;" and the Prince, having had time and opportunity to examine into the matter, finds, that to pursue the system of his revered father, to tread in his step, and, of course, to have *the same ministers*, is the only way to insure the safety and happiness of the nation! This is excellent. This is right on to the point; and it is what I defy the Morning Chronicle to controvert. We shall now hear from this venal man of the COURIER no more insinuations against the Prince of Wales; no more threats to revive "unpleasant discussions as to his pecuniary affairs;" no more assertions of his "pecuniary embarrassments having been the greatest cause of his unpopularity." We shall now hear nothing more of this sort from him. Nor do I think, that we shall again hear him calling the other Princes "GREAT BABIES." He will find all of a sudden, that they have acted a very wise part, especially if it be true, as we are told in the newspapers, that some of them were the bearers of the glad tidings to Lord Eldon and Mr. Perceval. He will now discover, that they are fit for *something more* than "dancing at a Duchess's Ball;" a discovery, which the unfortunate OUTS have, with lips half bitten through, already made.

The MORNING POST, too, lifts its hoof at the fallen party, now that it sees them down. It has been pricking up its long ears for some days past; it has been braying out some very significant compliments to the Prince: and, now back goes its hoof in a jerk, at those very men, whom, only ten days ago, it denominated "*highly respectable individuals*," as distinguished from *Sir Francis Burdett and his crew*."

It is worth while to hear a little of what this man now says, being, however, very cautious how we believe him.

The *Manifesto*, of which he speaks, is the article above quoted from the Morning Chronicle.

"The Manifesto to which we allude (for it clearly is a Manifesto, authorized by a part, at least, of the Opposition), gives us to understand, in the first place, that the determination to retain the present Ministers was grounded upon the opinion given by the Physicians, upon their examination by the Prince's Chancellor, of his Majesty's ultimate complete recovery. Now, we undertake to assert, without fear of contradiction, that this examination took place *very early in the last week*; and we are distinctly informed by the Organ of Opposition, that it was not until Friday night that the resolution was taken to make no change in the Administration. We therefore believe it to be a misrepresentation as important as it is complete, to say that the resolution followed the report of the Physicians;—important, as well because it is calculated to support the assertion that there were no *difficulties* in the arrangement of the

"projected Government, as because it implies that it was at the advice of the Noble Lords who, as we were given to understand, were commanded to prepare the new lists, that the change of Ministry was rendered dependent upon the state of his Majesty's health. We assert, without any fear of contradiction, that at the very moment in which the determination was communicated to the Noble Lords, they were engaged in discussing their projects of a new Administration; the communication (if we are not more grossly misinformed than, as we suspect the Morning Chronicle will tell us that we are), so far from being the result of any advice or opinion submitted to the Royal Personage by the Noble Lords, was a complete surprise upon the whole party, who rather expected a message to *hasten their deliberations*, than one which put a stop to them altogether.

"These facts would perhaps be of little importance, if they did not entirely overturn a delusion, which it is, evidently enough, the purpose of the Manifesto to encourage, namely, that every preparation for forming a new Administration originated with the Great Person himself; that it was with exceeding reluctance that the Noblemen and Gentlemen who were intended to compose it, consented to take upon themselves so heavy a burden; and that to be relieved from it was to them a *cause of unspeakable joy*! This representation is equally untrue and mischievous; that it is untrue the language of every person concerned, throughout the whole of Saturday and Sunday, before, in short, the Manifesto was issued to convince them that they were the *luckiest of human beings*, will sufficiently testify; its mischief appears in the disloyal and dishonest attempt to fix upon his Royal Highness the desire of changing the Government, and upon those whose wishes were to be gratified by the change, nothing but *an humble obedience to his Royal Command*."

This is all fair, To an attempt to make the public believe, that the OUTS did *not wish* to come into power, it is impossible to affix any epithet too contemptuous, What! after all that we have seen; after what has been before our eyes for the last three years; after the language of the men themselves and of their partizans for the last three months only; nay, but the last week, are we to be told, that they were solicitous to *avoid* place and power? This really is too impudent. If, however, this be their talk, they stand a good chance of being gratified to their heart's content; for, unless all my reasoning upon the subject be grossly erroneous, never will any set of men, with Lords GRENVILLE and GREY, or either of them at their head, be ministers again in this country. Their exclusion from political power appears to me to be irrevocably passed; and for my thinking so I will now state the reasons.

From what has been said above, there cannot, I think, remain, in the mind of any man of common sense, the smallest doubt, that the motives which have been alleged by the Morning Chronicle for the Prince's having changed his intention, have no foundation in truth.

The real motives, in my opinion, were very different; and, it will be found, I think, upon examination, that, placed as the Prince was at last, it was impossible for him to do otherwise than he has done, unless he had resolved upon a total, a radical, change of system, at once, a prominent feature in which system would have been that reform of the Commons House of Parliament, which has so long been the chief object with so large a part of the people.

The Morning Chronicle tells us, that the two Lords had formed a famously good ministry: "*an Administration of more internal strength, by the ties of mutual friendship, of more public influence, by talents, integrity, and stake in the country, than ever has been submitted to any Prince; one united, compact body of men, all holding the same principles, and all animated by the same views.*"

This is a very fine description. Here are *friendship*, INFLUENCE, *talents, integrity*, and STAKE, (that is to say *money*.) and *principles*; but *what* principles is not stated; nor is there a word said about what this fine ministry would have done for *the people*.

Whether there had been any *differences* as to who should compose the ministry is more than I can say; but if I may judge from the past, a ministry elected by Lords Grenville and Grey would have excluded almost the whole of those, to whom the Prince was most attached; and, if he was thus to be treated, it is very clear, that it was, as far as personal feeling went, better for him to keep the present men, who, I believe, had always treated *him and his particular friends* much better than they were treated by the *late ministry*.

I shall be told that these are considerations that ought not to have much weight in so momentous a case. Very true. They ought not; but it is quite impossible to divest ourselves of all feeling; and, though I am disposed not to ascribe any very great weight to these considerations, still they must have *some* weight given to them.

There were two sets of ministers talked of. One, with Lord HOLLAND at its head, and the other with Lords Grenville and Grey, for these two are always put together. From the former, the people would have expected *something*: from the latter *nothing*. It was supposed, with what correctness I know not, that his Royal Highness, the Prince, leant towards the former; but, it was, at the same time, very evident, especially after the Restrictions were carried, that he could not, without a dissolution of Parliament, *go on* with a ministry so composed.

It is likely that the bent of his mind was towards Lord HOLLAND, and men of that description; and, at any rate, it must be supposed, when we look back to 1806, that he would not, if he had had his free choice, have delivered up himself and his particular friends into the hands of Lords Grenville and Grey.

The probabilities are, therefore, that he had not, from the beginning, any liking to a ministry of their forming; and if he did give his commands to them to form a ministry, the progress might more and more tend to convince him that he should do better with the present men than with them.

This, however, I give to the reader as mere conjecture; but, I think, it is evident, that, situated as he was at last, he could not have *gone on* with a ministry of their making up; that he could not, by any means, in the present state of the Parliament, have carried the government on for a week with such a ministry.

If the Regency had been given to him *without restrictions* (which restrictions, be it observed, Lord Grenville *supported*), such a ministry might have gone on as well, or, rather as ill, as the ministry of 1806, composed of the same persons. But, when the power of making peers; the power of granting pensions; the power of granting office for life or in reversion; when the control over the Crown Lands; when the immense patronage of the Household; when the privy purse; when all these were taken from him, how was he to *go on* with a *dead majority against him in both Houses of Parliament*? It is nonsense to talk about his choice or his wishes or his affections or his commands to form a ministry; I ask, how he was to *go on*? There was only *one* way of even attempting to go on under such circumstances, and that was first proposing *a reform of Parliament*, and then, whether that proposition

were rejected or not, *dissolving* the Parliament, or in the words of the King's speech of 1807, "*appealing to the sense of the people.*" This was the *only* course left to be pursued. This course was not to be expected from Lords Grenville and Grey. To follow it he must have chosen other men, if such men had been to be found. His only choice lay, therefore, between the *present system*, whole and unmixed, and untouched, and *parliamentary reform*. There was no middle course for him to pursue. In short, to represent the things by persons, his choice lay between Mr. PERCEVAL and Sir FRANCIS BURDETT, and I am sure the OUTS, who so manfully "*rallied round*" the former against the latter, cannot, when they have taken time to reflect (and time enough they will have for reflection) do otherwise than commend the choice that has been made. When Mr. MADOX made his motion, his ever-memorable motion about the seat-selling, the OUTS "*rallied round*" Mr. Perceval; they defended, they justified him; they, therefore, ought to be amongst the last men in this whole world to find fault of the present choice of his Royal Highness; and, as to *the people*, if they find one *free* man in all England to join them in finding fault of Mr. Perceval's being preferred to *them*, I will acknowledge that I know nothing at all of the disposition of my countrymen.

Now, as to their *future* prospects; I mean the future prospects of those who would have composed a ministry with Lords Grenville and Grey at the head of it.

We are told by the Morning Chronicle, that the Prince has intimated to them, that when he is at liberty to pursue his own plans, he will avail himself of their talents.

We have before remarked upon the injury that this assertion (if believed) is calculated to do to the character of the Prince: it only remains for us to remark upon the folly of indulging any hope in the prospect that it holds out.

If the King recover *speedily*, there is, at once, an end to the hopes of those who entertain this expectation of *future* favour. He will either recover speedily, or he will not; if the latter, then, let it be observed, that Mr. Perceval is still Minister, that it is *he* who has all the *current* patronage, and, which is a great deal more, he is *sure* to be *King's* Minister again; he is, in fact Minister, in *reversion*, if the King recover during Mr. Perceval's life; he has, from this peculiarity of circumstances, a footing far more solid than any Minister ever had before.

This will give him great weight amongst those with whom he has to do, and whose support it is most material for him to have. Being now the Prince's adviser, he will be the person to be consulted as to the granting of *pensions*, *places for life*, and the like; and, then, the restrictions will, in fact, in this respect, be of no consequence; for, whatever the Prince may be advised to grant, will, of course be *confirmed*, in case of the resumption of the royal authority by the King. Are the OUTS not aware of all this? Do they not perceive how much *easier* and *pleasanter* the Prince will get on with Mr. Perceval, than he could have got on with them?

There is now nothing that his Royal Highness may wish to do for any one attached to his person (so that the party to be served meddle not with *politics*) which will not readily and cheerfully be done. Nay, I should not wonder much if Mr. TIERNEY and another or two were admitted into the buildings at Whitehall; but, as for the ministry-makers,

the men of "*stake*," never will they again put their noses into those buildings.

But, "*at the end of the year the restrictions expire.*" Yes; so they do; but a year is a *long while*; many things happen in a year; and, if all other matters hold together till next February, Mr. Perceval must be a very lame man indeed if he be not much more powerful than he now is, and if the Prince have not much *stronger* reasons for keeping him in than he had for choosing him.

In short, with the *Grenvillites* and the *Greyites* the game is up; completely up. They thought, and I told them they were deceived, that they could go on without *an appeal to the people*. They have *already* found themselves deceived. Hitherto in England there have been a *court party* and a *country party*; the *King's party* and the *people's party*; but, here we had a party, who would acknowledge neither. A party composed of men of "*stake*." Well, let them keep their "*stake*;" but let them not hope, that *the people* care a straw about their *stake*.

One comfort will be, that all their apprehensions will now be removed about *the King being brought out again before he be perfectly recovered*. We shall *now* hear no expressions of alarm upon this score. All parties will *now* be perfectly agreed as to this important point. The Prince's choice, like the Knight-Errent's balsam, heals all wounds, past, present, and to come.

Indeed, the thing is so complete, the discomfiture of the men of *stake* is so decisive, that I am thoroughly persuaded they never can "*rally*" again. I made a promise almost as strong as an oath, some years ago, that I never would go into the gallery of the House of Commons, again; but, if I were not, like the Bank, under the influence of a *restraining law*, I certainly should be tempted to break my promise. I should like, of all things in the world to see some men now with my own eyes, and hear them with my own ears.

The fall of the men of *stake* has proceeded solely from their contempt of the people generally, and particularly from the contumely, with which they have treated the applications for *reform*; and *now*, all those who have any sense must perceive, that this is the *only* ground left whereon to stand in opposition to any ministry carrying on the government upon the present system. There used to be a talk about the *Prince*, and what the *Prince* would do, *when he came to the throne*, which, by the by, was very unconstitutional talk; but, now they see what he will do, what he can do, and I have clearly shown, I think, that, unless he had had men ready to propose and stand firmly to a proposition for parliamentary reform, the Prince could do nothing but what he has done, unless he had refused the Regency altogether.

I do not lump together the whole of those persons who composed the *late ministry*; nor do I wish, by any means, to impute any base motives to Lord Grenville or Lord Grey; but, in the latter, there is so much disregard of the people, that he never can be a popular minister, and haughtiness towards the people is, too, the more resented on account of his former professions. Lord Grenville is a sensible man, and he has nothing of the mean intriguer about him. But there is that in his *whole family*, in all their connections and situations, which forbid the people to look towards them for a reform of Parliament, without which no other measure will ever again make any minister popular, be he who or what he may. Indeed (and it cannot be too often repeated) this is now the *only*

ground of opposition to any ministry ; and those who will not join their voices in calling for this great measure, will excite neither interest nor attention. What is the use of cavilling and carping at this or that little thing ? What is the use of a contest, which all the world knows will lead to no practical effect, and which has, indeed, no practical effect in view ? Even great things, such as the fate of Sir John Moore's army and the affair of Walcheren, excite no interest, because the people do not see, that they would be bettered by any change of councils that the struggle may produce. It would be just the same in case of a failure in Portugal. Some *borough*, under the control of him who found an interest in getting it, might send up a petition ; but, in this whole kingdom, not a *free* man would move pen or tongue to put out the ministry upon any such ground. But, once let the question of *reform* be espoused by any considerable number of the members of Parliament ; once let that question be agitated in a way that would show the parties to be *in earnest*, and you would see that the people of England are still alive to the interests and honour of their country. It is quite useless for the men of "*stake*" to fold up their arms and be sulky. There they may remain folded up till they grow to stone. If they care nothing for the people, the people care as little for them. The people have a *stake* as well as they ; and, if this be denied, why, then, those who possess no stake have no stake to *lose*.

WM. COBBETT.

State Prison, Newgate, Tuesday,
February 5, 1811.

KING'S ILLNESS.—THE REGENCY.—*Continued.*

(*Political Register*, February, 1811.)

THE last scene of this curious political drama has been performed, and every man of sense is now able to decide upon the *character* and *conduct* of the different actors. There nevertheless requires some observations, in addition to those offered in my last Article, as to the *catastrophe* of the piece ; not because the thing itself is of a puzzling nature ; but because so many and such strenuous attempts are made, by the writers of the two conflicting parties, to *disguise the truth*. It is the interest of the two parties to ascribe the Prince's choice of the present ministers to motives precisely opposite ; but it is the interest of neither to ascribe them to the *true* motive. The two parties are quite in earnest as to the desire of annoying each other ; but they are both alike anxious not to expose themselves to the contempt of the people. They would fain tear each other to pieces ; each would fain annihilate the other ; but, both prefer even defeat and disgrace from the hands of each other, to any confession that would tend to show, that a want of the people's confidence has had any weight in the event. All considerations as to the people, both are anxious to keep out of sight ; but, there is no reason why the *public* should keep them out of sight ; on the contrary, this conduct of

the writers of the two parties is, of itself, a sufficient reason for stripping the matter of all the disguise that has been attempted to be thrown over it, and to place it upon record in a way that shall prevent the possibility of misunderstanding it.

In my last Article I left it pretty plain, I think, that the MORNING CHRONICLE had assigned wrong motives to the Prince (whom we must now call THE REGENT) for the change in his intention as to the choice of his ministers. It was there clearly shown, that to ascribe his conduct to the re-examination of the Physicians at Carlton House, or to a feeling of filial affection for his father, at the same time that he was said to have declared his resolution to change the ministry if he held the Regency for any length of time; it was clearly shown, I think, that this account of the matter, while it was barely *possible* to be true, was *improbable* in the extreme, and, if true, greatly injurious to the understanding and the character of the Regent; that it placed him in the most disadvantageous and even odious light, exhibiting a fickleness of mind, a want of all feeling for the people, a want of constancy towards his known friends and adherents, and, though the contrary was affected, a want of even outward respect for the public character of his father, seeing, that, while it stated him to have declined changing the ministry lest it should *give pain* to his father, it made him declare, that *such a change was necessary for the good of the country*, and that he was only prevented from immediately making it lest it should *give pain* to his father, aye, lest a change *for the good of the country* should *give pain* to his father upon his recovery, and of course by that declaration inferring, that his father's recovery would *not be for the good of the country*.

It was, I think, very clearly shown, that the true motive had been disguised by the MORNING CHRONICLE for the purpose of saving its friends from ridicule, on account of their defeat.

Nor is there any more truth and sincerity in the motive assigned by the writers of the other party, who tell us, that the determination not to change the ministry was produced by a *Letter from the Queen* to his Royal Highness. There is something so childish in such a notion; it is so inconsistent with all ideas of wisdom and manliness; it has so much of the nursery and the leading-strings in it, that when one thinks of it in connection with the *age* of the Prince, one can scarcely forbear bursting out into laughter. But, when one considers it as applying to a measure affecting the happiness of fifteen millions of people, affecting the safety of a kingdom, it really fills one with indignation that any man should openly assert such a motive to have been the ground of action.

The writer, who ascribes the Regent's change of intention to a *Letter from his Mother*, does not, let it be observed, attempt to *deny*, that he had actually given his commands to Lords Grenville and Grey to form a new ministry; on the contrary, he fully admits it, and gives us a most ludicrous description of the confusion which the announcing of the change of intention produced amongst them, who, he says, had already begun to address each other in the titles of their intended offices. This writer, then, clearly admits that the Regent, had, after abundance of time to consider of the matter, actually given orders for the changing, totally changing the ministry; and he asserts, that, after all this, the Regent suddenly, and completely changed his intention upon receiving a *letter from his mother*, which letter, and that alone, induced him to reject the men he had at first chosen, and to take the men whom he had resolved to discard.

Now, in what a light is this to place his Royal Highness? The two sides have their different ways of exhibiting him; but neither seems disposed to spare his character. Both seem alike regardless of him, so that they annoy one another.

It is to be supposed, that, if the Prince Regent went so far as to give his orders for the forming of a new ministry (and it is admitted that he did); it is to be supposed, that before he did this, before he actually took so important a step, he had brought his mind to a thorough conviction, that a change of ministry was called for *by the good of the country*; that it was *necessary to the public welfare*; that it was a measure which the people's benefit and perhaps the safety of the country demanded. This must be supposed; and, in what a light, then, would the Prince be placed, if we were to admit the assertion of this venal writer, that, after this conviction was formed in the mind of the Prince, he was induced to abandon the measure, to abandon a measure which he was convinced was necessary to the good of the country, merely because he received a *letter from his mother*, desiring him to abandon it, lest it should give pain to his father?

How is it possible to devise any thing more injurious to the Prince's character than this? How is it possible to suggest any thing more likely (if it could be believed) to lessen him in the opinions of all men of sense and of public spirit? If this were universally believed, what reliance would any one ever place upon his firmness in future? If the people could be persuaded, that he had, from such a motive, abandoned a measure which he thought wise and necessary to their good, would they not have good reason to fear, that he *never* would be proof against assaults of the same, or a similar, kind, coming from that quarter, or from other quarters? Without supposing it probable or even possible, that the Queen should ever entertain any mischievous *intention*; an intention, or wish, hostile to the public welfare, we may very easily suppose her to have erroneous views of public affairs; we may easily suppose her not to be a proper judge of a measure like that under consideration; and, in this particular case, we may easily suppose her to attach, and excuse her for attaching, even more weight than ought to be attached to the feelings of the King when compared with the vital interests of the nation. But, that circumstance, so far from arguing in favour of listening to her advice upon such an occasion, naturally argues the other way, and ought to excite a greater degree of caution. In short, view the matter in which way we will, the imputation of having abandoned the intended change from such a motive is extremely injurious to the character of His Royal Highness, and as such, the belief of the statement will be rejected by the public, unless much better evidence of its truth, than we have yet had, be produced.

The *real* cause of the change in the Prince's intention was, the inability to *go on* with the proposed ministry; or, at least, of this I am quite sure, it would have been impossible to go on with them. A ministry without Lord Grenville, a ministry that would have, at once, dashed at *Parliamentary Reform* would have gone on; because the people would have been so decidedly for them, that there would have been every thing to expect from a dissolution of Parliament. But, what would a dissolution of Parliament with the restrictions in being, have done for the *late ministry*?

The original coalition between the Foxites and Lord Grenville was

before, and now again has been, the cause of the fall of the party; especially as Lord Grenville was, and was now to be again, at the *head* of affairs.

The junction was *unnatural*. It was as absurd as it would be to couple the shepherd's dog with the wolf. It was in vain to attempt to make the individuals harmonize; and, if that had been possible; if that had been actually effected, it was little short of insanity, to hope that *the people* would not view the harmony with a *suspicious* eye. It was useless to tell the people of the *strength* of the ministry; of the combination of *talents* and of *stake*; for, their answer was, "aye, but what will this Ministry *do for us?*"

Lord Grenville had been a party, and not only a party but an active, and even a prominent, party, to the *whole* of Mr. PITT's measures; and, indeed, he had been, to all appearance, one of the principal advisers of all those measures, which had given the most offence to the people, and the remembrance of which was most deeply engraven on their hearts, some of which measures, indeed, were actually brought forward by himself, and to this day, bear his name as part of their title in common conversation.

Against all these measures the Foxites had sworn eternal hostility; not an hostility founded on *degree*; or an hostility as to the more or the less; but an hostility against the *principle* of the measures, which they held to be outrageous and abominable at all times and under all circumstances.

Was it any wonder, then, that a ministry so composed should not have had the confidence of the people? The Foxites had gained the good will of the people by this their hostility to those measures. Whatever they had of popular estimation was founded upon their opposition to Mr. PITT and his measures, and upon the confident hope that the people cherished, that, whenever the Foxites came into power, they would *undo those measures as far as it was possible*, and that they would act upon those *opposite principles*, to which they had been *so long and solemnly pledging themselves*.

An union with Lord Grenville, therefore, was ominous in its very sound. It promised nothing that the people wanted; but, on the contrary, was a death-blow to their hopes.

There were some, however, who still hoped, that it was impossible, that the Foxites should not have taken care to insure the predominance of their principles, and that, of course, Lord Grenville had (in which there would have been nothing dishonourable) made up his mind to abandon the system of Mr. PITT, which had brought so much misery upon the country. But, alas! this hope soon vanished. The *predominance of Lord Grenville* appeared in every thing; in every act of the administration; and in every word of the whole party. To praise "*the great statesman now no more*" seemed to have been a positive stipulation on the part of the Foxites, who, to the inexpressible shame, mortification, and finally, rage of all those who had formerly been attached to them, seemed to vie with each other in seizing upon occasions, and making occasions, for uttering those offensive and insulting praises.

Nor was the effect of this compromise confined to *words*. It was seen in acts of all sorts, as well of omission as commission. *No changes* were to be made in any of the offices, except those which immediately appertained to the ministry. The offices being all filled by the PITTITES,

the persons filling them were the *friends of Lord Grenville*, not a few of whom had, indeed, been promoted under his patronage. He and Mr. PITT and Lord MELVILLE had, in fact, appointed the far greater part of the persons in office; and, as if there had been a design effectually to exclude the Foxites, Mr. ADDINGTON and his set of statesmen were included in the coalition; and, of course, those whom *he* also had appointed were to be kept in their places.

Thus, there was no change, worth speaking of, in this respect. People still saw the same faces at all the offices; the same influence was felt; and the same spirit animated the whole body. Whether in the Army, the Navy, the Law, the taxing offices, the Church, the Magistracy; in all departments, in every corner, the same influence, the same spirit, the same system, still prevailed.

When the Foxites wished to remove this or that person, to make this or that change, they found that the person was a friend of either Lord GRENVILLE or Mr. ADDINGTON, or, that he was a friend of "*the great statesman now no more*;" and, as to changing measures, it was impossible to propose such change, without *finding fault* with the existing measures, without conveying, by inference, at least, a censure on those measures; that could not be done without a tacit censure on Lord Grenville or Mr. Addington, or on "*the great statesman now no more*;" and, to censure Lord Grenville, either expressly or tacitly, was not to be expected from men, who had placed him at their head.

Yet, all this might have been borne by the people, who might have assented to this species of *forbearance*; but, when they saw forty thousand pounds of the public money voted away by the Foxites to pay the debts of Mr. PITT, upon the grounds, *expressly stated by them*, of HIS SERVICES TO THE COUNTRY; when they saw these same Foxites, who had gained the people's favour solely by opposition to, and reprobation of, the measures and the whole system of PITT; when the people saw those Foxites, not a man of whom had not a thousand times repeated the assertion, that Pitt was the greatest enemy that England ever saw, and who had, indeed, seen the fulfilment of all their predictions as to the effects of his measures; when the people saw these same Foxites voting away forty thousand pounds of their money to pay the debts of this man, and voting him also a funeral at the public expense, and upon the grounds, *expressly stated by them*, that HIS SERVICES TO THE COUNTRY demanded this tribute to his memory; when the people saw this, away went, at once, and for ever, all their confidence in the Foxites, all their friendship and all their respect.

This was amongst the first acts of the new ministry, and, of all their acts, it certainly was that which produced the greatest and most durable impression against them. It was so mortifying, it was such a cutting insult, it was such a cruel stab, a heart's-core stab, to their former friends and supporters, not a few of whom had such everlasting reason to remember "*the public services*" of Mr. Pitt, and the whole of whom had become attached to the Foxites, *because they constantly exposed and execrated his measures*.

In proportion as the Foxites sunk in the people's estimation they became more vulnerable, and the whole ministry became more easily assailed by the then opposition, who are now in power; but, the Foxites suffered in two ways: for, every thing that sunk them in the eyes of the people, sunk them also in the ministerial scale, made them of less con-

sequence there, and, of course, added to the relative weight of Lord Grenville, who, indeed, in a very short time, obtained a complete predominance, and, the ministry became, as to all its measures, as to every thing affecting the nation, only another set of Pittites, every principle, every part and particle of the PITT system being not only adhered to, but adhered to upon the *express grounds* of being that system. And, it was curious enough to hear both sides of the House contending, in many cases, not so much whether the thing in question was good or bad, as whether it had been sanctioned by the example or the principles of "the great statesman now no more," and both sides claiming *the honour of being his close imitators*.

What a scene was this for those to witness, who had, for so many years, been supporters of the Foxites! It was impossible, that they should not be shocked at it. It was quite impossible to retain or regain their confidence after this; and, accordingly, a more hearty abhorrence of public men certainly was never excited than that excited by the Foxites upon this occasion. At first men were silent; the shame which always arises, in a greater or less degree, from misplaced confidence, restrained for awhile the utterance of their indignation; but, this restraint did not last long; and, when it did find a vent, indignation more strong never was expressed in this world.

Here, too, Lord Grenville had the advantage; for, as the people had no reason to expect any thing in the way of change of system from him, *he* had not deceived them. *He* had never made them any promises; *he* had never professed any of those principles, by the profession of which the Foxites had gained the people's confidence. He was well known to belong to the PITT school; so far from ever having disclaimed it, he had taken all occasions of avowing its principles. *He*, therefore, lost nothing, while he gained, in the ministry, all the predominance that the sinking of the Foxites was calculated to give him; and thus, with them, the candle was burning at both ends: they were daily losing with the people, and daily losing with him; and, at every successive fall they fell further and further at a time; till, at the end of a year, scarcely a man of them durst open his lips, except for the purpose of supporting some measure or some principle which the whole of them had formerly condemned.

In this state was the late ministry, when it was broken up and dispersed with as little trouble and with as little impression upon the public as would arise from any man's discharging a dozen or two journeymen, and taking on others in their stead.

They were supplanted by men, whom they affected to despise; men whom they had laughed at; men who, indeed, had had so much dread of them, that they had, only fifteen months before, scampered away out of office at their approach. But, these men had the sagacity to perceive, that their opponents were sunk in public estimation; that the Foxites had been *tried* and found wanting; and that, as to *the people*, all the parties were now alike. They saw, that a total indifference as to public men had taken possession of the people's minds; and, which was of more importance than all other considerations put together, they had seen their opponents *do those things which would, in future, disarm them*. They saw, in short, their opponents fairly *launched into the system*; they had, at their fingers' ends, the example of their opponents for all that they themselves could wish to do: and, to crown all, they had Lord Grenville, at the *head* of these opponents, a sure guarantee that no hostility against

them would, upon any occasion, be pushed to *extremity*; a sure guarantee, that *the system* would not be assailed, and that, to secure themselves against all assaults, they had nothing to do but tread in the steps of "*the great statesman now no more.*"

These were the grounds upon which the present men went in supplanting the last; and experience has fully verified all their expectations.

While Lord Grenville is in the *opposition* what have they to *fear*; at least while he is the acknowledged *head* of the opposition; and of course, while the whole party have an eye to him in all their words and actions? While this is the case, the ministers do not, I warrant it, feel any apprehensions of a rude attack. They may have to encounter now and then a question of a diplomatic, or commercial kind, or relating to general policy, or to the wisdom or folly of an Expedition; but, in *THE SYSTEM* they are safe. There may be some very able manœuvring upon the plain; some fine regular combats, in which the ministers may be pushed to the glacia, with the loss, perhaps, of their outworks; but, in the *SYSTEM*, in the body of the place, covered by the name of "*the great statesman now no more,*" they are safe; for that is a rampart that Lord Grenville will never consent to scale or to batter. The opposition, under Lord Grenville, do, and always must, fight in *muffles*, while their opponents come at them with good bony fists. It has always been regarded as a great thing to have a *friend* in the enemy's camp; what must it be, then, to have for that friend the enemy's *Commander-in-Chief*?

How fearful must the odds, then, be? Yet, it is with an odds of this kind against them, that the Foxites have been carrying on the political warfare ever since January 1806. No wonder that they have had such an abundance of "*negative success.*"

I do not impute to Lord Grenville any *double-dealing*. On the contrary, he appears to me to have acted, all along, a very open part. He will join in endeavours to put out the ministry and get into their places, if he can do it with certain means; if he can do it without going beyond certain lengths; if he can do it without violating any of the principles of the *PITT SYSTEM*; if he can do it, and be at the head himself, and make all those under him laud the Gods for having given birth to William Pitt, he will do it, but he will not do it upon any other conditions. There is nothing at all unfair in this; it is natural in him to exact the conditions on which he intends to co-operate; the only thing to be astonished at is, the folly (to say nothing worse of it) of the Foxites in supposing that they will ever obtain power by yielding to such conditions.

I know well, that Mr. Fox had no stomach to the ministry that was formed in 1806. He was decidedly against its being composed as it was. He wished to be left out of it personally, and would have given it support where he could. He was, after a great deal of persuasion, prevailed upon to take office; but, I take upon me to assert, that he did it with *extreme reluctance*. This I *know* to be true. He must have foreseen the consequences. They soon began to make their appearance; and, there can be no doubt, that they hastened his death; which, for his own sake, should have happened one year sooner than it did.

Such is the true history of the *late ministry*; and, after this retrospect, is it possible for any one to suppose, that the Prince Regent could, if he wished it, have *gone on* with a ministry *composed in the same way*, starting with a majority against them in both Houses, and having such small means of influence as the Restrictions had left in the hands of the

Prince? I repeat my opinion, that the Regent had no great liking to a ministry with Lord Grenville at its head, notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary. There were many reasons for his not liking such a ministry; and, it cannot be supposed; it is to contradict the voice of human nature to suppose, that he could like to take as his prime minister, the man who had been the principal cause of imposing the *restrictions* upon him. It was Lord Grenville and his immediate connections who *decided the question* in both Houses. If they had joined in the vote for *Address* and not *Bill*, it would have been carried, and the Prince would have been Regent without any Restrictions *two months ago*. Lord Grenville laid most manfully on upon the ministers; but it was with respect to points of comparatively trifling importance. He laid on upon them with great force with regard to *inferior* points; the greater part of his *speeches* were very much against them; but, upon all the material points, he gave them his *vote*. He might have prevented the Restrictions; he and his immediate connections turned the scale. It was owing *to them*, therefore, that the Restrictions were imposed; and, indeed, that the Houses proceeded by *Bill* instead of *Address*.

I shall be told, perhaps, and so, I dare say, the Prince was, that this line of conduct was necessary to preserve the *consistency* of Lord Grenville, who had taken the same line in the time of the "*great statesman* now no more." To which, had I been in the Prince's place, I should have answered, "Very well; that may be very right in Lord Grenville; but, let him, then, keep his consistency to himself, and let me exercise " what little power he has left me under the advice of another."

But, was the consistency of Lord Grenville so great, so mighty an object, that the *consistency of the Prince* was to be wholly overlooked? It should be recollected, that, in 1788, the Prince expressed certain opinions and principles, as well as Lord Grenville; the Prince then declared most decidedly against such restrictions, *as hostile to every principle of the constitution*; and, having again now *repeated* the substance of that declaration, in his Answer to the Deputation from the two Houses, would it have been very *consistent in him to take Lord Grenville as his prime minister*? But, I dare say, that there are people, who think nothing at all of this, compared with the precious consistency of Lord Grenville.

The Prince has taken Mr. Perceval, I shall be told, who proposed those restrictions against which his Royal Highness had protested. But, there, is a great deal of difference in the two cases. He, in all probability, *liked* the one much about as much as the other; but, the conduct of the two, though tending to the same point with regard to him, must be viewed in a very different light. Mr. Perceval was the *minister of the King*, Lord Grenville was not; Mr. Perceval was acting, in appearance at least, in pursuance of his duty or attachment, towards *another*; Lord Grenville was the champion of his own *consistency*.

Besides, there is a wide difference between the *making* of a minister, and the taking of a minister ready made to his hands. If Lord Grenville had become minister, it would have been the Prince's *own act*, and he would have been looked upon as, in reputation at least, responsible for the measures and principles of the administration. He now merely suffers his father's ministers to go on as they were going on before, and as they would have gone on, if nothing had happened to his father.

Here are reasons more than sufficient to account for the Prince's pre-

ferring Mr. Perceval to Lord Grenville; but, if there were not, others would not be wanting; for, I insist, that it would have been impossible for the Prince to have carried on the Government with Lord Grenville at the head of it. The ministry would have been made up of men, who would have had *no part* of the community cordially with them. All the old true Anti-Jacobin tribe, all the contractors, all the tax-gatherers, the restrained Bank people, the Eastern Empire people, the country Bankers, the Lloyd's and the Exchange people, a great majority of the Clergy and of the Justices of the Peace, and nine-tenths of the good old women of both sexes; all these are for the present ministers. If a Parliamentary Reforming ministry had been chosen, they would have had all the active and independent part of the people of England and of the whole kingdom. But, a ministry with Lord Grenville at its head, would have had nothing for them but their "*stake*," as Mr. PERRY calls it; nothing but their estates and their tenants; and that is not sufficient, think of it what they will.

So that, as I said in my last, leaving all *likings* and *dislikings* out of the question, the Prince had no other choice, than that which lay between the *parliamentary reformers* and the *present men*. Had I been in his place I should have chosen the *former*: but, men differ in their tastes; and, at any rate, let not the most of those who composed the late ministry blame the Prince for taking Mr. PERCEVAL, whom *they* supported and "*rallied round*" upon every occasion, when it was interesting to the people that they should be his assailants. They have now their reward for that: and, much good may it do them. They called the petitions of the people "*popular clamour*," they call the parliamentary reformers, "*a low degraded crew*:" they have recently flung Sir SAMUEL ROMILLY overboard for denying to Mr. PITT the character of "*a great statesman*," and now they are *flung overboard themselves*, with the mortification of seeing not a single hand stretched out to save them, and of hearing millions of voices exclaim, Down! down! down to the lowest deep, *never* to rise again!

They were prepared, I believe, to fling overboard some others besides Sir SAMUEL ROMILLY. Every one who had taken the side of Sir Francis Burdett. When Lord ARCHIBALD HAMILTON brought forward his motion about Lord CASTLEREAGH, last session, how did they then act? Even then they "*rallied round*." And is there, can there be any man beast enough to regret, that the Prince has rejected them? I trust not; and am quite sure, that all those who *can* make a retreat from them, will do it. They may attempt other *coalitions*; but, they will not succeed. There is *now* no ground left for an opposition to stand upon, but *Parliamentary Reform*; and, those who will not stand forward boldly for that great measure, may as well hold their tongues.

WM. COBBETT.

State Prison, Newgate, Friday,
Feb. 8th, 1811.

KING'S ILLNESS.—THE REGENCY.—*Concluded.**(Political Register, February, 1811.)*

THIS subject, as one of regular discussion, I shall here bring to a close, having, I think, borne my part in it from the beginning to the end. It was I, who, as the saying is, *broke the ice*, as to the proper mode of considering and treating the matter. Till I entered upon the subject, nothing was heard, through the channel of the public prints, but lamenting and weeping and wailing and snivelling and canting. There were, in all human probability, more lying and hypocrisy in England during that month, than ever have been witnessed in any other country in the course of a year. If I were to select any particular month of the history of my country as the most disgraceful, I should have no hesitation in selecting that. The *Bank Restriction month*, that is to say, the last week of February and the three first of April, 1797, had, in my opinion, theretofore the shameful pre-eminence; but, the folly and baseness then so conspicuous in the country, were surpassed by the folly and baseness of the first month of the King's illness. The venal writers, who dealt in such doleful strains had *their* object in view, and a very rational one it was, though very malignant and mischievous. Their object was, by the means of incessant lamentations and howlings, to leave it to be clearly inferred, that if the kingly part of the government got into *other* hands, ruin, destruction, perdition, would come swiftly upon us all; and such has been the beastly stupidity of many of the people in this country since the year 1792, that I should not much wonder, if there were some of them who were, by these and the like means, made to believe, that even their natural lives depended upon that of the King.

It is true, that this description of persons, would, in an hour of need, be of no more consequence than so many snails or caterpillars; but, they count as to numbers, and they talk as much as the hale and the brave.

There seemed to be, in the hostile daily prints, a rivalry as to which should go farthest in the way of lying and canting; so that it is not a subject of much wonder, that the public caught the disgraceful tone.

What must foreigners have thought of this? The Americans, who say pretty freely what they think of us, do, to be sure, laugh most unmercifully at our *despair*. One of them, who seems to have got hold of the *Morning Chronicle* of about the beginning of November, breaks out into a pathetic apostrophe to us, does not expect us to survive the affliction, and calls upon us to repent before we depart, of our manifold sins and wickednesses, "especially those committed upon the *highway* of the water." In short, the cant, the incomparable cant, contained in our newspapers of the month of November last, seems to have convulsed the American continent with laughter. Some of the writers there put the case as it might have related to themselves. They suppose, for argument's sake, that they had still been subjects of the King. They ask what, in such a case as this, and with the doctrines of our newspapers in vogue, would have been *their* fate.

Then they turn to the memorable stories promulgated by the Morning Post, and laugh ready to split their sides. They repeat a great deal of the cant of our prints; they *explain* certain passages to their readers as they go on; they say what none of us would, for *delicacy's* sake, think of saying; they are not so *refined* a people as we are; they relate anecdotes; they state things in *so many words*, and when they insert the sham letters which the COURIER publishes as coming from Windsor, they burst out into laughter in such a way that you almost fancy you *hear* them laugh as you read their columns.

One would think, that those who have brains enough to manage even the *business* part of a daily paper, would have too great a sense of shame to be content to live in the state of a laughing-stock; and, when they have got money, and are able to say, that they can live all their days without any thing more than they have; that they have a plenty for all their purposes; when men are in this state, it really is astonishing, that they can voluntarily expose themselves to laughter and contempt for the sake of adding a few thousands to their gains. But, when men have lied and canted themselves into pelf, they are, I am afraid, generally found to persevere to the last. If such men were to become farmers, they would lie and cant to their labourers; or, in default of human beings to deceive, they would lie and cant to their horses or sheep.

I do not confound the MORNING CHRONICLE with the venal prints, which have so distinguished themselves upon this occasion; but, I often meet with what I cannot approve of in that paper; an instance of which I have now under my eye, in a passage relating to the SPEECH of the Prince. In the passage I am alluding to the writer makes these remarks:

"In one paragraph of it, at least, his Royal Highness will most cordially concur in the sentiment which will be introduced; namely, the expression of deep sorrow at the cause which has imposed upon him the afflicting duty of supplying for a time the Regal Authority. No man in the King's dominions can more perfectly sympathize in that expression than the Regent; for *all those* who have had the best opportunities of ascertaining the *inmost feelings of his heart* from his *earliest infancy*, assure us, that at no time, even when most embittered by the effects of the mischievous misrepresentations made to his detriment, was he ever known to manifest other than the most *affectionate* and *pious reverence* for his Royal Father. And we believe it has been *well rewarded*; for on the other side, we understand it has been remarked, and set down as an infallible symptom of the access of his Majesty's complaint, that his *paternal confidence* in the *affection, virtues*, and conduct of his Son and Heir, was loudly declared by him to be the *chief source of consolation to his heart* on every alarm of approaching malady. On this point at least the Commissioners will speak the sense of the Regent."

Now, in the first place, it is impossible that Mr. PERRY can *know* any thing at all of this matter. He cannot *know* any thing about it. He can know, for certainty, no more about the thing than I do; and I know no more about it than any of the ladies, my near neighbours, who are upon the eve of a trip to Botany Bay, with intentions much less mischievous than those with which another description of ladies take a trip to India, the latter having riches derived from plunder in view, while the former confine their views to a bare existence.

It is silly affectation to pretend to know any thing of such matters. It throws general discredit over the contents of the paper.

But, suppose Mr. PERRY to know all this to be true? What then? What *use* is it of? What is there "*rich or rare*" in it? Are we to

be called upon to express, or to feel, admiration at a thing which is so very common in common life? Do we stand in need of *assurances*, of *positive assertions*, that the Prince of Wales loves and respects his father, and that his father has a confidence in him? I forget who it is that says, in speaking of the assertions or arguments of some one in favour of Christianity, that "he wrote so long about it, that even believers began to doubt it." And, though a similar fate cannot, of course, attend these *asseverations* of the Morning Chronicle; yet, the writer may be assured, that, if there were any doubts as to the facts of which he speaks, these *asseverations* would not remove them; no, nor tend to remove them, in the smallest degree.

Besides, what is it after all? A son loving and respecting his father, and a father loving and having confidence in his son. Just as if this was *news* to tell to the public! Just as if there was something peculiarly meritorious in this! Why, the question is not, where the like is to be found; but, where it is *not* to be found. It is to be found in almost every family in all ranks of life; from the great family mansion to the shepherd's hut; and, not only in the shepherd's hut, but in the shed of his dog.

How foolish is it, then, to make a grand display of so very commonplace a thing; to take that, the existence of which nature bids us assume, and blazon forth as something requiring particular acquaintanceship to have discovered? Love his son! and where is the wretch so unnatural as *not* to love his son! Confide in his son! and where is the father so unfortunate, or jealous, or so perverse as *not* to confide in his son?

Let us hear no more of this, then; for, at the very best, it can do no good, it can strengthen no man's belief, and amongst people not understanding the cause of such publications, it may possibly excite suspicion; especially when, in almost the same breath, this same writer tells us, that, if the Prince had it in his power to do what he could wish, he would instantly *turn out* the ministers chosen and kept in and preferred to all others *by his father*.

I dislike exceedingly all these appeals to the *private personal* qualities and disposition of the royal personages. We know nothing at all about them; nor are they of any consequence to us. It is by their *acts*, by the measures and effect of the measures of their reign, or regency, that we must judge of them; and all the attempts, in whatever way, that are made to bias our judgment by appeals to the private qualities of the King or Regent, are mischievous and ought to be reprobated.

So much for the *cant* of the subject, which, however, cannot be too often exposed. It cannot be too often or too strongly condemned; for, if the effects were traced to their real causes, we should find no small part of our present difficulties and dangers fairly ascribable to this poisonous source.

I should here quit the subject of the Regency; but it seems necessary, by way of a close to it, just to take a view of, and put upon record, the tone which the two contending parties have now assumed.

THE MORNING CHRONICLE labours hard to make its readers believe, that the Ministry are *sighted* by the Prince, and that they are now puzzled and hampered by the restrictions, which they themselves imposed; and, in short, that the keeping of them in was a *clever trick*.

Let us, however, take the whole article, it being the last time that we shall, at any length, touch upon the subject. I beg the reader to

pay particular attention to it. He will see its object in a moment ; but there are particular passages, the very words of which we shall, I am sure, have hereafter to refer to :

" We cannot view the melancholy and almost ridiculous situation in which the King's ministers are placed at this moment, without feelings of *real and undivided pity*. Ministers without confidence, the *jest of Windsor, of Carlton House*, and of their *own friends*, distrusted even by their own retainers, who consider them only as upon *sufferance*, how can we in common humanity refuse them our sincere *compassion* ? With all the responsibility, all the trouble and all the plague of Government, they possess none of the means of rendering their situations beneficial to the public, grateful to their friends, or *formidable to their enemies*. Knowing how little they had deserved the applause of the people or the confidence of the Prince, they judged of him as they would of themselves, and looked only to their own immediate dismissal, because they took for granted that the Prince would take advantage of his father's illness, as they had done, and *endeavour to turn it to the objects of his own ambition, as they had to theirs*. Under this impression their sole object was to make the task of the Regent's future government, as irksome to him and to those who possessed his confidence as they could. Restrictions were heaped upon restrictions, not because they were to be found in the precedent of 1788 (for from that precedent they departed) but because by restrictions the Regent's Ministers would be prevented from conferring those acts of grace and favour which might tend to attach meritorious talent to his service and to add strength to their Government. Every runner of the Treasury enjoyed a joke which was so much to the taste of Mr. Perceval and within the comprehension of Mr. George Rose. Even Mr. Secretary Ryder made shift to understand it, and Lord Melville's son acknowledged the force as well as the wit of a project, the end of which was to prevent Ministers from practising jobs. The delusion however was quickly torn away, and their faces, distended with smiles, are now in most ridiculous contrast lengthened into sadness. The Prince, with a degree of *filial piety and affection towards his father which must endear him to the country*, resolves, so long as the *favourable symptoms in his father's malady continue*, to permit the King's Ministers to *drag on* the machinery of the State. The poisoned chalice is returned to their own lips, the restrictions operate upon themselves, they find *themselves* destined to try the experiment with how small a portion of royal power they can carry on a Regent's Government ; the Regent is determined too that they shall try with how small a portion of royal confidence they can perform their task, and they find themselves chained in bonds they forged for others, and *burning in their own bull*. In charity, then, we must give these poor men the consolation of our compassion !—We again state as a fact which we know cannot be disputed, that in the Council Chamber the Prince Regent showed the strongest and most flattering marks of his favour and of kindness to all those connected with the men known to possess his confidence, whilst to the King's Ministers and their adherents his deportment, always gracious, because to none can it be other than gracious, marked to all who were present, as well as to themselves, *the distance at which he meant to hold them*, and the terms upon which he permitted them to continue the Government ; and lest they should mistake him, he gave away the first thing which came within his gift, *without communication with them and in direct opposition to their known intentions and wishes*. We repeat, that the audiences of Mr. Perceval and of the other Ministers did not exceed two minutes each, with the exception of the Lord Chancellor, whom his Royal Highness detained whilst he communicated to him that *he would not go down to Parliament to read the speech written by Ministers who did not possess his confidence*. For the truth of this statement we are ready to make any appeal the ministerial newspapers may require. We are ready even to appeal to the Lord Chancellor's conscience."

Taking this in its order, we find, then, that it is now considered an *arch trick* to have kept the ministers in their places. But, surely, this cannot have been written by Mr. PERRY, nor inserted with his *heartily* consent. He has too much sense of decency to approve of so palpable an attempt to deceive the public ; so pitiful an endeavour to disguise dis-

appointment and envy by the means of affected compassion. No: this proceeded not from the mind of Mr. PERRY, who is only to blame, in this case, for fathering the stupid effusions of some underling of the twin statesmen.—This *clever trick* would now be held forth to us as having been contrived for the purpose; but, *who* was it that contrived it? Not the Prince, for he, as the Morning Chronicle has told us, gave his orders to the twin statesmen to form a ministry for him. Not the twin statesmen, for they, after the passing of the Resolutions, occupied themselves, as the French call it, in forming that ministry. And, difficult as the situation of ministers now is, they were, it seems, quite willing to undertake it. So that, at any rate, if there be any cleverness in the trick of keeping the present ministers in power, it is not to be ascribed to those who it is acknowledged, were ready to supply their places.

But, *what* are those difficulties; and what reason have the present ministers to wear *long faces*; and *how* are they *burning in their own bull*?

With them all is smooth. Whatever is conferred by the Prince, under their advice, will be confirmed by his father, if he recover; and, if he do not recover, *must*, in the end, be confirmed by the Prince himself.

The *present* ministers lose nothing in the way of power by the restrictions; for, whatever in the way of patronage cannot be disposed of previous to the King's resumption of the royal authority, will be to be disposed of *then*; and thus are these things, these "*rewards of merit*," as the Morning Chronicle calls them, accumulating for the benefit of those "*meritorious*" persons, who may have been, and may still be, found faithful to the present men.

Where, then, is the sense of talking of embarrassments to the *present* men from the restrictions? It is, perhaps, quite impossible to conceive any thing, short of absolute despotic sway, more complete than the hold which these men have upon power, as far as power is dependent upon patronage. Their hold is even mere strong than if, during the King's malady, they had all the kingly powers in their hands; for, in that case, they must, as they proceeded, actually reward some "*meritorious persons*" and disappoint and offend others, especially where "*meritorious persons*" are so very numerous as they are in this country; but, now, they disappoint no one, they disoblige no one, they hold every one in expectancy, every one in cheering and heart-enlivening hope, and those "*meritorious persons*," seeing the quantity of "*rewards*" daily accumulating, will become, of course, every day more attached to the ministers. "*Where the carcass is,*" says the Scripture, "*there will the eagles be gathered together.*" And, of course, the more carcasses the more eagles. And thus, so firm a bond of attachment, so strong a hold of such numbers of "*meritorious*" supports, no ministry in England ever had before.

Nay, they will have this without any trouble at all. They will not only have nothing to refuse to any one; but no one will attempt to plague them for any thing included in the restrictions. And, yet, this writer would fain have us believe, that the restrictions which they hatched are to operate *against themselves*!

I was in hopes, that the idea of the Prince's having changed his intention from motives of *filial piety* had been so completely scouted as never to be again brought forward; but, if it was again to be mentioned, surely it ought not to have been accompanied with a statement of his having resolved to put out the King's servants *if his malady continued any length of time*, and also with a statement of his having *treated those servants with contumely*, and told them that he would not go down

to the Parliament to read a speech written by *ministers who did not possess his confidence*? To make these statements, to state these things so positively, and, at the same time to assert, that the Prince kept in the ministers out of *filial piety to his father*, who had chosen them, is to do this writer's best to exhibit the Prince in a light the most disadvantageous that can possibly be conceived; for, any thing more inconsistent, more unworthy of a great, or even of a rational mind, it is, I think, very difficult to imagine.

The COURIER, who is the newspaper champion of the ministry, sees this matter in another light, and is accordingly quite successful in his answer.

"In pursuance," says he, "of the plan for attacking the person as well as the Government of the Regent, the Opposition represent him as behaving with marked rudeness to his Majesty's Ministers, that he purposely showed in the Council Chamber the distance at which he meant to hold them, whilst he smiled most graciously at the Opposition. This no doubt originated in his Royal Highness's humanity. He saw the poor creatures so chap-fallen, so woe-begone, looking with such misery, at each other, and with such envy at the Ministers, that he threw a smile at them to keep them from despair. Now, as to holding the Ministers at a distance, Mr. Perceval, and the other Members of the Cabinet, *have reason to be perfectly satisfied with the Prince's behaviour towards them*. It is most gracious. The conferring the 67th Foot on General Keppel was *not against the wishes* of the Ministers, though if the Opposition had been in, it might probably have been against *their* wishes. And as to the audience of Mr. Perceval, we adhere to our first assertion. But what must his Royal Highness think of those styling themselves his friends, who say that he detained the Lord Chancellor whilst he communicated to him, 'that he would not go down to Parliament to read the Speech written by Ministers who did not possess his confidence.'

"The Opposition would have us to believe the Prince to be subject to all the low little selfish passions that fill their breasts. Did he, or could he so deliver himself to the Chancellor? We are persuaded it is impossible; and let it be recollected, that whether the Speech be read by the Regent in person, or by his Commissioners, it is still a *Speech which must have previously received his sanction and approbation.*"

This is a complete answer to the Morning Chronicle. There is no doubt at all, that the Prince finds himself less thwarted by the present men, than he would have found himself with a ministry made up by Lords Grenville and Grey. No doubt at all of it. But, it does not follow, that he is to be regarded as *answerable*, to the extent here aimed at, for the *Speech* that may be delivered in his name. The *SPEECH* is a measure of the *Ministry*, in the same way as a *Proclamation* or an *Order in Council* or a *Message* is a measure of the ministry, and, as such it must be considered; as such Speeches from the Throne have always been considered, or else, how could they, without demolishing all respect for the King, be discussed either in Parliament or in print? And, if this be the true doctrine as to the King, who has no restrictions upon his authority, and who chooses whom he pleases for his ministers, it, surely, must apply still more forcibly to the case of the Prince, who has so small a part of the kingly powers and prerogatives left in his hands, who has had nothing to do in the choosing of the ministers, and who merely suffers them to remain where he found them, not having power either to choose or reject. Whether he ought to have accepted of the Regency upon such conditions is another matter; I should have advised him against it; but, this is quite a separate question; and, neither Mr. PERCEVAL nor Lord GRENVILLE can possibly impute any blame to him upon that score, seeing that the former *proposed*, and the latter *supported*, those restrictions.

I am the more inclined to dwell upon this topic of the Prince's assumed "*previous sanction of the Speech*;" because I am aware, that the assumption has not been now introduced without *design*. The venal writer has not introduced it without thinking what he was about; and the design is to play off the old trick of shifting the responsibility from the shoulders of the minister to those of the Prince. "Here," we shall be told: "Look here; here is the Prince's *own Speech*. See what *he* says, if you want to know what *he* thinks." And, in this way, if the Speech contain praises of all that has been done for the last three years, and deprecate any change in so delightful and prosperous a system, we are to be taught to believe, that these are the *genuine opinions of the Prince*.

It is very true, however, that, in spite of all that can be said, this, to a great extent, will be the *effect*; and here it is that his Royal Highness will feel the evils of having taken the office upon him with such limited powers. In the eyes of the mass of the nation, the speech will be *his speech*; and, it will require a great deal more than his particular friends, will, I am afraid, be either able or willing to do, to remove that impression, which may, one day or another, prove greatly injurious to his interests.

He will, unless great exertions are made to prevent it, become, to a great extent, identified with the *Pitt system*, the consequences of which no man can calculate, and, if any one could, it is to be feared, that there are very few who would honestly lay the result of the calculation before his eyes.

I am now writing while the Speech is *delivering* to the two Houses, and, I shall not see it, till long after this is gone to the press; but, it is hardly possible, that it should omit to speak of the affairs in Portugal, and, if it speak in *commendation* of what has been done there, it will be very difficult to keep the Prince from appearing to be a party to that famous war.

The prudent way would be, to say, that, "thus and thus my Royal Father has thought proper to order; and this and that have taken place under the direction of my Royal Father's ministers."

The minister could not object to this; and thus would the Prince keep clear of the system; but, I can conceive no other way for him to do it.

As to the *Opposition*, which will now show itself in Parliament, it will be pretty nearly what it was before, but *weaker*. The King's recovery would so completely confirm the power of the present people for his life, that there would not remain the smallest hope of supplanting, amongst those who have hitherto had that object in view; and as to the *people*, they like one of the *parties* just as well as the other; it being impossible for them to discover any difference in them, as far as the people's interests or feelings are concerned. Those who are *OUT*, and who, of course, wish to come in, tell us that *they would have conducted the war better*. We do not know that. But, what is the *war*, compared with many other things? Would they have *lessened the Taxes*? Would they have *lessened the sinecures and the pensions*? Did they do this? Did they attempt to do it? No: but they abused, like pickpockets, all those who called upon them for any such measure. It was they who swelled the *Income Tax* from *Six to Ten per Cent.*, and who, for the first time, exempted the *King's funded property* (in *whatever name* entered) from paying any tax at all. But, they did so many odious things; they discovered so decided a contempt for the people in every way; they so

outraged public feeling, that it is impossible for the people ever to like them again.

I do not confound them ; I do not lump them altogether ; and, I was in hopes of seeing the Prince so situated as to be able to divide them, and to form a ministry of those, from whom the people would have expected something ; but, if we were to have merely the late ministry revived, we are full as well as we are, and *he* is much better than he would have been.

The Morning Chronicle tells us, that the Opposition will not feel themselves under any *restraint* in attacking the ministers. O dear, no ! no restraint at all, except that of *the system* ; except that they will not dare to attack Lord Grenville's late colleague and relation ; except that they must carefully guard their tongues against any reflection, even the most distant, on any measure of "the *great statesman* now no more."

This restraint they will be still under, and that is all the ministers want. Only let them keep their *muffles* on, and the ministry will beat them I warrant it.

If the war in Portugal should end in a fatal way, we should hear of *inquiries* again ; and, indeed, we are told, that it was in order to let this war end in the hands of the ministers, that they were suffered to remain in place. But, what of that ? Have we not had a *Corunna* Affair, and a *Cintra* Affair, and a *Walcheren* Affair ? And what did the motions about them *produce* ? What was the result ? Why, an expense of printing Parliamentary Papers to the amount of many thousands of pounds in addition to the enormous expenses of the Expeditions.

The discussions about *Corunna* and *Walcheren* were excessively unfortunate. Each of them was thwarted by a question in which *the people* were interested : the first, by the question relative to the *Duke of York*, and the latter by the question relating to *Sir Francis Burdett*. Away went the *regular fights*. Not a word more could you get any one to say about them. Mr. TIERNEY, I remember, complained, that there were certain persons, who kept away, and took no part at all in the "*great questions* relative to the conducting of the war ; but who were all "*alive upon motions* like that of Mr. MADOX."

Aye, this was because the people had an *interest* in the latter ; because these questions affected *them* ; and, because, as to the *war*, the manner of its being carried on was nothing compared to the *principle* of it, of which the Regular Opposition approved.

This is the state of parties, then. The true bred Pittites are in power ; they, therefore, are the most powerful set. The Opposition, which originally consisted of Foxites, have been subdued by Lord Grenville and the Court, and are thus disarmed as to every question favouring the interests or feelings of the people. So that, these two parties, as far as they *act in corps*, must be considered as having the SAME PRINCIPLES to all intents and purposes. Some men imagine the OUTS wiser than the INS. It is not *want of talent* that occasioned those measures here which have put Napoleon in possession of all the continent of Europe. It is not *want of talent* ; and, if it were, I do not see so much difference amongst the leaders as some men would fain make us believe there is. There is, in fact, no difference at all in the two parties. They are precisely the same in principle, in every thing regarding the *Rights* and *Liberties* of the people, which has been proved by their *votes* and their *speeches* and their *measures*, over and over again and in all manner of ways.

As long, therefore, as the Foxites, or any persons in Opposition, con-

tinue to cling to Lord Grenville and the name of "the great statesman now no more," the people would be rank fools to wish to see them supplant the present men, it being as clear as day-light, that such a change could be productive of nothing more than an addition to the *pension list*, which is quite long enough already to satisfy any reasonable man.

There are some politicians, who wish for a *Reform of Parliament*. These belong to neither of the other parties. If they were to increase, from them the people would expect something; and, from *them* the ministry would have something to *fear*, because they are not restrained by the *system*; they drive at the whole system, "great man now no more" and altogether; they do not fight in *muffles*. This party, however little numerous, is formidable; and, if it increase, though but little, it will become an object of terror. Whether its increase will be speedy, whether it will be slow, when its power will be felt, I shall not pretend to say; but, that its power will, sooner or later, be felt, and will prevail, I am confident, and I am also confident, that its prevailing is absolutely necessary to the safety of the nation.

I began the discussion and I have closed it. In the course of it I have brought into view every material fact and argument, the production of others or of my own mind. I have given a proper place to every actor of any consequence; and, as far as my knowledge has enabled me, I have done strict justice to the actions and motives of every one. If I have, in any case, yielded to feelings of partiality, it has been in favour of the Prince of Wales, and the reason was, that, of all the parties concerned, he was the man whom I saw *with the fewest real friends* amongst those who were taking a part in the discussions; and further, because, some years attentive and pretty close observation as to politics and public men, long ago convinced me, that there was a settled design with some men to calumniate him by the means of canting insinuation, and thus to excite against him a prejudice that should *stick to him through life*.

The *Courier*, a few days ago, in remarking upon one of my articles on the Regency, observed, that it was well calculated to serve the Prince with the *Mob* (no bad service neither, as things may happen!), and that, it was to be regarded as having somewhat of *authority* about it, seeing that the writer was *intimately acquainted with one of the Royal Dukes*.

How ready these venal men are to ascribe motives of venality to others!

I have spoken to the Duke of KENT *four times* in my life, and no more. I have not *seen* even at a distance him or either of his brothers for these *last five years*, and have never had any communication, directly or indirectly, with any one of them of any sort, since that time; and I never received or asked from any one of the Royal Family any favour, of any kind, in all my life.

In the part I have taken upon this occasion, I have been actuated solely by a love of truth and of my country, and by a corresponding hatred of hypocrisy and of the worst enemies of that country, faction and corruption.

WM. COBBETT.

State Prison, Newgate, Tuesday,
February 12, 1811.

DISSENTERS.

(*Political Register*, May, 1811.)

At the end of this article, I insert the Resolutions recently passed at a Meeting of the PROTESTANT DISSENTERS, relative to the BILL, which is now before the House of Lords, and which has been brought in by LORD VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH, late Mr. Henry Addington, sometime prime minister of this country.

Thinking people as we are, I am disposed to believe, that the subject now before us is not very well understood; and, as I see, that the COURIER and other venal prints are complaining, that the *well-meaning* Dissenters are *deceived* respecting the object and the natural effects of the Bill, if it should pass into a law, I will endeavour, with my Lord Sidmouth's leave, to make the thing clearly understood.

The enactments of this Bill are stated to be as follow. I have not seen any copy of the Bill itself; but, I take it for granted, that they are correctly stated in the published Resolutions of so respectable a body as the Meeting above-mentioned.

"I. That such Ministers, upon *being admitted* to the peaceable possession and enjoyment of the peace of Ministers of a *separate Congregation*, may, on a certificate in writing, under the hands of *several substantial and reputable Household-ers belonging to such Congregation*, signed in the presence of some creditable witness, who is to make proof of their signatures upon oath at a *General Sessions* of the Peace, be permitted to take oaths and to sign the Declarations previously required, and shall then, and *then only*, during their continuance to be Ministers of such *separate Congregation*, be entitled to all the privileges and exemptions which the former acts had conferred.

"II. That any other person who may *desire to qualify* himself to preach as a Dissenting Minister, must procure several substantial and reputable household-ers, being Dissenters of the same Sect, and of the *same Congregation*, to certify on their consciences, in writing, to his being a Protestant Dissenting Minister of their Sect, and of the same Congregation, and to their *individual and long knowledge* to his sobriety of conversation, and to his *ability and fitness to preach*; and that such Certificate must be proved as before stated, before he be permitted to take the oath and subscribe the declaration, before he be exempt from the *pains, penalties, and punishments* to which he would otherwise be liable as a Dissenting Minister.

"III. That any person of sober life and conversation admitted to preach on probation to any separate Congregation, must produce a Certificate from several Dissenting Ministers, who have taken the oath (to be also proved on oath at a *General Sessions*) of his life and conversation, and to their *long previous knowledge*, before he can be admitted to take the Oaths and subscribe the Declaration, and that he may then, during a *limited period, to be specified in the Certificate*, officiate as a probationer to any Dissenting Congregation, and be, *during a limited period*, exempt from *prosecution and punishment*; but neither of the two last-mentioned classes of persons will be entitled to any *privileges*, or to the *exemptions* from offices conferred on Dissenting Ministers by the Toleration Act."

Such is, it is said, to be the substance of the new Act; and, how it will affect the Dissenters, what an alteration it will make respecting them, we shall now see.

Previous to the first year of the reign of WILLIAM and MARY, the Dissenters were liable to divers severe *penalties* and *punishments* for doing

that which they now do by law; and their Ministers, or Teachers, were liable to be punished in a very severe manner. But, in the year just mentioned (1688) an Act was passed, which is generally called the TOLERATION ACT, and which is the 18th chap. of the first year of William and Mary.

This Act took away great part of the hardships, under which the Dissenters before laboured; but, it still left them subjected to a load of *oaths* and *subscriptions*, and some of these they are still subjected to; so that, one would have wished for the abolition of these shackles, rather than the imposing of new ones.

There were also certain *Exemptions* provided for by the Toleration Act. That Act not only did away *punishments* but created *exemptions*. The proposed Act would create the grounds of punishments, and would take away exemptions.

By the Toleration Act any man, be he who he might, could become a Dissenting Minister, upon the conditions there prescribed; namely, taking of an oath of *fidelity* to the King, of *abjuration of popery*, and *subscribing the Articles of the Church of England*, with some exceptions. These conditions were hard; for, why should they subscribe any of the articles of the Church, of the Episcopal Church? However, such were the conditions, and the only conditions.

In the 19th year of the present king's reign (1779) an Act was passed (Chap. 44) to do away the obligation to *subscribe the Articles of the Church of England*; and to substitute in lieu thereof, simply a declaration of the person's being a *Protestant Dissenter*, of his being a *Christian*, and of his *belief in the Old and New Testaments*.

Thus, then, as to qualification for the Ministry, stands the law at this hour.

Before a man can preach or pray or teach, or, in any way officiate, as a Dissenting Minister, he must obtain a *Certificate* of his actually being a Dissenting Minister; and, this is the way in which he is to obtain it. He is to go to a General Sessions of the Peace, held for the County or Place, where he lives, and there he is to take the oaths of fidelity and abjuration, and is to make the declaration last-mentioned, and, when he has done this, the Justices present are to give him a *Certificate* of his having so done, and this constitutes him a *Dissenting Minister*, and authorizes him to officiate as such, in *any part of the kingdom where he pleases*. The Justices *cannot refuse* to admit him to take the oaths and to make the declaration; and, when he has so done, they cannot refuse him his Certificate. The Act is positive and peremptory; and, indeed, if it had not been so, it would have been a most wicked Act; for it would have given to the Justices the power of *selection*, which they might have used for the worst of purposes. It would have been much worse than to pass no Act at all.

Such is the mode of qualification; and, when a man is once qualified in this way, he is by the Toleration Act, exempted from serving upon any Jury, and from being chosen, or appointed to bear, the office of Churchwarden, Overseer of the Poor, and all other Parochial offices, and all offices of the Hundred or Shire, such as Constable, and the like. And, the Act of the 19th year of the present reign carries the exemption to SERVICE IN THE MILITIA, which is a very important thing, indeed, especially since the passing of Lord Castlereagh's LOCAL MILITIA Act, which makes every man in England, between the ages of 18 and 30 (1

believe it is) liable to the operation of that *military discipline*, having written about which some people have such excellent reason to remember to the latest hour of their lives.

The reader will stop *here* a little and fix his eye well upon this. This is the main point to keep in view, as he will see sufficient proof of by-and-by.

We must now look back at the provisions of the proposed Act of Lord Sidmouth, which we shall not, I think, want much said to convince us, strikes at the very root of the two Acts of Toleration; for, if this Act pass, the obstacles to the Ministry will be so great, that very few men will have either the ability, or the inclination to surmount them.

The FIRST provision in the intended law, relates to persons, who have actually become Ministers of separate Congregations; and, it is proposed to enact, that, any man being settled in this capacity, may go and take the oaths and sign the declaration before-mentioned, and that he shall then, and as long as he continue to be Minister of that specific Congregation, be exempted from *burdensome offices*, and from the *militia*; but, that, if he ceases to officiate as minister to that *particular* congregation, he then becomes again liable to the service in offices, and to MILITARY DISCIPLINE, which is a much more serious thing.

If the Act were now passed, any Dissenting Minister, not 45 years of age, not having a fixed Congregation, might be ballotted into the *old Militia*; and, if between the ages of 18 and 30, he might be drafted into Lord Castlereagh's Locals! And, if he has not money to pay the fine in the latter case (where no *clubs* will avail him), he *must go* and serve, and, of course, leave his congregation.

This was not so before. When a man had once become a Minister, he *always remained so*. He still enjoyed the exemptions attached to the character, though he might, from some cause or other, cease to officiate, just as our Church Ministers, who, whether they have livings or curacies, or not, are still exempted from the *Militia* and from *burdensome* office: other offices, some of them have no objection to. But, if this bill become a law, there will be no security for the Dissenting Minister, who may be preaching one day, and fighting the next.

There are many causes, whence a Dissenting Minister may cease to officiate. Illness may throw him out of his ministry, and cause his place to be supplied by another; and, when recovered from his illness, it may be impossible for him to recover his former situation, though he may be a very worthy man; but this circumstance at once subjects him to the Militia, and, as I observed before, if he be under 30 years of age, and has not money to pay the fine, he may be under the study of *military discipline*, in the Local Militia, the next day after his recovery.

Well, but, having lost his congregation, "he may get another." Yes, *if he can*; but, how is he to get it if he be ballotted for the militia in the meanwhile, or compelled to become Overseer of the Poor, or Constable? How, in that case, is he to get another congregation? He is almost necessarily disabled from getting another by the consequences naturally flowing from his loss of the one he now has; and this, of course, must have a tendency to degrade these Ministers in general; because men of character and of education will not like to place themselves in such a precarious situation, while it would inevitably happen in frequent instances, that a man seen in the pulpit to-day, would be seen

undergoing *military discipline* (that phrase is *delicate* enough I think) to-morrow.

A Dissenting Minister may be settled in a place where he, or his family, have ill-health. It is requisite for him to remove; but, if he does, he becomes liable to *military discipline*, unless he gets another Congregation immediately. And why should this be? The Ministers of our Church are not liable to *military discipline*, though they remove from *their* congregations for many years together. It is notorious that one-half of those, who own the livings in England and Wales, do not reside upon them. They are elsewhere, and very frequently the excuse is, that the air of the place does not agree with them. And, is no allowance of this sort to be made for the Dissenting Ministers? Why are they to be exposed to the ballotting for the militia the moment they leave their place of abode?

But, how is a man to *become* a Minister, if he be not one already? How is he, if this Act should pass, to obtain his *Certificate*?

We have seen, that, as the law *now* stands, he has nothing to do but to go to the Justices at their Quarter Sessions, and offer to take the Oaths and to sign the Declaration, and that having done it, he has his Certificate of course, the expense being settled by law at *SIXPENCE*. But, what is he, if this Act pass, to do in order to get his certificate of *being qualified*? Not of being a *Minister*; for, he is not to be looked upon as such, nor to be entitled to any exemptions, until he has actually gotten a separate congregation of his own.

In order to be *permitted to qualify*, he must, before he can show himself to the Justices at the Sessions, procure *several* SUBSTANTIAL and *reputable* householders, belonging to the same congregation with himself, to certify, on their consciences, in writing, to his being a Protestant Dissenter of their sect and of the same congregation, and to their *individual* and *long* knowledge, to his *sobriety of conversation*, and to his *ability and fitness to preach*; he must bring credible witnesses to prove that such certificate was duly signed by the parties; and, until he has done all this, the Justices are not to permit him to take the oaths and sign the declaration, and, if he officiates as a Minister without it, he is to be liable to all the heavy penalties and punishments, which were in existence before the Toleration Act was passed.

Now, the reader will easily perceive the effect of this provision. The trouble, the expense, and the difficulties of many sorts. But, even after this; after all these difficulties are got over, a person of this description, who has *qualified* for the Ministry, but who has not actually got a congregation, is not to be entitled to any of the *exemptions* above-mentioned. He may still (though he has qualified as Minister) be ballotted for the militia and may undergo the study of *military discipline*, whether he has a *taste* for such study or not.

The remaining provision relates to the admitting of men to be Ministers on *probation*, or *trial*. And here the man, to be so admitted, must bring a certificate from several Ministers of the same sect, who have taken the oaths, the signatures to which certificate are to be proved to the Justices as in the other case. This certificate, too, is to talk of *long* previous knowledge about life and conversation; and, when the Justices are satisfied, and have suffered him to take the oaths and subscribe the declaration; they may then, *for a limited time* to be specified in the *Certificate*, let him officiate as a *probationer* to any Dissenting Congregation,

and, *during a limited time*, they may exempt him from prosecution and punishment under the old laws.

But, even during the time that he is in this state of *probation* as a Minister, he is *not to be exempted from burdensome offices, or from the Local, or the other militia*; and, it may so happen, that his captain or serjeant will come and take him out of his pulpit and put him into the guard-house or black-hole.

What an alteration is here! As the law now stands any man may become a Minister without any certificate or witness or any thing else but his own oaths and his declaration; and, the moment he does become a Minister, he is secured against being forced into the militia, or to become a constable or other peace or parochial officer.

It is very clear, that if this Act of Lord Sidmouth should pass, that the Justices will, in fact, have the *selecting* of all the Dissenting Ministers; for, there is so much placed in their power, that it would be impossible to avoid this effect.

The Act will not, perhaps, say, that they shall have it in their *discretion* to refuse certificates; but, if it make provision for signatures of recommendation by *substantial* and *reputable* persons, it will, and it must, make them the judges of *whether the parties signing be of this description*. That's enough! Leave any one point wholly to them. Make them the sole masters of any link in the chain, and you do, in reality, put the whole thing in their power. You give them the selection of the *persons* to be Ministers, and you also enable them to limit the *numbers*; and, of course, the Toleration Act would be virtually repealed.

I shall be told, that this is not the *intention* at all; that nothing is further from the views of the author of the bill; and that I am quite mistaken as to the effect of it. As to what may be the *views* of the author of the bill, that is another matter. I am speaking of what the bill would produce; and, if it be what it is represented to be, it would produce what I am now describing.

It will not, perhaps, *say*, that the Justices shall have it in their discretion to *reject* any man on account of their dislike of *him*, or *without any reason assigned*. The Act will not *say* this perhaps; but as to the fulfilment of its own provisions relative to the *substantial* and *reputable* householders, it must give the Justices a *discretion*; they must be the judges and the *sole judges* of the recommendations they receive; it must be left to them to decide whether the persons signing the recommendation be, or be not, *substantial* and *reputable* people; and, we all know very well, that what one man may think *substantial* another may not, and that, with regard to who is, or is not, *reputable*, the difference in men's opinions may be still wider. Those whom Major CARTWRIGHT, for instance, would think very reputable people, JOHN BOWLES (who is a *Justice* by the bye) would be very likely to think just the contrary; and, if a flat *refusal* were not grounded upon such an objection, there might, at least, be delay; the applicant, together with his witnesses, might be sent away to seek more reputable vouchers for his character; when he came, he might be sent back again; his witness to the signatures might be questioned and cross-questioned; and thus the vexation and humiliation might become so great, and, indeed, the *expense*, that, with one thing and another, it might amount to a very serious persecution.

But, why should I suppose that the Justices *would* act thus. I do not *say* that they *would*. It is not necessary for me to say that they *would*.

It is enough for me to know that they *could*. I am not saying what *would* be, but what *might* be. I am reasoning and not conjuring.

But when one is reasoning upon probabilities; when one is endeavouring to ascertain what it is likely the Justices would do, it is worth while to ask what the Justices are.

In the country, more than two-thirds, I believe, of those who attend at the Sessions are *Clergymen of the Church of England*. Where this is the case it surely is not too much to expect, that the road to the Dissenting Ministry will not be smoothed by the Justices. And, as to the other Justices, they must have taken the *Test* at any rate. There are very few, perhaps, who do not belong to the Church of England; but, at the least, they must have taken the *Test*; they must have done an act, by which they do, in fact, declare themselves to be of that Church, so that they cannot be expected to be favourable to the Dissenters.

But, what I look upon as of more consequence than all the rest, is, the *political influence* that might, and that inevitably would, prevail here. The Justices are all appointed, they are all selected, by the Government. The Sheriffs are all selected and appointed in the same way. Every one, who will have power from this bill, does, except in a few of the Corporations, derive that power from the same source. This being the case, can any one suppose, that, in a matter where there is *discretion*, the decision will not be on the side of the Government, especially in cases where there is no apparent injury done to the party; for, to some persons it will always be difficult to make it out that a man is injured by a refusal to suffer him to preach; and, as to the public, I would fain see the man who would undertake to prove to a dozen of Clergymen and 'Squires that a well-set young fellow would not be better employed in the Local Militia, fighting for the preservation of their Tithes and Estates, than in preaching and praying to a Dissenting Congregation.

Such as were admitted as Ministers would, at any rate, have to pass review before the Justices, who would naturally have a leaning against all those whom they looked upon as *bad politicians*. If, for instance, I were to apply for a qualification. A thing by no means probable, to be sure; but, I put it as a strong case. If I were to apply to the Justices, does the reader not imagine, that they would *think* a little before they granted it? To be sure they would; and, indeed, no man can doubt, that, in every instance, political considerations would have great weight. The Act would, in short, give the Government, or rather the Ministry, through the Justices, the *selection* of the Dissenting Ministers; and, to suppose that they would select such as were not favourable to their own views, one must first see them in the habit of supporting at elections those whom they expect to oppose them in the House.

Does any one imagine, that this was not seen clearly at the time of passing the TOLERATION ACT? It was clearly seen, that, if there was any *discretionary* power lodged with the Justices, the Act would either have no effect in the way of toleration, or would cause toleration to be bartered for political purposes. Therefore it was that the Toleration Act left no discretion at all; but made it imperative upon the Justices to grant and to record the document constituting any man a Dissenting Minister, if he presented himself before them and offered to comply with the conditions specified in the Act.

But, there is a further consideration that must *now* have great weight

given to it. At the time when the Toleration Act was passed, the custom of making clergymen Justices did not, I believe, prevail to any extent worthy of notice; and, indeed, I believe, it did not exist at all. This custom, if it had existed, would certainly have been an additional motive for the imperative provision of the Toleration Act; for to conclude that a clergyman, acting as a Justice, would, as far as possible, increase the obstacles to the Ministry of the Dissenters, it is not necessary to suppose him a bad man, but on the contrary, to conclude that he would not increase these obstacles, you must first suppose him completely divested of every thing worthy of the name of *zeal* for the Church, to whom every *virtuous* and *able* Dissenting Minister must necessarily be a formidable enemy. Either, therefore, your clerical Justice must be something very little better than a traitor to the Church, or he must be almost irresistibly drawn to raise obstacles in the way of good and clever men in their way to the Dissenting Ministry. This consideration, however, though weighty, is trifling compared to another arising out of the change in the magisterial part of our government since the time when the TOLERATION ACT was passed. I allude to that very material measure, the Appointment of Justices of the Peace with SALARIES, and REMOVEABLE AT PLEASURE. Such a thing had never been heard of in England in 1688. It has been heard of now, and seen too; and we now have in the metropolis, twenty-four men, commonly called POLICE MAGISTRATES, who have all the powers of Justices of the Peace, not only in the metropolis itself, but in all the four populous counties adjoining it, namely, Middlesex, Essex, Kent, and Surrey, for all which counties they have *Commissions of the Peace*, and, of course, where they are amongst the Justices sitting at the General Sessions for these counties. These men were first appointed under an Act of Parliament, passed in the year 1792, just upon the eve of the late, or Anti-Jacobin war. They are paid 500*l.* a year each, free of all deductions.

Amongst other provisions in the Act by which they were appointed, they were disqualified, as Excisemen are, to vote at elections, for members to serve in Parliament. But, they are fully qualified by the Police Act to sit cheek by jowl with the gentlemen of the counties of Essex, Middlesex, Kent, and Surrey, at the General Sessions of the Peace of those counties; and, of course, they would be fully qualified to hear, and to determine on, the applications of persons to become Dissenting Ministers, if the proposed Act were to be passed. Here, in and round the metropolis, are, it is well known, the greater part of the Dissenters. A fourth part, perhaps, of the population of England, if not more, live within the jurisdiction of these STIPENDIARY JUSTICES, who, from their numbers, are at all times likely to form a majority of the Justices present at the General Sessions of the Peace held in any of the above four counties; and, who, from the very nature of their situation, must be disposed to do nothing hostile or displeasing to the Ministry of the day, *their places being held at the pleasure of the Crown*.

The nature of their situation, with regard to the Ministry, and the natural tendency of it to create an undue bias in *politics*, is clearly marked out by the provisions of the Act by which they were appointed, and which, as to *elections*, for Members of Parliament, puts them upon a footing with *Excisemen* and others, who are deprived of the elective franchise merely on account of the strong temptations of their offices. Yet, if the Act of Lord SIDMOUTH were to pass, these men would have

the *discretionary power* that I have shown above in the licensing of one-half, perhaps, or more than one-half of all the Dissenting Ministers in England and Wales; because it is from the Metropolis chiefly that these Ministers start.

After what has been said, there is no one, I imagine, who can doubt, that the effect of the proposed Act would be to lessen the number of Dissenting ministers, and, indeed, if the Act could be enforced, to render the TOLERATION ACT, or, rather, ACTS (for the last is a very important one) of none, or, of very little, avail. Upon this point there can, I think, be very little difference of opinion: whether it be *right* to render these Acts a nullity is another question, but this is a question which I have not time to discuss here, though I shall not fail to do it in my next.*

State Prison, Newgate, Tuesday,

WM. COBBETT.

May 21, 1811.

* At a numerous and most respectable Meeting of Protestant Dissenters of various denominations, and other Friends to Religious Liberty, residing in different parts of the United Empire, held at the London Tavern, Bishopsgate-street, on the 15th of May, 1811, Samuel Mills, Esq., Chairman, the following Resolutions were agreed to:

1. That this Meeting believe that there are at least two millions of Protestant Dissenters in the kingdom of England and Wales, including persons of opulent fortunes, high literary attainments, and active benevolence; that their exertions have contributed to promote industry, knowledge, good morals, social order, and public prosperity; that they are not inferior to any fellow subjects in fervent love to their country, nor in ardent loyalty to their venerable Sovereign, whose early promise to "preserve the tolerations inviolate," has made an indelible impression on their hearts, and that any means which might excite their discontent and enfeeble their attachment, would therefore at any time, and especially at this period, be inconsistent with the national interest, and with wise and liberal policy.

2. That although this Meeting consider the right to worship God according to individual judgment as an inalienable right, superior to all social Regulations; and although they have long anticipated a period when all Penal Laws for worshipping God according to their consciences would be abolished, they have been unwilling to agitate the public mind for the attainment of their hopes, and presuming that no persons would in this age venture to assail the Act of Toleration, after the ever-memorable declaration of the King, they have been content to regard it with grateful emotions, and to esteem it as an effectual protection from the recurrence of former persecutions.

3. That the persons assembled at this Meeting have received with great anxiety the communications frequently made by the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Sidmouth, of his intention to propose legislative Enactments interfering with the laws relating to Protestant Dissenters; that they did hope the applications he has received, and the information communicated would have prevented his perseverance; but they have learned the disappointment of their hopes, and have ascertained the provisions of the Bill which he has at length introduced into Parliament with extreme regret, and with painful apprehension.

4. That this Bill declares that all the provisions relating to the Dissenting Ministers contained in the Toleration Act, and in the subsequent Act for their further relief, were intended to be limited only to Ministers of separate Congregations, and enacts, 1. That such Ministers, upon being admitted to the peaceable possession and enjoyment of the peace of Ministers of a separate Congregation, may, on a certificate in writing, under the hands of several substantial and reputable Householdors belonging to such Congregation, signed in the presence of some creditable witness, who is to make proof of their signatures upon oath at a General Sessions of the Peace, be permitted to take oaths and to sign the Declarations previously required, and shall then, and then only, during their continuance to be Ministers of such separate Congregation, be entitled to all the privileges and exemptions which the former Acts had conferred. 2nd. That any

THE DISSENTERS.—*Continued.*
(*Political Register, May, 1811.*)

THIS measure, to the great mortification of the lovers of wrangling, has been abandoned.

The Bill, of which I took notice, and the substance of which I gave, in the preceding pages, was brought forth for a second reading, in the House of

other person who may desire to qualify himself to preach as a Dissenting Minister, must procure several substantial and reputable householders, being Dissenters of the same Sect, and of the same Congregation, to certify on their consciences, in writing, to his being a Protestant Dissenting Minister of their Sect, and of the same Congregation, and to their individual and long knowledge to his sobriety of conversation, and to his ability and fitness to preach; and that such Certificate must be proved as before stated, before he be permitted to take the oath and subscribe the declaration, before he be exempt from the pains, penalties and punishments to which he would otherwise be liable as a Dissenting Minister. And, 3rd. That any person of sober life and conversation admitted to preach on probation to any separate Congregation must produce a Certificate from several Dissenting Ministers, who have taken the oath (to be also proved on oath at a General Sessions) of his life and conversation, and to their long previous knowledge, before he can be admitted to take the Oaths and subscribe the Declaration, and that he may then, during a limited period, to be specified in the Certificate, officiate as a probationer to any Dissenting Congregation, and be during a limited period exempt from prosecution and punishment; but neither of the two last-mentioned classes of persons will be entitled to any privileges, or to the exemptions from offices conferred on Dissenting Ministers by the Toleration Act.

5. That the principle assumed as the foundation of the Bill is incorrect. That the Toleration Act authorized any persons to become Dissenting Ministers, who conceived themselves to be called and qualified to preach, upon giving security to the State for their Loyalty and Christian Principles, by taking certain Oaths, and by subscribing certain Declarations, and not only prevented their persecution under Laws made in times less favourable to civil and religious liberty, but conceiving their labours to be of public utility, granted to them exemptions from all parochial offices and other duties which might interfere with their more important exertions—that such construction of the Oath of Toleration has been sanctioned by the general practice of a century, and has never been impugned by any decision in a superior Court of Law—and that if even such construction be incorrect, and legislative exposition be required, such declaratory Bill ought to follow the intention of the only Act which has subsequently passed; and should extend, and not contract; protect, and not impair the relief afforded by the former, ancient, and venerable Statute.

6. That the Bill introduced into Parliament is not justified by any necessity, and will be highly injurious—that it is unnecessary, because the evils presumed to result from the abuses of the existing laws by a few persons who may have improperly taken the oaths required from Dissenting Preachers and Teachers, do not exist but to a most inconsiderable extent, and because the extension of all such abuses has been anxiously and would be effectually discountenanced by every class of Protestant Dissenters, and that it must be injurious, because it will introduce forms unprecedented, inconvenient, or impracticable—will render itinerant Preachers, Students of Divinity, Ministers on Probation, and many persons, to whose ardent piety and disinterested labours, multitudes are indebted for Religious Instruction, liable to serve all Civil Offices; and will expose all Ministers or the witnesses to the Certificates to be harassed by repeated attendances at different Sessions, and to capricious examinations and unlimited expense, because by limiting the right of persons to become Dissenting Ministers in obedience to their consciences, it will impose new restrictions on toleration, and because it will create a precedent for future attempts at even more dangerous or fatal experiments against religious liberty.

Lords, on Tuesday last, the 21st instant, by its author, Lord Viscount SIDMOUTH, late Mr. ADDINGTON, and sometime Prime Minister of this kingdom.

When he brought it out for a *second reading* there was, it appears from the report of the proceedings in the House of Lords, not less than *five hundred petitions* against it, presented by different peers.

After these petitions had been presented, Lord SIDMOUTH moved that the Bill should be then *read a second time*. He complained of the *misrepresentations* that had gone forth about his Bill, and said a great deal in its justification; but the tide was too strong against him.

7. That although most reluctant to interference with political affairs, they therefore cannot regard the present attempt without peculiar sensations of alarm, and that veneration for their ancestors, regard to their posterity, respect for rights which they can never abandon, and the sacred obligations which they feel will therefore compel them to disregard all doctrinal and ritual distinctions, and to unite, by every legitimate effort, to prevent the pending Bill from passing into a Law, and to oppose the smallest diminution of the privileges secured by the Act of Toleration.

8. That, from the noble declaration of the liberal-minded and illustrious Prince Regent of the Empire, that he will deliver up the Constitution unaltered, to his Royal Father, this Meeting are encouraged to indulge a confident hope, that measures so innovating and injurious can never obtain the sanction of his high authority, and that they also rejoice that it has not been introduced by his Majesty's Government; and that respectful application be therefore made to them for their wise and continued protection. That a Petition to the House of Lords against the Bill be signed by all the Persons present at this Meeting; and that all Congregations of Protestant Dissenters, and other friends to Religious Liberty, throughout the Empire, be recommended to present similar Petitions; and that a Committee, consisting of Persons resident in London, and in the Country, be appointed to effectuate these proceedings, and to adopt any measures they may deem expedient, to prevent the successful prosecution of this Bill; and that each Committee may increase their number; and that any three Members be competent to act.

9. That these Resolutions be communicated by the Committee now appointed to the Committee for guarding the Privileges of the Methodists, and to the Deputies and Ministers of the Congregations of Protestant Dissenters of the three denominations in or near London; and that their co-operation and assistance be respectfully invited.

10. That a Subscription be entered into to defray the expenses which may be incurred; and that Friends to Religious Liberty throughout the Empire be invited to contribute; and that such Subscription be appropriated at the discretion of the Committee.

11. That Subscriptions be received by Messrs. Roberts, Curtis, and Co., Lombard-street; Sir James Esdaile and Co., Lombard-street; and Down, Thornton, and Co., Bartholomew lane.

12. That Thomas Pellatt, Esq., of Ironmongers'-hall, and John Wilks, Esq., of Hoxton-square, be solicited to act as Joint-Secretaries to the Committee.

13. That the acknowledgments of this Meeting be presented to the Gentlemen by whom it was convened, for the vigilance meritoriously displayed, and for their prompt attention to every attempted infringement of the invaluable and long-established rights of the Protestant Dissenters.

14. That this Meeting present their ardent thanks to the Chairman, for the attachment to Religious Liberty which he has displayed, by consenting to preside on this occasion, and for the attention and ability which he has manifested.

15. That their thanks be also presented to John Wilks, Esq., for the ability and zeal which he has manifested as temporary Secretary, and for his eloquent and useful exertions at this Meeting.

16. That these Resolutions be published in the Newspapers, signed by the Chairman, and that measures be adopted by the Committee, necessary to give them requisite publicity.

SAMUEL MILLS, Chairman.

The ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY said, that no persecution was intended ; but, he recommended the stopping of the Bill.

Several other Lords spoke ; some, and especially the Lord Chancellor and the Earl of Buckinghamshire, defended the Bill ; but, still thought it not advisable to *press it* at that time.

When, therefore, the question was put upon the motion of Lord Sidmouth, it was *negatived without a division*.

Thus ended this offspring of the statesman of Richmond Park ; but, since the subject has been brought forward, there is something more to be said upon it than has yet been said.

I have before endeavoured to show the *effects* which the Bill would produce ; and, my conclusion was this : that it would *lessen the number of Dissenting Ministers*, and, indeed, render, as to them, the Toleration Act of very little avail ; but, whether it was *right* to do this was a question that I did not then enter upon, and that I reserved for the present Article.

In order to answer the question whether it would be desirable to lessen the number of Dissenting Ministers, we ought first to inquire a little into what sort of people they are, and what is the nature and what the tendency of their ministry. For, upon the good or evil that they produce depends the answer to the question before us.

That men, that *all* men, should be allowed to worship their Maker in their *own way*, is, I think, not to be doubted ; but, if the government once begins to meddle, it must establish somewhat of an *uniform creed*, and that this creed will not suit all men is very certain. Whether the government *ought ever to meddle* with religion is a question that I will not now attempt to discuss ; but this I am not at all afraid to assert : that, without a *state religion*, a kingly government and an aristocracy will never long exist, in any country upon earth ; therefore, when the Dissenters, as in the present case, come forward and volunteer their praises of kingly government, and boast so loudly, and so perfectly gratuitously, of their "*ardent loyalty* to their venerable Sovereign," whose goodness to them "has made an indelible impression upon their hearts ;" when they do this, they do, in effect, acknowledge the utility and the excellence of a state religion ; because, as I said before, and as all history will clearly prove, *without a state religion a kingly government cannot exist*.

If this be the case, it must be allowed that the government is bound to protect its own religion, which is to be done only by *keeping down others* as much as is necessary to secure a predominance to that of the state. And, then, we come to the question : whether it ought not, for this purpose, now to do something to lessen the number of Dissenting Ministers, who are daily increasing, and whose influence increases in proportion beyond that of their number. Indeed, *if we allow that a state religion is necessary*, this is no question at all ; for, in proportion as these Dissenting Ministers increase, the Church of England must lose its power.

But, in another view of the matter, in a *moral* view, I mean, it may still be a question with some persons, whether the increase of these Ministers be a good or an evil. I say, in a *moral* view ; for, as to *religion* without morality, none but fools or knaves do, or ever did profess it.

Now, as to the moral benefit arising from the teaching of Dissenting Ministers, it is sometimes very great, and I believe it is sometimes very small indeed, and, in many cases, I believe, their teaching tends to immorality and to misery.

Amongst the Ministers of some of the sects there are many truly learned and most excellent men, and such there always have been amongst them ; and, even amongst the sects called Methodistical, there have been, and, doubtless, are, many men of the same description. But, on the other hand, it must be allowed that there are many of the Methodistical Preachers, who are fit for anything rather than *teaching* the people *morality*. I am willing to give the most of them full credit for sincerity of motive, but to believe, that the Creator of the Universe can be gratified with the ranting and raving and howling that are heard in some of the Meeting-Houses, is really as preposterous as any part of the Mahomedan Creed ; and, if possible, it is still more absurd to suppose, that such incoherent sounds should have a tendency to mend the *morals* of the people, to make them more honest, industrious and public-spirited, for this last is a sort of morality by no means to be left out of the account.

I have heard it observed by very sensible and acute persons, that even these ranters *do more good than harm* ; but, if they do any harm at all, the question is, I think, at once decided against them ; for, that they can do any *good* appears to me utterly impossible.

I am clearly of opinion, that, to lessen the number of this description of Ministers (for so they are called) would be a benefit to the country, provided it could be done without creating a *new source of political influence*. And, as to the politics of the whole sect of the Methodists, they are very bad. Never has any thing been done by them, which bespoke an attachment to *public liberty*. "Their kingdom," they tell us, is "*not of this world* ;" but, they do, nevertheless, *not neglect the good things of it* ; and, some of them are to be found amongst the rankest jobbers in the country. Indeed, it is well known, that that set of politicians, ironically called THE SAINTS, who have been the main prop of the PRR system ; it is well known, that under the garb of sanctity, they have been aiding and abetting in all the worst things that have been done during the last twenty years. These are very different people from the *Old Dissenters*, who have generally been a public-spirited race of men. The *political* history of THE SAINTS, as they are called, would exhibit a series of the most infamous intrigues and most rapacious plunder, that, perhaps, ever was heard of in the world. They have *never* been found wanting at any dirty job ; and have invariably lent their aid in those acts, which have been the most inimical to the liberty of England.

Their petitioning now, I look upon as a *selfish* act. If a Bill had been before the House to enable the government to bring 200,000 German soldiers into the country, not a man of them would have petitioned. They never petitioned against any of the acts of Pitt and his associates, from the year 1792 to the year 1799 ; and, therefore, I give them very little credit for their alacrity now.

Seeing them in this light, I must confess, that I do not wish to see their numbers increase ; and, at any rate, I cannot imagine any ground, upon which their Ministers can, without having congregations, claim *exemption from service in the Militia*. As the law now stands, *any man*, be he who he may, except he be a *Catholic* or an *Infidel*, can exempt himself from the Militia service for life, by only paying *sixpence*. An exemption from Militia service is now, to a young man, worth 100 pounds at least. But he can obtain it for a *sixpence*. A carter, for instance, who is 25 years of age, is now liable to be drafted into the *Old Militia* and also into Lord Castlereagh's *Locals*, may obtain a security for life

for sixpence. He has only to go to the Quarter Sessions and there take the oath of *fidelity* and that of *abjuration*, and to declare that he is a *Protestant* and a *Christian* and that he *believes in the Scriptures*. He has only to do this and pay sixpence, and he is secure against *military discipline* for his life. And what *objection* is there to it? Who need object to take the oath of allegiance to the King, to abjure the Pope, or to declare himself a Christian? This is all; and thus, you see, as the law now stands, *any man* but a *Catholic* or an *Infidel* may, without any perjury or falsehood, exempt himself from all militia service. So that, really the project of our good old Richmond-Park Minister, was not wholly destitute of reason in its support.

He is reported to have given some instances of the abuse of this privilege. He mentioned an instance in Staffordshire of a man's having taken out a license who could neither *write* nor *read*. And *why not*, as the law now stands? The man, in all likelihood, did not relish MILITARY DISCIPLINE, and, being told that there was a law to exempt him from it for life, if he would but take a couple of *true oaths* and make one *true declaration* and give a *sixpence*, he, of course, betook himself to these cheap and simple and infallible means. There is many a young man who is prevented from marrying by this dread of *military discipline*: here is the remedy at hand: here is the law come in to his aid. Our old friend of Richmond Park seems to have taken it for granted that his man in Staffordshire actually became a *Preacher*. *Why* should he? The law does not require it. It gives him a *license* to preach, and protects him from the *Militia discipline*; but, it does not compel him to preach, nor does it require of him any declaration that he *will* preach, or, that he *intends* to preach, or that he ever had such a thought in his head. The man need not be a *Dissenter* at all. A Church-goer may take out the license as well as any other man; and, indeed, any man but a *Catholic* or an *Infidel* has this protection at his command.

Now, surely, this is not the way in which it was intended the law should stand? We see, that it is *possible*, for the militia to be left without any body to fill its ranks, except *Catholics, Jews, Turks, Heathens*, and other *Unbelievers*; for, every *Christian Protestant* may excuse himself if he will, and that, too, without any perjury, falsehood, or deception. For suppose *John Stiles*, who is just coming 20 years old, and who has a stronger liking for some milkmaid than he has for what the soldiers call the *Drum-Major's Daughter*; suppose he is a church-goer; what is that to him or to the Justices? They have no authority to ask him whether he can write or read, or what he means to do with his *license* when he has got it. His license is to show to a constable, when he comes to warn him for militia duty. He has *paid* for his license, and has, of course, a right to use it for whatever purpose may appear most beneficial to himself.

It is something curious, that the law should be so made as to leave the country to the chance of being defended solely by *Catholics, Jews, Turks*, and *Infidels*; that the law should enable every one to exempt himself from the service of defence; *except those only, in whom the government will not put trust!*

It is, too, not much less curious, that the *Catholics* should, in this respect, be put upon a footing with the *Jews*, and *Turks*; and, I must say, that, when I hear the Dissenters complaining of persecution, I cannot help reflecting on the behaviour of some of them towards the

Catholics, with respect to whom common decency ought to teach them better behaviour. But, whether I hear in a Churchman or a Dissenter abuse of the Catholics I am equally indignant; when I hear men, no two of whom can agree in any one point of religion, and who are continually dooming each other to perdition; when I hear them join in endeavouring to shut the Catholic out from political liberty on account of his religious tenets, which they call idolatrous and damnable, I really cannot feel any compassion for either of them, let what will befall them. There is, too, something so impudent; such cool impudence, in their affected contempt of the understanding of the Catholics, that one cannot endure it with any degree of patience. You hear them all boasting of their *ancestors*; you hear them talking of the English Constitution as the pride of the world; you hear them bragging of the deeds of the Edwards and the Henrys; and of their wise and virtuous and brave forefathers; and, in the next breath, perhaps, you hear them speak of the Catholics as the vilest and most stupid of creatures, and as wretches doomed to perdition; when they ought to reflect, that all these wise and virtuous and brave forefathers of theirs were *Catholics*; that they lived and died in the Catholic faith; and that notwithstanding their Catholic faith, they did not neglect whatever was necessary to the freedom and greatness of England.

It is really very stupid as well as very insolent to talk in this way of the Catholics; to represent them as doomed to perdition, who compose five-sixths of the population of Europe; to represent as beastly ignorant those amongst whom the brightest geniuses and the most learned men in the world have been, and are to be found; but still, the most shocking part of our conduct is to affect to consider as a sort of out-casts of God as well as man those who have, through all sorts of persecution, adhered to the religion of *their* and *our* forefathers. There is something so unnatural, so monstrous, in a line of conduct, in which we say, *that our forefathers are all in Hell*, that no one but a brutish bigot can hear of it with patience.

Why, if we pretend to talk of toleration, should not the exemptions from *military discipline* extend to *Catholic* Christians as well as *Protestant* Christians? What good reason can be found for the distinction? None; and, while this distinction exists, and while I hear not the Protestant Dissenters complain of it, I shall feel much less interest in any thing that concerns *them*. Why do they petition *now* any more than at any other time? Because *they* were now the object of attack. They were quiet enough while none but the Catholics were the object of attack; and, indeed, they have not now noticed it at all; they have not even glanced at the hardships on the Catholic, who was expressly shut out from the benefit of the TOLERATION ACT. They could, and still can, see him treated in that way, without uttering a word in his behalf. He is in the very state they were petitioning not to be placed in; and yet they say not one word in his behalf.

LORD HOLLAND is reported to have said, that "every man had a right to preach if he pleased to any body that would hear him." Agreed, my lord, but, surely, every man ought not to have a right to *exempt himself from the militia service*? Yet, this right he has, unless he be a *Catholic*, a *Jew*, a *Turk*, or an *Infidel* of some sort or other. This is what I should have dwelt upon, if I had had a bill to bring in on the subject. I do suppose that the greater part of those who take out licenses actually

go a preaching; but, if they do, is there to be *no limit* to their number? Is every broad-shouldered, brawny-backed young fellow that chooses to perform what he calls preaching, to be excused from service in the Militia? Who is there that would not much rather sit and bear a score or two of young women sing at a meeting-house two or three times a week than be liable to be a hearer, much less a *performer*, at a military circle, though it were but once in a year? It is easy enough to TALK about *carrying the Cross* and *mortifying the flesh*; but, when it comes to the pinch, when the hour of *performance* comes, we find men disposed to act by a figure of rhetoric, rather than to do the thing in their real, proper, natural person.

The Dissenters may, indeed, say, that it is not their fault, that the Militia Laws have been passed, and that so many thousands of men are liable to these laws; and this is very true; but, there are such laws, and, as they have said nothing against them, we may suppose that they approve of them.

We are now, however, to look at the matter in another light. I cannot help thinking, that one of the reasons, if not the great reason of all, for the bill that has made all this noise, is, the great increase of the congregations of the Methodists in particular, and the consequent diminution in the congregations of the Church of England. This has long been a subject of alarm to the Clergy of the Church, who imagine, that, in time, people, from so seldom seeing the inside of a church, will begin to wonder why the *tithes* should be given to the clergy of that Church; and, we may be very sure, that the *Dissenting teacher* will put himself to no very great pains to prove to his flock, that the tithes are *due* to the Clergy. This defection from the Established Church bears a strong resemblance to the defection from the parochial Clergy in the second and third century of the Catholic Church of England, when the laziness and neglects of those Clergy and their endless pluralities, had thrown the people into the hands of the *itinerant* monks and *friars*, who appear to have been a most active and vigilant description of men, and, indeed, to have borne a strong resemblance in most respects, to the itinerant Methodist preachers of the present day. Such hold did they get by means of their exertions, that, as the benefices fell in, the patrons bestowed many of them in fee upon the Abbays and Priories, who thus became the patrons, and who, of course, supplied the churches from their own houses, and took the greater part of the tithes to their own use, but who, having become rich in their turn, became also in their turn lazy and neglectful as the parochial clergy had been; and hence came that change which we call the REFORMATION, which *originated* not in any dislike on the part of the people to the tenets or ceremonies of the Catholic Church, but in the laziness, the neglects, and, in some cases, oppressions of the Clergy, aided by a quarrel between the King and the Pope.

Men looked back into the *cause* of the existence of the *tithes* and *benefices*. They inquired into the *grounds* upon which they stood. They asked *why* they were granted. They came to a clear understanding as to what was expected and what was due *from the Clergy* in return for them. And, at every step, they found, that *endowment* and *residence* went together. They found, in short, that the parish churches, the parsonage-houses, the glebes, and the tithes, had been originally granted for the purpose of insuring the *constant residence* of a Priest in each

parish, there to teach the people, to give them religious instruction, to feed the poor, and to keep hospitality. These were the express conditions, upon which the grants were made; and, when, instead of fulfilling these purposes, the livings were given away to Abbeys and Priories and religious communities of various descriptions, who merely kept a sort of journeymen in the parishes called *Vicars*, to whom they gave the nails and the hair, while they took the carcase home to be spent at the Convent; when this was the case, and when, in another way, the Popes were bestowing living after living upon one and the same person; when, in short, a very considerable part of all the parishes in the kingdom were thus deprived of nearly all that they had a right to expect in return for their tithes; when this was the case, it was no wonder, that the people were ready to listen to reformers. And, I beg the reader to bear in mind, that these were the real efficient causes of what we call the *Reformation*, and not any fault that the people discovered in the *doctrines* or *ceremonies* of the Catholic Church; for, after all, we believe in the Creed of ST. ATHANASIUS, and what can any Catholic or Pope want us to believe more? We hold, that a man *cannot be saved* unless he believes the whole of this Creed; and will any man believe, then, that the Reformation had a quarrel about *doctrine* for its cause.

Such being the short but true history of the causes of the *Reformation*, that is to say, *the taking of the tithes from Catholic Priests and giving them to Protestant Priests, keeping back a part to be given to favourite Lords and Ladies*, and which are now called lay impropriations; such being the history of this grand event, which, after all, was merely a shifting of the *Church Property* from one set of hands to another, is it not worth while for the present Clergy, that is to say, the present possessors of that property, to consider a little of the state in which they are with regard to their parishioners? They evidently have considered this, or somebody else has for them. The complaint, on the part of the Church, of the increase of the Methodists, has been made for some years. The evil increases; and dangers, greater than those of former times, menace; because, if once the church property be touched *now*, it *never returns*.

But, let us now see how they attend to their parishes. Let us see how vigilant they are in the discharge of their duty. The following list of absentees is copied from a paper laid before Parliament in 1808. None of the same kind has, I believe, been laid before Parliament since that year; but, that the number of non-residents has not decreased I infer from the fact, that, for the three years of which an account of the non-residents is given, numbers kept *increasing*.

ABSTRACT of the Returns of the Number of NON-RESIDENTS in 1806-7.

Want or unfitness of Parsonage-House.....	1063
Residence on other Benefices	1137
Infirmity.....	430
Literary or Ecclesiastical Employment.....	396
Offices in Cathedrals	183
—— in Dioceses	32
—— in Universities.....	113
Chaplaincies in Royal or Noble Families.....	27
—— in the Navy	15
Residence in own or Relatives' Mansion	123
Members in Universities, under 30 Years of Age	5

Carried over 3524

Brought forward	3524
Metropolitan Licenses.....	38
Without Notification, License or Exemption	2446
No Church	12
Sinecures	17
Vacancies	33
Imprisonment	5
Sequestration.....	19
Recent Institutions	23
Living held by Bishops	21
Doing Duty and resident in a House belonging to a Sinecure in the Parish.....	2
Abroad	5
Total	<u>6145</u>

Now, it is impossible to look at this List, recollecting, at the same time, that there are only about 11,000 livings in the whole, without seeing a quite sufficient cause for the great increase of Dissenting Congregations. We see here above half the parishes unattended by the persons who have undertaken the "*care of the people's souls*" in those parishes. These are the words: "*Care of their souls.*" What can a man say in his defence; what can he think of himself, to undertake such a charge, and never go near the spot? And, is it to be wondered at, that the people should go to Meeting-houses, while this is the case? Here we see, that there were nearly a *fourth part of all the Rectors and Vicars in England*, not only absent from their parsonage-houses and their parishes, but absent *without leave or license*, and even without condescending to *notify their absence to their Bishop*, though expressly required so to do by the law, and by a law, too, passed for their ease and indulgence.

The first head, it will be observed, contains the numbers absent from the *want*, or *unfitness*, of the Parsonage-house. If not *fit*, why not *made fit*? Why not appropriate part of the income of the living to this purpose?

Some, you see, are absent upon *literary pursuits*. What! Writing Reviews, or Political Pamphlets, or Paragraphs, or what? But, at any rate, what *literary pursuit* could be so proper as the writing and study tending to effect the object of the living? What! a man receives an income for life, and he engages at the same time to take upon him the care of the souls of the people of a parish; and, he, while he *keeps the income*, leaves the people of the parish to take care of their own souls, because some *literary pursuit* calls him away elsewhere!

When he takes upon him the office of Minister he declares, in the most solemn manner, that he believes himself to be *called by the Holy Ghost* to take upon him the ministry of the Gospel and to labour in the saving of souls. When he is inducted into a living, he promises to *watch constantly over his flock*, to aid them with *his advice*, to *comfort them* in their troubles and sufferings.

What can be more amiable than such an office! What a blessing it must be where punctually discharged! But, what is it if the man who takes this office upon him; who enters into this engagement; who makes these solemn promises; if he, as soon as he has insured the revenue of the living, as soon as he has just ridden into the parish and taken possession, sets off again, and never more hears of, or asks after his flock

again, except at *shearing time*, but leaves them, body and soul, to the care of a stipendiary, whom he has never even *seen*, perhaps, in all his life time?

With this before their eyes, is it any wonder, that the people prefer the itinerant preachers, who, however deficient in other respects, are seldom wanting in *zeal*?

I shall be told, perhaps, that, if the *incumbent* is not resident, his *curate* is. *Sometimes*. But, what is that? The curate serves two, perhaps, and sometimes three churches; and, he has not the pecuniary *means*, if he has the talents, to do all that might be done by the incumbent.

Indeed, it is notorious, that to the neglect of the Clergy the rise of the Methodists is owing. And, how neglectful, how lazy, must they be to suffer any sect to rise its head only an inch high! When one looks over the country and sees how thickly the churches are scattered; when one considers how complete is the possession of the country by the Clergy; when the force of habit is taken into view; when we consider, that they are the keepers of the records of births and of the bones of ninety-nine hundredths of the dead; when we behold them and their office having all the large estates, all the family consequence and pride on their side; when one considers all this, one cannot help being astonished that there should be any such thing as a Meeting-house; but, when we reflect, that the Clergy have the *power of speaking, as long as they please, to the people, in every parish in the kingdom, once a-week at least*, and in a place where no one *dares to contradict them*, or would ever think of such a thing; when we reflect upon this, and calculate the number of hours that the Pitt system would exist, if we Jacobins had the use of the pulpits only for one fortnight, when we consider this, we cannot find words to express our idea of the *laziness*, the incomprehensible laziness that must prevail amongst the Clergy of the Established Church.

There are, however, some worthy and diligent men amongst them; and, at any rate, I do by no means believe, that public liberty would gain any thing by exchanging the Clergy for "*THE SAINTS*," who have been the most steady abettors of the Pitt system, and who have been full as eager as any of the Clergy in the cry of "*No Popery*."

In short, they are *Dissenters* merely because they have *no tithes*, and in that name only do they resemble the Dissenters of the times before the Revolution: they are as much like the Dissenters of old times as a *horse-dung* is like an *apple*. Those were fanatics, but they were honest and just men, full of courage and full of talent; they understood well the rights and liberties of Englishmen, and upon the maintenance of them they staked their lives. The mongrel "*SAINTS*" of our days are as keen for places, pensions, contracts, and jobs, as the inhabitants of any perjured borough in the kingdom; and, indeed, if I were to be put to it to find out the most consummate knaves in all England, I should most assuredly set to work amongst those who are ironically denominated "*SAINTS*." They were the great corps of scouts in the famous times of *No Popery*, and did more with that base and hypocritical cry than all others put together. One of the bawling brutes in my neighbourhood told the people, that "the King, Lord bless him! had saved them all from being burnt by the *papishes*." Was it for a service like this that he was to be exempted from Lord Castlereagh's Local Militia? A con-

gregation of these "*Saints*," in a neighbouring county, *cashiered the Minister* because he spoke at a town meeting, against the clamorous outcry of "*No Popery*;" and, in consequence thereof, a gentleman gave him a living in the Church.

Many, very many, instances of their base time-serving in politics might here be mentioned; but, enough has, I think, been said to show, that the increase of their members cannot be expected to be attended with any good effect. I would let them alone; but, I would give them no *encouragement*. There are persons who like them, because they look upon them as hostile to *the Church*. Their hostility is for the *tithes*, which they would exact with as much rigour as the present Clergy, and would, if possible, deserve them less. But, *my* great dislike to them is grounded on their *politics*, which are the very worst in the country; and, though I am aware, that there are many very honourable exceptions amongst them, I must speak of them as *a body*; and, as a body I know of none so decidedly hostile to public liberty. This is an age of *cant*. The country has been ruined by cant; and they have been the principal instruments in the work, and have had their full share of the profit.

WM. COBBETT.

*State Prison, Newgate, Friday,
24th May, 1811.*

TO THE PRINCE REGENT:

ON THE DISPUTE WITH THE AMERICAN STATES.

(Political Register, August, 1811.)

SIR,—Feeling, as the people of this kingdom do so severely, smarting, writhing, as we are, under the effects of the war with France, and considering how easily this war might, in 1793, have been avoided without either danger or dishonour to England; thus feeling and thus reflecting, it is natural for us, when threatened with a new war, to inquire betimes, what are the grounds of such war; whether it would be *just*; if just, whether it would be *necessary*; and, be the cause what it may, whether the *consequences* are likely to be good or evil.

If, Sir, the counsels of Mr. Fox had been listened to, in the years 1792, and 1793, the state of England, of Europe, and of the world, would have been very different indeed from what it now is. A war against opinions and principles would not have been waged; England, instead of becoming a party in that fatal and disgraceful war, would have been a mediatrix between the conflicting parties, if, indeed, she had not wholly prevented the conflict. So many governments would not have been overthrown; such rivers of human blood would not have been shed; *reformation* might and would have been produced, because the state of things and the temper of men's minds demanded it; but nowhere need there have been destruction; all the states of Europe might have remained on their old foundations, and the Bourbons might at this day have been upon the Thrones of France and Spain. This kingdom, too, might

and must have shared in the *reformation*; but, such reformation would have made no inroads upon rank or property; and the nation would have avoided all those measures of coercion, all those before unheard-of laws to which the contest gave rise; and those enormous expenses, which, first producing Debt and tenfold Taxation, led by degrees to that *pauperism* and *paper-money*, which now form the two great and hideous features in the state of our internal affairs, and which no man, who really loves the country, can contemplate without the most serious apprehensions.

Such being the consequences of that war, or, rather, a part of these consequences, the far greater proportion of them being, in all probability, yet to come, it behoves those who have power to act *to consider well*, before they launch the country into a new war; and it is the right of every man to express, in the way which he may think most likely to be efficient, his opinions upon the subject. This right I am now about to exercise, and if I have chosen, as the vehicle, an address to your Royal Highness, it is because that respect, which inclination as well as duty dictate upon such an occasion, will not fail to make me dismiss from my mind all partiality and prejudice, and to offer nothing unsupported by fair reasoning and undeniable facts.

As to the *grounds of the present dispute* with the American States, they are some of them of very long standing. The conduct of this government relative to the war against those States was extremely unwise; but, its conduct since the war is, I am convinced, unparalleled in the annals of diplomatic folly. The moment that war was at an end, the *people* of the two countries, attached to each other by all the ties which imperious nature has provided, were ready to rush into a mutual embrace, and like children of the same common parent, whose harmony had been disturbed by a transient quarrel, to become even more affectionate towards each other than they had been before. Not so the *governments*. With them ambition and resentment had something to say. But, the American Government being, from the nature of its constitution, a thing of such transient possession, it would have been impossible for any set of men long to remain in power if they had been discovered to entertain a vindictive disposition towards England; that is to say, if the government of England had discovered no such disposition towards America. Unhappily such a disposition was but too plainly seen in the whole of the conduct of our government; and hence we have witnessed, from the end of the American war to this day, a dispute and an angry dispute too, upon some ground or other, constantly existing and in agitation between the two countries, to the great injury of them both, to the great injury of the cause of freedom, and to the great advantage of France as a nation, and to the cause of despotic sway all over the world. The *war* was at an end, but the *quarrel* seemed only to have begun: a seven years' war, and an already eight and twenty years of quarrel!

It was full ten years before we condescended to send a Minister to reside in America, and when we did it, the object seemed to be only to recall, or to render more active, ancient animosities. A miserable dispute about old claims for debts due to English subjects on one side, and about negroes carried off at the peace on the other side, clouded and made gloomy the dawn of this new diplomatic intercourse. This dispute was kept alive till new claims for vessels unlawfully confiscated arose on the part of the American Government. The treaty of 1794, which provided for Commissioners to settle these claims would, it was hoped, produce

harmony; but it is well known that it only widened the breach. At last, however, we patched up this matter: we yielded, but it was without magnanimity: we gave our money, the nation was taxed to make up for the blunders of the cabinet; but we gave without the credit of generosity. In the meanwhile, the English creditors have remained, many of them until this day, unsatisfied, while a Board of Commissioners, who have been sitting either here or in America ever since the year 1794, or, at least, have been paid all that time, have swallowed up in expenses to the nation, a great part of what would have sufficed to satisfy our own claimants without any application for money for that purpose to the American States. In the course of this part of the dispute there was much unfairness on the part of the American Government; and we might have been fully justified, strictly speaking, in coming to a rupture upon that ground. But, we came to neither a rupture nor a reconciliation: we asserted our claims and then gave them up; but we took care to choose that manner of doing it, which effectually took all merit from the thing.

This point was hardly patched up, when another subject of dispute arose: to that another and another and another have succeeded, the long-contested question relative to the *impressment of American Seamen* running through the whole. So that, at last, there has grown together a mass of disputes and of ill-blood, which threatens us with a new war, and which war threatens us with new burdens, and, still worse, which threatens the world with the extinguishment of some part, at least, of its remaining liberties. The points, however, more immediately at issue, are those relating to the present *non-importation law* and the *affair between the American Frigate, President, and our sloop of war, the Little Bell*. As to the former points in dispute the Americans were the complainants: they called for satisfaction, and, whether they ought to have obtained it or not, it is certain that they have not yet obtained it. Upon these two recent points, therefore, as being thought likely to lead to war, and as being so represented by those public prints which are known to be under the influence of persons in power, I shall now proceed most respectfully to offer to your Royal Highness such remarks as the occasion appears to me to demand.

The *Non-importation Act*, that is to say, the law which has been passed in America to prohibit the importation of any thing being the growth or manufacture of Great Britain or Ireland, and which law is now in force in America, must doubtless be regarded as a measure of a hostile, though not of a warlike nature, because the same law does not apply to the enemy with whom we are at war; and, besides this commercial prohibition, our ships of war are shut out from the harbours, rivers, and waters of the United States, while our enemy's ships of war are permitted freely to enter and abide in them. These are distinctions of an unfriendly nature: they are, indeed, measures of hostility; but, then, I beg your Royal Highness to bear in mind, that they are acts of a much lower degree of hostility than were the acts of your Royal Father's ministers against France in the year 1792, though they, to this hour, contend, that that war was a war of *aggression* on the part of France; and, of course, their own doctrine, if now cited against this country, would be quite sufficient on the part of America. But, the fact is, that the *Non-importation Act* and the exclusion of British ships from the waters of America, while importation is permitted from France

and while French ships have free entrance and abidance in the waters of the United States, are acts of a hostile nature, and would, if unjustified by provocation, fully authorize, on our part, acts of reprisal and of war.

But, Sir, these measures on the part of America have not been adopted without alleged provocation and without loud and reiterated remonstrances. They have, in fact, arisen out of certain measures adopted by us, and which measures are alleged to be in violation of the rights of America as a neutral nation; and, therefore, before we can justify a war in consequence of the hostile measures of America, we must ascertain whether her allegations against us be true; for, if they be, we may find, perhaps, that she is not only not blamable for what she has now done, but is entitled to praise for her forbearance and moderation.

That we have violated the rights of America as a neutral state, there can be no doubt. The fact is not denied; nor is it pretended, that the violation would not, in itself, be sufficient to justify any degree of hostility on the part of the offended state. Indeed, to dispute these facts would be to show a total disregard of truth; for, we have published, and, as far as in us lies, we have carried, and still carry into execution, an *interdict against all trade on the part of America, except such as we choose to license*. We have said to her, that she shall not carry the produce of her soil and exchange it for the produce of the soil of France, Italy, or Holland. If we meet with one of her ships laden with the flour of Pennsylvania and owned by a Pennsylvanian merchant bound to any port of the French empire, we compel such ship to come into some one of our ports, and there to unlade and dispose of her cargo, or else, to *pay duty upon it*, before we permit her to proceed on her voyage. In short, we have issued and acted upon such edicts as establish an absolute control and sovereignty over the ships of America, and all that part of the population and property of America that are employed in maritime commerce.

That the rights of America are herein openly violated all the world knows. Your Royal Highness need not be reminded of the dispute, so long continued, relative to the *right of search*; that is to say, a right on the part of a belligerent to search merchant neutral ships at sea, in order to ascertain whether they had on board *contraband goods of war*, or *goods belonging to an enemy*. It was contended by those who denied the right of search, that no belligerent had a right to search a neutral at sea in any case; and, that, if this point was given up, the *goods* of an enemy in a neutral ship ought not to be seized, for that the neutrality of the ship protected the goods. To this doctrine English writers and statesmen have never subscribed; they insisted, that we had a right to search neutral ships upon the high seas, and if we found contraband articles or enemy's goods on board of them, to seize them, and, in some cases, to make ship as well as cargo lawful prize. But, no statesman, no lawyer, no writer ever pretended, that we had a right to seize in a *neutral ship* the *goods of a neutral party*. No one ever dreamt of setting up a right like this, which, in fact, is neither more nor less than making war upon the neutrals; because we do to them the very worst that we can do, short of wanton cruelty, of which the laws and usages of *war* do not allow.

In justification of the adoption of these our measures towards America, our Government asserted, that France had *begun* the violation of the neutral rights of America, and that our measures were in the way of *re-*

talion, and that the laws of war allowed of retaliation. It is a singular species of *law*, which, because a weak nation has been injured by one powerful nation, subjects it to be injured by another. If Belcher were to beat Mr. Perceval and Lord Liverpool in the street, Crib would not, for that reason, be justified in beating them too: this would, I presume, be deemed a new and most outrageous species of retaliation; and there is little doubt that the belligerent pugilists would soon be sent to a place where they would have leisure to study the laws of war. But, it is alleged by our Government, that the Americans *submitted* to the decrees of Napoleon; that they *acquiesced* in his violation of their rights; and that it was just in us to treat them in the same manner that he had treated them, because they had so submitted and acquiesced. The same reason would apply equally well in justification of the above supposed retaliatory measures of Crib, who also might, with just as much truth, accuse Mr. Perceval and Lord Liverpool of submission and acquiescence with regard to Belcher; for they could not avoid submission and acquiescence to superior force; they might *cry out*, indeed, and, they would cry out; and so did the Americans, who, from the first day to the last of the existence of the French Decrees, ceased not to remonstrate against them, and that, too, in the strongest terms; and, therefore, there appears not to have been the slightest ground whereon to build a justification of our measures as measures of *retaliation*.

But, Sir, if our measures were not justifiable upon the supposition that this violation of neutral rights was *begun* by the enemy, surely they must be declared to be wholly without justification, if it appear, that *we ourselves were the beginners* in this career of violation of the rights of America as a neutral state; and that this is the fact is clearly proved by the documents, which have long ago been laid before the public, but which I beg leave to call to the recollection of your Royal Highness.

This rivalry in the violation of neutral rights began in a declaration on our part, made to America through her Minister here, that she was to consider the entrances of the Ems, the Weser, the Elbe, and the Trave as in a state of rigorous blockade, though it was notoriously impossible for us to maintain such blockade by actual forces. The grounds for this measure were stated to be, that *the King of Prussia* (and not France) had forcibly and hostilely taken possession of various parts of *the Electorate of Hanover* and other dominions belonging to his Majesty, and had shut English ships out of the Prussian ports. This might be a very good reason for shutting the Ems, the Weser, the Elbe, and the Trave against *Prussian* ships; but, surely it gave us no right to shut them against the ships of America, whose government had had nothing to do with the King of Prussia's hostile seizure upon the Electorate of Hanover; who had neither aided him, abetted him, nor encouraged him in any manner whatever; and, it was very hard that the people of America should be made to suffer from the result of a dispute, be it what it might, between the King of Prussia and the Elector of Hanover. The King of Prussia is closely connected by marriage with your Royal Highness's illustrious family; it is not therefore for me to dare to presume that he should have been capable of any thing unbecoming his high rank; but this I may venture to say, that, whatever his conduct might be, there could be no justice in making the people, or any portion of the people, of America suffer for that conduct. Indeed, Sir, it appears to me, that to involve, in any way whatever, England in this dispute about Hanover was not very closely

conformable to that great constitutional Act by which your Royal Highness's family was raised to the throne of this kingdom, and which Act expressly declares, that in case of the family of Brunswick succeeding to the throne, no war shall be undertaken by England for their German dominions, *unless by consent of Parliament*. If the measure of blockade above-mentioned had produced war on the part of America, that war would have been made without consent of Parliament; and, though a measure fall short of producing war, it may be equally a violation of the Act of Settlement, if its natural tendency be to produce war, or to cause England to support warlike expenses, which this measure manifestly has done, and has, at last, led to something very nearly approaching to open war with America, though, in the meanwhile, Hanover itself has been wrested from the King of Prussia and formed into a member of another kingdom.

Thus, then, at any rate, this attack upon the rights of neutrals did not *begin* with France. If it was not begun by us, it was begun by the King of Prussia, though it is not very easy to perceive how he could violate the maritime rights of America by any act of his in the heart of Germany. The Decrees of France have grown out of our measures. They carry in themselves the proof of this. The first (for there are but two), issued from Berlin, was expressly grounded upon our Orders issued in consequence of the conduct of the King of Prussia in Hanover; and thus the Emperor Napoleon became, towards us, the avenger, as far as he was able, of that very King of Prussia, whom he had just driven from his dominions! Alas, Sir, what a scene was here exhibited to the people of Europe! First the King of Prussia, closely related to the family of the King of England, seizes upon the German dominions of the latter: the latter protests against this, and by his Secretary of State, declares that he never will make peace without obtaining the restoration of these dominions: while this quarrel is going on, Napoleon marches against the King of Prussia, defeats him, drives him from his dominions, takes Hanover, the object in dispute, and bestows it on a third party; and, from the capital of the King of Prussia's dominions, issues a decree against England, avenging the cause of the King of Prussia!

Napoleon in this his first decree, *declares England* (who had, by this time, extended her blockade from the Elbe to the port of Brest) *in a state of blockade*, and prohibits all trade and all commercial communication with England. But, this Decree, which was little less practicable in all cases than our blockade, was declared to be *retaliatory*, and was to be repealed whenever England repealed her Orders in Council which had then been issued. Certainly this was not the *beginning*. We had begun, and that, too, under the administration of those who have since so loudly censured the Orders in Council; and, which must, I presume, be a subject of regret with your Royal Highness, the state paper in which this beginning was announced to the American government, came from the pen of Mr. Fox, who appears to have yielded implicitly to the principles of his new associates in politics. At any rate, this Decree of the Emperor Napoleon was not the beginning of the open attacks upon neutral rights; and, what is of still more importance, it was *not Napoleon*, but it was *the King of Prussia*, who committed those acts of aggression in Hanover which produced our first of that series of measures, called the Orders in Council, and which measures have finally led to the exclusion of our goods and our ships from the American ports. This is a fact of

great importance in the dispute, and especially if that dispute should end in war. It will be right, in that case, for us to bear in mind the *real* grounds of the war; the *true* origin of it. And endeavour to cast the blame where we will, it will, at last, be found in *the aggression of the King of Prussia upon Hanover*.

The Berlin Decree brought forth new Orders in Council from us; and these brought from the Emperor Napoleon the Decree issued at Milan, in December 1807. This ended the series of invasions of neutral rights; for, indeed, nothing more was now left to invade. Both parties called their measures *retaliatory*. Crib having taken a blow upon a third party in the way of retaliation on Belcher, Belcher takes another blow upon the same party in the way of retaliation on Crib. Both parties declared, that they were perfectly ready to *repeal* their Decrees; that they *regretted* exceedingly the necessity of adopting them; each explicitly promised, that, whenever the other gave up the new restrictions he would also give them up too. Napoleon said his measures had been forced upon him by us: we said our measures had been forced upon us by him. The Americans, who complained of both, were told by us, that we should always be ready to revoke our Orders if the enemy would *revoke* his Decrees. This was saying very little, seeing that his Decrees had been issued *in consequence of our Orders*, and, of course, he was not to be expected to revoke first, especially as the Decrees themselves declare that their object is to cause our Orders to be revoked.

The American government having remonstrated so long in vain, and seeing no likelihood of obtaining redress by the means of diplomatic entreaties, and yet not wishing to plunge the country into a war, resort to the measure of *exclusion from their ports*, giving to both parties an opportunity of preventing the execution even of this measure of demi-hostility. During the session of Congress in 1809-10, a law was passed providing, that, if both France and England continued in their violation of the rights of America till and after the 1st day of November, 1810, the ships and goods of both should be prohibited from entering the ports and waters of the American States; that, if they both repealed their obnoxious Decrees and Orders, then the ships and goods of both were to have free admission; that if one party repealed and the other did not, then the ships and goods of the repealing party were to be admitted, and the ships and goods of the non-repealing party were to be excluded. Napoleon, the Americans say, has repealed: we have not, and accordingly, our ships and goods are excluded, while those of France are admitted into the waters and ports of the United States.

This is one source of the present ill-blood against America, who is accused of *partiality to France*; but, before this charge can be established, we must show that the measures she has adopted are not the natural and necessary result of an impartial measure; a measure in execution of an impartial law. If a pardon were tendered to Belcher and Crib upon condition that they ceased to beat the parties as above supposed, and if Belcher persisted while his enemy did not, the injured parties could not fairly be accused of *partiality* in pardoning Crib while they punished Belcher. The American Government and people may, however, without any crime, or, at least, without giving us any just cause of complaint against them, like, and show that they like, Napoleon better than Messrs. Perceval and Rose and Lords Liverpool and Wellesley. It may be bad taste in the American Government and people

to entertain such a liking; it may be great stupidity and almost wilful blindness that prevent them from perceiving how much more the latter are the friends of freedom than the former. But, so long as the American Government does no act of partiality affecting us, we have no reason to complain: so that justice is done to a man in court, he has no reason to complain of the personal likings or dislikings of the judge or the jury. The people in America look at France and at the state of Europe in general with minds pretty free from prejudice. They are in no fear of the power of Napoleon. They have amongst them no persons whose interests are served by inflaming the hatred of the people against him. They reckon dynasties as nothing. They coolly compare the present with the former state of Europe; and, if they give the preference to the present state of things, it must be because they think there has been a change for the better. They may be deceived; but, it can be the interest of nobody to deceive them. Those who have the management of their public affairs may have a wrong bias; but they cannot communicate it to the people; for they have no public money to expend upon a hireling press. The government and the people may all be deceived; but the deception cannot be the effect of any cheat practised upon either; it cannot be the work of bribery and corruption. If, therefore, the government and people of America do really entertain a partiality for Napoleon, we have, on that account, good ground for regret, but certainly none for complaint or reproach. They have a right to like and to dislike whom they please. We, for instance, have a great attachment to the court and government of Sicily, and also to the courts and ancient governments of Spain and Portugal. We should not permit the American government or people to interfere with these attachments of ours; and, I presume, it will, therefore, not be thought reasonable that we should arrogate to ourselves the right of judging whom the American people and government are to like.

When we are told of the "partiality for France," which is a charge continually preferred against the American government, we should ask what *acts* of partiality they have been guilty of, and that is the test by which we ought to try their conduct in the present instance. They have put their law in force; they have shut out our goods and our ships, while they freely admit those of France; and this is called *partiality*, and is made the grounds of one of those charges, by the means of which, it appears to me, that the venal press in England is endeavouring to prepare the minds of the people for a war with the American States. But, to make out this charge, it must be shown, that the French have done nothing that we have not done in the way of repealing the injurious Decrees. Indeed, this is what is asserted; and, though a regular communication has been made to the American government by the French government, that the Berlin and Milan Decrees *are revoked*; though they are by the American Minister here asserted to be revoked, and no longer in operation; still it is asserted by some here, that they are not revoked. The American government, however, is satisfied that they are revoked, and it has, accordingly, put its exclusion law in force against us.

To settle this point of fact the Americans have not been told what sort of *evidence* we shall require. They present us the letter of the French minister for foreign affairs to the American minister at Paris, telling him, that the Decrees *are revoked*, and that the revocation is to *go into effect* on the 1st of November 1810. This we say is nothing at all,

because it is clogged with this remark, "*it being clearly understood that the English Orders in Council are to be revoked at the same time.*" Certainly. This was to be naturally expected; and England had promised that it should be so. The Decrees *have* actually been revoked, without this condition being complied with on our part; but, if they had not, it was to be expected that the American Government would put their exclusion law in force against us at the time appointed; because we ought to have declared our *intention* at the same time and in the same manner that the French declared their intention. It was in the month of August 1810, that Mr. Pinckney, the American minister in London, communicated to our Foreign Secretary, Lord Wellesley, that the French Decrees were revoked, and that the revocation was to take effect from the 1st day of the then ensuing November. The answer which Mr. Pinckney expected was, that the English Orders in Council were also revoked, and that the revocation would take effect from the 1st of November. That he had a right to expect this will clearly appear from the communications made to the American Government by our ministers in that country, who, in answer to the complaints of America upon this score, always declared, that the King their master was exceedingly grieved to be compelled to have recourse to such measures; that nothing could be farther from his heart or more repugnant to his feelings than a wish to injure or harass the commerce of neutrals; that he had taken these odious measures in pure self-defence; that it was his "*earnest desire*" (I quote one of these declarations) "*to see the commerce of the world restored to that freedom, which is necessary for its prosperity, and his readiness to abandon the system, which had been forced upon him, whenever the enemy should retract the principles which had rendered it necessary.*" When, therefore, Mr. Pinckney, who had this declaration before him, communicated to Lord Wellesley the fact that the French Decrees were revoked, and that the revocation was to go into effect on the 1st of November, he had a full right to expect an immediate revocation of our Orders in Council, and an assurance that such revocation should go into effect on the same day when the French revocation was to go into effect. But, instead of this he received for answer, that we would revoke our Orders, when the revocation of the French Decrees should have *actually taken place*. But there was another condition, "*that whenever the repeal of the French Decrees shall have actually taken place, and the commerce of neutral nations shall have been restored to the condition in which it stood previously to the promulgation of these Decrees,*" then the King will relinquish his present system. Here is a *second* condition. We do not here content ourselves with the revocation of the Decrees; no, nor even with that revocation having actually gone into effect. We call for something more, and that something greater too than the thing for which we before contended. We here say, that, before we revoke our Orders, we will have the neutral commerce restored to its old footing; that is, that we will have the "*Continental System*" abandoned by France, with which system the Americans have nothing to do, and with regard to which they can have no right to say a word, it being a series of measures of internal regulation, not trenching upon nor touching their maritime commerce. It is a matter wholly distinct from the other; it relates to the reception or exclusion of English goods in France and her dependencies; and, if we are to make America answerable for the conduct of France in that respect, it would follow that France would have

a right to make her answerable for our conduct in excluding the goods of France from the ports of England.

We had, it appears to me, no right to require any thing of America, previously to our revocation of the obnoxious Orders, than an official and authenticated declaration, that the French Decrees were revoked. And, what more could we ask for than was tendered to us, I am at a loss to conjecture. The French Government officially informed the American Government that the Decrees were revoked, and that the revocation was to have effect on the 1st of November. This was officially communicated to us by the American Government through their accredited minister. We were, therefore, to give credit to the fact. But, no : we stop to see the 1st of November arrive. This was not the way to convince America of our *readiness*, our *earnest desire*, to see neutral commerce restored to freedom. The course to pursue, in order to give proof of such a disposition, was to revoke our Orders in Council, and to declare that the revocation would begin to be acted upon on the 1st of November. This would have been *keeping pace* with the French ; and, if we had found that the revocation did not go into operation in France on the 1st of November, we should have lost nothing by our revocation ; for we might immediately have renewed our Orders in Council, and we should then have continued them in force, having clearly thrown all the blame upon the enemy.

This line of conduct would, too, have been perfectly consonant with our professions to the American Government, to whom, in 1808, our minister had declared, that, in order to evince the security of our desire to remove the impediments to neutral commerce, we were willing to *follow the example* of France in the way of revocation, or, to proceed step for step with her in the way of relaxation. Our minister, upon the occasion here alluded to, in communicating the several Orders in Council to the American Government, declared that " the king felt great regret " at the *necessity imposed upon him* for such an interference with neutral commerce, and he assured the American Government, that his Majesty " would *readily follow the example*, in case the Berlin Decree should " be rescinded ; or, would proceed, *pari passu* with France, in relaxing " the rigour of their measures." Agreeably to this declaration, we should, it clearly appears to me, have done exactly *what France did* in August 1810, and not evaded it by saying that we *would* revoke after her revocation should have been actually put into operation ; that is to say, that we would condescend to *begin* after France had *ended*.

This is the view, may it please your Royal Highness, which clear and unclouded reason takes of this matter. This is the light in which it has been seen by the American Government and by the people of that country, who, though they do not wish for war, will assuredly not censure those who manage their affairs for acting as they have done upon this occasion. The measure of exclusion adopted against us by America is too advantageous to France for the latter not to *act* upon the revocation of her Decrees ; and, indeed, there appears now not to be the smallest doubt, that, as far as relates to America (and she is in reality the only neutral), the Decrees are, in deed as well as in word, revoked. It is notorious that our Orders are not revoked ; and, for my part, I am wholly at a loss to form an idea of the grounds upon which any complaint against America can be founded, as far as relates to this part of the dispute.

State Prison, Newgate, 29th Aug. 1811.

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE PRINCE REGENT: ON THE DISPUTE WITH AMERICA.

(*Political Register, September, 1811.*)

LETTER II.

SIR,—Intelligence, received since the date of the former Letter, which I did myself the honour to address to your Royal Highness, makes it more imperious upon us to examine well the grounds upon which we are proceeding with regard to the American States. The President has called the Congress together; and, there can be little doubt of his object being to propose to them, for their approbation, some measure more of a warlike character than any which he has hitherto adopted; nor, can we it seems to me, be at all surprised at this, if, as is rumoured, it be true, that Mr. Foster, our new minister in America, has made a communication to the American government, making the revocation of our Orders in Council depend upon the conduct of Napoleon as to the Continental System.

The rise and progress of the Orders in Council and of the French Decrees have already been noticed, and sufficiently dwelt upon; it has been shown, that the grounds of the present dispute, namely, the flagrant violation of neutral rights, did not originate with France, but with England, or, if not with England, with Prussia; it has been shown, and no one will attempt to deny the fact, that the French Decrees were passed *after* the issuing of our Orders in Council; that they were passed expressly in the way of retaliation; that they were to be revoked when we revoked our Orders. It has been shown, that we professed to be animated with a sincere and most earnest desire to revoke our Orders, and, indeed, that we expressly declared that we would revoke them whenever the French would revoke their Decrees. It has been shown, that the French officially informed the American Government, that the Decrees were revoked, and that, thereupon, the American Government called upon us to fulfil our promises in revoking our Orders; but, that we did not do this; that we evaded the fulfilment of these promises, and, in short, that we have not revoked, or softened the rigour of, any part of our Orders. It has, in a word, been shown, that while the French have revoked their Decrees, while they, in consequence of the remonstrances of America, have ceased to violate her neutral rights, we persevere in such violation.

The pretext for this was, at first, that the Emperor Napoleon, though he *said* he had revoked his Decrees, had *not* done it, and meant not to do it. This, may it please your Royal Highness, was, it appears to me, a very strange kind of language to use towards other powers. It was treating the American government as a sort of political idiot. It was telling it that it did not understand the interests of America, and that it was unworthy to be intrusted with power. And, it was saying to the Emperor of France, that he was to be regarded as shut out of the pale of sovereigns; that he was on no account to be believed; that no faith was

to be given to the official communications of his ministers, or of any persons treating in his name. Thus, then, the door against peace, against exchange of prisoners, against a softening of the rigours of war in any way or in any degree, was for ever barred; and, the termination of war was, in fact, made to depend upon the death of Napoleon.

But, this pretext could not last long; for the Decrees were actually revoked; the revocation went into effect; and those Decrees are now wholly dead as to any violation of the neutral rights of America. It was, therefore, necessary to urge some new objection to the revocation of our Orders in Council; and it is now said, that Mr. Foster has demanded, that, as a condition of the revocation of our Orders in Council, the French shall revoke all the commercial regulations which they have adopted since the Orders in Council were issued; that is to say, that Napoleon shall give up what he calls the Continental System, and *admit English goods into the Continent of Europe.*

I do not say, may it please your Royal Highness, that Mr. Foster has been instructed to make such a demand: I state the proposition as I find it described in our own public prints; but, this I can have no hesitation in saying, that a proposition so replete with proof of having flowed from impudence and ignorance the most consummate is not to be found in the history of the diplomacy of the universe. The Government of America can have no right whatever to interfere with the internal regulations of the French Empire or of any other country; and, the Continental System, as it is called, consists merely of internal regulations. These regulations have nothing at all to do with the *rights of neutrals*; they do not violate in any degree, any of those rights; and, therefore, America cannot, without setting even common sense at defiance, be called upon to demand an abandonment of that system.

But, Sir, permit me to stop here and to examine a little into what that system really is. It forbids the importation into the Empire of Napoleon and the states of his allies any article being the manufacture or produce, of England or her colonies. This, in a few words, is the Continental System. And your Royal Highness certainly need not be reminded, that it is a system which has been very exactly copied from the commercial code of England herself. Your Royal Highness's ministers and many members of Parliament have spoken of this system as the effect of vindictiveness on the part of Napoleon; as the effect of a mad despotism, which threatens Europe with a return of the barbarous ages; but, I see nothing in this system that has not long made part of our own system. It is notorious, that the goods manufactured in France are prohibited in England; it is notorious that French wine and brandy are forbidden to be brought hither; in short, it is notorious that no article being the manufacture or produce of France is permitted to be brought into England; and, that seizure, confiscation, fine, imprisonment, and ruin attend all those who act in infraction of this our commercial code.

This being the case, it does seem to require an uncommon portion of impudence or of self-conceit for us to demand of the Americans to cause the Continental System to be abandoned as a condition upon which we are willing to *cease to violate their rights.* But, it has been said, that Napoleon enforces his system with so much rigour and barbarity. This does not at all alter the state of the case between us and America, who has no power, and, if she had the power, who has no right, to interfere with his internal regulations. Yet, Sir, it is not amiss to inquire a little

into the fact of this alleged *barbarity* of Napoleon. All rulers are content with accomplishing their object; and, in this case, it would not be his interest to inflict greater penalties than the accomplishing of his object required. Our own laws against smuggling are not the mildest in the world; and, we have seen them hardened by degrees, till they answered the purpose that the Government had in view. We have been told, indeed, that Napoleon punishes offences against his commercial code with enormous fines, with imprisonment, and we have heard of instances where he has resorted to the punishment of death. These severities have been made the subject of most grievous complaints against him here; they have brought down upon him reproaches the most bitter; they have been cited as proofs indubitable of the intolerable despotism, under which his people groan. But, Sir, I have confidence enough in your justice and magnanimity to remind you, that there is nothing which his commercial code inflicts; that there is nothing in any of the punishments that even rumour has conveyed to our ears; no, nothing in any of these surpassing in severity; nay, nothing in any of them equalling in severity, the punishments provided for in the commercial code of England, having for their object, towards France, precisely that in view which the Continental System has in view towards England, namely, her embarrassment, and finally, her overthrow.

In support of this assertion I could cite many of the acts in our statute-book; but I allude particularly to that which was passed in the month of May 1793, at the breaking out of the war against the Republicans of France. That act, which appears to have been drawn up by the present Lord Chancellor, makes it high treason, and punishes with death, and also with forfeiture of estates, all those persons, residing or being in Great Britain, who shall have any hand whatever, either directly or indirectly, in selling any goods (mentioned in the said act) to the French government, or to any body residing in French territories. This act punishes in the same awful manner, any one who shall send a Bank-note to any one residing in the French territory, or shall have any hand, in the most distant manner, in causing such notes to be sent. It punishes in the same manner any person residing or being in Great Britain, who shall have any hand in purchasing any real property in any country under the dominion of France; and it extends its vengeance to all those, who, in the most distant manner, shall have any hand in such transaction. This act is the 27th chap. of the 33rd year of the reign of George the Third; and I have never seen and never heard of any act or edict that dealt out death and destruction with so liberal a hand.

It was said at the time, by the present Lord Chancellor, and by the greater part of those men who compose your Royal Highness's ministry, that this act, terrible as it was, was demanded by the safety of the nation. This Mr. Fox denied, and he strenuously laboured to prevent the passing of an act so severe. I shall offer no opinion upon this matter; but it is certain that the code of Napoleon is not, because it cannot, be more terribly severe than this act; and this being the case, common decency ought to restrain those who justified this act from uttering reproaches against the author of the continental code. Our Government then said that the act of 1793 was necessary in order to crush the revolution that had reared its head in France, and that was extending its principles over Europe. They justified the act upon the ground of its necessity. So does Napoleon his code. He says that that code is necessary to protect

the continent against the maritime despotism and the intrigues of England. His accusations against us may be false, but he is only retorting upon us our accusations against France; and between two such powers, there is nobody to judge. In truth our Government passed its act of 1793, because it had the will and the power to pass and to enforce it; and Napoleon has established his continental system, because he also has the will and the power. It is to the judgment of the world that the matter must be left, and I beseech your Royal Highness to consider, that the world will judge of our conduct according to the evidence which it has to judge from, and that that judgment will leave wholly out of view our interest and our humours.

To return and apply what has here been said to the case on which I have the honour to address your Royal Highness, what answer would have been given to America, if she, in the year 1793, had demanded of our Government the rescinding of the act of which I have just given a faint description? In supposing, even by the way of argument, America to have taken such a liberty, I do a violence to common sense, and commit an outrage upon diplomatic decorum; and it is quite impossible to put into words an expression of that indignation which her conduct would have excited. And yet, Sir, there appears to me, to be no reason whatever for our expecting America to be permitted to interfere with Napoleon's continental system, unless we admit that she had a right to interfere with our act of 1793. The dispute between us and America relates to the acknowledged *rights of neutral nations*. These rights of America we avow that we violate. We have hitherto said, that we were ready to cease such violation as soon as the French did the same; but now, if we are to believe the intelligence from America and the corresponding statements of our public prints, we have shifted our ground, and demand of America that she shall cause the continental system to be done away, or, at least, we tell her that it shall be done away, or we will not cease to violate her rights.

The language of those, who appear to be ready to justify a refusal, upon the ground above stated, to revoke our Orders in Council, is this; that it was *natural* to expect that the revocation would be made to depend upon a *real* and *effectual* abolition of the French decrees; that the revocation is merely nominal unless all the regulations of Napoleon, made since 1806, are also repealed; that when these latter are repealed, it will be right for America to call upon us for a repeal of our Orders in Council, and not before; and, it is added, that the American President will not have the support of the people if he attempt to act upon any other principles than these. So that, as your Royal Highness will clearly perceive, these persons imagine, or, at least, they would persuade the people of England, that, unless the President insist upon the admission of *English* manufactures and produce into the dominions of *France*, he will not be supported by the people of America in a demand of England to cease to violate the known and acknowledged rights of America. The President is not asking for any indulgence at our hands: he is merely asking for what is due to his country; he is merely insisting upon our ceasing to violate the rights of America; and if what the public prints tell us be true, we say in answer: "We will cease to violate your rights; we will cease to do you wrong; we will cease to confiscate your vessels in the teeth of the law of nations, but not unless Napoleon will suffer the continent of Europe to purchase our manufactures and commerce." If

my neighbour complain of me for a grievous injury and outrageous insult committed against him, am I to answer him by saying, that I will cease to injure and insult him, when another neighbour with whom I am at variance will purchase his clothing and cutlery from me? The party whom I injure and insult will naturally say, that he has nothing to do with my quarrel with a third party. We should disdain the idea of appealing to America as a mediatrix, and, indeed, if she were to attempt to put herself forward in that capacity, indignation and vengeance would ring from one end of the kingdom to the other. Yet, we are, it seems, to look to her to cause the French to do away regulations injurious to us, but with which America has nothing at all to do.

As to the disposition of the *people* of America, your Royal Highness should receive with great distrust whatever is said, come from what quarter it may, respecting the popular feeling being against the President and his measures. The same round of deception will, doubtless, be used here as in all other cases where a country is at war with us. It is now nearly twenty years since we drew the sword against revolutionary France; and, if your Royal Highness look back, you will find, that, during *the whole* of that period, the people of France have been, by those who have had the power of the press in their hands in this country, represented as hostile to their government, under all its various forms, and as wishing most earnestly for the success of its enemies. The result, however, has been, that the people have never, in any one instance, aided those enemies; but have made all sorts of sacrifices for the purpose of frustrating their designs. On the contrary, the people in all the countries, allied with us in the war, have been invariably represented as attached to their government, and they have, when the hour of trial came, as invariably turned from that government and received the French with open arms. After these twenty years of such terrible experience, it is not for me to presume, that your Royal Highness can suffer yourself to be deceived with regard to the disposition of the American people, who clearly understand all the grounds of the present dispute, and of whom, your Royal Highness may be assured, Mr. Madison, in his demands of justice at our hands is but the echo. The Americans do not wish for war: war is a state which they dread; there is no class amongst them who can profit from war: they have none of that description of people to whom war is a harvest: there are none of those whom to support out of the public wealth the pretext of war is necessary: they dread a standing army: they have witnessed the effects of such establishments in other parts of the world: they have seen how such establishments and loss of freedom go hand in hand. But, these considerations will not, I am persuaded, deter them from going far enough into hostile measures to do great injury to us, unless we shall, by our acts, prove to them, that such measures are unnecessary.

The public are told, and the same may reach the ear of your Royal Highness (for courts are not the places into which truth first makes its way), that the American President is *unpopular*; that the people are on *our side* in the dispute. Guard your ear, I beseech you, Sir, against such reports, which are wholly false, and which have their rise partly in the ignorance and partly in the venality of those by whom they are propagated. It is a fact, on which your Royal Highness may rely, that, at the *last election* (in the Autumn of 1810) the popular party had a majority far greater than at any former period; and, it is hardly necessary

for me to say how that party stands with regard to England ; for, from some cause or other, it does so happen, that in every country where there is a description of persons professing a strong and enthusiastic attachment to public liberty, they are sure to regard England as their enemy. We are told, that these are all sham patriots ; that they are demagogues, jacobins, levellers, and men who delight in confusion and bloodshed. But, Sir, the misfortune is, that these persons, in all the countries that we meddle with, do invariably succeed in the end. Their side, proves, at last, to be the strongest. They do, in fact, finally prove to form almost the whole of the people ; and, when we discover this, we generally quit their country in disgust, and, since they " will not be true to themselves," we c'en leave them to be punished by their revolutions and reforms. In America, however, it will, I think, be very difficult for any one to persuade your Royal Highness that those who are opposed to us are sham patriots, and men who wish for confusion. Every man in that country has enough to eat ; every man has something to call his own. There are no baits for sham patriots ; no fat places to scramble for ; no sinecures where a single lazy possessor snorts away in the course of the year the fruit of the labour of hundreds of toiling and starving wretches ; none of those things, in short, for the sake of gaining which it is worth while to make hypocritical professions of patriotism. As an instance of the sentiments of the people of America with regard to political parties, I beg leave to point out to your Royal Highness the circumstance of *Mr. Pickering* (who is held forth as the great champion of our cause in America) having, at the last election, been put out of the *Senate* of the United States, of which he had long been a member, being one of the Senators for Massachussetts, his native state. The people of the State first elect the two Houses and the Governor of the State, and these elect the persons to serve them in the Senate of the Union. Thus *Mr. Pickering* was, then, rejected, not merely by the people ; not merely at a popular election ; but by the deliberate voice of the whole legislature of the State. And this, too, in that part of the Union called New England ; in the State of Massachussetts too, which State it is well known takes the lead in the Northern part of the country, and which State has always been represented as disposed to divide from the States of the South. If we had friends any where in America, it was in this State ; and, yet, even in this State, we see the most unequivocal proof of disaffection to our cause.

It is useless, Sir, for us to reproach the people of America with this disaffection. They must be left to follow their own taste. In common life, if we find any one that does not like us, we generally endeavour, if we wish to gain his liking, to win him to it by kindness and by benefits of some sort or other. We go thus to work with animals of every description. In cases where we have the power, we but too often make use of that to subdue the disinclined party to our will. But, where we have not the power, we are seldom so very foolish as to deal out reproaches against those whose good will we do not take the pains to gain. It is, therefore, the height of folly in us to *complain* that the Americans do not like our government, and prefer to it that of Napoleon. The friends of England accuse them of giving support to a *despot*. They do not love despot, Sir, you may be assured ; and, if they like Napoleon better than they do our government, it is because *they* think him less inimical to their freedom and their property. This is the ground of their judgment. They

are not carried away by words : they look at the acts that affect them ; and, upon such grounds, they might, under some circumstances, justly prefer the Day of Algiers to the ruler of any other state.

I am, &c. &c.

WM. COBBETT.

*State Prison, Newgate,
Thursday, 5th September, 1811.*

TO THE PRINCE REGENT : ON THE DISPUTE WITH AMERICA.

(*Political Register, September, 1811.*)

LETTER III.

SIR,

Before I enter upon the affair of the American Frigate and the Little Belt, permit me to call your Royal Highness's attention, for a moment, to the servility of the English press, and to offer you some remarks thereon.

Towards the end of last week a Council having been held, and an Order relative to American commerce having been agreed upon, it was, by those who merely knew that some order of this kind was about to come forth, taken for granted, that it contained a prohibition against future imports from the American States into this country, by way of retaliation for the American Non-importation Act. There needed no more. The busy slaves of the press, who endeavour even to anticipate the acts of government, be they what they may, with their approbation, lost not a moment. This "measure of *retaliation*," as they call it, was then an instance of perfect wisdom in your Royal Highness's ministers : it was a measure become absolutely necessary to our safety as well as our honour ; and, indeed, if it had *not* been adopted, we are told, that the ministers would have been *highly criminal*. Alas ! It was all a mistake : there was no such measure adopted : and, oh ! most scandalous to relate ! These same writers discovered, all in a moment, that it would have been *premature* to adopt such a measure at present !

I have mentioned this fact with a view of putting your Royal Highness upon your guard against the parasites of the press, who (though it may be a bold assertion to make) are the worst of parasites, even in England. "Hang them, scurvy jades, they would have done no less if Cæsar had murdered their mothers," said Casca of the strumpets of Rome, who affected to weep, when Cæsar fainted, and who shouted when he came to again. And, be your Royal Highness well assured, that these same writers would have applauded your ministers, if, instead of an Order in Council to prohibit the importation of American produce, they had issued an order to strip the skin over the ears of the Roman Catholics, or to do any other thing, however tyrannical, however monstrous, it might have been.

Suffer yourself not, then, Sir, to be persuaded to act, in any case, from what is presented to you in the writings of these parasites. Reflect, Sir,

upon the past. During the whole of the last twenty years, these same writers have praised *all* the measures of the government. *All* these measures were, according to them, the fruit of consummate wisdom. Yet, these measures have, at last, produced a state of things exactly the contrary of what was wished for and expected. All the measures which have led to the victories and conquests of France, that have led to her exaltation, that have produced all that we now behold in our own situation, the paper-money not excepted; *all* these measures have received, in their turn, the unqualified approbation of the parasites of the press. To know and bear in mind this fact, will be, I am certain, sufficient to guard your Royal Highness against forming your opinion of measures from what may be said of them by this tribe of time-serving writers, who have been one of the principal causes of that state of things in Europe, which is, even with themselves, the burden of incessant and unavailing lamentation. Buonaparté! "The Corsican Tyrant"! The "towering despot," Buonaparté! Alas! Sir, the fault is none of his, and all the abuse bestowed upon him should go in another direction. The fault is in those, who contrived and who encouraged the war against the Republicans of France; and, amongst them, there are in all the world none to equal the parasites of the English press.

In returning, now, to the affair of the American frigate and the Little Belt, the first thing would be to ascertain, *which vessel fired the first shot*. The Commanders on both sides deny having fired first; and, if their *words* are thus at variance, the decisions of Courts of Inquiry will do little in the way of settling the point. This fact, therefore, appears to me not *capable* of being decided. There is no court wherein to try it. We do not acknowledge a court in America, and the Americans do not acknowledge a court here. Each government believes its own officer, or its own courts of inquiry; and, if the belief of the American government is opposed to what ours believe, there is no decision but by an appeal to arms. But, there is a much better way of settling the matter; and that is to *say no more about it*, which may be done without any stain upon the honour of either party. And this is the more desirable, if the supposed attack upon the Little Belt can possibly be made, in some general settlement of disputes, to form a set-off against the affair of the Chesapeake.

Yet, may it please your Royal Highness, there is a view of this matter which it is very necessary for you to take, and which will never be taken by any of the political parasites in this country. We are accustomed to speak of this supposed attack upon the Little Belt, as if it had taken place *out at sea*, and as if there had been *no alleged provocation* ever given to the American ships of war. But, Sir, the Americans allege, that the Little Belt was found *in their waters*; that she was one of a squadron that formed a sort of blockade of their coast; that this squadron stopped, rummaged, and insulted their merchantmen; and, that in many cases, it seized and carried away their own people out of their own ships within sight of their own shores. The way for us to judge of the feelings that such acts were calculated to inspire in the bosoms of the Americans, is, to make the case our own for a moment; to suppose an American squadron off our coast, stopping, rummaging and insulting our colliers, and, in many cases, taking away their sailors to serve them; to be exposed to the loss of life in that service; and, at the very least, to be taken from their calling and their families and friends.

Your Royal Highness would, I trust, risk even your life rather than

suffer this with impunity; and you would, I am sure, look upon your people as unworthy of existence, if they were not ready to bleed in such a cause. Your Royal Highness sees, I am fully persuaded, but one side of the question, with regard to America. The venal prints present you with publications made by the enemies of the men at present in power in America; that is to say, by the *opposition* of that country. But, the fact is, that *all* parties agree in their complaints against our seizure of their seamen, with instances of which their public prints abound. This is a thing so completely without a parallel, that one can hardly bring oneself to look upon it as a reality. For an American vessel to meet a packet between Cork and Bristol and take out some of her sailors and carry them away to the East or West Indies to die or be killed, is something so monstrous that one cannot bring oneself to feel as if it were real. Yet, this is no more than what the Americans complain of; and, if there be good ground, or only slight ground; if there be any ground at all, for such complaint, the affair between the American Frigate and the Little Belt is by no means a matter to be wondered at. I beg your Royal Highness to consider how many families in the American States have been made unhappy by the impressment of American seamen; how many parents have been thus deprived of their sons, wives of their husbands, and children of their fathers; and, when you have so considered, you will not, I am sure, be surprised at the exultation that appears to have been felt in America at the result of the affair with the Little Belt.

As a specimen of the complaints of individuals upon this score, I here insert a letter from an unfortunate impressed American, which letter I take from the New York Public Advertiser of the 31st of July.

“Port Royal, Jamaica, 30th June, 1811.

“Mr. Snowden, I hope you will be so good as to publish these few lines.—I, Edwin Bouldin, was impressed out of the barque Columbus, of Elizabeth City, Captain Trastor, and carried on board his Britannic Majesty’s brig Rhodian, in Montego Bay, commanded by Capt. Mobary.—He told me my protection was of no consequence, he would have me whether or not. I was born in Baltimore and served my time with Messrs. Smith and Buchanan. I hope my friends will do something for me to get my clearance, for I do not like to serve any other country but my own, which I am willing to serve. I am now captain of the forecastle and stationed captain of a gun in the waist.—I am treated very ill because I will not enter.—They request of me to go on board my country’s ships to list men, which I refused to do, and was threatened to be punished for it.

“I remain a true citizen of the United States of America,

“EDWIN BOULDIN.”

This, may it please your Royal Highness, is merely a specimen. The public prints in America abound with documents of a similar description; and thus the resentment of the whole nation is kept alive, and wound up to a pitch hardly to be described.

Astonishment is expressed, by some persons, in this country, that the Americans appear to like the Emperor Napoleon better than our government; but, if it be considered, that the Emperor Napoleon does not give rise to complaints such as those just quoted, this astonishment will cease. Men dislike those who do them injury, and they dislike those most who do them most injury. In settling the point, which is most the friend of *real freedom*, Napoleon or our Government; there might, however, be some difference of opinion in America, where the people are free to speak and write as well as to think, and where there are no persons whose trade it is to publish falsehoods. But, whatever error any persons might

be led into upon this subject, the consequence to us would be trifling, were it not for the real solid grounds of complaint that are incessantly staring the American people in the face. There may be a very harsh despotism in France for any thing that they know to the contrary; though they are not a people to be carried away by mere names. They are a people likely to sit down coolly and compare the present state of France with its state under the Bourbons; likely to compare the present situation of the great mass of the people with their former situation; and extremely likely not to think any the worse of Napoleon for his having sprung from parents as humble as those of their Jefferson or Madison. But, if they should make up their minds to a settled conviction of there being a military despotism in France, they will, though they regret its existence, dislike it less than they will any other system, from which they receive more annoyance; and in this they do no more than follow the dictates of human nature, which, in spite of all the wishes of man, will still continue the same.

The disposition of the American people towards England and towards France is a matter of the greatest importance, and should, therefore, be rightly understood by your Royal Highness, who has it in your power to restore between America and England that harmony, which has so long been disturbed, and which is so necessary to save the remains of freedom in the world. I here present to you, Sir, some remarks of a recent date (25 July), published in an American print, called the "*BALTIMORE AMERICA*." You will see, Sir, that the writer deprecates a war with England; he does not deceive himself or his readers as to its dangers; he makes a just estimate of the relative means of the two nations; and, I think your Royal Highness will allow, that he is not ignorant of the *real situation of England*. I cannot help being earnest in my wishes that your Royal Highness would be pleased to bestow some attention upon these remarks. They are, as a composition, not unworthy of the honour; but, what renders them valuable is, that they do really express the sentiments of all the moderate part of the people in America; they express the sentiments which predominate in the community, and upon which your Royal Highness may be assured the American government will act:

"God forbid that we should have war with England, or any other nation, if we can avoid it. For I am not of the temper of that furious federalist, who would have unfurled the American colours long ago against a less offender. I had rather see her starry flag floating in the serenity of a calm atmosphere than agitated and obscured in the clouds, the smoke and flashes of war. But if Britain's unchangeable jealousy of the prosperity of others, her obdurate pride and enmity to us, should proceed upon pretence of retaliating upon what she has forced, to more violent and avowed attacks, I trust that your older and younger Americans will meet her with equal spirit, and give her blow for blow. I have never expected her to abstain from injury while our merchants had a ship or our country a seaman upon the ocean, by any sense of justice—but have trusted only to the adverse circumstances of her state, to restrain her violence and continue our peace. Heaven grant that it may be preserved, and if possible without the distress of her own partly innocent people. But if her crimes will not allow it; if urged by the malignant passions she has long indulged, and now heightened by revenge, she throws off all restraint, and loosens war in all its rage upon us, then, as she has shed blood like water, give her blood to drink in righteous judgment.—I know too well, that we must suffer with her. Dreadful necessity only justifies the contest. I call you not, young Americans, to false glory, to spoil and triumph. You must lay down your lives, endure defeat, loss and captivity, as the varying fate of war ordains. But this

"must not appal you. Prepare for it, with unsubmitting spirit, renew the combat, till your great enemy, like the whale of the deep, weakened with many wounds, yields himself up a prey to smaller foes on his own element. This, by the order of Providence, has been the case before. When they possessed the sea in full security, our sailors issued out in a few small barks, mounted with the pieces dug from the rubbish of years, and scanty stores of ammunition, seized their trade, and baffled their power. From such beginnings grew a numerous shipping, that fearlessly braved them on their own coasts, and on every sea; that brought plenty into the land, and at once armed and enriched it. What shall prevent this again? Have our enemies grown stronger, or we become weaker? Or has Heaven dropped its sceptre, and rules no more by justice and mercy? We are now three times as many as in 1775, when we engaged them before. Our territory is greatly enlarged, and teems with new and useful products. Cotton, formerly known only to the domestic uses of a part of the people in two or three States, is now in sufficiency to supply clothing to all America, and from its lightness can be easily conveyed by land to every quarter. Wool, flax and hemp are furnished in increasing quantities every day.—Machines for every work, manufactories for every useful article, are invented and establishing continually. Large supplies of salt, sugar and spirits are provided for in the western countries, and can never be wanting on the sea coast. Lead, iron, powder and arms we have in abundance—parks of artillery for the field and fortifications—magazines and arsenals ready formed and increasing—a sufficient force of disciplined troops and instructed officers to become the basis of larger armies—a number of ships of war, with men and officers trained and prepared for naval enterprise—a people ready in the spirit of independence, to rush against the enemy that wrongs and challenges them—a government formed, established, operating all round, with every material for intelligence, direction and power—revenues, credit, confidence—good will at home and abroad—justice and necessity obliging, and Heaven, I hope, approving.—It is a common opinion that our enemies are stronger; but this appears an illusion, from the fleets of other nations having been vanquished one by one, and left the ocean. Her strength has not increased in proportion. She indeed possesses a thousand ships of war, but no increase of people. Her commerce is distressed, her manufactures pining, her finances sinking under irrecoverable debts; her gold and silver gone, her paper depreciating; her credit failing—depending upon other countries for food, for materials of manufacture, for supplies for her navy; her wants increasing; her means lessening. Every island and port she takes demands more from her, divides her force, increases her expense, adds to her cares, and multiplies her dangers. Her government is embarrassed, her people distracted, her seamen unhappy and ready to leave her every moment. The American commerce has been a staff of support, but will now become a sword to wound her. Instead of supplying, we shall take her colonies. Her West India possessions will be able to contribute nothing; their labour's turned to raise bread. Their trade stopped as it passes our coast; obliged to make a further division of her forces, her European enemies will seize the opportunity to break upon her there. Ireland is in a ferment and must be watched. The East Indies bode a hurricane. She is exposed to injury in a thousand places, and has no strength equal to the extension. She may inflict some wounds on us, but they cannot go deep; while every blow she receives in such a crisis may go to her vitals. She will encounter us in despair; we shall meet her with hope and alacrity.—The first occasion that has presented, proved this fact; though the sottishness of her Federal Republican attempted to prevent the volunteer offering of our seamen to Decatur, as a proof of our inability to procure men.—Had we impressed, as England does all her crews, what would it have proved by the same logic?

"AN OLD AMERICAN."

Such, Sir, are the sentiments of the people of America. Great pains are taken by our venal writers to cause it to be believed, that the people are *divided*, and that Mr. Madison is in great disrepute. This, as I had the honour to observe to you before, is no more than a continuation of the series of deceptions practised upon this nation for the last twenty years with such complete and such fatal success. If, indeed, the Ameri-

cans were to say as much of Ireland, there might be some justification for the assertion ; but, there is no fact to justify the assertion as applied to America, in the whole extent of which we hear not of a single instance of any person acting in defiance of the law : no proclamations to prevent the people from meeting ; no calling out of troops to disperse the people ; no barracks built in any part of the country ; no force to protect the government but simply that of the law, and none to defend the country but a population of proprietors voluntarily bearing arms. There can be no division in America for any length of time ; for, the moment there is a serious division, *the government must give way* : those who rule, rule solely by the will of the people : they have no power which they do not derive immediately from that source ; and, therefore, when the government of that country declares against us, the people declare against us in the same voice.

The infinite pains which have been taken, in this country, to create a belief, that the American President has been rendered unpopular by the publications of Mr. SMITH, whom he had displaced, can hardly have failed to produce some effect upon the mind of your Royal Highness, especially as it is to be presumed, that the same movers have been at work in all the ways at their command. I recommend to the perusal of your Royal Highness, an address to this Mr. Smith ; and, from it, you will perceive, that, by some of his countrymen at least, he is held in that contempt, which his meanness and his impotent malice so richly merit. And, Sir, I am persuaded, that his perfidy will meet with commendation in no country upon earth but this, and in this only amongst those, who have always been ready to receive with open arms, any one guilty of treason against his *country*, be his character or conduct, in other respects, what it might. This person appears to have received no injury but what arose from the loss of a place which he was found unfit to fill, and from which he seems to have been removed in the gentlest possible manner. Yet, in revenge for this, he assaults the character of the President, he discloses everything upon which he can force a misconstruction ; and, after all, after having said all he is able to say of the conduct of the President, whose confidence he seems to have possessed for nearly eight years, he brings forth nothing worthy of blame, except it be the indiscretion in reposing that very confidence. The publication of Mr. Smith is calculated to raise Mr. Madison and the American government in the eyes of the world ; for, how pure, how free from all fault must the government be, if a Secretary of State, who thus throws open an eight years' history of the cabinet, can tell nothing more than this man, animated by malice exceeding that of a cast-off coquette, has been able to tell !

The praises, which have, in our public prints, been bestowed upon the attempted mischief of this Mr. Smith, are by no means calculated to promote harmony with America, where both the government and the people will judge of our wishes by these praises. This man is notoriously the enemy of the American government, and, *therefore*, he is praised here. This is not the way to prove to the American government, that we are its *friends*, and that it does wrong to prefer Napoleon to us. That we ought to prefer the safety and honour of England to all other things is certain ; and, if the American government aimed any blow at these, it would become our duty to destroy that government if we could. But, Sir, I suspect, that there are some persons in this country, who hate the American government because it suffers America to be the habitation of

freedom. For this cause, I am satisfied, they would gladly, if they could, annihilate both government and people; and, in my mind there is not the smallest doubt, that they hate Napoleon beyond all description less than they hate Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Madison. This description of persons are hostile to the existence of liberty any where, and that, too, for reasons, which every one clearly understands. While any part of the earth remains untrodden by slaves, they are not at heart's ease. They hate the Emperor Napoleon because they *fear* him; but they hate him still more because they see in his conquests a tendency to a reforming result. They are the mortal enemies of freedom, in whatever part of the globe she may unfurl her banners. No matter what the people are who shout for freedom; no matter of what nation or climate; no matter what language they speak; and, on the other hand, the enemy of freedom is invariably by these persons, hailed as a friend. Such persons are naturally averse from any measures that tend to restore harmony between this country and America, which they look upon as a rebel against their principles. What such persons would wish, is, that America should exclude not only from her ships, but also from her soil, all British subjects without distinction. This would exactly suit their tyrannical wishes. This would answer one of their great purposes. But this they never will see. No government in America would dare to attempt it. The very proposition would, as it ought to do, bring universal execration down upon the head of the proposer.

The charge against the Americans of entertaining a *partiality* for the Emperor of France is one well worthy of attention; because, if it were true, it would naturally have much weight with your Royal Highness. But, from the Address to Mr. Smith, you will perceive, that the same men in America, who complain the most loudly of Great Britain, condemn, in unqualified terms, the system of government existing in France. And, which is of much more interest, Mr. JEFFERSON himself (supposed to be the great founder and encourager of the partiality for France) expresses the same sentiments, as appears from a letter of his.

With these papers before you, Sir, it will, I think, be impossible for you to form a wrong judgment as to the real sentiments of the American government and people; and, I am persuaded that you will perceive that every measure, tending to widen the breach between the two countries, can answer no purpose but that of favouring the views of France. Even the Order in Council, issued on the 7th instant, will, I fear, have this tendency, while it cannot possibly do ourselves any good. The impossibility of supplying the West India Islands with lumber and provisions from our own North American Provinces is notorious. The Order, therefore, will merely impose a tax upon the consumer, without shifting, in any degree worth notice, the source of the supply. And, indeed, the measure will serve to show *what we would do if we could*.

There is one point, relative to the intercourse between America and England, of which I am the more desirous to speak, because I have heretofore myself entertained and promulgated erroneous notions respecting it: I allude to the necessity of the former being supplied with woollens by the latter. Whence this error arose, how it has been removed from my mind, and what is the real state of the fact, your Royal Highness will gather from the Preface to an American work on Sheep and Wool, which I, some time ago, republished, as the most likely means of effectually eradicating an error which I had contributed to ren-

der popular, and the duration of which might have been injurious to the country. This work, if I could hope that your Royal Highness would condescend to peruse it, would leave no doubt in your mind, that America no longer stands in absolute need of English wool or woollens; that, if another pound of wool, in any form, were never to be imported by her, it would be greatly to her advantage; and, in short, that it comports with the plans of her most enlightened statesmen not less than with her interests and the interests of humanity, that she should no longer be an importer of this formerly necessary of life. This, Sir, is not one of the most trifling of the many recent revolutions in the affairs of the world; and, it is one, which, though wholly overlooked by such statesmen as Lord Sheffield, is well worthy of the serious consideration of your Royal Highness.

There is no way in which America is now dependent upon us, or upon any other country. She has every thing within herself that she need to have. Her soil produces all sorts of corn in abundance, and of some sorts, two crops in the year upon the same ground. Wool and flax she produces with as much facility as we do. She supplies us with cotton. She has wine of her own production; and, it will not be long, before she will have the oil of the olive. To attempt to bind such a country in the degrading bonds of the Custom-house is folly, and almost an outrage upon nature. In looking round the world; in viewing its slavish state; in looking at the miserable victims of European oppression, who does not exclaim: "Thank God, she cannot so be bound!" A policy on our part, that would have prolonged her dependence would have been, doubtless, more agreeable to her people, who, like all other people, love their ease, and prefer the comfort of the present day to the happiness of posterity. We might easily have caused America to be more commercial; but, of this our policy was afraid; and our jealousy has rendered her an infinite service. By those measures of ours, which produced the former Non-importation Act, we taught her to have recourse to her own soil and her own hands for the supplying of her own wants; and then, as now, we favoured the policy of Mr. Jefferson, whose views have been adopted and adhered to by his successor in the Presidential chair.

The relative situation of the two countries is now wholly changed. America no longer stands in absolute need of our manufactures. We are become a debtor rather than a creditor with her; and, if the present Non-importation Act continue in force another year, the ties of commerce will be so completely cut asunder as never more to have much effect. In any case they never can be any thing resembling what they formerly were; and, if we are wise, our views and measures will change with the change in the state of things. We shall endeavour, by all honourable means, to keep well with America, and to attach her to us by new ties, the ties of common interest and unclashing pursuits. We shall anticipate those events which nature points out: the absolute independence of Mexico, and, perhaps, of most of the West India Islands. We shall there invite her population to hoist the banners of freedom; and, by that means, form a counterpoise to the power of the Emperor of France. This, at which I take but a mere glance, would be a work worthy of your Royal Highness, and would render your name great while you live, and dear to after ages. The times demand a great and far-seeing policy. This little Island, cut off, as she will be, from all the world, cannot, I am persuaded, retain her independence, unless she now exert her energies in something

other than expeditions to the continent of Europe, where every creature seems to be arrayed in hostility against her. The mere *colonial* system is no longer suited to her state nor to the state of Europe. A system that would combine the powers of England with those of America, and that would thus set liberty to wage war with despotism, dropping the Custom House and all its pitiful regulations as out of date, would give new life to an enslaved world, and would ensure the independence of England for a time beyond calculation. But, Sir, even to deliberate upon a system of policy like this, requires no common portion of energy. There are such stubborn prejudices and more stubborn private interests to encounter and overcome, that I should despair of success without a previous and radical change of system at home; but, satisfied I am, that, to produce that change, which would infallibly be the ground-work of all the rest, there needs nothing but the determination, firmly adhered to, of your Royal Highness.

To tell your Royal Highness what I *expect* to see take place would be useless: whether we are to hail a *change of system*, or are to lose all hope of it, cannot be long in ascertaining. If the former, a short delay will be amply compensated by the event; and, if the latter, the fact will always be ascertained too soon. I am, &c. &c.

WM. COBBETT.

*State Prison, Newgate,
Thursday, 12th September, 1811.*

TO THE PRINCE REGENT:

ON THE DISPUTE WITH THE AMERICAN STATES.

(Political Register, February, 1812.)

LETTER IV.

SIR,—In looking back to the real causes of the miseries, which afflict this country, and of the greater miseries with which it appears to be threatened, your Royal Highness will, I am persuaded, find that one of the most efficient has been the *prostitution of the Press*. It is, on all hands acknowledged, that the Press is the most powerful engine that can be brought to operate upon public opinion and upon the direction of public affairs; and, therefore, when used to a bad end, the mischief it produces must necessarily be great. If left *free*, it is impossible that it can, upon the whole, produce harm; because, from a free press free discussion will flow; and where discussion is free, *truth* will always prevail; but, where the press is in that state, in which a man dares not *freely* publish his thoughts, respecting public men and public affairs, if those thoughts be hostile to men in power, the press must of necessity be an evil; because, while it is thus restrained on that side, there will never be wanting slaves to use it in behalf of those who have the distribution of the public money. Thus the public mind receives a wrong bias, and measures are approved of which in the end prove destructive, and which would never have met with approbation, had *every* man been free to communicate his thoughts to the public.

Where there is *no Press at all*, or, which is the same thing as to politics, where there is a *Licenser*, or person appointed by the government to sanction writings previous to their publication, the press does no good, to be sure, but neither does it any harm; for, the public well knowing the source of what they read (and very little they will read), suffer it to have no effect upon their minds. They read a licensed newspaper as they would hear the charge of an accuser, who should tell them beforehand that the accused party was not to be suffered to make any defence. But, where the press is called *free*, and yet where he who writes with effect against men in power, or against public measures, is liable to be punished with greater severity than the major part of felons, the press must be an engine of incalculable mischief; because, the notion of *freedom of the Press* is still entertained by the greater part of readers, while there exists this terrific restraint on him who would write strongly, and, perhaps, effectually, against public men and public measures, if it were not for the fear of almost certain ruin.

Thus the press becomes a *deceiver* of the people; it becomes prostituted to the most pernicious purposes. Few men of real talent will condescend to write with a bridle in their mouths; the periodical press falls, for the far greater part into the hands of needy adventurers, who are ever ready to sell their columns to the highest bidder; Falsehood stalks forth and ranges uncontrolled, while Truth dares not show her face; and if she appear at all, it is under so thick a covering, in so crawling an attitude, and with so many apologies to power, that she always disgraces her character, and not unfrequently injures her cause.

Hence we may trace all the severe blows which our country has suffered, and which have at last reduced us to a state, which every man contemplates with a greater or less degree of apprehension. At the outset of the American war, Mr. HORNE TOOKE, who wrote against the project of taxing America by force of arms, while she was unrepresented in Parliament, was harassed with state prosecutions and was pent up in a jail, while Dr. Johnson,* who wrote in defence of the project, and in whom venality and pride contended for the predominance, was caressed and pensioned. The nation, by the means of a press thus managed, were made to approve of the measures against America; they were made to expect the contest to be of short duration and the success to be complete. They were induced to give their approbation to the sending of German Troops, Brunswickers and Hessian mercenaries, to make war upon the fellow-subjects, the brethren of Englishmen. If we look back to that day, we shall see the periodical press urging the nation on to the war, and promising a speedy and successful termination of it. The Americans were represented as a poor contemptible enemy; as ragamuffins without arms and without commanders; "destitute," as one writer asserted, "of money, of arms, of ammunition, of commanders, and, if they had all these, they had not courage to apply them to their defence." Thus were the people of England induced to give their approbation to the measures of the ministry at the outset; and, by similar means were they inveigled into a continuation of that approbation from one campaign to another, and were only to be undeceived by the capture of whole armies of English troops, by those whom they had been taught to despise.

* See Note in Selections, Vol. 1, p. 266,—ED.

To the same cause may, in great part, be attributed the war against the Republicans of France, a war, which has laid low so many sovereign princes, rooted out so many dynasties, and which, however it may terminate, has already occasioned more misery in England than she ever before experienced. If there had been *no Press* in England at the commencement of the French Revolution, the people of England would have formed their judgment upon what they *saw* and what they *felt*; or, if men had been on both sides of the question, free to publish their thoughts, the people, hearing *all* that could be said *for* as well as *against* the cause of France, would have come to a decision warranted by truth and reason. But, while those who wrote against the Republicans of France and urged the nation on to a war against them were at perfect liberty to make use of what statements or arguments they chose for that purpose, those who wrote on the other side were compelled to smother the best part of what they might have urged, that is to say, they could not write with *effect*; or, if they did, they exposed themselves to ruin, and, perhaps, to premature death; for, there are not many bodies able to endure sentences of long imprisonment, without receiving injuries that are seldom overcome. Mr. GILBERT WAKEFIELD lived out his two years in Dorchester-jail; but he did not for many months survive the effects of his imprisonment, leaving a wife and family to starve, had not his virtues bequeathed them friends. Mr. Wakefield's crime was the answering, the triumphant answering of a *Bishop*, who had written against the Republicans of France, and the tendency of whose publication was to encourage the people of England to go on with the war then begun. After the example made of Mr. Wakefield, after such a *reply* to his pamphlet, the war would of course meet with few literary opponents, or, if any, so shy and so timid as to produce little or no effect; while, on the other side, the advocates of the war, with nothing to fear, and everything to hope in the way of personal advantage, could not fail to succeed in persuading the people that to push on the war was just and necessary. The delusion was kept up, through the same means. In spite of discomfiture and disgrace; in spite of facts that might have been supposed almost sufficient to enlighten a born idiot, they were made to hope on from campaign to campaign; and, though they saw league after league dissolved, they were still induced to give their approbation to new leagues. Without a Press, such as I have described, this would have been impossible. A total destruction of the Press; or, the establishment of a *Licensor*, would have prevented the possibility of such delusion; because then the people would have judged from what they *saw* and what they *felt*; they would have judged from the actual events of the war, and from the effects which the war, as it proceeded, produced upon themselves. But, by the means of the press, such as I have described it, by the means of a succession of falsehoods, coming upon the heels of one another so quick as to leave little time for reflection, the people were hurried on from one stage to another of the war, till at last they saw no way of retreating; and thousands, when they saw, in the end, the fatal consequences of the measures they had been so zealous in supporting, continued, rather than acknowledge themselves dupes, the partisans of those by whom they had been deceived; and so they continue to this day.

But, sir, amongst all the instances, in which this prostituted press has abused the public ear, I know of no one where it has worked with more zeal or more apparent effect than with regard to the present *Dispute with the American States*. The grounds of complaint on the part of

America have been sedulously kept out of sight; her remonstrances, against what no one can deny to be a violation of *her rights*, have been constantly represented as *demands* made upon us to give up some of *our rights*; her people have been represented as being on our side and against their government; and, at last of all, when this prostituted press can no longer disguise the fact, that the Americans are preparing for war against us, it represents the American Legislature as well as the President as acting under the influence of France, as being instruments in the hands of Bonaparte. And by these means, it has drawn the public along from stage to stage, in an approbation of the measures, which have now brought us to the eve of a new war, in addition to that which we find sufficiently burdensome and calamitous, and to which there is no man who pretends to see the prospect of a termination.

I have before taken the liberty to address your Royal Highness upon this subject; and, if I now repeat, in part, what I have already said, my ~~object~~ must be, that the state of things is now more likely, in my opinion, to ~~excite~~ attention to my observations. Under this persuasion, and in the hope of being yet able to contribute something towards the prevention of a war with the American States, I shall here again take a view of the whole of the question, and shall then offer to your Royal Highness such observations upon the subject, as appear to me not to be unworthy of your attention.

There are two great points, upon which we are at issue with America; the *Orders in Council*, and the *Impressment of American Seamen*. The dispute with that country has lately turned chiefly upon the former; but, it should be made known to your Royal Highness, that the latter, as I once before had the honour to observe to you, is the grievance that clings most closely to the hearts of the people, so many of whom have to weep the loss of a husband, a brother, or a son, of whom they have been bereft by our impressments.

In proceeding to discuss the first of these points, I will first state to your Royal Highness how the Americans are affected by our Orders in Council. An American ship, though navigated by American citizens and laden with Indian corn, or any other produce of America, bound to any part of France or her dominions, is, if she chance to be seen by one of our ships of war or privateers, brought into any one of our ports, and there she is condemned, ship and cargo, and the master and seamen are sent adrift to get back to America as they can, or to starve in our streets. The same takes place with regard to an American vessel, bound from France or her dominions to America. These captures take place on any part of the ocean, and they have often taken place at the very mouth of the American ports and rivers; and, as great part of the crews of vessels so captured are taken out by the captors to prevent a rescue, the sailors so taken out are frequently kept at sea for a long while, and, in many cases, they have lost their lives during such their detention, which to them must necessarily be, in all cases, a most irksome and horrible captivity.

That this is a great injury to America nobody can deny, and, therefore, the next point to consider is, whether we have any right to inflict it upon her; whether we have a right thus to seize the property of her merchants, and to expose to hardship, peril, and death, the persons of her sailors. And, here, Sir, I have no hesitation in saying, that our conduct is wholly unjustifiable according to all the hitherto known and

settled rules of the neutral law of nations, even as recognized by ourselves. For, never until since the year 1806, that is to say, till since the issuing of the Orders in Council, did England pretend to have a right to make prize of a neutral ship, even carrying *enemy's* goods to or from an enemy's port, contenting herself with seizing the *cargo* and suffering the *ship* to go free. And, as to the seizure of the goods of a neutral on board a neutral ship, the very attempt to set up the pretension of a right to do that would have marked out the author as a madman. Indeed, such a pretension puts an end to all idea of *neutrality*; it at once involves every maritime nation in every war that shall exist between any other maritime nations; and is, therefore, a pretension so tyrannical in its principle and so desolating in its consequences as to be abhorred by all but those who delight in the troubles and miseries of mankind and the waste of human life.

Conscious that general usage and reason are against us, we ground our justification upon a rule of war, which says that one belligerent may *retaliate* upon another. It is not, for instance, held to be right, to kill prisoners made in war; but, if our enemy kill the prisoners he takes from us, we may, according to this rule, kill the prisoners we take from him; though, even in that case, not exceeding the number that he has killed belonging to us. No rule of *retaliation* could apply to the case before us. We were not at war with America. She had seized no ships belonging to England. She had not been guilty, and she was not charged with being guilty, of any breach of the laws of neutrality. But, if *she* had been guilty of no offence, *France* had, and the retaliation was to fall upon America.

This leads me to solicit the patient attention of your Royal Highness to the *History of the Orders in Council*, which Orders we have always called *retaliatory* measures. The Emperor Napoleon issued two Decrees, the first from *Berlin* and the second from *Milan*. These Decrees were levelled against the trade carried on between neutrals and England, or, rather, between America and England, America being, in fact, the only neutral then left. The Decrees were a gross violation of the neutral rights of America. Napoleon had not, indeed, the power of enforcing them; but, he would have done it if he could; and, the very attempt, the very existence of the Decrees, was a violation of the theretofore acknowledged rights of neutrals. Such was the conduct of Napoleon. We issued what we called Orders in Council, the nature and effect of which I have above described. We have contended, that these Orders were in the way of *retaliation* for the French Decrees. This the Americans have always treated as an outrage on every principle of justice. They have, as well they might, denied that we have a right to act with injustice towards them upon the pretence, true or false, that another power has acted with injustice towards them. They have scoffed at such a principle of action; but they have, at the same time, observed, that even if this monstrous principle were admitted, we should find in it no justification of our Orders, the commencement of which they trace to a date *prior to that of the first of Napoleon's Decrees*.

The *first* of this series of measures, of which America complains, was adopted by our Government, and that, too, under the Administration of those who are now OUT. It was a blockade of the entrances of the Ems, the Weser, the Elbe and the Trave, in consequence of the *king of Prussia* having taken possession of various parts of the *Electorate of*

Hanover, and having, as was asserted in Mr. Fox's letter, done other things injurious to English commerce. Thus this dispute with America grew, in part at least, out of the connection with *Hanover*. This regulation, against which the Americans immediately protested as being a gross violation of their neutral rights, was dated on the 8th of April, 1806. Before the month of November in that year, Napoleon had put an end to all disputes between us and the king of Prussia by attacking, defeating, and overthrowing the king of Prussia, and taking possession of Prussia itself as well as Hanover. Being at Berlin, he, on the 21st of November, 1806, issued that Decree before spoken of, called the *Berlin Decree*. This measure he called a measure of *retaliation* for our regulations against neutrals. We followed him with more restrictions upon neutrals, or rather, upon America, under the form of Orders in Council, and these we declared to be measures of *retaliation* for the Berlin Decree. Then came Napoleon with his Decree from Milan, as a *retaliation* for these Orders. And we have followed him with Order upon Order since that time, still calling them measures of *retaliation*.

America complained of both the belligerents, and was told by each that he had been compelled to deviate from the law of nations in his own defence, and that he only wished to reduce his adversary to the necessity of returning to an observance of the rules of that law. We, more especially, expressed our sorrow at being *obliged* to give annoyance to neutral commerce; and we said, we were so anxious to see this obligation at an end, that we would waive the point of *priority* of violation, and would repeal our Orders, *step by step*, with the repeal of the French Decrees; that is to say, that, whenever Napoleon was ready to *begin* the work of repealing, we would begin too, and keep pace with him, till the whole mass of obnoxious Decrees and Orders were removed.

As neither did begin, however, America fell upon a mode of inducing one or the other, or both, to do it by a temptation to their interests. She passed an Act, in May 1810, which provided, that, if neither of the belligerents had repealed before the 1st of November in that year, the ships and goods of both should be excluded from her ports and harbours; that if both repealed, the ships and goods of both should continue to be admitted; that, if one repealed and the other did not, the ships and goods of the non-repealing nation should be excluded.

Napoleon, in the month of July 1810, signified to the American Minister at Paris, that his Decrees *were repealed*, and that the repeal would be acted upon on the appointed 1st of November. Whereupon the President, as the Act required, declared the fact of the repeal, and declared, at the same time, that unless England had repealed her Orders before the 1st of February 1811, her ships and goods would from that day be excluded. England did not repeal, and her ships and goods have been excluded accordingly, to the woeful experience of our wool-growers and manufacturers, and to the infinite satisfaction doubtless of the Emperor of France.

The reasons we have given for not repealing, are, *first*, that Napoleon *has not repealed*; and, *second*, that if he had, he has erected the continental system in the stead of his Decrees. As to the first of these reasons, it is telling the American Government, that it utters wilful falsehoods, or that it is so blind and foolish as not to be able to ascertain a fact of such importance to the interests of the nation. And, as to the latter reason, it is, in fact, calling upon America to compel Napoleon to alter

his internal laws in favour of English goods ; or, it is telling her, that we will continue to punish her if she does not do that, or join us in the war. America is satisfied that Napoleon has repealed his Decrees ; she has declared it through her Minister here, and through her President in his Proclamations and his Messages to the Congress ; and still, we *deny the fact*. This is a ground of action that no nation will endure, unless it be wholly destitute of spirit, or of the means of obtaining redress or revenge.

The matter is now taken up by the Congress, to whose proceedings therein I will speak when I have submitted to your Royal Highness a statement of the nature of the other great point in dispute ; namely, *the impressment of seamen out of American ships by our ships of war*.

Our ships of war, when they meet an American Vessel at sea, board her, and take out of her, by force, any seamen whom our officers assert to be *British subjects*. There is no rule by which they are bound. They act at discretion ; and, the consequence is, that great numbers of native Americans have been thus impressed, and great numbers of them are now in our navy. The total number so held at any one time cannot, perhaps, be ascertained ; but, from a statement published in America, it appears, that Mr. Lyman, the late Consul here, stated the number, about two years ago, at *fourteen thousand*. That many of these men have died on board of our ships, that many have been wounded, that many have been killed in action, and that many have been worn-out in the service there can be no doubt. Some obtain their release through the application of the American Consul here, and of these the sufferings have, in many instances been very great. There have been instances where men have thus got free after having been flogged through the fleet for desertion.

But, it has been asked, whether we are not to take our sailors where we find them. To which America answers, yes, but take only your own ; "take," said Mr. Lyman, "your whole pound of flesh, but take not a drop of blood." She says, that she wishes not to have in her ships any British sailor ; and she is willing to give them up, wherever the fact of their being British sailors can be proved. Let them, she says, be brought before any Magistrate, or any public *civil* authority, in any of your own ports, at home or abroad ; and she is willing to abide by the decision. But, let not men be seized in her ships upon the high seas (and sometimes at the mouth of her own rivers) where there is nobody to judge between the parties, and where the British Officer going on board is at once accuser, witness, judge and captor. Let not your officer, who cannot know the men, except by mere accident, be taken to be a better judge of the fact than the commander of the ship in which they sail. Let it not be admitted, that he is never to be believed, and that even the protections given by the American authorities are to be received as falsehoods, and disregarded accordingly.

We have hitherto refused to alter our practice. The grievance has been growing greater and greater, as it necessarily must with the continuance of the war, till, at last, the number of persons impressed, the number of sufferers, and the corresponding number of complaining parents, wives, and children in America, are become so great, that the whole country cries out, War ! war ! or an end to impressment !

I beg your Royal Highness to consider what must be the feelings of a people at the existence of a grievance like this ; and, if you do seriously

consider it, I am sure you will see cause to despise those parasites of the press in England, who are using their utmost endeavours to persuade the public, that the American Congress are, in their resentful language against England, "stimulated by the *intrigues* of Buonaparte." As if the intrigues of Buonaparte were necessary to make an Assembly of *real* Representatives of the American people feel for the ruin of so many hundreds of their merchants and for the greater sufferings of so many thousands of their seamen and of the relations of those seamen! As if the intrigues of Buonaparte were necessary to make such an Assembly feel at seeing their country, whose independence was purchased with the blood of their fathers, treated, at sea, as if it were still no more than a colony! As if to feel acutely and to express themselves strongly upon such an occasion, it were necessary for them to be instigated by the intrigues of a foreign power!

Having now, with as much clearness as I have been able to combine with brevity, submitted to your Royal Highness the nature and extent of the complaints, which America prefers against England, I next proceed to state to you what has been done by the Congress, in the way of obtaining redress for those grievances, after which will naturally come such observations, as I think not unworthy of your serious attention, relative to the consequences of a war with a country, which, *until this moment*, the prostituted press of this country has studiously treated with *contempt*.

It is necessary to begin here by observing on the means, which this press has, on this subject, made use of to deceive the public. The writers, to whose labours I allude, were employed, during the last spring and summer, in representing Mr. Madison as a falling character; they told us that Mr. Smith's disclosures had ruined the reputation of the former; they expressed their opinion that he would never more show his face in the Congress; and, the *people* of America they represented as being decidedly against a war with England. So that the public here were led to believe, that, let our Ministers do what they might with regard to America, there was no danger to be apprehended. I took the liberty, many months ago, to endeavour to guard your Royal Highness against the adoption of opinions founded upon such statements; and, I then expressed to you my firm conviction, that an *immediate* change of conduct, on our part, towards America, was necessary to prevent a war with that country. When the President's Speech reached us, breathing a spirit of resentment, and suggesting the propriety of arming, these yelpers of the venal press, as if all set on by one and the same halloo, and as if forgetting their predictions about his fall, flew at him in a strain of abuse such as I have seldom witnessed, except when I myself have had the honour to be thought by their setters-on an object worthy of their mercenary malice. They likened the style of his Speech to that of the Wabash and Shawanese Savages; they called him a tool of Buonaparte; they represented him as a mean, low-minded, ignorant man; and I have never heard, that any one of them has been called to account for this conduct. They soon found, however, what every man of sense anticipated, that the sentiments of the President's Speech were but a faint sketch of the picture to be finished by the Congress, who, therefore, next became an object of attack. But, by degrees, as the accounts of the proceedings of the Congress have reached us, these deceivers of the English people have grown more measured in their abuse. At the arrival of every new menace from the city of Washington, they have, as

is in the nature of the true-bred bully, become more and more gentle ; till, at last, they have softened down into a tone of civility. They do not *now* " make a mockery " of war with America ; they even hope that it may be prevented ; and, they " trust empty punctilio will not stand in the way of reconciliation ; " that very reconciliation, which they had done all in their power to prevent.

But, still sticking to their character of deceivers, they are now employed in garbling the debates in the Congress. They are employed in suppressing the sentiments of those members, who are advocates for a resistance of England, and in puffing forth the speeches of those who are on the opposite side. The speech of one gentleman in particular, Mr. RANDOLPH, they praise beyond bounds, for which, however, they have one reason, which they do not avow ; and, which, as it is somewhat curious, I will, even at the expense of a digression, make a subject of remark.

In reading the speech of this gentleman, as copied into some of our newspapers, I could not help wondering that a thing so incoherent and so weak should have called forth the praises even of these prints. I wondered that even they should describe such at once wild and vapid matter as " full of *acuteness* and *sarcasm*." I had, indeed, frequently heard them bestow encomiums on the speeches of Lord Liverpool and Mr. Perceval ; but anything so inappropriate as this I had never heard them hazard before. When, however, I came to see the Speech itself, in the American newspapers, and found that *I myself* had been an object of Mr. Randolph's attack, the wonder ceased. It was no longer a matter of surprise, that the mercenary tribe had discovered in the speech of Mr. Randolph everything characteristic of acuteness and profundity and public spirit. But, really, it was dealing very unfairly with their readers not to treat them to a participation in the enjoyment of these sarcastic passages, especially when they would not thereby have diminished their own ; and it is not a little surprising, that they should, in copying the speech of their champion, have taken the pains to exclude precisely these passages. Since, however, they have done it, I will fill up the gap.

Mr. RANDOLPH had, it seems, been accused of not being a *republican*, and of being devoted to England, in the way of answer to which he makes the following personal remarks and allusions. " I do not like this ' republicanism,' which is supported by *Mr. Adams* on this side the Atlantic, and by *Cobbett* on the other, who, if he could *break jail*, ' would assist in revolutionizing New England. Republicanism of John Adams and William Cobbett, *par nobile fratrum*, united now as in 1798. Formerly Mr. Adams and Porcupine would have called me a *Frenchman* ; now, if worthy notice, both would call me an *Englishman* " From whom," says he, in another part of his speech, " come these charges ? From men *escaping from jails* in Europe, and here " teaching our fathers and sons their political duties." Now, in the first place, I have great satisfaction in learning from such unquestionable authority, that I agree in political opinions with Mr. Adams. Mr. Adams was one of those who, at the earliest date, made a conspicuous figure in the cause of no taxation without representation ; he was American minister at the Hague, afterwards at Paris, afterwards in England ; he was Vice-President of the United States all the time that General Washington was President ; he was afterwards himself President of the United States ; and, having been, at the next election, supplanted by Mr. Jefferson, he

has, since his retirement, had the rare virtue to acknowledge, upon further reflection, that the system of his successor was the most advantageous to his country; and, upon that ground, to give that system all the support in his power. He lives now, in the simplest style, at the age of about seventy-five, in his native State of Massachusetts, beloved and venerated by all around him, and without having, or being suspected of having, added to his own private means a single dollar of the public money. Such is the man, whose opinions I am now charged with holding, and in company with whom I am said to have changed my former opinions as to American politics; upon which I can only say, that no effort of mine shall be wanting to render myself worthy of such an honour. As to what Mr. Randolph says about my being *in jail*, that is a mode of *answering* which he must have learnt from our mercenary prints. That is the way that they answer my arguments. But, this gentleman's general accusation against those *who have been in jails in Europe*; his objection to *their* teaching politics to the people of America; these are worthy of some attention. For the present, laying my own case out of the question, I would, if I were within his hearing, ask this gentleman, how long it is since the bare circumstance of having been imprisoned in a jail has been looked upon as sufficient to disqualify a man for teaching *political duties*. It seems to me, on the contrary, that the circumstance ought, if such man has suffered on account of his politics, to be considered as one qualification at least, seeing that it must necessarily have impressed strongly upon his mind the nature and effect of the political institution, under which he has suffered. But, surely, Mr. Randolph cannot have been serious; for, he boasts of having descended from the country of *Hampden* and *Sidney*, and of having imbibed his political principles from them. Indeed! Why, then he should have recollected, that the former, if he had not, in a glorious fight for the liberties of England, died in the field, would have perished on the scaffold; and, that the latter, after having, for a long while *inhabited a jail*, did actually lose his life under the hands of the executioner. And, if the brave Sidney, who was found guilty by a packed jury, and who, when condemned by a corrupt judge, stretched out his arm to him and bade him feel his pulse to see if he trembled; if this undaunted advocate of freedom had escaped before the day of execution, and arrived in America, would Mr. Randolph, had he been then living, have objected to *him* as a teacher of political duties merely on the ground of his having escaped from a jail? And *Prynn*, who was persecuted by the then Attorney-General of England, and who, by the tyrannical judges of that day, those base instruments of a corrupted court; if he, who was imprisoned and fined and pilloried and mutilated almost beyond mortal endurance, and who, after all, lived to bring one of his judges to the block; if Prynn, who was thus punished on a charge of seditious libel, had "*broke jail*," *this very jail of Newgate*, where he was at first confined; if he had "*broke jail*," and gone to America, would Mr. Randolph's forefathers, of whom he boasts, have objected to such a teacher of political duties? Why, though, perhaps, Mr. Randolph does not know it, William Penn was prosecuted for seditious libel, and was confined in *this very jail of Newgate* too, though his time here was rendered short by a jury, who had the sense to know their duty, and the courage to resist the browbeating of a corrupt political judge; and, was William Penn thought an unfit teacher of political duties? I am pleading here, not my own cause, but that of many others, who are now

in America, and who have been in jails in Europe. This, however, is unnecessary ; for, it is a fact, and a fact, too, which your Royal Highness should know, that these gentlemen have been received there, not as Mr. Randolph seems to have wished, but with kindness, respect, and honour. Mr. *Emmett* and Mr. *Sampson* are amongst the first advocates at the bar in New-York, and their associate, Dr. *M'Nevan*, is at the head, or nearly so, of the Physicians. The instance of Mr. *Duane* is worthy of particular notice. He was a printer at Calcutta, where his types and property were destroyed, himself thrown into a guard-house, and soon afterwards shipped off to Europe. He found his way to America, and to his pen England owes no inconsiderable portion of the hostility that has since existed against her in that country. I can remember the time, when he, and he alone, as far as the power of the press went, kept alive the opposition to the English interest. All the other writers seemed to be weary of the strife ; but his inextinguishable remembrance of the past sustained him under all difficulties, and he finally saw that cause triumph, of which, at one time, every body else seemed to despair. He, above all others, has been a teacher of " political duties," as Mr. Randolph calls them ; and, assuredly, if success be a proof of merit, few men ever had so much. If Mr. Finnerty were to exchange a solitary cell in Lincoln-jail, to which he has been consigned, at a distance from his friends and from his means of obtaining a livelihood ; if he were to change that situation for the free air of America, leaving his present dreary abode to the occupancy of the next man, if another such man should be found, to comment on the character of Castlereagh ; if Mr. Finnerty were to make this exchange, does Mr. Randolph imagine, that the people of America would regard him, who has given such proofs of his talents and integrity, as a very unfit teacher of political duties ? And now, as to myself, it appears to me, that Mr. Randolph would have better consulted the dignity of his situation as a legislator, if he had *answered my arguments* rather than made an allusion to the situation in which he knew me to be. I had not given him any offence ; I had not even named him in any of my articles on American affairs. I had used the best of my humble endeavours to prevent the necessity of, and to remove all pretence for, those warlike measures, of which he appears to have been so determined an opponent ; and, surely, if I did happen to differ from him in opinion, the circumstance of my being in a jail was not to deprive me of all right to exercise my judgment and to put the result upon paper. Such a deprivation made no part of my sentence. Judges Grose and Ellenborough and Bailey and Le Blanc, did, indeed, sentence me to be imprisoned for *two years in Newgate*, where Prynne had been before me, but they did not sentence me to be *blindfolded* and have *my hands tied*, all the time ; they did, indeed, further adjudge that *a thousand pounds* should be taken from me and *paid to the King*, but they did not condemn me to be *bereft of my reason* ! they did, indeed, sentence me to give bail for my good behaviour for the further term of *seven years*, making altogether much more than the average calculation of the duration of man's life, but they passed no sentence of imprisonment on *my thoughts*. Nor did they, in their sentence, include a prohibition against my thoughts finding their way to America ; no, nor against their producing an impression there proportioned to their correctness and to the force with which they might be expressed. Therefore, I presume, it will be thought, that Mr. Randolph censured me without cause, though I must confess, that his censure is

more than compensated for by the information that he has given me and the world that my efforts, as to America, coincide with those of Mr. Adams ; and, in return, I will inform him, that he has the honour to agree, not only in sentiments, but also in expressions, with every literary slave in the British dominions, with every one whose hand is like the beggar's dish, and whose columns have a price as regular, though not, perhaps, so moderate, as stalls at a market or beds at an inn.

From this digression I should now return to the Proceedings in the American Congress, a regular account of which I should lay before your Royal Highness ; but the performance of this duty must, for want of time, be deferred till my next.

I am, &c. &c.

WM. COBBETT.

State Prison, Newgate, January 30, 1812.

TO THE PRINCE REGENT :

ON THE DISPUTE WITH THE AMERICAN STATES.

(*Political Register*, February, 1812.)

LETTER V.

SIR,

I now proceed to place before your Royal Highness an account of the measures proposed by the American Congress to be adopted, in consequence of the refusal of our government to comply with the demands of the American President, relative to the Orders in Council and the Impressment of American Seamen.

The Lower House of Congress began by receiving and approving of a Report of their Committee of Foreign Relations. That Report can be regarded in no other light, than as a *manifesto* against England. It sets forth the grounds of complaint ; and it then recommends preparations for war.

This recommendation has been acted upon, and preparations for war are actually going on.—An Act was brought forward immediately for raising a body of regular troops ; and, after much deliberation, this Act appears to have been passed, the number of troops amounting to 25 thousand men. And, here let me beg your Royal Highness to observe, that these troops are to have a bounty in *lands*, of which every man is to receive 160 Acres. These men will have the *soil* to fight for ; their motive of action will not be of that vague and indefinite kind which is held forth by Colonel Dillon, in his work addressed, as he says, by permission, to you. That these troops are not intended for purposes of mere *defence* will be obvious to your Royal Highness ; but, of the way in which they will probably be employed I shall speak by and by.

Besides these the President is to be enabled to employ 50 thousand Volunteers, whose services may, at any time, be extended beyond the limits of the United States, if the parties volunteering choose to be so employed.

The Militia, consisting of all the able men in the country, without any exception as to rank or degree, the President may call out in such numbers as may be found necessary.

Some national ships are to be built ; those that they now have, are to be repaired and armed ; gun-boats are to be fitted out ; and the *merchant ships* are to be permitted to *arm* and to defend themselves at sea. But, the greatest of the maritime measures is, a high reward to be offered to any Americans on board British ships, and to the *associates of such Americans*, in case of their *bringing in to an American port* any British ship of war. This is, in fact, a reward offered to the crews of British ships to desert to the enemy, and to carry their ship with them, upon the same principle, I presume, that our Consul at Valencia and our commandant at Gibraltar are, in our public prints, said to have offered so much a man to each soldier of the French army that should desert to them, and so much in addition provided the deserter brought *his horse*. Whether this be consistent with morality, I shall not, at present inquire ; but, of this I am very sure, that the measure adopted, or proposed to be adopted, by the Congress, is of a very dangerous tendency, especially when we consider how large a portion of Americans and other foreigners we have on board of our ships.

These measures are not, Sir, to be considered as the measures of a faction, whose object, in getting the nation into a war, is to create the means of fattening themselves and their families and dependents and supporters ; they are the measures of *the people of America*, speaking through the lips of their real Representatives, unbribed themselves and chosen without the aid of bribery ; and they arise out of the grounds of complaint against us, which I before had the honour to lay before your Royal Highness. The prostituted press of London has, for many months past, been endeavouring to make its deluded readers believe, that the partisans of England, in America, were the most numerous ; and that, if the government engaged in war against us, the people would turn against it, and that a separation of the States would take place. I endeavoured to guard the public and your Royal Highness against these delusive statements ; and we now see, that, though there are two parties in America, both parties have united against us, with as much cordiality as the two parties in our House of Commons united against Mr. Madocks's motion of the 11th of May 1809 for an inquiry into the Sale of Seats in that Hon. House ; and, surely, an union more cordial than that has seldom been heard of between opponents of any description. Those members of the Congress who have voted against the war with England are so few, and those who have spoken against it, are, for the most part, so notoriously contemptible, that the measure may be regarded as having been adopted without opposition. The Congress has not been long elected ; they have just received the instructions of their constituents ; and it will not be long before those constituents will again have an opportunity of deciding upon their merits or demerits. None of those members hold offices of any sort ; none of them have pensions or sinecures, and none of them can touch, in any way, a farthing of the money which may be expended in consequence of their votes for the creation of any office. This being the case the voice of the Congress must be the *voice of the nation* ; and it would be delusion unexampled to believe, that the people of America are not entering heartily into this war.

Our prostituted press, unable any longer to keep up the delusion of

the disinclination of the American nation to resist by force of arms, now tell the public, that the war will not be of *long duration*; and, this prediction they found chiefly upon the supposition, that America has not the *pecuniary means* sufficient for the carrying on of war.

The *collection of taxes*, is, indeed, what the Americans do not like; but, it does not follow, that, for a great purpose, they would not submit to a trifling tax; and a very trifling tax, indeed, would suffice. It is true, that they now pay but little. In America the taxes do not amount to a *Dollar* a head; taking the people one with another; here, if we exclude the army, the navy, the paupers, and the prisoners, the taxes amount to *fifty Dollars* a head. By putting on a second *Dollar*, the Government would double its means; and, surely, an American can pay 2 *Dollars* as well as an Englishman can pay 50. One of your Royal Highness's servants, that stirring old gentleman, Mr. George Rose, assures us, that our population *increases* in war, and that the longer the war continues the faster we increase in numbers. He says nothing of the increase of *paupers*; but, upon his principle, American population cannot be checked by war; for, he will hardly contend, that this quality of fecundity appertains exclusively to us. Another of your servants, Lord Harrowby, has lately asserted, that the *prosperity* of this country is now greater than it ever was. Your Royal Highness will not, therefore, believe, that America is to be beggared and ruined by a war, which, in all probability will last only a few years.

Besides, the resources of America in her *lands* are very great. She has, owing to her peculiar situation, a species of fund to draw upon which no other nation has. She is now about to raise an army with a bounty, in money, of 16 *Dollars* a man. The rest of his bounty is to consist of *lands*, which, of course, cost the people nothing; and, in this same way a large portion of the demands of a war may and will be met.

Much has been said about the *natural ties* between the two countries. This, considered as an impediment to war, is the grossest of all the delusions, and never could have been practised upon any nation but this. All that remains of a recollection of the former connection is calculated to produce hostility. It is fine enough to flourish away upon the subject of the Americans being of the *same family* with us; but, there are many and many hundreds and thousands of men in America, who recollect that their fathers were killed by those Brunswickers and Hessians and other German Mercenaries, whom England hired to send against them, because they insisted upon the principle of *No Taxation without Representation*. These ideas of kindred might do very well in a poem; but, they are despicable in political reflections, and only discover the folly, or the wickedness, of those who obtrude them upon the public.

There appears, then, no good reason to suppose, that the Americans will not enter upon the war, and that they will not persevere in it, till they obtain its object, or, at least, till they have fairly tried their strength. As to the *consequences* of such war to us, some of them I should regard as ultimately beneficial. The *loss* of Canada I should deem a gain, though it is worth to us a thousand Empires in the East; that is to say, it is not a thousandth part so mischievous to us.

Another loss would be deeply felt, I mean the loss, *for ever*, of America as a market for our goods. Lord Sheffield has lately said, that what America does not take *this* year, she must take *next* year; that, pass what Acts she will, she must, in the end, be clothed by us. His Lord-

ship's mind does not keep pace with the events of the world. The *Morning Post* and *Courier* are, I suspect, his chief instructors as to what has been passing for the last ten years; or, he would have known, that manufactures have arrived at great perfection in America; that she is able to supply herself; and that she already exports cotton and wool in a partly manufactured state. A war of a few years continuance would sever the two countries for ever as to manufactures; and, this is one reason why the government of America, which wishes to cut off the connection with England, is disposed for war. This, however, is not, in *my opinion*, an evil. A temporary one it is: but, I can see no good that can arise to England from being the workshop for America, while we do not raise corn enough to feed ourselves.

But, Sir, there are consequences, which may be produced by a war with America, well calculated to make one think seriously on the event. Mr. JOEL BARLOW, who in the year 1792, went as a deputy from a Society of men in England to present a congratulatory Address to the National Convention of France, and who was, at that time, hunted down and proscribed like PAINÉ and many others, is now American Ambassador at the Court of Napoleon, where he has to negotiate with COUNT DARU, who, in that same year 1792, was in England, and was chased out of England along with MR. CHAUVELIN. These two men, who are old acquaintances, will not be long in coming to a clear understanding. They have both now an opportunity of repaying the kindness they received from England, and there can be little doubt of their having the disposition to do it.

By a hearty co-operation between America and France, fleets, and formidable fleets too, may be sent to sea much sooner than our overweening confidence will, perhaps, permit us to believe; and, if a force of forty ships of the line, with a suitable number of frigates, can be sent out from the ports of France and Holland, in the course of a year, there is no telling what may be the consequence to this kingdom. America has *more than a hundred thousand seamen*; she has facilities of all sorts for building ships; and, with the aid of France, would soon become truly formidable; because, we should not dare to send a merchant ship to any part of the world without a convoy. Americans would enter into the French naval service; those, who are now captains of merchantmen, would be tempted with the honour of commanding ships of war; they have, for the greater part, some particular cause of hatred against England, and would be animated by the double motive of ambition and revenge.

No man at all acquainted with American seamen will ever speak of them with contempt. They are universally allowed to be excellent seamen; active and daring, but not more so than they are skilful and cool. These are precisely the ingredients that the Emperor Napoleon stands in need of; and, what, then, Sir, shall be said of those English Ministers who shall force them into his hands!

A war with America would hasten the work of revolution in Mexico, and it would have the further effect of making that country, in its state of independence, start in hostility to us; because, between North and South America there would inevitably be a close connection. Indeed, Sir, this appears to me to be one of the great objects which America has, in now going to war. She sees that a revolution is taking place in South America; she sees, that, if that revolution be crushed, England, under

the character of *Protector of Spain*, will, in fact, govern South America, if for no other purpose, for that of keeping the mines out of the hands of France. That England should govern South America is what North America can never permit; therefore the latter must, by some means or other, assist the South Americans to secure their independence; and this assistance North America cannot give with effect, *unless she be at war with England*; for, as she has seen, in the case of the *Floridas*, the moment she makes a move towards the Spanish territory, England steps forward as the Protector of Ferdinand, and complains of her conduct.

If, therefore, the President of the United States has resolved upon doing all that he is able to promote and secure the independence of South America, he must also have resolved upon a war with England, which, in that case, is not to be avoided by a repeal of the Orders in Council, and an abandonment of our practice of impressing American seamen, unless we have the wisdom to declare beforehand, that we shall leave the South Americans wholly to themselves. This is the golden opportunity for the South Americans to assert their rights and to become free. Our war against Napoleon on the land disables us (if we were inclined to do it) from sending soldiers to support the old system; and our fleets are exceedingly well employed in preventing Napoleon from sending soldiers for that purpose; the government of Old Spain has neither troops nor ships; there are no Brunswickers or Hessians or Waldeckers or Anspachers to be hired by the government of Old Spain, as in the case of the war for independence in North America; and thus are the South Americans left to settle the dispute with their own colonial governments.

To this state of things the American President as appears from his Speech at the opening of the Session, has not been inattentive; and, it appears to me very clear, that we have here the real foundation of the sudden change of the tone of the American Government towards us. It may be asked, how these views of the United States comport with those of the Emperor of France; and whether *he* will approve of a separation of South America from Old Spain, of which he, with but too good reason, expects to be the master? In the first place, he has seen the result of a war against independence in North America, and the love of dominion must have bereft him of reason, if he fail to profit from so memorable a lesson. In the next place, he must see, that, unless New Spain become independent, it will become dependent upon England, he not having a sufficient maritime force to keep it in colonial subjection to himself against the will of England. And, even if he were to receive it in its colonial state, at a peace, he would only be entailing upon himself and his heirs the possession of a vulnerable point, exposed to the attack of England. These reasons are quite sufficient to induce him not to oppose any project for separating New from Old Spain, who, notwithstanding the independence of the countries containing the mines, would still be a great receptacle of the treasures thence derived.

But, when to these reasons are added the many weighty reasons for seeing America engaged in a war with England, there can be no doubt as to what will be his decision. Such a war would favour his views against us in so many ways that the bare enumeration would be tedious. It would lock up the troops that we have now in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Canada, and would demand new levies of militia and fencibles in

those provinces ; it would compel us to send a larger naval force to North America and the West Indies than is now there ; it would compel us to send convoys with every fleet of merchant vessels to the end of their voyage ; it would, of course, divide our fleets, and thereby weaken our strength in the European seas ; it would (as far as that is an evil) make it much more expensive and difficult to maintain our armies in Spain and Portugal ; it would greatly augment our expenses, and, at the same time, our danger.

If I were asked what ought to be done to prevent war with America, I should say, certainly, first repeal the Orders in Council ; but, I am far from supposing, that that measure alone would be sufficient. Indeed, it seems to me, that the impressment of American seamen must be abandoned ; and to this I would add a declaration, that England would not interfere in the affairs of Spanish South America. There would then be an end of the causes of ill-blood ; we should then have in America, not a *faction* for us, but we should have the whole nation for our friends. We should also have a friend in South America ; and, to these countries we might look with confidence for the means of forming a combination against the overwhelming power of France.

I am well aware, Sir, of the great obstacles to such an arrangement ; but, those obstacles it is in the power of your Royal Highness to remove. This country, which has so long been suffering, now looks *to you* for some mitigation, at least of its sufferings ; and I, therefore, trust, that the dawn of your authority will not be clouded with an additional war ; a war that will complete the round of English hostility to nations looked upon as free. It was a fatal day which saw the sword of England drawn against the republicans of France. What a lesson do the effects of that war hold out to your Royal Highness ! There is no man, be he who he may, who does not now dread the ultimate consequences. That that war might have been prevented all the world is now convinced ; and, if war should take place with America, the same opinion with respect to it, will hereafter prevail, but it will prevail, perhaps, when it will be useless. Princes, more than other men, are liable to be deceived, and it is too often a matter of great difficulty to undeceive them ; yet, of what vast importance it is that they should know the truth ! And how urgent a duty it is to convey it to their ear if one has the power ! The lives of thousands, and the happiness of millions depend upon the decision which your Royal Highness shall make with regard to this question of war or peace with America ; and, therefore, that you should weigh it well before you decide must be the anxious hope of every man who has a sincere regard for the fame and the safety of the country. I am, &c., &c.,

WM. COBBETT.

State Prison, Newgate, Feb. 13th, 1812.

TO THE PRINCE REGENT :

ON THE DISPUTE WITH THE AMERICAN STATES.

(*Political Register*, June, 1812.)

LETTER VI.

SIR,

Since I was imprisoned in this jail for writing and publishing an article on the *flogging of English Local Militiamen*, at the town of Ely, and on the employing of *German troops* upon that occasion, I have presumed to do myself the honour to address five Letters to your Royal Highness, relative to the dispute between this country and the United States of America. In the first three of these Letters, which were published in August and September last, I exerted my humble endeavours to draw the attention of your Royal Highness to the nature of that dispute; to caution you against the danger of suffering your ministers to urge us on to a war with America; to give you a true account of the feelings of the people of America upon the subject; and to prevail on you to cause the *Orders in Council to be rescinded*. I had, nine months before the date of these Letters, exhorted your ministers to adopt this measure, giving them what I deemed sufficient reasons for believing, that they would be *compelled* to adopt it at last; or, that they would have to justify themselves for plunging the country into a war with America.

What has now taken place in the House of Commons, in that same House which have, for so long a time, supported the ministers in their adherence to the Orders in Council, can hardly fail to have awakened in the mind of your Royal Highness a recollection of these my efforts, which, to the misfortune of the country, appear to have been despised by your late minister and his colleagues. Now, however, those great teachers, experience and adversity, seem to have commanded attention; and, in consequence of a motion of MR. BROUGHAM, at the close of an investigation brought forward by that gentleman, and conducted by him to the close, with spirit, perseverance, and ability which do him infinite honour, and which have received, as they merit, that highest of honours, the thanks and applause of all the sensible and public-spirited part of the nation; in consequence of this motion, made on the 16th instant, the ministry appear to have yielded rather than put the question to the vote, and to have agreed, that the Orders in Council, as far as objected to by America, should be annulled.

Here, then, Sir, is an occasion for you to pause and to reflect. And, the first thing to ask is, what *new* grounds present themselves for the annulling of these Orders. There are none. They stand upon precisely the same footing that they have stood on ever since the month of November, 1810, when your ministers were, by the American government, called upon to annul them in imitation of the revocation of the decrees of Berlin and Milan. I backed the application of the American minister; I told your ministers that the *sooner* they repealed the Orders the better;

I foresaw that war must, at last, be the consequence of their persisting in a refusal; I urged them to do what they ought to do of their own accord, and not to wait till they should be compelled to do it. But, Sir, your minister, that minister for whose *public services* we, the people of England, are now to pay 50,000*l.* down and 3,000*l.* per annum; that minister, to whose memory we are *now to erect a monument*; that minister persisted in his refusal, and tauntingly set America at defiance; the best, and, indeed, the only excuse, for which, is, to suppose him profoundly ignorant of the temper and the means of America, and of the interests of England in respect to her transatlantic connections.

America, whose government is very properly obliged to consult the wishes of the people at large, was slow in her movements towards measures of hostility. Like a truly wise man, the President not only used all the means in his power to avoid the extremity of war; but he also took care to prove to the world that he had done so. At last, however, the Congress began to make preparations for war, beginning with fully explaining to the people the grounds of their so doing. From one step they proceeded to another, and, at every step, their proceedings became more and more a subject of *mockery* with all those who, in England, take to themselves the exclusive appellation of *loyal men* and *friends of government*.

It was in this stage of the occurrences, on the 1st of February last, just after the arrival of the Report of the Committee of Foreign Relations to the Lower House of Congress, that I thought it my duty to address a *Fourth Letter* to your Royal Highness, the chief object of which was to exhort you not to believe the representations of the hired press, which was hard at work to inculcate a belief, that the Report in question, and that all the warlike steps taken by the Congress, were mere empty noise; mere boasting and bullying; that all would end in smoke, and that our ministers might adhere to their Orders in Council with perfect safety. I occupied no less than four pages in my earnest endeavours to impress upon the mind of your Royal Highness a distrust of this hired, this base, this prostituted press, which, while it was vilifying the President and the Congress, while it was calling them tools in the hands of France, was telling the people of England, that a war with America would be felt by them no more "than a war with the rocks of Scilly." Many were the prints that laboured to these ends; but the print pre-eminent in this as in almost every other imposition on the public, was the *Times*, the prostituted columns of which has, within these two years, done England more mischief than those of all the other prints put together.

What will be said by these prints now that they see the Orders in Council annulled even before America has struck a blow, is more a matter of curiosity than of concern; but, it must, with your Royal Highness, be a subject of deep sorrow and mortification to see your ministers now lowering their tone, taking a cowering attitude, without any new reason being afforded in the conduct of either France or America, and before the ink is hardly dry of that DECLARATION, wherein you were advised to proclaim to the whole world, that you would *not annul* the Orders in Council, till France had, by a distinct and solemn act made an *unqualified revocation* of her decrees. France, so far from doing this, has, in the most distinct manner, proclaimed the contrary; and yet our Orders are, or are to be annulled! After all the bold talk of your ministers; after all the pledges of perseverance that they have put in your mouth; after

all their contemptuous defiance of America; here we are doing the very act which we might have done nearly two years ago, and might thereby have prevented much of the misery, and all the melancholy consequences of that misery, in the central counties of England!

That we should be forced to adopt this measure, or to sustain a war with America, might have been foreseen, and ought to have been foreseen, by your ministers from the beginning. I am warranted in asserting this, because I foresaw and foretold it; but, so long ago as the month of January last, it became so evident to me, that I could not refrain from reiterating a positive assurance that it would and must be the case. At the time, to which I here refer, your minister, that minister to whose memory we are now to erect *a monument*, told the House of Commons, that America would be totally *ruined* if she persisted in her measures against England, and he, with a sort of supercilious benignity, observed, that he did not wish to see her "*destroyed*." I saw her affairs in a very different light, and, at that very moment, told the public, that what is now come to pass would come to pass. My words of the 18th of January were these:

"The Americans said, that the Orders *ought* to be repealed, and we refused to repeal them; and they now say, that we *shall* repeal them, or that we shall have them amongst our enemies. Now, then, shall we repeal them, or shall we not? Shall we, after all, give way? Shall we, after all our vaunts and all our threats, yield at the name of war? Shall we who can conquer thirty millions of people in five days, retract our determinations at the menace of eight millions? And, shall we do it, too, in consequence of a Manifesto, in which, according to the interpretation of the Times Newspaper, our Court is called a *corrupted Court*? Shall we yield, at last, upon terms like these? My opinion is, *that we shall*. Aye, hard as the thing may be to get down, my opinion is, that we shall swallow it.

"The wise-acres of the hired press say, that the Orders will be repealed, when Napoleon revokes the Decrees '*with the same formality that he employed in promulgating them*.' Here they foolishly make new disgrace for themselves; for he will, I dare say, do no such thing. The Americans say, that he *has* revoked them to their satisfaction. They will not call upon him to issue any proclamations or edicts. They are perfectly satisfied with what he has done; and, therefore, this new pretension is a very foolish thing; it is keeping just the ends of the horns projecting. When the wise men were at it, they would have done well to draw them in out of sight. *For, draw them in they must, or there is a war with America.*

"By-and-by I shall offer an observation or two upon the reasons the Americans have for going to war, and upon the probable consequences of such war, if it should take place. At present, I shall as to this point, only repeat my opinion that it will take place, unless the Orders in Council be repealed; and also my opinion, that these Orders will be repealed; and, that, too, without any of the saving conditions, of which the half-horned Courier is so silly as to talk. *It will mortify some people, but it will be done.* It will make those Jacobins and Levellers in America laugh, and Mr. Madison more, perhaps, than any body else; *but I say, it will be done.* Buonaparte will laugh too; *but it will be done*; and, perhaps, the least mortifying circumstance will not be, that *it is what I recommended fifteen months ago*. How much better would it have been, IF IT HAD BEEN DONE THEN! How much better in every respect; and especially how much better for our character! However, better late than never; only when it is done, I hope it will be done with *as good a grace as possible*, and that after that, the venal prints in London will never more foretel the downfall of Mr. Madison, and will see the folly of venting their spleen in words, against those who are beyond our reach; of showing the teeth where one cannot bite."

These passages, Sir, were published on the 18th of January last; so that it would seem, that, though shut up in one of "His Majesty's Jails,"

I knew what was doing in the world better than "his Majesty's Ministers" did. "How much better would it have been, if it had been done *then*!" These were my words five months ago, Sir; and therefore they apply with the more force now. "How much better would it have been, if it had been done *then*!" How much better would it have been, if *my* opinion had been acted upon; if my advice, so urgently and so respectfully tendered to your Royal Highness, had been followed! What national shame, what humiliation, what misery, what melancholy scenes would have been avoided! There, can, I think, be no doubt in the mind of your Royal Highness, that the troubles which we have witnessed in the manufacturing counties, have arisen chiefly from the want of employment amongst the manufacturers, which, lowering the wages at the same time that corn was rising in price, has, in the end produced all the scenes of misery, all the acts of violence, and the melancholy fate of so many of our countrymen. There can, I think, be no doubt, that the perseverance in the Orders in Council, and certain other parts of our maritime system connected with them, have been the chief cause of all these calamities; and, when we behold the sufferings of the people, as proved before the House of Commons; when we see the soldiers stationed to protect the judges in the courts of justice; when we see the soldiers employed (as is stated in the public prints) *to guard the sheriff and his officers* in the performance of their awful duty of executing the men at Chester; when we are now told of 38 men being just committed in a body to Lancaster-jail, out of which 8 persons have just been taken to be hanged, amongst which eight, one is stated to have been a woman, "Hannah Smith, for committing a *highway robbery*, by *STEALING POTATOES* at Bank Top, in the *town of Manchester*:" when we behold all these things, Sir, and scores of others that might be added to the list, and when we reflect, that they might *all have been prevented if my advice had been followed a year and a half ago*; when we thus reflect, and when we see that we have to pay 50,000*l.* down, and 3000*l.* to the family, and have further to be taxed to pay for a *monument* in honour of the minister who rejected this advice, what must be the feelings of the people?

Even in December last when the Corporation of the City of London, upon the motion of Mr. ALDERMAN WOOD, prayed your Royal Highness to take measures for "*re-opening the usual channels of intercourse with neutral nations*;" if, even then the Orders in Council had been annulled, the greater part of the calamities above-mentioned might have been prevented. But, your ministers, with the late Mr. Perceval at their head, advised your Royal Highness to reject this part of the prayer of the City of London, and to tell them, that "nothing should be wanting on your part to contribute towards the restoration of commercial intercourse between this country and other nations to the *footing on which it had been usually conducted even in the midst of war*." This, Sir, was only repeating what your ministers had before said; but, Sir, you have not been able to do this. You have not been able to make the Emperor of France relax in the smallest degree. His *Continental System* remains in full vigour; and so it will remain, even after our Orders shall have been completely done away. What, then, Sir, are we to think of the minister who advised you to give such an answer to the City of London? What are we to think of a *monument* to the memory of that minister?

There is yet one point, and it is a point of great interest, upon which I am anxious to address your Royal Highness; and that is, the *effect*

which the annulling of our Orders will produce in America. It has been said by the hired writers (who detest the Americans only because they are free) ; it has been said by these prostituted personages and their like elsewhere, that America will now demand other points to be conceded to her. I had the honour to state to your Royal Highness, in my *Fourth* Letter, that America had TWO subjects of complaint against us, upon both of which she must be satisfied, if we meant to have peace with her : namely, *The Orders in Council*, and *The Impressment of American Seamen*. The nature, the extent, and the grounds of the latter complaint was, in the Letter here referred to, fully stated ; and I then took occasion to endeavour to convince your Royal Highness, that this was what stuck closest to the hearts of the people of America ; and, in America, Sir, the feelings of the people are consulted, as they ought to be, upon all occasions.

If we look back to the Report of the Committee of Congress, of November last, we shall find, that the heaviest of its denunciations is levelled against our impressment of their seamen. After stating their grievances as growing out of the Orders in Council, they proceed to the subject of impressment, and say :

" Your Committee are not, however, of that sect whose worship is at the shrine of a calculating avarice. And while we are laying before you the just complaints of our merchants against the plunder of their ships and cargoes, we cannot refrain from presenting to the justice and humanity of our country the *unhappy case of our impressed seamen*. Although the groans of these victims of *barbarity* for the loss of (what should be dearer to the Americans than life) **THEIR LIBERTY** ; although the cries of their wives and children in the privation of protectors and parents, have of late, been drowned in the louder clamours at the loss of property : yet is the practice of forcing our mariners into the British navy, in violation of the rights of our flag, carried on with unabated rigour and severity. If it be our duty to encourage the fair and legitimate commerce of this country by protecting the property of the merchant, then indeed, *by as much as life and liberty are more estimable than ships and goods, so much more impressive is the duty to shield the persons of our seamen*, whose hard and honest services are employed, equally with those of the merchants, in advancing, under the mantle of its laws, the interests of their country."

These were the sentiments, expressed in that Report, which determined on war ; and, your Royal Highness may be assured, that up to these sentiments they are prepared to act. It was from this conviction, that, in the Fifth Letter, addressed to your Royal Highness, I said : " If I were asked what ought to be done to prevent war with America, I should say, certainly, first repeal the Orders in Council ; but, I am far from supposing, that that measure alone would be sufficient. Indeed, it seems to me, *that the Impressment of American seamen must be abandoned* ; and to this I would add a declaration, that England would not interfere in the affairs of Spanish South America*." I now, Sir, most earnestly repeat this advice. I implore you to resist the advice of those, who would fain make you believe, that we ought to persist in

* The following Bill, which, in all probability, has long ago become a law in America, will show in what light the Americans view the subject of our Impressment of their Seamen.

A Bill for the Protection, Recovery, and Indemnification of American Seamen.

The Preamble states, that His Britannic Majesty has caused to be impressed out of the ships of the United States, sailing on the high seas, under the American flag, divers liege citizens of said States, and hath compelled them to serve

these impressments. I implore your Royal Highness to reflect on the manifold miseries that may arise from this cause; and, to be pleased to bear in mind, that to yield hereafter, to yield upon force or menace, will be disgrace; whereas to yield now would indicate a sentiment of justice. How many nations have, from the indulgence of the pride and obstinacy of their rulers, been, at last, humbled in the dust! But this will never, I trust, be the lot of England under the sway of your Royal Highness. That nothing may be wanting on my part to prevent your Royal Highness from being deceived into the adoption of injurious measures with regard

on board the ships of war of Great Britain, and to fight against the United States, and that numbers of them are yet detained.

It is therefore enacted, that from and after the 4th day of June next, any person or persons who shall impress any native seaman of the United States, sailing on the high seas, or in any port, river, haven, basin, or bay, under pretence or colour of a commission from any foreign power, shall, for every such offence, be adjudged a pirate and felon, and on conviction, suffer death; and the trial in such case shall be had where the offender is apprehended or may be first brought.

That it shall be lawful for any seaman, sailing under the flag of the United States, or any person or persons attempting to impress him, to repel by force; and if any person so attempting to impress said seaman shall be killed, maimed, or wounded, such seaman, on the general issue, may give the special matter in evidence, which is hereby declared a perfect justification.

That on information being given to the President of the United States proving satisfactorily to him, that any citizen of the United States shall have been impressed, and shall be yet detained, or shall hereafter be impressed, to cause the most rigorous retaliation on any of the subjects of said Government taken on the high seas, or within the British territories, whom he is hereby authorized to cause to be taken and seized for that purpose, any treaty to the contrary notwithstanding.

That any seaman, heretofore or hereafter impressed, may attach, in the hands of any British subject, or in the hands of any debtor of any British subject, a sum equal to thirty dollars per month for the whole time he shall have been detained on board any British vessel or vessels.

That the President of the United States may capture, by way of reprisal, as many British subjects, on the high seas or within the British territories, as may be equal to the impressed American seamen in the possession of Great Britain, and by a cartel to exchange the same.

That the President, whenever sufficient testimony shall be produced, that the commander of any public armed vessel of any foreign nation shall have taken or impressed from on board any ship or other vessel of the United States, while at any port or place not within the jurisdiction of such foreign nation, or while on her passage to or from any port or place, any seaman, mariner, or other person not being in the military service of an enemy of such foreign nation, may prohibit by proclamation, every person residing within the United States or its territory, from affording aid, succour or provisions, of whatever kind, to such ship or vessel; and any pilot or other person, residing within the United States, who shall, after such prohibition shall have been made known, and before the same shall be revoked, afford aid, succour, or provisions, as aforesaid, to such ship or vessel, and be thereof convicted, shall be sentenced to be imprisoned not exceeding one year, and fined not exceeding one thousand dollars.

That from and after the 4th of June next, whenever full and sufficient testimony shall be produced, that the commanders of public armed vessels of any foreign nation, have impressed or taken from on board any ship or vessel within the jurisdiction of the United States, or while on her passage to or from any port or place, any seaman, mariner, or other person, the President may prohibit, by proclamation, the landing from on board any ship or other vessel of the foreign nation (whose commander or commanders have offended as aforesaid) any goods, ware, or merchandise within any of the ports of the United States or the territories of the United States.

The above Bill was read a first time by a majority of 83 to 28. On its third reading, it was re-committed to a Committee of the whole.

to the question of Impressment, I will, in my next, endeavour to lay before you a true and clear statement of the case, and will humbly offer you my opinion as to what ought to be done by our Government with respect to it. And I remain in the meanwhile, &c. &c. &c.

WM. COBBETT.

*State Prison, Newgate, Thursday,
18th June, 1812.*

TO THE PRINCE REGENT :

ON THE DISPUTE WITH THE AMERICAN STATES.

(*Political Register, August, 1812.*)

" I implore your Royal Highness to reflect on the manifold miseries that may arise from this cause, and to be pleased to bear in mind, that, to yield hereafter upon force or menace, will be disgrace; whereas to yield now would indicate a sentiment of justice."—*Letter to the Regent, Vol. XXI. Pol. Reg. p. 789.*

LETTER VII.

SIR,

If I have now to refer to the proofs of the correctness of those opinions which I addressed to your Royal Highness many months past, upon the subject of the Disputes with America, I beg you to be assured, that I do it not in the way of triumph, but in the hope, that even yet my advice, most respectfully offered to your Royal Highness, may have some weight with you, and may, in some small degree, tend to avert that last of national evils, a war with America, a war against the children of Englishmen, a war against the seat of political and religious freedom.

In my former Letters I took great pains to endeavour to induce your Royal Highness to distrust the statements in our public prints as to the power of the English party in the American States. I assured you, that the venal press in England was engaged in promulgating a series of deceptions with regard to the opinions of the people of America. I took the liberty to point out to your Royal Highness the mischiefs which must result from listening to the advice of those whose language might correspond with that of this press; and, in short, I showed, that, if the endeavours of that pernicious, partial, and corrupt press had their intended effect, war with America must be the consequence. By this press (the vilest instrument of the vilest corruption that ever existed in the whole world) the people of England were induced to approve of the measures which have now produced a war with America; or, at least, they were induced to wink at them. They were made to believe, that our measures of hostility against America were useful to us, and that the American Government had not the power to resent them by war. The same, I

doubt not, was told to your Royal Highness verbally ; but, how wretchedly have the nation and you been deceived !

The state of affairs between the two countries now stands thus : There exists a Dispute on the subject of our *Orders in Council*, on that of the *Impressment of American Seamen*, and on the *possession of the Floridas*. There are some other matters of inferior importance, but they would admit of easy arrangement. With regard to the Orders in Council, your Royal Highness was advised to issue, on the 21st of April last, a Declaration, stating that you would not repeal the Orders in Council, until France, officially and unconditionally, by some public promulgation, repealed her Berlin and Milan Decrees. France, so far from doing this, has, in the most public and solemn manner, declared, that she will never do what your Declaration required, though, at the same time, she has repeated (and she has done no more) what she had said to the American Government in 1810, and what was then communicated to our Government by the American Minister in London. Nevertheless, you were afterwards advised to repeal the Orders in Council, though the conditions of the Declaration before issued were not at all satisfied, but were, in fact, set at open defiance.

This repeal, which took place on the 23d of June last, was, however, too late in its adoption to prevent war. The American Government, who had been making their preparations for many months, and which preparations had been the subject of mockery with the venal press in England, declared war on the 18th of June last. The intelligence of this having been received in England, your Royal Highness was advised to issue, on the 31st of July, an Order in Council for an embargo on all American vessels in our ports, and also for capturing and detaining all American vessels at sea.

This is the state of affairs between the two countries ; and the main question now appears to be, whether, when the American Government hears of our repeal of the Orders in Council, they will revoke their declaration of war. This is a question of great interest at this moment ; and, I shall, therefore, proceed to lay before your Royal Highness my sentiments with respect to it.

The same sort of infatuation that has prevailed here, with regard to American affairs, for many months past, appears still to prevail. Indeed, Sir, I can call it no other than *insolence* ; an insolent contempt of the Americans, thought by those who hate them, and who would, if they could, kill them to the last man, in revenge for their having established a free government, where there are neither sinecures, jobs, or selling of seats. This insolence has induced people to talk of America as a country incapable of resenting anything that we might do to her ; as being a wretched state, unsupported by anything like vigour in government ; as a sort of horde of half-savages, with whom we might do what we pleased ; and, to the very last minute, the great mass of the people here ; ninety-nine out of every hundred, firmly believed, *that America would never go to war with us*. They left *provocations* quite out of the question. They appeared to have got into their heads a conclusion, that, let us do what we would to America, *she would not go to war with us*.

This way of thinking has pervaded the whole of the writings upon the subject of the Dispute with America. At every stage in the progress towards war, the corrupt press has asserted, that America *knew better* than to go to war with us. When she went so far as to pass Acts for

raising an army and equipping a fleet, and that, too, with the avowed intention of making war against us; still the hirelings told the people, that she dared not go to war, and that she only meant to *bully*. I could fill a large volume with assertions from the Times newspaper alone, that *we should not yield a tittle*, and that *America would not dare to go to war*. But, the fact is too notorious to dwell upon. There is no man, and especially your Royal Highness, who can have failed to observe the constant repetition of these assertions.

At last, however, *America has dared to go to war*, even against that great warrior George the Third, nearly three-fifths of whose reign has been occupied in wars, exclusive of the wars in India. He has been not only the greatest warrior, but the greatest *conqueror* of any European prince that ever lived. Napoleon is nothing to him as a conqueror; and yet the Americans have dared to declare war against him. But, even now, now that she has actually declared war, and that too, by an Act of Congress, by a law passed by *real* representatives of the people; by men elected by the free voice of the nation; by an unbribed, unbought, unsold, unenslaved assembly, not by a set of corrupt knaves whom the President can at any time twist about by means of the people's money; even now, when she has declared war in this solemn manner, the hireling newspapers in London would fain make us believe, that the whole thing is a mere make-belief; that it is a mere feint, and "will end in smoke." At the least, they tell us, that when the news of the repeal of our Orders in Council reaches America, there must be a *revocation of the declaration of war*. They seem to forget, that the declaration of war in America is an *Act of Congress*, and that to do away the effect of that Act, another Act must pass. They seem to forget, that it is *the people* who have declared war; and that the people must be consulted before that declaration can be annulled, or revoked. But, Sir, the fact is, that these writers talk miserable nonsense. We are *at war* with America; and, before we can have peace with her again, we must have a *treaty of peace*.

But, the main question for rational men to discuss is: "Will the repeal of our Orders in Council be sufficient to induce America to make peace with us, without including the redress of her other grievances?" This is the question that we have to discuss; it is a question in which hundreds of thousands are immediately interested; and it is a question which I think may be answered in the *negative*; that is to say, Sir, I give it as my opinion, that the repeal of our Orders in Council will not be sufficient to restore us to a state of peace with America, and, I now proceed respectfully to submit to your Royal Highness the reasons, upon which this opinion is founded.

In my last Letter (page 105) I had the honour to state to your Royal Highness, that there was another great point with America: namely, the *Impressment of American seamen*, which must be adjusted before harmony could be restored between the two countries; and, as you must have perceived, this subject of complaint stands at the head of Mr. Madison's statement of the grounds of war; it stands at the head of his manifesto against our Government. His own words will best speak his meaning:

"Without going beyond the renewal, in 1803, of the war in which Great Britain is engaged, and omitting unrepaired wrongs of inferior magnitude, the conduct of her Government presents a series of acts hostile to the United

"States as an independent and neutral nation.—British cruisers have been in the continued practice of violating the American flag on the great highway of nations, and of seizing and carrying off persons sailing under it, not in the exercise of a belligerent right, founded on the law of nations against an enemy, but of a municipal prerogative over British subjects. British jurisdiction is thus extended to neutral vessels in a situation where no laws can operate but the law of nations and the laws of the country to which the vessels belong; and a self-redress is assumed, which, if British subjects were wrongfully detained and alone concerned, is that substitution of force for a resort to the responsible Sovereign, which falls within the definition of war. Could the seizure of British subjects, in such cases, be regarded as within the exercise of a belligerent right, the acknowledged laws of war, which forbid an article of captured property to be adjudged without a regular investigation before a competent tribunal, would imperiously demand the fairest trial, where the sacred rights of persons were at issue. In place of such trial, these rights are subjected to the will of every petty commander.—The practice, hence, is so far from affecting British subjects alone, that under pretext of searching for these, thousands of American citizens, under the safeguard of public laws, and of their national flag, have been torn from their country, and from every thing dear to them,—have been dragged on board ships of war of a foreign nation, and exposed, under the severities of their discipline, to be exiled to the most distant and deadly climes, to risk their lives in the battles of their oppressors, and to be the melancholy instruments of taking away those of their own brethren.—Against this crying enormity, which Great Britain would be so prompt to avenge if committed against herself, the United States have in vain exhausted remonstrances and expostulations: and that no proof might be wanting of their conciliatory dispositions, and no pretext left for continuance of the practice, the British Government was formally assured of the readiness of the United States to enter into arrangements, such as could not be rejected, if the recovery of the British subjects were the real and the sole object. The communication passed without effect."

The grievance here complained of is certainly very great, and cannot be expected to be borne by any nation capable of resistance. If England were at peace and America at war, and if the latter were to assume the right of stopping our merchant vessels at sea, and taking out of them by force any men whom her officers might choose to consider as Americans, what should *we* say to the assumption? And, would not your Royal Highness be ashamed to exercise the Royal authority without the power instantly to punish such an affront to the dignity of the Crown and the honour of the country? But, *degrading* as this impressment is to the national character of the Americans, it cuts them still deeper by the real sufferings it inflicts; by the ruin which it occasions to thousands of families; and by the deaths which it produces in the course of every year. I have before stated that the number of impressed American seamen is very great, or, at least, has so been stated in America, amounting to many thousands, constantly in a state of the most terrible bondage to them; and, as some are daily dropping off, while others are impressed, the extent to which the evil has been felt in America must have been very great indeed, during so long a war.

Our corrupt newspapers, with the Times at their head, are endeavouring to misrepresent the nature of the complaint of America, and thereby to provide the Ministers beforehand with a justification for war rather than afford her redress. Upon the part of the President's manifesto above quoted, the Times makes these observations:

"She first complains of our impressing *British* seamen, when found on board American vessels: but this is a right which we now exercise under peculiar modifications and restrictions. We do not attempt to search *ships of war*, however inferior their force to ours: and as to searching merchantmen, we do not

"even do this, vaguely or indiscriminately; but upon *positive and accurate information*. And practically, we apprehend, that the *criminal concealment* on the part of America, is a much greater nuisance to us, than a wanton search on our part is to her. Let her, however, propose 'such arrangements' on this head, as are calculated to effect the recovery of British subjects, and she will find Great Britain far from averse to listen to her."

This, Sir, is a tissue of falsehoods and misrepresentations. The President does not complain that we impress *British seamen*: he complains, that, under pretence of taking British seamen, we take *American seamen*. This is what he complains of, which is precisely the contrary of what is here stated. As to our not taking men out of American ships of war, our Government knows well, that America has no ships of war worth speaking of, and that she has thousands of merchant ships. It is said here, that we do not search American merchantmen "vaguely and indiscriminately; but, upon *positive and accurate information*." One would suppose it impossible for any man, capable of writing a paragraph, to sit down coolly and state so perfect a falsehood as this. But herein we have an instance of the length to which the hirelings of the English press will go in supporting any thing which they are called on to support. It is a fact, and this writer knew it to be a fact, that any commander of any ship in our navy, when he meets an American merchantman at sea, does, or may, go or send on board of her, and that he does, or may, take out of her any persons, who, IN HIS OPINION, are British subjects. That this is a fact no one can deny; where then, is the "*positive and accurate information*?" It is also a fact, that the Americans have frequently asserted, that our officers have thus taken out of their ships at sea many thousands of American Citizens, under the pretence of their being British subjects. It is also a fact, which is proved by the books at our own Admiralty, that the American Government, through its Consul in London, has *obtained the release* from our fleet of a great number of American Citizens thus impressed, seized, and carried off upon the high seas. It is also a fact, proved by the same authority, that many of the Americans thus taken have lost their limbs in the compulsory service of England, a service which they abhorred. It is a fact that I take upon me to vouch for, that, amongst the American Citizens, thus captured and carried off, and forced into our service of late years, were *two grand nephews of General Washington*, and that one of the two was released from our service by the Lords of the Admiralty, in consequence of an application from the American Consul, while I was in prison for writing about the flogging of the Local Militia in the town of Ely, and about the employment of German troops upon that occasion.

And yet, Sir, in the face of all these facts, has the hired writer the audacity, the cool impudence, to assert, that we never search American vessels for seamen, "but upon *positive and accurate information*." With this instance of falsehood; of wilful, shameless falsehood, before them, one would imagine, that the public would never after be in danger of being deceived by the same writer; but, alas! Sir, the cunning slave who sells his pen for this purpose knows well, that the public, or, at least, that that part of the public whom he wishes to deceive will never, till it be too late, be able to detect him; he knows that his falsehood goes where the exposure seldom comes, and, if it come at all, he knows that its arrival will be too late to prevent the effect, to produce which is his object.

He next calls upon America to *propose her arrangement*, upon this subject; though in the very manifesto, upon which he is commenting, the President declares that an offer had been made to our Government to enter into an arrangement, but that "the communication passed without effect." It is going very far on the part of America to offer to enter into any arrangement upon the subject; for, why should not she say, as we certainly should say: "Take care of your own seamen; keep them from us in any way that you please; but, you shall, on the seas, take nobody out of our vessels." Nevertheless, she has offered to enter into arrangements, "such," she says, "as could not be rejected, if the recovery of *British Seamen* was the *sole object*;" and yet this writer accuses her of the *criminal concealment* of our seamen! We have rejected this offer of an arrangement for the prevention of British seamen from taking shelter in American ships; and, yet this writer accuses America of a desire to injure us by making our ships an asylum for British deserters!

Our Government say, that, if we do not exercise our power of searching American ships, and taking out our own seamen, our sea service will be ruined by the desertions to those American ships. For instance, a British ship of war is lying at Plymouth, and there are three or four American vessels in the same port. Numbers of the seamen get on board the American ships; they get out to sea; and, if they cannot be seized there, they go off safely to America or to any other part of the world, and are thus lost to our navy. There is no doubt, Sir, but this might become a very serious evil, if not counteracted. But, are the Americans to suffer because (for whatever reason) our sailors desert? And, above all, are real American citizens to be exposed to impressment, to be sent to be shot at, to be conveyed to the West or East Indies, to be made to end their days under the discipline of an English man of war; are real American citizens to be exposed to all this because British seamen desert, and because that desertion (a very serious crime) may become extremely dangerous to us? I am sure your Royal Highness is too just to answer this question in the affirmative.

The case must be new, because the relative situation of the two countries is a novelty in the history of nations; but, while we have an undoubted right to recover our own seamen, if we can do it without violating the rights of other nations, we can have no right in any case, to seize American citizens. America says, "I do not want your seamen. I would rather not have them. Keep them by what means you please. Take them wherever you can find them in my ships; but, before you do it, produce *proof of their being yours*, and that, too, before a *competent tribunal*." Nothing can be fairer than this; but this necessarily sets aside all impressments *at sea*, where there can be *no proof given*, because there can be no tribunal or umpire, to decide upon the proof; and we contend, that, without the power of impressing *at sea*, our navy would be greatly injured by desertion, and our strength thereby materially weakened.

This is the point upon which we are at issue with America. Supposing the Orders in Council to remain repealed, and the Dispute as to that matter to be settled, this is the point upon which, if not settled amicably, we shall have war with the American States. It is the point upon which *the people* of America, who are *something*, are more sore; and I am convinced that it is a point which they will not give up. They say and they

truly say, that it is a mockery for them to talk of their freedom and their independence, if the very bodies of their citizens are liable to be taken upon the high seas, and forced into the service of a foreign sovereign, there to be treated according to the rules and regulations of that sovereign. A people submitting to this cannot be called free, and their country cannot be called independent. Therefore, when the time comes for entering on a treaty of peace with America, I hope your Royal Highness will resist all advice tending to a pertinacious adherence to the exercise of the power of impressment; for while that power is exercised, we shall, in my opinion, never have real peace with America.

The other point in dispute, namely the *possession of the Floridas*, or, at least, that part of them which belongs to Spain, is of inferior importance; but, I am of opinion that that point will not be easily overcome, unless we are prepared to give it up. America sees the possibility of Old Spain becoming a mere puppet in the hands of England, and she sees the almost *certainly* of its becoming a dependent upon either England or France; and, she wants neither France nor England for *so near a neighbour*. She has, in the adventures of *Captain Henry*, seen the danger of having a neighbour on her northern flank; and, the Floridas are not divided from her by immense deserts and lakes as Canada is. While the Floridas were held by the sleepy old government of Spain, America saw little danger; but, she will not, I am convinced, suffer either England or France to be mistress of those provinces.

This is a point, therefore, which, in my opinion, we should be *forward* in giving up, and not get into a war with America *for the sake of Ferdinand*, as we are continuing the war with France for his sake. The revolutions going on in South America it is the interest of the United States to encourage and assist to the utmost of their power; and I should advise your Royal Highness to show an earnest desire to avoid interference therein; for if, upon the ground of supporting the authority of Ferdinand, or, upon any other ground, you show a disposition to take part against the republicans of South America, that alone will be sufficient greatly to retard, if not wholly defeat, all attempts at an accommodation with America. Nay, Sir, to speak freely my sentiments, I do not expect peace with America while we have an army in Spain, or, at least, while there is the smallest chance of our obtaining a settled ascendancy in that kingdom; and I really think, that every mile of progress that we are making there puts peace with America at a greater distance. We, in this country, or, the greater part of us, see no danger in the increase of any power, except the power of Napoleon, whose territories half envelop our coast, and whose armies are but at the distance of a few hours' sail. Not so the Americans. They see danger in the increase of *our* power, ours being that sort of power by which they are most annoyed. If they had their choice between us and France for a neighbour in South America, they would not hesitate a moment in preferring France; because her power is not of that sort which would be formidable to America. What she would wish, however, is to see South America independent of Old Spain, and, of course, of the masters of Old Spain; and she is not so blind as not to perceive, that the contest in Old Spain now is, who shall have it under her control, England or France.

For these reasons every victory that we gain in Spain will be an additional obstacle to peace with America, unless we set out by a frank and

clear declaration, leaving South America to itself and the Floridas to the United States.

Before I conclude, I beg leave to notice that part of the speech, recently delivered by your Royal Highness's order to the two Houses of Parliament, wherein mention is made of the dispute with America. The part I allude to is this: "His Royal Highness has commanded us to assure you that he views with most sincere regret, the hostile measures which have been recently adopted by the Government of the United States of America towards this country. His Royal Highness is nevertheless willing to hope, that the accustomed relations of peace and amity between the two countries may yet be restored; but if his expectations in this respect should be disappointed, by the conduct of the Government of the United States, or by their *perseverance in any unwarrantable pretensions*, he will most fully rely on the support of every class of His Majesty's subjects, in a contest in which the *honour of his Majesty's Crown*, and the *best interests of his dominions*, must be involved."

This part of the speech has been thought, and with reason, to augur war; for, I am not aware of "*any pretension*" of America that she will not "*persevere*" in. If pretensions to be put forward, to be now originated, had been spoken of, there might have been more room for doubt; but, in speaking of pretensions to be *persevered* in, the speech necessarily refers to pretensions *already put forward*; and, I repeat, Sir, that I do not know of any pretension that America has put forward, in which I do not believe she will persevere, to do which the conduct of your Royal Highness's ministers is eminently calculated to give her encouragement.

As to support from the people of England in a war against America, your Royal Highness, will certainly have it, if the grounds of the war be *clearly just*; but it would be very difficult for your ministers to make the people perceive, or believe, that the impressment of American seamen, anywhere, and especially in the very ships of America, was necessary "to the honour of his Majesty's Crown, and involved the best interests of his dominions." The people have now seen all the predictions of the hiringling prints, with regard to America, falsified; they have been told, that America could not support herself for a year without England, and they have seen her do it for a year and a half, and at the end of that time declare war. They are not now to be persuaded that this government can do what it pleases with America.

It has been stated, with an air of triumph, by the partisans of your ministers, that the *Opposition* are pledged to support a war against America, unless she is satisfied with the repeal of the Orders in Council. But, *the people*, Sir, have given no such pledge; the manufacturers have given no such pledge; and the war will not be a jot the more popular on account of its having the support of that set of men who are called *the Opposition*, and for whom the people have no respect any more than they have for their opponents. The Orders in Council were a grievance to America, but not a greater grievance than the imprisonment and captivity of her citizens; not a greater grievance than to see her citizens dragged by force into a service which they abhor, on so many accounts, however pleasant and honourable it may be to our own countrymen. This grievance was known to exist; and, therefore, if the *Opposition* have given a pledge to support a war against America, unless she be satisfied with the

repeal of the Orders in Council alone, they have given a pledge to do that in which they will not have the support of the people.

I am one of those, Sir, who do not regard a great extension of trade as a benefit; but, those who do must lay their account with seeing much of our trade destroyed *for ever* by a war with America. Three or four years of war would compel her to become a manufacturing country to such an extent as never more to stand in need of English goods; so that, if your Royal Highness's ministers do insist upon exercising the power of seizing people on board of American ships at sea, those persons who manufacture goods for America must seek another market, for that is closed against them for ever.

For many years, Sir, there has existed in this country, a faction perfectly desperate in their HATRED OF FREEDOM. They not only hate all free nations, but, they hate the very sound of the word freedom. I am well satisfied that persons of this description would gladly hear of the murder of every soul in America. There is nothing that they hate so much as a man who is not a slave, and who lives out of the reach of arbitrary power. These persons will be sorely grieved to see peace preserved between the two countries on terms honourable to America; but, I am, for my part, ready to confess, that with me it will be a subject of joy; I am ready to declare, that I see less reason than ever for an Englishman's wishing to see the people of America humbled or borne down; and that it will grieve me exceedingly to reflect that England is taxed, and that English blood is shed for the purpose of enforcing the power to impress American seamen; but this mortification I shall, I trust, be spared by the humanity and wisdom of your Royal Highness. I am, &c. &c.

WM. COBBETT.

Bolley, Tuesday, 4th August, 1812.

TO THE PRINCE REGENT:

ON THE DISPUTE WITH THE AMERICAN STATES.

(Political Register, Sept. 1812.)

"If I were asked what ought to be done to prevent war with America, I should say: first repeal the Orders in Council; but, I am far from supposing, that that measure alone would be sufficient. Indeed, it seems to me, that the impressment of American seamen must be abandoned."—*Pol. Register*, Vol. XXI. p. 200. *Feb. 15, 1812.*

LETTER VIII.

SIR,

During the time that I was imprisoned for two years in Newgate for writing about the flogging of the Local Militia, in the town of Ely, and about the employment of German Troops upon that occasion, I addressed to your Royal Highness several Letters, the object of which was to pre-

vent this country from being plunged into war with America. I took great pleasure in offering to you advice, which I thought would be beneficial to my country; and, of course, I have experienced great sorrow at seeing that that advice has not been followed, and that, in consequence of its rejection, we are now actually in a state of war with our brethren across the Atlantic.

Those corrupters and blinders of the people, the hired writers, do yet attempt to make their readers believe, that we are not at war with the Republic of America. They it is, who have hastened, if not actually produced this war; for, they it was, who reviled the American President, and who caused it to be believed here, that he and the Congress *dared not go to war*. What pains, alas! have I taken to convince your Royal Highness of the folly and falsehood of these opinions! Though my mind was busied with the means of raising the thousand pounds fine to pay TO THE KING (and which you have received from me in his behalf), I let slip no occasion to caution you against believing these representations. I told you (and you might as well have believed me), that the *American people were something*; that *they* had a say in the measures of government; that they would not suffer themselves to be plunged into war for the gain of a set of lazy and rapacious fellows; but that, if their country's good demanded it, they would go to war; and that such war would, in all probability, be very calamitous to England.

While I was telling you this, your late minister, Perceval, was laughing at the idea of America going to war; and his opinion was upheld by all the venal scribes in the kingdom; that is to say, by nineteen-twentieths, perhaps, of all those who write in newspapers, and other political works. That we really *are at war* with America, however, the following document clearly proves. The American Congress declared war in due form; they passed an Act making war against your Royal Sire and his people; their government issued Letters of Marque and Reprisals; but, still our hirelings said that there was *no war*. The following proclamation, however, issued by an American General from his head-quarters in Canada, which province he has invaded, puts the fact of war beyond all doubt:

" By William Hull, Brigadier-General and Commander-in-Chief of the North-Western Army of the United States.

" A PROCLAMATION.

" Inhabitants of Canada!—After thirty years of peace and prosperity, the United States have been driven to arms. The injuries and aggressions, the insults and indignities of Great Britain, have once more left them no alternative but manly resistance or unconditional submission.—The army under my command has invaded your country, and the standard of Union now waves over the territory of Canada. To the peaceable, unoffending inhabitants, it brings neither danger nor difficulty. I come to find enemies, not to make them. I come to protect, not to injure them.

" Separated by an immense ocean and an extensive wilderness from Great Britain, you have no participation in her councils, no interests in her conduct; you have felt her tyranny, you have seen her injustice; but I do not ask you to avenge the one or redress the other. The United States are sufficiently powerful to afford every security consistent with their rights and your expectations. I tender you the invaluable blessings of civil, political, and religious liberty, and their necessary result, individual and general prosperity. That liberty which gave decision to our councils, and energy to our conduct, in a struggle for independence, and which conducted us safely and

" triumphantly through the stormy period of the revolution—that liberty which has raised us to an elevated rank among the nations of the world; and which afforded us a greater measure of peace and security, of wealth and improvement, than ever fell to the lot of any country.

" In the name of my country, and by the authority of Government, I promise you protection to your persons, property, and rights. Remain at your homes—pursue your peaceful and customary avocations—raise not your hands against your brethren. Many of your fathers fought for the freedom and independence we now enjoy. Being children, therefore, of the same family with us, and heirs to the same heritage, the arrival of an army of friends must be hailed by you with a cordial welcome; you will be emancipated from tyranny and oppression, and restored to the dignified station of free men.

" Had I any doubt of eventual success, I might ask your assistance, but I do not. I come prepared for every contingency—I have a force which will look down all opposition, and that force is but the van-guard of a much greater. If, contrary to your own interests, and the just expectation of my country, you should take part in the approaching contest, you will be considered and treated as enemies, and the horrors and calamities of war will stalk before you. If the barbarous and savage policy of Great Britain be pursued, and the savages let loose to murder our citizens and butcher our women and children, this war will be a war of extermination. The first stroke of the tomahawk, the first attempt with the scalping-knife will be the signal of one indiscriminate scene of desolation. No white man found fighting by the side of an Indian will be taken prisoner; instant destruction will be his lot. If the dictates of reason, duty, justice, and humanity, cannot prevent the employment of a force which respects no rights, and knows no wrong, it will be prevented by a severe and relentless system of retaliation. I doubt not your courage and firmness—I will not doubt your attachment to liberty. If you tender your services voluntarily, they will be accepted readily. The United States offer you peace, liberty, and security; your choice lies between these and war—slavery and destruction. Choose, then, but choose wisely; and may He who knows the justice of our cause, and who holds in His hand the fate of nations, guide you to a result the most compatible with your rights and interests, your peace and happiness.

" By the General, A. P. HULL, Capt. the 13th United States' Regiment of Infantry and Aid-de-Camp.

" *Head-quarters, Sandwich, July 12, 1812.*"

He, Sir, who will not believe in this, would not believe though one were to rise from the dead. This is an animating address, and, it is, at least, possible that it may prove the fore-runner of the fall of Canada, which, when once gone, will never, I believe, return to the English Crown.

The fact of war being now ascertained beyond all doubt, the next thing for us to think of is, the means by which we are to obtain peace with this new and most formidable enemy. The hired writers, unable any longer to keep from their readers the fact that war has taken place, are now affecting to treat the matter *lightly*; to make the people of England believe, that the Americans will be driven out of Canada; that the people of America hate the war; and that, at any rate, the Congress will be obliged to put an end to the war when the intelligence of the repeal of our Orders in Council shall arrive at the seat of the American government.

These being the assertions now most in vogue and most generally listened to, I will give your Royal Highness my reasons for disbelieving them.

FIRST, as to the probability of the Americans being baffled in their designs upon Canada, if the contest was a contest of *man to man*, upon ground wholly neutral, I should say, that the advantage might be on our side; but, I am not sure that it would; for, the Americans have

given repeated proofs of their courage. They are, indeed, known to be as brave as any people in the world. They are, too, volunteers, *real* volunteers, in the service they are now upon. The American army does not consist of a set of poor creatures, whom misery and vice have made soldiers; it does not consist of the off-casts and out-casts of the country. It consists of a band of freemen, who understand things, and who are ready to fight for what they understand; and not of a set of half-cripples; of creatures that require to be trussed up in order to prevent them from falling to pieces. It is the youth; the strong, the active, the hardy, the sound youth of America whom our army in Canada have to face; and, though I do not say, that the latter will be unable to resist them, yet I must say, that I *fear* they will not, when I consider, that the Americans can, with ease, pour in a force of *forty or fifty thousand men*, and when I hear it stated, that we have not above fourteen or fifteen thousand men in Canada, exclusive of the Militia, upon whom I do not know what degree of reliance is to be placed. After all, however, the question of success in the invasion of Canada, will, as in the cases of France and Holland, depend wholly upon *the people* of Canada. If they have reason to fight for their present government; if they be convinced, that a change of government would *make their lot worse*, they will, of course, rise and fight against the invaders, and then our commander may safely set General Hull at defiance; but, if the people of Canada should have been inveigled to believe, that a change of government would be for their benefit, I must confess that I should greatly doubt in our power of resistance. It will be quite useless for us to reproach the people of Canada with their want of zeal in defence of their country. We have reproached the Dutch, and the Italians, and the Hanoverians for the like; but, Sir, it answers no purpose. Such reproaches do not tend to drive out the invaders; nor do they tend to deter other nations from following the example of the invaded party. What a *whole nation* wills must, sooner or later, take place.

As to the second assertion, that the people of America hate the war, I must say, that I have seen no proof of such hatred. The Americans, being a reflecting people and a people resolutely bent upon preserving their freedom, have a *general* hatred of war, as being, generally speaking, hostile to that freedom. But, in the choice of evils, if war should appear the least evil, they will not fail to take it; and, indeed, they *have taken it*; for, in America, it is really the people who declare war; the Congress is the *real* representative of the people; there are no sham elections; no buyings and sellings of votes and of false oaths; but the members are the unbought, uncorrupted, unenslaved agents of the people, and, if they cease to speak the sentiments of those who elect them, they are put out of the Congress at the end of a very few months. It is, therefore, not only false, but stupid, to affect to believe that the war is *unpopular*, and that the *government* is odious in the eyes of the people. The whole of the government is of the people. All its members are chosen by them; and, if it ceased to please them, it would soon cease to exist. Nothing, therefore, can be so absurd as to suppose that a measure so important as that of war has been adopted *against the will of the people*.

This opinion has been attempted to be sustained upon the evidence of a riot at Baltimore, the object of which was the silencing of a newspaper, and the end of which was bloodshed on both sides. But, from this fact

the exactly contrary conclusion ought to be drawn. The newspaper in question was, it appears, *hostile to the war*; and, therefore, a riot, in order to silence such paper, cannot be considered as a proof of *unpopularity* attached to the war. The truth appears to have been, that the editor of the paper was pretty notorious as being bribed to put forth what gave so much offence to the people, who were, upon this particular occasion, unable to imitate the tolerant conduct of their government. It was, however, very wrong to assail the corrupt tool by force. He should have been left to himself; for, though this species of attack upon the liberty of the press is far less injurious to that liberty than the base attacks, dictated by despotism, and masked under the vizard of forms dear to freedom; still it is an *attack*; it is answering statements or arguments by violence; by something other than statement and argument. Therefore, I disapprove of the attack; but I cannot consider it as a mark of the unpopularity of the war, of the precise contrary of which it is, indeed, a very bad proof.

Much having, in our hired newspapers, been said of this riot; it having been represented as a proof of bad government in America, and (which is more to my present purpose) as a sign of *approaching anarchy*, tending to the overthrow of that government which has declared war against us, I must trespass a little further upon this head, to beg your Royal Highness to believe nothing that the hired men say upon the subject. When the war with France began in 1793; that war which appears not to promise any end; when that war began, many riots took place in England against those who were opposed to the war; many houses were destroyed; many printing-offices demolished; many booksellers put to flight; many men were totally ruined, and that, too, by mobs marching and burning and killing under banners on which were inscribed "CHURCH AND KING." Now, as there was not a general anarchy to follow these things in England, I beg your Royal Highness not to be persuaded to believe, that anarchy will follow the demolishing of a printing-office in the United States of America, where there are more newspapers than there are in all Europe, this country included. Once more, however, I express my disapprobation, and even my abhorrence, of that demolition; which was the less excusable, as the assailants had freedom, *real* freedom of the press, to answer any thing which the bribed printer might publish, and even to publish an account of his bribery. Such, however, appears to have been the popular feeling *in favour of the war*, that no consideration was of sufficient weight to restrain the resentment of the people against a man who was daily declaiming against that measure.

If we conclude, as I think, we must, that the people of America were in favour of the war at the time when it was declared, the next thing to be considered is, what effect the intelligence of the repeal of our Orders in Council will have in America. The question is, in short, whether that intelligence will make such a change in the sentiments of the people of America *as to produce peace*. I think it will not. There are some persons in England who seem to believe, that the receipt of that intelligence will, at once, put an end to the war; for, they do not appear to consider any *treaty* necessary to the restoration of peace with America.

Not only must there be a *negotiation* and a *treaty*, or *convention*, before there can be peace, or even a suspension of arms; but, I am of opinion, that no such treaty or convention will be made without more being

done by us than *merely the repealing of our Orders in Council*, which removes but a part, and not, by any means, the greatest part, of the grievances of which the Americans complain. So long ago as the month of February last, as will be seen by my motto, I expressed to your Royal Highness my opinion, that the mere repeal of the Orders in Council would not satisfy the people of America. It was, therefore, with no small degree of surprise, that I saw (from the reports in the newspapers), that Mr. Brougham had *pledged himself to support the ministers in a war against America, if she should not be satisfied with their measure of repeal*. I was surprised at this, because Mr. Brougham must have seen, that she complained of the *impressment of her seamen*, and of divers other things, which she deemed to be injuries. Besides, did Mr. Brougham imagine, that our two years' nearly of refusal to repeal were to go off without any thing done by us in the way of compensation? The history of the transaction is this; The American President announces in 1810, that, unless we repeal our Orders by a certain day, in the same way that France had done, a certain law shall go into force against us. We do not comply: we continue in what he calls a violation of his country's rights for a year and a half after the time appointed for repealing; at the end of that time an inquiry takes place in Parliament, and two volumes are published, containing evidence of the ruinous consequences to us of the measure which America has adopted. *Thereupon we repeal*. But, Sir, Mr. Brougham can hardly want to be told, that America has made *no promise to be satisfied* with any repeal which should take place *after* her act should go into effect. Indeed, she has never made any such promise; nor was it to be supposed, that, when she saw that her measure of exclusion was ruining us, she would be content with our merely doing that which was calculated to *save ourselves*. This, in fact, is our language to her: we refused to repeal our Orders till we found that the not repealing of them was injurious *to ourselves*, and, therefore, we now repeal them, and, in consequence, call upon you *to act as if we had never refused*.

This, Sir, is what no nation can be supposed to listen to. We do what America deems an injury; we do what she says is sufficient to justify her in declaring war against us. And, after awhile, we desist; but notoriously because proof has been produced that perseverance is *injurious to ourselves*. In the meanwhile she declares war to compel us to do that which we have done before we hear of her declaration. And, under these circumstances, can we expect her to disarm, until she has obtained something like *indemnification* for the injuries which she alleges she has sustained? If there were in existence no ground of dispute other than that of the Orders in Council, it appears to me, that America could (especially with our parliamentary evidence before her) never think of peace without a *compensation for the vessels seized* illegally, as she says, under the Orders in Council. Otherwise she tells the world, that she may be always injured with impunity; because, the utmost that any nation has to apprehend from her hostility is to be compelled to *cease* to violate her rights. Upon this principle she may be exposed to a like attack the next day after she has made peace. Either, therefore, she complains without cause; or, the mere repeal of our Orders in Council ought not to satisfy her.

Besides, Sir, it appears to me, that even supposing that there were no other ground for the war, on her part, than the existence of our Orders in Council, she is bound, in fairness towards the Emperor Napoleon, to

obtain some kind of compensation for what she has suffered from the execution of our Orders in Council after the time that he repealed his decrees. If she make peace with us, and place us upon the same footing with France, without obtaining such compensation, he will assuredly allege partiality against her, since she will have suffered us to continue to do with impunity, for a year and a half, that which she made him cease to do. It was, therefore, I repeat it, matter of great surprise with me, that Mr. Brougham should have given the pledge above-mentioned; though I hope your Royal Highness will be advised better than to pursue measures that shall put him to the test.

Compensation for the property seized under our Orders in Council will, I think, be demanded; and, if the Orders be recognized as a violation of the rights of America, I do not see upon what ground such compensation could be objected to; but, Sir, as far as relates to ourselves, I trust, that the means of making such compensation would not be demanded of *the people*, but would be taken from those who have received the amount of the property seized. With this, however, America has nothing to do: she can only demand compensation; but, she may extend that demand to the amount of her expenses in fitting out ships of war and in raising and sending forth an army. "*Indemnity for the past and security for the future*" is, Sir, a phrase not unknown amongst the statesmen who adorn, and who have adorned you and your royal Sire's court; and, I do not know of any maxim in public law, or in diplomacy, that forbids a republic any more than a monarchy to make such a demand. If we do allow that America has just cause of complaint, we cannot well refuse her indemnity at least; if we do not allow that she has just cause of complaint, we do wrong, we act a base and cowardly part, if we desist from doing that which she complains of.

Upon what ground it is, then, that Mr. Brougham expects an immediate cessation of hostilities on the part of America I am at a loss to discover. I am at a loss to discover upon what ground it is that he has made his pledge, or, at least, the pledge which has been attributed to him. Either he must look upon the Orders in Council as the sole ground of the American declaration of war, or he must suppose there to be other grounds. If he looks upon them as the sole ground, he must, I think, suppose that America will not lay down her arms without obtaining indemnity for such heavy losses as those Orders have occasioned her; and, if he looks upon the declaration as having been partly produced by *other subjects* of complaint, he must necessarily suppose, that an adjustment as to those grounds of complaint must precede a cessation of hostilities.

Whatever pledges may have been given by any persons, it is for your Royal Highness to lend an ear to the voice of reason; and, I am greatly deceived if that voice will not recommend to you an expression, as speedily as possible, of your readiness to cause the officers of the fleet to cease to impress any persons out of American ships. This, as I have before had the honour to assure your Royal Highness, is the complaint which has, at last, in reality produced the war between us and our American brethren. There have been many subjects of difference; many grounds of quarrel, but this is what finds its way to the hearts of the American people. They would I verily believe, have endured all but this; this, however, I knew they would not endure, and I told your ministers and the public so long ago. If I am asked whether I think, that the ceasing to impress people on board of American ships would cause many of our sailors to desert, I answer, that *I do not know*: but, that I do not see *why it should*!

I do not see why Englishmen should like the American service better than our own. And, really, I must say, Sir, that I think, that to entertain any such apprehension squares not well with the tenor of our national songs about the valour and patriotism of our "*tars*." I think it exceedingly humiliating to us to suffer it to be said, or to act as if we said, that we must retain the power of impressment, or personal seizure, on board American ships out at sea, for fear the giving up of that power should cause our fleet to be deserted. Sir, I am one of those who love to believe, that English seamen do not want *force* to induce them to fight for their country. It is, in my eyes, a most mortifying thing to proclaim to the world, that we are likely to have war with America, and that we appear to prefer war with America, to the giving up of the means of detecting and seizing English sailors, deserters from the King's service. This so badly comports with all our assertions respecting the *freedom* we enjoy, and also respecting our devotion to our King and our glorious constitution; for, it appears to me, that, if the world believe in the *necessity* of this power of impressment, it must think either that our boastings of our blessed state are untrue, or, that our sailors are not the most wise or the most loyal set of men. I am for wiping off this stigma, and without crying or fainting away, as Sir Vicary Gibbs is reported to have done at Horsemonger-lane, I am for showing the Yankees and the whole world, that we want no terror to keep our seamen to their duty; that we are not afraid of their skulking from our fleet to take refuge in American ships; that we entertain not the disgraceful apprehension, that those who have once had the honour to sail under the *royal flag* of the House of Hanover will ever prefer that of the American or any other *republic*.

Honour, Sir, as well as policy seem to me to dictate the giving up of this power; and, as the giving of it up might, and, as I think, would cause the restoration of peace between England and America, I will not be persuaded that such a measure does not accord with the wishes of your Royal Highness.

As to "*the exhausting of the resources of America*," which now begins to be talked of by that most corrupt of newspapers, the *Times*, I do most earnestly beseech your Royal Highness to bear in mind how long the late *PITT* promised this deluded nation that he would *exhaust the resources of republican France*! Sir, Mr. Madison, though a very plain-dressed, sleek-headed man; though he wears neither tails, nor bags, nor big wigs, nor robes; though he dresses in a pepper-and-salt coat, and a nice dimity waistcoat, knows a great deal more of our real situation than I believe many of your ministers know of it; and, I should not wonder if he knew almost as much of it as your Royal Highness's self does. He is a man, Sir, who is not to be led by our hireling prints; he sees our gold at above *five pounds an ounce*; he has seen acts passed which, in effect, force the circulation of our Bank-notes; and, seeing this, he does not want any body to tell him what is coming; seeing this he will laugh at the idea of our exhausting the resources of America, the capital of whose whole debt does not amount to a tenth part of one half year's interest upon our debt. This ground of hope is, Sir, more visionary than any other. Indeed, they are all equally visionary. There is no hope of any thing but loss and injury to us by a war with America.

I have now done all that I am able to prevent this calamity. If the war proceed, I shall say as little about it as circumstances will permit.

I have lost no occasion of endeavouring to put aside this evil; and, when the result of the contest shall be lamented; when those who now rejoice at the idea of doing mischief to free men, shall be weeping over their folly, I trust that your Royal Highness will have the justice to remember, that this war had always a decided opponent in your faithful servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Bolley, 15th September, 1812.

TO THE PRINCE REGENT:
ON THE DISPUTE WITH THE AMERICAN STATES.
(*Political Register*, September, 1812.)

"I implore your Royal Highness to resist the advice of those, who would fain make you believe, that we ought to insist upon these impressions. I implore your Royal Highness to reflect on the manifold miseries that may arise from this cause; and to be pleased to bear in mind, that, to yield *hereafter*, to yield upon force or menace, will be *disgrace*: whereas, to yield *now*, would indicate a sentiment of *justice*."—POL. REGISTER, 20th June, 1812. Vol. XXI. p. 789.

LETTER IX.

SIR,

When I closed the eighth Letter to your Royal Highness upon this subject, it was my intention to forbear any further remonstrance with you thereon, and to leave *time* to be the teacher. But, the intelligence, arrived from America since the date of that Letter, has made me depart from that intention, and has induced me to make one more effort to convince you, that, without further measures in the way of conciliation, peace with America is not likely to be restored.

The very day on which my last Letter was printing (Friday last), was marked by the promulgation of tidings from America, that the Congress had *revoked the declaration of war*, and that the American General in Canada had *entered into an Armistice* for 30 days; and that both these had taken place in consequence of the revocation of our Orders in Council. A few hours were sufficient to dissipate these falsehoods, fabricated, no doubt, for the purpose of deceiving the people of this "most thinking" country. The deception would last, in all human probability, for only a few days; but at the end of those days, a new falsehood would be invented, and the old one lost in that. This falsehood, however, does not appear to have lived even 48 hours; for, the very next day after its promulgation brought forth the contradiction; brought forth the complete proof of a fabrication. Surely, Sir, the people of America must despise us! They must despise, or, at least, pity, a nation who are made the sport of such vile literary impostors; base hirelings, who prostitute the press to all the purposes hostile to truth and freedom.

The authentic intelligence received from America appears to be, in substance, this: that the American Government has received intelligence of the repeal of our Orders in Council, but, that it is by no means satisfied therewith, and means to demand a redress of all its alleged grievances before it lays down its arms. In confirmation of this, the follow-

ing paragraph has been quoted from a paper deemed the demi-official paper of the American Government :

"The Orders in Council of the British Government are now no longer a question with the United States. The question of peace now requires only a proper and a vigorous use of the ample means which the Government is possessed of, to render it speedy, decisive, and glorious. Peace, when it comes, must bring with it more than the confession of British outrage by the retraction of its avowed tyranny. It is not a mere cessation to do wrong that can now produce a peace; wrongs done must be redressed; and a guarantee must be given in the face of the world, for the restoration of our enslaved citizens, and the respect due to our flag, which, like the soil we inherit, must in future secure all that sails under it. The rights of neutrals must be recognized; and the British, like the first tyrants of the Swiss, must no longer expect a free people to bow down, and worship the symbols of British usurpation."

Did I not tell you so, Sir, in my very last Letter? Did I not say, that America would now demand "*indemnity for the past and security for the future*?" I wish to guard your Royal Highness against deception, and I, for that purpose, entered into an argument to show, that we ought not to expect America to make peace with us upon our having barely ceased to commit what she asserted to be a violation of her rights. I told your Royal Highness, that she, for more than one reason, must demand something more than a mere cessation to do what she declared to be a wrong. In short, if I had been informed, when I wrote my last Letter, of what I now know, I could not have written otherwise than I then did.

I, therefore, have, I think, some claim to attention from your Royal Highness, especially as I have all along told you, that the repeal of our Orders would not, alone, be sufficient. When the repeal took place, upon the death of Perceval, and when Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Brougham were reported to be making pledges to support a war against America, if that repeal did not satisfy her; at that time; at that important moment, when conciliation might have been rendered complete; even then, without a moment's delay, I told your Royal Highness, that the repeal of the Orders would not, of itself, be enough, and, as will be seen by the passage taken for my Motto, I most earnestly besought you to put a stop, of your own accord, to the impressment of persons on board of American ships. If this had been done, Sir; if this measure, so strongly recommended by me, had been adopted then, we should now have seen our ports crowded with American ships to take away our manufactures, instead of hearing of hundreds of American privateers cruising against our commerce.

The COURIER and TIMES newspapers, two of the most corrupt in England, make certain remarks upon the paragraph which I have quoted from the American demi-official print; and, as these remarks embrace assertions and notions that are false, it is necessary, or, at least, it may be useful, to put the matters of which they treat in a fair light.

The COURIER has this paragraph :

"Here, then, is an open avowal, that nothing will satisfy the American Government but the abandonment of the right of search, and the acknowledgment of the principle, that free ships make free goods. Perish the idea of peace, if it is only to be made on such terms. Yet this the American Government calls 'an anxious desire to accommodate all differences upon the most reasonable conditions!'"

The TIMES says :

" In this philippic, *redress* is not only claimed for the supposed wrongs inflicted " by this country, but it is declared, that the 'American flag must in *future* " *secure all that sails under it.*' This is adopting, in its fullest extent, the lan- " guage of Buonaparte, that 'free ships make free goods.' If that principle be " maintained by the American Government, and supported by the American " Legislature, we see not the slightest prospect of a speedy termination of hos- " tilities."

Thus, then, these good hirelings are for war, rather than give up what they call the "*right of search.*" They are hardly so stupid as not to know, that the Americans do not contend for our abandonment of *the right of search*, in the usual sense of those words; they must know, that, as far as to search ships at sea (or rather to *visit* them) has been sanctioned by the usage of nations, the Americans are ready to submit to it; but, Sir, this right of search is very different indeed from that of which these good hired writers are speaking.

There is a right of search, or of visit, acknowledged by all the nations of Europe. When a nation is at war, she claims the right of visiting all neutral merchant ships at sea, in order to see that they do not assist her enemy by carrying warlike stores or troops for him; and, if she find them thus taking part with her enemy; if she find them thus transgressing the general usage of nations, she seizes them, as, indeed, she has just cause for doing, seeing that they are, in fact, engaged in the war against her. And, the right of visiting them, to see whether they be thus transgressing, has been, by us, called *the right of search.* We have contended for, and have, for some time past, been able to maintain, an extension of this right to the *goods of an enemy* found in a neutral ship; though it is to be observed, that our ally, Russia, and our ally Sweden, as well as Denmark, and Holland, in all times, have contended against this right. But, what have these to do with the searching of which the Americans complain? They complain, not that we seize contraband of war on board their vessels; not that we confiscate ships or cargoes where there are enemy's troops or enemy's goods; but, that we stop their vessels upon the high seas, and that there we TAKE OUT OF THEM WHATEVER PERSONS WE PLEASE. This is what they complain of; and, the fact is perfectly notorious, that we have, in this way, taken many thousands of persons out of American ships, carrying on their trade quietly from one part of the world to another. It is notorious, that many of the persons thus seized were citizens and natives of America; that they have been taken on board of our ships of war; that they have been kept there for years; that they have been taken to all parts of the world; that many of them have been wounded, many have lost their limbs, and many killed, in a service which they abhorred, being compelled to fight against those with whom they had no quarrel.

There is no man of any consideration, who will attempt to say, that this is right. It must of necessity have created deep-rooted ill-will against us in America, where the sea-faring people are not a class of individuals who have neither house nor home, and whose state is desperate. A vessel, in America, is often manned by people all living in the same village; and, the impressment, the banishment, the destruction of one, must be felt by the whole, and by the whole of the neighbourhood also. Hence the heart-burnings in America against England. The confiscation of ships and cargoes, under the Orders in Council, together with

the dreadful distress to the Captains and crews, produced great effect against us ; but, great as it was, it fell short of the effect produced by the impressment of American seamen.

It has been said, that, if we give up the exercise of this power of impressment, our sailors will desert to the American ships. But, suppose the fact be so : What is that to America ? It is not her fault. She does not force them out of her service. She does not compel them to desert. If they really do like her service better than ours, she cannot help that. We may as well complain of her for having such a country as our artizans and manufacturers prefer to their own, and upon that ground, go and search her country for our deserted artizans and manufacturers, who emigrate to her shores in defiance of our laws. Really, Sir, I can see no just cause of complaint against her because our men desert to her ships. It is for us to keep our men, if we wish them not to go into her service ; and not to complain of her for receiving them.

It is a practice wholly unknown in the world before. We have never, that I have heard of, attempted to exercise such a power against any nation but America. It is true, that all our officers who may visit her ships may not conduct themselves in a manner such as she has complained of ; but, it is not less true, that they are *left entirely to their own discretion*. They are, it is true, not authorized to take *Americans* out of American ships ; but, then, it is left to them, and must be left wholly to them, to decide *who are, and who are not, Americans*. This being the case, it is clear that every American ship's crew who meet an English ship of war at sea are *at the mercy* of the commander of that ship of war ! No more need be said ; for no man likes to be at the mercy of another. The English Captain has, in this case, the power of seizure, of imprisonment, of banishment, and, indeed, what power has he not over the American crew ? They may produce proof of being natives of America, and then he is not authorized to seize them. Aye ! but he, alas ! is the sole and absolute *judge of that proof*, which he may think *bad*, and then it may as well not be produced.

This is the view to take of the matter, Sir. The corrupt press of London may, and will, bewilder the minds of the people by talking about our right of search, and the like ; but, the plain fact is this ; that in consequence of this authority given to our ships of war to take persons out of American ships at sea, the crew of every American merchant ship that went to sea, or even from one port to another in America, were at the absolute mercy of the commander of the first English ship of war that happened to meet them. Suppose the case, Sir, of an American captain sailing out of the Delaware for the East Indies with his complement of men, being twenty, all his neighbours, met by an English sloop of war ; suppose him to have six of his men taken out in spite of all his assurances of their being native Americans ; suppose him left to pursue his voyage with only 14 hands ; suppose the six seized men to be taken off to the West Indies ; suppose two or three to die of the yellow fever ; another to be killed ; another lose an arm ; and the sixth released by the intervention of the American Consul in London. Suppose this case, Sir, and you will suppose *what may have happened*. It was possible for such cases to happen, and that was enough ; but, it was a thing which admitted of being rendered impossible. It is sufficient to say, that, in consequence of the exercise of this power, no American could, in a merchant ship, sail the sea in safety. He never was, for one single hour, secure

against captivity and banishment. To a people so situated war must be a *relief*. The American seaman will prefer war, because if captured in war, the laws of war protect him and feed him as a *prisoner*; whereas he was before liable, not only to be seized and carried from his calling and country, but, at the same time, compelled to act as a seaman on board of our ships; compelled to labour and to risk his life in our service, where it might be his lot to assist in serving others of his own countrymen as he himself had been served.

Sir, when you take a dispassionate view of this matter, I am quite sure that the justice of your mind will decide you in favour of an abandonment, a frank abandonment, of the exercise of this power, which is, I am satisfied, without a precedent in the usage of nations, and which, under the present circumstances, can do nothing towards the safety of the country.

If this point were once settled, it appears to me, that much difficulty would not remain. But, as I had before the honour to state to your Royal Highness, it is not to be supposed, that war is to *cease* the moment we *cease to do wrong* to America. I have not taken upon me to say, whether our Orders in Council were a wrong, or not; but, by the repeal, we seem to have acknowledged that they were. If, then, they were a wrong, the cessation of them cannot be considered as sufficient to induce America to put up the sword at once, and without any further ceremony. When I published what was called a Libel, in the year 1809, that is to say, when I published an expression of my feelings at what had then been described as having taken place, at the town of Ely (where the Bank has since broken), with respect to the Local Militia and the German Legion; when I had made that publication I *ceased*; I made only one of that sort; yet, Sir, was I, at the distance of a year after the publication, sentenced to be imprisoned for two years, and to pay a thousand pounds fine to your royal Sire, and which thousand pounds I have paid to you, in his behalf. So you see, Sir, that, after one has done a thing, or has been doing a thing, it is not always sufficient to *cease* to do it; the ceasing to do that which is deemed wrong, is not always regarded as sufficient to appease, or disarm, the offended party. The last part of my punishment, the payment of the fine to you, in behalf of your royal Sire, was inflicted at more than three years' distance from the time of my writing about the Local Militia and the German Legion. There may, perhaps, in the law of nations, be an exception from the general principles in cases where a kingly government commits an offence, or alleged offence, against a republic; but, in my small reading, I have, I must confess, never met with any such exception.

Therefore, I, for my part, was not at all surprised to see the American demi-official print announce, that *compensation for the past and security for the future* would be required. "It is not," says the writer, "a mere *cessation to do wrong* that can now produce a peace: wrong done must be redressed, and a guarantee must be given in the face of the world." Yes, Sir, just as in my case, who, after imprisonment and fine was compelled, before I was released, to enter into bonds, to give a guarantee, as the republican writer calls it. Indeed, Sir, the history of the world is full of cases in support of this doctrine of the Americans. When your Royal Brother invaded Holland, it was not sufficient that he *ceased* to penetrate into the country; for, when he got back to the *Helder*, though he had then entirely *ceased* to be an invader, and appears

to have very properly confined his wishes to the safe bringing-off of his army, the Republican generals, *Brune* (the "Printer's boy of Limosin") and *Daendels*, insisted upon his stipulating for the surrender to France and Holland of *eight thousand* of their seamen, who were then prisoners of war in England; this they insisted upon, "as the price of permission to the British troops, with whom the Duke of York had invaded Holland, to re-embark on board their transports *without molestation*."

This was a compensation for injury, not *done*, but *attempted*. If the Royal commander had said, "I have *stopped*; I have *ceased*; I am going away; *what more do you want*?" If he had thus addressed the republican generals, they would have thought him cracked in the brain. His Royal Highness knew a great deal better. He took the effectual way of giving his opponents satisfaction, and thus he was enabled to bring off his army without molestation.

Here, then, Sir, are two instances of the soundness of the American doctrine; that a mere cessation of an offensive act is not, as a matter of course, deemed a satisfaction to the party offended. Nay, in my case, that was single; it was committed in a moment; it at once ceased; there was no remonstrance; no expostulation; the single act was seized hold of, and my printer and publisher and one of the newsmen, though they did not attempt to defend *their* conduct, but confessed their crime, declared on oath that they were wholly unconscious that they were publishing a libel, and humbly sued for mercy; though they did all this, *yet they were all imprisoned*.

Upon what principle, then, I ask, can these corrupt writers imagine, that America is to be satisfied with the mere repeal of our Orders in Council; that is to say, with a mere cessation of the acts offensive to her? Upon what ground is it that the country, in which the proceedings against me took place, can expect this at her hands? I do not say, that we were doing her wrong; I do not take upon me to decide that question. If we were not doing her wrong, however, why did we repeal? If we were not doing her wrong, why did we yield at her menaces? If we were not doing her wrong, we should not have given way: and, if we were doing her wrong, we should have gone further; for, upon the principles on which I was punished, and on which the cans-culotte generals insisted upon your Royal Brother's giving up of 8,000 prisoners of war then in England; upon those principles a *mere cessation* to do what gives offence is not considered as a sufficient atonement to the offended party.

The President of the United States has seen himself ridiculed and most grossly abused in our venal newspapers, who, amongst other qualities not more to be admired, have ascribed to him that of *cowardice*. Such language does not tend to harmony; and, though (thank God!) Mr. Madison cannot, by his obstinacy, or to indulge any old grudge, plunge his country into a war; yet, he certainly has the power to render the way to peace more difficult. I must, however, do him the justice to say, that I do not believe him capable of imitating, for one single moment, those detestable miscreants, whom history has but too frequently exhibited in the act of rendering millions miserable for the purpose of gratifying some stupid, some idiot-like, some hog-like, passion. But, without being under any such influence, and without supposing any very strong prejudice against England in the minds of the people of America, there are, I fear, reasons enough to induce Mr. Madison to be in no haste to listen to terms of peace.

America has long felt the power of England; she has long been compelled to endure that which she detested; she is covered with scars of our inflicting; and she will not forget all this now that she has arms in her hands. I have before pointed to your Royal Highness of what importance it is to her that we should have nothing to do in the affairs of Spain. The war in Spain is, in fact, most fearful to America when it is most promising in appearances to us. She will never rest contented while there is a chance of our having any influence in Spanish South America. Of Napoleon she is not afraid in that quarter. He has no fleet to endanger her commerce; and, besides, her present exertions against us may, perhaps, secure her his assent to her wishes on that flank of her territories.

As to our internal situation, she is well aware of it. The army in Canada is not better known to her than the army in the "*disturbed counties*." Mr. Madison is very well acquainted with the causes of our disturbances; he has read before now all the evidence taken at the bar of Parliament; he has seen it *proved* that the people of England are suffering greatly from the non-importation of their goods into America; he is well aware of the wants of our army in Spain, Portugal, and the Mediterranean; and he knows that a war with his country must soon plunge us into the greatest distress.

It is with a knowledge of all these that Mr. Madison enters on the war; and, under such circumstances, it appears to me impossible that he should listen to any terms of peace not including ample indemnity for the past. The American prints seem to insist upon a guarantee for the release of the American seamen whom we have impressed. This, I should hope, there would be no objection to; and, indeed, I hope, that your Royal Highness's ministers will *now*, at the eleventh hour, do every thing in their power to procure us the restoration of *honourable* peace; I hope that England is not doomed to wage war against every man in the world who is in the enjoyment of real liberty. I know, Sir, that there are, in England, men who abhor the American government and people, and who would, if they had the power, exterminate them both, merely because the one guarantees and the other enjoys freedom. Such men will never be happy while they see a free man in the world; but, their malice will not be gratified; they will, though it blast their eye-sight, still see the Americans free. Such men always speak of America with disdain; they affect to consider her as nothing; they seem to think that no ceremony is necessary with her; that even when she has declared war, and has actually begun war, she is bound to leave off merely upon our ceasing to do her wrong, if wrong it be. Such men would, of course, think it a great mortification to *send over to her pacific overtures*, which one of them already calls *suing for peace*. Far from your Royal Highness be counsels like these! How much blood might they cause to flow! This was the language with regard to the republicans of France; but, the haughty Pitt was glad, at last, to be permitted to send overtures of peace to those republicans. I hope, therefore, that we shall, in this case, be wise in the out-set, which is far better than *wisdom at the close*.

The whole case is now before you, Sir; war or peace is in your power. That you may choose the latter is the earnest wish of your Royal Highness's faithful servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 23rd September 1812.

TO THE PRINCE REGENT :

ON THE DISPUTE WITH THE AMERICAN STATES.

(Political Register, January, 1813.)

LETTER X.

SIR,

During the two years that I was imprisoned in Newgate, for writing and publishing an article upon the flogging of certain English militia-men, at Ely, in England, under the superintendence of German troops, and for which writing and publishing I, besides, paid your Royal Highness a fine of a thousand pounds, in behalf of your Royal Sire ; during that time I endeavoured, in various ways, to expiate my offence, but in no way more strenuously than in trying to dissuade you from yielding to advice, which, as I thought, would, if followed, produce a war with the American States. That consequence, which I so much dreaded, and which I laboured with so much earnestness to prevent, has unhappily taken place ; and, though it may be of no service ; though my efforts may still be unavailing ; nay, though I may receive abuse instead of thanks for my pains, I cannot refrain ; the love I bear my own country, and the regard I shall ever bear a great part of the people of America, will not suffer me to refrain from making one more trial to convince your Royal Highness, that the path of peace is still fairly open with that country, and that pacific measures are the only measures which ought even now to be pursued.

In one of my letters to your Royal Highness, I endeavoured to convince you, that it was to the base, the prostituted press, of England, that we were likely to owe this war ; I pointed out to your Royal Highness the means resorted to by that press in order to deceive the people of England ; and, I expressed my apprehensions, that those means would succeed. That press, that vile and infamous press, which is the great enemy of the liberties of Europe and America as well as of England, was incessant in its efforts to cause it to be believed, that, in no case, would the American Government dare to go to war. It asserted, that America would be totally ruined by six months of war ; that the people would not pay the taxes necessary to carry it on ; that the President, for only barely talking of war, would be put out of his chair ; that the "*American Navy*," as it was called by way of ridicule, would be "*swept from the ocean in a month* ;" and, that, in short, a war with America was a thing for Englishmen to laugh at ; a subject of jest and mockery.

This was the style and tone of the hireling press in London, and, with very few exceptions, the country prints followed the stupid and insolent example. Events have already shown how false all these assertions were ; and now, as its usual practice, this same corrupt press is pouring forth *new falsehoods*, with a view of urging-on the war, and of reconciling the people to its calamities.

It was my endeavour to show your Royal Highness the real state of the case. I said, that the people of America, though wisely averse from war, as the great source of taxation and loss of liberty, would, nevertheless, submit to its inconveniences rather than submit to the terms which

it was recommended, in our hireling prints, to impose upon them. I begged your Royal Highness to disbelieve those, who said that the American Government dared not go to war, and that Mr. Madison would not be re-elected. I besought you to reflect upon the consequences of rushing into a war with that country, amongst which consequences I included the forming of a *great Naval force* on the other side of the Atlantic, and the not less fearful measure of *manning a French Fleet with American Sailors*. Our hired press affects to turn into *jest* a proposition said to have been made by the President for the building of *twenty frigates*. If he has made that proposition, however, and, if the war continue *only a year*, your Royal Highness will find that the twenty frigates are launched upon the ocean. The ignorant and saucy writers in London, who live up to their lips in luxury, and whose gains are not at all dependent upon the prosperity of the country; these men care not how the people suffer. Their object is to prolong the war, which suits the views of all those with whom they are connected. They assert whatever presents itself as likely to promote this object, and, therefore, they take no pains to ascertain whether the building of twenty frigates is, or is not, a matter of easy execution in America. If they did, they would find that the Americans have the Timber, the Iron, the Pitch, the Hemp, *all of the produce of their own country*; all in abundance; all, of course, cheap; and, as to dock-yards, and other places to build ships, inquiry would teach these ignorant and insolent men, that, in many cases, the Timber grows upon the very spot where the ship is to be built, and that to cut it down and convert it into a ship is to do a great benefit to the owner of the land.

And, then, as to the *pecuniary means*: to hear the language of our hirelings, one would imagine, that the people of America were all *beggars*; that the country contained scarcely a man of property; that there were no such things as money, house goods, cattle, or manufactures. They must, indeed, confess that the country grows *corn*; but, somehow or other, they would have us believe, that there are, in America, no *means*; no *resources*. They cannot disguise from us the fact, that there are fine cities and towns; that there is a commercial marine not far behind our own in point of magnitude; that the exports from the country amount annually to more than half as much as our exports, and that they consist of articles of first necessity; that the country contains all the articles of useful manufactory; and that manufactures are making great progress; nay, that they have arrived at great perfection; that the country is stocked with sheep, that great source of a nation's wealth, and that to so high a degree have these animals succeeded, that many single proprietors have already flocks of more than a thousand head. These facts the hired press cannot disguise from us; or, at least, from those amongst us, who are not wilfully blind. Upon what ground, then, Sir, would they have us believe, that America is *destitute of resources*? The things which I have here spoken of, are things of which national riches consist; they form the means of making national exertions; of sending forth fleets and armies. And we ought to bear in mind, that America, that this new enemy of ours, has a population of more than *eight millions of souls*; none of whom are *paupers*; none of whom are clad in rags; none of whom are without *meat* upon their table daily; not one soul of whom would condescend to pull off his hat to any human being. And this is the nation, a nation, too, descended from ourselves,

that the hirelings of the London press represent as *destitute of resources!*

Perhaps, Sir, the resources of America are estimated according to *the salaries which their public functionaries receive*; and, measured by this standard, our new enemy must, indeed, appear wholly unable to contend against us for a single day; for the President, the Vice-President, the Secretaries of State, the Treasury, War, Navy, and all their clerks; that is to say, the whole of the Officers of the Executive Government, do not receive *more than about half the amount of Lord Arden's sinecure*, as stated in the Report to the House of Commons in 1809. Nay, the *Apothecary to our Army* does, according to the same report, receive, in clear profits, annually, as much as twice the amount of the Salary of the President of the United States. Our Chief Justice, in salary and emoluments, as stated in the Reports laid before Parliament, receives annually a great deal more than Mr. Madison, Mr. Monroe, Mr. Gallatin, and the Secretaries of War and the Navy in America, all put together. I shall, perhaps, be told, that our public functionaries *ought* to receive more than those in America. That is a point which I shall leave for others to dispute. I content myself with stating the facts; but, if I am told, that we ought not to measure the salaries of our functionaries by the American standard, I must beg leave, in my turn, to protest against measuring the expenses of war in America by the standard of war expenses in England. I must insist, too, that the resources of a country are not to be measured by the standard of the salaries of its public functionaries. I should take quite a different standard for the measuring of the resources of America. We know, that, upon a population of *ten millions*, in Great Britain, a revenue of about *eighty millions of pounds is now annually raised*; and that, in these ten millions of people we include, at least, *two millions of paupers*. Now, then, if they raise but a *tenth part* as much upon the *eight millions* of Americans, who have no paupers amongst them, their eight millions will be four times as much as was ever yet raised in the country in any one year; and, it is, I think, not too much to suppose, that an American will bear a *tenth part* as much taxes as an Englishman, in the prosecution of a war declared by the vote of *representatives freely chosen by the people at large*. Eight millions of pounds sterling, raised for three or four successive years, would build a navy that I should, and that I do, contemplate with great uneasiness; for, as I once before had the honour to state to your Royal Highness, the Americans are as good sailors as any that the world ever saw. It is notorious that the American merchant ships sail with fewer hands, in proportion to their size, than the merchant ships of any other nation; the Americans are active in their persons; they are enterprising; they are brave; and, which is of vast consequence, they are, from education and almost from constitution, SOBER, a virtue not at all less valuable in an army or a fleet than it is in domestic life.

This, Sir, is a view of the means and resources of America very different, perhaps, from the views which some persons might be disposed to present to your Royal Highness; and, if this my view of the matter be correct, it surely becomes us to be very cautious how we force these resources into action, and set them in array against us, backed, as they will be, with the implacable hatred of the American people. If, indeed, the *honour* of England required the setting of these resources at defiance; if England must either confess her disgrace, must basely abandon her

known rights ; must knuckle down to America, or brave the consequences of what I have been speaking of ; I should then say, in the words of the old Norman proverb (adopted by the French in answer to the Duke of Brunswick's proclamation), "*let honour be maintained, happen what will.*"

But, Sir, the question is : *does* the honour of England require the making of this perilous experiment ? In my opinion it does not ; and I now, with the most anxious hope, that, at last, they may be attended with some effect, proceed respectfully to submit to your Royal Highness the reasons upon which this opinion is founded.

The dispute with regard to the *Orders in Council* I look upon as being at an end ; for, though all is not quite clear in that respect, an arrangement seems to be matter of little difficulty. But, as I am sure your Royal Highness will do me the honour to recollect, I took the liberty to warn the public, the very week that the Orders in Council were done away, that that measure *alone* would do nothing towards preventing war with America. I then said, and in the most distinct terms, and without any hesitation, that America would never be content without a complete abandonment, on our part, of the practice of *seizing persons on board her ships upon the high seas*. I formed this opinion upon the general tone of the American prints ; upon the declaration of the Congress ; and especially upon information contained in letters received from friends in America, in whose hearts, strange as it may appear to some, my imprisonment in Newgate seems to have revived former feelings towards me. These letters, written by persons (be it observed) strongly attached to England, for no others did I ever number amongst my friends ; these letters assured me, that *the people* of America ; not the *Government* ; not "*a faction*," as our hirelings have called them ; that the people of America, from one end of the country to the other, cried for war in preference to longer submission to the stopping of their vessels on the high seas, and taking persons out of them, at the discretion of our officers. Upon this information, coming, in some cases, three hundred miles from the Atlantic coasts, I could safely rely ; and, therefore, I did not hesitate to pronounce, that the repeal of the Orders in Council alone would not preserve peace ; nor, was I a little surprised to hear Mr. Brougham declare, that if that measure did not satisfy America, he, for one, would support a war against her.

The question, then, is now reduced to this ; Does the honour of England demand, that she insist upon continuing the practice of which America complains, and against which she is now making war ? To answer this question, we must ascertain, whether the practice of which America complains *be sanctioned by the usages of nations* ; whether the giving of it up would be to yield any *known right* of England ; because, in the case of the affirmative, to yield would be to make a sacrifice of our honour, rather than which I agree that we ought to continue the war to the last extremity, it being much less disgraceful to submit to actual force, than to submit to menaces.

My opinion is, however, decidedly in the negative ; and I will not disguise from your Royal Highness, that I never felt surprise more complete (to give my feelings no stronger appellation) than that which I experienced at reading the following passage in the letter of Lord Castlereagh to Mr. Russell of the 29th of August last :

" I cannot, however, refrain on one single point from expressing my surprise ; namely, that, as a condition, preliminary even to a suspension of hostilities, the

"Government of the United States should have thought fit to demand, that the British Government should desist from its *ancient and accustomed practice of impressing British seamen from the merchant ships of a Foreign State*, simply on the assurance that a law shall hereafter be passed, to prohibit the employment of British seamen in the public or commercial service of that State.

"The British Government now, as heretofore, is ready to receive from the Government of the United States, and amicably to discuss, any proposition which professes to have in view either to *check abuse in exercise of the practice of impressment*, or to accomplish, by means less liable to vexation, the object for which impressment has hitherto been found necessary, but they cannot consent to suspend the exercise of a *right* upon which the naval strength of the empire mainly depends, until they are fully convinced that means can be devised, and will be adopted, by which the object to be obtained by the exercise of that *right* can be effectually secured."

Being no Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I shall, I trust, be excused if I am found to understand less of the "ancient and accustomed practice" of Great Britain as to this matter; but, Sir, I have never before heard, except from the London newspapers, that Great Britain did ever, until now, attempt to take persons of any description out of neutral vessels sailing upon the high seas; and very certain I am, that such a practice is not warranted, nay, that it never was thought of, by any of those authors who have written upon public law. I do not recollect a single instance in which we have exercised what is here called a *right*; and, if in the abandonment of the practice, we give up no known right of England, such abandonment can be no dishonour; unless, which would be a monstrous proposition, it be regarded as dishonourable to cease to do any thing, because the doing of it has been the subject of complaint, and the object of resistance.

The men who conduct the London newspapers, and whose lucubrations are a sore affliction to their native country, have long been charging the Americans with a wish to make England give up her "*right of search*." Whether this falsehood has arisen from sheer ignorance, or from that impunity in deception, or, rather, encouragement to deceive, which such writers have so long experienced in England, I will not take upon me to determine; but, I know well, that it is a most audacious falsehood; I know that America has never expressed even a *wish* to make us give up "*the right of search*;" and, if her Government were to attempt to accomplish such an end by war, I am quite sure that it would soon lose the support of the people. But, "*the right of search*" is not, and never has been, for a moment, by any writer on public law, considered as a right to search for *persons*, except, indeed, *military* persons, and those, too, openly employed in the *enemy's service*. "*The right of search*" is a right, possessed by a belligerent power, to search for and to seize as good prize, any articles contraband of war, such as *guns, powder*, and the like, which may be on board of a neutral ship going to an enemy's port; because, by carrying the said articles, the neutral does, in fact, *aid the enemy* in carrying on the war. This right has been further extended to any *goods*, belonging to an *enemy*, found on board a neutral vessel; because, by becoming the carrier of his goods, the neutral does, in fact, screen his goods, as far as possible, from capture, and does thereby also *aid the enemy*. This is what is called "*the right of search*;" a right, however, which, as far as relates to *goods*, has been often denied by neutral powers, and which we actually gave up to the threats of Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, towards the end of the last American War.

But, of *this right*, of *no part* of this right, do the Americans now com-

plain. They yield to the exercise of this right in all its rigour. But, they deny that we have any right at all; they deny that we have a pretence to any right to stop their vessels upon the high seas, and to take out of them any persons whatever, unless, indeed, military persons in the service of our enemy; and, I repeat it, Sir, that I know of no usage of nations; that I know of no ancient usage of our own even; that I know of no law, maxim, principle, or practice, to sanction that of which the Americans complain, and in resistance of which they are now armed and at war; and, therefore, I am of opinion, that to abandon this practice would be no dishonour to England.

Lord Castlereagh talks of our right to "impress *British seamen* from the merchant ships of a foreign state." Impressment may take place in our ports and harbours; and, there, if confined to our own seamen, America does not object to it. It is upon the *high seas* that she objects to impressment; because there the matter *must* be left to the discretion of the British officer. It is there a matter of power. There is no one to appeal to; there is no umpire; there is no judge to look into proofs, and to decide. The searching officer may, under his discretion, take out as many men as he pleases; he may leave the ship destitute of the hands necessary to conduct her a league; and he may take out American citizens as well as English subjects. That this *may* be done is quite certain, because it *has* been done in countless instances. *Thousands* of native Americans, thus impressed, *have been released* by our Admiralty on the official application of the American agents; and, who can doubt that many thousands remain unreleased? General Lyman, late American Consul in London, once stated, in a report to his Government, that there were about *fourteen thousand* native Americans then on board our fleet, who had been impressed from on board American ships on the high seas. He might possibly exaggerate; but it is not to be doubted that the number was, and has constantly been, very considerable. And, I beg your Royal Highness to take a serious view of the great hardships experienced by Americans thus impressed. Taken from their lawful and peaceable pursuits; dragged into a service and forced under a discipline so little congenial with their habits and their prejudices; wafted away to sickly climates, exposed to all the dangers of battle, taken, perhaps for ever, from the sight and the knowledge of their homes and friends; and, if, by chance (for it can be nothing more), restored at last, restored (as has often been the case) with the loss of health or of limbs, and at the very least, with the loss of time, and that, too, in the prime of their lives; and carrying about them, for the remainder of their days, feelings towards England which I need not attempt to describe.

Your Royal Highness's heart will tell you, I hope, much better than I can, not what *is*, but what *must* be, the effect of such a practice, carried on against a people, who are not only the children of Englishmen, but of those Englishmen who preferred freedom in a wilderness across the ocean to slavery in their native land. This it is, Sir, that has, at last, kindled the flame of war in a country where the very name of war was too hateful to be endured.

But in answer to all this, it is said, by Lord Castlereagh, that "*the naval strength* of the empire *mainly depends*" upon the continuation of this practice of impressment. That is to say, if we take the whole of the facts into view, our naval strength mainly depends upon a practice which exposes so many of the American citizens to misery and ruin. The

plain meaning of our perseverance in the practice is this : that, if we do not continue it, our seamen will desert to the American ships in such numbers as to leave us without the possibility of obtaining a sufficiency of men to man and fight our fleet. Supposing this to be the fact, it really forms no justification of the practice ; for, we can have no right to put America to any inconvenience whatever merely for our own benefit, or to save ourselves from loss or danger. The President, however, in order to show, that he does not wish us to receive any injury in this way, and in order, if possible, to put an end to the war, has made a voluntary offer of a law to be passed in America to prevent our seamen from being admitted into American ships, upon condition, that we will first abandon our practice of impressment, and give up, that is, restore to their liberty, those native Americans whom we have already impressed. Mr. Russell, in his letter to Lord Castlereagh, says :

" While, however, it regards this course as the only one which remained for it to pursue with a hope of preserving any portion of that kind of character, which constitutes the vital strength of every nation, yet it is still willing to give another proof of the spirit which has uniformly distinguished its proceedings, by seeking to arrest, on terms consistent with justice and honour, the calamities of war. It has therefore authorized me to stipulate with his Britannic Majesty's Government, an armistice to commence at or before the expiration of sixty days after the signature of the instrument providing for it, on condition that the Orders in Council be repealed, and no illegal blockades to be substituted to them, and that orders be immediately given to discontinue the impressment of persons from American vessels, and to restore the citizens of the United States already impressed ; it being moreover well understood that the British Government will assent to enter into definitive arrangements as soon as may be, on these and every other difference, by a Treaty to be concluded either at London or Washington, as on an impartial consideration of existing circumstances shall be deemed most expedient. As an inducement to Great Britain to discontinue the practice of impressment from American vessels, I am authorized to give assurance that a law shall be passed (to be reciprocal) to prohibit the employment of British seamen in the public or commercial service of the United States."

Really, Sir, it is not possible, it appears to me, to suggest anything more reasonable than this. I can form an idea of nothing more strongly expressive of a desire to put an end to the war. What ! shall it be said that England wages a war, when she might terminate it by such means ? I trust not, and that we shall not have to weep over a much longer continuation of this unfortunate contest.

I know, that there are persons who treat the idea of a law, passed by the Congress, with contempt. But, if this is to be the course pursued, the war will not soon have an end. We *must* treat America with respect. We *must* do it ; and the sooner we begin the better. Some of the impudent hireling writers in London, affect to say, that no credit is to be given to any act of the American Government ; that our officers ought not to believe the passports and certificates produced by the American seamen. If this is to be the tone, and if we are to act accordingly, there is no possibility of making peace with America. Peace implies *treaty* and *confidence* ; but, what confidence are we to have in a nation such as our hirelings describe America to be ? This arrogant, this insolent tone must be dropped, or peace is impossible.

The fact of our impressing of native Americans is affected to be denied, and Lord Castlereagh does not notice the proposition to *restore* those whom we have already impressed. But, Sir, if the fact were not perfectly notorious, that thousands have been released by us, the letter of CAPTAIN

DACRES, of the *Guerriere*, removes all doubt upon the subject; for, in that letter, intended to account for his defeat by the *Constitution*, he says, that PART OF HIS CREW WERE NATIVE AMERICANS, and, they not choosing to fight against their country, he suffered them to be inactive spectators. Now, here we have the fact clearly acknowledged, that we had Americans unwillingly serving on board. And, what a lamentable contrast do we find in the same letter, with regard to some *English seamen* said to have been on board the *Constitution*; to which I beg leave to add, for your most serious moment, the fact (if a fact it be) that part of the crews of the victorious American ships, the *Wasp* and the *United States*, were *English*. Nay, it is stated in the *Courier* newspaper, upon what is asserted to be good authority, that *two-thirds* of the crews of the American ships of war are *English seamen*. If this be true, it is another, and a most cogent reason, for acceding to the terms of America, and putting an end to the war; for, the longer the war continues the longer will continue a connection from which such fearful consequences may ensue.

At any rate, it appears to me, that our own safety, if the war is to be continued, will dictate the discharging of all the impressed Americans whom we may have on board of our ships. Fight against their country they will not, unless they be *forced*, and who is to foresee and provide against the contagion of such an example? Against this evil, however, and against numerous others, which I forbear to mention, the measure proposed by the President would completely guard us; and, the respect, which it is my duty to entertain towards your Royal Highness, bids me hope that that proposition will finally be accepted.

I am, &c., &c.,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 29th December, 1812.

AMERICAN WAR.

(*Political Register*, January, 1813.)

THIS war, which was spoken of by the hireling of the *Times* newspaper and others, with such ineffable contempt, has now assumed a very formidable mien; and those who were so eager for the war, begin to revile each other with regard to the conducting of it.

There are, at this time, three political factions in the country; the one that is in possession of the distribution of the public money; the Whig faction; and the faction of the Wellesleys and Cannings. The two latter would join if they could; but, each aims at the possession of the power of giving places and pensions, and, in short, at being the ministry.

These two, therefore, cannot agree wholly; but, they both attack, though upon different occasions and different grounds, those who are in possession of the paradise of Whitehall.

Amongst other objects of attack is that of *negligence as to the American War*. The *Chronicle* and the *Times* are equally bitter against the

ministers upon this subject; they revile them for having plunged the country into a war with America without providing a sufficient maritime force to cope with that new enemy. *A sufficient force!* Why, the Times newspaper spoke of the navy of the United States as a thing not worthy of the name; it laughed at "Mr. Madison and *his navy*;" it predicted that a few months would add that navy to our own; it, in short, spoke of it in a tone of contempt which I should in vain attempt to describe.

And yet, it now blames the ministers for not having provided a sufficient force to cope with that contemptible navy; that navy which was an object of the most cruel ridicule.

The defeat and capture of the *Guerriere*, the *Frolic*, and the *Macedonian* must, of course, be matter of astonishment to those, who listened to the language of these presumptuous and foolish men; but, in what respect are the ministers to blame for it any more than they were for the evacuation of Madrid, and for all the consequences of the unexpected retreat of our army in the Peninsula? The ministers had a great abundance of ships, of all sizes, on the American station; and what were they to do more? I recollect, and so must the reader, that, at the time of the rencounter between *Commodore Rodgers* and *Captain Bingham*, the words in the mouths of all these writers were: "Let one of our FRIGATES meet with Rodgers, and *we ask no more.*" This wish; this challenge, was repeated a thousand times over; the public cannot have forgotten the fact; nay, the sentiment was universal. Upon what ground, then, are the ministers now to be blamed? Are they to be blamed, because, upon trial, it has been found, that our Frigates are not a match for those of America? Are they to be blamed, because they did not entertain a meaner opinion of our Frigates, compared with those of America, than any other man in England entertained, or, at least, dared to say that he entertained?

We are told, by the writers in the interest of the two OUT factions, that the Republican Frigates are bigger, longer, have heavier guns, and the like, than our Frigates have.

"The varlet's a *tall man*," said Bobadil when he had been cudgelled.

But are these new discoveries? Were the facts not all well known before to all these writers, when they so boldly challenged out the American Frigates to combat with ours? When Rodgers attacked Bingham, the size of his ship was well known and particularly described; and, yet, no one then called for heavier ships to be sent out to the American coast.

Why, then, are the ministers to be blamed for not sending out heavier ships?

Besides, they have heavier ships upon the station, and it cannot be their fault if those ships do not fall in with the American Frigates. What are they to do with our Frigates? If ours are unable to face the American Frigates, what are, I ask, the ministers to do with them? Are they not to suffer them to go on a cruise, lest they should fall in with a *tall* Yankee? In short, it is another of the tricks of faction to blame the ministers for these misadventures of the navy; and, the attempts made by the ministerial prints to account for our defeat upon the ground of our *inferiority of force* is another of the means made use of to deceive the people, and to encourage them in the continuation of the war.

When, until now, did we think of disparity of force? When, until now, did we dream of an English ship surrendering to a ship, the superiority of the force of which it required a *minute calculation* to show? When, until now, did an English Captain hesitate to attack a ship of a few guns more than his own?

Instead of all the *calculations* that we have seen in the newspapers; instead of those swelled out accounts of the vast force of the American Frigates, we should be plainly told, that we have *now* an enemy to cope with equal to ourselves as far as his numbers will go.

Amongst all the *calculations* and computations, however, that we have heard, I have not perceived it any where taken into account, that we have *experience*, which the Americans have not. Where did Isaac Hull gain his naval experience; and where Mr. Decatur? There are two Decaturs, the father and son. They were my neighbours, in the country, in Pennsylvania. They were farmers more than seamen, though the elder went occasionally to sea as commander of a merchant ship. If it be the father who has taken the Macedonian, he must be upwards of three-score years of age; and, if it be the son, I am sure it is the first battle he ever was in; for, twelve years ago, he was but a mere lad. The father was a man of great probity and of excellent sense; and, I have no doubt that the son is the same; but, I'll engage, that both have had more experience in raising Indian corn than in naval tactics.

Something, therefore, in our estimates, should be allowed for our superiority in point of *experience*. We have no officer of the navy, who has not passed a great part of his life on actual service; we have scarcely one who has not been in numerous battles; and, in the unfortunate cases above spoken of, one of the Captains appears to have been of long standing even in that rank.

When we are speaking of the naval preparations of Napoleon, we always dwell upon the difficulty of his forming naval *officers*; but here we see, in the case of America, that that is attended with no difficulty at all; we here see gallant and consummate commanders start up in a trice; and, in a moment, is dissolved the charm which bound us in ignorance as to this important species of information.

The truth is, I believe, that, amongst the first qualities of a naval commander, are *sobriety*, *vigilance*, and *consideration for his crew*; and these qualities are within the reach of every man. The American Government, too, has a *wide range for choice*; with it no intrigues, commonly called "*interest*," is likely to prevail; because the possession of the powers of the state depend solely upon the *will of the people*, and the government, having *such* support, is not reduced to the necessity of seeking support from any individuals; and, of course, is not exposed to the danger of being compelled to employ as commanders, or as officers of any rank, persons not recommended by their own good qualities.

This is a very great advantage possessed by the American Government; an advantage to which, perhaps, it owes those successes, which we so sorely lament, and which seem to be very likely to form an era in the naval history of the world.

But, let what will be the final result of these transactions, I really can see no good ground for accusation against the ministers on account of the misfortunes that have befallen our Frigates. Blamed they may be *for the war*. There, indeed, there is matter for blame; because, if my reasoning upon the subject be correct, they might have avoided the

war without any dishonour to England; but, for this they cannot be blamed by those who are seeking for their places; because some of those very persons were amongst the men who adopted and adhered to the measures which produced the war; and, the rest of them have pledged themselves to prosecute it upon its present ground.

Mr. Canning and Lord Wellesley were, in succession, Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs while the dispute was maintained against the abolition of impressment of persons on board of American ships. Indeed, the former has expressed his *disapprobation* of the "*concessions*," as he calls them, made to America, in the repeal of our Orders in Council. Of course he cannot complain of the ministers for going to war; and Mr. Ponsonby, as the organ of the Whigs, distinctly declared, that, if America was not satisfied with that repeal, he would support the war against her.

Not, therefore, being able to find fault with the ministers for the war itself, they fall on upon them as to their manner of conducting it; and, as I think, I have shown, they do this without a shadow of justice.

We, "Jacobins," blame all the three factions; some of them for causing the war, and others for pledging themselves to support it; nor have I the least hesitation to predict, that, day after day, will tend to convince all persons of impartiality, that we are right.

This war we owe entirely to the presumption inspired by our foolish and venal writers. The language of the late PARCEVAL, who talked of not wishing for the "*destruction*" of America, and who spoke of her as of a power depending on his will for her very existence; this language, which will long be remembered, was the general language of the press. We could not believe it possible, that a government, the whole of the officers of which, President and all, did not receive from the public so much money annually as one of our sinecure placemen; we could not conceive, that a government who did not get more money *for itself*, would be able to get money enough to *carry on a war*, more than sufficient to last our sloops for a few months. We have now found our mistake; and, indeed, the premises which we had in our eye should have led to a directly different conclusion; for, would not common sense have told us, that the less of the public money was taken by the officers of Government for their own use; the less of it that was devoured by placemen, and by others for no services rendered the public, the more there must be for the Government to employ in the public service? This would have been the rational conclusion; but, to reason thus, suited not those who had, and who have, the control over ninety-nine hundredth parts of the press of this country. They, therefore, represented America as a nation destitute of warlike means; when they should have made an estimate of her resources upon the grounds stated in my last Article.

The persons in *high* offices in America are *badly paid*; but (and the fact is worth great attention) those in *low* rank, or, no rank at all, are *well paid*. The former have very small salaries; their gains are much less than those of any considerable merchant or manufacturer, lawyer, or Physician; but the common soldier and sailor are paid at a very high rate; at such a rate as not to make him regret his change from civil life.

I should not say, perhaps, that the former are *badly* paid; because there is something in the *honour* of high office, which the common man does not enjoy; and, besides, there is something due from every man to his country; and, the greater that is his stake in the country, the less is

his right to draw from her purse. Mr. Madison does, I dare say, expend, *as President*, every shilling of the 6,000*l.* that, as President, he receives. And, why should he not? What claim would he have to the title of *patriot*, if he grudged to use his talents for his country; or, which is the same thing, if he refused to use them without being paid for their use? If such were his disposition, what claim would he have to the confidence of his fellow citizens? But, with the common soldier or sailor, or other inferior person employed by the Government, the case is wholly different. He has nothing but his *labour* for his inheritance; he possesses no part of the country; his time is his all; and, of course, he is paid for that time at as good rate as if he laboured for an individual.

Those who speculate upon the *resources* of America should not overlook these important circumstances; but, hitherto, I am sorry to say, that we have almost wholly overlooked them.

I never shall forget the obstinacy of many persons with whom I am acquainted, as to the intention of the American Government to go to war. They persisted to the very last, that it was *impossible*. They called the declaration of the Congress "*bullying*;" they said it was "*all smoke*;" and so, indeed, said the hired press, that vehicle of lies, that instrument of ill to England.

They have found some *fire* as well as smoke; they have found that the Republicans have something at their command besides words; and, when it is too late, I fear that they will find, that this is the most fatal war in which we have yet been engaged. One effect of it appears to me to be inevitable; and that is, *the creation of a Navy in America*.

Pray, good hired men, do not laugh at me; for I am quite serious when I say, that my fear is, that this war will lead to the creating of a *formidable* navy in America. The *means* are all in her hands, and her successful beginning will not fail to give activity to those means.

A navy, a military marine, in America, is, to me, a most formidable object. Twenty frigates only would cause an expense to us of millions a-year, unless we resolved to yield the West India Islands at once.

I would not advise our Government to look upon the rearing of an American Navy as something necessarily *distant*. America has swelled her population from about two to about eight millions in the space of less than 30 years. Another ten years may see her population amount to twenty millions. From not being permitted "to make a hob-nail," she has risen to be an exporter of numerous useful manufactures. I state it as an undeniable fact, that she is now able to supply herself with all the articles necessary to man, even in polished life. And, if this be so, why should she not be able to *rear a Navy*, having already nearly as great a mercantile marine as our own.

Whether it will be for her *happiness* that she should do this is another question; but, that she *will* do it I think is most likely; because, in the mass composing every society of men, there is generally a sufficient number on the side of power and glory to decide the nation in favour of the love of those captivating objects.

This war, therefore, if not speedily put an end to, will, in my opinion, not fail to make America a manufacturing nation, as far as her own wants call for, and to make her also a naval nation; and will thus, at one stroke, deprive us of our best customer for goods, and give us upon the seas a rival who will be daily growing in strength as well as in experience.

In my preface to the republication of Mr. Chancellor Livingstone's *Treatise on Merino Sheep*, I showed how necessarily it would follow from the introduction of flock-keeping in America, that she would become independent of us to woollens. Nevertheless, and in spite of all the facts which have, from time to time, been published relative to the manufacturing of cloths in that country, there are still men to treat with *ridicule*, aye, even with *ridicule*, the idea of America being able to make her own coats and blankets. I remember, that, while I was in Newgate for two years, for writing about the flogging of the Local Militia, at the Town of Ely, in England, under the superintendence of German Troops, there came a gentleman, who was, I believe, a dealer in wool, to ask my opinion relative to the future commerce with America. After having spent about a quarter of an hour in a detail of facts, which, in my mind, contained *proof unquestionable*, that the woollen trade with America was for ever *at an end*, he began a sentence upon the surprising increase of the manufactures in America, which he concluded in words to this effect: "I dare say, that, in less than *half a century*, we shall not ship a bale of cloth to that country." This put me in mind of the effect that the Botley Parson's sermons used to have upon me; and I lost no time in changing the subject of conversation.

I am not one of those who shall regret this independence of America, which I do not think will prove any injury to England in the end; but I could have wished the change to have been *less abrupt*, and effected without war, and without the animosities and the sufferings inseparable from war. To me it appears as absurd as it is unnatural, that the American farmer should not have his coat untaxed at the Custom-house in England. I can see no sense and no reason in it. Nor do I see why the people of England, or any portion of them, should make coats or knives, or any thing else for the use of other countries, except merely in such quantities as may be necessary to exchange for wine and oil, and some few other things which really are useful to man. The use of commerce is to effect an exchange of the products of one climate for those of another; but governments have turned it into the means of *taxation*, and, in many cases, that appears to be its only object. An exchange of *English coals* for *French wine*, the former at 30s. a chaldron at Paris, and the latter at 6d. a bottle in London; that would, indeed, be a commerce to be contemplated with pleasure. But a commerce, carried on under a code of prohibitions and penalties, such as those now every where in existence, is not to be desired. It is an instrument of taxation, and an endless source of war, and it is nothing more.

Those, however, who are of a different opinion, may look upon the war with America as one of the surest means of destroying, or, at least, diminishing for ever, the best branch of what they admire; but, while I blame the ministers for the war, I must say, that the merchants and manufacturers (I mean the powerful ones) have no right to blame them. The ministers, in their measures towards America, have done no more than pursue *that same system*, of which those merchants and manufacturers have a thousand times, and in the strongest terms, expressed their approbation. At the outset of this long and destructive war, who stood forward so readily in support of it as this class of persons? The war-whoop has invariably originated with them. They indulged the selfish hope of seeing themselves in possession of all the trade and all the riches of the world. The English newspapers contain a record of their

love of war, of war against any body, so long as it promised gain to them. They have, over and over again, called the war which began in an invasion of France by the Duke of Brunswick, "a just and necessary war;" but, of late, they appear to have been taught by their *poor-books* and the list of *Bankrupts*, that the war is not quite so "necessary," however "just" they may still think it. They have, I repeat it, no right to complain against the ministers, who have not deviated from the system of Pitt and Grenville, and who, with regard to America, are only acting upon the very same principles, and pursuing the very same objects, that have been acted upon and pursued from the year 1792 to the present day; and the manufacturers are tasting, as is most meet, of the fruit of the tree of their own planting and protecting.

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 7th January, 1813.

AMERICAN STATES.

(Political Register, January, 1813.)

My two last Articles were devoted principally to the task of endeavouring to convince the Prince Regent and the public, that it was neither dangerous nor dishonourable to yield to the terms upon which we might have had, and may yet have, peace with America: and, to my great mortification, though, I must confess, not much to my surprise, I now see, from the contents of the last Gazette, wherein is His Royal Highness's "*Declaration*," that all my endeavours have been of no avail, and that war, long, expensive and sanguinary war, will now take place with an enemy, who, above all others, is capable of inflicting deep wounds upon this already-crippled, or, at least, exhausted nation.

From the first publication of the Letters which passed between Lord Wellesley and Mr. Pinckney, soon after the French had announced their intention to repeal the Berlin and Milan Decrees; from the very day of that publication, which took place soon after I was imprisoned in Newgate for two years (with a fine to THE KING, which I have since paid, of a thousand pounds) for having written and published upon the subject of flogging certain English militia-men, at the town of Ely, in England, who had been first reduced to submission by German Troops; from the very day of that publication I began to fear the present sad result of the dispute which had then assumed a new and more serious character than it had ever before worn. With that fear in my mind, I bent all my feeble powers towards preventing such result. I have failed: opinions and counsels the direct opposite of mine have prevailed; and time will show who was right and who wrong.

Upon former occasions the real grounds of war have, but too often, been lost sight of in the multitude and confusion of subsequent events; the Government has had the address to enlist the passions of men on its side, and the voice of reason has been stifled.

But, *here*, as I was from the first resolved it should be, there is a clear,

a distinct, an undisguisable ground before our eyes; we know well what we are at war for: we know, and must bear in mind, that we are at war for the purpose of *enforcing our practice of stopping American vessels upon the high seas, and taking out of them all such persons as our naval officers may deem to be British seamen.* This is now become the clearly defined subject of the war with America.

The "DECLARATION," does not contain any *new* matter: it is a summary of what our Ministers have before alleged and asserted in their correspondence with the American Government and its divers agents. But, there are some few passages of it which require to be particularly noticed.

The question relating to the Orders in Council has been before so amply discussed, in my several Letters and articles upon the subject, that I will not encumber my present remarks with any thing relating thereto; but, will confine myself to what relates to the impressment of persons out of American ships on the high seas.

Upon this point the "DECLARATION" says:

"His Royal Highness can never admit, that in the exercise of the *undoubted* and hitherto *undisputed* right of searching neutral merchant vessels in time of war, the impressment of British seamen, when found therein, can be deemed *any violation of a neutral flag.* Neither can he admit, that the taking such seamen from on board such vessels, can be considered by any neutral State as a hostile measure, or a justifiable cause of war.—There is no right more clearly established, than the right which a Sovereign has to the allegiance of his subjects, more especially in time of war. Their allegiance is no optional duty, which they can decline, and resume at pleasure. It is a call which they are bound to obey: *it began with their birth, and can only terminate with their existence.*—If a similarity of language and manners may make the exercise of this right more liable to *partial mistakes, and occasional abuse,* when practised towards the vessels of the United States, the same circumstances make it also a right, with the exercise of which, in regard to such vessels it is more difficult to *dispenſe.*"

The doctrine of *allegiance*, as here laid down, I admit, with some exceptions; but, as to the right of impressing British seamen, on the high seas, out of neutral ships, I deny it to be founded on *any* principle or maxim laid down by *any* writer on public law. Indeed, the "DECLARATION" does not say that it is: it says, that the right of SEARCHING neutral vessels in time of war is "*undoubted* and has *hitherto been undisputed.*" This is not correct; for, not only has even *this* right been doubted, not only are there two opinions about it in the books on public law, but the writers on public law are, for the most part, *against* the said right as *we practise it*, and they contend, that we have no right to seize enemy's goods on board of merchant ships which are neutral. Nay, the contest has given rise to military resistance on the part of our now-ally, Russia, Denmark, and Sweden; and, what is still more, Great Britain ceased, upon their *threats*, to exercise this, even *this*, right of seizing *enemy's goods* on board of neutral ships of war.

But, this right; this right of SEARCHING neutral ships; what has it to do with the *impressment of persons* on board of such ships? That is what the Americans object to, and are at war against. They are not at war against our right of *search*, even in our own interpretation of that right. What they object to is, the stopping of their vessels on the high seas, and taking *people* out of them by force; a practice which, I repeat it, is sanctioned by no principle or maxim of any writer on public law, nor by any usage heretofore known in the world.

The "DECLARATION" does not assert, as Lord Castlereagh did, in his letter to Mr. Russell, that this practice is sanctioned by any former usage; but, it *declares* the right from the *right of search*. It says, that, *in exercising* "the right of search," that is to say, the right to search for articles *contraband of war*, and for *enemy's goods*, we have a right to impress British seamen, if we find them. So that, this is the new shape of the defence of the practice: we do not now assert that we have a right to stop American vessels upon the high seas *for the purpose of impressing* our seamen; but, having stopped them for the purpose of exercising our old "*right of search*," we have a right to avail ourselves of the opportunity to take out persons whom our own officers, at their discretion, may judge to be British seamen.

This is not even *plausible*, in my opinion; for, what right can we have to impress, if we have no right to stop for the purpose of impressing? I may enter another's house to search for a stolen coat, and, if I find there my hat, I may seize it as well as my coat, having due authority for the first; but, be it observed, that to steal the hat was as criminal as to steal the coat; and, if I had known, or suspected, that the hat was there, I might have had my search-warrant for the former as well as for the latter.

The law of nations calls the high seas the common right of nations. A ship there is a parcel of the State to which she belongs, and the sovereign rights of that State travel with her. The sole exception is, as has been before stated, that belligerents have a right to search neutrals for *goods of the enemy*, and for *warlike stores and troops*, carrying for the enemy's use; because, as far as neutrals are engaged in such a service, they are deemed to be *in the service of the enemy*.

In all other respects a neutral ship carries with her, on the high seas, the rights of sovereignty appertaining to the State to which she belongs.

Now, it is well known, that no nation has a right to enter the territory of another to exercise any authority whatever, much less that of seizing persons and carrying them away by force; and, indeed, is it not fresh in every one's memory, what complaints were made against the French for entering the territory of the Elector of Baden, and seizing the Duke of Enghein?

If we have a right to enter American ships on the high seas, and take out of them, by force of arms, British seamen, what should hinder us from having the same right as to any of the sea-ports of America? Nay, why should we not go and seize our numerous manufacturers, who have been (contrary to our laws) carried to America, and who are filling America with cloths and cutlery? Their alleging, that they went thither to avoid the effect of prosecutions for libel or for some other of our state crimes, would be no bar to our claim upon them; and, in short, they could never be safe to the last moment of their lives.

It is said, that the seamen on board of American ships are *deserters*. Be it so. We may be sorry that they do desert; but it is no crime in the Americans that our sailors go into America. Is it not well known that numerous deserters from the Austrian and Prussian armies have at all times deserted into the neighbouring States; and is it not equally well known, that the neighbouring State has invariably possessed the undisputed right of giving them protection, and of enlisting them in its service?

Why, therefore, should we deem it a crime in America, whose abundance of lands and provisions, whose high price of labour, and whose hap-

pinces to the lower orders of mankind, hold out their arms to the whole world?

And here I cannot help introducing a remark upon the proposition, made by Lord Castlereagh to Mr. Russell, that the American Government should stipulate to *deliver up* all British seamen in the service of Americans. Mr. Russell is said to have expressed himself as having been *shocked* at this proposition, which has afforded an abundant theme of abuse of him by our hireling writers. But, I have no scruple to say, that I firmly believe, that it is a proposition that never was before made to any independent State; even to the most petty State of Germany. There was a plan, some years ago, in agitation amongst the States of Europe, for putting in force a mutual surrender of each other's subjects, whereupon the Abbé Raynal remarks, that, if it had gone into effect, each of the several States might have taken the motto of *Danté* over the entrance to his *infernal regions*: "He who enters here leaves even *hope* behind." He represents it as the utmost stretch of tyranny; a point, he says, which the world ought to perish rather than reach. And, therefore, though Lord Castlereagh's proposition did not go this length; though it was confined to British *seamen*, we have no reason to abuse Mr. Russell for his expression.

It will be said, may be, that Mr. Russell was ordered to stipulate for the surrender, on our part, of all American seamen. Aye; but the difference is, that Mr. Russell proposed the surrender of those only who had been *impressed by us*; whereas we wanted to stipulate for the surrender of those British seamen who had gone into America of *their own free will*. We wanted to have surrendered to us, men who were employed in American *merchant-ships*; they wanted us to surrender men, whom we had seized in their ships and forced into our *men-of-war*.

But, is it possible, that any one can find anything to object to in a request, that, as a *preliminary*, we should give up the Americans, whom we had impressed into our service? What is the state of those men, now on board of our ships of war? What is their state? Has the reader reflected upon this? They must be useless on board of ship; they must not act; they must do no seaman's duty; or, they must, according to our own doctrine, lately exemplified at Horsemonger-lane, be *TRAITORS*, worthy of being hanged, ripped up, and cut in quarters.

His Royal Highness's Declaration says, that allegiance to his father and his successors begins with a man's birth and ends but with his death. And, is it not the same with American citizens? Do they not owe similar allegiance to their country? Or is it about to be pretended, that none but kings can claim this sort of allegiance?

I do not think that any one, even of the writers in the Times and Courier, will have the impudence to set up this doctrine; but, this they must do before they can make out any good ground of charge against the Americans for having demanded, as a preliminary, the surrender of the impressed American seamen.

Captain Dacres, in accounting for the loss of his frigate, expressly states, that he had *many Americans on board*, whom he permitted to be spectators, from a reluctance to compel them to fight against their country. And, can the reader believe, that this was the only instance in which native Americans were unwillingly serving on board of British ships of war? What, then, again, I ask, must be the state of those Americans? And, what are we to think of those writers who

abuse Mr. Russell for proposing to us their surrender as a step preliminary to any further arrangement?

The Declaration complains, that America demanded the abandonment of the practice of impressment as a *preliminary* to her passing a law to prevent British seamen from being received on board her ships.

The hiring writers have treated this demand as something too insolent to be for a moment listened to. The "DECLARATION" does not treat it in this lofty style; but it speaks of it in pretty strong terms, as thus:

"The proposal of an armistice, and of a simultaneous repeal of the restrictive measures on both sides, subsequently made by the commanding officer of his Majesty's naval forces on the American coast, were received in the same hostile spirit by the Government of the United States. The suspension of the practice of impressment was insisted upon in the correspondence which passed on that occasion, as a *necessary preliminary* to a cessation of hostilities. Negotiation, it was stated, might take place without any suspension of the exercise of this right, and also without any armistice being concluded: but Great Britain was required *previously* to agree, without any knowledge of the adequacy of the system which could be substituted, to negotiate upon the basis of *accepting the legislative regulations of a foreign State, as the sole equivalent for the exercise of a right, which she has felt to be essential to the support of her maritime power.*"

Well, and what then? "*A right*" it is called again; but, if America *denied* it to be a right, as she has uniformly done, what wonder was there that she made the proposition? Great Britain might "*feel*," though I should have chosen the word "*deem*," as smacking less of the boarding-school Miss's style; Great Britain might "*feel*," if feel she must, that the practice complained of was essential to the support of her maritime power; but did it hence follow, that America, and that impressed Americans, should like the practice the better for that? We have so long called ourselves the *deliverers* of the world, that we, at last, have fallen into the habit of squaring up all our ideas to that appellation: and seem surprised that there should be any nation in the world inclined to wish for the diminution of our power.

The Americans, however, clearly appear to see the thing in a different light. They, in their home-spun way, call us any thing but *deliverers*; and, it must be confessed, that, whatever may be our general propensity, we do not seem to have been in haste to *deliver* impressed American seamen.

That one nation ought not to yield a *right*, depending for compensation solely upon the legislative provisions of a foreign State, is very true; but, if the right be doubtful; if it be unsupported by any law, principle, maxim, or custom, then the case is different; and then, indeed, the offer of a legislative provision is a proof of a sincere desire to accommodate.

If my view of the matter be right, and I verily believe it is, this is the light in which that offer ought to be viewed; and I most deeply lament that it was not thus viewed by the ministers.

These lamentations, however, are now useless. The sound of war is gone forth: statement and reasoning are exhausted; the sword is to decide whether England is, or is not, to impress, at the discretion of her naval officers, persons on board American merchant-ships on the high seas.

There is one passage more in the "DECLARATION," upon which I cannot refrain from submitting a remark or two. After stating, that America

has made only *feeble remonstrances* against the injuries she has received from France, the "DECLARATION," this "*memorable document*," as the Courier calls it, concludes thus :—

"This disposition of the Government of the United States—this *complete subserviency to the Ruler of France*—this hostile temper towards Great Britain—are evident in almost every page of the official correspondence of the American with the French Government.

"Against this course of conduct, the real cause of the present war, the Prince Regent solemnly protests. Whilst contending against France, in defence not only of the liberties of Great Britain, BUT OF THE WORLD, his Royal Highness was entitled to look for a far different result. From their *common origin*—from their *common interest*—from their *professed principles of freedom* and independence, the United States were the last power in which Great Britain could have expected to find a *willing instrument*, and *abettor of French tyranny*.

"Disappointed in this just expectation, the Prince Regent will still pursue the policy which the British Government has so long, and invariably maintained in *repelling injustice*, and in supporting the general rights of nations; and, under the *favour of PROVIDENCE*, relying on the justice of his cause, and the tried loyalty and firmness of the British nation, his Royal Highness confidently looks forward to a successful issue to the contest, in which he has thus been compelled most reluctantly to engage."

The last paragraph is in the old style, and will hardly fail to remind Mr. Madison of the documents of this kind issued about *six and thirty years ago*. However, the style is none the worse for being old; though one cannot but recollect the occasion upon which it was formerly used.

I regret, however, to find, in this solemn document, a distinct charge against the American Government of "*subserviency to the Ruler of France*;" because, after a very attentive perusal of all the correspondence between the American and French Governments, I do not find anything, which in my opinion, justifies the charge. The truth is, that "the Ruler of France" gave way in the most material point to the remonstrances of America; and, I have never yet read a Message of Mr. Madison, at the opening of a Session of Congress, in which he did not complain of the conduct of France. The Americans abhor an alliance with France; and, if they form such an alliance, it will have been occasioned by this war with us.

This charge of subserviency to Buonaparte has a thousand times been preferred against Mr. Madison, but never, that I have seen, once *proved*. It is, indeed, the charge which we have been in the habit of preferring against all those powers, who have been at war with us: Spain, Holland, Prussia, Denmark, Sweden, and though last not least, Russia, as will be seen by a reference to Mr. Canning's answer to the propositions from Tilsit.

"Subserviency to the Ruler of France!" We stop the American merchantmen upon the high seas; we take out many of their own native seamen; we force them on board of our men-of-war; we send them away to the East Indies, the West Indies, or the Mediterranean; we expose them to all the hardships of such a life and all the dangers of battle, in a war in which they have no concern: all this we do, for we do not deny it; and when, *after MANY YEARS of remonstrances*, the American Government arms and sends forth its soldiers and sailors to compel us to desist, we accuse that Government of "*subserviency to the Ruler of France*," who, whatever else he may have done, has not, that I have ever heard, given the Americans reason to complain of impressments

from on board their ships. Many unjust acts he appears to have committed towards the Americans; but he has wisely abstained from impressments, which, as I have all along said, was the *only ground* upon which the people of America could have been prevailed upon to enter heartily into a war with any power: it is a popular ground: the war is in the cause of the people: accordingly, we find the motto to the war is: "*Liberty of the seas and seamen's rights.*"

I therefore regret exceedingly that the "DECLARATION" styles America "a willing instrument and abettor of French tyranny." It is a heavy charge; it is one that will stick close to the memory of those who support the war; it will tend to inflame, rather than allay, the angry passions; and, of course, it will tend to kill all hopes of a speedy reconciliation.

As to what the "DECLARATION" is pleased to say about the "*common origin*" of the two nations, if of any weight, it might be urged, I suppose, with full as much propriety by the Americans *against our impressments*, as it is now urged against their resistance. I remember that it was urged with great force in favour of American submission to be taxed by an English parliament; but, as the result showed, with as little effect as it possibly can be upon this occasion.

There is one thing in this "*calling cousin*," as the saying is, that I do not much like. The calling cousin always *proceeds from us*. The Americans never remind us, that we are of the same origin with them. This is a bad sign on our side. It is we, and not they, who tell the world of the relationship. In short, it is well enough for a newspaper to remind them of their origin; but I would not have done it in a solemn Declaration; especially, when I was accusing them of being the willing instrument and abettor of our enemy.

"*Common interest.*" That, indeed, was a point to dwell on; but, then, it was necessary to produce something, at least, in support of the proposition. The Americans will *query the fact*; and, indeed, they will flatly deny it. They will say, for they have said, that it is not for *their interest*, that we should have more power than we now have over the sea; and, that they have much more to dread from a great naval power, than from an overgrown power on the Continent of Europe. They are in no fear of the Emperor Napoleon, whose fleets they are now a match for; but they are in some fear of us; and, therefore, they do not wish to see us stronger.

It is in vain to tell them, that we are fighting in defence of the "*liberties of the world.*" They understand this matter full as well as we do, and, perhaps, a little better. I should like to see this proposition attempted to be *proved*. I should like to hear my Lord Castlereagh, beginning with the Declaration against the Republicans of France, continue on the history of our hostilities to the present day, taking in those of India by way of episode, and concluding with the war for the *right of impressment*, make it out, *how* we have been and are defending the liberties of the world.

I dare say that his Lordship could make it out clearly enough. I do not pretend to question the fact or his ability; but it would be at once instructive and entertaining to hear *how* he would do it.

"From their *professed* principles of *freedom.*" From these the "DECLARATION" says, that His Royal Highness expected the United States would have been the last power to become a willing instrument of French

tyranny. Very true : of *French tyranny* : but, that did not hinder him from expecting them to be the enemy of *impressing men from on board their ships* ; and, it should have been shown how this disposition proved them to be a willing instrument to French tyranny, or of any tyranny at all.

It is useless to revile ; it is useless to fly off to other matter. We impress men on board of American ships upon the high seas ; we take out (no matter whether by mistake or otherwise) American seamen as well as English ; we force them to fight on board our ships ; we punish them if they disobey. And, when they, after years of complaints and remonstrances, take up arms in the way of resistance, we tell them that they show themselves the willing instruments and abettors of French tyranny.

I wish sincerely that this passage had been omitted. There are other parts of the "*DECLARATION*" that I do not like ; but this part appears to me likely to excite a great deal of ill-will ; of lasting, of rooted, ill-will.

I do not like the word "*professed*," as applied to the American *principles of freedom*. The meaning of that word, as here applied, cannot be equivocal, and assuredly would have been better left out, especially as we never see, in any of the American documents, any expressions of the kind applied to us and to our Government.

But, to take another view of the matter, *why* should His Royal Highness expect the Americans to be disinclined towards France, because they profess principles of freedom ? *Why* should he, on *this account*, expect that they would lean to *our side* in the war ?

Does the Declaration mean to say, that the Government of France is more tyrannical than was that monarchy, for the restoration of which a league was made in Europe in the years 1792 and 1793 ? From its tone, the Declaration may be construed to mean, that *our* Government is *more free* than that of France, and that, therefore, we might have expected the Americans, who profess principles of freedom, to be on *our side* in a contest against "*French tyranny*."

Hem ! Mum !

* Well, well ! We will say nothing about the matter ; but, it must be clear to every one, that the Americans may have their *own opinion* upon the subject ; and, they may *express it too*, until we can get at them with an *ex-officio*. They may have their own opinion upon the matter ; and their opinion may possibly differ from ours. They are, to be sure, at a great distance ; but, they are a *reading* and an *observing* and a *calculating* people ; and, I'll engage, that there is not a farmer in the back States who is not able to give a pretty good account of the blessings of "*English Liberty*."

Besides, leaving this quite out of the question ; supposing that the Americans should think us freemen and the French slaves, why should that circumstance prevent them from leaning to the side of France ? What examples of the effect of such morality amongst nations have the Regent's ministers to produce ? How often have we seen close alliances between free and despotic States against States either free or despotic ? How often have we been on the side of despots against free States ? England was once in offensive alliance with France against Holland ; Holland and France against England ; and, it ought never to be forgotten, that England, not many years ago, favoured the invasion of Holland and the subjugation of the States-General by a Prussian army.

Have we not formed alliances with Prussia, Austria, Russia, Spain, Naples, and all the petty princes of Germany, against the *Republic of France*? Nay, have we refused, in that war, the co-operation of *Turkey and Algiers*? And, as for the old Papa of Rome, "the Whore of Babylon," as our teachers call him, his alliance has been accounted holy by us, and his person an object of our peculiar care and protection.

Why, then, are we to expect, that America is to refrain from consulting her interests, if they be favoured by a leaning towards France? Why is she to be shut out from the liberty of forming connections with a despotism, supposing a despotism now to exist in France?

The truth is, that, in this respect, as in private life, it is interest alone that guides and that must guide; and, in my mind, it is not more reasonable to expect America to lean on our side on account of the nature of the Government of our enemy, than it would be to expect a Presbyterian to sell his sugar to a Churchman, because the only man that bade him a higher price was a Catholic.

Here I should stop; but, an article, upon the same subject, in the *Morning Chronicle* of the 18th instant, calls for observation.

Upon the falsehoods and impudence of the *Times* and the *Courier*, that is to say, the principal prints on the side of the Wellesley party and that of the Ministers, I have remarked often enough. I was anxious to hear what the Whigs had to say, and here we have it. Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Brougham had pledged themselves to support the war, if America was not satisfied with the repeal of the Orders in Council; and here we have the *grounds* of that support. On this account the article is interesting, and, of course, worthy of an attentive perusal.

"Notwithstanding the tedious length of the papers on both sides, the question between the Court of London and the Government of the United States is simply the right of impressment of seamen on board trading ships—and this is, in truth, the sole cause of the war. If we were to examine the value of this cause to the two parties, it cannot be denied but that to the Americans it is exceedingly slight, and to the British highly material. The Americans cannot regard it as an insult, because it is a right which has been at all times asserted and acquiesced in by Sovereign States respectively. Then, viewed as an injury what is it? That they shall go to war to prevent British subjects who have forfeited their allegiance, abandoned their country, and left their families probably starving, from being impressed on board their merchant-vessels—that is to say; they claim the right to afford an asylum and employ the refuse of the British navy—men without principle, for it is only the profligate that are likely to become the objects of their protection. In this view, then, the point is of little consequence to the Americans, but it is interesting to the British to assert the power inherent in every State to reclaim its subjects; and the time may come when the principle would be equally important to America herself.

"But, say the American Ministers, it is not so much the right itself, as the violent and insulting mode of exercising it that we complain of; for we have upon reflection agreed in the principle of international law, that free bottoms do not make free goods, and therefore we have no objection to the search of our merchant-ships for contraband of war; but, in that case, whenever warlike stores, &c. are found on board an American vessel, she is detained and carried into a port, for adjudication by a competent Court. Whether the adjudication be always impartial or not is another affair, but in this respect nations are on an equal footing, and these Admiralty Courts, well or ill-conducted, are recognized by all maritime nations. But with respect to the impressment of seamen, the act is violent because summary, and because it is subject to no review—so no adjudication—and because the individual seized has no means of redress. By this sort of reasoning there is a tacit admission on the part of America, that it is not to the act itself which they object so much as to the manner of the act; and accordingly we see various suggestions made by Ame-

"ricans, for entering into an amicable discussion on the means of getting over the outrageous way in which the right is exercised, and of giving security to both nations against the abuse in question. On the other side, Lord Castlereagh declares the readiness of the British Government to receive and discuss any proposition on this subject coming from the American Government; though he would not enter into a negotiation, a preliminary to which should be the concession of this right, and so far we think he was clearly right.

"But is it not monstrous that two people of common origin, and of almost inseparable interests, should remain at war on a point upon which there is so little difference between them? Surely without any sacrifice of etiquette on either side, the expedients might be canvassed, by which this mighty cause of war might be removed. Let each party promulgate their thoughts on the subject, and if there be an honest disposition to peace, it must follow.

"The argument on both sides is short, and may be put in a few words. The agreement ought to be so drawn as to make it most dangerous to the Captain of an American ship to employ a British seaman on board; and, on the other side, to make it equally dangerous for a British Captain to seize and carry off an American seaman, under pretext of his being a British subject. Or, in other words, it ought to be made their interest to abstain from those two causes of national offence. Various modes have been suggested for this purpose.—The most effectual undoubtedly would be to ordain by a treaty, that the subjects of each power, if found on board the merchants' vessels of the other, *should be considered in the nature of contraband of war*, inasmuch as their natural Sovereign was thereby deprived of their service in war, and that that should be a cause to detain the vessel for adjudication. By this the American Captain or his owners would most seriously suffer by having British seamen on board; and, on the other hand, the British Captain would equally suffer, if he had all the risk and loss to incur of an improper detention. Against this, however, the arguments are strong. The American Captain may have been imposed upon by the similarity of language, &c.; and when brought into one of our ports, where there is a competent Court to adjudge the point, a real American seaman might find it impossible to adduce proofs of his nativity. Besides, in both events, the penalty would be inordinate.

"Another suggestion has been made, that the British naval officer impressing a seaman on board an American vessel, and *vice versa*, should be bound to make a certificate in duplicate (or what the French call a *proces verbal*), to the fact, one copy of which he should deliver to the American Captain, and transmit the other to the Admiralty to be filed; and that the seaman seized should have his action for damages in the Courts of Law, the certificate to be produced by the Admiralty as proof of the trespass, if the person can prove himself to be a native of the country that he pretended to be. We confess we think that this ought to satisfy both Governments, for this would make officers cautious in exercising the right which at the same time cannot be safely surrendered."

This is poor, paltry trash. But, it contains one assertion, which I declare to be *false*. It is here asserted, that "the right of impressment of seamen on board of trading ships, is a right which has, *at all times been asserted, and acquiesced in by sovereign states respectively*."—I give this an unqualified denial. I say, that it is a right, which *no nation* has before asserted, and that *no nation* ever acquiesced in.

Let the Morning Chronicle name the nation that has ever done either: let him cite the instance of such a practice as we insist upon; let him name the writer, every English writer, on public law, who has made even an attempt to maintain such a doctrine; nay, let him name the writer, who has laid down any principle, or maxim, from which such a right can possibly be deduced. And, if he can do none of these, what assurance, what a desperate devotion to faction, must it be to enable a man to make such an assertion! The assertion of the "value of the cause" being slight to America, in comparison to what it is to us, has no better foundation. The *value*! what is of value, what is of any value at all, if the

liberty and lives of the people of America are of no value? And when we know, when no man will deny, when official records of the fact exist, that hundreds of native Americans have been impressed and sent to serve on board our ships of war: when this is notorious; when it neither will nor can be denied, what is of value to America if this cause be not of value?—As to the proposition for making English seamen “*contraband of war*,” it is so impudent, it is so shameful, it is even so horrid, that I will do no more than just name it, that it may not escape the reader’s indignation.—Indeed, there needs no more than the reading of this one article to convince the Americans, that all the factions in England are, in effect, of one mind upon the subject of this war; and, I am afraid, that this conviction will produce consequences, which we shall have sorely to lament, though I shall, for my own part, always have the satisfaction to reflect, that every thing which it was in my power to do, has been done, to prevent those consequences.

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 14th January, 1813.

THE LUDDITES.

(Political Register, July, 1812.)

Message of the Prince Regent to the two Houses of Parliament.—Sealed Papers and Secret Committee.—Nature of the Ballot for a Committee.—Publications in the TIMES and COURIER newspapers for the purpose of Feeling the Public Pulse.

“Englishmen, now is your time to watch the WHIGS!”

No. I.

THIS is the title which I intend to give to the several articles, which I shall necessarily have to write upon the subject of the measures now about to be adopted by the Government, with regard to the counties of England, which have for some time past, been in a state of disturbance.—It is well known, that the frame-breakers in Nottingham took the name of *Luddites*; that this name has since spread into the neighbouring counties; and that several counties have, for many months, been in a state of great trouble.

On Saturday, the 27th June, the following Message was delivered to the two Houses of Parliament, to the Lords by VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH and to the Commons by LORD CASTLEREAGH:

“GEORGE P. R.—His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, in the name and on behalf of his Majesty, has given orders that there be laid before the House of Commons, Copies of Information received by his Majesty’s Government, relative to certain violent and dangerous proceedings, in defiance of the laws, which have taken place, and which continue to take place, in certain counties of the kingdom.—His Royal Highness confidently relies on the wisdom of the House of Commons that they will adopt such measures as are necessary to secure the lives and property of the peaceable and loyal inhabitants of the disturbed districts, and to restore order and tranquillity.”

The first remark that presents itself here is, that, so long as three

weeks ago, Lord Castlereagh assured the House of Commons, that the accounts which were received by Government from the disturbed counties were very satisfactory, more and more so every day.

Either, therefore, he was misinformed, or the people have relapsed.

On Monday the 29th of June, both Houses voted, without a division, an Address to the Regent, promising to take the subject into their consideration, and to adopt such measures as might be necessary to ensure the end pointed out in the latter part of the Message.

Upon this VITAL subject we must be very particular as to the *names* of all the actors.

Lord Liverpool supported the motion in the Lords, which was made by Lord Sidmouth; and Lord Stanhope moved an amendment, the object of which was to shut out any project for *suspending the Habeas Corpus Act*. Lord Holland went with Lord Stanhope; but the motion was adopted.

N.B. Not a word against the motion by Lord Grenville or Lord Grey. In the Commons the motion was made by LORD CASTLEREAGH. Mr. Whitbread and Sir Francis Burdett expressed their hope that nothing was about to be attempted against the great constitutional laws of England.

The next thing that was done was the making of a motion in both Houses for the appointment of a SECRET Committee to examine and report upon certain papers that were laid upon the table, SEALED UP! The motion was, in the House of Commons (to which we will now confine ourselves), that the Committee should be appointed by *ballot*; that is to say, in fact, *appointed by the Ministry*.

What passed upon this subject was very interesting indeed. I will, therefore, insert it, and I beg the reader, especially if he be a young man, to make a point of bearing it in mind.

"LORD CASTLEREAGH then moved, that the Papers he had this day presented, should be referred to a Committee, that it be a Committee of Secresy, and that the number of Members be 21, which were severally ordered. His Lordship likewise moved, that the members be chosen by *ballot*.—MR. WHITBREAD protested against this mode of proceeding, since, *it would give the Noble Lord the appointment of every Member of the Committee*. He wished that the Members of it should be publicly named and chosen, that the House, and not the Noble Lord, might have the formation of the Committee. (*Hear !*)—LORD CASTLEREAGH persisted in his motion, since he was certain that on no side of the House on such a question would party feelings be exercised; he was convinced that it would be treated by Parliament in a manner, which while it did it honour, would give satisfaction to the people.—SIR F. BURDETT, looking at the precedents to which Mr. Whitbread had referred, could not help feeling great jealousy as to the conduct of Government; he hoped that the bounds of the Constitution would not anew be transgressed by them. The mode in which the Committee was formed, if the satisfaction of the people were looked to, was of the utmost importance. (*Hear, hear !*)—It ought to be of such a description, that the country would place reliance upon its wisdom and impartiality, and not to be merely composed of the creatures of ministerial nomination.—The question, that the Committee be chosen by ballot was then put and carried, though there were a long number of dissentient voices.—On the question that Members prepare lists, and appear to-morrow to put them into the classes appointed for their reception, MR. WHITBREAD declared that he should not attend for that purpose, as experience had shown that it would be useless, since any list he might prepare would be smothered in the vast heap of names supplied by the Noble Lord and his political friends.—It was ordered that the Papers communicated by the Prince Regent should remain sealed, until the appointment of the Committee."

From this the reader will form his opinion of the nature of a ballot.

But, indeed, a *ballot* is no more than this. Every member present at a given time, puts a ballot into a box, or something with a list of any 21 members' names that he may choose to write on a ballot. When the Speaker takes out the ballots, he counts the number of times that he finds the several names written. These 21 members whose names are written the greatest number of times are the Committee. From this it follows, of course, that the *majority* of the House select the Committee. The name of ballot does, doubtless, lead some persons to suppose, that the names of all the members are put into a box, and that, as in the case of a *common jury*, the first 21 names drawn out are the names of the Committee; but, after what has been said above, no one will be deceived upon this subject again.

The ministry did not, during the debate, develop their intended schemes. But, on the contrary, appeared extremely anxious to avoid making any explicit statement upon the subject. Mr. Whitbread, however, took occasion to anticipate any attempt upon the constitutional laws, as did also Sir Francis Burdett, and the former warned the ministers (by bidding them look at the example of other countries) of the consequences of resorting to measures unwarranted by the usual laws of the country. Mr. *Wilberforce* said something, and, as it was curious, we will have it upon record.

"He entirely participated in the hope that nothing would be found in the documents laid upon the table to call for any extraordinary measures. He would not allow himself even to express an opinion, lest it might give rise to feelings that ought to be banished from all minds, that might produce dissent instead of union, for the accomplishment of an object of the greatest magnitude, not being at all acquainted with the nature of the papers supplied, and not having been present on Saturday when the message was brought down, he was, perhaps, of all men, the least competent to offer anything to the House, but he could not avoid rising to express a wish, that the utmost calmness and moderation might be observed in the deliberation. Nearly connected as he was with a district of the country most disturbed, he felt it necessary to conjure the House, that the case of these unfortunate and misguided people might be fully and candidly weighed, that the result might be the restoration of order, unanimity, prosperity, and happiness."

This is a very curious speech. To *speak*, and say less than is here said, I should think extremely difficult. We will, reader, if you please, show our respect towards this honourable member by keeping a steady eye upon him all through this affair. I remember his conduct at the times when former measures of the kind now in contemplation were proposed. I remember him at the time of the *Bunk stoppage*, and upon various other trying occasions.

While these things were going on in Parliament, the venal press was not idle; especially the newspapers called the *Times* and the *Courier*. These prints began, at once, to pave the way for what was intended to follow; they began to feel the pulse of the people. The Message was carried down, as we have seen, on Saturday, and, on Monday morning, the former of these prints began to announce, that it wished to see the rioters "*put out of the protection of the law*;" alleging, as a reason, that they were become *assassins* and *incendiaries*. But, even assassins and incendiaries have hitherto had the *law* applied to their case. I do not know why the word *assassin* is now so much in use. It seems that there are people who think it more horrible in its sound than the word *murderer*. Be this as it may, however, we have *laws* for the punishment of persons guilty of *murder* and *arson*. If this is all, we want no new

laws. "When," says the vile *Times*, "they became assassins and incendiaries, they put themselves out of the protection of the LAW, and JUSTICE must be done upon them." This is an excellent phrase! The law is to be laid aside, and justice is to be done! Very good, indeed! But, this is the sort of trash that delights the readers of this corrupt vehicle. In his paper of the 30th of June, this writer calls the people in the disturbed counties "abandoned revolutionary miscreants." In short, he says every thing which malice and cruelty can suggest to him in order to prepare beforehand for a justification of any measures of severity that may be adopted. The *Courier*, the faithful fellow-labourer of the former print, sets about its work in a more elaborate manner. It begins, on Monday, the 29th of June, with accounts of acts of violence committed in Yorkshire, Staffordshire, and Nottinghamshire. And, having inserted those accounts, the hireling next sets about his work, the recommending of a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and the putting the country under martial law. These things he talks of as coolly as Lord Liverpool, some years back, talked of a march to Paris.

Reader, does not this last sentence bring you back to the outset of the French Revolution, when this nation went to war to keep down republicans and levellers? Really the contest has brought us to something at last! How far farther it will take us I do not know.

To return now to the accounts from the troubled counties, I think it necessary to insert them here; because, it will, hereafter, be very useful to be able to recur to these dawnings of a state of things, the like of which, this country has not seen for a great while, and which will, if I mistake not, make a very considerable figure in history.

The *Courier* begins with Nottingham, a place at the very name of which every hireling's knees knock together. To be sure, he has nothing here to speak of but a squabble at the playhouse; but, of that he makes the most. I beg the reader to pay attention to the story.

"Nottingham, 26th June.—The theatre at this place has been abruptly closed by command of the Town Magistrates, in consequence of the tumultuous proceedings that have taken place on several successive evenings, occasioned by a request made to the Orchestra to play the NATIONAL air of *God save the King*. On the tune being called for, it has generally been accompanied with a cry of '*Hats off*,' which has produced the most violent opposition on the part of those who are any thing but loyal. Instead of complying with the request, the Oppositionists answer it with a cry of '*Millions be free*,' and rising with their hats on, place themselves in the most menacing attitude of defiance. This act of INDECENCY has frequently led to blows, and individuals in the boxes have been obliged to seek their personal safety by leaping into the pit, while those in the pit have placed themselves in array against the boxes, and a general contest or tumult has been the result. In several instances tickets have been distributed, gratis, to the amount of several pounds, with a view to beat down the loyal party by main force, in consequence of which several OFFICERS have been insulted, and mal-treated, particularly on Wednesday evening last, when a number of those desperadoes surrounded Brigade-Major HUMPHREYS, on coming out of the Theatre, hooted him along the streets to his quarters, and threw a bottle in his face which cut him severely. Brigade-Major HUMPHREYS is a most gentlemanly character, who had never taken any part whatever in the disturbances, but that he was a military officer was quite sufficient. On another occasion, a party way-laid an officer of the 2d Somerset Militia who had been forward in displaying his zeal and loyalty to his King at the Theatre, in the Park, late in the evening, and beat him in a most inhuman manner. Several have been compelled to enter into recognizances for their good behaviour, and two or three are bound over to appear at the Quarter Sessions, for the assault committed on the officer in the Park. This evening was fixed

"for the benefit of Mr. Robertson, one of our highly respected Managers, who calculated upon a net receipt of at least 100*l.*; but by the abrupt closing of the Theatre, his benefit is necessarily postponed until after the Races, which it is supposed will be a great loss to him."

Now, reader, if you examine this matter, you will find, that, even upon their own showing, the God-save-the-King party have been the aggressors.

What right, I should like to know, has one part of an audience at a public theatre to compel the other part, however small that other part may be, to *stand up*, or to *pull off their hats*, upon the playing of a tune or the singing of a song called for by the former? And, if this right exists in no case, it surely cannot exist when, as appears to have been the case here, the party, taking upon them to give the command is the least numerous. Well might the theatre be shut up, if the manager would suffer the *few* amongst his audience to hector over the *many*.

This writer calls the tune of *God save the King* "the NATIONAL air." But, he has not cited to us any law by which we are compelled to rise and pull off our hats at the playing of it. *He* may like it, and so may the Officers at Nottingham, though the language is a rare specimen of stupid verbosity and tautology; though some of the sentiments, as far as they can be called sentiments, are at once malignant, abject, and impious; and though the whole, when considered with reference to the unfortunate personage whose name is the chief burthen of the song, amounts to a species of burlesque the most disgusting that can be conceived, still it may accord with the taste of the military officers quartered at Nottingham, and they may, if they choose, consider the air as *national* and have it played accordingly at their mess-rooms. But, if we leave them to their taste, we shall not agree to subject the people of Nottingham thereto; we shall not agree that they have a right to cram their sentiments down the throats of the people of that town, or any other town or county.

Observe, reader, that it is not the people who *begin* the quarrel. The others call for the tune; it is *played*; no interruption is given by the people. But, this is not enough. The people must not only sit and hear that which they disapprove of; but, they must, at the *word of command*, pull off their hats, as a mark of *approbation* of that which they are known to disapprove of, and that, too, at the order of a comparatively small part of the audience. Can subservience; can slavery, go lower than this? And, if the people of Nottingham were compelled to submit to this, what impudence would it be in them to affect to revile any other people as slaves!

To this last stage of servility the people of Nottingham were not, it seems, disposed to submit; but, in answer to the *word of command*, they rose and exclaimed, "'MILLIONS BE FREE;' placing themselves, at the same time, in a most *menacing* attitude of *DEFIANCE*." Of *defiance*, mind. Not of *aggression*. And, what could be more proper? Yet this hiring calls it an "act of *indecenty*!" Slave, dost thou, then, think it an act of indecenty in Englishmen to answer an arbitrary and insolent command by an exclamation expressive of their love of freedom? Dost thou then, slave as thou art, think this an act of *indecenty*; and hast thou the impudence to give utterance and publicity to thy thought?

If the people of Nottingham were to submit to this command to pull their hats off in the play-house, why not in the street? And, if to pull

off their hats, why not to go down upon their knees, or to turn out their pockets? Loss of property and loss of liberty are never far asunder.

As to the assaults, committed on the bodies of the two military officers, if they were *unprovoked*, the parties ought to be punished; but, it will be observed, that we here have but *one side of the story*, and that every story has two sides. The story comes, too, from a man (if one ought to call him such), who looks upon it as an act of *indecent* for Englishmen, when arbitrarily and insolently commanded to pull off their hats, refuse to comply, and exclaim that they are free. This being the sort of persons from whom the story comes, we ought to distrust, and, indeed, to disbelieve every word of it that makes against the people of Nottingham.

One of these officers had, we are told, "been forward in displaying his zeal and loyalty to his King at the theatre." That is to say, he had been (according to this writer's previous account) *forward in commanding the men of Nottingham to pull off their hats*. The gentleman, whoever he is (and he is *not named*), might have found a better way than this of displaying his zeal and loyalty. There is very little loyalty in the bawling out of a stupid song; but that would have been a good in endeavouring to conciliate the people, amongst whom he was quartered.

In short, it is clear, that these rows at the theatre at Nottingham have been provoked by the unbearable insolence of a few of those persons, who assume to themselves the exclusive merit of *loyalty*. Nothing can be clearer than this, even from the statement of this hireling himself; and, therefore, it appears to me, that the conduct of the *manager* of the theatre has been unjustifiable. It was for *him* to express his disapprobation of the conduct of those, who were taking upon them to give commands to the audience, and turn a place of recreation, where every man had equal rights, into a scene of political triumph of the few over the thoughts and wishes of the many; and, in not having expressed this disapprobation, he appears to me to have tacitly taken part with insolent commanders. I am not, therefore, at all sorry for his loss; and, I hope, that, unless he makes atonement by restoring *freedom* to his theatre, he will be left to exhibit his scenes to his exclusively "loyal" customers and to them only.

So much for the accounts from Nottingham. Let us now hear those from other places. I shall insert them one after another without any interruption.

"HUDDERSFIELD (Yorkshire), June 25.—Last Monday, about midnight, a great number of armed men, with their faces disfigured by broad black marks down each cheek and over the forehead, assembled near the dwelling-house of Mr. Fisher, a shopkeeper of Briercliffe, in this neighbourhood, and after firing two guns or pistols, demanded admittance into Mr. Fisher's house, which he refused. They then broke open the door, and two of them rushing into the house, seized Mr. Fisher, who had just got out of bed; they each presented a pistol to his breast, and threatened him with instant death if he stirred a foot. Not intimidated by this threat, Mr. Fisher rushed from them towards the door, when he was seized by other six men, who placing a sheet over his head, face, and arms, kept him in that situation while their comrades ransacked the house, and took from his pocket-book bills to the amount of 11*l.* besides 20*l.* in notes and some cash; they also took a quantity of notes and cash out of a drawer, but to what amount Mr. Fisher does not exactly know. When the depredation was completed, the leader cried out to the guard placed over Mr. Fisher, 'Let him go; don't hurt him; we have got what we wanted, and we will bring it back in three months,' and immediately made off."

"SHEFFIELD (Yorkshire), June 27.—We are sorry to learn, from the resolutions of the meeting of Lieutenancy and Magistrates, that the nightly depredations, and other most violent breaches of the peace, in a great part of the manufacturing districts of this Riding, still continue. The most effective measures are immediately to be taken to stop the career of the lawless offenders."

"STAFFORD (Staffordshire), June 27.—In the beginning of the last week, a strong body of those deluded men, calling themselves *Luddites*, surrounded the house of a lady, the widow of an officer, residing in Edgeley, near Stockport, and, with horrid threats, demanded entrance, to search for arms. The inhabitants, under an impression of dreadful consequences resulting from a refusal, opened the door, when a number of armed men rushed into the house, and after minutely searching all parts took away with them eight swords, leaving the affrighted inmates in a state of extreme consternation. The party consisted of from eighty to one hundred, variously armed, and they paid the strictest obedience to the commands of one who acted as the leader, and who was of a respectable appearance. We wish we could, with that degree of justice we owe to the public's information, here close this article; but we are sorry to say, the lapse of each day discloses some new object of alarm—some new act calculated to impress upon us the most alarming sensations and apprehensions for the general peace and safety of the country. It has been told us, that assemblies nightly take place in secluded places, to the number of some hundreds, that the oath continues to be administered, and that the names of those who are parties to the abominable and seditious compact, are called over at the several places of rendezvous with all the regularity and appearance of system and discipline."

The acts here spoken of, if really committed, are such as call for the exertion of the lawful authorities to put a stop to them. They are *unlawful*, and that is enough; but, then, have we not *laws*? Have we not Justices and other magistrates; have we not Constables and other peace officers; have we not Sheriffs, who have power to call out *all the people* in their several counties to their assistance?

To lament the existence of such disturbances is unavoidable; but, I cannot help thinking, that, if I were a Lord Lieutenant, or even a Sheriff, I would render, as far as my county went, an application for military force unnecessary.

I cannot help observing here, that a great deal of mischief has, in all probability, been done by those who have the impudence to assume to themselves exclusively the appellation of "*loyal men*." These men, who, for the most part, live, in one way or another, upon the taxes, have, in the indulgence of their senseless rage against the Emperor Napoleon, been, in fact, openly inculcating the *right*, and even the *duty*, of a people to *rise in arms against their government*. I have in my eye two remarkable instances of this: one in the *COURIER*, who applauded the conduct (or reported conduct) of the people in Holland in flying to arms, and even in pulling the Dutch Judges from the Bench and dragging them along the streets. The other instance was in the *TIMES* newspaper, which said, not long ago, that it *hoped to have to record accounts of insurrections in France*. I, as the public will do me the justice to remember, remonstrated with these good hirelings at the time. I told that there was danger in the promulgating of sentiments of this sort; because, though they themselves were, doubtless, able to discriminate between an insurrection in England and an insurrection in France, some of their readers might not. I, therefore, advised them to *let France alone in this respect*, stating my opinion, that they would have to repent having meddled with her.

As to the *remedy* for the disturbances, the way to ascertain that, is, first to ascertain the *cause*; but, of that I must speak in my remarks upon

the article of the *COURIER* of the 29th instant, which, as I before observed, was published for the purpose of *feeling the public pulse*, and which, before I proceed to my remarks, I shall, agreeably to my usual practice, insert. I shall insert the whole of it, because it will hereafter be to be referred to. We are now, I am convinced, at the *dawn* of a set of memorable measures and events. It is, therefore, of great consequence to note down, and to fix clearly in our minds, all the preliminary steps. History often becomes wholly useless for want of a knowledge of the little springs which first set the machine in motion.

With this preface I hope the reader will enter upon the article, which is not long, with a disposition to attend to its contents.

"The Message of the Prince Regent to both Houses on Saturday, related to the violent proceedings which have taken place in several counties of England. Copies of the information which has been received by Government, relative to them will be laid before Parliament to-day. The intention of Government is to move an address this afternoon to the Regent, thanking him for his communication, and to refer the information to a Secret Committee of Inquiry. Of course we do not presume to state what their report will be; but it is rumoured that a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act will be proposed. We have, from the country papers received this morning, extracted accounts of the situation of several districts, where, we regret to state, the practice of stealing arms, administering treasonable oaths, and assembling in large numbers nightly, is carried on with increasing violence. More vigorous measures have therefore become necessary. That the Government have hitherto endeavoured to put down these outrages without demanding more extensive powers; that they hoped the laws as they stood would be sufficient; that they trusted the trials and punishment of some prominent offenders would operate as a salutary example and warning, is now adduced against them as a crime; and falsely imputing these outrages to the Orders in Council, the Opposition ask whether 'it is not alarming that measures of such extent should be brought into discussion at this season of the year;' when it is added, 'almost all the independent Representatives of the people are on their return to the country?' What! are measures necessary to the public peace and safety not to be discussed because independent Representatives do not choose to attend their duty in Parliament? If they prefer their own business or pleasure to the public business, are Ministers to blame? The evil which it is wished to remedy has grown to an alarming height only within a short time, how then was it possible to bring it into discussion earlier? And with respect to the Orders in Council, is there the least shadow of proof that the outrages were occasioned by them? Nay, is there not abundant evidence to show that they had nothing to do with them? Did the Orders in Council produce the destruction of the stocking-frames in Nottinghamshire? Did they lead to the burning of the mills in Yorkshire? Did they cause the horrible assassinations in Lancashire? Have they produced the Luddite Associations and the oaths of treason which have been the consequence of them? Are arms seized and large numbers of persons drilled and disciplined nightly because of the Orders in Council? It is absurd, if not worse, to endeavour so to mislead the public mind. But the Orders in Council have been repealed! It is known in every part of the disturbed counties that they have been repealed, and yet these outrages, so far from having abated in violence, are on the increase. TREASON is the object of these associations, and their weapons have hitherto been burnings and assassination. Are these crimes to be palliated or excused, and are we to characterize the perpetrators of them merely as poor deluded mistaken men? They are neither deluded nor mistaken; their hatred is against the whole form of our Government, and their object is to destroy it. The SUSPENSION OF THE HABEAS CORPUS, and the PROCLAMATION OF MARTIAL LAW may be and are measures to be deplored, but the question is, whether a lesser evil shall be incurred to avoid a greater; whether disaffection shall be put down and punished, or suffered to pursue its march with impunity."

The object of this article clearly is to prepare a justification of a suspension of the Habeas Corpus, or PERSONAL LIBERTY ACT, and also of the subjecting of the people of England to MARTIAL LAW.

Reader, English Reader ! Reader, of whatever country you may be, do think a little of the nature of the measures here unequivocally pointed out for adoption. As to the first, it would expose us, it would expose any of us, it would expose every man in England, TO BE PUT IN PRISON, INTO ANY PRISON, AND KEPT THERE, DURING THE PLEASURE OF THE MINISTRY, WITHOUT ANY SPECIFIC CHARGE AGAINST US, AND WITHOUT EVER BEING BROUGHT TO TRIAL. This would be the effect of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, which, by all our great lawyers, is described as the safeguard of our liberties and our lives.

The other measure, the proclaiming of martial law, would SUBJECT US ALL TO BE TRIED BY COURTS-MARTIAL, AND TO BE IMPRISONED, FLOGGED, HANGED, OR SHOT, AS SUCH COURTS-MARTIAL MIGHT ADJUDGE.

I do not say, mind, that Lord Castlereagh has these measures in his budget for us. No, no ; I do not say that ; but it is very clear, that the vile Editor of the *Courier* newspaper is prepared to justify the proposing and the adopting of these measures, which he calls "*a lesser evil*" than that of suffering "*disaffection* to go unpunished ;" and this he says, too, while he is calling upon us to fight for our *liberties*.

However, having seen his measures, let us now see what are the grounds upon which he would justify them. He says, that "*treason* is " the object of the rioters ; that they are neither deluded nor mistaken : "*but that their hatred is against the whole form of our government, and that their object is to destroy it.*" This must be news indeed to the Emperor of France, who will, doubtless, be anxious to hear to how many counties of England this hatred extends itself. He will, I dare say, be amused with the reflection that a twenty years' war to keep down republicans and levellers has brought us to this ; and, really, we cannot be much offended even if he should laugh at us, when he recollects that our newspapers have been expressing so anxious a desire to have to record the events of disturbances and insurrections in France.—But, where is the *proof* of the truth of this assertion of the *Courier* ? Upon the strength of what evidence is it, that he sends forth these tidings so pleasing to the Emperor of France and to all the enemies of England ? Where are his *proofs* of that treason and of that hatred of the whole form of the government, of which he talks ? If he has the proofs, why does he not give them ? And, if he has them not, how dares he make such an assertion ? How dares he thus blacken the character of the people of the most populous and most valuable part of the kingdom ?—He denies, that the Orders in Council have had any thing to do in the producing of the disturbances, though the evidence of a crowd of most respectable witnesses, given before both Houses of Parliament, *prove* that the Orders in Council have been *one cause*, at least, of the distresses which exist in the troubled counties ; and also prove, that the *distresses have been, or, at least, originally were, the cause of the disturbances*. Yet does this unfeeling man endeavour to make the world believe, that distress has had nothing at all to do with the matter.—It has been proved, in the clearest possible manner, that, in the troubled counties, the people have suffered and are suffering, in a most cruel manner ; that the food of many of them is of the worst sort, and not half sufficient in quantity ; that hundreds and thousands of poor mothers and their children are wholly destitute of *bread*, and that even *potatoes are too dear for them to get at* ; that the

food of these unfortunate creatures is *oatmeal and water*, and that they have not a sufficiency of that. It has been proved, that many have died, actually expired for want of food. And, it has been proved, that this want has, in part, at least, arisen from the existence of the Orders in Council.—Yet, with this proof all before him, does this unfeeling writer, this inexorable man, deny that any part of the disturbances has arisen from distress, and that a *treasonable* intention, “a hatred to the whole form of the government, and a desire to destroy it,” are the sole causes.

This pampered hireling does not know what *hunger* is. It is charity to suppose that he is incapable of forming an idea of the sufferings of a human being under the craving of an appetite which there are not the means to satisfy. Let him read a passage in the history of Trenck, who, having travelled for two or three days without eating, and being in a house where he saw some victuals without having money to purchase any, says, *he rushed out of the door lest he should commit murder in order to obtain the food, which he felt himself violently tempted to do.* Let the hard-hearted hireling read this passage; let him put himself, for a moment, in the place of a father who sees a starving family around him; and, then, I should hope, that he, even *he*, will feel and express some compassion for the suffering manufacturers.—Far be it from me to attempt to justify people in the commission of unlawful acts. I do not wish to justify the woman who, according to the newspapers, committed *highway robbery* in taking *some potatoes out of a cart at Manchester*, and who, according to the newspapers, was HANGED FOR IT. I do not pretend to justify her conduct. But there is, I hope, no harm in my expressing my *compassion* for her; and, I further hope, that my readers would think me a most inhuman brute, if I were to endeavour to deprive her and her unhappy fellow-sufferers of the compassion of the public; by asserting that she was actuated by a *treasonable* motive, and that she hated the whole form of our government, and wished to destroy it. No, reader, I will not lend my aid to this. I allow her to have been guilty of *highway robbery* in forcibly taking *some potatoes out of a cart at Manchester*; I allow this; and I allow that the law has made *highway robbery* a crime punishable with *death*, if the judges think proper; but I cannot and I wil' not allow, that her forcibly taking of some potatoes out of a cart at Manchester, was any proof of a *treasonable* design and of hatred against the whole form of our government.—Upon some future occasion I will give a picture of the mode of living of a poor man and his family in England, and will show how far his wages will go with the quartern loaf at 20 pence. At present I shall add only one remark to what has been said above, and that is, that though this hired writer could see nothing but *treason* to arm the Government against, LORD SIRMOUTH could. He could see, not only an insurrection of the head to provide against, but also an insurrection of the *belly*; for, in the speech by which he introduced his motion for thanks to the Regent for his Message, he is reported to have said:—“They (the government) ought “to be prepared for the worst. If their hopes should prove to be unfounded; if it should please Providence to afflict the country with “another BAD HARVEST; how heavy would be the *responsibility* of “the Government; how heavy that of their Lordships, if they neglected “to take such *precautionary measures as the occasion required*?”—Very true, my lord! Really, very true! And, doubtless, as you are so

sensible of the heavy responsibility that will fall upon you both as a minister and a lord, if *precautionary measures* are not taken to meet the affliction of another *bad harvest*; this being the case you, doubtless, have in view some means either of *augmenting the wages or income of the poor*, or, of *lowering the price of their food*. There appears to me to be only these two sets of means; and, as your lordship seems to be so fully sensible of the responsibility, there can be no doubt that one or the other will be employed. The former object might be accomplished, to a great extent, at least, by certain *savings* which I will hereafter take the liberty to point out to your lordship; and the latter, by adding to the quantity of corn by importation. But, I have not now room to do anything more than merely open this most interesting of all subjects.

We must now, before we take our leave of this subject for the present, return to the House of Commons, where, on Tuesday, the 30th June, we find the ballot producing the following members for the Secret Committee:

G. Canning	Lord G. L. Gower
W. Wilberforce	Lord Milton
Lord Castlereagh	C. Long
H. Lascelles	H. Goulburn
W. Lamb	J. S. Wortley
Samuel Whitbread	Lord Newark
The Master of the Rolls	— Paget
D. Davenport	G. Tierney
J. Blackburne	H. Leicester
W. W. Bootle	T. Babbington.
C. Yorke	

Upon the names being read over Mr. Whitbread said, "this List contained the identical names that he had seen handed about this morning. The present was therefore neither more nor less than the Treasury List, as all Committees ballotted for in this manner were uniformly found to be"

The reader will ask, perhaps, how it comes, then, that Mr. Whitbread's own name was put on it: but, reader, of what use is his name, if there be a majority on the side of the minister?

Such, then, is this SECRET Committee. And, what is this Committee to do? Why, it is to examine the SEALED UP papers; and, then it is to make a report to the House of the result of its inquiries, and of the measures which it thinks proper to recommend in consequence. And then the House is to decide without seeing the papers! Or, I suppose, at least, that this is the course, it having been so in other cases of Secret Committees.

Having now given this subject an opening, and having brought the history of the Luddite measures down to the appointment of the Committee of Secrecy; I shall, for the present, take my leave of it, with once more requesting my readers to WATCH THE WHIGS, and mark what their conduct will be through the whole of this transaction.

In neither House have they yet opened their lips upon the subject.

WM. COBBETT.

THE LUDDITES;

OR,

HISTORY OF THE SEALED BAG.

(*Political Register*, July, 1812.)

No. II.

IN my last, under this head, I inserted and commented on, an article, published by the hireling press, about a row at the *Theatre at Nottingham*. The following letter, published in the Nottingham Review of the 3rd of July, will show how false and how base were the charges contained in that article :

LIBELS AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF NOTTINGHAM.

To the Editor of the Nottingham Review

SIR : It seems that a dark scheme has been laid by several character-assassins, for the purpose of exciting the particular resentment of Government against the inhabitants of this town, as several of the London papers of this week have teemed with abuse against them, equally false and malignant. We are told that a man has been shot at, who had been active in bringing the "evil-disposed people to justice;" that "parties of these deluded people are in the habit of assembling in different parts of the town, to carry their revengeful designs into execution; that it is dangerous for the military to walk the streets in the evening; that on the 24th ult. Brigade-Major Humphreys, who is on the Staff here, was laid wait for on his return from the Theatre (which seems to be a favourite resort of these lawless ruffians) by a large party, and without the slightest provocation on his part, was knocked down by a shower of stones, two of which took effect, and one, which struck him on the forehead, nearly terminated his existence; and that an Officer of the Somerset Militia, who was quietly walking along the streets, was assaulted by a considerable party of these desperadoes, and narrowly escaped with his life," &c. Now, Sir, the truth or falsehood of these grave charges will show what credit is due to the testimony of these calumniators, who seem to ape the conduct of those *worthy* gentry, that some time ago corresponded with the *celebrated* and *honest* John Bowles.—It is true that a man was shot at eight miles hence on the 20th ultimo; but the writers in question might with as much propriety have charged the Lord Chancellor of England with having been accessory to the assassination of Mr. Perceval, as to implicate the people of Nottingham with an attempt on the life of a man eight miles hence, for his Lordship was very likely much nearer the House of Commons when Bellingham drew the fatal trigger.—As to the other charges, brought by these scribbling *gentlemen*, they are still of a more infamous complexion; but a short statement of facts will set the business to rights.—The Theatre is described as having been the rallying point for a set of ruffians; and, perhaps, this may prove correct; for it can be proved by many respectable witnesses, that few evenings passed over during the late season of performance at that should-be place of social amusement, without a row being kicked up by certain military characters, and a few stripling ruffians who had *honourably* enlisted under their *warlike* banners.—The practice generally was for these *worthies* to make their *sober* appearance at *half-price*, and as soon as the curtain fell, to vociferate "God save the King;" and those who did not immediately obey their second imperious mandate, which was "Hats off," were instantly assailed with oaths, sticks, swords, &c. *Party* in politics made no distinction here; for many persons of great respectability, who are known to be staunch friends to what is called "the high party," met with much abuse,

because they chose to act as men; nay, many of the fair sex felt the effects of the *gentlemanly* conduct of some of these *defenders of our country*, and their worthy coadjutors. One of them, a conspicuous officer of the 45th, for abusing a man in the pit, was brought before the Magistrates; and had not the prosecutor have taken the *hush-money*, he would have appeared in his true colours in a court of justice; a gentleman of high character both for property and personal respectability, was a volunteer evidence on the occasion, but who has had the tables turned upon him for his services; for this same *gallant* Officer has since caused him to be bound over to the Sessions, on a charge of having *excited* an assault upon the latter, though I do not understand that he exhibited any *honourable* wounds obtained in either his *offensive* or *defensive* operations. A jury will, however, set this business to rights.—As to the charge about the Somerset Officer, I will beg leave to inform you, that his *valour* had often been displayed against the *hats* of the audience in the Theatre, and that he one evening received a severe chastisement by the aid, as I understand, of a *horse-whip*, for which he has caused a man to be bound over to the Sessions.—As to the wound received by Brigade-Major Humphreys, I have no doubt, but every person in the town laments the unfortunate circumstance; because, since his residence here, he has invariably conducted himself as a gentleman. The truth is, however, that as he was departing from the Theatre, in company with some other officers, he was struck on the forehead by a stone, or some other hard substance; but, happy I am to say, so far from his life being endangered by the blow, that a gentleman of my acquaintance met him the next morning going about his business.—The principal sufferer in consequence of these outrages, is Mr. Robertson, one of the Managers of the Theatre; who, as a good husband, a good father, and in other respects, a good member of society, it grieves me to say, was deprived of his benefit, the Mayor ordering the Theatre to be shut; but who, I hope, will be remunerated when he makes his appearance here at the Races.—The writer of the inflammatory article in one of the London papers, whose character and station in life, I believe, I am acquainted with, concludes by saying, “It is a lamentable circumstance, that with the powers granted by the Watch and Ward Bill, such acts of atrocity should not be prevented.” To this I will reply, that, with the exception of the disturbances occasioned as above described, so peaceable is the state of the town, that the Magistrates have not seen it necessary to saddle the inhabitants with the expense and trouble of Watching and Warding since the 5th of June. So much for the veracity of these correspondents to the London papers!

A FRIEND TO TRUTH.

THE LUDDITES;

OR,

HISTORY OF THE SEALED BAG.

(Political Register, July, 1812.)

“That the subjects which are Protestants, may have arms for their defence, suitable to their conditions, and as allowed by law.”—DECLARATION OF RIGHTS.

No. III.

I HAVE brought down this curious history to the appointment of the Committee of the House of Commons, to examine and report upon the contents of the SEALED BAG. I am now about to put upon record what has been the result of that examination; and, when I have so done, I shall offer such remarks upon the subject as appear to me likely to assist in causing the thing to be *seen* in its true light, and also to be re-

membered for what it has been. The people of this country have been led on by degrees to their present state. No people were ever so much changed all at once. If, twenty years ago, the people of England, who were then shouting for war, had been told what their state would be in twenty years from that time, they would have been ready, like Richard, to stab the prophet in the midst of his prophecy. If they had been told, that, before that war should end, they would be compelled to pay an income-tax of ten per centum; that they would be subjected to laws of taxation such as those now in existence; that they would see German Troops brought into the heart of the country; that they would see the arms of a Local Militia put under the guard of regular soldiers; that they would see barracks erected in, or on the side of every considerable town; that they would see districts of England put under the command of German Officers; that they would see the Judges sitting at the assizes under the protection of regular soldiers; that they would see soldiers attending to protect the Sheriff and his officers at the execution of criminals; that they would see soldiers called in at an election for members to serve in Parliament; and, finally, that they would see a law passed for DIS-ARMING THE PEOPLE, or any considerable part of the people: if they had been told this, what would they have said? Would they not have regarded the man, telling them so, as either a madman or one disposed to excite hatred against the Government? Would not such a man have been prosecuted as a *seditious libeller*? Nay; how many Gentlemen, how many real friends of England and of English liberty, were prosecuted, and some of them utterly destroyed, for endeavouring to prevent the war, and to produce that reform, without which, as they then stated, it was impossible for England to avoid ruin? But, even their forebodings; even their notions of ruin fell far short of what we now have in the reality before our eyes.

Let the reader, therefore, prepare his mind for much more than he has yet seen. What is to be the end of the progress, in which we now are, no man can say, and I shall not pretend to conjecture; but, I beseech the reader to be prepared; and with this caution to him, I enter upon the continuation of the history of the sealed bag.

We before saw how the Secret Committee was *appointed*; and we have now to see its *report*. This report was laid before the House of Commons on the 8th instant, and, in substance, it is given as stating,

"That alarming disturbances, destructive to property, prevailed in the counties of Lancaster, York, &c., and had continued from the month of March down to the latest accounts on the 23rd of June. That the rioters assembled in the night-time, with their faces blackened, armed with the implements of their trades, and other offensive instruments, with which they destroyed the property of those who were obnoxious to them. That they had in many instances written threatening letters, had proceeded the length of setting fire to the houses of individuals, and even that an atrocious murder had been committed on a person of the name of Horsefall, by four persons, who there was every reason to believe were accomplices in these disturbances. That great dread and alarm was occasioned in consequence of these proceedings; and that, in some instances, sums of money were demanded and extorted. The Committee, without entering into details, thought it necessary to state, that the first object of these rioters seemed to be the breaking of machinery; but they had in many instances resorted to measures infinitely more alarming, namely, the demanding of arms; and had even carried them off, in many instances where they allowed every other species of property to remain untouched. These seemed not to be the effect of any sudden impulse, but of an organized system of lawless violence. Sometimes the rioters were under the control of leaders; and were distinguish-

"ed, not by names, but by numbers; were known to each other by signs and countersigns; and carried on all with the utmost caution. They also took an oath, that while they existed under the canopy of Heaven they would not reveal any thing connected with the present disturbances, under the penalty of being put out of existence by the first brother whom they should meet. &c. It did not appear to the Committee that any sums of money were distributed among the rioters. It was extremely difficult to discover them. It was held out to them that they might expect to be joined by other discontented persons from London, and that there were *persons in the higher ranks* who would also lend them support; but of these insinuations the Committee were able to find *no evidence*. Whatever was their object, however, and whoever were the *secret movers* of these disturbances, yet the secrecy with which they were carried on, the attempts at assassination that had been made, the oaths that had been administered, and the system of terror that prevailed, had not failed to impress the Committee deeply."

Deeply, enough, no doubt; but there was, it seems, no evidence to prove a *selling on*; no evidence to prove a *plot*. And, this is the circumstance that will most puzzle the ministry. They can find no *agitators*. It is a movement of the *people's own*, as far as it goes; and, if the ministry say, that it does not arise from the dearness of provisions and from other causes of *distress*; if it does not arise from that source, it follows, that it must arise from *some dislike of what the Government itself is doing or has done*; it follows, that the people are displeased with something in their rulers; and this is what is called *dissatisfaction*.

There is a sad dilemma here for the eulogists of the system. For, either it is a good system, or it is not: either it is calculated to make the people happy, or it is not: if the latter, *the system ought to be changed*; if the former, *the people are hostile to the Government for hostility's sake*; they, in this case, must hate the system under which they live.

I shall not undertake to say which is the case. It is not necessary. But, one or the other is the case; that I will say, and, in the assertion, I am warranted by irrefutable argument. The conclusion, either way, is mortifying enough to the pride of those, who began the war for the purpose of keeping democratical principles out of England, and who, at a later period, *exulted* with ARTHUR YOUNG, that nothing short of an *iron despotism* would be sufficient to keep order in France; and that, thus, the people of England would be *terrified from all thoughts of reform*. This malignant, this diabolical idea is clearly and unreservedly expressed by Arthur Young, in his "Warning." Yes; after having seen all France; after having witnessed, described, and inveighed against the oppressions and miseries under the old Government of France, he exults at the prospect of seeing the people of France punished with an iron and everlasting despotism; and *why*? Because they had put down for ever that old Government, under which he had before said they were so grievously oppressed.

But, what have these sentiments of the Secretary of the Board of Agriculture to do with the subject before us? A great deal to do with it. For, we now see, that though the people of France were so far foiled by the English Government and its allies as not to be able to establish freedom in France; though they have been, after all, compelled, for the sake of tranquillity and safety, to submit to what they call monarchy, and what our hired writers call a military despotism; though the wish, the abominable, the fiend-like wish of Arthur Young and the Anti-Jacobins has been thus far, according to their own account, accomplished; though they assert that France labours under the most terrible of despotisms;

still are they now compelled to confess, that there are a part, at least, of the people of England who have not taken the "Warning." These people have seen all that has passed in France. They have seen it all, and yet they are, it seems, not afraid of *change*! Mr. Young must be greatly surprised at this. He must be greatly mortified to see his most charitable wish disappointed!

Returning now more immediately to the subject; upon the above-mentioned *report* has been grounded a Bill, which is now before Parliament. Of this Bill, which is intended as a *remedy* for the evils stated in the report, the chief feature is a power given to the Justices (who are all appointed *by the Crown*) to DISARM THE PEOPLE at their discretion, or, at least, so nearly at discretion, as to leave no room for a clearly defined exception.

There are other provisions in the Bill, which would be calculated to attract attention, if unaccompanied with that which I have just stated: but *this* is such a thumper, that it leaves no room for surprise or any other feeling at the rest. DISARM THE PEOPLE! Disarm the people of England! And FOR WHAT? No matter what. The fact is quite enough. The simple sentence stating this one fact will save foreign statesmen the trouble of making any inquiries relative to the internal state of England. It speaks whole volumes. A law is passing for taking the arms away from a part of the people of England! What can be added to this, in order to give Napoleon an adequate idea of our situation? Why, this: that LORD CASTLEREAGH is the man to propose the measure.

The whole of the act will be inserted by me hereafter, in order that it may be read in every country in the world; and, in the meanwhile, I shall content myself with a few remarks upon the debates, which took place, in the House of Commons, during the progress of the Bill; but, these I must postpone to my next, for subjects now present themselves, which, in point of *time*, demand a preference. None can equal it in point of intrinsic importance; because the *disarming of the people* is decisive of the character, not only of our present, but of our future situation; but, in point of *time*, there are subjects which are still more pressing.

TO THE THINKING PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,

ON THE

AFFAIRS OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

(*Political Register*, January, 1813.)

LETTER I.

THINKING PEOPLE,

Amongst all the numerous subjects upon which you have discovered your acuteness of perception and profundity of thought, I know of none (except that of Pitt's *sinking fund*) which has drawn forth so brilliant a display of these qualities as the subjects connected with India; and, when I reflect on your wise notions about the riches derived to the *nation* from our "Empire in the East," I cannot wonder at the alarm that many

of you now feel lest the curbing of the power of the East India Company, through the means of the now-proposed measure, should bring ruin upon England. In plain language, you have so long been deceived; you have so long listened, and loved to listen, to falsehoods; you have so long been the almost willing dupes of designing knaves; that there is scarcely a passage left by which truth can find its way to your minds. Nevertheless, I shall endeavour to disentangle the question, which is now so much agitating your wise and plodding noddles; I shall endeavour to strip this grand humbug of its covering; and, when I have so done, I shall leave you to the tricks of the several classes of mountebanks, who are striving for the upper hand in deceiving you.

Those, whose object is to deceive; who have falsehoods to make pass for truths; those persons generally endeavour to confuse and confound facts and circumstances as much as possible; and, in the present case, the real points at issue seem to have been kept wholly out of sight. Nay more, I would bet my life, that, if you were all examined one by one, not one out of 5,000 of you know what the words *East India Company* mean; that you have no more knowledge of the nature and effect of that Corporation than you have of what is passing in the moon; and that, when you read about the wars in India, it is with about as much knowledge and advantage as you read, in Milton, about the Devils firing off cannons in heaven.

This being my firm persuasion, I shall endeavour to make the subject clearly understood; and, when I have so done, I shall willingly leave, to be cheated still, every one who is fool enough to join in the clamours now raised and raising against the proposed measure of opening the trade to India.

This measure, it is said, by the partisans of the Company, *will ruin the Company*; that it will *break up their power*; that it will cause the *loss of India as a Colony*. I will not stop to dispute about this. I will take these propositions as granted; and, still I shall contend, that the measure ought to be adopted. It is useless, therefore, to enter into any details to show what the measure will do against the Company; for I am ready to assert, and to *prove*, and I trust that I shall prove, that the breaking up of the Company would be a great blessing to England; that Company being, and having long been, one of our greatest scourges, one of the chief causes of corruption and oppression.

The outline of the proposed measure is this: that, whereas the trade to India is now exclusively in the hands of the Company, the Ministers mean to make such a change as shall open the trade to other merchants. At present, in consequence of an agreement, made with the Government 20 years ago (which agreement is called a *Charter*), no merchant of this kingdom, except the Company, can trade with the East Indies; no ships but the East India Company's ships can go thither; but, the Ministers mean to introduce a measure (now that the Company's Charter is upon the point of expiring), which shall enable any merchant of this kingdom to trade to India. Of this proposed measure it is that the Company is complaining, and in opposition to it they are exciting the most violent clamours, representing it as an act of injustice as well as of impolicy.

Faction is endeavouring to make the question a *party* one, and the City of London, actuated by narrow self-interest, is abetting, in some degree, the opposition, and joining in the clamours. But, the *people*, if they have not been quite bereft of their reason by conflicting falsehoods,

ought to consider the question as one in which *they* are opposed to this domineering Company. It is with the *nation* that that Company has made a bargain; it is from the nation that they hold their Charter; and, it is for the nation to consider, whether that Charter shall be renewed; whether it shall again grant a monopoly of trade to a select body of men, to the exclusion of all the rest of the King's subjects.

It is not a little impudent in the Company to pretend that the nation is guilty of *injustice* in withholding this renewal. What would be thought of a tenant, who should set up a clamour against his landlord, because the latter refused to renew his lease? He would be called, at least, a very presumptuous man, and, if he endeavoured to show, that his landlord would *lose* by not renewing his lease, would not that landlord laugh in his face? The very endeavour to persuade the nation, that it will lose by not renewing the Charter, is enough to make any rational man distrust the views of those who make it.

In order to decide, whether a new Charter should be granted to the Company, we ought first to inquire how they have acted towards the nation in consequence of their last Charter. But, before we enter upon this inquiry, I will, in nearly the same words that I used seven years ago, give a brief description of that strange thing called the East India Company.

You hear of great fortunes being made in the East; you hear of plunder enormous, and you see the plunderers come and elbow you from your homes; but, you never appear to perceive, that any part of this plunder is, either first or last, drawn from your own estates or their labour. You seem to think, that there are great quantities of goods, and of gold and precious stones in India; and, the only feeling which the acquirers of these excite, seems to be that of envy, and, in some instances, of emulation. But, that this proceeds from a gross error would, in the *two millions* lately paid to the East India Company out of the taxes of the nation,* have been clearly demonstrated, had not our system of finance been such as to keep in darkness, upon this point, men otherwise well informed. Now, however, the demands upon the taxes must, for the purposes of India, be such as will, I should imagine, open men's eyes, especially if the ministry make and promulgate an authentic statement of the nation's affairs. Thirteen years ago a Charter, by the influence of Mr. Pitt and his colleague Dundas, was granted to the East India Company, whereby were secured to the said company of merchants certain rights of sovereignty in, and, with some exceptions, an exclusive trade with, those countries in Asia, which we, taking them all together, call the East Indies. As the foundation of their firm, or partnership, of trade, this Company were allowed by the Charter, to create a quantity of stock; that is to say, to make loans, in the same way that the ministry do, and to pay annually, or quarterly, in dividends, interest upon the amount of these loans. The Company became, in fact, a sort of under government, having its loans, its scrip, its debt, or, more properly speaking, its funds, or, still more properly, its engagements to pay interest to a number of individuals. The paper, of whatever form it may be, which entitles the holder to demand this interest, or these dividends, is called *East India Stock*, the principal of which has now been augmented to the sum of 12 millions sterling;

* This was in 1806. There have been several millions granted in the same way since that time.

and, the holders of the stock are called *East India Proprietors*. - The sources, whence the means of regularly discharging the interest upon the stock were to be derived, were, of course, the profits of the trade which the Company should carry, but, aided by the revenue which they were authorized to raise from their territory, the defence and government of which were, however, placed, in some sort, under the control of the mother government at Westminster. Thus set out in the world this company of sovereigns, furnished, at once, with dominions, subjects, taxes, and a funded debt. But, supposing the measure (which I do only by way of illustration) to have been, in other respects, just and politic, it certainly would have been neither, not to have bound these sovereigns to pay the nation something, or, more properly speaking, to contribute something towards the taxes, by way of consideration for the immense advantages to be derived from the exclusive trade of a country, while the nation might be called upon, as it has been, to defend in a naval war, and which must, at any rate, be defended on the land-board by troops drawn, in part at least, from the population of the kingdom. It was therefore, provided, that the Company, during the continuance of its Charter, which was to be for twenty years (thirteen of which have now nearly expired),* should pay into the Exchequer the sum of 500,000*l.* sterling a year, and that, upon all the money not so paid, an interest would arise and accumulate at the rate of fifteen per centum.—Such were the principal engagements on both sides, under which this Company started. The nation has fulfilled its engagements; and that, too, at an enormous expenditure both of men and of money; and, while the Company has been enjoying all the advantages of an exclusive trade, and all the receipts of a territorial revenue; while hundreds and thousands of persons concerned in that trade have amassed fortunes so great as to overshadow and bear down, not only the clergy and the country gentlemen, but even the ancient nobility of the kingdom, not one penny (since the *first* year) has the Company ever paid into the Exchequer of the stipulated half-million a year; and, what is still more glaringly unjust, and more galling to the burthened people, two millions of our taxes have already been granted to this Company, wherewith to pay the dividends upon their stock; and, such has been the management, and such is now the state, of the Company's affairs, that we need not be at all surprised if another million be called for from us, during this present session of Parliament! For the causes of this state of the Company's concerns; for the reasons why they have not been held to their engagements; why the Act of Parliament has thus been treated as if it had been passed merely as a job; why we have been called upon to *pay to*, instead of *to receive from*, this company of trading sovereigns; let the eulogists of Mr. Pitt's memory; let Mr. Canning and Old Rose; let Lord Melville, with his 2,000*l.* a year pension from the Company (who are so *poor* as to come to us for money); let the Directors, those managers of the Company's affairs, and those staunch advocates of the Minister that suffered the Act to lie unenforced against them; let Lord Wellesley, who has so long been the Governor-General of India; why the Act has not been enforced, why the law has thus been set at nought, let these persons tell.

It seems incredible, that these things should have been; but, not only

* The 20 years are now about to expire.

were they so up to the year 1806, they are so up to this hour, except, that *four millions* more of money have, since that time, been advanced by the nation to the Company, instead of the nation having *received*, as it ought to have done, *nine millions and a half* of principal money from the Company, with accumulated interest at *fifteen per centum*. The nation engaged to do certain things, and to grant certain privileges to the Company: these things have been done, and these privileges granted; but, of the money, which we were to receive in return, only one half-million out of twenty half-millions has ever been received by us. The Company entered into certain engagements with the nation: amongst these engagements was that of paying, on the part of the Company, under certain provisions and penalties, the sum of £500,000 a year into the King's Exchequer, as an equivalent, in part, for the exclusive advantages granted and secured to the Company by the nation. In case of failure to fulfil this important provision of the Act of Charter (being the 33 Geo. III. Chap. 52), the Lords of the Treasury, of whom Mr. Pitt, afterwards Mr. Addington, and then Mr. Pitt again, then Lord Grenville, then Perceval, and now Lord Liverpool, have been at the head, were to take certain steps, and to make certain reports thereon to the Parliament. It is now nearly 20 years since the Act of Charter was passed, of these 20 years the first year only has seen a payment made by the Company into the Exchequer, the Company, owing, therefore, to the nation, 6 millions sterling, with, as the Act provides, accumulated interest at 15 per centum a year; yet, in the whole of this series of years, during this long scene of defalcation and of forfeiture, have the Lords of the Treasury, though so positively thereunto enjoined by the Act, never taken any steps whatever, and never made any report to Parliament relating to the subject. It is possible, and, indeed, likely, that the present Lords of the Treasury will make a report agreeably to the law; but, that report cannot remove, or shake, any of the facts that I have stated. I have fairly stated the nature of the agreement between the nation and the Company; and it will, I imagine, require no very long time for any unbiassed man to decide, whether the nation ought again to trust this Company with the advantages that it before enjoyed. I am not only for throwing open the trade, but for taking the sovereign authority wholly out of the hands of the Company. I am for not listening to them for a single moment, until they have paid up their arrears with interest agreeably to the law.

But, you will ask, "What do they *say* for themselves: what defence do they set up: what excuse do they make for not paying the stipulated "sums to the nation?" The excuse they make is this: that they have been engaged in expensive, *unavoidable wars*; and, they say, that the Act of Charter provides, that, in such a case, they *shall be excused*. Yes; but, only for a *time*; the sums are still to be *due to the nation*; and *interest is to run on* against the Company. In fact, the law allows of a *postponement* only, and not that, except upon a report and recommendation of the Lords of the Treasury made to the Parliament; and, no such report has ever been made. In short, there is no legal defence; no legal defence can be made; the Company owes the nation the nine and a half millions sterling, and, in this situation it has the assurance to come forward and reproach the ministry with a *design* not to trust it again to the same extent as it was trusted before. What would any man think of a tenant, who, during a term of twenty years, should pay but one year's

rent, and who should then becall his landlord for refusing a renewal of his lease? What you would think of such a man, you will readily think of this Company; but, you will not easily find terms to express your contempt of the landlord who should be fool enough to assent to such renewal.

Let us, for argument's sake, take the word of these trading sovereigns; let us, however common sense forbids it, believe them for once. Let us suppose, that they, while they have been dividing their gains so largely, have spent the nine and a half millions in wars. With *whom* have they been at war? With those who were *attacking England*? Oh, no! With the natives of a country at nine months' sail from our shores; with a people whom Mr. Robert Grant, in his late speech in favour of the Company, described as "the most *pusillanimous, unresisting, and weak* in the world." This is the people, in wars against whom, they say they have spent so much as to be thereby rendered incapable of paying the sums due to the nation as a compensation for advantages given up to their exclusive possession. Could such wars be *necessary*? Could such wars be *just*? Could such wars be *unavoidable*? But, monstrous as is the supposition, let us grant it even for argument's sake; and, then, I ask what better reason can there be for not renewing their Charter; what better reason for not again putting any of the power of government in their hands; what better reason for wholly breaking up their corporation? If from their Charter such scenes of blood and devastation have arisen, shall we consent to a renewal of that Charter? The very excuse for their defalcation furnishes the best possible reason for the adoption of some measure that shall for ever put an end to their power.

I beg, most thinking people, once more to draw your attention to the nature of the argument contained in the Act of Charter, before referred to. The nation grants to the Company, the power of raising a revenue upon the millions of people in India; and, it further grants it a trade to India, while it stipulates to exclude from that trade, supposed to be very advantageous, all the rest of the King's subjects; and, while it agrees to send out forces, by land and water, for the protection of the trade and the territory against foreign enemies. In return for all this the nation is to receive, in money paid into the Exchequer, 500,000*l.* a year, during the twenty years that the Charter is to last. This sum was, of course, to go in aid of the taxes; and 10,000,000 of pounds would have been something worth having. But, only half a million of this has been paid: the rest, we are told, has been spent in wars; in "just and necessary wars;" and, we have advanced them *five millions* besides. A very pretty way this of executing the terms of the Charter! A decent way of *fulfilling a bargain*!

What the nation now demands is, that another such a bargain shall not be made; and, the ministry propose, that the trade shall be open; that other English merchants shall trade to India; that a country, the possession of which is, like Jamaica or any other Colony, held by the means of the national taxes, shall be open to all the King's subjects. And, what can be more just; what more reasonable; what more moderate than this proposition? Why should not all the people of the kingdom be free to profit from a territory, of which they all assist in maintaining the possession. Whether India ought to be held *as a colony* at all, is another question, to be hereafter considered; but, while it be so held, or whether it be so held or not, can any man devise a good reason

for continuing the trade a monopoly in the hands of a Company, who, as experience proves, will pay the nation nothing for such monopoly ?

The opposition, which the *City of London* is making to the measure, proposed to be adopted, arises from a motive of the same sort as that which actuates the East India Company : namely, a preference of their own interests to those of their fellow-subjects at large. But, before I enter upon this subject more minutely, let me notice certain passages, in the speeches of Mr. FAVELL and Mr. Alderman BIRCH, during the debate of the 25th instant.

Mr. FAVELL said, there was "*great danger of transferring the government of India from the Company to the British Ministry.*" Now, "Lord Buckinghamshire expressly threatened the Company with a new Administration of India ; and therefore his worthy Friend, when he saw Government on the point of *laying hold of the Indian army*, would certainly be disposed to stand forward and resist in time, what, if adopted, would *effectually put an end to every thing like resistance to the measures of the Executive of this country.*" Mr. BIRCH said, 'He had no doubt that this was the first of a series of measures by which *the whole of the revenue of India would be taken by Government.* They would thus obtain by stratagem, what, in the beginning, "they durst not ask."

This is a sort of doctrine that I cannot comprehend ; and, I wonder how Mr. Favell and Mr. Birch have arrived at the discovery, that there is danger in putting the government, and Mr. Birch in putting the revenue, of India into the hands of those who have in their hands the government and revenue of England. If they mean to say, that the present ministry are unfit to be entrusted with the government and revenue of England ; or, that any ministry that can be chosen in the present state of the representation in Parliament are unfit to be entrusted with the government and revenue of England, that gives rise to a new question ; but, to say, that the same men, who are fit to be entrusted with the ruling and the taxing of us at home, are unfit to be entrusted with the ruling and taxing of Hindostan, or, at least, more unfit than a company of merchants living and holding their court in London, is, to me, a proposition that requires very good arguments indeed to maintain it. For my part, my taste is the opposite of those of these Gentlemen. I would much rather trust the ministers with an army and a revenue in India than in England ; and I would a million to one rather trust them with an army and a revenue in England, than I would trust the same in the hands of the East India Company, who are a body of men, of the individuals forming which body no one knows any thing. It is a nondescript sort of sovereign, from whose sway every man of common sense must wish to be preserved. The taste of Mr. Birch must be very curious. He has always been on the side of every ministry. There has been no act of their's, that I have ever observed, which he has not supported. He has no objection to trust them with the distribution of the 70 or 80 millions a year, which they raise upon the people of this kingdom ; but he is in terrible alarm at their getting possession of the "*whole revenue of India.*"

I would ask these two gentlemen, whether they seriously believe, that the ministry, that *any* ministry, that the present or any other, would, or *could*, make a worse use of power, than has been made of power by the East India Company ? What could they do more than spend the revenues of India in wars ? Has war ever ceased since the Company's Charter was

granted? And, what could any ministry do worse than this? The excuse for not paying the nation the nine and a half millions of money is, that it has been expended in necessary wars. Is it not time to take the government of thirty millions of people out of such hands? Whether it is likely to fall into *better* hands I do not pretend to know; but, here I come to close quarters with Mr. Birch; for, I say, that those whom he thinks good enough to govern England, I think quite good enough to govern India.

Mr. BIRCH even asserted, that the adoption of the proposed measure would be a violation of the Company's Charter: "He considered the proposed innovation as a *violation of the East India Company's Charter, and a daring confiscation of property*. Their Charter had been renewed from time to time; their property had been embarked in numerous establishments on the faith of it; and now, when these had attained maturity, the Company were to be turned out, that others might enjoy the fruits of their labours. Unless the safety of the State were concerned, Charters ought never to be *infringed*." I do not know, for my part, where men find confidence sufficient to make assertions like these. The measure cannot be a violation of the Charter. The term of the Charter will have expired. The nation has fulfilled its part of the agreement. It was a grant for 20 years, and, when the 20 years shall have been completed, the nation has, surely, a right to resume its possession. What an impudent man should we think a tenant, who, at the expiration of his lease, should accuse his landlord of a violation of it, because he refused to renew it? "A *daring confiscation of property*!" What language applied to such a case! Mr. Birch could see no confiscation of property in the selling of a part of an Englishman's estate under what is called the redemption of the land-tax; but, the refusing to grant a new Charter to the East India Company, he calls a *daring confiscation of property*! The Company have embarked, he says, in numerous establishments, on the faith of the Charter. What faith? The faith of its lasting 20 years. No other faith did the nation pledge; and that faith, notwithstanding all the defalcations of the Company, the nation has kept. What reason, then; what reason, in the name of common sense, have the Company to complain?

"Now," says Mr. BIRCH, "the Company are to be turned out, that others may enjoy the fruits of their labour." How are others to enjoy the fruits of the Company's labour? The Company have pocketed those fruits themselves. They have had their lease out, though they have paid but one year's rent out of twenty; and how, then, are others to get at the fruits of their labour. Besides, who are these "others" that Mr. Birch talks of so slightly? They are nothing less than all the people of the kingdom, able to embark in the India trade. It is the nation, in short, who, at the expiration of a lease, re-enters its demised estate; and this is what Mr. Birch terms "*others*;" and this act of re-entry he calls a violation of the Charter, and a *daring confiscation of property*. The worthy Alderman has only to apply his doctrine to the affairs of private life, and he will go a great deal farther than even the abused *sans-culottes* of France ever dreamt of going.

Sir WILLIAM CURTIS, during this debate, expressed his fears, that a free trade to India might cause the introduction of political freedom. "If a free trade to India were once allowed, among other exports, they would probably soon have a variety of politicians, who would use their

"best endeavours to give the Hindoos a conception of the Rights of Man."

A most alarming thought, to be sure ! Sir William Curtis is, then, for no *rights of man*. He is for keeping the poor slaves, slaves still. His wishes, however, will not be accomplished, I believe ; and, he may yet live long enough to see men claiming and asserting their rights all over the world. But what a sentiment is this from an Englishman ! His objection to an unrestricted intercourse with another part of the world, is, that it may lead to the teaching of enslaved men their rights ! This is the objection which one of the Aldermen, who is also a member of Parliament, for the *great City*, has to the opening of the trade to India. Commerce has, by many writers, been applauded for having produced an extension of knowledge and of freedom ; but, this man objects to it on that account ; he *fears* that the opening of trade may tend to the enlarging of the mind of man ; he is *afraid* that a free intercourse would break the chains of a people ! Let us hope, that there are very few assemblages of men in the world where such a sentiment would not have been received with an unanimous exclamation of horror. And yet, I dare say, that Sir William Curtis is one of those who talks well about the despotism of Buonaparte's government, and who is loud in his prayers for the *deliverance of Europe*. I dare say he is one of those who is for the deliverance of every body but those whom we may deliver at any hour that we please. Now, I am for beginning the work of deliverance that is within our own power ; and, having closed that, then call upon Buonaparte to follow our example.

The arguments urged in favour of the opposition by the *City of London* I shall notice in my next, as well as the statements and reasoning in some of the speeches at the India House.

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 28th January, 1813.

TO THE THINKING PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,

ON THE

AFFAIRS OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

(*Political Register*, February, 1813.)

LETTER II.

THINKING PEOPLE,

Before we come to consider the arguments in support of that opposition, which the *City of London*, in its corporate capacity, is making to the intended measure of opening the trade to the East Indies, I think it right to offer you some further remarks upon what has been said relative to the *new power and influence, which such a measure must throw into the hands of the ministry at home*.

I noticed, in my last, an idea of Mr. Birch and of Mr. Favell, that

the measure, by taking the Government, and, of course, the army and revenue of India, out of the hands of the East India Company, the ministry would become possessed of so much power, that....that.... that *God knows what they might do!* I will now cite a passage from the Morning Chronicle.

"We this day lay before our readers the correspondence that has taken place between the Court of Directors and the President of the Board of Control. There never came before the public eye a correspondence pregnant with results so important and alarming; for the letter of Lord Buckinghamshire, in the most summary and cavalier style, gives the India Company only the alternative of the surrender of a material part of their rights, or the unconditional transfer of the whole management and power of India to Ministers. He will submit to no previous discussions. He bids them hunt for information among the Memorials and Petitions from the Out-ports; but demands the concurrence of the Company to the opening of the trade, before he will enter into an explanation of the rules by which it shall be regulated. The question of a partial opening of the India trade, or of the strict maintenance of the Charter, is of such magnitude as to demand the most grave and deliberate attention. He must have a very comprehensive mind indeed, that can, at a first view, decide on the national policy of the measure. We certainly do not feel ourselves competent to form such a judgment. But on the alternative, namely, that if the Company do not implicitly acquiesce in the principle of the measure without inquiry or explanation, the result may be the TRANSFER OF THE WHOLE TO GOVERNMENT, there can be but one opinion. viz. :— that it would be CONSTITUTIONAL RUIN. The dissolution of the India Company could not take place without bringing with it a *national bankruptcy*, and that must be followed by *military despotism*. A correspondence, therefore, of more dreadful import was never laid before the public, and we earnestly request our readers to give it the attention which it deserves."

At the first blush there appears to be something so wild in this; there appears to be something so mad in the notion, that the constitution of England is to be destroyed; that a national bankruptcy is to be produced; that a military despotism is to be established, by the dissolution of a company of merchants; there seems to be something so crazy, or, more politely speaking, so *delirious*; it seems to proceed from something so much like one of those "exacerbations," vulgarly called fits; the thing seems to be so much of this character, that I should not have thought it worthy of notice, had it not issued through the chief organ of the Whig faction. What an opinion, however; what a contemptuous opinion must the writer have of the intellects of his readers, to put forth such extravagant notions! We are, indeed, in a pretty state, if what he says be true. A charter is granted to a company of merchants to trade to one of our colonies; the term of the charter is about to expire; and, we are told, that, if we do not renew the charter, we shall be placed under a *military despotism*! Verily a man must have screwed up his nerves into a very tight state, before he could hazard such an assertion.

In *what way*, I should be glad to know, is the dissolution of the East India Company to produce this terrible effect? To point out this, was the duty of the Morning Chronicle; and not having done it, his assertion might be dismissed, without further notice, it being incumbent on no one to produce proof, or argument, in refutation of that, which has not been attempted to be proved. Nevertheless, as the matter is of great importance, I will put here a few questions to this writer. And in the first place, I ask him, whether it be likely, that a national bankruptcy will arise from the dissolution of a Company, the affairs of which Company are in such a state as to require the aid of the Government to keep the Company itself

from becoming bankrupt? I ask whether this be likely? For some years past, the East India Company has been borrowing money, or rather bank-notes, from the national Government; it has come to the Government, and has got from it *accommodations*; the Government has it lent bank-notes to the amount of millions. I will not encumber my argument with the items in detail; but I state distinctly, that this East India Company has had bank-notes to the amount of millions of pounds, lent to it by the Government, in order to enable it to pay its *dividends*; for, Thinking People, this Company has its *National Debt*, and its *dividends*, in the same manner that the Government at Westminster has! Now, if the Company cannot pay its way without the assistance of the nation; if it be compelled to borrow money of the nation in order to pay its dividends; if this be the case (and the Morning Chronicle does not deny the fact), how is the dissolution of this Company to make the nation itself a bankrupt? I shall be told, perhaps, that if the Company's Charter be not renewed, it will not be able to pay its debts, or the interest on its debts; and, that, the East India Stock-holders being thus ruined, an alarm will be spread amongst the Stock-holders of the nation; that the funds will fall to a very low price, and that thus a national bankruptcy will be produced. But, how is this to happen? The Government would only have to guarantee the payment of the interest upon the India stock, in order to prevent any such alarm; and that, in fact, it now does, by the advances which it makes to the Company, in order to enable it to pay its dividends. The truth is, that, in case of a dissolution of the Company, the Government must guarantee the payment of the interest upon its debts, or else, the whole of the funding fabric would be instantly blown into the air; but, no injury could arise from this; because, as I have before shown, the Government is, at this time, and long has been, surety for the payment of the interest on the Company's debts.

Another question that I should wish to put to this gentleman is, where he has made the discovery, that, what he calls a national bankruptcy "*must be followed by a military despotism!*" But, perhaps, it will be best, first to ask him what it is that he means by a *military despotism*? Does he mean that state of things, where there is nothing existing in the name of *law*; where there are no tribunals, with people sitting in them, called judges; where there are none of those persons called peace-officers, police-officers, commissioners of taxes, surveyors of taxes, supervisors of taxes, assessors of taxes, collectors of taxes, excisemen, custom-house-officers, tide-waiters, &c. Does he mean a state of things, wherein all these are unknown, and where the taxes are collected and offenders against the Government are punished through the instrumentality of *soldiers only*? If he does, then I tell him that he means to describe a state of things which never existed in any nation in the world. If he means a state of things where the Government has the absolute command of so large a military force, as completely to preclude, or to render desperate, any attempt at resistance on the part of the people, let the acts of the Government be what they may; if he means this state of things, then I call upon him to show how the dissolution of the East India Company; I call upon him to show, how a national bankruptcy can possibly be big with the danger which he affects to anticipate.

By national bankruptcy, he means, doubtless, as others have meant, *a ceasing to pay at the Bank the interest of the national debt*. But, is he not deceived as to the course which things will naturally take in this

respect? The Bank continues to pay the dividends on the debt, as promptly as it paid them before the stoppage in 1797. It pays, indeed, in *paper*, instead of hard money, and so it will continue to do, as long as the paper will pass current at all. There may come a time when the paper will be worth very little; or, in other words, when it will require a great deal of it to purchase the same quantity of goods that may be purchased with a silver shilling; but still, the Bank will keep on paying the interest of the national debt, and as long as it does that, who can, with propriety, say, that a *national bankruptcy* has taken place?

However, suppose that there should come a time, when even the paper-money cannot be made fast enough for the due discharge of the dividends. The supposition is quite beyond the compass of probability; but, let us, for argument's sake, adopt it. What then? Why, then there is a national bankruptcy. But *why* should this be followed by a military despotism? In order to get rid of all dispute about the meaning of the words *military despotism*, we will take it for granted that the writer means a state of things, in which the Government would possess a more complete and absolute control over the purses and persons of the people than it now possesses. We will not stop to inquire what sort of control that must be; but we will take it for granted, for the sake of the argument, that the thing is possible, and then it remains for this writer to show us, *how* such a state of things is likely to be produced by the total discredit of bank-paper.

It is, I believe, universally acknowledged, that, without the aid of bank-paper, the Government, on its present system, could not have been carried on unto this day. It has been a hundred times asserted in the Houses of Parliament, that it is the bank-paper which has enabled the Government to engage in, and to prosecute, these long and destructive wars. In short, it is pure waste of time to attempt to show, that the Government, on its present system of great power, has derived its chief support from bank-paper, and that the system depends for its existence upon the bank-paper. *How*, then, is it possible, that the annihilation of that paper should give to the Government a more complete and absolute control over the purses and persons of the people than it now possesses? *How* is it possible, that additional strength should be produced by the total destruction of that, which, up to this moment, has been the principal source of strength?

I might stop here; for, until this question be answered, nothing more can be necessary in the way of refutation of the assertion before us. But, I will anticipate, that this writer means, that the destruction of the paper-money must be followed by the destruction not only of the present system of sway, but also of the whole form of the Government; and that, hence would necessarily ensue that state of things, whatever it may be, which he denominates a *military despotism*; and by which we must suppose that he means a Government possessing a more complete and absolute control over the purses and persons of the people than the Government, on its present system, possesses.

Now, upon *what grounds* does he presume, that the destruction of the paper-money must be followed by the destruction of the whole form of our Government? When men are advancing assertions of such import, they ought to back them with proof, or, at least, with an attempt at proof, if they expect them to have any weight with men of sense. When a man was asserting, in terms so unqualified, that the King, Lords,

Commons, courts of justice, laws, customs, and usages of the country; when he was asserting that the existence of all these hung upon the credit and durability of a paper-money, which he himself has a hundred times asserted to be in a state of rapid depreciation; that is to say, rapidly tending towards destruction; when he was making this assertion, he should not have contented himself; he should not have thought that he had done his duty until he had produced something, at least, in its support.

For my part, I think better of the Government of England. In spite of all that has been done for the last thirty years, I am persuaded that there is still good stuff enough in this form of government to prevent its resting for support solely upon a paper-money; and I love to indulge this opinion, because I see the paper-money tending to total annihilation. If we consult experience, we find, that the fall of a paper-system is not necessarily followed by the destruction of a constitution of government. This writer has in his eye the *example of France*; but why lose sight, at the same time, of the example of America? The latter presented itself with full as much prominence as the former, and, I should have thought it much more applicable to our case. The destruction of a paper-money, by which a certain system of rule has long been supported, will naturally and inevitably produce a great change in that system. It will, in most cases, cause power, in some degree, to change hands; but, it does not necessarily produce a destruction of the form of government, as we see in the experience of America, and more recently in the experience of Austria. And in no case, that I have ever heard of, has it tended to produce a military despotism, or to put into the hands of any government more power than it had before. It is not in the nature of things that the destruction of the paper-money in England should prove injurious to the real constitution of England. That constitution existed, kings reigned, freely chosen parliaments taxed the people, and justice was administered in mercy long before a paper-money was heard or thought of; and, I am yet to hear *reasoning*, before I shall believe, that these cannot be hereafter without the existence of a paper-money.

The assertion is again made by this writer, too, that the transfer of the whole government of India from the hands of the Company to the hands of the Ministers, would be ruinous to the *constitution*. It is very difficult to determine, or even to guess at, what the Morning Chronicle means by the *constitution*; but one may ask him, what new power it would give to the Ministers that could be injurious to us? Could it give them greater power of taxing us? After all, that is the principal point. Could it, I say, place our *purses* more completely at their command? If it could, then, indeed, I should say, that there was danger to us in the proposed measure; but, as long as I do not perceive, and cannot perceive, that that would be the case, I shall feel no alarm at the army and revenue of India being taken out of the hands of the Company.

But, what idle talk is this, about the danger to be apprehended from this new source of ministerial influence? What influence can a minister want more than that which he now possesses? He has now the distribution of nearly one hundred millions sterling, annually; he has an army of two hundred thousand men, including foreign troops; he has a thousand ships of war; and the tax-gatherers receive as their pay for collecting the taxes several millions sterling every year. There is not a parish where he has not several persons in his pay as tax-gatherers, under one

denomination or another; and, besides, is not the East India Company itself a body as much under his influence, and as powerful an instrument in his hands, as India itself could become in consequence of the proposed transfer? Can the Editor of the Morning Chronicle cite me an instance, when the East India Company, or when any individual East India Director, has appeared in opposition to the ministry of the day? I can recollect no such instance. On the contrary, I have always observed, that, let who would be minister, he was sure of the support of that body. Therefore, I am not to be made to believe, that the political liberties of the country can possibly be endangered by the minister's possessing, with some degree of responsibility attached to it, all that influence, which he before possessed without even the show of responsibility.

We now come to a consideration of the arguments, if such they may be called, in support of that opposition which the city of London, in its corporate capacity, is making to the intended measure of the opening the trade to India. And here, it is to be observed, that this opposition stands upon a different ground from that on which the opposition of the Company rests. The latter dreads the loss of its monopoly; the former the loss of the advantages, as they are thought, from the importation of India goods being confined, as it now is, to the port of London. The latter would care but little about the extension of the importation to the out-ports; and the former would not care a pin for the opening of the trade to individual merchants, provided all the goods were still to be brought into the port of London, and, provided all the establishments arising out of the commerce of India, were still to remain in London.

Mr. Alderman BIRCH, in the debate before referred to, is reported to have said that,

"Millions had been expended by the Company on warehouses and other important concerns, and the seat of their Government was in the City of London. To borrow a figure from the East, the Company are to the City like the great Banyan tree, whose branches descended and took fresh roots, and which flourished again till it formed of itself a species of forest, full of bloom, and verdure, and fruit, under which thousands took shelter and sustenance. Now, it was proposed to lay the axe almost to the root, or to plant new shoots that would wither as soon as they came up from the earth. (Hear.) *Extend the trade, and they would weaken it.* In practice it was prosperity: in theory, it would be ruin. Experience was against experiment. Look at our proud river, with its immense forests of masts floating on its bosom, its innumerable vessels fraught with the merchandise of the globe: go down to the extent of the City's jurisdiction, and hear the gladdening echoes of cheerful labour resounding from shore to shore; and then ask the question, how much of this prosperity is owing,—how many of these labourers earn their bread from the East India Company? (Hear, hear.) Was that proud river to be stripped of the ancient ensigns of her dignity? Were they ready, step by step, to make it flow at Wapping, as clearly, and unencumbered, as it did at Westminster? Let them stop in limine all attempts against the prosperity of London. (Hear.) Charters were most important; and every attempt to disturb them should be viewed with jealousy. The renewals of the East India Charter only strengthened the arguments on which they stood. All the Indian commerce centred in London, and it was its interest and duty to keep it there."

Mr. Birch seems to be a stout stickler for charters; but what does he say to *Magna Charta*? I think I could point out instances, wherein that gentleman has been one of the loudest advocates of measures by which that charter was violated. I have never known any resolution proposed in the Court of Common Council complaining of a violation of the people's rights, which was not opposed by Mr. Alderman Birch, who

is now so zealous an advocate for the rights of the East India Company. It is astonishing to me that a man of sense, as Mr. Birch is, and a man of good manners too, should be able to muster up resolution enough to *speak* of the proposed measure as a violation of a charter; and, though I have before dwelt upon the point, I cannot help again observing on the perversion of words resorted to upon this occasion. What is this Charter? It is a bargain, made between the nation and the Company, and the terms of the bargain are to be found in an Act of Parliament passed in the 33rd year of the present King's reign. According to that bargain, the Company were, upon certain conditions, to have a monopoly of the India trade, and to have the sovereignty of the colony, for *twenty years*. As I have shown before, the Company has not fulfilled its part of the bargain, it has paid only a twentieth part of what it was bound to pay as the price of the monopoly, and of the advantages of the sovereignty. But, if it had punctually fulfilled its covenants, the term of the bargain is expired, or about to expire. The twenty years are at an end; and shall the nation, because it refuses to renew the bargain, because it refuses to grant the monopoly, and to yield the sovereignty of its colony again; shall it for this cause be accused of violating a *charter*? I am surprised that a man of sense should thus resort to a sounding word, for the sake of supplying the place of fact and argument.

But, we are told by Mr. Birch, in fine figurative language, that the Company is to the City like the great Banyan-tree. Mr. Birch was not aware, perhaps, that figures of rhetoric should be cautiously used. The Banyan-tree may, for aught I know, be possessed of the qualities that he describes. Its branches, like those of the laurel and thousands of other shrubs and trees, may descend to the earth, take fresh root, and send up fresh trunks towards the skies. But, with the leave of Mr. Alderman Birch, he is labouring to prevent this species of propagation; for he is endeavouring to confine the tree of which he is speaking to the port of London; whereas the ministers are for extending its branches to the out-ports, and, of course, for enlarging its capacity for affording shelter and sustenance. After his figure of the Banyan-tree, the gentleman was extremely unfortunate in asserting that the trade would be *weakened* by its *extension*!

After all, however, after all the talk about the Banyan-tree, and the proud river Thames, and the gladdening echoes of cheerful labour; after all this talk, the opposition is, in plain English, founded upon this, that the measure proposed by the ministers will take part of the trade from the port of London and distribute it amongst the out-ports; that it will lessen the quantity of money expended in London; that it will diminish its population; and that, of course, it will draw something away from the gains of the owners of land and houses in London, and generally from persons keeping shops, public-houses, and otherwise engaged in trade.

That all this is true, I allow; but, so far am I from regarding this as an evil, I have no hesitation in saying, that I look upon it as an unqualified good. I should have no wish to lessen the value of real property and of trade in the city of London, were it not from the consideration, that what ever is in this way taken from that City, must go to other parts of the kingdom. But, with respect to a lessening of the population of London, *that* is a positive good. There is no man, I am persuaded, who has reflected upon the matter, who does not lament the enormous increase of that metropolis, which has already drawn to itself so large a part of the

means of the whole kingdom. The "gladdening echoes of cheerful labour," if such there be in the filthy stews of Wapping, are not more gladdening than they would be at Liverpool, at Glasgow, or at Dublin. Poets have written more beautifully than Mr. Birch can speak about the river Thames; but, in the eye of a statesman, such descriptions are of no consequence. In his eye, the Thames has no more pretensions to pride than any other river or stream in the kingdom, while he must be well convinced, that to make all the trade of the country centre in one port, is to prevent emulation, and, in fact, to contract the sphere of national exertion.

Mr. Birch speaks of the persons who earn their bread from the East India Company, as if they would be thrown out of employ and starved, if the monopoly were put an end to, and especially if the trade were divided amongst the out-ports. But, is it possible that Mr. Birch does not perceive, that the trade would still be carried on by other persons than the Company, and that it would still give employment to as many persons as it now employs? If not employed in London, these persons would be employed elsewhere; and if Mr. Birch will point me out a spot in the whole globe, where they could be employed with less chances of health and more chances of vice, than on the banks of the Thames, below London-bridge, I will at once, waving all other considerations, give up the argument.

There is, it seems, a body of persons called the *shipping interest* in the port of London, who join in this opposition. And I should be glad to know from these gentlemen, upon what it is, that they found their claim to a monopoly of the advantages of the trade to and from India. Do not the whole kingdom pay the taxes which are expended in the maintenance of the colonies in the East. Why should the counties of Lancaster, Somerset, or any other, be shut out any more than the county of Middlesex? In short, the grounds of this opposition appear to me to be so flagrantly unjust, that I will not believe anything further to be necessary to expose them to public indignation.

Before I conclude, however, there is one reason, and that of great weight, which I shall state for my approbation of the proposed measure, or of any measure, the tendency of which is, to diminish the influence of the East India Company, and, indeed, to break up that body. And this reason is, that such a measure will have a powerful tendency to destroy political corruption in the city of London and in the county of Middlesex. That Company has long been a powerful phalanx in opposition to the voice of public liberty. At all elections, whether for the city or the county, that Company, with its numerous dependants at its heels, have had a monstrous influence, and that influence has always been exerted to the utmost against the rights of the people. If we look back to the causes of this war, we shall find the East India Company acting a prominent part. The East India House and the Bank have been amongst the forwardest in support of all those measures which led to the enormous taxes now weighing us to the earth; and, who can have failed to be filled with disgust at seeing it stated, in the documents and speeches of the opponents of the present measure, that its adoption would tend to introduce light and liberty into the enslaved countries under their sway?

I am not certain, nor do I flatter myself, that it is intended to change the interior system of government of India; but, of this I am very sure, that it cannot be intended to establish there any system of government more hateful to me than that which now exists there under the Company.

What do they mean when they express their alarm, *lest an additional number of Europeans should find their way to India?* What sort of government must that be, which feels uneasiness at the prospect of seeing its acts subjected to the observation of well-informed men? What sort of government must that be, which dreads the approach of men accustomed to ideas of law and liberty? And I put it as a question to all those who have any pretensions to thinking, whether they think that the treasure and the blood of Englishmen ought to be expended in maintaining the possession of a colony, the mode of governing which will not bear the inspection of freemen, and trembles at the thought of a free communication with the natives of England? Whether this government will be put an end to, I know not; but that it may be, is the sincere wish of

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 3rd February, 1813.

TO JAMES PAUL,

*Of Bursledon, in Lower Dublin Township, in Philadelphia County,
in the State of Pennsylvania;*

ON

MATTERS RELATING TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE
PRINCESS OF WALES.

(*Political Register, February, 1813.*)

LETTER I.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The excellent effect which attended my letter to you, has made me resolve to discuss the present subject in the form of letters to you; a form, which, for various reasons, I have a great liking to, and which has always this strong recommendation, that it affords me an opportunity of proving to you that your friendship and that of your brother and children is always alive in my recollection. At this time, however, another motive has had some weight with me. I understand, that our Government has issued orders for causing all letters for your country *to pass through its hands*, or, which is the same thing, the hands of its agents; and, as I am resolved, that they shall never have the fingering of a letter of mine to America, I will put what I have to say into print, and then it can no more be impeded in its progress than can the clouds, or the rays of the sun.

In the case above alluded to, my letter did, I understand, settle all men's minds at once, as far as it went; and, as it was re-published in America, it gives me great satisfaction to reflect on the extent of its influence. Nor was it without its uses here, where the people, at a distance from London, must, of course, know almost as little about the local circumstances of the case as the people in Pennsylvania themselves. Indeed

the publication of that letter soon convinced me, that one ought not to take it for granted, that the mass of the people know much about particulars as to any sort of public matter; and that to suppose one's readers to be on the other side of the Atlantic is no bad way of making any case that one discusses quite clear to the people of England; nay, even to nine-tenths of those who walk, in decent clothes, about the streets of London itself.

It is, therefore, in the full conviction that I shall communicate information to a great portion of the people here as well as to the eight millions of people who inhabit the United States, that I now renew my correspondence with you, leaving my promised communication, about the mode of keeping large quantities of sheep upon your farm, till the return of peace, lest, by fulfilling that promise at this time, I should subject myself to the charge of conveying comfort and giving assistance to the enemies of my Sovereign, than which, assuredly, nothing can be further from my heart.

The subject, upon which I now address you, is one of very great interest and of very great importance. It is interesting, as involving the reputation of persons of high rank; and it is important, as being capable of raising questions as to rights of most fearful magnitude.

You will have seen, in your own newspapers, copious extracts from our English daily papers upon the subject of Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales; but, these extracts you will find so confused, so dark, so contradictory, so unintelligible upon the whole, so topless and tail-less, that you will from them be able to draw no rational conclusion. You will see Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales abused by these journalists; you will see all sorts of charges by them preferred against her; you will hear one insinuation following another, till, at last, the ear sickens with the sound; but, you will find nowhere any clear statement of her case. Even her own Letter, which I shall, though for a second time, insert below for your perusal, does not go far enough back to produce that view of her case which ought to be exhibited, in order to a defence of her against the base insinuations which have, for a long while, been in circulation. In short, all that will reach your country, through the channel of these corrupt London Journalists, can only serve to mislead you as to the real merits of the case; and, even I, with a most earnest desire to lay before the world the means of forming a correct judgment, should fail of my object, were I not to revert to the earliest period of that connexion between the Princess and the Prince, which has, unhappily, been, for some years, interrupted.

It is generally well known, but not improper to state here, that the Princess of Wales is the daughter of the late Duke of Brunswick, and that her mother is a sister of our present King. Of course she is a first cousin of the Prince her husband. They were married on the 8th of April, 1795, the Prince being then 32 years of age, and the Princess being 26 years of age; the former will be 51 the 12th day of next August, and the latter will be 45 on the 17th of next May. On the 7th of January, 1796, that is to say, precisely nine months from the day of their marriage, was born the Princess Charlotte of Wales, who, being their only child, is the heiress to the Throne, and who, of course, has now completed her 17th year.

Here you have an account of who the parties most concerned are, and of the how and the when of their connexion. But, there were some cir-

circumstances, connected with the marriage of the Prince and Princess, to which it will be necessary to go back, in order to have a fair view of the matter.

The Prince, at the time when he was about to be married, in 1795, was *greatly in debt*. He had an annual allowance from the nation, besides the amount of certain revenues in the county of Cornwall belonging to him as Duke of that county. But, these proving insufficient to meet his expenses, he was found, in 1795, to have contracted debts to the amount of 639,890*l.* 4*s.* 4*d.*; for we are very particular, in this country, in stating the fractions of sums in our public accounts. You will, perhaps, stare at this sum; but you may depend upon my correctness in stating it, as I copy it from the documents laid before Parliament.

When the Prince was married, a proposition was made to Parliament for the payment of this sum of debt, which, indeed, seems to have been stipulated for before the marriage; for, in the report of the debate upon the subject of the debts, the Duke of Clarence is stated to have said, "that when the marriage of the Prince of Wales was agreed upon, there was a stipulation that he should be exonerated from his debts." Much and long opposition was, however, made to the proposed payment by the country, and those who made this opposition contended, that, after having paid his debts, to a great amount, in 1797, upon a clear understanding, that no more debts should be contracted on his account, the nation ought not to be called on again, and that the King ought to pay the debts out of his annual allowance, which we here call the *Civil List*, and which amounts to nearly half as much as your whole American revenue, though there are eight millions of you on whom to raise that revenue. See how rich a nation we must be!

The proposition was, however, at last agreed to; but, it ought to be borne in mind, that, through the whole of the discussions, the ground upon which this new call upon the public purse rested, was the *Prince's marriage*. The debts were not paid off in a ready sum; but, were to be liquidated by certain yearly deductions to come out of an additional yearly allowance to be made to the Prince; and, in case of the death of the King or of the Prince before the debts were all paid, the payment of the remainder was to fall upon the public revenues. So that it amounted to exactly the same thing in effect as if a simple vote had been given for the payment of the debts, at once, out of the year's taxes.

The King, in his message to the Houses, in about twenty days after the marriage took place, asked for an establishment to be settled upon the Prince "and his *august spouse*," and, at the same time, told them, that the benefit of any such settlement could not be effectually secured to the Prince, "till he was *relieved from his present encumbrances to a large amount*." Upon this ground the Prince's annual amount from the nation was augmented. It was raised at once, from 60,000*l.* a year to 125,000*l.* a year; and, of this sum, 25,000*l.* a year were set apart for the discharge of his debts. To this was added a sum of 27,000*l.* for preparations for the marriage; 28,000*l.*, for jewels and plate; and 26,000*l.* for finishing Carlton House, the residence of the Prince.

It was necessary to enter into this statement, in order to show you what were the circumstances under which the Prince and Princess came together, and to make you acquainted with the fact, that her Royal Highness did really bring to her Royal Spouse one of the greatest blessings on earth; namely, a relief from heavy pecuniary encumbrances, which en-

cumbrances would, it is manifest, have continued to weigh upon his Royal Highness had his marriage not taken place.

But, Her Royal Highness also brought with her other claims to love and gratitude. She was represented at the time, and with truth, I believe, as a person of great beauty, but not greater than her sweetness of manners, her acquired accomplishments, and her strength and greatness of mind. She was received in England with transports of joy; addresses of admiration and gratitude poured in upon her from all quarters, and her husband was congratulated as the happiest of men. A similar torrent of addresses came in upon the birth of the Princess Charlotte of Wales. In short, no events seem ever to have caused such unmixed joy in this country as the marriage of this illustrious Lady and the birth of her child.

What a contrast, alas! is presented in the occurrences of the present day! What short-sighted mortals we are! Who, though the most far-seeing of men, could, in 1796, while addresses of congratulation were succeeding each other to the Prince and Princess upon the birth of their child; who, at that day, could have anticipated, that the time was to come, when the mother would have to complain, aye, and to make public her complaints, of being debarred a free communication with that child!

This leads us to a consideration of the Princess's Letter; but, I ought, in the first place, to remind you, that it was not, as was stated at the time in print, many months after the Princess Charlotte was born before her Royal Mother had a place of residence separate from that of the Prince. Now, this *might* happen without ground of blame on *either* side. There are so many ways in which misunderstandings in families are created; there are so many causes from which the society of man and wife become disagreeable; and these causes may be founded in so many incidents having nothing of crime or blame belonging to them, that, when separations of this sort take place, it is a harsh judgment that will insist upon affixing blame to one party or the other. Therefore, I, for my part, have always been willing to content myself with expressing merely regret upon this subject, in which respect, I am satisfied, that I did no more than follow the example of the great mass of the community. Had things continued in this state; had the parties, though living at a distance from each other, suffered the world to hear nothing from them in the way of complaint against each other, all would yet have been well. Unhappily this has not been the case; accusations of a very serious nature are, in the public prints, now stated to have taken place in private, and, at last, the consequence has been the writing and the publication of that Letter of the Princess, which I am now about to make a subject of most respectful consideration and remark.

This, however, I shall defer till my next Number, for reasons, which, when that Number shall appear, will, I imagine, be obvious to all my readers.

WM. COBBETT.

London, 24th Feb. 1813.

Copy of a Letter from Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales,
to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent:—

"SIR,—It is with great reluctance that I presume to obtrude myself upon your Royal Highness, and to solicit your attention to matters which may, at first,

appear rather of a personal than a public nature. If I could think them so—if they related merely to myself—I should abstain from a proceeding which might give uneasiness, or interrupt the more weighty occupations of your Royal Highness's time. I should continue, in silence and retirement, to lead the life which has been prescribed to me, and console myself for the loss of that society and those domestic comforts to which I have so long been a stranger, by the reflection that it has been deemed proper I should be afflicted without any fault of my own—and that your Royal Highness knows it.

"But, Sir, there are considerations of a higher nature than any regard to my own happiness, which render this address a duty both to myself and my Daughter. May I venture to say—a duty also to my husband, and the people committed to his care? There is a point beyond which a guiltless woman cannot with safety carry her forbearance. If her honour is invaded, the defence of her reputation is no longer a matter of choice; and it signifies not whether the attack be made openly, manfully, and directly—or by secret insinuation, and by holding such conduct towards her as countenances all the suspicions that malice can suggest. If these ought to be the feelings of every woman in England who is conscious that she deserves no reproach, your Royal Highness has too sound a judgment, and too nice a sense of honour, not to perceive, how much more justly they belong to the Mother of your Daughter—the Mother of her who is destined, I trust, at a very distant period, to reign over the British Empire.

"It may be known to your Royal Highness, that during the continuance of the restrictions upon your Royal authority, I purposely refrained from making any representations which might then augment the painful difficulties of your exalted station. At the expiration of the restrictions I still was inclined to delay taking this step, in the hope that I might owe the redress I sought to your gracious and unsolicited condescension. I have waited in the fond indulgence of this expectation, until, to my inexpressible mortification, I find that my unwillingness to complain, has only produced fresh grounds of complaint; and I am at length compelled, either to abandon all regard for the two dearest objects which I possess on earth,—mine own honour, and my beloved child; or to throw myself at the feet of your Royal Highness, the natural protector of both.

"I presume, Sir, to represent to your Royal Highness, that the separation, which every succeeding month is making wider, of the Mother and the Daughter, is equally injurious to my character, and to her education. I say nothing of the deep wounds which so cruel an arrangement inflicts upon my feelings, although I would fain hope that few persons will be found of a disposition to think lightly of these. To see myself cut off from one of the very few domestic enjoyments left me—certainly the only one upon which I set any value—the society of my child—involves me in such misery, as I well know your Royal Highness could never inflict upon me, if you were aware of its bitterness. Our intercourse has been gradually diminished. A single interview weekly seemed sufficiently hard allowance for a Mother's affections. That, however, was reduced to our meeting once a fortnight; and I now learn, that even this most rigorous interdiction is to be still more rigidly enforced.

"But while I do not venture to intrude my feelings as a Mother upon your Royal Highness's notice, I must be allowed to say, that in the eyes of an observing and jealous world, this separation of a Daughter from her Mother will only admit of one construction, a construction fatal to the Mother's reputation. Your Royal Highness will also pardon me for adding, that there is no less inconsistency than injustice in this treatment. He who dares advise your Royal Highness to overlook the evidence of my innocence, and disregard the sentence of complete acquittal which it produced—or is wicked and false enough still to whisper suspicions in your ear,—betrays his duty to you, Sir, to your Daughter, and to your People, if he counsels you to permit a day to pass without a further investigation of my conduct. I know that no such calumniator will venture to recommend a measure which must speedily end in his utter confusion. Then let me implore you to reflect on the situation in which I am placed; without the shadow of a charge against me—without even an accuser—after an inquiry that led to my ample vindication—yet treated as if I were still more culpable than the perjurers of my suborned traducers represented me, and held up to the world as a Mother who may not enjoy the society of her only child.

"The feelings, Sir, which are natural to my unexampled situation, might justify me in the gracious judgment of your Royal Highness, had I no other motives for addressing you but such as relate to myself; but I will not disguise from your

Royal Highness what I cannot for a moment conceal from myself,—that the serious, and it soon may be, the irreparable injury which my Daughter sustains from the plan at present pursued, has done more in overcoming my reluctance to intrude upon your Royal Highness, than any sufferings of my own could accomplish: and if, for her sake, I presume to call away your Royal Highness's attention from the other cares of your exalted station, I feel confident I am not claiming it for a matter of inferior importance either to yourself or your people.

"The powers with which the constitution of these realms vests your Royal Highness in the regulation of the Royal Family, I know, because I am so advised, are ample and unquestionable. My appeal, Sir, is made to your excellent sense and liberality of mind in the exercise of those powers; and I willingly hope, that your own parental feelings will lead you to excuse the anxiety of mine, for impelling me to represent the unhappy consequences which the present system must entail upon our beloved Child.

"Is it possible, Sir, that any one can have attempted to persuade your Royal Highness, that her character will not be injured by the perpetual violence offered to her strongest affections—the studied care taken to estrange her from my society, and even to interrupt all communication between us? That her love for me, with whom, by His Majesty's wise and gracious arrangements, she passed the years of her infancy and childhood, never can be extinguished, I well know; and the knowledge of it forms the greatest blessing of my existence. But let me implore your Royal Highness to reflect, how inevitably all attempts to abate this attachment, by forcibly separating us, if they succeed, must injure my Child's principles—if they fail, must destroy her happiness.

"The plan of excluding my daughter from all intercourse with the world, appears to my humble judgment peculiarly unfortunate. She who is destined to be the Sovereign of this great country, enjoys none of those advantages of society which are deemed necessary for imparting a knowledge of mankind to persons who have infinitely less occasion to learn that important lesson; and it may so happen, by a chance which I trust is very remote, that she should be called upon to exercise the powers of the Crown, with an experience of the world more confined than that of the most private individual. To the extraordinary talents with which she is blessed, and which accompany a disposition as singularly amiable, frank, and decided, I willingly trust much: but beyond a certain point the greatest natural endowments cannot struggle against the disadvantages of circumstances and situation. It is my earnest prayer, for her own sake, as well as her country's, that your Royal Highness may be induced to pause before this point be reached.

"Those who have advised you, Sir, to delay so long the period of my daughter's commencing her intercourse with the world, and for that purpose to make Windsor her residence, appear not to have regarded the interruptions to her education which this arrangement occasions; both by the impossibility of obtaining the attendance of proper teachers, and the time unavoidably consumed in the frequent journeys to town which she must make, unless she is to be secluded from all intercourse, even with your Royal Highness and the rest of the Royal Family. To the same unfortunate counsels I ascribe a circumstance in every way so distressing both to my parental and religious feelings, that my Daughter has never yet enjoyed the benefit of Confirmation, although above a year older than the age at which all the other branches of the Royal Family have partaken of that solemnity. May I earnestly conjure you, Sir, to hear my entreaties upon this serious matter, even if you should listen to other advisers on things of less near concernment to the welfare of our Child?

"The pain with which I have at length formed the resolution of addressing myself to your Royal Highness is such as I should in vain attempt to express. If I could adequately describe it, you might be enabled, Sir, to estimate the strength of the motives which have made me submit to it: they are the most powerful feelings of affection, and the deepest impressions of duty towards your Royal Highness, my beloved Child, and the country, which I devoutly hope she may be preserved to govern, and to show, by a new example, the liberal affection of a free and generous people to a virtuous and Constitutional Monarch.

"I am, Sir, with profound respect, and an attachment which nothing can alter, your Royal Highness's most devoted and most affectionate Consort, Cousin, and Subject,

(Signed)

"CAROLINE LOUISA.

"Montague-house, 14th of Jan. 1813."

TO JAMES PAUL,

*Of Bursledon, in Lower Dublin Township, in Philadelphia County,
in the State of Pennsylvania;*

ON

MATTERS RELATING TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE
PRINCESS OF WALES.

(*Political Register, March, 1813.*)

LETTER II.

Botley, 3d March, 1813.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Since the date of my last letter I have returned home, where I found my children delighted to hear, that I had resumed my correspondence with "*Grand-daddy Paul*;" but very much surprised, that I did not write to you about sheep, and turnips, and carrots, in preference to the subject which I had chosen. To say the truth, I should prefer the former topics; but, I have a *duty* to perform with regard to the latter. It is certainly one of the most important public matters that ever has been discussed in England. It is a matter that must make a great figure in the history of a country which fills a high rank in the community of nations; and, viewing it in this light, I cannot help being anxious, that those, who, some years hence, may refer to the Register for information relating to it, should not have to blame me for their disappointment.

It is impossible for any one to enter on a discussion with more perfect impartiality than I have entered upon this. I know nothing personally of either of the Royal parties most concerned; I have never received either good or evil from the hands of either; I have never been under any indirect influence flowing from either. I reside at a great distance from the scene of all cabals and intrigues; I hold no correspondence which the people at our Post-office may not, if they like it, amuse themselves with reading; I never deal in *secrets*, and never desire to hear any thing that may not be uttered by the mouth of the crier in the open streets. I can have no motive to make my court either to the Prince or the Princess, seeing, that I am bound by the most solemn pledge never to touch, in any shape, a farthing of the public money as long as I live, and never to suffer any son of mine to do it, if I have it in my power to prevent him, and I do flatter myself that neither of them will ever entertain such a design. Thus standing before the public, having nothing to complain of with regard to either party; having nothing to fear, and nothing to hope for, from either, I shall, I trust, be listened to without prejudice, and that the facts, or the reasonings, which I shall bring forward, will, at the least, have a fair chance of producing their wished-for effect; a just decision in the minds of all persons of sense and integrity.

My last letter concluded with a remark as to the separation of dwelling-places of the Prince and Princess. The *time*, however, was not exactly named; and, as I wish to leave nothing less perfect than circumstances compel me, I have now to remind you, that this separation of dwellings took place in April, 1796, twelve months after the marriage, and three months after the birth of the Princess Charlotte of Wales. It is said, that, as to the *cause* of this unhappy event, and as to the manner of its taking place, there is a *Letter* in existence, in the hands of her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales; and, as this Letter was, as it is stated, written by the Prince himself, it will, doubtless, be found to be, at once, satisfactory in its reasons and delicate in its sentiments and diction. This being the case, we shall, I hope, see this Letter in print; because it will answer one great purpose; it will clear up every thing to the day of separation, and will, I have no doubt, shew the world, that any infamous tales, which the tongues of base parasites may have been engaged in circulating, are wholly without foundation.

Before I come to that consideration, which I have promised, of the several parts of the Princess's Letter, let me request you to bear in mind, that, in 1806, when Lord Grenville, Lord Erskine, Lord Grey, and Mr. Fox were in the ministry, there was, in our newspapers, many articles published, relative to an *inquiry*, which was then going on, respecting the conduct of the Princess of Wales. This was called, at that time, the "Delicate Investigation," by which name it has ever since gone. The Princess was observed, at that time, and for sometime afterwards, *not to go to Court*, as she had done before, which circumstance had the effect of producing an opinion to her disadvantage. Some months after this, however, she *re-appeared at Court*; but, in the meanwhile, *the ministry had changed*, and the late Perceval and his set had become ministers. It was understood, also, that an account of the Delicate Investigation had been formed into A BOOK, had been printed, had been upon the eve of publication, had, all at once, just when the change of ministry took place, been stopped; and that, certain copies, which had escaped by chance, had been bought up by the supposed authors at an enormous price. What I state here as matter of mere report, will, probably, hereafter appear in a more authoritative shape; but, in the meanwhile, there having been such reports current is fact sufficient for our purpose; namely, to explain certain parts of the Princess's Letter, which, without such explanation, must appear unintelligible to you.

Bearing in mind what has been said, you will now have the goodness to follow me to the period of the *establishment of the Regency* in the person of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. Hitherto the Princess had lived chiefly at a small mansion at Blackheath, upon, apparently, a very limited pecuniary allowance, which, by almost all the public prints, we were told she participated with the poor and distressed persons of her neighbourhood. I do not *know* that this was the case. I cannot know it, and, therefore, I vouch not for the fact; but I do know well that the fact was asserted in print, and that the assertion so often met the public eye, accompanied with a detail of the instances of her benevolence, that it was next to impossible that it should not have obtained general belief.

When, therefore, the Regency came to be settled, and the Prince came to the possession and disposal of a kingly income, it was natural for the

nation to expect to see the Princess placed upon a corresponding footing; and this became the more a subject of observation, because, just at the same time, large sums of money were granted by the Parliament for the purpose of enabling the Prince's maiden sisters to keep their state in separate mansions, and to maintain separate establishments. In this state of things, the nation seemed, with one voice, to ask, *why* no change was to be made in the pecuniary circumstances and the exterior appearance of the Princess of Wales, the wife of the Regent and the mother of the sole heiress to the throne. The question was actually asked in Parliament; it was put to the then minister, Perceval, what was the cause of this marked slight to Her Royal Highness; and finally, it was put distinctly to him, who had been intimately acquainted with all the facts, *whether there existed any ground of charge against the Princess*: to which he as distinctly answered, *that there existed none*.

Now, my friend, you will observe, that this declaration was made by a man, who had been a minister at the time when the Princess was restored to court, and who, of course, had advised that measure. He, as a Privy Councillor, was sworn to give the King the best advice in his power. Besides, he, at the time of his making the Declaration, was the prime minister, chosen by the Prince himself to fill that office. He was the man who directed the councils of the Prince, now become Regent with kingly powers. Therefore, his Declaration of the innocence of the Princess had deservedly very great weight with the public, who then, more than before, seemed astonished, that, while the Prince was raised in splendour as well as power, to the state of a king, the Princess, his wife, should experience no change whatever in her circumstances, but appeared to be doomed to pass the whole of her life in obscurity. The public did not seem to wish to pry into any family secrets. They generously wished not to revive past disputes. They were willing and anxious to forget all the reports which had been circulated. They wished to have no cause to suspect anything improper in either husband or wife; and, therefore, anxiously wished to see the Princess placed in a situation suited to the rank of her royal spouse, by which means all doubts, the effect of all malicious insinuations and rumours, would, at once, have been removed.

In the articles, which I wrote at the time, recommending a suitable establishment for Her Royal Highness, I was, I sincerely believe, no more than the echo of ninety-nine hundredths of the people of England. No such establishment did, however, take place; and Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, the wife of the Regent; she who, if the King die before the Regent, will be crowned Queen with her husband; she who is the mother of our future sovereign, was left in her former comparative obscurity, even at a time when establishments were granted to the sisters of the Prince; and this happened too, you will bear in mind, while the prime minister, the Prince's chief adviser, explicitly declared in open Parliament, that there was *no ground of charge* existing against Her Royal Highness.

It will be said, perhaps, and it has been said, that, in not granting an establishment of a higher order to the Princess; in not enabling her to hold a court of her own, and giving her the necessary accompaniments of splendour; it has been said, that, in not doing this *no law was violated*. Very true; but, if this were a sufficient answer to us, to what a state might she not be reduced before the proper season of complaint would arrive? We are not talking about *law*: the question before us is a ques-

tion of feeling ; a question of moral propriety. For my part, I appear not as an *accuser* of any one in authority : my object is simply this : to inquire whether the foul, the base, the malignant publications against the Princess of Wales do, or do not, admit of a shadow of justification. Justification, indeed, they cannot admit of ; but, whether they admit of the shadow of an apology ; and the answer to this question will naturally grow out of a consideration of the several parts of Her Royal Highness's Letter.

In entering upon this consideration, we must bear in mind, that the Letter treats of two subjects ; namely, *the treatment of the Princess herself, and the education of her daughter*. These we must keep separate in our mind, or else we shall fall into a confusion which will prevent a clear view of the case.

The Princess complains, as to herself, that she is debarred from that intercourse with her child which it is natural for a mother to expect, and which mothers do usually enjoy. And, here, before I proceed further, you ought to be informed, that, when the Princess went to live at Blackheath, in 1796, she took her daughter with her ; that her daughter remained with her till she attained the age of *eight years* ; that she was then placed under the care of proper persons to superintend her education, and that her place of residence was chiefly at Windsor, the place of residence of the Queen, her mother going frequently to see her, and she going frequently to see her mother. It now appears, from the Princess's Letter, that (at what time is not mentioned), the Royal Mother's visits to her daughter, or rather, the *interviews* between them, were limited, at first, to ONCE A WEEK ; that they were afterwards reduced to interviews of ONCE A FORTNIGHT ; and that she now learns that, " even " this most rigorous interdiction is to be STILL MORE RIGIDLY EN- " FORCED."

This, her Royal Highness says, has compelled her reluctantly to break a silence which has long been most painful to her. Her complaint is this : —That, at the time of settling the Regency, she was unwilling to obtrude herself upon the Prince with her private complaints ; that she waited patiently, expecting redress from the Prince's own gracious condescension ; but, that, having waited so long without receiving that redress, and now perceiving that the measures with regard to her interviews with her daughter, are calculated to admit of but one construction, and that *construction fatal to her own reputation*, she has now resolved to give utterance to her feelings.

Whether the reasoning of the Princess be correct ; whether the separation of her from her daughter ; whether the limiting of their interviews to once a week, and then further limiting them to once a fortnight ; whether, in short, the prohibition against a mother (any mother), seeing and speaking to her daughter at her pleasure ; whether such a prohibition can admit of *any construction not fatal to the mother's reputation*, I will, my sensible and honest friend, leave you to judge. And, with regard to the Princess's maternal feelings, you will, I am sure, want nothing to guide you in your judgment further than the supposition, for a moment, of a similar prohibition laid upon yourself.

Upon this part of the subject I would not add a single word, did I not think it my duty to expose some of the unfeeling ruffians of the London press, who have, upon this occasion, assailed the Princess of Wales. In answer to her complaint of not being permitted to have a free intercourse

with her daughter, the *COURIER* newspaper, of the 18th of February, makes the following remarks :—

“ The charge of separating a child from its mother, naturally engages the affections of every parent ; and her Royal Highness knowing this, does not forget to “ make a strong appeal to the passions of Englishwomen. But to what extent “ is this charge founded ? A visit once a week is changed to a visit once a fortnight. And how many mothers are there who do not see their daughters of “ *seventeen so often as once a fortnight* ? They must be callous-hearted jades who “ *trust their girls to a boarding-school* ; they must be *unfeeling monsters* who “ allow their daughters, when of an age fit for marriage, to make visits to their “ friends and relations with the view of forming connexions ; and if this daughter “ were to live under the protection of her grandmother, her uncles, and aunts, “ nay, of her very father, the conduct must be *barbarous indeed* ! But how inhuman must it be to allow girls of seventeen or eighteen to *marry*, thus placing it “ in the power of a *hard-hearted husband* to take a daughter to his own home, at “ a distance, perhaps, where the mother may not see her for months together, a “ *privation*, which, if any thing desirable is to be had through the daughter’s “ influence, is certain of raising *loud lamentations*.”

I am afraid, my friend, that the reading of this paragraph will give you a very bad opinion of the people of England ; for, you will naturally ask, “ What a people must that be, amongst whom any writer would dare to “ give vent to such miserable trash as this, and to call it an answer to the “ *Princess’s complaint* ? ” It is not of an *unavoidable* separation that the Princess complains ; it is of a separation easily avoided ; a separation, not arising from distance, or any other insurmountable obstacle, but simply from the prohibition of a third party. It is not, as in the cases here cited, a separation growing out of a calculation of advantages and disadvantages, but a separation without any compensation to the party complaining. To her a sheer, unmixed evil, and that, too, of a most grievous kind. It is not a separation, as in the case of school, or marriage, of a temporary nature ; but is of that sort, which, if rightly represented in the Letter, promises no termination. It is, in one word, *the forcible separation of an only child from her mother*. No powers of description can heighten the fact, the bare naming of which is sufficient for any one who has the common feelings of humanity about him.

Yet, my friend, I do not say that there may not be causes, even in common life, to justify such a separation. We may suppose a case of a mother so profligate, as to render it prudent in the father to prevent her from having access to her daughter. It is a horrible case to suppose. One can hardly entertain the idea without being ashamed of one’s human character. Still the case is possible ; but then the guilt, the profligacy, of the mother, must be so certainly established, so far removed from all doubt, as to leave no possibility of dispute on the question. I do not take upon me to determine in what degree the maxims, as to this matter, may be different, when the parties belong to royal families ; but we have, in the Letter of the Princess, a most clear and positive assertion of her innocence, as to *all* the charges that base insinuation had ever preferred against her.

This, my good friend, is by far the most material part of her Letter, and it will, unless I am greatly deceived, be considered as more than a sufficient answer to the calumnies, which the panders of all the low, filthy passions have hatched and circulated against her. In the former part of her Letter, she says, that she has been afflicted without any fault of her own, and that His Royal Highness knows it ; but, she afterwards comes to this distinct and unequivocal assertion :

"He who dares advise your Royal Highness to overlook *the evidence of my innocence*, and disregard the sentence of *complete acquittal* which it produced,—or is wicked and false enough still to whisper suspicions in your ear,—betrays his duty to you, Sir, to your Daughter, and to your People, if he counsels you to permit a day to pass, *without a further investigation of my conduct*. I know that no such calumniator will venture to recommend a measure, which *must speedily end in his utter confusion*. Then let me implore you to reflect on the situation in which I am placed; *without the shadow of a charge against me*, without even an *accuser*—after an inquiry that led to my ample vindication—yet treated as if I were still more culpable than the *perjures of my suborned traducers* represented me, and held up to the world as a Mother who may not enjoy the society of her only Child."

There is no such thing as misconception here. This passage of the Letter will not be misunderstood. It asserts the perfect innocence of the writer; it challenges fresh inquiry even after acquittal; and it pronounces beforehand the confusion of those, who shall excite a doubt of her innocence; besides asserting, that her traducers were *suborned and perjured*. It is not in the power of words to express anything in a manner more clear and decided. The Princess says, that there is *evidence of her innocence*. In my opinion, there needs little more evidence, than this passage of her admirable letter. If we admit that it is yet *possible*, that she may be guilty, we must admit, that a stronger proof of innocence was never exhibited to the world. In the first place, the *writing* of the Letter is her own act. She might hope, by an application to the Prince, to obtain leave to see her daughter more frequently; but, if she had thought it possible that any proofs of her guilt existed, I ask you, my friend, whether it is likely that she would have ventured to make any application at all to him, and especially an application founded entirely on an assertion of her perfect innocence, and accompanied, moreover, with the charge of *perjury and subornation* against those who had traduced her; against those who had laid the crimes to her charge? If, then, it be to set at defiance the suggestions of reason and of nature to suppose that such an application could proceed from a mind conscious of guilt, what an outrage is it to offer to the common sense of mankind to suppose, that the writer, if conscious of guilt, would have made the application public to the whole world; and thus proclaim, not only her own innocence, but the guilt, the black, the foul, the nefarious guilt of her enemies!

I can conceive it possible, that a person, accused of a crime and conscious of guilt, may put on a bold front, may affect to laugh at his accusers and their accusation. Indeed, this we see daily done by criminals of every degree. But, mark the distinction in the cases. This is the conduct of persons *accused* of crimes; and not of persons coming forward with demands for redress. If the Princess had been accused afresh at this time; if some proceeding had been going on against her; then, indeed, I should have allowed, that little weight ought to have been given to these bold assertions of innocence. But, her case was precisely the opposite of this. No one was moving accusations against her; her conduct was not a subject of discussion anywhere; she was the beginner of a new agitation of the matter; she must have known that her former accusers were still alive, and, without doubt, still as much her enemies as ever; and, she could not possibly see, in any of the political changes that had taken place, any thing to operate in her favour, but, on the contrary, many things to operate against her, in a revision of the investigation.

Had the Princess been possessed of *greater power, or influence*, now than she was in 1806 and 1807. Had she had a powerful party now on

her side, then one might have supposed it possible for her to have a reliance different from that which innocence inspires. But, it is notorious, that she has no power and no influence; that she has no party at her back, nor any political support from any quarter; and yet, she voluntarily comes forward and challenges fresh inquiry, accompanied with accusations of the most serious kind against her former accusers.

Unless, therefore, we can suppose it *possible* for a man in his senses, who has committed a murder, and who has luckily obtained an acquittal, to come voluntarily forward and petition the court for a new trial, all the evidences of his guilt being still at hand; unless we can suppose this possible, it appears to me, that we must pronounce it *impossible* that the Princess of Wales should have been guilty of any of the acts of either guilt or shame which have been laid to her charge, or insinuated against her.

So far, however, are the ruffians of the London press, who have attacked her Royal Highness upon this occasion, from reasoning in this way, that they hold it forth as proof of her guilt that she lives in a state of separation from her husband; or, at least, they tell her, that whether innocent, or not, she, if not living with her husband, must expect to meet with nearly all the consequences of guilt.

"Rash, mistaken, unfortunate woman!" (say they in the *COURIER* of the 18th of February). "In this country no wife can command the respectful attentions of society, due to her station, *if she lives separately from her husband*, still less if she publicly accuses and traduces him.—She may excite sympathy and compassion; she may gratify revenge; she may be *injured and innocent in the highest degree*; but still the countenance of her husband is the *unalterable channel through which the attentions of the world can permanently flow upon her*. She may have friends to console and caress her, every one may acknowledge the *injustice* of the treatment she meets, and pity her condition; but so severe are the rules of society, and for the *best purposes*, that she is *coldly received*, and as conveniently avoided as may be, until at last she becomes disgusted with public company, and finds her only comfort in retirement. *Impeachment by the husband entails three-fourths of the external consequences of guilt in this world, though no internal disapprobation may follow.*"

This article in the *COURIER*, as well as the one cited before, was signed K. B.: who the *real author* was I know not; but, sure I am, that his heart is the seat of the most odious tyranny; a tyranny so base and cowardly that it is impossible to express one's detestation of it in terms sufficiently strong. He confines his maxims to *this country*, which, if he spoke truth as to the maxims themselves, would be some comfort to the rest of the world; for, certainly, any thing so dishonourable to the understandings and hearts of a people was never before promulgated. Somebody, I forget who, has called England a heaven for women and a hell for horses; but, if what this calumniator of Her Royal Highness asserts were true, the saying might be reversed, or, at least, we may safely say, that the lot of our four-legged fellow-creatures would be by far the best of the two. But, his assertions are as false as the intention of them is foul. In this country, as in all others, except, perhaps, in the states of Africa, an innocent woman, injured by her husband, is always amongst those who are acquainted with the facts, not only an object of compassion but of the attentions of the world; and what is more, we are just enough, in general, to ascribe to the husband his full share of any indiscretions, into which the temptations, almost inseparable from the nature of her situation, may lead her. So far from acting upon the doctrine of this writer,

from whom, I dare say, all the properties of manhood have long ago departed; so far from acting upon what he calls our "severe rules of society," we make large allowances for the conduct of wives notoriously ill-treated by their husbands, and do not expect that a woman is to shut herself up in a hermitage for life, because, "though innocent in the highest degree," an effete or capricious brute of a husband, having, perhaps, first pocketed her fortune, may have driven her from his house.

This may serve as a justification of our manners and rules against the doctrine of K. B., in its *general application*; and, in applying it to the particular case before us, let me ask this gentleman (for, I dare say, he calls himself one) where we are to look for "*impeachment by the husband*." I do not mean, nor does he mean *impeachment* in the technical sense of the word; but, I mean, *accusation*; and, where, I say, are we to look for any accusation preferred by the Prince against the Princess? I have never seen any such accusation, and I do not believe that any such accusation exists even to this day. The Princess asserts, in her Letter, that there is *no accuser* of her. I implicitly believe what she says. It is not possible to believe, that she would, in so solemn a manner, have made this assertion, if it had not been true. And, if what she here asserts be true, what does the man deserve, what punishment does not that man merit, who has thrown out these insinuations!

But, though the Prince has never *impeached*, or accused, the Princess, this Mr. K. B. has done it. It is done in a very low way, to be sure; but it is done, and a very curious accusation it is. Having spoken of the refusal of the mother to see her daughter, he proceeds thus:—"This may be *hard*; but the *same policy* which takes the child from the mother, *gave to the husband the wife*. These things are not regulated by *common rules*, and should not be judged by *common feelings*. If the mother is *to be pitied* for seeing her daughter but once in the fortnight, how *much more* should the father be *pitied* who was FORCED to marry a *Lady whom he never had seen*, and of whose TEMPER he had no opportunity to judge." This last insinuation is quite worthy of the source whence it proceeds; quite worthy of the source whence came the doctrine, that the reputation of the wife is to be blasted merely by the fact of her having been driven from the husband's house.

It is not easy to discover why the "*same policy*" that leads to state marriages should produce a prohibition against the mother seeing the daughter more than once in fourteen days. But, laying this aside, as unworthy of further notice, we are here, for the first time, introduced to the *hardship*, imposed upon the Prince, in forcing him to marry; and, we are told, that, so hard was his case, that he is more to be *pitied* on account of it than is the mother on account of her being deprived of the sight of her daughter.—This language is somewhat different from that which was contained in the Addresses of 1795, on the occasion of the marriage, and in the *Answers to those Addresses*, wherein the Prince expressed his *happiness* at the event. It is rather hard, seeing all that passed then, for the Princess to be told, in the London prints, that the Prince was *forced* to marry her, and that he ought to be *pitied on that account*.—But, besides the baseness, besides the cowardly insolence of the statement, it is *false*. If true, it makes nothing against the Princess, for, it is clear, that if there was *force* on the one side, there was force on the other. But, *as far as relates to the Prince*, it is not true; it is a direct falsehood, and the use of it can only tend to show what miserable shifts the

calumniators of the Princess are compelled to resort to. The Prince was not, because he could not be, *forced* to marry the Princess. The King has the power of *refusing his consent* to any of the members of the Royal Family to marry; he has a *negative* upon their choice in this respect; but, he has no power, nor have the Parliament and the King together any power, to force any member of the Royal Family to *marry*, under any circumstances whatever they may be. It is, therefore, *false*; flatly false, and it is an impudent falsehood, to say, that the Prince was forced to marry her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.

This writer, when, for the basest purposes, he was hatching this tale about *force* put upon the Prince as to his marriage, forgot, perhaps, what an imputation he was, indirectly, casting upon the King; "our good old King," whose example, as to education, though not as to *other things*, he is so eager to cite. If the Prince was forced to marry, it was his father forced him, for, as to the laws of the land they know nothing of any such power. If anybody forced the Prince to marry, it was his father, who made the treaty of marriage, and who never consulted the Parliament about the matter, till he had so done. This was all in the usual way; the father's consent was necessary, and it was given. It is likely, too, that the match was advised by him; it is likely that it was very much desired by him; but, I again say, that he did not, because he could not, *force* the Prince to marry. If he married a person whom he had never seen, he knew what he was about. He was no chicken. He was 32 years of age. He had cut his wisdom teeth long before the day of his marriage. He did what he did with his eyes open. I do not say that the Princess was, or that she could be, the object of his choice as to personal affection, because he had never seen her; but, this I assert, that it was *his choice*, that it was *his own free choice to marry her*. He, doubtless, had higher views than those of vulgar gratification. He viewed the matter as a Prince, and not as a man. He had in idea heirs to the throne; the perpetuating of the line of his ancestors. Say that these were his views, but do not say that he was *forced* to marry, and do not tell us that he is to be *pitied* on account of his marriage; for we know, that, if he had chosen it, he might have remained single all his life-time.

But, if the Prince is to be *pitied*, what shall we say of the Princess? If he is to be pitied because the nature of his situation in life led to his marriage with a person whom he had never seen, and with whose "TEMPER" (dirty insinuation!) he could have had no opportunity of becoming acquainted; if *he* is to be pitied on this account; if this plea is to be put forward in his favour (for as a plea this writer means it); if, I say, the Prince is to become an object of our compassion on this score; if he is to be held forth to the people in this light, what shall we not say for the Princess upon the same score? Did not she marry a man whom she had never seen? Did not she marry a man of whose "TEMPER" she could have no knowledge from experience or observation? Were they not upon an equal footing in this respect? Yes; and, besides, though he was not, and could not be, *forced* to marry her, I do not know that it was not in the power of her father to *force her to marry him*. I do not know that it was in his power; nor do I know that he would have exerted such power if he had had it. But, it is *possible* that it might have been so; and, I know, that, in the case of the Prince, the thing is impossible. I knew, that there existed no power to force him, and that to marry was an *act of his own free will*. His motives I am not presumptuous enough

to attempt to point out; but, I insist, that the act itself was the effect of his own choice. The act of the Princess might, for aught I know, have been the same; but, what I say is this: that if *he* be an object of pity because he married a lady whom he had never seen, *she* must, upon the same ground, be an object of pity, and an object of greater pity, on that score, because the marriage removed her into a foreign country and cut her off from all the connexions of her youth, from all her friendships, and from the greater part of those things that make life delightful.

Therefore, in whatever degree, the circumstance of marrying an unknown person is calculated to weigh in favour of the Prince, it must weigh, in the same degree, at least, in favour of the Princess. But, to say the truth, it can have no weight, if duly considered, in favour of either, upon the supposition, that the marriage was as much an act of *her choice* as it was of his. They both knew what they were about. They were willing to make the sacrifice (if they did make any) in order to secure great benefit to themselves and their families; and, in talking about the *pity* due to the Prince's situation, the *objects he had in view* ought not to be overlooked. If we were to reason in the way that this writer does, who would be entitled to so much of our pity as *miners* and *well-diggers*, a tenth-part of whom get their brains knocked out, or are buried alive? The truth is, however, they are no more objects of pity than labourers above ground. They calculate gains and dangers; and they freely choose to take the latter for the sake of the former. No man can *force* another to be a well-digger; nor was the Prince of Wales forced to be a husband.

It is easy to see with what view this topic has been brought forward. The writer looks back to the time of the unhappy separation. He is, perhaps, of opinion, that the world will look back to that epoch too, as being the proper point whence to start in an inquiry into the conduct of the parties most concerned; and, conscious, apparently, that up to that moment, no one had dared to utter even an insinuation against the conduct of the Princess, he thinks it necessary to lay the ground of a *cause of disagreement and separation*. Hence his real motive for this *pity* of the Prince on account of his *forced* marriage; hence his insinuation against the "TEMPER" of the Princess, than which, surely, nothing ever was more insolent or more base; for, the sentence contains a charge against Her Royal Highness as to her *temper*. It is a *new* charge; for, until now, the Princess has always been spoken of as a person of the best temper, which, indeed, is pretty well proved to be the case by the attachment of her daughter to her, and by the silence, upon this head, of her bitterest enemies.

In another of his articles this same writer has the following passage, which merits particular attention, and ought to go forth to the world as a specimen of the brutality by which the Princess has been assailed in the London newspapers.

"In her Letter, her Royal Highness complains, that the limitation of visits to her daughter is an impeachment of her honour, a revival of the charges made some years ago. But since these charges were made and investigated, the intercourse between the mother and daughter has been allowed to continue. The assertion therefore that it is on such grounds the intercourse is refused is obviously a mere pretence. There may be other grounds on which a father may deem it proper to limit a daughter's visits to the mother. Supposing the mother of a *violent temper*, of *coarse manners and habits*; *capricious*, *boisterous*, *restless*, *ambitious*, and *vain*; less inclined to the society of her own than of the other sex, and with them *familiar beyond the ideas of English*

"*decorum*, though perfectly chaste in person and even in thought; supposing such a mother associating herself with her husband's enemies, making of them her confidants, and entering into the schemes of the factious for the purpose of *thwarting, exasperating and traducing him*; supposing this mother to live separately from the husband, and on the worst terms with him; let all this be supposed, and ample reasons will be found for the Father's refusal of allowing the child to be educated under such an example *without* ascribing that refusal to an opinion of the Mother's want of chastity. A woman may be chaste in person, yet of manners and habits leading to unchastity in others, or of a temper and inclination likely to make an undutiful child."

Having thus, under the guise of *supposing a case*, given what he evidently wishes to go forth as a description of the character of Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, he next, in the usual manner of such calumniators, says, that he *does not wish it to be so understood*.

"It is not intended to assert or insinuate that this is a picture of the character of the Princess of WALES. Her friends, personally acquainted with her, represent her as mild and amiable in all respects. The picture is *not drawn that it may be taken as a likeness of the Princess*, but to show that there are other bad qualities besides unchasteness which may justify a father in refusing his child's education to a mother; and still more should that child be the heir presumptive to the throne, a personage for whom the British Constitution has specially provided." This is adding cowardice to calumny. He drew the picture with a manifest intention of its being applied to her Royal Highness, and this latter part of the paragraph is merely for the sake of avoiding a prosecution for libel, for which purpose, however, it is not sufficient, seeing that the real meaning of the writer can be mistaken by no man.

Now, then, my friend, what a picture is here given! And, observe, that this picture is intended to be applied to that same lady, who, in 1795, was received in England as an Angel bringing with her blessings, not only for the present generation, but for generations yet to come! Her husband was described as the happiest of mortals in possessing such a treasure; and, in short, there were no expressions of praise that our language affords, which were not employed in the description of her person, her manners, and her mental endowments. For my part, I can *know* nothing of the Princess's manners; but, with the two pictures before me, and with a pretty good view of the circumstances under which both were drawn, I can have no hesitation in believing the picture now given to be a most foul and base attempt to disseminate falsehood. I believe the character of the Princess to be strongly marked with frankness and unreserve, but this, so far from a fault, is an amiable characteristic. More mischief is done by hypocrisy, in a day, than by the want of caution in a life-time.

However, the cowardly writer (for *cowardice* is the great characteristic of all the Princess's enemies) does not here venture to give countenance to the *serious* charges said to have been preferred against Her Royal Highness. He charges her with caballing with her husband's enemies. *Who* are they? The persons who espoused her cause in the first instance are *now her husband's ministers*, chosen by himself. He chose them for his ministers *after* they had espoused her cause; *after* they had advised the King to restore her to Court; and would he have chosen them, if he *himself* had not been convinced that she really was innocent of the things laid to her charge?

She is charged here with entering into the schemes of the factious, for

the purpose of thwarting, exasperating, and traducing her husband. And, where is the *proof* of this? This charge, like all the others, is false. She complains to him in private, that she is not permitted to see her only child; she boldly asserts that there is no just cause for this severe affliction on her; and, her complaint not being attended to, she makes her letter public, in order that the world may not suppose, that the prohibition is founded on any misconduct of her's. Is this entering into the schemes of the factious? Is there here any attempt to thwart, exasperate, or traduce her husband? If she has caused her complaint to be made public, from what has that arisen but *from the refusal to listen to that complaint*? Had her complaint been listened to, had she received redress, had she been permitted to see her child *only once a week*, we should never have seen the letter, because it is evident, that the letter never would have been written. With what justice, then, can she be charged with entering into the schemes of the factious for the purpose of thwarting, exasperating, and traducing her husband?

The truth is, that being conscious of innocence, her forbearance is something wonderful; and, it is not less true, that any longer forbearance must have made against her in the opinion of the world. That the Prince, now invested with kingly powers, has a right to direct his daughter's *education*, we know very well; but, this does not mean that the mother is to be shut out from free access to the child. Her seeing her child could not have interrupted the course of her studies. I never yet heard, that a part of *good bringing up* consisted in excluding the mother from a sight of the child to be brought up. It is in vain to attempt to twist the prohibition into a part of a *system of education*; for the sole interpretation that it will admit of is that which the Princess has put upon it: namely, that she is *unfit* to be trusted in the presence of her daughter; and this being so manifestly the case, I put to any man of a just mind, what must have been the conclusion if the Princess had any longer forbore to complain? I put it to any man, what he would have thought of her, if she had remained silent under such circumstances? Yet is she, by these base panders of the press, charged with caballing and intriguing with her husband's enemies; she is charged with obtruding herself upon the public. They seem really to think her something less than a worm. Something that either has no feeling, or that ought to suppress every feeling the discovering of which is inconvenient to her husband. This is a state to which no human being ought to be reduced; and, it is a state to which no *man*, worthy of the name, would wish to reduce anything bearing the name of *woman*.

But, if it be part of a system of education to exclude the mother from the child, how comes it, that the *Queen* was never shut out from *her* children? And how comes it, that she is not now shut out from her *grand-child*? Why is the grandmother more fit to have the care of the child than the mother herself? The writer before quoted, whose malignity can be traced to only one source, expresses his fears of the Princess Charlotte being initiated into *German manners*.

"What education," says he, "does the young PRINCESS require? Is it lessons in *German morality*? Are we not *sufficiently Germanized*? Must we *Germanize* our females in manners as our fops are Germanized in dress? What should we do; set the example before the young PRINCESS of a *dutiful wife*, or of one who could go repeatedly to the Opera, where she was *applauded in reproach of her husband*, and he was *hissed in her praise*: of one who can *endanger the raising of the public indignation against him*, on grounds so shallow as those of

"the letter in question? Unfortunately the PRINCE and PRINCESS live separately, on the worst terms. This state of things can only have arisen from *what the PRINCE thinks sufficient cause*, and to give up the government of his child to a person whose conduct he himself impeaches, would be *to confess himself conscious of being wrong*, of being highly criminal in living separately from the mother."

Now, if there be any danger in *German manners*, why are so many Germans introduced into our army, and why have they, in England, the command even of English troops? But, why was not this perceived *when the marriage took place*? Did not the Prince and the King know, that the Princess was a *German woman*? Nay, is not the Queen, the King's wife and the Prince's mother, a *German woman*? And yet, behold, this man can discover no danger in her manners or precepts. Is the Queen less a German, is she less a foreigner than the Princess? To what miserable shifts are these assailants of her Royal Highness driven! Nothing more clearly shows the weakness, the miserable weakness, of their cause.

But the Princess is here called an *undutiful wife*. And why, because she was, it is here said, applauded at the Opera in reproach of her husband. How was she to blame for that, or for the hisses, which he is here said to have received in her praise? She had not the power to restrain either the applauses or the hisses; and, as to *going to the Opera*, was she to refrain from doing that because she was separated from her husband, and thus, by shunning the eye of the public, tacitly acknowledge herself in fault? The Prince, beheld, is, by this writer, justified in excluding the mother from the daughter, lest by allowing the intercourse, he should seem to confess himself conscious of *being wrong in living in a state of separation from his wife*. But, the mother, oh! she is to hold her tongue, she is even to shun the light, she is to look no one in the face, she is to do nothing to convince the world, that she is not in the wrong; she, though innocent, is to act the part of an acknowledged criminal; and, because she does not do so, she is to be called an *undutiful wife*! She has now, it seems, "*endangered the raising of the public indignation against her husband*." And how? Only by publishing her appeal to himself. That is all she has done. She has complained to him of her treatment; and, if the publishing of this complaint exposes him to the danger here spoken of, she is not to blame; or, if she be, so is every man who makes known to the public any grievance under which he labours. If her complaint, as contained in her letter, be well founded, it will and it ought to produce an effect in the public mind; if it be ill-founded, let it be answered; let it be shown to be ill-founded. She makes certain assertions. She says, that *perjured* and *SUBORNED* accusers have been brought against her; she says, that she has been fully acquitted of all the charges preferred by them; she says, that, if any one is still wicked enough to whisper suspicions against her, she wishes for a fresh inquiry. And, what *answer* has been given to this? Base insinuations only, by anonymous writers. This answer will not satisfy the world; this is not the way to answer a serious complaint, signed with the complainant's name.

Much has been said about the Princess having acted under *bad advice*; and it has been frequently stated that she would have cause to *repent* of what has been called her *rashness*. The newspapers have been filled with accounts of great councils of state held upon the subject of her letter, and of depositions and examinations taken before magistrates. But, still,

we see no answer to the bold and distinct assertions of her innocence ; and, I say again, that those assertions are not to be answered by hints and insinuations of anonymous writers of paragraphs. In my conception of it there never was a plainer case. The limitation of the Princess's visits to her daughter must rest for defence upon some ground of complaint against herself. This all the world will allow. Indeed, this is allowed on all hands. Well, then, she positively asserts that there is no ground of complaint against herself, and, if any one suspects that there is, she challenges fresh inquiry into her conduct. This challenge remains hitherto *unanswered* ; and, until some sort of authentic answer be given to it, she may safely rest her case where it is.

Before I conclude, I cannot refrain from expressing my hope, that the Princess will not resort to *lawyers* as advisers. Her case is too plain to require, or admit of, the use of subtlety. I am far from supposing that the gentlemen of the bar are, in the smallest degree, less honest, and they must necessarily be more acute and discriminating, than the mass of men. But with full as much honesty as other men, and with greater faculties of judging rightly than fall to the lot of men in general, they are by no means to be preferred where *politics* or *political power*, may intermix themselves with the matters in question. Other men are exposed to but the one old vulgar species of temptation, the yielding to which becomes visible at once to all eyes ; but, the Devil has in this country, at least, such a choice of baits when fishing for a lawyer ; he has them of so many sizes, adapted to such a variety of swallows and of tastes, and has, in every case, such ready means of neatly hiding his hook, that, when he chooses to set in earnest about it, I am much afraid, that very few of these gentlemen escape him.

In my next I shall enter into other parts of the subject, and in the meanwhile, I remain

Your faithful friend,

WM. COBBETT.

TO JAMES PAUL,

*Of Bursledon, in Lower Dublin Township, in Philadelphia County,
in the State of Pennsylvania ;*

ON

MATTERS RELATING TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE
PRINCESS OF WALES.

(*Political Register, March, 1813.*)

LETTER III.

Botley, 9th March, 1813.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is now seventeen years since I first took pen in hand, with an intention of sending the production of it to the press ; and, certainly, I never did, from that day to this, experience more satisfaction in sitting down to

write, than I do at this moment, in the full assurance, that the present Number of my Register will convey to you and to the world a thorough conviction of the innocence of the injured Princess of Wales, and of the baseness, the unparalleled black-heartedness of her calumniators.

At the out-set of my last letter, having occasion to revert to the period of the separation of the Princess and the Prince, I observed to you, that it was said, that there was a *Letter* in existence upon the subject; and I ventured to predict, that when that letter should be published, the world would see the falsehood of all the infamous tales, which, up to that period, the tongues of base parasites had been engaged in circulating. The letter, or, a *Letter*, dated about the time referred to, and upon the subject referred to, has, since my last, been published in the London newspapers; and also a letter of the Princess in answer thereunto. I will say nothing myself as to the authenticity of these documents; but, as they have obtained general circulation, through the means of the press; and, as their authenticity has not been called in question, in print, at least, I take them for authentic, and, viewing them in this light, I shall insert them here.

Letter from the Prince to the Princess of Wales.

Windsor Castle, April 30, 1796.

MADAM,—As Lord Cholmondeley informs me that you wish I would define, in writing, the terms upon which we are to live, I shall endeavour to explain myself upon that head with as much clearness, and with as much propriety, as the nature of the subject will admit. Our inclinations are not in our power; *nor should either of us be held answerable to the other*, because nature has not made us suitable to each other. Tranquil and comfortable society is, however, in our power; let our intercourse, therefore, be restricted to that, and I will distinctly subscribe to the condition which you required through Lady Cholmondeley, that, even in the event of any accident happening to my daughter—which I trust Providence in its mercy will avert—I shall not infringe the terms of the restriction, by proposing, at any period, a connexion of a more particular nature. I shall now finally close this disagreeable correspondence, trusting that, as we have completely explained ourselves to each other, the rest of our lives will be passed in uninterrupted tranquillity.—I am, Madam, with great truth,

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) GEORGE P.

ANSWER.

The avowal of your conversation with Lord Cholmondeley, neither surprises nor offends me. It merely confirmed what you tacitly insinuated *for this twelve-month*. But after this, it would be a want of delicacy, or rather, an unworthy meanness in me, were I to complain of those conditions which you impose upon yourself.

I should have returned no answer to your letter, if it had not been conceived in terms to make it doubtful whether this arrangement proceeds from you or from me; and you are aware that the credit of it belongs to you alone.

The letter which you announce to me as the last, obliges me to communicate to the King, as to my Sovereign, and my Father, both your avowal and my answer. You will find enclosed the copy of my letter to the King. I apprize you of it, that I may not incur the slightest reproach of duplicity from you. As I have at this moment no protector but His Majesty, I refer myself solely to him on this subject; and if my conduct meets his approbation, I shall be, in some degree, at least, consoled. I retain every sentiment of gratitude for the situation in which I find myself, as Princess of Wales, enabled by your means to indulge in the free exercise of a virtue dear to my heart—I mean charity.

It will be my duty likewise to act upon another motive,—that of giving an example of patience and resignation under every trial.

Do me the justice to believe, that I shall never cease to pray for your happiness, and to be

Your much devoted,

6th May, 1796.

CAROLINE.

Upon these Letters I shall first observe, that we have here a fresh proof, and a most striking one it is, of the sound sense, the moderation, and delicacy of sentiment, of the Princess of Wales; and, for my part, I cannot help regarding it as most fortunate for this country, that its future sovereign had her early education under, and is said to entertain a most ardent affection for, such a mother. Another remark upon these Letters will, perhaps, be unnecessary; namely, that their date shows them to have been written *within thirteen months after the marriage took place*, and, which is singular enough, the Prince's Letter is dated on the very day twelvemonth that the Parliament were engaged in discussing His Majesty's gracious Message, relative to the provision to be made for the "august spouse" of his son, including the discharge of his debts, as necessary to his future comfortable establishment. In the midst of these melancholy reflections we must not, however, overlook the substantive fact, that, according to these Letters, it is manifest, that the proposition for a separation *originated with His Royal Highness*. This is very material. This, together with the *cause* of separation, as stated in his Letter, clears all up to that interesting period, which is of very great consequence; for there is no just man, who, in viewing the circumstances of the sequel, can possibly overlook the cause from which all has proceeded. You will have observed, too, that the base calumniators of the Princess have said, that the *bare fact* of her living in a state of separation from her husband amounts to a presumptive proof of her guilt. How material is it, then, to be informed rightly as to the real cause of that separation! If the separation had been caused by any fault, or even any *alleged fault*, of the Princess, her case, at this day, would have been very different indeed from what it is. But, the Prince's Letter leaves no room for doubt upon this important point. It clears all up. If she had been the *proposer* of the separation, her case would have been very materially affected by it; for, though her innocence must still have been acknowledged, the world might have said, that it was the separation which led to the charges, and that, therefore, she must thank herself for them. As the case now stands, she is quite free from even this imputation; and, instead of agreeing with her enemies, that she has discovered *rashness*, our only wonder is, that she has, with so good a cause, been able so long to remain silent, especially when we reflect on the endless insinuations that have been thrown out against her.

I must now crave your attention to the interesting proceedings which have taken place since my last letter to you went from under my hand. In the postscript to that letter, I noticed, and, indeed, I inserted, the Princess's Letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is stated, in print, that a similar Letter was sent to the Lord Chancellor, who is the Speaker, or chairman, of the House of Lords; but, it seems, that, for reasons which I attempt not to dive into, the Lord Chancellor did not communicate that Letter to the House. That Letter, as you will have seen, was occasioned by a *Report*, made to the Prince by certain members of what is called the *Privy Council*. And here I should give you some account of this Council. It consists of whomsoever the King pleases to name, and he generally makes all his Ministers Privy Counsellors. Some of the Bishops, too, and of the Judges generally belong to it. So that, especially if there occur frequent changes of Ministers, the Privy Council is rather a numerous body, consisting of persons of all parties, seeing that when once a man becomes a Privy Councillor, he

always remains a Privy Councillor, except his name be expurged from the list on account of some flagrant and scandalous offence.

But, when the Privy Council assembles, it is not to be understood that *all* the members are present, or that they come *promiscuously*. In fact, they do not come, unless they be *summoned* to come; and, of course, the King, or the Regent, causes to be summoned those members, and those only, whom his Ministers advise him to cause to be summoned. I have entered into these particulars, in order to explain to you the nature of the body, whence the Report, which I am here about to insert, proceeded. You will see, that the Report itself states, that the persons who made it were *specially summoned* for the purpose of taking the Princess's Letter into their consideration, and of making a report to the Regent thereon.

Report, &c. to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent.

The following Members of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council, viz. — His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, — The Right Hon. the Lord High Chancellor, — His Grace the Archbishop of York, — His Grace the Lord Primate of Ireland, — The Lord President of the Council, — The Lord Privy Seal, — The Earl of Buckinghamshire, — The Earl Bathurst, — The Earl of Liverpool, — The Earl of Mulgrave, — The Viscount Melville, — The Viscount Sidmouth, — The Viscount Castlereagh, — The Right Hon. the Lord Bishop of London, — The Right Hon. Lord Ellenborough, Lord Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench, — The Right Hon. the Speaker of the House of Commons, — The Right Hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer, — The Right Hon. the Chancellor of the Duchy, — His Honour the Master of the Rolls, — The Right Hon. the Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas,* — The Right Hon. the Lord Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer, — The Right Hon. the Judge of the High Court of Admiralty, — The Right Hon. the Dean of the Arches — Having been summoned by command of your Royal Highness, on the 19th of February, to meet at the office of Viscount Sidmouth, Secretary of State for the Home Department, a communication was made by his Lordship to the Lords then present, in the following terms: —

MY LORDS, — I have it in command from His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, to acquaint your Lordships, that a copy of a Letter from the Princess of Wales to the Prince Regent having appeared in a public paper, which Letter refers to the proceedings that took place in an inquiry instituted by command of His Majesty, in the year 1806, and contains, among other matters, certain animadversions upon the manner in which the Prince Regent has exercised his undoubted right of regulating the conduct and education of his daughter the Princess Charlotte; and His Royal Highness having taken into his consideration the said Letter so published, and adverting to the directions heretofore given by His Majesty, that the documents relating to the said Inquiry should be sealed up, and deposited in the office of his Majesty's Principal Secretary of State; in order that His Majesty's Government should possess the means of resorting to them if necessary; His Royal Highness has been pleased to direct, that the said Letter of the Princess of Wales, and the whole of the said documents, together with the copies of other letters and papers, of which a schedule is annexed, should be referred to your Lordships, being Members of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, for your consideration; and that you should report to His Royal Highness your opinion, whether, under all the circumstances of the case, it be fit and proper that the intercourse between the Princess of Wales and her daughter, the Princess Charlotte, should continue to be subject to regulations and restrictions: —

Their Lordships adjourned their Meetings to Tuesday the 23rd of February; and the intermediate days having been employed in perusing the documents referred to them, by command of your Royal Highness, they proceeded on that and the following day to the further consideration of the said documents, and have agreed to report to your Royal Highness as follows: —

* The Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas was prevented by indisposition from attending, during any part of these proceedings.

In obedience to the commands of your Royal Highness, we have taken into our most serious consideration the Letter from Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales to your Royal Highness, which has appeared in the public papers, and has been referred to us by your Royal Highness, in which Letter the Princess of Wales, amongst other matters, complains that the intercourse between Her Royal Highness and Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte, has been subjected to certain restrictions.

We have also taken into our most serious consideration, together with the other papers referred to us by your Royal Highness, all the documents relative to the Inquiry instituted in 1806, by command of His Majesty, into the truth of certain representations, respecting the conduct of Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, which appear to have been pressed upon the attention of your Royal Highness, in consequence of the advice of Lord Thurlow, and upon grounds of public duty, by whom they were transmitted to His Majesty's consideration. And your Royal Highness having been graciously pleased to command us to report our opinions to your Royal Highness, whether, under all the circumstances of the case, it be fit and proper, that the intercourse between the Princess of Wales and her daughter, the Princess Charlotte, should continue to be subject to regulation and restraint.

We beg leave humbly to report to your Royal Highness, that after a full examination of all the documents before us, we are of opinion, that under all the circumstances of the case, it is highly fit and proper, with a view to the welfare of Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte, in which are equally involved the happiness of your Royal Highness in your parental and royal character, and the most important interests of the State, that the intercourse between Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales and Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte, should continue to be subject to regulation and restraint.

We humbly trust that we may be permitted, without being thought to exceed the limits of the duty imposed on us, respectfully to express the just sense we entertain of the motives by which your Royal Highness has been actuated in the postponement of the confirmation of her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte, as it appears, by a statement under the hand of Her Majesty the Queen, that your Royal Highness has conformed in this respect to the declared will of His Majesty, who had been pleased to direct, that such ceremony should not take place till her Royal Highness should have completed her 18th year.

We also humbly trust that we may be further permitted to notice some expressions in the Letter of Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, which may possibly be construed as implying a charge of too serious a nature to be passed over without observation. We refer to the words—"suborned traducers." As this expression, from the manner in which it is introduced, may, perhaps, be liable to misconstruction (however impossible it may be to suppose that it can have been so intended), to have reference to some part of the conduct of your Royal Highness, we feel it our bounden duty not to omit this opportunity of declaring that the documents laid before us afford the most ample proof, that there is not the slightest foundation for such an asperson.

(Signed)

C. Cantuar,
Eldon,
E. Ebor,
W. Armagh,
Harrowby, P. C.
Westmoreland, C. P. S.
Buckinghamshire,
Bathurst,
Liverpool,
Mulgrave,
Melville.

Sidmouth,
J. London,
Ellenborough,
Chas. Abbott,
N. Vansittart,
C. Bathurst,
W. Grant,
A. Macdonald,
W. Scott,
J. Nicholl,

(A true copy)

SIDMOUTH.

Such was the Report, made to the Prince Regent upon this occasion. The Princess, in her Letter, inserted in the postscript to my last, states that a copy of this Report had been transmitted to her by Lord Sidmouth. Now, we must, I think, take it for granted, that this Report was intended

to be an *answer* to the Princess's Letter of complaint respecting her exclusion from her daughter; for, if it were not intended to be such, why was a copy of it sent to her? If it had been intended solely for the purpose of satisfying the Prince, that he had acted rightly in insisting upon such exclusion; then, it would have been sufficient to lay the Report before him; and if the intention had been to settle any doubt in his mind as to the propriety of the exclusion; in that case, also, the Report would naturally have been confined to the perusal of the Prince and of his advisers and friends. If intended as an answer to the Letter of the Princess, it would, of course, be communicated to her; and, if it failed to convince her that she was wrong, or to silence her complaints, there it was ready for the justification of the Prince in the eyes of the nation and of the world.

Assuming, therefore, as we safely may, that this Report ought to be considered as the best answer that could be given to the complaint of her Royal Highness, let us now, my friend, inquire a little how far it ought to be considered as a satisfactory answer.

Her Royal Highness says, that she was, for awhile, permitted to see her daughter only once a week; that she is at present (that is to say, at the time of writing her Letter) permitted to see her only once in two weeks, and that she has reason to apprehend that even that degree of intercourse is about to be further contracted. She then proceeds to remark that, though forbearance had hitherto marked her conduct, though she had thus far consoled herself in her retirement with the consciousness of her innocence, she could now, no longer remain silent; that her love for her child and for her own honour called upon her to complain. Her reasoning was this: if it becomes notorious to the whole world, as it very soon must, that I am not permitted to see my daughter; that the Queen and my husband's sisters are not only permitted to be with her as often as they please, but that, she even lives amongst them, and is brought up under their eye; if this fact become notorious to the whole world, *what must that world think of me?* Her conclusion is, that, if she continued to endure this without complaint, the world must think that the motive for her silence could be nothing less than the fear of an inquiry into her conduct and an exposure of some sort of guilt of which she was conscious. This was her reasoning upon the subject, and you will not, I am sure, hesitate to say, that her reasoning was undeniably just. Therefore, said she, I claim permission to see my child, as other mothers see their children, seeing that I have done no act that ought to deprive me of that right of nature; and, she adds, if there be any doubt upon this point, after the full and clear acquittal which was pronounced in my favour against the calumnies which my perjured and suborned traducers had raised against me; if there remain any doubt as to this point, let there be a fresh inquiry or let me not be treated as a guilty woman, as a mother unworthy of being permitted to have an intercourse with her daughter.

Such was the complaint of the Princess of Wales, and what sort of an *answer* does the Report give to this complaint? Does it deny the allegations with regard to the prohibition of an intercourse with her daughter? Does it deny, that the natural conclusion to be drawn from that prohibition is injurious to the mother's reputation? Does it deny, the clear and complete acquittal of the Princess with regard to the charges that had been brought against her? Does it deny that she was traduced by

persons perjured and suborned? No: it denies none of these; it evades all these points; it touches upon no one of them, except, indeed, that of the perjured and suborned traducers, and, as to that, it only says that the Prince himself was not the suborner, and that he had no knowledge of a subornation having been resorted to; an assertion, by the bye, which the Princess's Letter does not appear to have called for, seeing that it does not charge the Prince with that base and detestable act.

To me it appears, therefore, that this Report contains no answer at all to the Letter of the Princess. It says, indeed, that the Prince has laid the Documents relating to the inquiry of 1806, and also other documents and evidence before the Privy Council; but it does not say what other documents or what other evidence these were; and it does not intimate to her that her challenge to a fresh inquiry has been, or is to be accepted. It informs her, that, after examining all these documents and this evidence, the intercourse between the Princess and her daughter ought to continue to be subject to regulation and restraint; but it does not say what sort of regulation; it does not mark out what degree of restraint; it does not say whether it ought to be a week, or a fortnight, or any greater or less period, that ought to form the interval of the visits between the mother and her child.

Again, therefore, I say, that, as to the main point, and, indeed, as to all the main points, in the letter of her Royal Highness, this Report contains no answer at all. Yet, without containing an answer to the letter, without clearly denying any of its allegations, and without attempting to controvert any part of its reasoning, the Report does seem, as her Royal Highness says, to cast an aspersion upon her. For, it gives, as the grounds of the opinion that the intercourse between her and her daughter ought to be subject to restraint; it gives, *as the grounds of this opinion*, a conclusion drawn from a perusal of the documents and evidence produced to the Privy Council, relating to the conduct of the mother; the inevitable inference to be drawn from which is, that the conduct of the mother, according to those documents and the evidence, appeared to be not what it ought to have been, and such as justified, if not called for that regulation and restraint which was recommended.

This is so clear, that I will not suppose it possible for any man to entertain a doubt upon the subject. If the Report, without saying anything about *documents* or *evidence*, had said that it was right, that the mother should be restricted in her visits to her daughter; if it had said this without giving any *reason* for it, without assigning any *cause*, the Princess might still have had reason to complain of the hardship; but she would have had no ground whereon to found a new complaint of an aspersion upon her character. The Report, on the contrary, by bringing forward the documents of 1806, and also other documents and evidence as the cause of the restraint, certainly called for that reply which the Princess gave in her letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons. She there calls for the interference of Parliament; she says that she has not been permitted to know who have been her accusers; that she has not been allowed to be heard in her defence; and that, while she is told in this Report that certain documents and evidence have formed the ground of an opinion that her intercourse with her child ought to be subject to regulation and restraint, she is not suffered to know what those documents and that evidence are. Therefore, she throws herself on the wisdom and justice of Parliament; she earnestly desires a full investigation of her conduct during

the whole period of her residence in this country; she says she fears no scrutiny however strict, provided it be conducted by impartial judges, and in a fair and open manner, according to law; and she concludes with expressing a wish, which every just man in the world will say ought to be complied with; namely, that she may be TREATED AS INNOCENT, or PROVED TO BE GUILTY.

When this letter was read to the House of Commons the ministers were asked whether they meant to propose the adoption of any proceeding upon it, or to enter into any explanations. This they declined, upon the ground, that as a motion was speedily to be proposed by Mr. Cochrane Johnstone, relative to the Princess, it would be best to defer all discussion upon the subject till that motion should be made. The motion was made in two days afterwards, and a very long debate took place; but, the moment Mr. Cochrane Johnstone rose to make his motion, another motion was made for putting out all persons in the gallery and shutting the doors. This measure might be very proper; but I wish you to observe, that Mr. Cochrane Johnstone expressed his disapprobation of it. He, at any rate, did not wish to keep secret anything that might transpire; anything that might be said by anybody. Indeed, as will be seen from his resolutions, a copy of which I am about to insert, he, like the Princess herself, wished to produce fresh inquiry. The resolutions were as follows:

MR. C. JOHNSTONE'S RESOLUTIONS.

I. RESOLVED,—That, from the disputes touching the succession to the throne, bitter public animosities, tumultuous contentions, long and bloody civil wars, have, at various periods of the history of this kingdom, arisen, causing great misery to the good people thereof, grief and affliction to the Royal Family, and in some cases, exclusion of the rightful Heir.

That, therefore, loyalty and affection towards the Sovereign, and a just regard to the happiness of the people, call upon every subject of this realm, and upon this House more especially, to neglect nothing within their power to prevent the recurrence of similar calamities from a similar cause.

That it has been stated to this House by a Member thereof, who has offered to prove the same by witnesses, at the bar of this House, that, in the year 1806, a Commission was issued under His Majesty's Royal Sign-Manual, authorizing and directing the then Lord Chancellor, Erskine, Earl Spencer, the then Secretary of State for the Home Department, Lord Grenville, the then First Lord of the Treasury, and the then and present Lord Chief Justice, Ellenborough, to inquire into the truth of certain written declarations, communicated to His Majesty by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, touching the conduct of Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.

That the said Commissioners, in pursuance of the said authority and direction, did enter into an examination of several witnesses, and that they delivered to His Majesty a report of such examination, and also of their judgment of the several parts alleged against her Royal Highness, which Report, signed by the four Commissioners aforesaid, and dated on the 14th of July, 1806, was accompanied with copies of the declarations, examinations, depositions, and other documents on which it was founded.

That it has been stated to this House, in manner aforesaid, that the said written accusations against Her Royal Highness expressly asserted, "That her Royal Highness had been pregnant in the year 1802, in consequence of an illicit intercourse, and that she had in the same year been secretly delivered of a male child, which child had ever since that period been brought up by her Royal Highness in her own house, and under her immediate inspection."

That the Report further stated, that the Commissioners "first examined on oath the principal informants, Sir John Douglas and Charlotte his wife, who both positively swore, the former to his having observed the fact of the pregnancy of Her Royal Highness, and the other to all the important particulars contained in

her former declaration, and before referred to," and that the Report added, "that the examinations are annexed to the Report, and are circumstantial and positive."

That the Commissioners, after the above statements, proceeded in their said Report to state to His Majesty, that they thought it their duty to examine other witnesses as to the facts in question, and that they stated, as the result of such farther examination, "their perfect conviction that there is no foundation whatever for believing that the child now with the Princess is the child of Her Royal Highness, or that she was delivered of any child in 1802, or that she was pregnant in that year," and that the Commissioners added, "That this was their clear and unanimous judgment, formed upon full deliberation, and pronounced without hesitation, on the result of the whole inquiry."

That the Noble Lords composing the Commission aforesaid had not, and could not, in that capacity, have any legal power to pronounce a judgment or decision in the case; that the matter of charge submitted to them as a subject of inquiry amounted to a charge of high treason, a crime known to the laws, and, therefore, triable only in a known Court of Justice; that if, as Justices of the Peace (a character belonging to them as Privy Counsellors), they were competent to receive informations and take examinations regarding the conduct of Her Royal Highness, they had no legal power in that capacity, nor in any other capacity that could be given to them, to pronounce an acquittal or a condemnation upon the charge referred to them; for that, to admit them to have been competent to acquit, is to admit them competent to have found guilty, and this would be to admit their competence to have sent Her Royal Highness to an ignominious death, in virtue of a decision founded on selected *ex parte* evidence, taken before a secret tribunal.

That the whole Report, as far as it relates to the judgment of the Commissioners (if the making of it be not an unlawful act), is, at least, of no legal validity, and, in the eye of the law, leaves the question of the guilt or innocence of Her Royal Highness where the Commissioners first found it; that the depositions and examinations upon oath (supposing the Commissioners to have taken them in their capacity of Justices of the Peace) possess a legal character; but that no legal decision has yet been made upon any of the important facts stated in these depositions and examinations, and that it has not yet been legally decided that the fact positively sworn to, of Her Royal Highness having been delivered of a male child in the year 1802, is not true.

That in any claim to the succession to the Throne, which, by possibility, at least, may hereafter be set up, by any aspiring personage possessed of great power, the circumstantial and positive evidence of Sir John Douglas and of Charlotte his wife, if again called for, would still retain all its legal character and weight, while it might happen, that the evidence on the other side might, from death or other causes, be found deficient; and that there can be no doubt that if it should hereafter be made to appear, that the facts sworn to by Lady Douglas are true, and if the identity of the male child so born should be proved, he would be the legal heir to the throne, notwithstanding any assertions, or any proofs, relating to the alleged illicit intercourse of her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.

That, therefore, the honour of Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, the sacred right of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, the safety of the throne, and the tranquillity of the country, do all unite in a most imperious call on this House, to institute now, while the witnesses on both sides are still living, and while all the charges are capable of being clearly established, or clearly disproved, an ample and impartial investigation of all the allegations, facts, and circumstances appertaining to this most important subject of inquiry.

II. **RESOLVED**,—That an humble address be presented to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, requesting that His Royal Highness will be graciously pleased to order, that a copy of a Report made to His Majesty on the 14th day of July, 1806, by the then Lord Chancellor, Erskine, Earl Spencer, Lord Grenville, and Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough, touching the conduct of her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, be laid before the House, together with the copies of the following written documents annexed to the Report, namely,

The Narrative of His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, dated the 27th of December, 1805.

Two written Declarations, or examinations, of Sarah Lampert; one dated Cheltenham, 8th of January, 1806, and the other the 29th of March, 1806.

One of Mr. Lampert, baker, Obeltenham, same date with the last.

Four of William Cole, dated 11th January, 14th January, 30th January, and 23d February, 1806.

One of Robert Bidgood, dated Temple, 4th April, 1806.

One of Sarah Bidgood, dated Temple, 23d April, 1806.

One of Frances Lloyd, dated Temple, 12th May, 1806.

The King's Warrant for holding the Commission, dated the 29th May, 1806.

Deposition of Lady Douglas, dated the 1st of June, 1806.

Deposition of Sir John Douglas, dated the 1st of June, 1806.

Deposition of Robert Bidgood, dated the 6th of June, 1806.

Deposition of William Cole, dated the 6th of June, 1806.

Deposition of Frances Lloyd, dated the 7th of June, 1806.

Deposition of Mary Wilson, dated the 7th of June, 1806.

Deposition of Samuel Roberts, dated the 7th of June, 1806.

Deposition of Thomas Hikeman, dated the 7th of June, 1806.

Deposition of J. Picard, dated the 7th of June, 1806.

Deposition of Sophia Austin, dated the 7th of June, 1806.

Letter from Lord Spencer to Lord Gwydir, 20th of June, 1806.

Letter from Lord Gwydir to Lord Spencer, 20th of June, 1806.

Letter from Lady Willoughby to Lord Spencer, 21st of June, 1806.

Extracts from the Register of Brownlow-street Hospital, dated 23d of June, 1806.

Deposition of Elizabeth Goeden, dated 23d of June, 1806.

Deposition of Betty Townley, dated 25th of June, 1806.

Deposition of Thomas Edmeades, dated 25th of June, 1806.

Deposition of Samuel G. Mills, dated 25th of June, 1806.

Deposition of Hamit Fitzgerald, dated 27th of June, 1806.

Letter from Lord Spencer to Lord Gwydir, dated 1st of July, 1806.

Letter from Lord Gwydir to Lord Spencer, dated 3d July, 1806.

Query to Lady Willoughby, and Answer, dated 3d July, 1806.

Farther Depositions of Robert Bidgood, dated 3d of July, 1806.

Deposition of Sir Francis Milman, dated 3d of July, 1806.

Deposition of Mr. Lisle, dated 3d July, 1806.

Letter from Sir Francis Milman to the Lord Chancellor, dated 4th July, 1806.

Deposition of Lord Cholmondeley, dated 6th July, 1806.

The debate upon these resolutions appears to have been of great length ; but as the galleries were shut, a mere sketch of it has gone forth to the world. That sketch, however (which I have inserted below), will show, that, in whatever degree the different speakers might vary in their opinions as to other points, they were all perfectly of accord, that there existed no grounds of charge against the mother who was restricted in her visits to her only child. The Honourable Mover of the resolutions said there may exist doubts, as to the innocence of the Princess ; if not at this time, there may hereafter exist doubts with regard to that innocence ; and, therefore, while all the witnesses are alive, while all the testimony is forthcoming, while all the means of proof are at hand, let us inquire, and for ever put an end to these doubts, and to the possibility of doubt. No, no, no, said the ministers, the innocence of the Princess is so clearly established ; all the charges against her so manifestly void of foundation, that inquiry is not only not necessary, but that to inquire would be doing injustice to the Princess, by seeming to allow that there are persons in the world who still entertain a doubt of her innocence.

Mr. COCHRANE JOHNSTONE might well say that the day on which he made his motion was a proud day for him. It was so, but it was a still prouder day for the Princess of Wales, who, at the end of seven years of calumny, of base parasitical slander, heard herself pronounced innocent and her traducers pronounced perjured, and that, too, by the chosen ministers, by the confidential Servants, by the advisers of the Prince her husband.

This discussion in the House of Commons has, in the minds of all men of common sense, settled the question. There are still some persons to throw out insinuations against Her Royal Highness; but these are so notoriously the panders of mean hatred, cowardly malice, despicable impotence, and of every thing that is vile in man, ay, in the meanest of mankind, that no one pays the smallest attention to what they say.

Whether the Parliament may think it meet to adopt any proceeding upon the subject; whether they may think it right, in the way of address or otherwise, to interfere in behalf of the Princess, I cannot pretend to say, and they are a body far too wise for me to presume to offer them any thing in the way of advice; but, I have no scruple to say, that I think it a fit occasion for the *people*, assembled in a constitutional manner, to prove, by some solemn declaration of their sentiments, that they still retain that love of justice and that hatred of false accusation, which were formerly prominent features in the character of Englishmen. As to the precise way in which they ought to do this, it is not for me to point out; but, the way will not be difficult to discover by men of proper feeling and of just minds. It is now seven years since these calumnies were first circulated against the Princess of Wales; and now, that they are all shown to have been false, now, that we are fully able to estimate all her sufferings and her long forbearance, it would be a shame indeed, if there were none to be found amongst us to show that we feel for her as we ought. The people have not, indeed, the power to punish her traducers; they have not the power to replace her in Carlton-House; they have not the power to give her admission to her daughter; but they have the power to show to all the world, and to that daughter in particular, that they are lovers of justice, and that they hold in abhorrence false accusers, cowardly and malicious calumniators.

In the case of the Princess of Wales there is every thing to excite a feeling in her favour. In the first place, we see that it was owing to no fault of hers that her husband's palace was no longer her place of abode. In the next place we see false and infamous accusations trumped up against her, and the tongue of calumny let loose, while she was destitute of all the means of defence, having by her counsellors, been prevented from making public the refutation of charges, the substance of which charges, unaccompanied with any answer, had gone forth to the world. Lastly, we see her denied the sight of her daughter, except once in a fortnight, while even the advisers of the Prince declare her to be innocent and her traducers to be perjured. Such is briefly the state of her case, and I say, for the whole nation to remain silent, for no part of the people to give utterance to any feeling for her would justify the opinion, that Englishmen have less sensibility than the half frozen inhabitants of the coast of Labrador. Talk of LIBELS, indeed! What libels has she not had to endure? A month has not passed over our heads since the writers in the *Courier* and *Times* newspapers poured forth libels against her, which no private person would have suffered to pass without prosecution. They called her rash, foolish, and with an insolent affectation of compassion, pointed her out as seduced and unfortunate. In short, they spoke of her in terms the most contemptuous, they affected to pity her for having been so weak as to call for fresh inquiry into her conduct, which conduct they had the impudence unequivocally to describe as indecent to the last degree. Seven years of these calumnies she has had to endure, and, to her immortal honour be it spoken, she has relied upon her innocence for the

support of her character, and has, in no instance, resorted to the assistance of the law. She has wisely relied upon the never-failing power of truth; she has relied also (and I hope for the sake of the character of the country, she will not here be deceived) upon the good sense and love of justice of the people of England.

Besides the justice due to the Princess, we ought to consider the light in which we as a nation, shall appear, in this instance, in the eyes of the world. It will not be forgotten with what addresses, what speeches, what exhibitions, what acclamations of joy this lady was received upon her arrival in England. The world will not forget the praises we then bestowed upon her, and even the gratitude we expressed at her having condescended to become instrumental in the happiness of ourselves and our posterity: and, the world will not fail to remark, that the commencement of the calumnies against her, that the perjuries by which she was traduced took place in a *very few months after her father was killed, and his successors bereft of their dominions!* I will not impute even to perjured wretches the baseness of choosing such a time for the making of their attack; but the fact, as to the time, is as I have stated it; and most assuredly the change produced by the events here spoken of, in the circumstances of her family, must have great weight in the mind of every considerate person. The more destitute she is of the means of protection from any other quarter, the stronger is her claim on the people of England; and I cannot help repeating my opinion, that if the occasion be suffered to pass without some testimony of public feeling in her favour, it will be a great and lasting reproach to this nation.

This interference on the part of the people is the more necessary, and at the same time more likely to be proper, as both the great political *factions* have left her Royal Highness to her fate. or, rather, have each in its turn been her enemies. Nay, they have not only by turns disclaimed her cause; but they have both of them accused her of having resorted to the support of the *enemies of social order and regular government;* that is to say, men who meddle with politics without pocketing, or wishing to pocket, the public money. These are, in our country, called *Jacobins* and *friends of Buonaparté*; and to these men the factions, who fight for the public money, have accused the Princess of resorting for advice and support. If this accusation be true (and I have no inclination to deny it), it appears that she has not made a bad choice at last. She has not been *betrayed* this time, at any rate. Until now her conduct has been an object of calumny with her enemies and of suspicion with many good people; but, by following the advice of the Jacobins, she has silenced the former and removed the doubts of the latter. If her husband were to take a little advice from the same source, it would, I am persuaded, be full as well for him. The Princess has, in fact, made her appeal to the people. She has published her complaint. She has called upon the people for their opinion upon the merits of her case; and, though that opinion has been pronounced without hesitation in private, it wants, in order to give it its full effect, to be expressed in a public, solemn, and authentic manner.

In a future Letter it will give me great pleasure to tell you that this has been done; and, in the meanwhile, I remain your faithful friend,

WM. COBBETT.

TO JAMES PAUL,

*Of Bursledon, in Lower Dublin Township, in Philadelphia County,
in the State of Pennsylvania ;*

ON

MATTERS RELATING TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE
PRINCESS OF WALES.

(Political Register, March, 1813.)

LETTER IV.

London, 19th March, 1813.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You must remember, that, while I was in Newgate for writing about the flogging of the English Local militiamen at the town of Ely, and the employment of German troops upon the occasion ; you must remember, that, while I was in that jail, and not many months before the expiration of my two years, and the payment of a fine of a thousand pounds which the Prince Regent received in behalf of his Royal Father, who, during my imprisonment, was become incapable of governing in person : you must remember, that, at the time here referred to, I confidently predicted, and, indeed, positively asserted, that the BOOK would come out in spite of all that could be done to prevent its publication. It was notorious, that many thousands of pounds had been expended in order to prevent the appearance of this Book ; it was notorious that the most extraordinary means had been resorted to in order to secure that object ; and I was in possession of some facts relative to the endeavours that were still making for the same purpose ; but, still I said, that the Book would come out. I assured my readers, in the most unqualified terms, that they would, at no very distant day, see the whole of the famous BOOK.

Since the date of my last letter to you, the BOOK, the real, the genuine Book, has made its appearance in print, in a complete form, in an octavo volume, and being page for page and word for word with the original work. Thus, then, my prophecy is fulfilled ; and though prophets are said not to be honoured in their own countries, I ought, I think, to expect my due share of credit in yours.

With such a mass of matter before us ; overlaid, as we now are, with materials for comment, it is no easy thing to determine where to begin. After a little reflection, however, it appears to me to be the best way, to set out by giving you a short history of this Book, and before we come to an examination of its contents, as they affect the Princess of Wales, to show you what were the uses which political and party intrigue, has made of those contents.

The history of the Book is this : When the Princess of Wales, in con-

sequence of the Letter of the Prince, which you have already seen, quitted Carlton House, she went to reside in a house called *Montague House*, at Blackheath, near Greenwich, which is about five or six miles distant from London. There, in the year 1801, she became accidentally acquainted with a *Lady Douglas*, the wife of Sir John Douglas, who, as an officer of marines, greatly distinguished himself at the Siege of St. Jean d'Acre, when that place was so bravely defended by Sir Sidney Smith against Buonaparte. Lady Douglas and her husband soon became extremely intimate with the Princess, who, according to the statement of Lady Douglas, seems to have been very fond of her indeed. This intimacy continued until 1804, when the Princess, after some previous bickerings, dismissed Lady Douglas from her society.

Lady Douglas and her husband, after this, that is to say, in 1805, and in the month of December in that year, gave in, as she states, in consequence of commands to that purpose from the Prince of Wales, a *written statement of facts*, relative to the language and behaviour of his wife, and particularly relative to the birth of a child, which she asserted the Princess to have brought into the world in 1802. The Statement of Facts is now published; but, as it is the same, in respect to all the material points as the deposition of this Lady, which deposition you will find in another part of the present double number of my Register, I shall not insert it this week. It does nowhere, that I can discover, appear, *how* the Prince came by the knowledge of Lady Douglas being in possession of such dreadful secrets. Lady Douglas says, that she makes the statement *in obedience to the commands of the Prince*; but, who gave the *information*, which induced his Royal Highness to give such commands, we are nowhere, that I can perceive, informed. Yet, this is a circumstance of considerable importance; and, we must not fail to bear it in mind. Lady Douglas was the depository of the awful secret; and she says, that she divulged it by command; but, before the command was issued, the person issuing it must have known that she possessed a secret of some sort about his wife. This circumstance must be borne in mind.

But, be this as it may, the STATEMENT of FACTS was made, and was laid before the Prince, verified by the DUKE of SUSSEX. The Statement of Facts, which was to serve, or, at least, which did serve, as the ground-work of all the further proceedings, has, in the printed Book, now published, the name of "AUGUSTUS FREDERICK" signed to it, in order, I suppose, to verify the authenticity of it; in order to verify, that it was signed by Lady and Sir John Douglas. So that the Prince, when it was laid before him, could have no doubt of its being authentic.

Thus in possession of an *assertion* of his wife's criminality, the Prince, it seems, lost but little time in laying the Statement before his father, who, on the 20th of May, 1806, issued a warrant to the four Lords, ERSKINE, SPENCER, GRENVILLE, and ELLENBOROUGH, to examine into the matter. A copy of this warrant, being the 2d of the subjoined documents, will explain its own nature, if you refer to it, as, indeed, you ought to refer to all the documents as you proceed.

The four Lords, having thus got their authority for acting, assembled and called such persons as they chose in order to examine them on oath, touching the matters alleged against the Princess by Lady and Sir John Douglas. It is not my intention to stop here, in order to inquire into

the legality or propriety of this mode of proceeding, my business, at present, being simply to tell you *what was done*; to trace along the proceedings to the present time; and to show you the uses which politicians and parties have made of these family concerns, and thereby to enable you to judge of the way in which our national affairs are managed, and to settle in your own impartial mind, whether we, who call for a reform of the House of Commons, are the enemies of the throne and of the Royal Family.

When the Four Lords had gone through the examinations, beginning with those of Lady and Sir John Douglas, they made, agreeably to the warrant under which they acted, a REPORT thereof to the King, a copy of which Report is the first of the documents hereunto subjoined. When you have read that Report, you will see, that the Four Lords declared the Princess to be quite clear of the charge of having been pregnant in 1802; but that they left her stigmatized with charges of minor import. The Princess, upon receiving a copy of this Report, together with copies of all the Statements and Depositions that had been received against as well as for her, wrote several letters to the King, and these letters *contain her defence* against those minor charges with which the Four Lords left her tarnished. The whole of these Letters I have not, this week, had room to insert: but I have inserted all the DEPOSITIONS against the Princess; because, these naturally come before the *Defence* of the accused party.

We now come to the making of THE BOOK; to its *origin*, its possible *object*, and its *effects*, which are now of much more importance to the people here, and to the world in general, than the truth or falsehood of the several allegations themselves. As to these we will hereafter inquire; but, at present, the *uses* that have been made of the Book is the subject of our inquiry.

The Princess, when the Report of the Four Lords was laid before her, resorted, as it was natural she should, to *legal advisers*, that is to say, to men eminent in the profession of the law. She chose, as her chief adviser, PERCEVAL, who was shot last year by John Bellingham. It is now said, that two others, the late Attorney-General, GIBBS, who is now a Judge, and the present Attorney-General, Sir Thomas Plumer, were also consulted; but it is perfectly notorious, that Perceval was the chief adviser.

You must now go back with me a little and take a view of the state of parties. In 1805, when the information was given to the Prince by Lady Douglas, PITT was minister, and Perceval was his Attorney-General. But, even at that time, Pitt was ill at Bath; and, in January, 1806, soon after the information was in the hands of the Prince, Pitt died. His death was followed by the ousting of his set, and Lord Eldon, who was Lord Chancellor, Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Canning, Lord Camden, and others, went out of place, and, in the usual way, formed the OPPOSITION to Mr. Fox, Lord Grenville, Lord Grey, Lord Erskine, and others, who came into power, and who, from a trick of party, were called the *Whig Administration*.

This change, you will observe, took place in 1806, and in the month of February, and it brought into the possession of long-sought power, those persons who had always been regarded, and, indeed, called *the Prince's Friends*; and, you will observe, from the words of the King's warrant, that Lord Erskine, who was now become Lord Chancellor, and

who had been the Chancellor of the Prince, laid before the King the abstract of those declarations against the Princess, upon which the King founded his warrant for the inquiry. I do not mention these circumstances for the purpose of raising in your mind a suspicion, that the Prince would not have made the appeal had his friends not been in power, because I believe he would; but, I mention them for the purpose of showing you the true state of all the parties with regard to each other, and also for the purpose of preparing your mind for the clear comprehension of certain matters that have arisen since the Regency was established in the person of the Prince.

Amongst those who were ousted by the death of PITT was his Attorney-General, PERCEVAL, who, at the change, became, of course, a member of the OPPOSITION to the Whigs, who, as I observed before, were also denominated the *Prince's friends*. It was, therefore, not unnatural for the Princess, when the Four Lords had made their Report respecting her, to look to Mr. Perceval as an adviser. She did so, and, as you will soon see, he was a man who knew how to manage such a concern to the greatest advantage.

Having got possession of all the documents relating to so important an affair, the first thing that was done, was, through the means of a correspondence between the Princess and the Lord Chancellor Erskine, to obtain a *verification* of the Report, the Warrant, the Statement of Facts of Lady Douglas, and the several Depositions, Examinations, and Letters, which you will find subjoined to this Letter. This being done, the little lawyer had materials to work upon; and, under his advice, the Princess then addressed two Letters to the King, which Letters I shall hereafter publish, and in which Letters she defended herself, made observations on the conduct of her accusers and of the other parties concerned, and called upon the King to *restore her to his presence at Court*, from which, since the making of the complaint against her, she had been kept.

The addressing of these Letters to the King took place, as you will see by the dates, during the summer and autumn of 1806. The Report of the Four Lords was made to the King on the 14th of July in that year; the Princess did not receive a copy of it, as you will see, for some time; from the time she did receive that copy, she continued writing to the King to the date of her Letter of the 2nd October, 1806, concluding with her prayer to be *restored to his presence at Court*, and thus to be cleared in the eyes of the world. Thus were materials for THE BOOK every day, up to this time, increasing in the hands of Perceval, who seems to have been duly impressed with a sense of their value.

The King, having the defence of the Princess before him, and also her demands of justice at his hands, referred her Letters to his Cabinet Ministers, and required *their opinion and advice* as to what he ought to do in the case. The Princess, as you will see, had called for her justification in the eyes of the world by means of *an admission to Court*. That she insisted upon as absolutely necessary to the vindication of her honour. And certainly her request was most reasonable; for, it was gone forth to the world, that she had been *accused* of having had a child in consequence of an illicit amour. It had, indeed, been also stated, that she had been cleared of this, *but that other imputations remained*. Therefore, said she, let me appear at Court, and then the nation will be convinced, that I am cleared of every thing of which I

have been accused; or, said she, if you refuse me this request; if you refuse me this open testimony of your conviction of my innocence, let me be proved to be guilty in a fair and open manner. Let me be proved to be guilty, or let me be treated as innocent.

Nothing could be more reasonable, nothing more fair, nothing more just than this; but, the King, who seems, through the whole of the transactions, to have acted the part of an impartial judge as well as of a considerate and kind parent, was hampered by the previous decision of the Four Lords, which left a stain upon the Princess's character. In this emergency he did what a King of England ought to do. He referred the Letters of the Princess to his constitutional advisers, the ministers; and bade them, after perusing and considering all that the Princess had to say, give him their opinion and advice as to the course he ought to pursue.

The ministers (the Whigs you will observe) appear to have been greatly puzzled upon this occasion. They were involved in a dilemma out of which it was impossible for them to get. They were compelled either to advise the King to suffer the Princess to come to Court, or not to suffer her to come to Court. If the latter, they ran the risk of all the dangers of an open exposure of all that has now been exposed. They ran the risk of the publication of Lady Douglas's Statement and Deposition; and Mr. Edmeades's deposition; and of all the other depositions, proving so clearly what had been going on against the Princess. But, on the other hand, if they advised the King to receive the Princess at Court, what would that advice have amounted to with regard to the judgment of the Four Lords, who had made the Report of 14th July, 1806, and who were, four out of the eleven, members of the Cabinet, not forgetting that Earl Moira was a fifth?

In this dilemma the ministers, in Cabinet Council assembled, took a course which generally, if not always, proves fatal to those who pursue it; that is to say, a *middle* course; and, on the 25th of January, 1807, after long and repeated deliberations, laid before the King the result, in the following Minute, which you will read with great attention, seeing that it has, as you will see, been productive of very important consequences, not only to this country but to all those countries which have been affected by the measures of our cabinet.

“ MINUTE OF CABINET, DOWNING-STREET, JANUARY 25, 1807.

PRESENT,

The Lord Chancellor,
Lord President,
Lord Privy Seal,
Earl Spencer,
Earl of Moira,
Lord Henry Petty,

Lord Viscount Howick,
Lord Grenville,
Lord Ellenborough,
Mr. Secretary Windham,
Mr. Grenville.

“ Your Majesty's confidential servants have given the most diligent and attentive consideration to the matters on which your Majesty has been pleased to require their opinion and advice. They trust your Majesty will not think that any apology is necessary on their part for the delay which has attended their deliberations, on a subject of such extreme importance, and which they have found to be of the greatest difficulty and embarrassment.

“ They are fully convinced that it never can have been your Majesty's intention

"to require from them, that they should lay before your Majesty a detailed and circumstantial examination and discussion of the various arguments and allegations contained in the letter submitted to your Majesty, by the Law Advisers of the Princess of Wales. And they beg leave, with all humility, to represent to your Majesty that the laws and constitution of their country have not placed them in a situation in which they can conclusively pronounce on any question of guilt or innocence affecting any of your Majesty's subjects, much less one of your Majesty's Royal Family. They have indeed no power or authority whatever to enter on such a course of inquiry as could alone lead to any final results of such a nature. The main question on which they had conceived themselves called upon by their duty to submit their advice to your Majesty was this,—Whether the circumstances which had, by your Majesty's commands, been brought before them, were of a nature to induce your Majesty to order any further steps to be taken upon them by your Majesty's Government? And on this point they humbly submit to your Majesty that the advice which they offered was clear and unequivocal. Your Majesty has since been pleased further to require that they should submit to your Majesty their opinions as to the answer to be given by your Majesty to the request contained in the Princess's letter, and as to the manner in which that answer should be communicated to Her Royal Highness. They have, therefore, in dutiful obedience to your Majesty's commands, proceeded to re-consider the whole of the subject, in this new view of it; and after much deliberation, they have agreed humbly to recommend to your Majesty the draft of a Message, which, if approved by your Majesty, they would humbly suggest your Majesty might send to Her Royal Highness through the Lord Chancellor. Having before humbly submitted to your Majesty their opinion, that the facts of the case did not warrant their advising that any further steps should be taken upon it by your Majesty's Government, they have not thought it necessary to advise your Majesty any longer to decline receiving the Princess into your Royal presence. But the result of the whole case does, in their judgment, render it indispensable that your Majesty should, by a serious admonition, convey to Her Royal Highness your Majesty's expectation that Her Royal Highness should be more circumspect in her future conduct; and they trust that in the terms in which they have advised, that such admonition should be conveyed, your Majesty will not be of opinion, on a full consideration of the evidence and answer, that they can be considered as having at all exceeded the necessity of the case, as arising out of the last reference which your Majesty has been pleased to make to them."

In this Minute of the Cabinet there are evident marks of timidity. At every period you see the hesitation of the parties from whom it came. It was not till nearly *four months*, you will perceive, after the date of the Princess's letter of defence, that they made this Minute; and, you will perceive, too, that, in the meanwhile, the Princess had written, on the 8th of December, 1806, *another letter* to the King, urging a speedy decision on her case. She had manifestly the strong ground, and the cabinet were puzzled beyond all description.

The King, agreeably to the advice of his cabinet, sent a *message* to the Princess, through the Lord Chancellor, Erskine, containing the *admonition*, recommended in the Minute of Cabinet above inserted. This message was sent on the 28th of January, 1807. *Dates* must now be strictly attended to. The Princess, upon receiving this message, immediately wrote to the King, intimating to him, that she would wait upon him at Windsor, on the Monday following. The King, the moment he received her letter, wrote back, that he preferred receiving her in London, "upon a day *subsequent to the ensuing week*." To this letter the Princess returned no answer, and waited, of course, to hear from the King, respecting the time for her reception, when he should come to London. All these letters, you will bear in mind, make part of THE BOOK, and will appear in my next Number.

Thus, then, every thing appeared to be settled at last. The Princess

had obtained her great object : that is to say, her re-admission to Court ; and here, perhaps, the whole affair would have ended, and the world never have been much the wiser for what had passed. But, now, just when the Princess was about to be received at Court, *all the charges against her having been shown to be false* ; just as the King was about to receive her back into his presence and thus to proclaim her innocence to the world, just as her sufferings of almost a year were about to be put an end to, and she was anxiously expecting, every hour, a message from the King appointing the time for her waiting upon him ; just then, all was put a stop to, and the King acquainted her, that he had been requested to *suspend any further steps in the business !* And by whom, think you, was this request made ? Why, BY THE PRINCE OF WALES HIMSELF ! The Prince had, as the King informed the Princess on the 10th of February, 1807, made a formal request to him, to suspend all further steps ; that is to say, to put off receiving the Princess, till till when, think you ? Why, *till he (the Prince) should be enabled to submit to the King a statement which he proposed to make to him* upon the papers relating to the Princess's defence, after consulting *with his own lawyers !*

It was now that the serious work began. It was now that the advisers of the Princess began to change the tone of her letters, and, from the plaintive to burst forth into the indignant. Her Royal Highness answered the King's letter on the 12th of February, 1807, intimating her design to represent to him in another letter the various grounds on which she felt the hardship of her case, which was done in a letter dated the 16th of February, 1807, in a most able manner. *This is the document, which, above all the rest, is worthy of your attention.* Perceval was, I dare say, the sole author of it, and it does infinite honour to him as a man of talents. Whether for reasoning, language, or force, I never read any thing to surpass this letter. The reasoning is clear as the brook and strong as the torrent ; the language is dignified while the feelings it expresses are indignant ; and, in short, it makes out such a case, it presents such a picture, that I no longer am surprised at the pains which were afterwards taken to conciliate its author and to keep it from the eye of the world. Who could have been the Prince's *advisers* upon this occasion ; who could have been the cause of drawing forth this terrible letter I presume not to say ; but, certainly there never existed in the world a man exposed to the advice of more indiscreet or more faithless friends.

At the close of this letter (and now, as the plot thickens, you must pay close attention to dates) ; at the close of this letter, which, you will bear in mind, was dated on the 16th of February, the Princess, for the first time, **THREATENS AN APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC**, unless she be speedily received at Court, and also allowed some suitable establishment in *some one of the Royal Palaces, if not in Carlton House.* To this letter, however, she received no answer ; and, on the 5th of March, which was on a *Thursday*, she wrote to the King to say, that, unless her requests were granted, the *publication* would not be withheld beyond the next *Monday*, which would have been on the *9th of March, 1807.* The publication did not appear, but *Mr. Perceval was Chancellor of the Exchequer in less than fifteen days from that time !*

We all remember how sudden, how surprising, how unaccountable, that change was. The cause was stated to be the *Catholic Bill* ; but, at the time, all men expressed their wonder that that cause should have been

attended with such an effect. The Bill had been, by the Whig ministry, introduced into Parliament with the understood approbation of the King; and the Whigs, clinging to place, *had withdrawn the Bill*, upon some objection being started on the part of the King. But this would not do; the King insisted upon *their signing a promise that they would never mention such a Bill to him again*. This they could not do without ensuring their destruction as ministers. Upon *this ground*, therefore, they were turned out, as all the world thought; and away went this "*most thinking nation*" to a new election, bawling out *bigotry* on one side, and *no popery* on the other!

But, you see, my friend, that there really appears to have been no choice left to the King. He, very likely, had sincere scruples as to the Catholic Bill, and had, in some sort, had it forced upon him; and, that being the case, he had a right to make the Bill the ground of the dismissal of his ministers; but, that the case of the Princess of Wales would have produced the same effect, if the Bill had not existed, there can, I think, not be the smallest doubt. In short, there appears to have been no other way of getting rid of a thing, which must have operated most injuriously in the opinions of the world to one, at least, of the parties concerned; and, I think, you will agree with me, that His Majesty, in this case, acted the part of a prudent man, and of a kind and considerate father. He had read all the documents, and especially the famous letter of the Princess on the 16th of February; and he saw the consequence of a publication of those documents; therefore, he took, as you will see, the effectual means of preventing that publication. If as much good sense had lately prevailed, we should not now have these documents to make our remarks on.

The Whig ministry being removed, the *four Lords* and *Lord Moira*, and all those who were called the *Prince's friends*, being out of the Cabinet and out of place, there remained no longer any obstacle to the receiving of the Princess at Court; and, accordingly, on the 21st of April, 1807, the following Minutes of Council were laid before the King, as a prelude to that step:

" MINUTE OF THE COUNCIL, APRIL 21, 1807.

PRESENT,

The Lord Chancellor (Eldon)
The Lord President (Camden)
The Lord Privy Seal (Westmoreland)
The Duke of Portland
The Earl of Chatham

The Earl of Bathurst
Viscount Castlereagh
Lord Mulgrave
Mr. Secretary Canning
Lord Hawkesbury.

" Your Majesty's confidential servants have, in obedience to your Majesty's commands, most attentively considered the original Charges and Report, the Minutes of Evidence, and all the other papers submitted to the consideration of your Majesty, on the subject of those charges against Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.

" In the stage in which this business is brought under their consideration, they do not feel themselves called upon to give any opinion as to the proceeding itself, or to the mode of investigation in which it has been thought proper to conduct it. But adverting to the advice, which is stated by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to have directed his conduct, your Majesty's confidential servants are anxious to impress upon your Majesty their conviction that His Royal Highness could not, *under such advice*, consistently with his

" public duty, have done otherwise than lay before your Majesty the Statement and Examinations which were submitted to him upon this subject.

" After the most deliberate consideration, however, of the evidence which has been brought before the Commissioners, and of the previous examinations, as well as of the answer and observations which have been submitted to your Majesty upon them, they feel it necessary to declare their decided concurrence in the clear and unanimous opinion of the Commissioners, confirmed by that of all your Majesty's late confidential servants, that the two main charges alleged against Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, of pregnancy and delivery, are completely disproved; and they further submit to your Majesty, their unanimous opinion, that all the other particulars of conduct brought in accusation against Her Royal Highness, to which the character of criminality can be ascribed, *are either satisfactorily contradicted, or rest upon evidence of such a nature, and which was given under such circumstances, as render it, in the judgment of your Majesty's confidential servants, undeserving of credit.*

" Your Majesty's confidential servants, therefore, concurring in that part of the opinion of your late servants, as stated in their Minute of the 25th of January, that there is no longer any necessity for your Majesty being advised to decline receiving the Princess into your Royal presence, humbly submit to your Majesty, that it is essentially necessary, *in justice to Her Royal Highness, and for the honour and interests of your Majesty's Illustrious Family, that Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, should be admitted with as little delay as possible, into your Majesty's Royal Presence, and that she should be received in a manner due to her rank and station, in your Majesty's Court and Family.*

" Your Majesty's confidential servants also beg leave to submit to your Majesty, that considering that it may be necessary that your Majesty's Government should possess the means of referring to the state of this transaction, it is of the utmost importance that these documents, demonstrating the ground on which your Majesty has proceeded, should be preserved in safe custody; and that for that purpose the originals, or authentic copies of all these papers, should be sealed up and deposited in the office of your Majesty's Principal Secretary of State."

" CABINET MINUTE, APRIL, 21, 1807.

PRESENT,

The Lord Chancellor
The Lord President
The Lord Privy Seal
The Duke of Portland
The Earl of Chatham

The Earl of Bathurst
Viscount Castlereagh
Lord Mulgrave
Mr. Secretary Canning
Lord Hawkesbury.

" Your Majesty's Confidential Servants think it necessary to notice, in a separate Minute, the request of Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, that for her more convenient attendance at your Majesty's Court, some apartment should be allotted to her in one of the royal palaces; although it appears to your Majesty's Confidential Servants that some arrangement in this respect may be supposed naturally to arise out of the present state of this transaction, yet they humbly conceive that this is a subject so purely of a private and domestic nature, that your Majesty would not expect from them any particular advice respecting it."

Thus ended the matter at that time. The Princess was, soon afterwards, received at Court with great splendour, and she had apartments allotted to her in Kensington Palace, which is situated at but about two miles from St. James's.

Up to this moment the conduct of Perceval seems to have been perfectly honourable. He might possibly have ambitious views from the beginning. He might possibly think that one way to power was through the gratitude of the Princess, at some distant day; but, in the outset of the business, he could hardly have entertained an idea of things taking the sudden turn that they took in the month of March, 1807: indeed

it was impossible ; for how was he, who had written the Princess's defence, and so clearly seen her innocence, to foresee, or to suppose it possible, that any obstacles would be opposed to her reception, even *after an admonition had been given her ?* Up to this period, therefore, the conduct of Perceval appears to have been truly honourable ; he had proved himself to be a wise adviser, and a most able and zealous advocate. He found the Princess banished from the Court and the royal palaces, and loaded with numerous imputations. He cleared her of them all, and restored her to that situation which was the object of her prayer.

We are now to view his subsequent conduct towards her, and herein it is that he was, as appears to me, wanting in his duty both to the Prince and Princess. He and *others*, had contrived, by one means and another, to suppress **THE BOOK**, which was ready for publication when he was made minister. But, the Princess had been received at Court, she was inhabiting a palace, and the affair was at rest. There was no blame, therefore, in the suppression ; but when the **REGENCY** came to be established in the person of the Prince ; when the husband came to be exalted to the rank, the power, and splendour of a King, how could Perceval reconcile it with the letter of 16th February, 1807, and with the Minute of the 21st of April in that year, to leave the Princess of Wales, the wife of the Regent, in her former comparatively obscure and penurious state ? How came he to do this ; and that, too, at a time when he was so amply providing for the splendour and power of the *Queen*, and was granting the public money for the making of new establishments for the maiden sisters of the Regent ?

Alas ! We are now to look back to that wonderful event, the choosing of Perceval for minister by the Regent, the choosing of the author of the letter of 16th February, 1806, to the exclusion of those who had always been called *the Prince's Friends*. The Prince was certainly advised by prudent men, when he took this step ; for he avoided a certain evil at the expense of no certain, and, indeed, of no probable, good that a change of ministry would have effected. But, I blame Perceval for keeping his place *without stipulating for, or without doing, something in behalf of the Princess* ; and, it was his failing to do this, which has, step by step, finally led to the present disclosure. He had, indeed, done much for the Princess ; he had cleared her of every imputation ; he had restored her to the Court ; he had replaced her in a palace ; but, her husband being now exalted, her non-exaltation operated with regard to her character in nearly the same way as her exclusion from Court had formerly operated. Therefore she had a new ground of complaint ; the imputation against her honour was revived, not in words, but in the want of acts, more especially as her defender was now placed on the highest pinnacle of power.

In this light the Princess herself, from her last letter to the Prince, seems to have viewed the matter ; for, she there says, that she has waited with patience, since the establishment of the Regency, to see what would be done. I, for my part, strongly urged, at the time, the propriety of giving her an establishment suitable to the new rank of her husband, and especially the means of enabling her to *hold a Court*. This was not listened to. The ministers seem to have thought it best to leave her in comparative obscurity ; but, her own spirit and her consciousness of innocence, have defeated their views. Still, however, all might have remained undisturbed, if a free intercourse had been permitted between

her and her daughter ; and, I am sincerely of opinion, from a full view of her character and disposition, as exhibited in the whole of these documents, that provided no restraint had been laid upon the indulgence of her maternal affections, she would, without much repining, have persevered in her magnanimous silence. But, when she saw herself deprived of that indulgence ; when she saw her intercourse with her only child was more and more restrained ; when she saw the likelihood of an approaching total exclusion from that child, and took into her view the effect which the notoriety of that exclusion must have upon her reputation, she found it impossible longer to withhold the statement of her grievances.

Even now, even after the writing of her last letter to the Prince ; ay, and after the publishing of that letter, all might have been quietly set at rest, if the Prince had found advisers to recommend the acceding to her reasonable request. Such advisers he did not find ; and we have the consequences before us.

Upon the Report of the Privy Council to the Prince dated on the 19th of February, 1813, I will not make any comment ; and, will only request you, my honest friend, first to read the Minute of the Cabinet of 21st of April, 1807, and see *who it is signed by* ; then to read the defence of the Princess together with her letter of the 16th of February, 1807, as you will find them in my next Number ; then to read carefully the Report of the Privy Council of 19th February, 1813, and see *who that is signed by* ; and then to pass *your* judgment upon the conduct of the parties concerned.

This Report of the Privy Council brought forth the Princess's Letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons. That Letter would probably have produced the effect that has since been produced ; but, the motion of Mr. Cochrane Johnstone did it more speedily. That motion drew from the ministers a *full and complete acknowledgment of the innocence of the Princess* ; and that acknowledgment has drawn forth, through the channel of a paper, the property of a Reverend Divine, *who has recently been made a Baronet*, a publication of the Depositions AGAINST the Princess ; but, with shame for my country, with shame for the English press ; and with indignation inexpressible against its conductors, I say it, while the documents *against* her have all been poured forth in hasty succession, her *defence* ; her able, her satisfactory, her convincing, her incontrovertible answer to all, and every one of the charges against her, and her exposure of the injustice and malice and baseness of her enemies, have been carefully, by these same prints ; the prints attached to *both the political factions*, been kept from the public eye !

Anything so completely base as this I do not recollect to have before witnessed, even in the conduct of the London press ; but, my friend, this nefarious attempt to support injustice will not succeed. In the present Double Number of my Register I have inserted *all* the Evidence against the Princess ; in another Number, next week, of the same description, I shall insert the *whole of her defence* ; and, thus you will have before you the *whole* of what has been called THE BOOK. You will then be at no loss to decide upon *every* point relating to this important affair, and upon the conduct of all the parties, who, by these documents, will be brought under your view.

In the meanwhile I must beg leave to point out the necessity of reading all the subjoined documents with great care. Every word will be found

to be of importance, when you come to the perusal of the Princess's defence. I shall have great pleasure in publishing and in circulating it through the world; and when that is done, let her base enemies "go to supper with what appetite they may."

I am your faithful friend,

WM. COBBETT.

TO JAMES PAUL,

*Of Bursledon, in Lower Dublin Township, in Philadelphia County,
in the State of Pennsylvania;*

ON

MATTERS RELATING TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE
PRINCESS OF WALES.

(*Political Register*, March, 1813.)

"Heav'n has no curse like love to hatred turn'd,
"Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn'd."—CONGREVE.

LETTER V.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In my last Letter I gave you a brief history of THE BOOK, and showed you, as clearly as I was able, what effects it had produced as to political changes in the government. I, at the same time, laid before you all the depositions *against* Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, together with the beginning of her *defence*. The remaining part of that defence I continue to this Letter; and, when you have read it, together with Her Royal Highness's Letter to the King of the 16th of February, 1807, you will have the whole of the case before you.*

So satisfactory to my mind is that defence; so completely does it do away every charge against her honour; so quickly does it dissipate, in my view of it, every doubt that could have been raised in the mind of any rational man, that I am utterly at a loss to find words to express my astonishment, that His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, should have found advisers, weak enough (for I will forbear to apply to them any harsh epithet) to recommend the raising of any obstacle to the giving of the injured Princess those external marks of complete acquittal, which she so justly demanded, and with which, it appears, her moderation would have been contented. Indeed, when you take an impartial view of the case up to the close of her Letter of the 16th of February, 1807, you will be at a loss to say which feeling is strongest in your bosom: that of admiration of her moderation and magnanimity; or, of indignation against the wretches who had manifestly conspired, with the most deliberate malice, against her reputation and even against her life.

Exalted as the parties concerned are in rank, important as every thing must be which is so closely connected with their character and honour;

* These Documents are too long to be inserted, but "the Book" has been so often republished, that it is common enough.—En.

yet, such is the ability with which this defence was conducted, that, merely as a specimen of excellence in this sort of productions it will, I am persuaded, live and be admired, long after the cause of it shall have become of no interest to the world. I hated Perceval when living; I hate his memory now that he is dead; because I regard him as having been a bitter enemy of the liberties of my country. But, I should tacitly belie my conviction, I should commit an act of violence on my own mind, were I to abstain from expressing my admiration of this defence, as doing equal honour to the heart and to the talents of its author; who, from the first page to the last, shines, not only as a wise counsellor, an able and zealous advocate, but as an ardent, a steady and disinterested friend; and, really, I look upon it as a fortunate circumstance for the character of the country, that, while England had produced wretches so vile as to conspire against the life of an innocent and friendless woman, England also furnished the man able and willing to be her protector.

This defence being, in all its parts, so complete, I should not trouble you with any observations of my own on any part of the evidence or proceedings, and should merely give you my reasons for believing, that the conduct of the Princess, up to this very hour, has been such as to merit full approbation; but, as endeavours are still making, in some of the detestable newspapers in London, to give the air of truth to the refuted calumnies of the Douglasses and others, I think it right to point out for your special notice some few of the circumstances of the case.

There is an observation, made by some persons, in these words: "There, surely, must be *something* in all this. How could such a story as that of Lady Douglas have been *all* invented?" This is a very absurd way of reasoning; for, if *one part* of a story be hatched, *why not the whole*? It is not the practice either of courts of justice or of individuals to give credit to any part of a story, upon the principal facts of which the narrator has been fully proved to have spoken wilfully false. If any man were to tell you, that I had defrauded him of a ten-pound-note, and that, upon the same occasion, I had been guilty of blasphemy, would you, when you had seen the former clearly disproved, attach any credit to the latter? Would the man, who could invent the former charge, scruple to invent the latter also? Would that malice, which proved the mother of the one, be insufficient for the producing of the other? The *consistency* of the different parts of a story, all coming from the same person, or from a set of conspirators, argues little in support of its credibility; for, if one sits down to *invent*, especially when there is an abundance of time, it is entirely one's own fault if the several parts of the story do not agree. You do not read Romances and Plays; but, if you did, you would not set any part of them down for realities, because all the parts correspond with each other. They are fabulous, they are the work of invention, from the beginning to the end; and so, it appears to me, were all the minor circumstances, related by the Douglasses and others, tending to corroborate the main facts, and to render complete and successful the great plot of this disgraceful drama. The main allegations having been proved to be false, and none of the rest having been proved to be true, we must necessarily, in common justice to the accused, regard the whole as a mass of falsehoods.

Indeed, it is impossible for any man, when he has read the whole of the documents, to entertain the smallest doubt of the innocence of the Princess as to *everything* which has been alleged against her; but it ap-

pears to me to be very essential for us to inquire, *how these infamous charges came to be made*. And, here I think, we shall find all the marks of a deliberate and settled *conspiracy* against her, originating to all outward appearance, with the Douglasses.

We see, that, from 1801 to 1804, there was an intercourse of friendship existing between Sir John and Lady Douglas and the Princess; and, it is not till after the former are discarded by the latter that the accusations appear to have been hatched; or, at least, to have assumed any thing of a systematic form. Soon after this, we find Sir John Douglas receiving, as his wife says, anonymous letters, containing lewd drawings, exhibiting Lady Douglas as committing adultery with Sir Sidney Smyth; and of these she says, the Princess of Wales was the author. This fact of the authorship is clearly disproved by the most satisfactory of evidence, positive as well as circumstantial. And, now, mark; this fact being proved to be false, what other conclusion can we draw from its having been advanced, than that the Douglasses wrote the letters themselves to themselves with a design of imputing them to her Royal Highness, and thus to furnish themselves with some excuse for the treachery, to say the very least of it, of Lady Douglas? For, you will observe, that, upon the supposition of all the allegations of Lady Douglas, being *true*, nothing could clear her of the charge of *perfidiousness* to the person, who, in the warmth of her friendship and the plenitude of her confidence, had committed to her breast secrets affecting her life.

Having thus prepared the way; having provided themselves with an excuse, though a very unsatisfactory one, for the divulging of secrets, which they could not in any case, and under any degree of provocation, divulge without subjecting themselves to the charge of perfidy, they appear to have set themselves to work to get a way opened for their information to the Prince of Wales; and, at last, in December, 1805, they draw up and sign their STATEMENT in order to its being laid before him.

If this statement was believed, as it appears to have been, by His Royal Highness's advisers; for, my respect for the person, whom I obey as my sovereign, will permit me to speak, in this case, only of his *advisers*. If this statement was *believed* by them, there can be no doubt of the propriety, and, indeed, of the absolute necessity, of submitting the matter to the consideration of the King. Different men see the same thing in a different light; and, for my part, I am convinced, that if my own sister had laid such a statement before me, relative to the conduct of even a *suspected* wife, I should, at once, have treated it as a tissue of abominable falsehoods; the reasons for which I will now give you.

The statement of Lady Douglas, as well as her deposition, clearly show, that her making of it originated in *revenge*. There are those, who, roused in the way of suspicion, by a view of the whole affair, are inclined to ascribe the accusation to another origin, and to suppose, that the Douglasses went to live at Blackheath for the express purpose of carrying on a conspiracy against the Princess. But, an impartial examination of the several parts of the proceeding rejects this opinion; and, it is manifest that the charges had their origin in the revenge of this woman. Therefore, if her statement had been laid before me, as an adviser of the Prince, I should, without going into the utter improbability of the story itself, have said, that a woman, in whose bosom the

passion of revenge was so strong as to goad her on to take away the life of another woman, after months and years for cooling and reflecting; I should have said, that a woman, in whose bosom the passion of revenge was so strong as this, *was a person not to be believed* in anything that she might say with regard to the object of that revenge.

Then, I should have observed, that she sets out with a *self-evident falsehood*; for she asserts, that it was *a sense of duty*; the fear of seeing spurious issue on the throne, her loyalty, her gratitude towards her Sovereign and the Royal family; she asserts, that it is this *sense of duty*, which has wrung the awful secret from her, and induced her to be guilty of a most atrocious breach of confidence. But, with this sense of duty in her mind; with all this loyalty and gratitude in her heart; and with this patriotic fear of seeing spurious issue on the throne, she keeps the secret locked up in her breast from 1802 to 1805. Was that to be believed? If she really were under the influence of the motives, which she pretends to have been under when she made the statement; how came that influence to have had no weight at an earlier period?—If such had really been her motives in making the communication, the year 1802 was the time for making it, when she first was told of the pregnancy, or, at any rate, when she saw the child, especially as that child was a *male*, and, of course, *the heir to the throne*; and when she reflected, moreover, that she might die, and that, from the death of herself or other persons, the impossibility of preventing the danger she feared might soon arrive. Therefore, it is manifest, that, in making the communication to the Prince, she could not be actuated by motives of duty and of loyalty; and, seeing her declaration thus bottomed in falsehood; seeing it thus ushered in by a flagrant though hypocritical lie; I should, if I had been an adviser of the Prince, said, that nothing flowing from such a source is to be believed, or paid the smallest attention to.

Then, as to what she says about the licentious behaviour of the Princess, and her disrespectful language towards the King, the Queen, and the Royal Family, I should have observed, that, though the informant pretends to have been shocked at the indecencies and immoralities of all this, and though people were obliged to send their daughters out of the room to prevent them from hearing the language of the Princess, the informant continued to be intimate with her, and even *to court her acquaintance*, for years after she was the eye and ear witness of these indecencies; and what is singular enough, one ground of her pretended complaints against the Princess, is, *her children were not admitted*, upon a particular occasion, to that, as she paints it, scene of open indecency and debauchery, Montague House! Upon a view of all these circumstances, could I have believed, that she had seen anything to *shock* her in the behaviour of the Princess? Could I have believed a word of her story; and could I have refrained from advising the Prince, not to believe a word of that story?

Upon her own showing, I should have seen in Lady Douglas a traitor to her friend from motives of revenge; I should have seen in her a hypocritical pretender to loyalty and patriotism; and should have seen part of her revenge arising from *her children not being admitted* where she herself had been shocked at the constant indecencies of the scene, and where other persons had sent away their children from a fear of their being corrupted. But, besides all this, I must have believed Her Royal Highness to have been wholly bereft of her senses before I could believe,

or give the smallest degree of credit to, the story of her accuser. For, could I believe, that any woman in her senses, though the most profligate of her sex, would have imparted the facts of pregnancy and delivery to another, without any possible motive, and afterwards behave to that other in a way the best calculated in the world to provoke that other to a disclosure of those facts? I can suppose it possible, and barely possible, that there may be found in the world a married woman in common life, so very shameless, being in a state of separation from her husband in consequence of no fault of her own; I can suppose it barely possible, that such a woman, so situated, might, out of a mere inclination to communicate a secret, or to show that she was not without a paramour, tell a confidant that she was with child, and, I will even go so far as to suppose it possible, that there may be found one in the whole world, in such a place as St. Giles's or Billingsgate, to go up to a man, and proclaim her crime in words, while she put her hand to the depository of the half-matured fruit of that crime. It is not without begging pardon of every thing bearing the name and form of woman, that I venture upon this supposition. What then must have been my conclusion upon hearing conduct like this attributed to a Princess of Wales, whose crime, in this case, went to take away her *life*, and who, according to the showing of Lady Douglas herself, could have *no possible motive* in making known to her the fact of that crime?

Away, I should have said, if I had been an adviser of the Prince, with this mass of atrocious falsehoods; these overflowings of blackhearted revenge; these self-evident proofs of a foul and detestable conspiracy against life and honour. I should have said, that knowing the Princess to be in her senses, it was impossible for me to believe, that she would first make known her pregnancy and delivery to Lady Douglas without any motive; that she would so contrive her delivery as to have it take place in her own house, surrounded as she was by the servants of the Prince; and that, having brought the child into the world, she would even attempt to *suckle it herself*, and actually do it for some time; I should have said that it was impossible for me, or for any man in his senses, to believe this for one single moment. And, therefore, I should have advised his Royal Highness not to give by any acts of his, the smallest countenance to so incredible, so malicious, so detestable a charge, made against an unprotected woman, not to say, that, though separated from his bed, that woman was still his wife.

While you observe, however, that the advice given to His Royal Highness, upon this occasion, was precisely the opposite of that, which, as I have said, I should have given, you will not, in fairness to those who gave that advice, fail to suppose that they might possibly be actuated by a desire to rescue the character of the Princess from any future danger, which, from the death of witnesses, or from other causes, might arise out of the charges preferred by Lady Douglas. Willing as I am to go along with you in this supposition, I must, nevertheless say, that the *means* they adopted were not the best calculated in the world to arrive at so amiable and desirable an end.

These advisers did not, it appears, recommend to His Royal Highness to lay the statement of the Douglasses before the King *at once*, and unaccompanied with any corroboratory evidence. That statement, as appears from its date, was made on the 3rd of December, 1805; and it appears, that it, or rather an abstract of it, was not laid before the King till

the 29th of May, 1806. In the meanwhile, the advisers of the Prince of Wales appear to have recommended, the obtaining of other statements, from different persons, relating to the conduct of her Royal Highness; and, as you will have seen, there were obtained the written declarations of Sarah Lampert, William Lampert, William Cole, Robert Bidgood, Sarah Bidgood, and Frances Lloyd, which were also laid before the King together with the statement of the Douglasses. And, it is with great pain that I perceive these papers to have been said, in their title, to be "For the purpose of *confirming* the statement made by Lady Douglas." I perceive this with pain, because it admits of the interpretation, that the advisers of the Prince *wished* to see that horrible statement confirmed, while, you will agree with me, that they ought to have been anxiously desirous to see it wholly refuted. If the object of the advisers of the Prince was to rescue the character of the Princess from all future danger, to which, from the death of witnesses, or other causes, this statement might be thought to expose it, they took, as I said before, means not well adapted to their end. This error (not to call it by any other name) it was, which produced all the disagreeable consequences that followed.

We must now take a look at the *source* of these *confirmatory* declarations, and of the *time* and *manner* of their being communicated to the King, and upon which communication his warrant was founded.

The two Lamperts were, it appears, *old servants of Sir John Douglas*, and, it also appears, that Sir John himself was the person, who went from London to Cheltenham, in Gloucestershire to take down their declarations. These two declarations do not, however, appear to have been of any importance, seeing that the persons, who made them, were not afterwards examined upon oath by the Commissioners. Bidgood, Cole and Lloyd were *old servants of the Prince*, and, it appears that Cole has been at Carlton House, in performance of his service, ever since the time to which his information refers. Bidgood appears to have been still with the Princess, when the inquiry was going on; but, you will remark, that there is an affidavit, produced by the Princess, showing, that, while the inquiry was going on, Bidgood was, upon one occasion, at least, *in conversation with Lady Douglas*; and, that, too, at a time when he must have well known *what that lady had been doing with regard to his Royal mistress*, because he himself had been previously examined for the purpose of confirming her statement.

When you have read the defence of the Princess, you will want nothing to convince you, that the evidence of Bidgood and Cole is of no unequivocal description. Indeed, it is quite impossible for you to entertain the smallest doubt as to its character. With respect to *Fanny Lloyd's* declaration there are some remarks to be made of very great interest and importance.

You will bear in mind, that all the declarations, of which we are speaking, were taken as their title imported, "for the purpose of *confirming* the statement made by Lady Douglas." Cole voluntarily underwent *four* separate examinations; Bidgood one, and Fanny Lloyd one, all which you will have read in the foregoing Number. At *what place* Cole was examined and signed his declarations is not stated in their dates; but, those of Bidgood and Fanny Lloyd are dated at *the Temple*, a place in London where lawyers and attorneys reside; and it is pretty fairly presumed by the Princess in her defence, that they were drawn up and signed at *Mr. Lowten's*, who is an Attorney, living in the Temple, and who, as appears from one of Cole's declarations, was at Cheltenham with *Sir John Douglas* to take the Declaration of the two Lamperts.

These are very material circumstances for you to bear in mind, and it would be useful to have it clearly ascertained, *who it was* that actually *employed* Mr. Lowten. At any rate, we see him at Cheltenham employed in taking declarations with Sir John Douglas, "for the purpose of confirming the statement of Lady Douglas;" and it is at the *Temple* where we find that the declarations of Bidgood and Fanny Lloyd were made. Observe another thing, too, with respect to the declarations of Cole, Bidgood and Fanny Lloyd. They do not come forth with *attested*, or *witnessed*, signatures, as in the case of the statement of Sir John and Lady Douglas. The signature of that famous statement is, as you will see, verified by the Duke of Sussex, who signs his name as having seen the paper signed; a very necessary precaution in so momentous a case, but not less necessary with regard to the *confirmatory* declarations than with regard to the statement itself. It is a pity that this requisite is wanting to these documents; because, if they had been regularly witnessed, we should have seen *who were the persons engaged in taking them down*, a circumstance of no trifling import, when we are endeavouring to unravel the thread of these memorable proceedings.

Carrying all these circumstances along in your mind, you will now accompany me in some remarks touching the declaration of *Fanny Lloyd*. This part of the subject has very much interested the public *here*, and will not, I dare say, be uninteresting to you, a lover of truth and justice as you always were, and who always felt a deep interest in everything connected with the peace, happiness and honour of the country of your forefathers. *Fanny Lloyd* says, in her declaration, taken at the Temple, and she afterwards *swears* nearly to the same amount before the four Lords; but, it is with her *declaration* that we now have to do. She says, in her declaration, that a *Mr. Mills*, a surgeon and apothecary, at Greenwich (a place near Blackheath), being in attendance upon her for a cold, asked her if the *Prince* visited at the Princess's house; and *Fanny Lloyd* having answered, that he did not to her knowledge, said that THE PRINCESS WAS CERTAINLY WITH CHILD. Now, mind, this declaration is taken down *at the Temple*, on the 12th of May, 1806 (keep the *dates* constantly in your eye); it is signed at the Temple on that day, but in the *presence of whom* we are not informed.

Luckily for the character of the Princess a new witness was here introduced. *Mr. Mills* was named; and *he* was to be examined, of course. He was examined, not *at the Temple*, indeed, but at *the house of the Earl of Moira*, and by *that nobleman himself*, but, in the presence of *Mr. Lowten*, who is a person of some consideration, being, besides an attorney, *an officer in the Court of King's Bench*.

Fanny Lloyd's declaration *confirmatory* of Lady Douglas's Statement, was of great importance, as it went directly to establish the fact of the alleged pregnancy; but, unfortunately for Miss Lloyd's veracity, *Mr. Mills* declared to Lord Moira and *Mr. Lowten*, that her declaration, as far as related to him, was "*an infamous falsehood*." Now mind, this was on the 14th of May, 1806, two days only after Miss Lloyd had made her declaration. Upon hearing this from *Mr. Mills*, Lord Moira said (as *Mr. Mills* states in his affidavit) that he supposed there must be some *mistake*, and that *Fanny Lloyd* must have meant *Mr. Edmeades*, who was the *partner* of *Mr. Mills*, and who, having at the request of Lord Moira, waited on his Lordship, at his house, on the 20th of May, 1806 (mind the *dates*), declared (as you will see by his affidavit) to his

Lordship, in the presence of a Mr. Conant, a *Police Magistrate*, that the declaration of Fanny Lloyd, if he was the person meant by her, was *wholly false*; for, that he, at no time, had said that the Princess was pregnant, and that such a *thought* had never, for a single moment, entered his mind.

Here, then, we see Fanny Lloyd's *confirmatory* declaration, or, at least, the only important part of it, blown, at once into the dark regions of malicious invention. The whole of the affidavits of Messrs. Mills and Edmeades, the facts stated by those gentlemen, the *place, time, and manner* of their being examined, are worthy of your most careful attention; but, at present, let us pursue the destination of the declaration of Fanny Lloyd; and, as you are about to see, our pursuit will soon be at an end. That declaration was taken, you will observe, on the 12th of May, 1806, at the Temple; on the 14th it was flatly falsified by Mr. Mills; on the 20th it was as flatly falsified by Mr. Edmeades; on the 29th, as appears from the Report, Fanny Lloyd's declaration was laid before the King; but, it does NOT appear any where, THAT THAT DECLARATION WAS ACCOMPANIED BY THE FALSIFICATION FIXED ON IT BY MR. MILLS AND MR. EDMEADES.

As Her Royal Highness, in her defence, avows, that she dares not trust herself with any *inferences* from this proceeding, I cannot be expected to draw any; but, I cannot, at any rate refrain from expressing my deep regret, that this omission should have taken place; because, if the falsification of Fanny Lloyd's declaration had accompanied the declaration itself, the King might, probably, have not issued the commission for that inquiry, which has led to all this serious mischief. The Princess, in her defence, seems very reluctant to fix the blame of this omission upon any one. She says, "I know not whether it was *Lord Moira*, or *Mr. Lowten*, who should have communicated this circumstance to His Royal Highness (who is stated to have laid the declarations before the King): but, she adds, in all fairness, it ought, unquestionably to have been communicated by *some one*." And so it certainly should; for Fanny Lloyd's was one of those important declarations, upon which confessedly the inquiry was founded.

It is my business to fix your attention upon *great points*, it being impossible for me, in my limited space, to go over the whole of the case with you, and it being also quite unnecessary, seeing that the documents themselves are so full and satisfactory.

One of these great points is, the credibility, which the *Four Lords* gave to the evidence of *Cole* and *Fanny Lloyd*, and the effect of that credibility. You will perceive, that the facts of *pregnancy* and *delivery* were so completely disproved, that their Lordships, in their REPORT to the King, declare, in the most explicit and the most forcible terms, that the charge was *wholly false*; that it was utterly destitute of foundation. But, they leave a *sting in the tail of this Report*. They say, that other particulars, respecting the conduct of Her Royal Highness, must "necessarily give occasion to VERY UNFAVOURABLE INTERPRETATIONS;" and these particulars, they say, rest especially upon the evidence of Bidgood and Cole, Fanny Lloyd and Mrs. Lisle; "who," say the Lords, "cannot, in our judgment, be suspected of an *unfavourable bias*, and whose VERACITY, in this respect, we have seen no ground to question."

As to Bidgood, you will see by the defence and by his own declarations

and depositions, whether he was likely to be under any unfavourable bias. Mrs. Lisle's evidence amounts to little, and of that little I shall leave you to judge with only this remark: that, if every married woman in the world were to be liable to be admonished upon grounds similar to those to be found in that evidence, there would not be one, even amongst you Quakers, that would escape an admonition. If it be faulty in a married woman to prefer talking to a man rather than to her attendants; if it be a fault in a married woman to smile or laugh in conversation with any other man than her husband; if it be a fault in her to endeavour to appear witty or agreeable in the eyes of any man except those of her husband; if this be the case, point me out, if you can, a single brother Broad-brim, who has not a right to complain.

Fanny Lloyd and Cole are two of the persons, whose *veracity*, in this respect, it appears, the Four Lords *saw no ground to question*. With regard to Fanny Lloyd, you will bear in mind, that she had positively *sworn* to the most important fact about the pregnancy; and that Messrs. Mills and Edmeades had *sworn* before these same Lords, that *that fact was false*. She swore on the 7th of June, 1806, that Mr. Mills told her the Princess was with child, or looked as if she was with child. The two gentlemen (there appearing to be a mistake as to which of the two it was) both swear, on the 25th of the same month, that they never did and never could say any such thing to her; for that such a thought never came into their heads. And, yet, as you will perceive, the Four Lords, in their Report to the King, say, that Fanny Lloyd is a witness, whose *veracity*, in this respect, they *see no ground to question*. To be sure, they are here reporting upon the improprieties of conduct, and not upon the pregnancy, and they qualify their opinion of the veracity of the witness, by the words, "*in this respect*;" but, as her evidence relative to the pregnancy as well as to the improprieties was all contained in the same deposition, it was not very easy to regard her as a person of veracity in respect to the latter, and not as a person of veracity in respect to the former. Therefore, it appears to me, that their Lordships must have given *more credit* to her oath than to the oath of Mr. Mills, or Mr. Edmeades, and, in that case, they would, of course, see no ground to question her veracity. Be their view upon this point, however, what it might, you, having all the documents before you, will form *your own opinion* as to Fanny Lloyd's veracity, and you will always bear in mind, that *she* was one of the four persons, whose evidence, the Four Lords say, "*must necessarily give occasion to very unfavourable interpretations.*"

Mr. Cole was another of the four witnesses, whose evidence is said, by the Four Lords, to give occasion to these interpretations. Now, observe, then, as to Cole, that he, in his declaration of the 11th of January, 1806, positively says, that Fanny Lloyd told him, that one day, "when Mary Wilson supposed the Princess to be gone to the Library, she went into the *bed-room*, where she found a man at breakfast with the Princess; that there was a *great* to do about it; and that Mary Wilson was *sworn to secrecy*, and threatened to be turned away if she *divulged what she had seen.*" This, you will observe, was a most important fact; and these are the very words in which Cole stated it in his declaration, which declaration was one of the papers on which the Inquiry was founded. Now, then, what says Fanny Lloyd to this fact? Why, as you will see, at the close of her deposition, she swears, THAT

SHE NEVER DID TELL COLE ANY SUCH THING. Which of these two witnesses spoke falsely, it is impossible for me to say, but that one of the two did speak falsely there can be no doubt; indeed, the fact is certain, for the two witnesses *flatly contradict each other*. And yet, they are both, yes, *both*, mentioned as persons, whose *veracity* the Four Lords *see no grounds to question*. You will please to observe, that the qualification by the words, "*in this respect*," does not apply here, as in the former case; for, the fact here mentioned does not relate to the *pregnancy*, or the *delivery*, but merely to the *improprieties of conduct*; so that the flat contradiction given by Fanny Lloyd to the declaration of Cole appears not to have been, in the opinion of the Four Lords, sufficient ground to cause the *veracity* of either of them to be questioned as to the matter to which, it is clear, that their evidence related. Against the opinion of four such persons as Lord Erskine, Lord Ellenborough, Lord Grenville, and Lord Spencer, it is not for me to set up mine; and, indeed, my only object is to draw your particular attention to the point, to induce you to read with care all the documents referred to, and then to leave you, as a sensible and impartial man, far removed from the heated atmosphere of our politics and parties, to form your *own judgment*; always bearing in mind, however, that Cole and Fanny Lloyd were two out of the four persons, from whose evidence those particulars arose, which, as the Four Lords say, "*must necessarily give rise to very unfavourable interpretations.*"

As the present double Number of my Register contains nearly the whole of the *Defence* of Her Royal Highness, and as I know you, who are a lover of truth and justice, will read the whole of it, I will not trouble you with any further remarks upon the case itself, being well assured that there will not, when you have gone through the whole, as you will be enabled to do by my next Number, in an attentive manner, remain in your mind, the smallest doubt, that Her Royal Highness was perfectly innocent of *every* charge preferred against her; not only of every charge of criminality, but also of every charge of indecency or impropriety or indiscretion of conduct; and I am further assured, that you will agree with me, that there are comparatively very few married women, though living happily with their husbands, whose conduct would bear such a scrutiny as that which the conduct of this calumniated Lady has been compelled to undergo. Tried and re-tried and tried again and again; rummaged and sifted and boiled as it has been, through statements and declarations and depositions and minutes and debates and pamphlets and paragraphs, it comes out at last without any thing sticking to it, which the most modest and happy married woman in the world need not own without a blush; and, after having carefully read and impartially weighed every word of these documents, I most solemnly declare, that, if I had a daughter twenty years married, I should think myself a happy and a fortunate father, if as little could be said against her conduct as has been proved against the conduct of the Princess of Wales.

You will naturally be anxious to know, whether any measure, and what, has been adopted by the ministry, the Parliament, or the people, in consequence of the disclosure, which has now, fortunately for the cause of truth, taken place. By the ministry no measure has, as yet, been adopted. In Parliament there have been some movements, but, hitherto, without producing any measure of a decided character. A motion has been brought forward by Mr. Whitbread for the prosecution

of Sir John and Lady Douglas *for perjury* ; but was given up, upon its appearing, that they could not be so prosecuted, having given their oath before persons *acting in a capacity which did not make it perjury for any one to swear falsely before them*. Of this, as you may perceive, the Princess complains in her defence. And, surely, it was very hard for her to have her conduct tried, to have evidence touching her honour and her life, taken down before a tribunal, whose competence did not extend far enough to allow of false swearers being prosecuted for perjury. This should have been thought of before the warrant was issued ; for, it seems to me, that the hardness of the case is without a parallel. If the oaths had been taken before the Privy Council, or before magistrates, a prosecution for perjury might have followed ; and, it is to be greatly lamented, that this most important circumstance was not attended to in time ; more especially as the Report and the Depositions must necessarily find their way to the knowledge of so many persons. It was impossible that, when so many persons were examined, the purport of the accusations should remain a *secret*. Indeed it was very well known ; and it is also very well known, that it gave rise to very serious doubts and unfavourable impressions. Was it not, then, very hard upon the accused party, that the accusation should have been received and recorded, and reported upon by a tribunal, whose incompetence *on her side* was such as not to constitute perjury anything that might be sworn falsely against her ? Such, however, now appears to have been the fact ; and upon that fact I shall not, for I am sure it is quite unnecessary, offer you any further observation of mine, being convinced that you will want no one to assist you in forming a correct opinion with respect to it.

Sir John Douglas, however, has presented a petition to the House of Commons, on behalf of himself and of Charlotte, his wife, praying the House to put them in a situation to *re-swear* all that they have before sworn. That the prayer of this petition could not be granted, they knew very well. However, as the petition was upon the Table of the House, Mr. COCHRANE JOHNSTONE, one of the members, upon the ground, that, while it so lay, without any opinion of the House pronounced upon it, it seemed to receive some degree of countenance from the House, moved, on the 24th instant, the following resolution : “ That the petition of Sir John Douglas, in behalf of himself and of Charlotte his wife, is regarded “ by this House as an audacious effort, to give, in the eyes of the nation, “ the colour of truth to falsehoods before sworn to, during the prosecution of a foul and detestable attempt against the peace and happiness, “ the honour and life of Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.” This motion, upon the ground of there being no documents regularly before the House, whereon to ground such a resolution, was got rid of by a motion to *adjourn* ; but, during the debate that took place, it was avowed on all hands, that the opinion which the resolution expressed was perfectly just. Not a single man was found in the House to attempt to justify, to excuse, or to palliate the conduct of the petitioners ; and, therefore, the effect of the motion of Mr. COCHRANE JOHNSTONE upon the public mind has been just the same as it would have been if the motion had been carried by an unanimous vote of the House.

The public *feeling*, which was before strong on the side of the injured Princess, has now received the sanction of the *conviction* of her perfect innocence ; and, which is well worthy of remark, this conviction has been produced, in general, by the reading of the *Evidence* only ; for,

there is not, up to this hour, one person out of fifty thousand in the kingdom, who has read the *Defence*, contained in the letter of the 2nd of October, the greater part of which I now publish in this Double Number. What, then, must be the feelings of the people, when time and circumstances shall have enabled them to read and well reflect on that *Defence* and the Affidavits in support of it?

Another thing worthy of remark, is, that those newspapers, which, upon the appearance of Her Royal Highness's Letter to the Prince, and upon that of the far better letter which she addressed to the Speaker of the House of Commons; those newspapers, which called her a misguided woman, an unfortunate woman, a rash woman, who taunted her with the evidence of Cole, Bidgood, and Fanny Lloyd, and who menaced her with a new Inquiry; those same newspapers, perceiving the universal cry excited by their baseness, accompanied with a disclosure of all the dark machinations of her vindictive enemies, have, all of a sudden, turned round, and, while they have become her panegyrists, have fallen, in the most violent manner, upon Sir John and Lady Douglas; just as if the conduct of these persons were not now what it always had been known to be! You will be shocked to hear of such a perversion of that noble instrument, the Press; but, my friend, you must be here, and be acquainted with the *means* made use of to move that instrument; you must see the working of the secret wheels, before you can have a sufficient horror of the cause of so apparently unaccountable an effect.

For my own part, I confess that, without any motive whatever to bias my judgment, I, for a long while, for several years, thought the Princess *guilty to some considerable extent*. The very existence of a commission to inquire into her conduct was sufficient to produce that impression in my mind; and, this, added to the tales and anecdotes which were circulated with an industry and in a way, of which you, who live in a happy ignorance of the crafty intrigues of this scene, cannot form the most distant idea, had left me in little doubt, that, though acquitted upon all capital points, she was still an immoral woman; an opinion, too, which I will fairly avow, was neither removed nor shaken by her public reception at Court and her restoration to apartments in one of the Royal Palaces; acts which, without being over-suspicious, I might, and indeed, I did, ascribe to mere prudence, which must have dictated to the whole of the Royal Family to use all the means in their power to cause a veil to be drawn for ever over the whole transaction. I was, moreover, influenced in the forming of this opinion by the total silence of the Princess herself; for, one must have actual experience of forbearance and magnanimity like hers, before one can possibly believe in their existence. If I viewed the matter in this light, how must others, with less opportunity of getting at the truth, have viewed it? Certainly in a light less advantageous to the Princess, who, it appears to me, must have had very faithless advisers; or, she could not, for so long a time, have remained silent.

The fact which first led me to suppose, that I had formed a wrong opinion upon this point, I was informed of about eighteen months ago. It was this; that a certain Noble Earl, well known to be much attached to the Prince, had expended, through the hands of a gentleman, *some hundreds of pounds in purchasing up a stray copy of THE BOOK*. What could this be for? What could be the motive? From that time I began to think, that the Princess was not so very guilty; and, when, soon afterwards, Mr. Perceval, who was well known to have been the

author of the Book ; when he, who was now become the Prime Minister of the Prince, and who had been chosen to that office to the exclusion of the Prince's old friends ; when, in open Parliament, he explicitly declared, the Princess to be perfectly innocent of all the charges that had been preferred against her, I could no longer doubt of her perfect innocence ; and, from that hour, as the pages of my Register will show, I did all in my little power to inculcate the same opinion on my readers.

When the Prince was addressed by the City of London upon his being constituted Regent, I thought that the Princess ought to have been addressed too. I think so still ; and, if she had, at that time, been placed in a situation to hold a court, THE BOOK would still, in all human probability, have slept in quiet. The want of wisdom in the advisers of the Prince and the sense and courage of the Princess have combined to order it otherwise ; and I should be a very great hypocrite if I were now to affect to be sorry for it. The disclosure will do great good in many ways, while to the nation at large, and especially to the calumniated Princess, it is impossible that it should do any harm. With this remark I leave you to the perusal of the Princess's defence, well satisfied, that you will need nothing more to enable you to form a correct judgment upon every part of this memorable transaction.

I remain your faithful friend,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 26th March, 1813.

TO JAMES PAUL,

*Of Bursledon, in Lower Dublin Township, in Philadelphia County,
in the State of Pennsylvania ;*

ON

MATTERS RELATING TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE
PRINCESS OF WALES.

(*Political Register, April, 1813.*)

LETTER VI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

This Letter will conclude the remarks which I mean to address to you, relative to the interesting affair of the Princess of Wales. I have, indeed, already gone into the whole of the subject as far as it is necessary for me to go into it, seeing that the Defence of the Princess leaves so very little to be said by any one. But, there have arisen certain matters, forming the sequel of the disclosure, which are well worthy of your attention ; and of these, the most important are, the debates, or, rather, the remarks and counter-remarks, which have been made in the two Houses of Parliament, relative to the *deposition of Mrs. Lisle*, which deposition you will find in the Register, at page 393.

Mr. WHITBREAD, in the House of Commons, on the 17th of March,

last past, referred to this affidavit, or deposition, and he animadverted upon the conduct of the Four Lords, who took it down. The Four Lords, in their place, in the House of Lords, a few days afterwards, entered into an explanation, vindicating their own conduct, and spoke in very severe terms of the attack which had been made upon them.

Before I enter further into this matter, I beg you to observe, that it is of very great importance; because, as you will have perceived, of the whole of that crowd of witnesses, who were examined upon this occasion, Mrs. Lisle is the only one, to whose testimony the Princess appears to attach any importance; and, indeed, she is the only witness whose testimony seems to merit any serious refutation. She is, as was observed in my last Letter, one of the *four* persons, upon whose testimony the charge of impropriety of conduct did, in the eyes of the Four Lords, rest for credibility; and, as the Princess's defence does, in my opinion, demolish the testimony of the other *three*, Mrs. Lisle alone remains as a witness whose testimony has *some* weight. It was, therefore, in the opinion of Mr. Whitbread, of great consequence to explain every circumstance relating to the mode which the Four Lords pursued in getting at and in recording this testimony. I will not, for fear of mistakes, attempt to make any abstract, or abridgment, of his speech upon this occasion; but, will insert it just as I find it reported in the *Times newspaper* of the 18th of March, that being the fullest report that I have been able to find of Mr. Whitbread's speech, which, as far as related to the subject before us, was as follows:

"He must," he said, "trouble the House for a few minutes with some passages in Mrs. Lisle's evidence relative to the Princess and Captain Manby. Mrs. L. could not say there was any attachment; and she never saw any kissing hands, &c. He wished to confine himself to material points. After the evidence was given, the depositions were taken; and he was not surprised, under all the circumstances, at Mrs. Lisle's signature to the deposition; but he was, he must confess, surprised to find leading questions put to her by his learned friend, the Lord Chancellor Erskine; questions on which that noble and learned Lord, when an advocate, would have expired, sooner than have permitted to be answered by any witness of his on a trial in a court of law. One would be tempted by the deposition to think that Mrs. L. said all in *one breath* as it were. The question in the examination was put to Mrs. L. '*Did Captain Manby sit next the Princess at dinner?*' Yet, in the deposition, it seemed as if she stated it *voluntarily*. Then Lord Erskine asks Mrs. L. '*whether they all sat just as the four noble Lords sat round their table with her?*' Mr. W. remarked on various other questions put to Mrs. L., and expressed his astonishment that so many leading questions should have been put to her. '*What! did the Princess and Captain Manby sit apart? What, if sitting together, do you suppose they talked about?*' Lords Erskine and Ellenborough put these questions; and then the deposition is to go out to the world to impress the sense of guilt on the part of the Princess. The answer of Mrs. L. regarding the conversation was, that she did not listen to it. Then Lord Erskine desires her to answer him, as a woman of reason, character, and of knowledge of the world, whether the Princess's conduct was *proper for a married woman*—he puts it to her honor as a mother? Really, there never was a question put to a female witness which could make the chords of sensibility vibrate more strongly in her heart. The answer was collected, dignified, affectionate, and motherly, for the question related to her own family: 'My daughter,' she says, '*lived well with her husband.*' To the question again, whether the Princess lived as a married woman ought? Mrs. L.'s answer was, not like the statement in the deposition. Lord Ellenborough, indeed, said to the Chancellor, 'I suppose you'd put it as *any married woman.*' '*What did you ever think of the Princess's talking with Captain Manby?*' was another question; but these were never answered, though we had something about them in the deposition. He was sorry to be obliged to animadvert upon the conduct of the four noble Lords Commissioners; but he should be doing

"injustice to the cause of justice, if he did not say, that if the accused had been provided with an advocate, witnesses would have been protected, or prevented from answering many interrogatories that were put to them. '*The Princess*,' says Mr. L., '*is free and condescending.*' '*That*,' says the Chancellor, '*is not my question.*' '*I thought*,' says Mrs. L. '*that the Princess liked to talk with Captain Manby, rather than with the ladies.*' Let the House recollect, that there were, and are attached to the Princess, persons of high consideration; yet, could any body doubt that when new society, which afforded new topics of conversation, broke in upon the sameness—the fatigue of retired and mock royalty,—debarred from many sources of amusement,—yet uncompensated by even the trappings of her state, could any body doubt, or be surprised, that the Princess should find something in it agreeable? Yet that was an imputation upon her! Let gentlemen bring to their consideration the situation of their own wives, sisters, and daughters. When they left home to attend to their public or private business, would they not treat with contempt and scorn, evidence such as this, if it was attempted to charge criminality upon it? (*Hear, hear.*) They might be disposed to prosecute the calumniator: but her Royal Highness did not stand in the situation of a person for whom such steps could be taken. He was ashamed of some parts of the examination. It was asked, whether she went out with Mr. Hood in a whiskey? Where he drove it? This was something like the mode of cross-examination. 'Who was there besides Mr. Hood's servant?' 'Was he a man or a boy?' (*A laugh.*) 'How often did she go out so?' Was it fair play to the Princess to extract answers in that manner? Then they came to Mr. Chester, who was stated to be '*a pretty young man.*' (*A laugh.*) This was too ludicrous to be serious, and yet too serious to be ludicrous. The inference seemed to be, that there was a *prepossession* for him, because he was handsome. It was asked, '*Is he not handsome?*' The answer was '*pretty!*' All that was nauseous had been read; but he should notice one point: the witness was asked, 'Do you recollect the Princess getting up and going out of her room into another at night, for a light?' Answer, 'I do.' '*Why*,' say the two lawyers, '*did she get up in the night?*' (*A laugh.*) Yet this was in the deposition; and the shakers of heads continued to shake because Mrs. Lisle had deposed so and so. That was not a fair construction of Mrs. L.'s evidence, if the examinations were read. '*I heard her Royal Highness say*,' says the witness, '*that she had been ill, and that her candle was gone out.*' Was not the Princess to be in a situation common to every subject of the realm? The public mind must form her shield, and her protection. Read the evidence, and say whether she has not a right to be treated as innocent, till she be proved guilty. Mrs. L.'s testimony gives an easy, natural, and probable solution, of this mysterious transaction. (*Hear.*) Mr. Chester, it seems, walked out twice with the Princess; and he was left at Lord Sheffield's. Then for Captain Moore. He dined there, and where, it was asked, did he go afterwards? Why, down stairs: she sent him for a book. '*How long was he in getting it?*' Twenty minutes. Then it was asked how long he stayed the second time. This part of the examination was as much like an imputation on Mrs. Lisle, as upon the Princess. Well then: the Princess actually made Captain Moore a present of a silver inkstand! Mrs. L. saw him afterwards on the Princess Charlotte's birth-day, when he went away before the rest of the company. He (Mr. W.) might now go to Mr. Lawrence, and so on to the end of the chapter in the same manner. He had, he conceived, done enough in referring to this book; and he clearly saw that the notes of the examination *took the sting entirely out of the depositions.*"

This was the speech of Mr. WHITEHEAD, as reported in the newspapers. He had, by some means, obtained a written copy of the questions put to the witnesses. This paper, it seems, he read to the House, making his remarks on it as he proceeded. No notice, in public, was taken of this, by the *Four Lords*, till the 22nd of March, when they all four spoke of it in the House of Lords. Lord Ellenborough, the Lord Chief Justice, led the way; and, as the other three gave their full assent to the correctness of his statement, I will not insert any of their speeches except his, which I take from the Report, published in the Times newspaper of the 23rd of March, and which Report gave it in the following words:—

“ Lord Ellenborough commenced by saying, that he had to trouble their Lordships on an occasion, in which many motives concurred to make him come forward reluctantly. The House would understand, that the circumstance to which he alluded, was connected with the mention of individuals whom his respect would not allow him lightly to name. He was aware, that in coming forth to clear himself, there might be an imputation of weakness and irritation under the charge which forced him forward; but then it was necessary that truth should be told: there were cases, in which all of respect that we could feel for general opinion,—all of credit that we could claim with the world,—all honour and propriety urged us on exculpation. Another reason still might retard him,—he was a Privy Councillor: going into a question of this nature might seem to involve a dereliction of his duty; but he trusted nothing should so far make him forget that duty, as to touch upon matters by whose disclosure it might be impaired. But the character of his Noble Colleagues must not be left to suffer through his silence. They were all placed in the strange and hard situation where they must be condemned unheard, or look for an imperfect vindication by the scantiness of their right to explain. But nothing should prevent him from giving the fullest denial to the calumny in question,—that *foulest, basest, and most malignant calumny* that could have been thrown out against men in the situation which he and his Noble Colleagues had held. It would be remembered that some years since His Majesty had been advised to issue a Commission for an inquiry into matters which involved some eminent persons in this country. In that Commission his (Lord Ellenborough's) name was inserted, without his knowing anything of the matter. Once engaged by His Majesty's command, he did his duty to the best of his power. But it was in the performance of that duty that some person, with the most *abandoned and detestable slander*, had dared to charge him with a gross act of dishonesty; him, on whose character for integrity, diligence, and care, depended more of the property and interests of the people than on those of any other man in the country: yet of him, it was foully and slanderously alleged, that he had *falsified the evidence* given before the Commission, giving in as a document, evidence that was not received, and suppressing that which was actually given. This was all a *lie*—a *vile slander*,—all *false as Hell*. He would not violate the propriety of that House; he knew the respect and decency which it required; but he must give the *lie* to falsehood. He should now trouble the House with a short statement of facts. In the course of the inquiry his Noble Colleagues thought it proper to have some person to take down and arrange the evidence. His Majesty's Solicitor-General, at that time (Sir Samuel Romilly), was the person fixed on. One evening the Commission having met, and the witnesses being in attendance it was thought better not to defer the examination, and lose the evening, though from some circumstance or other Sir Samuel Romilly was not in attendance. The messenger sent for him could not find him, and the examination proceeded. The Commissioners requested that he (Lord Ellenborough), as he had been in the habit of taking down evidence, and probably took down in the year twice as much as any man in the kingdom, should take down the evidence of the witnesses in attendance. He declared upon the most sacred asseveration that could be made,—the most solemn sanction of an oath,—that every word of that deposition came from the lips of the witness in question,—that every word of it was read over to her,—if not paragraph by paragraph, as it was taken down, certainly all after it was taken,—and every sheet signed with her name. If it would not be going into the particular disclosure, which nothing could induce him to allow or advise, the bare inspection of the paper would be enough to show that fabrication was impossible. It was full of interlineations; the mind of the party was expressed in its language,—any man might have seen, in its changes and corrections, that the deposition went to ascertain the full meaning of the witness, and could not have been the work of him or the other Commissioners. He might, at least, from his station, take the credit of laborious accuracy; and he would venture to say, that not one word was in that written deposition which had not been spoken by the witness. But how absurd was the charge! Would his Noble Colleagues have suffered him to vitiate the evidence! Would they have allowed him to set down a word on the paper which was not deposed by the witness? He had every reason, from the most perfect recollection, to say, that the paper in question contained the whole evidence—and nothing but the evidence of the witness. Their Lordships would forgive him for those repetitions; but when they showed so just a jealousy of the repu-

"tation of their body, when it was so important that his (Lord Ellenborough's) integrity should stand without suspicion, from the multitude of interests connected with it,—their Lordships could not blame him for standing forth to repel in the strongest manner so base and impudent, and *miscreant* an imputation. (Hear.) Nay, the thing was *foolish* as well as wicked. It was *despicable* from its very *stupidity*. It charged him with putting *leading* questions. Now what was the case in which leading questions could be put? It was, where there were contending parties; and leading questions was only improper when the counsel might be suspected of instructing his own witness. But the Judge had a right to put any question which appeared to him likely to elucidate the truth. There was another case, when the witness was adverse; but here the rule had its exceptions, and nothing to be derived from it could impeach the putting of any questions by *Commissioners who could have no object but the truth*. It remained for this *stupid and cursed impudence*,—for impudence was a *curse*, to add another query, and gravely demand, why the examination had not been written in question and answer. But was there a man grey-headed in the law who had ever heard of such a thing? If the whole of the facts could be detailed, no prejudice on the subject could lie on the minds of the public for an instant. But as a Privy Councillor he could not address the Prince Regent for that purpose. (Hear.) One of the most alarming symptoms of the age was, that *brutal and savage* indifference with which men threw about slander at the *highest characters*: this was 'tossing firebrands,' and then saying, 'am I not in sport?' But in the whole transaction, he and the noble Commissioners, he must be allowed to say, felt, not perfect indifference (for who could feel indifference?) but a single desire to do their duty. (Hear!) He was sorry to have so far troubled the House. His purpose was not vindictive, but exculpatory. For whatever punishment the offence might call, he would call for none;—he was only desirous to stand unimpeached in the opinion of the country, and honest in the eyes of his fellow-men."

My Lord, the Chief Judge, appears to have been very much enraged upon this occasion. He appears to have been greatly moved. He appears to have been in a passion as people call it. But, before I make any remark on the merits of this dispute between the Four Lords and Mr. Whitbread, it will be necessary to pursue the matter as it proceeded in Parliament, where, on the 23rd of March, Mr. Whitbread having, in the meanwhile, applied to Mrs. Lisle, produced a letter, signed by that lady, stating, that the paper which had been sent to her (the same which he had read in the House) was a correct copy of the *questions* put to her and her *answers*, as she had *written the whole down*, immediately after the examination took place. He also entered into an explanation as to the *nature* of the animadversions which he had made upon the conduct of the *Four Lords*; and said, that he had *not* accused them of putting a false deposition upon paper; that he had *not* accused them of any *fabrication*; that he had *not* said, that they had been guilty of any falsification of testimony; but, that he had said, that *leading* questions were put, and that, if the evidence had been inserted by *question and answer*, instead of putting down the *answers only*, Mrs. Lisle's testimony would have appeared in a very different light from what it did; and this appears to have been the impression on the mind of Mrs. Lisle herself; for, otherwise, why did she write down the questions and answers upon going home from the Commissioners.

The main points to be considered here are, first, whether *leading* questions ought to have been put by the Four Lords upon such an occasion; secondly, whether they ought to have reported the evidence in *question and answer*, or only in the answers.

Mr. Whitbread has, by the writers in some of the newspapers, as well as by the Four Lords, been charged with *ignorance*, because he complained

of the putting of leading questions. It is very well known, that, what is called a leading question is sometimes intended or has an obvious tendency to draw from a witness that which is not true ; or, at least, *to point out to him what to say* ; and, such questions are not allowed to be put by the advocate on whose side the witness is brought ; but that *any* question may be put by the adverse advocate, or by the Judge, because they cannot be suspected of any desire to tutor the witness. Therefore, as applicable to the present case, Lord Ellenborough is reported to have said, that “ nothing could impeach the putting of leading questions by the Commissioners, *who could have no object but the truth.*” No : certainly. God forbid that I should say, that they had *any object but the truth* ; but, still, when a deposition, consisting, in part, of *answers to leading questions*, came to be published to the world, such deposition might be understood in a sense different from that in which a simple declaration, or narration, of the witness would be understood ; and, indeed, in this case, Mrs. Lisle, who had read and signed her deposition, seems to have thought it necessary to guard against this ; for, upon her going home, she wrote down the answers as contained in her deposition, and she put to them the *questions*, by which those answers were drawn forth. This she regarded as an act of justice due to Her Royal Mistress, and, as appears from her letter to Mr. Whitbread, she *immediately* gave her Royal Highness a copy of the whole of the examination, in question and answer ; and, as you will perceive, Her Royal Highness says, in one part of her defence, that, in such a case, the questions as well as the answers ought to have been subjoined to the Report.

Upon this second point, the Lord Chief Justice defied any man to cite an instance, in which the minutes of a *Judge* had been taken down in any other way than that in which Mrs. Lisle's deposition had been taken down ; and, in the House of Commons, Mr. Whitbread was told, that he ought to have known, from his attendance at the Quarter Sessions, that such was the universal practice ; and that, therefore, he ought to have considered it as proper in this case.

Now, observe, it must be here supposed, that the reprovers of Mr. Whitbread spoke either of depositions or examinations previous to trial ; or, of examinations before a court and jury ; and, I am of opinion, that neither of these furnishes a case in point. As to the first, the examinations thus taken do not serve as the ground of *any final decision* ; the party accused may be held to bail or committed upon them ; but, he is afterwards to be *tried* ; the whole is to be heard over again before other magistrates and before jurors, who are to *decide* upon the case ; but, who are not to decide, *till they themselves have heard the witnesses speak* ; till they themselves have *heard* the questions as well as the answers. In the case of Mrs. Lisle's deposition, there was no after examination to take place. The King, to whom the deposition was sent along with the Report upon it, was to form his judgment upon the answers only. The difference here is so manifest and so important, that it needs nothing further to make you fully sensible of it.

As to examinations before a court and jury, it is very true, that the Judge makes a minute of the answers only. When he sums up the evidence, he seldom says a word about the questions, and merely tells the jury, that the witness has sworn *thus* and *thus*, repeating, as nearly as possible, the words of the witness ; but, observe, though the Judge does not minute down the questions ; though he does not state the questions to the jury,

the jury have HEARD THEM ALL; and, when they are told by the Judge, that the witness has said so and so, they have fresh in their mind the *question* in answer to which he so said; and that, by that means, they are enabled to give to the answer its precise value, which no one who has not heard the question can be able to do.

You will please to bear in mind, that it was the *King* who was to *decide* upon Mrs. Lisle's testimony. It was to him, that the Four Lords made their Report upon that evidence, and that it was to him, that her depositions was sent. And, it is necessary for you to keep in mind also, that Mrs. Lisle was one of the four witnesses, mentioned at the close of the Report, as having given testimony calculated to give rise, and, indeed, which must *necessarily* give rise, to *very unfavourable interpretations* as to the conduct of the Princess. The other three of these four witnesses, Cole, Bidgood, and Fanny Lloyd, we have seen enough of before; but Mrs. Lisle, a lady of unimpeached character, who had been with the Princess for many years, and who has remained with her almost up to this time, was, and is, worthy of serious attention.

It was the King, you will perceive, who was to *decide* upon the value of every expression of Mrs. Lisle, and the King was not present, as a juror is, to hear the *questions* as well as the answers; and, therefore, as Mr. Whitbread contended, the King had not the best means of arriving at a just opinion of the value of Mrs. Lisle's evidence. The same might be said of the *public*. They saw only the answers; and, though the Four Lords did not publish the depositions, the depositions were published; the answers of Mrs. Lisle were published; and, therefore, Mr. Whitbread thought it just; he thought it necessary to a right decision by the people, that the questions as well as the answers should be publicly known.

When it was contended, that Judges in their minutes and Justices in their examinations took down and recorded only the *answers* of witnesses, it might have been recollected, that, in other cases, the questions as well as the answers are taken down. In trials before Committees of the House of Commons, for instance, this is the practice; and the reason of it appears to be this: that the House itself, who is to decide upon any special Report of their Committees, *are not present* to hear the examinations; and, therefore, must have question as well as answer to enable them to judge correctly of the real value and amount of the evidence. And, as to trials that are *published*, the question, as well as the answer, is invariably given, as being absolutely necessary to give the public a clear insight of the matter. The fact appears to me to be this: that where the party who is to *decide* is not present at the examination, the question as well as the answer is necessary to the ends of fair decision. The Four Lords, looking upon themselves apparently as judges or magistrates, followed the usual practice of judges or magistrates; but, they do not appear to have adverted to the circumstance of the King not being present as jurors are; and, as to the capacity of magistrate, they did, unfortunately for the Princess and fortunately for Lady Douglas, soon find, that they were not acting in that capacity.

The vast difference between a report of evidence in question and answer, and one only in the answers, will appear in a moment, if we take a passage from this very evidence of Mrs. Lisle, in which, for instance, she says;

"At Lady Sheffield's Her Royal Highness paid more attention to Mr. Chester than the rest of the Company. I knew Her Royal High-

"ness walk out alone with Mr. Chester twice in the morning; once
 "a short time it rained—the other not an hour—not long. Mr.
 "Chester is a pretty young man."

Now, this, though quite sufficient for a judge, or for a jury, who had heard the questions, must have, on mere *readers* of the deposition, a very different effect from that which would naturally be produced by the reading of the same thing in question and answer; thus:

At Lady Sheffield's, did her Royal Highness pay more attention to Mr. Chester than to the rest of the company?—*Yes.*—Did you know Her Royal Highness walk out alone with Mr. Chester?—*Yes; she walked out twice in the morning: once a short time it rained—the other not an hour—not long.*—Is Mr. Chester a handsome young man?—*He is pretty.*

You see, my friend, the statement is precisely the same *in words*; but, the impression it conveys is very different indeed. As the story stands in the deposition, stripped of the form of question and answer, it would appear to come *voluntarily* from Mrs. Lisle; and the circumstance of Mr. Chester being a *pretty young man* would naturally, in the mind of the mass of readers, appear to have occurred to *Mrs. Lisle herself* as the CAUSE of the Princess's attention to him more than to the rest of the company, and also as the CAUSE of the walks with him alone. Therefore, though it was the duty of the Four Lords to use all possible means to get at the truth as to every circumstance; and though they, in recording the evidence, followed the usual practice of judges and magistrates, we cannot help lamenting that they did not think it necessary to put down and report the questions as well as the answers. Lord Ellenborough appears to have thought, that he and his coadjutors had been charged with a *falsification of evidence*; a *suppression of evidence*; but, really, I did not so understand Mr. Whitbread. I understood him simply to say; that, if the questions as well as the answers, in the case of Mrs. Lisle, had been given, the impression produced by her evidence, upon the mind of the reader of it, would be different from what it must be while nothing but the answers were seen. It seems to have been understood that Mr. Whitbread had stated, that the evidence was *taken down by the Four Lords in question and answer*, and that they put *only the answers into the deposition*. But, this is not the way in which I understood him. I understood him to say, that he had obtained a copy of the answers accompanied by the questions; but, not to say that the questions had been taken down by the Four Lords, and afterwards suppressed by them; and, in short, the only points upon which there seems to have been any real difference of opinion were these; whether, in the first place, it was right to put *leading questions*; and whether, in the next place, the questions ought not, in this case, to have been given as well as the answers.

The defence of the Princess is so complete and every way satisfactory upon the evidence of Mrs. Lisle, that I can hardly think it necessary for me to say anything more about it; but, there is one point or two on which I cannot refrain from making a few observations. She says, that "Her Royal Highness behaved to Captain Manby *ONLY* as *any* woman "would who likes *flirting*;" and, in another place she calls the conduct of the Princess "*ONLY* a *flirting* conduct." The word to *flirt* means, in its proper sense, to *banter* or *jeer*. I know not, for my part, what other sense can be given to it; and, therefore, all that Mrs. Lisle says here is,

that the Princess behaved with Captain Manby like a woman who likes *bantering* and *joking*.

Lord preserve all our wives from such a scrutiny ! I am really afraid, that it would be too much even for those most amiable and most virtuous of creatures, the sleek sisterhood of Pennsylvania. And yet, as you see by the Report, Mrs. Lisle's evidence did, in the opinion of the Four Lords, give rise to unfavourable interpretations. Judge, then, to what a pitch we, in this country, carry our notions of female decorum !

The word ONLY seems, however, to take the sting completely out of this part of Mrs. Lisle's evidence ; for if she had meant by the word *flirting*, any thing *criminal*, any thing *vicious*, any thing *indecent*, any thing *gross*, any thing *indecorous*, any thing *improper*, she would never have prefixed to it the word ONLY. She would not have said *only criminal*, *only vicious*, *only indecent*, *only gross*, *only indecorous*, or *only improper* ; and, if it was something, which was neither criminal, vicious, indecent, gross, indecorous, nor improper ; if it was neither of these, in the name of common sense, what *harm* was there in it ; and, in what way could it possibly give rise to *unfavourable interpretations* ? You see, too, that Mrs. Lisle must have had some question put to her which drew forth the word ONLY ; so that, this word must be taken to exclude all that is not included in the word *flirting* ; and, of course, to shut out every thing of a higher cast than that of flirting, which means neither more nor less than *bantering*. You yourself are a very sober, grave man, and not at all likely to wink at improper conduct in any woman, especially a married woman, though separated from her husband without any fault of her's ; but, would you, if you were told, that such a woman were given to banter, and did actually banter, with a man in the presence of several other women, think it right to give an *unfavourable interpretation* to her conduct on that account ?

But, Mrs. Lisle says, as is stated in the deposition (see Register, p. 466), that " she would not have THOUGHT that *any married woman* would " have behaved *properly*, who behaved as the Princess did to Captain " Manby." Now, you will observe, that Mr. Whitbread stated, that there was a question put here as to whether Mrs. Lisle would have liked to see such conduct in her own daughter, who had just then died ; and that she replied, that her daughter *lived in the same house with her husband*. However, leaving this circumstance quite out of the question, does not the Princess, in her defence, complain with some reason of having the *opinion* of Mrs. Lisle, or of anybody else, set up against her conduct ? When witnesses are called and sworn as to the *acts* of accused persons, is it usual to ask the *opinions* of those witnesses as to the nature of those acts ? Besides, the opinion here given was in answer to a *general question*. *Any married woman* ; not any married woman *living separated from her husband*, which makes all the difference in the world. For, you will readily agree, that the bantering ascribed to the Princess, the talking more to Captain Manby than to the ladies, might be very excusable in a married woman living separated from her husband, though it might not be so easily excused in one living with her husband, and whose duty it would be to avoid every sort of familiarity likely to give that husband the smallest degree of uneasiness. Mrs. Lisle might very consistently have thought that the Princess's conduct to Captain Manby was perfectly innocent and right, and yet she might have thought, that such conduct would not be right in *any married woman* without exception, and without

attention being paid to the peculiar circumstances of the case. She does not say, you will observe, that such conduct would, in her opinion, have been proper in NO married woman. You will pay particular attention to that. She only says, that, such conduct would not, in her opinion, have been proper in ANY married woman without exception; that is to say, that it would not have been, in her opinion, a conduct proper for *all* married women, meaning, of course, to be understood to be speaking of women living as married women generally live.

Is this splitting of hairs? If it be, the fault is not mine. Importance has been given to trifles, and it is not, therefore, our fault if we treat them as being important.

I have now, my good friend, said every thing to you that I think it necessary to say relative to charges against the Princess of Wales. But, before I dismiss the subject altogether, I think it right to notice a letter, published on the 27th of March by *Earl Moira*, who, as you will have perceived, has been pretty much concerned in some part of these transactions. In this letter his Lordship denies having gone to Lord Eardley's to seek, amongst the servants there, for evidence against the Princess. He asserts, that the information came first from Lord Eardley to the Prince; that the Prince listened to it reluctantly; that the servants came to Lord Moira, and he did not go to them; that he found their stories unworthy of notice; that he, therefore, advised the Prince to do nothing in the business; and that it was his advice and the Prince's desire that no talk should take place on the subject.

His Lordship then gives his explanation as to the much more important point; the examination, by him, of Messrs. Mills and Edmeades, on the subject of the fact stated by Fanny Lloyd, respecting what one of those gentlemen had said as to the supposed pregnancy of the Princess. This is a point of so much consequence, that, in justice to the character of his Lordship, I shall insert the whole of that part of his letter which relates to it.

"The interviews with Dr. Mills and Mr. Edmeades did not take place till between three and four years after the examination of Lord Eardley's servants, and had no reference to it. Fanny Lloyd, a maid-servant in the Princess's family, had, in an examination to which I was not privy, asserted Dr. Mills to have mentioned to her that the Princess was pregnant; a deposition which obviously made it necessary that Dr. Mills should be subjected to examination. This happened to be discussed before me; and it was my suggestion that it would be more delicate to request the attendance of Dr. Mills at my house, and to have him meet the Magistrate there, to avoid the publicity and observation which would be entailed by his being summoned to the Office in Marlborough-street. Dr. Mills came early, and then it was immediately discovered that it was his partner, Mr. Edmeades, who had bled Fanny Lloyd, though the latter (knowing the Princess's apothecary to be Dr. Mills, and imagining it was that apothecary who had bled her) had confounded the names. Dr. Mills was therefore dismissed, without being examined by the Magistrate; and he was begged to send Mr. Edmeades on another morning. Mr. Edmeades came accordingly, and was examined before the Magistrate. An attempt is made to pervert an observation of mine into an endeavour to make Mr. Edmeades alter his testimony injuriously for the Princess. So far from there being anything of conciliation in my tone, Mr. Conant must well remember my remark to have been made as a correction of what I deemed a premeditated and improper pertness of manner in Mr. Edmeades.—It was an unmitigated profession of my belief that he was using some subterfuge to justify his denial; a declaration little calculated to win him to pliancy, had I been desirous of influencing his testimony. My conviction on that point remains unchanged. One or other of the parties was wilfully incorrect in their statement; if Fanny Lloyd

" were so, it was downright perjury; Mr. Edmeades might have answered only elusively. I have been told that some individual, pointing at the direct opposition between the affidavits of Mr. Edmeades and Fanny Lloyd has indicated the preferable credit which ought to be given to the oath of a well-educated man, in a liberal walk of life, over that of a person in the humble station of a maid-servant. I shall not discuss the justice of the principle which arbitrarily assumes deficiency of moral rectitude to be the natural inference from humility of condition. The inculcation in the present instance would have been somewhat more rational, had it advised that, in a case of such absolute contradiction upon a simple fact, the comprehension of which could have nothing to do with education, you should consider on which side an obvious temptation to laxity appears. Fanny Lloyd was not merely a reluctant witness, but had expressed the greatest indignation at being subject to examination. When she swore positively to a circumstance admitting of no latitude, the only thing to be weighed was, what probability of inducement existed for her swearing that which she knew to be false. It will appear that her testimony on that point was not consonant to the partiality which she had proclaimed; that by the other parts of her evidence she was barring the way to reward, if any profligate hopes of remuneration led her to risk the falsehood; and that she could not be influenced by malice against Mr. Edmeades, with whom it was clear she was unacquainted. Nothing, therefore, presented itself, to throw an honest doubt upon her veracity. Mr. Edmeades was very differently circumstanced. A character for dangerous chattering was absolute ruin to him in his profession. He had the strongest of all motives to exonerate himself from the charge, if he could hit upon any equivocation by which he might satisfy himself in the denial of it. And the bearing of my remark must not be misunderstood. No man would infer anything against the Princess on the ground of such a random guess as that of Mr. Edmeades' must have been, unless Mr. Edmeades should support his proposition by the adduction of valid reasons and convincing circumstances; but there was a consequence ascribable to it in its loosest state. His having been sufficiently indiscreet to mention his speculation to others as well as to Fanny Lloyd, would well account for what was otherwise incomprehensible; namely, the notion of the Princess's pregnancy so generally entertained at Greenwich and in that neighbourhood. It was my conviction that such indiscretion had taken place, not any belief of the fact to which it related, that I endeavoured to convey by my remark.

" This construction is not put upon the circumstance now, for the first time. A paper of mine submitted to His Majesty at the period of the investigation, and lodged with the other documents relative to that inquiry, rebuts in the same terms the base attempt of insinuating conspiracy against the Princess. *Why that paper has not seen the light with the other documents may be surmised.* I had thought it incumbent on me, from the nature of the transaction, not to furnish any means for its publication from the copy in my possession. The present explanation unavoidably states all the material points contained in it. But it will be felt by every one that the detail has been extorted from me."

I will offer you no remark upon his Lordship's explanation as to the point above dwelt upon. He still gives the preference to the testimony of Fanny Lloyd; and it is not for me to express any doubt of his sincerity; but, I must still be allowed to express my wonder, that, when Fanny Lloyd's Declaration was laid before the King amongst the documents confirmatory of Lady Douglas's Statement, *the opposing declarations of Dr. Mills and Mr. Edmeades were not laid before the King along with it.* The King would then have been able to form his opinion of the veracity of the parties respectively.

In the conclusion of the paragraph of the letter of Lord Moira, above cited, he complains of a paper of his having been kept out of sight; and says, that the reason " may be surmised." I wish his Lordship had helped me in this; for, I must confess, that I cannot surmise it. The other documents have been published through the same channel that

was selected for the conveying of his Letter to the public; and why his paper has been kept back I, for my part, cannot imagine. It was, it seems, intended to rebut the insinuation, in the Princess's defence, against him as having been a participator in a conspiracy against her. But, it was, at any rate, in the hands of his friends, the present Ministers, under whom he is serving in a very high situation. He has, certainly, not to blame his old friends and colleagues, the Whigs, for keeping this paper back. The fault, if it lie anywhere, must lie amongst those with whom he has, for some time past, been connected; and, therefore, he has, in some sort, himself only to blame.

Before I conclude this my last letter upon the subject, I must observe to you, that there never was, perhaps, any one occasion, in which public opinion was so decided and unanimous as upon this. There is not a creature to be found, in any rank of life, who is not on the side of the Princess; who does not regard her as the most calumniated of women, and who does not hold her base assailants in detestation. You will recollect the passages, which, in my first Letters upon the subject, I quoted from our hired newspapers, reviling the advisers of the Princess; calling them a disloyal faction; attributing to her rashness, weakness, folly, and even impudence; menacing her with a fresh inquiry; and, in short, abusing every person, who, in any way, seemed to take her part. You will remember, on the other hand, that I said, she was pursuing good advice, and that the result would prove the advantages of her showing her resolution no longer to submit in silence.

Now, hear the language of one of those same prints (the Morning Post) of the 26th of March:—

"The triumph of the much-injured Princess of Wales may now be considered as most proudly complete. All the *new attempts* to blast her fair fame, have, like the former *conspiracy* against her honour and life, ended only in the confusion and disgrace of her *perjured* calumniators. No discovery whatever, that could by the most forced construction of the most inveterate, be deemed injurious to Her Royal Highness, could, by possibility, be made or produced against her; and the public will rejoice to hear, that this heart-rending question, excepting only as far as regards the *punishment of her infamous and perjured accusers* (for which, in the name of justice, and in the crying cause of injured innocence, we shall never cease to call) is thus completely, most satisfactorily and happily, set for ever at rest. May this joyous result prove *the first step towards the respect which justice and propriety require to be shown to this illustrious Lady*; and still further we pray, may it be the happy prelude to the re-establishment of concord, peace, and bliss, among all the branches of that illustrious Family, in whose tranquillity and happiness every good and *loyal subject* must feel so deep and serious an interest."

Aye, you caitiff Editor, but you said, only six weeks ago, that all those who, like myself, were labouring to establish, in the eyes of the world, the innocence of this injured Princess, were enemies of the Royal Family, and belonged to a desperate and bloody-minded faction; aye, and it is only your own baseness, your base fear of the effects of popular hatred, that has induced you to change your tone.

Well, but the "*joyous result*" of which you are speaking, is the *first* step, it seems, "*which justice and propriety require to be shown to this illustrious Lady.*" What is the *second*? Why, that which I proposed more than a year ago; namely, the *enabling of her Royal Highness to hold a Court*. This is as just now as the *receiving of her at Court* was in 1807. Her husband is now become Regent, clothed with all the powers and splendour of a king; and, why is she not to hold her

Court? Why is she to be kept in obscurity? A free intercourse with her daughter follows of course; but, a Court is absolutely necessary to wipe away all remains of imputation; to do her complete justice in the eyes of the whole world.

In the meanwhile, however, the newspapers inform me, that the Citizens of London are about to meet in order to present to Her Royal Highness a loyal and affectionate Address upon this occasion. That this is a proper measure, and worthy of the example of the whole nation, you will, I am sure, readily allow. It is not only the duty, but it is the *interest*, of the people to step forward and cause themselves to be heard upon such occasions. To hold their tongues, in such cases, is tacitly to acknowledge that they are *nothing*, and, of course, that their opinions may safely be despised by their rulers.

Nevertheless, I have heard, and, indeed, not with much surprise, that there are certain persons in the City of London, attached to the faction called the Whigs, who are disposed to discourage these public demonstrations of the feeling of the people. It is easy to conceive, that they must dislike anything tending to throw a slur upon their party; they know, that it was their party, who, with the Princess's defence before them, hesitated four months before they advised the King to receive her at Court, and then only accompanied with an *admonition*, that admonition which every human being is now ready to pronounce judgment upon. An address to her Royal Highness would necessarily be a condemnation of the Whig ministry; and, therefore, it is that its partisans are endeavouring to prevent such a measure on the part of any portion of the people.

But was there ever so fit an occasion for an Address? When the King was thought to have been in danger from the pen-knife of a poor old mad-woman, addresses of loyalty, affection, and of congratulation at his escape poured in from every county, city, and town in his dominions; and, shall those who were filled with horror at the attempt of *Peg Nicholson*, be silent at the discovery of the attempt of *Lady Douglas* and her coadjutors? Shall those who were so loud in their cries of abhorrence on the former occasion, be now dumb as posts? The *life* of the King was then attempted; and has not the *life* of the Princess of Wales been now attempted? Aye, and by means, too, much more infamous than those which poor old crazy Peg is said to have employed. What was Peg's pen-knife when compared to the conspiracy against the Princess? To be sure, in this case, the carrying up of an Address will be attended with no creation of Knights. This is, really, the only difference in the two cases; except that in the present case the party to be addressed stands in need of the support of the people.

It would give me, on another account, singular satisfaction to see the Princess receive those marks of the approbation of the people. Those marks of approbation could not fail to make on her mind, as well as on the mind of her daughter, who has so strong an affection for her, an impression favourable to popular rights; to endear the people to them, and to show them, that, after all, the preservation of the people's liberties and privileges is the best guarantee, is far more efficacious than armies and sinecure placemen, in the support of the throne and the Royal Family. When the City of London shall have carried their Address to the Princess of Wales; when they shall have expressed their detestation of the conspiracy against her life and honour, Her Royal

Highness and her Daughter will have to compare the conduct of the people with that of those orders, whom the enemies of liberty have represented as *the great props of the throne*. What an useful lesson will this be to give to her, who, in the course of nature, is destined to be our Sovereign! It ought to make, and I have no doubt it will make, a strong and lasting impression upon her mind; that it will arm her before-hand against those parasites (never wanting to a Court), who would persuade her that every right possessed by the people is so much taken from her; that it will lead her to respect instead of despising, to confide in instead of suspecting, to love and cherish instead of hating and harassing, the people, whose good sense, whose love of justice, whose abhorrence of baseness and cruelty, have proved the best safeguards of the life and honour of her Mother.

I have now, my good friend, completed the task which I had imposed upon myself. I have done all that lay in my power to make the innocence and the injuries of the Princess of Wales known to the world; and, though, in the performance of this task, I have been animated with a consciousness that I was discharging a sacred duty to my country, I have derived additional satisfaction from the ever-recurring thought that I was addressing myself to you, and giving you, if that death which you fear not has not yet closed your eyes, a renewed proof of my unalterable gratitude and esteem.

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 2nd April, 1813.

TO JAMES PAUL,

*Of Bursledon, in Lower Dublin Township, in Philadelphia County,
in the State of Pennsylvania;*

ON

MATTERS RELATING TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE
PRINCESS OF WALES.

(*Political Register, April, 1813.*)

LETTER VII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

When I concluded my last letter to you, I did not suppose that I should find it necessary to address you again upon this subject; but, an event has occurred which induces me to do it. Towards the close of that letter, at page 250, I told you that I had heard, that the Citizens of London were about to address Her Royal Highness, the Princess, upon the subject of the conspiracy against her, and I stated the reasons, which, in my opinion, rendered this a proper step. Indeed, I had in a former Letter, told you, that it was a matter for the people to take up without delay. You may judge, therefore, of my pleasure at hearing that it was actually

done by the City of London, which, when not misled by the base sycophants of the Court, has always given an example of good sense and public spirit.

Upon the present occasion, the Address (a copy of which you will find below) was proposed by Mr. WOOD, who is an Alderman of London, and, I have the pleasure to add, that, as SHERIFF at the time of my imprisonment for two years for writing about the *flogging of English militia-men* at the town of Ely, in England, who had been first subdued by German troops, he was very kind to me, and assisted in procuring me what, in all probability, was the cause of preserving my life. This Mr. WOOD it was, who had the honour to propose the Address to the assembled citizens of London; and, this Address having been unanimously agreed to, it was, the day before yesterday, presented to Her Royal Highness, at her apartments at Kensington Palace. Not being in London at the time, I cannot give you an account of the procession from my own observation: I, therefore, give it you in the words of a very excellent daily newspaper, called the *Statesman*, and I take this opportunity of informing persons in America, who get newspapers from England, that the *Statesman* is the very best daily newspaper that we have.

"At a quarter past twelve o'clock yesterday, the Lord Mayor, attended by the Sheriffs, and the usual retinue, proceeded in state from Guildhall to Kensington Palace, to present to the Princess of Wales the Address voted by the Livery, in Common Hall assembled, congratulating Her Royal Highness on her triumph over the foul conspiracy formed against her honour and her life. There were upwards of a hundred carriages in the procession, which extended from Guildhall to the west end of Cheapside, where a short pause took place, for the purpose of receiving instructions; when a card was handed to the City Marshal from the Lord Mayor's carriage, with orders to proceed by Newgate-street, Skinner-street, Holborn, through St. Giles's, Oxford-street, entering the Park at Cumberland-gate, Tyburn, then to Hyde Park-corner, along Rotten-row, and out at Kensington-gate, on to the Palace; thus making a circuitous route of more than a mile. The crowd in King-street and Cheapside was considerable, but not to be compared to the immense assemblage of persons of all descriptions who collected in St. Paul's Church-yard, along the Strand, Pall Mall, and in the streets through which the procession was expected to pass, and who felt, as might be imagined, greatly mortified at its taking a circuitous route. Mr. Alderman Combe fell into the procession, next to the state-coach, just as it turned down Newgate-street. The acclamations of joy with which the procession was greeted, evinced the deep sense entertained by the public of the honest and manly expression of the sentiments of the Livery of London. They were loud, cordial, and reiterated. In the Park, however, which contained an assemblage no less respectable than numerous, no disappointment occurred. The carriages, horsemen, and spectators on foot, were numerous beyond all precedent, and the procession was greeted, as it passed, with enthusiastic shouts and plaudits.

"About eleven o'clock Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, attended by Lady Charlotte Lindsey and Charlotte Campbell, left Montague House, Blackheath, for Kensington Palace. Her Royal Highness travelled the most private way across the country and over Battersea Bridge, and arrived at Kensington Palace at a quarter past twelve o'clock. The populace had begun to assemble round the Palace by eleven o'clock. Soon after one, Bacon, belonging to Bow-street office, who was entrusted with the direction of the police upon this occasion, cleared all those assembled near the entrance of the Princess's apartments, to the outside of the railing which encloses the grass-plot, to enforce which he called in a number of the military to his assistance. The Lord Mayor's gentlemen in waiting arrived about one o'clock, to be in readiness to receive his Lordship. At ten minutes past two, the grand cavalcade arrived; the crowd that accompanied it, overpowered the police and the military, and burst open the gates, at which it entered. The Lord Mayor was received with marks of disapprobation by the incalculable crowd that surrounded the Palace

"and those in the trees. The Aldermen were received with three huzzas; Alderman Wood experienced unbounded applause, his carriage being drawn from Holborn to the door of the Palace by men. The Common Councilmen who attended on the occasion, did not appear in that character, but merely as Liverymen. Among them Mr. Waithman was discovered, and he was received with loud huzzas. The Lord Mayor, Aldermen, &c. were shown into the small dining-room, between the grand dining-room and the drawing-room. The procession consisted of the two City Marshals, in their state uniforms, on horseback; the state carriage, and six bays, in which was the Lord Mayor, the Mace-bearer, the Sword of State, and his Lordship's Chaplain; Aldermen Combe, Wood, Goodbehere, and Heygate; Sheriff Blades and the City Remembrancer, Mr. Sheriff Hoy and his Chaplain; the Chamberlain, the Comptroller, the Solicitor, the Town Clerk, and about 150 of the Livery, in their gowns. It occupied exactly half an hour the setting down from their carriages. It being announced to the Princess that the whole were arrived, Her Royal Highness entered from a back anti-room into the grand dining-room, and took her station at the upper end of the room, with her back to a large marble slab, before a large looking-glass; Ladies Charlotte Lindsey, Charlotte Campbell, and Lady Anne Hamilton, Her Royal Highness's ladies in waiting, stood to her right hand; and Mr. St. Leger, her Vice-Chamberlain, and Mr. H. S. Fox, on her left. The Town Clerk, in the absence of the Recorder, approached the Princess, and read the following Address:

"TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

"The humble Address of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Livery of the City of London, in Common Hall assembled.

"May it please your Royal Highness,

"We, His Majesty's loyal subjects, the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Livery of the City of London, in Common Hall assembled, bearing in mind those sentiments of profound veneration and ardent affection with which we hailed the arrival of your Royal Highness in this country, humbly beseech your Royal Highness to receive our assurances, that in the hearts of the citizens of London, those sentiments have never experienced diminution or change.

"Deeply interested in every event connected with the stability of the throne of this Kingdom, under the sway of the House of Brunswick; tenderly alive to every circumstance affecting the personal welfare of every branch of that illustrious House, we have felt indignation and abhorrence inexpressible, upon the disclosure of that foul and detestable conspiracy which, by perjured and suborned traducers, has been carried on against your Royal Highness's honour and life.

"The veneration for the laws, the moderation, the forbearance, the frankness, the magnanimity, which your Royal Highness has so eminently displayed under circumstances so trying, and during a persecution of so long a duration; these, while they demand an expression of our unbounded applause, cannot fail to excite in us a confident hope, that under the sway of your illustrious and beloved daughter, our children will enjoy all the benefits of so bright an example; and we humbly beg permission most unfeignedly to assure your Royal Highness, that, as well for the sake of our country, as from a sense of justice and duty, we shall always feel, and be ready to give proof of the most anxious solicitude for your Royal Highness's health, prosperity and happiness.

"The Address was then delivered to Her Royal Highness, who read the following answer.

"I thank you for your loyal and affectionate Address. It is to me the greatest consolation to learn, that during so many years of unmerited persecution, notwithstanding the active and persevering dissemination of the most deliberate calumnies against me, the kind and favourable sentiments with which they did me the honour to approach me on my arrival in this country, have undergone neither diminution nor change in the hearts of the citizens of London.

"The sense of indignation and abhorrence you express against the foul and detestable conspiracy which by perjured and suborned traducers has been carried on against my life and honour, is worthy of you, and most gratifying to me. It must be duly appreciated by every branch of that illustrious House

"with which I am so closely connected by blood and marriage; the personal welfare of every one of whom must have been affected by the success of such atrocious machinations.

"The consciousness of my innocence has supported me through my long, severe, and unmerited trials; your approbation of my conduct under them is a reward for all my sufferings.

"I shall not lose any opportunity I may be permitted to enjoy, of encouraging the talents and virtues of my dear daughter, the Princess Charlotte; and I shall impress upon her mind my full sense of the obligation conferred upon me by this spontaneous act of your justice and generosity.

"She will therein clearly perceive the value of that free Constitution, which, in the natural course of events, it will be her high destiny to preside over, and her sacred duty to maintain, which allows no one to sink under oppression; and she will ever be bound to the City of London in ties proportioned to the strength of that filial attachment I have had the happiness uniformly to experience from her.

"Be assured, that the cordial and convincing proof you have thus given of your solicitude for my prosperity and happiness, will be cherished in grateful remembrance by me to the latest moment of my life, and the distinguished proceeding adopted by the first city of this great empire, will be considered by posterity as a proud memorial of my vindicated honour.

"Her Royal Highness read the answer with great propriety, feeling, and dignity; and some particular passages, upon which any comment would be unnecessary, were marked with a peculiar sentiment and emphasis.

"Immediately after the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs had kissed her Royal Highness's hand, and while the Livery were pressing forward to enjoy the same honour, she seemed slightly agitated; but she almost instantaneously recovered herself, and exclaimed, 'I beg, gentlemen, that you may not hurry: you will have plenty of time.' Mr. Alderman Wood remained in conversation a considerable time with Her Royal Highness; noticing to the Princess the most prominent characters as they had the honour of kissing her hand. The apartment in which Her Royal Highness received the deputation of the Livery was so very close to the Gardens, where thousands were assembled, that many persons near the windows could see her Royal Highness's person distinctly.

"After the departure of the Livery, Her Royal Highness condescendingly went to both the doors, accompanied by her attendants, and curtsied to the assembled multitude. Her Royal Highness afterwards presented herself from the balcony on the first floor, where she was also received with great acclamations, and after remaining there a short time, she retired to her private apartments, and had a select party to dine.

"The carriages of the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs were drawn round into the Duke of Kent's yard, where his Lordship and his friends took their seats, and returned to town in the same order they had come.

"Mr. Alderman Wood was, as before, drawn by the populace, and was greeted by the exulting shouts of the spectators, who lined the roads and filled the windows as he passed.

"Upon the arrival of the carriage of the Lord Mayor at Park-lane, he ordered it to turn up, in defiance of the cries '*To Carlton House*,' which burst from all quarters—he was followed by the two Sheriffs; and in his retreat encountered the strongest marks of indignation from the crowd, who groaned, hissed, and pelted his carriage, and that of the Sheriffs, with mud, as long as they were in view.

"The remaining part of the procession, at the head of which was Mr. Alderman Wood's carriage, proceeded down Piccadilly, cheered as they went, and saluted by all who passed, with the most marked respect. The streets were lined with Gentlemen's carriages, from the windows of which the inmates waved their handkerchiefs, and gave other demonstrations of pleasure. As Alderman Wood's carriage passed the house of Sir Francis Burdett, three cheers were given in honour of the worthy Baronet, for the part he had taken in the vindication of Her Royal Highness. The Procession then pursued the line of St. James's-street into Pall Mall, where, on passing *Carlton House*, which they did with unusual speed, some groans and expressions of disapprobation were uttered, but no act of violence or impropriety was committed. It next proceeded to Charing-cross, through the Strand, Fleet-street, Ludgate-

" hll, St. Paul's Church-yard, to Guildhall, where the ceremony concluded, amidst loud and reiterated cheers.

" Upon the whole, considering the multitude assembled, we never witnessed a spectacle conducted with more propriety, attended with less ill consequences, for we did not hear of a single accident or occurrence to lessen the heartfelt pleasure."

Thus, I think, my friend, this matter may be looked upon as settled. The Address of the City of London expressed the full and clear sense of the nation. In the shouts of the people, upon this occasion, the guilty, the base, the cowardly, the unmanly, the detestable *conspirators* might read the sentence which honesty passed upon them. I wonder how the wretches looked at each other, if any two of them happened to be together when they heard those shouts. Their feelings were to be envied by those only, who, for some odious offence, are pelted in the pillory.

The sentiments of the Address and of the answer are worthy of the parties and of the occasion; but, I am particularly pleased with that passage in Her Royal Highness's answer, wherein she so judiciously and so feelingly refers to the support that she has thus received from the people's possessing rights under a *free constitution*. And, as I observed to you in my last letter, her daughter cannot fail here to receive a lesson, that may be most beneficial to herself as well as to the country. Had the people possessed no political rights; had they had no right to assemble and to express their opinions in this public way, the Princess could not have received this mark of their good will, "this proud memorial of her vindicated honour."

Neither will it escape either mother or daughter, that those who have taken the most active part in the defence of the former, are such as are called *Jacobins*. Mr. Wood, by the base hirelings of the press, has long been represented as a Jacobin; as a man who wishes to destroy all government and all law. The Princess Charlotte will not fail to bear in mind, that they were the *friends of freedom and of parliamentary reform*, amongst whom her injured mother found zealous and successful supporters, which all the horde, who live upon corruption, were either leagued against, or were careful to keep aloof.

I remain your faithful friend,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 14th April, 1813.

GENERAL ENCLOSURE BILL.

(*Political Register, July, 1813.*)

DURING the present session of Parliament, a Bill has passed the House of Commons, for an enclosure, upon certain conditions, of *all* the Waste, or Unenclosed, Lands in the kingdom.

As the law stands at present, no enclosure and distribution of Wastes

can take place without an *Act of Parliament*, to obtain which is very expensive.

This expense has been, certainly, a great hinderance to enclosures, where the wastes have belonged to divers parties; and, therefore, the friends to new enclosures have wished for *one general Act*, to enable the parties concerned to enclose and to make distribution of their wastes, by application to the Justices of the Peace in their Quarter Sessions.

A Bill to this effect passed the House of Commons in the early part of the session just now closed; but, this Bill has been put aside by the *Lords*.

The subject is one, in which the public naturally take great interest, and, for that reason, I am about to submit my sentiments upon it; a further inducement to which is a letter, which I have received from a very respectable gentleman, and which, because it expresses the opinions of many persons, and, I believe, of a large majority of the nation, I shall here insert, and then offer my observations to the author of it, and, through him, to the public.

I should further observe, by way of preface, that the Bill, rejected by the *Lords*, provided for the assent of a certain number of the owners of wastes and common fields; that the agreement of this certain number was to be *binding upon the rest*; that it rested with the Justices to appoint Commissioners, and to do all that is now done, in cases of enclosure, by the Legislature.

It is not of the *details* of the Bill, but of its principle as to *effect on agriculture*, that I am about to speak; but, I cannot omit this occasion of expressing my astonishment, that any man, who has any regard for the safety of property, should have thought of throwing so large a portion of the landed property of the kingdom down at the mercy of Justices of the Peace, who, be they ever so upright, must be, as a body, unfit to be intrusted with such enormous powers as this Bill would have given them.

It would be making the Justices of the Peace in each county *legislators* for the county, in a matter of the greatest importance to the principal part of its land-owners. When it is considered, that Justices of the Peace are all appointed at the sole will and pleasure of the Crown; that the people have nothing to do in the selection of them; that no qualification will enable them to act as Justices without an express commission from the Crown; and that, of course, persons not approved of by the advisers of the Crown, are not likely to be made Justices of the Peace: when it is further considered, that the Justices themselves must naturally be owners of wastes in the county as well as other people, and, of course, would frequently have had, if this Bill had passed, to legislate for themselves as well as for their neighbours: when these things are considered, and when we reflect on the caballing and conflict of interests that must inevitably take place in these several provincial legislatures, we ought to think ourselves very lucky in having escaped the establishment of them.

Only consider, for a moment, what a pretty tenure a man would have of his property, when his title would be founded on the orders of Justices, drawn up and recorded by country Attorneys, who, without any disparagement of either their integrity or their qualifications for their profession, must, in general, be wholly unfit for the discharge of functions so important.

On this ground alone, therefore, I rejoice that the Bill has been rejected by the Lords.

But, it is the Principle of the Bill, as affecting the agriculture of the country, that I now propose to discuss, after having inserted the letter of my respectable correspondent, which is as follows :

" Mr. COBBETT,—It is no flattery to say, that so versatile and original is your genius, that as there are few subjects on which you at times have not treated, so there are none on which, by your clear statement and close reasoning, you have not afforded information, and in many have produced conviction. Entertaining this opinion, it is not extraordinary that I should wish to turn your attention to the general Enclosure Act, which was the last session passed by the Commons House of Parliament, but rejected by the Lords. Should you enquire of me what occasioned this rejection, I cannot help stating it as my belief that the principal cause was, the loss certain Clerks and certain Public Officers would have sustained by its enactment, in the cessation of the enormous and unreasonable fees due to them upon the passing of every private Bill. Thus these fees are, in fact, a bar to improvement, and keep up the price of corn, inasmuch as they prevent the ready extension of agriculture. Now, if they *had* their weight in producing the rejection of this Bill, it does strike me to have been most impolitic and most unjust. Impolitic, considering the millions we annually pay to foreign countries for our deficit in the production of corn, proportioned to our consumption ; considering the employment which would, on passing such a Bill, have arisen to multitudes, who, in the manufacturing districts, on every check to trade, are without it ; and considering the demand it would have created for capital, to be engaged in domestic investment. Unjust, inasmuch as it thus places the easy support of multitudes—the ready employment of the industrious—and the home expenditure of millions, in competition with the interest of Clerks in Office and men in place. Though some of the provisions in this proposed Act might, perhaps, with reason, have been objected to by Lords Eldon, Ellenborough, and Redesdale ; yet, surely, their sagacity might have suggested alterations and amendments, rather than ridicule and sweeping opposition, to overturn the whole. I remember, when the West Indian Merchants offered to save our corn by substituting their sugars at the distilleries, all the agriculturists, noble, gentle, and simple, The Duke of Bedford, Lord Somerville, Sir John Sinclair, Mr. Coke, Mr. Curwen, and Mr. Arthur Young, Secretary to the Board, one and all, privately and publicly, by their own exertions, and backed by county meetings, frightened, as it were, in a mass, declared that barley would become a drug ; the course of crops be quite impossible ; and agriculture be ruined. But where are these patriots now ? Has a prospect of plenty, has a fear of glutted markets, panic-struck them ? Are they mute from apprehension ? or why are they for a moment careless of the fate of a Bill, by which that very agriculture, in the pursuit of which they pride themselves so much, would be so greatly and so beneficially extended ?

" Now, Sir, if you can arouse the spirit of justice ; if you can excite the enthusiasm of patriotism ; if you can make the public sensible of their own interest, in preference to the interest of a few ; I exhort you as a Briton ; I call on you as a farmer ; I entreat you as a man, to exert yourself, to be the friend of the hungry poor, in a cause where you will also be the friend of the industrious, and of the enterprising rich.

" With great respect, allow me to subscribe myself,

" RUSTICUS."

This appeal of my correspondent I am perfectly ready to answer, under one or all of the appellations which he is pleased to bestow on me. I am, at all times, ready to take the side of the public interest, when opposed to the interests of a few individuals in office ; but, whether I view this matter as a Briton, as a farmer, as a man, as a friend of the hungry poor, or of the industrious, and of the enterprising rich ; in whichever of these capacities I view this matter, I cannot bring myself to believe,

that any act of parliament, or any other measure, tending to produce a general enclosure of the waste lands, would be a benefit to the country.

I do not say that the expenses in passing particular Enclosure Bills might not be with justice reduced; and I think that fees on the passing of bills is not the proper way of paying the officers belonging to the Houses of Parliament. It is certain, that those officers ought to be very highly paid, seeing that the business which they have to transact is of such very great importance; but I would wish to see them relieved from all anxiety about the amount of their incomes, and, at any rate, would not suffer to exist amongst them anything like a scramble for fees.

But this has nothing to do with the utility of enclosures. My correspondent, *Rusticus*, like all those who have written on the same side of the subject, is of opinion, that the more new enclosures take place, the greater will be the quantity of corn produced in the country, and that that quantity, too, will be greater than it is now in proportion to the number of the people.

Here are two propositions, the one relating to the *positive* quantity of corn, and the other, to the *relative* quantity of corn.

Let us dismiss the latter first, because the former is that which is most generally believed to be true.

It is a principle in nature, and will admit of no more doubt than will the fact of the sun's giving light, that the number of mouths, in any country, which has for ages been inhabited, will always bear an exact proportion to the quantity of food to be got at in that country. If England were to produce ten times as much food as it now produces, the consequence would be, that there would be ten times as many mouths as there are now, to consume it.

Do we not constantly see, that upon every farm all the cattle food is annually consumed? Do we not see that every farmer proportions the number of his stock to the quantity of his food? Do we not see, that in years when cattle food is abundant, there is more of preservation of stock and less of slaughter.

In this case, indeed, causes and effects are more immediately within the power of man, and are of shorter duration; but in the cases of nations, do we not see, that in China, Japan, and several other countries, where the whole earth groans under its produce of two or three crops in a year, that, so far from there being a superabundance of food, the inhabitants have much less to eat than in any of the countries of Europe.

Populousness follows close upon the heels of the production of food; all is eaten; nothing is left, though not a single inch of the ground be suffered to remain unproductive.

It, therefore, appears very clear to me, that an increase of the positive quantity of food raised in England would not have a tendency to augment the quantity which would fall to the lot of each individual poor person; that it would not tend at all to lessen the sufferings of the poor, whose increasing miseries are, in my opinion, to be ascribed to causes wholly different from that of a want of sufficient produce in the country.

To illustrate this, what need we more than the fact, that the poor man has just as much food when corn is dear as when it is cheap, his wages, or his additional parish allowance, being proportioned to the price of the loaf? When first I came to Botley, the common wages of a day-labourer was twelve shillings a week; it is now fifteen shillings a week; and thus his wages must go on augmenting with the price of the loaf.

Thus, I think, it appears pretty clear, that if enclosures of wastes were to add to the positive quantity of food raised in England, they could not add to its quantity, relatively considered with the number of mouths ; and that, of course, they could have no tendency to better the lot of the poor.

Now, then, in returning to the first proposition, namely, that a general enclosure of the waste lands, that is to say, all lands not now in cultivation, would add to the positive quantity of food in England, this is a proposition, from which I wholly dissent.

Rusticus will please to observe, that I do not mean to deny, that there are particular spots, so situated with regard to surrounding circumstances, and also with regard to the nature of the soil itself, that the enclosure of them may be very beneficial, not only to the owners themselves, but to the public also. Hounslow-heath, for instance, and other spots in the neighbourhood of great towns, and of an increasing population. But these are trifling exceptions. What I mean to contend is this ; that, *in general*, new enclosures could not possibly add to the positive quantity of food raised in the country.

There seems to be an opinion prevailing among some persons, that the quantity of corn, for we will now speak of corn only, must ever be in proportion to the quantity of land in cultivation.

How any one can seriously entertain such an opinion is very surprising, seeing that it is so notorious, that one acre of land, well cultivated, will produce an infinitely larger crop than an acre of land badly cultivated, though both of them be in the very same field and of precisely the same natural quality.

This notion, therefore, is erroneous. It is a fact, not to be doubted, that produce will be proportioned to the sort of cultivation as well as to the quantity of the land.

It is also a fact very notorious, that the waste lands in general are the worst lands in the country.

Those who think, that an augmentation of the quantity of corn is a *necessary* consequence of new enclosures, seem never to have reflected, that new enclosures will not, any more than the old enclosures, produce corn *without cultivation*, that is to say, *without labour being bestowed upon them*.

They seem to think, that these new enclosures would cultivate themselves, and that manure would drop down upon them from the clouds. Those who have had experience of them, know, I believe, to their cost, that waste lands are not thus distinguished from other lands ; and that they require pretty nearly the current price of the old lands to be laid out upon them, acre for acre, before they will produce any thing at all.

WHENCE, then, let me ask *Rusticus*, are the labour and manure to come to put these waste lands into a productive state ?

WHENCE ; from what part of this kingdom are this labour and this manure to come ? I beg *Rusticus* to attend to this question. I wish to know from him, what is the source from which he would draw the labour and the manure necessary to bring these new lands into a productive state.

It is very easy, in riding across commons, and forests, and downs, to exclaim : " What a pity that all this land should lie uncultivated, while so many poor creatures are in want of bread ! " This is very easy, requiring nothing more than a slight exertion of the lungs, unloaded with any particle of thought. But to show how the cultivation of these lands

would add to the quantity of bread, demands much greater powers of argument than I have ever met with in any person who took that side of the subject.

Rusticus will observe, that I am always speaking of wastes *in general*, and not of wastes, in the neighbourhood of which, local circumstances present artificial aid. These particular and partial instances, have nothing to do with the general question.

I return, therefore, to the charge, and again ask him, from *what source* he would draw the means of putting the wastes of the kingdom into a state to make them produce corn? These means consist of *labour and manure*, or rather, they consist simply of labour, for every one must perceive, that manure itself is the consequence of labour.

Whence, then, is the labour to come to dig ditches, to make banks and fences round waste lands, to make roads through them, to pare and burn, and plough, and drag, and harrow, and cart chalk, and lime, and marl, and clay, and dung, and, at last, to sow these waste lands? WHENCE, I, once more, ask, is this labour to come?

He will allow, I suppose, that the labourers in England are all employed now. He must allow this, or else he will have to find out a reason why the lands already enclosed are not better cultivated than they are. Let him travel through the country, and he will see the fields smoking from the fire of *couch grass*. Out of ten fields he will not see above two that are sown with wheat, that most valuable of all corn crops. Let him look closely at the land where even that wheat is, and he will see that the weeds and the couch grass are, in general, enjoying, at least, one-half of the benefit of the last year's dung and tillage.

There are some few exceptions to this, but this is the general state of the lands in England.

Let Rusticus ask the farmer why he suffers his land to get into such a foul state, and why he has not five fields of wheat in place of two. The farmer will tell him, that all his capital, all his labour, and all his manure, are employed upon his farm, and that he gets as much out of it as he is able, and keeps it as clean as he is able.

Would it not be a pretty proposition to make to such a man, to enclose an additional piece of ground, and add it to this farm? It is very likely, that greediness might make him grasp at the proposition, nothing appearing to be more natural to the taste of man than the love of extent of landed possessions. But, does Rusticus really believe, that by adding a piece of waste land to this man's farm (worse of course in its nature than that which he has already enclosed); does Rusticus really believe, that such an addition to the extent of the farm, would make an augmentation in this man's crops?

To enclose the piece of waste, even before he begin his process of cultivation, this farmer must take from his present farm a considerable portion of the labour which he now there employs; and, before he can make the piece of waste produce him anything at all, he must take from his present farm a great deal more of the labour that he now employs upon it. If he does this, his present fields must have less labour than they now have; must be still fuller of weeds and couch grass than they now are; must be still poorer; and, of course, must produce less than they now produce, and that, too, observe, in a proportion exceeding the produce of the new enclosure, because on the new enclosed land there are fencing and other labours to be performed, which are not necessary upon

the land already enclosed, to say nothing about the nature of the soil being worse in the new enclosure than in the old, which, however, in general must necessarily be the case.

Thus, then, we see, that this augmentation of extent of culture, could not produce an augmentation of corn, in this instance.

Perhaps Rusticus will say, that this farmer might get more labourers, more horses, more implements than he now has, and might thus avoid robbing his old farm to bring into tillage the new enclosure. But WHERE, my good friend is he to find them? Are not all the labourers, all the horses, all the wheel-wrights, all the blacksmiths, and all the collar-makers employed now? And if they are not all employed now, why, I ask again, are not the present enclosed lands better cultivated than they are? But, it is a monstrous proposition, to assert that they are not all employed. This being the case, then, WHERE is this farmer (supposing him to have more capital than he employs) to find these additional labourers, horses, and implements? It is obvious, that he can find them nowhere but upon other people's farms, and if he draws them thence, he must, of course, cause a diminution of the crops upon those farms; and then how is the general quantity of corn to be augmented by this new enclosure?

Besides, we are talking of a general enclosure, and then we are to suppose, of course, that all the other farmers are enclosing as well as this one; so that the labourers, the horses, and the implements, to bring these new enclosures into a bearing state, must come from abroad, or from the clouds, or it is impossible that new enclosures can make any addition to the positive quantity of corn grown in the country.

If, indeed, the enclosed lands were now cultivated in the best possible manner; that is to say, if they were now made to produce as much food as it is possible to make them produce, then there might be some reason in supposing, that there was in the country labour to spare for the cultivation of new lands; but while we see, all over the country, the contrary of this; while we see nearly one-half of the land which is already enclosed, lying in an unproductive state, or producing corn but once in two or three years, and then in very scanty quantity; while we see these enclosed lands in general overrun with weeds and couch grass, and stifled with hedge-rows, many of which are a pole or two in breadth, and which in general serve no useful purpose, while they are a harbour for mice, moles, rabbits, and destructive birds; while we have this spectacle before our eyes over the far greater part of the kingdom, can any man in his senses believe that there are labourers, horses, and implements to spare for the enclosure and cultivation of *worse* lands than those which are already enclosed?

Let me not be told, that these hedge-rows, weeds, couch grass, and scanty crops, arise out of the slovenliness and obstinacy of the farmers: for though they may be, in general, slovenly and obstinate, they take pretty good care to have their pennyworth for their penny. Few of them let either men or horses eat at their expense without working for it. In short, all the labour that there is in the kingdom is employed upon the lands already enclosed, and it necessarily follows, that, as those lands are not made to produce so much as they might be made to produce, there is not, as yet, any labour to spare for the cultivation of *worse* lands, and for making a fence round them into the bargain.

Perhaps I shall be told that by an improvement in the mode of culti-

vating the lands, more produce might be raised from the same quantity of labour that is now employed. I accede to this proposition. I believe that even with the present quantity of labour, distributed judiciously, and applied industriously, with great care and skill, upon true principles, all the enclosed lands in England might be made like a garden; that the weeds and the couch (or FIORIN) grass might be nearly extirpated; and that the crops might be trebled. But we are talking of enclosures in the present state of agriculture; we are not talking of enclosures under a state of agriculture like that of China; a specimen of which may be seen at this moment on a piece of ground, which was recently *waste*, on the side of the turnpike-road, between Esher and Kingston in Surrey, where, on a bed of as sour a clay as I ever saw, Mr. BRADDICK will, in my opinion, have, at least, forty bushels of wheat upon three-quarters of an acre of ground, the *seed* being somewhat less than *two quarts*, or, half a Winchester gallon; we are not talking of new enclosures under a state of agriculture like this, the effect of an ingenious mind attentively applied to the object; I am not talking of new enclosures under a state of agriculture like this, but under a state of agriculture such as that now existing in England, and this is the way, of course, in which we must talk upon the subject.

Those who are so eager for new enclosures always seem to argue as if the *waste land*, in its present state, *produced nothing at all*. But is this the fact? Can any one point me out a single inch of it which does not produce something, and the produce of which is not made use of? It goes to the feeding of sheep, of cows, of cattle of all descriptions; and what is of great consequence in my view of the matter, it helps to rear, in health and vigour, numerous families of the children of labourers, which children, were it not for these wastes, must be crammed into the stinking suburbs of towns, amidst filth of all sorts, and congregating together in the practice of every species of idleness and vice. A family reared by the side of a common or a forest is as clearly distinguishable from a family bred in the pestiferous stench of the dark alleys of a town, as one of the plants of Mr. Braddick's wheat is distinguishable from the feeble-stemmed, single-eared, stunted stuff that makes shift to rear its head above the cockle, and poppies and couch grass, in nine-tenths of the broad-cast fields in the kingdom.

This is with me a consideration of great importance. In the beggarly stinking houses of towns, the labourers' children cannot have health. If they have not health, the greatest of all blessings, they must be miserable in themselves and a burden to the parish. It has been observed, that when bred on the side of commons and forests, they are more saucy and more daring. There may be some inconvenience in this perhaps: but, for my part, give me the saucy daring fellow in preference to the poor, crawling, feeble wretch, who is not saucy, only, perhaps, because he feels that he has not the power to maintain himself. I am not in love with saucy servants any more than other people. But I know how to tackle them. A poor, feeble, heartless, humble, crawling, creature I can do nothing with; and of this description I have observed are almost all those who are bred up, under a gossiping mother, in the stinking holes, called houses, in country-towns, or large villages.

If this scheme of a general enclosure were to take place (the scheme is a mad one, and physically impracticable), the whole race of those whom we in Hampshire call foresters, would be extirpated in a few years;

and my sons, I dare say, would live to see the day when there would be scarcely a man to be found capable of wielding a felling axe. Rusticus appeals to me, as a farmer. If he had known all, he might have appealed to me in a character still more closely connected with the subject; that is to say, as a person entitled, in case of a general enclosure, to, perhaps, fifty, sixty, or a hundred acres of waste land, and that, as it happens, very good land too. But, though I make no use of this waste, and it is very likely that I never shall, I will never give my consent to the enclosure of it, or any part of it, except for the purposes of the labourers. All around this great tract of land, which is called waste, the borders are studded with cottages of various dimensions and forms, but the more beautiful for this diversity. The greater part of these are encroachments, as they are called; but the Bishop of Winchester, who is the Lord of the Manors, has never had a very harsh Steward, and the tenants have had too much compassion to attempt to pull down and lay open any of these numerous dwellings. For my part, rather than see them destroyed and their inhabitants driven into towns, I would freely resign all the claim that I have either to the land or to the herbage. These wastes, as they are called, are the blessing and the ornament of this part of the kingdom; and, I dare say, that they are the same in every other part of the kingdom where they are to be found.

These are my reasons for being glad that the general Enclosure Bill has failed; and, until I see them satisfactorily confuted, I shall, of course, retain my present opinion upon the subject.

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 28th July, 1813.

PRICE OF BREAD.

(Political Register, Oct. 1813.)

IN spite of all our boasting of being in an *enlightened state*, my opinion is, that, in few countries does ignorance, profound ignorance, as to all matters, only a little complicated, prevail so completely as in this.

Who could imagine, that, at this day, an opinion should prevail, that laws, that *compulsion* is necessary to *cause bread to be sold at the proper price*? Yet, this opinion does prevail, and such laws are in existence and acted upon too. Nay, some people go further in their notions in this direction; and seem to wish for new and more rigorous laws upon the subject.

An article, in the Courier of the 23rd of September, would almost make one believe, that there was not a grain of mere common sense left in the nation.

I will insert it, and then make a few remarks upon it.

“PRICE OF BREAD.—According to the statement of the Lord Mayor on Wednesday last to the Bakers and Dealers who then assembled at the Mansion-House, the public might reasonably have expected a further fall in the *assize* of Bread this week. The average price of wheat was then (last week) stated

"to be 89s. 7½d., and the average price of flour 89s. 1d.; so that in justice to the public, the average price of flour ought not to have exceeded 74s. per sack this week, nor even so high as 74s., there having been a further decline of 2s. 9d. in the price of wheat at Mark-lane. Surely the Bakers cannot be *so lost to their own interest*, or to what is *due in strict justice from them to all ranks of society*, as to stop at home, and by that means expose themselves to the mercy of such *avaricious machinations*.—Bread, if assized from flour at 74s., would be 1s. 1½d. per quartern loaf; and although the returns to the Mansion-House this week are made to average at 89s. 0½d., they, under all circumstances, ought not to have averaged at more than 74s. His Lordship has, therefore, given notice to the Bakers Company of his intention to fix the price of Bread next week from the average of wheat, unless prevented by a fall in the price of flour."

It is very hard to say what this wisecrack would drive at! He talks of "*avaricious machinations*;" but, on the part of *whom*? The *flour-dealers*, it would seem. The *millers*, I suppose, and those who sell their flour for them.

What a brutish nation! To suppose it possible, that so many hundreds, so many thousands of persons, who, from the very nature of the case, *must be rivals in trade*, should agree together, should plot and contrive, should combine and co-operate, to raise, or keep up, the price of the article, in which they deal; and, that they should do this, too, without a *possibility* of gaining, in the end, any thing by such combination!

It requires only common sense, and a very moderate portion of it, to see, that such a combination is out of nature; that it is, in short, *impossible*; and, that no better reason can be given for a combination amongst millers than for a combination amongst mercers or drapers. Every miller, or seller of flour, is desirous to *sell*; it is his object to turn his flour into money; as much money as he can get, to be sure; but, he must sell, and, if he will not sell at the price which the price of wheat warrants, his neighbour will, and the former must then come down to his neighbour's price.

How many instances do we see of this daily? Who can doubt, who has either eyes or ears, that every thing of this sort will regulate itself to a hair?

Well, but let us, for sake of argument, allow *the possibility* of a combination of all the flour-sellers in this island: and, then, let me ask, what they could possibly *gain* by their combination? More money for their flour, do you imagine? That must be their object, of course; but, that object they could not possibly secure by their combination; unless in a case, where the flour, at a period subsequent to the combination, should be *sent out of the country*, and to some *market wholly new*.

Let us suppose, that there are only ten millers in a country, and that, by a combination, they raise the price of flour 10s. a sack, on the first of October. What would be the consequence of that? Why, that less of their flour would be sold, than would be sold, if it were not so dear by 10s. a sack. Supposing it to be 70s. a sack, they would only sell six sacks, where they would have sold seven sacks, if the price had been 60s. a sack; for, their rising their price would not add to the means of purchasing their commodity.

The effect of this would be an accumulation of flour upon hand; and, in the end, they would have in their store-houses more flour than the whole of their capital would answer, flour being made out of an article, which always was, and always must be, a *ready-money* article.

Where are the millers to find money to keep up such a combination as this? Was there ever a notion more perfectly barbarous?

Well, but, at *last*, they must sell. They cannot keep by them this amazing accumulation of flour for ever. They may keep it till they lose the value of it in interest of their money; but, they must sell at *last*; and, whenever they do sell, they must, by their own act, so lower the price, as to make the diminution of price then equal to the enhancement caused by their combination before.

But, supposing all this reasoning to be erroneous. Supposing it possible and easily practicable for all the millers and owners of flour to combine; supposing people to have the means of purchasing as much dear flour as cheap flour; supposing the consumption not to be at all dependent upon the price; and supposing, that, in the end, the millers gain greatly by combining together to keep up the price of flour. Supposing all this, we must not stop here, but must go on to suppose them able to raise flour to *ANY price that they please*. If the millers (suppose there to be only ten in the kingdom) are able, by the means of combination, to raise, or keep up, flour 10s. a sack, why should they *stop there*? Is that the length of tether which is allowed to a miller's conscience? It is, I imagine, avarice that this combination is ascribed to; and, does avarice content itself with a seventh, when it might, at pleasure, take a second, or more? What, let me ask, is it, then, which thus checks the *conscience* of these *unconscionable* men? Why, do they not demand 50 pounds or 100 pounds for a sack of flour, seeing that by their *machinations* they are able to get 70s. instead of 60s.

I wish the wiseacre, who has written in the *Courier*, would answer these questions.

The truth is, that, if the millers, by combination, or by any other means, could gain as much as they pleased, or, even an immense profit by their trade, we should soon see many *new millers*. There would soon be two millers where there is now only one. Every hill and every rivulet would have its mill.

This is so clear, that one is almost ashamed to state it in a serious tone; but, really the ignorance which we witness upon these matters, justifies observations which men usually address to nothing but mere children.

The *Assize of Bread* in London is a relic of the barbarous ages. Men believed that the blood of a duck, which knavish priests exhibited to them in a phial, was part of the blood that issued from the hands and feet of Christ; they believed this, at the time when the assize of bread in London was established by law; and the former really appears to me to have been as good a proof of their wisdom as the latter.

Why not an assize of *meat* as well as of *bread*? Why not an assize of every thing that we eat, drink, or wear? I should be glad to know what reason any one can offer for this singular exception to the general rules of bargain and sale. In all other cases, those who have goods to sell put their own price upon them; and why they should not in this case also, remains to be shown.

The proof that the law is, in this respect, useless, is, that, *in the country*, there is no assize of bread. The country bakers sell their bread for what they please; or, rather, as butchers do meat, *for as much as they can get*. Now, if the assize of bread be of any use in London, why is not the country to have the benefit of it? If it be to protect the people against avaricious combinations in London, why are the people in the country left unprotected? That the bakers in the country do not avail themselves of this inconsistency in the law is very evident to me, seeing

that the quartern loaf at Botley is generally a halfpenny, and sometimes a penny, cheaper than it is in London.

The assize is a relic of barbarism, and the whole set of notions of which it fosters the existence, are of the same cast.

In America there is no assize, either as to *price* or *weight*. Every one sells his bread as men sell other things; and the people purchase where they are best served in proportion to the price. If they find that one baker supplies them better than another, they deal with him, in exactly the same way that they give a preference to one shoemaker before another.

An attempt was made to establish an assize of bread at New York; but the bakers having found it necessary to add to the profits on their bread, as as a compensation for the additional trouble which the assize occasioned, the assize was prudently abandoned, upon the principle that short follies were best.

The present complaint against the millers and flour-dealers seems to have arisen out of the disappointment of the public, who expected, from the statements relative to the harvest, that bread would be sold for 8d. or 10d. the quartern loaf. But, if the public have been disappointed, who have they to blame but the newspapers, who, upon this, as upon all other occasions, have filled them with false hopes?

It is very true, that the crop has been very great indeed, as far, at least, as my observation has reached; and the harvest, from beginning to end, has been such as not to suffer any waste, even in the hands of the most careless sloven in the kingdom. But, what man in his senses can expect to see wheat nominally cheap, while every thing else is nominally dear? To expect to see wheat return to its former nominal price, while the wages of the ploughman is doubled, is, one would think, something too foolish even for such a person as the editor of the *Courier*.

This is a year of astonishing abundance. We have had a summer of sun-shine, of dews, and of showers, almost worthy of the meridian of France, where the vine and the maize grow side by side; but, even after such a crop as this, we shall not see wheat much lower than 5l. 10s. a quarter; and it is impossible that it should, while every thing employed in the producing of it is so high in price.

In short, things are not *dear*, but money, or that which we call money, is cheap. The grower of corn experiences no advantage in the high nominal price. He gets 12s. a bushel for his wheat, and he pays 12s. an acre for reaping it. Seventy years ago, he got 5s. a bushel for his wheat, and he paid 5s. an acre for reaping it. All his other expenses are in the same proportion. What, then, does he gain by what is called *the high price of corn*? He gains upon his *landlord*, indeed if he have a long lease; because his rent, which remains nominally the same, is really diminished, in a certain degree, every year.

But, even here his gain is not much, in general, for, in most cases, his own mistaken notions of profit, induces him to farm so badly for the last five or six years of his lease, that he loses, through niggardliness and slovenliness and malice, a great part of what he has before gained.

To return to the *Bakers*, I perceive, that some of this unhappy trade have been recently prosecuted and fined in London for what is called *adulterating* their bread.

" ADULTERATED BREAD AND SHORT WEIGHT.

" UNION HALL.—A Baker was summoned before Mr. Evance, charged with

"exposing to sale bread short of weight: he pleaded guilty, and was fined 7*l.* 5*s.* and costs, being at the rate of 2*s.* 6*d.* per ounce.

"Another information was then preferred against him by Wortley and Lockie, charging him with adulterating his bread, and using *potatoes* and alum. It appeared, that in consequence of information which they had received, the officers went to the defendant's house, and proceeded to search the premises, and in the bakehouse they found a quantity of alum; they also found the customary apparatus, the *iron pot* and *tin cullender*, to the latter of which a *quantity* of *potatoes* and some alum were still adhering. Wortley's curiosity induced him to look into the oven, he there discovered another iron kettle close covered, the iron being hot; he inquired what it contained, and was told a stew: this, however, not satisfying him, he drew it out, and on examining its contents, found them to be potatoes. These, in their boiling state, together with the light bread and alum, they conveyed to the office.

"The defendant pleaded ignorance that he was doing any thing illegal, though he confessed having heard that other bakers had been fined for similar practices: he used the alum and potatoes because he considered they improved the flavour of the bread.

"The Magistrate reprobated his conduct in *strong terms*, observing, that had he known what was to follow, he would most certainly have imposed the full penalty of 5*s.* per ounce for the short weight. In the present, which he considered an aggravated case, he should for the adulteration impose a fine of 20*l.* and costs."

So, then, it appears, that it is a crime for a man to use potatoes in the making of bread, and that the iron pot, and the cullender, were looked upon in somewhat the same sort of light as a pick-lock or a bloody knife.

Now, what crime could this baker intend to commit in using the potatoes and the iron pot and the cullender? A *fraud*, I suppose, upon his customers, just as if the poor creatures had no *taste* of their own: no *palate*: no discriminating faculty either in their jaws or in their bowels: and being of this extraordinary description, a description which never before suited either man or beast, the law, with paternal tenderness, comes in to their aid, and protects them against the man who was selling them bad bread for good! Astonishing law! Where it was first invented, I know not; but I am very sure that there never was such a law ever heard of before in this world; and, if the people of England are remarkable for their thinking faculties, this law affords a very strong presumption that their bellies are the most stupid of those of any part of the creation.

What, then, the poor devils in the Borough of Southwark, did not know that they were eating potatoes in the place of flour! Really, if they liked the stuff as well, I should have been very much disposed to let them go on feeding upon it; for, there can be no doubt that their so doing would have left more flour for other people, and, according to the vulgar notion, this baker's proceedings would have tended to lower the price of bread.

But, what is the real state of the case? What is this fraud which this baker has been committing upon his customers?

A short statement of undeniable facts will prove, that, if the man really did make use of potatoes in aid of flour, in whatever degree he so employed them, he committed a fraud upon himself.

It takes ten pounds weight of potatoes, to make one pound of bread. Before they can be mixed with flour (and they can be mixed only with the water) they must be boiled down; they must be worked through a cullender; and, then, ten pounds in weight of them, in their original state, are required to make an addition of one pound to the flour.

Now, the average price of potatoes in London, purchased by the ton, is, at least, one penny a pound, delivered in ; and, of course, ten pounds weight of potatoes, costs the baker ten pence. Flour, at ninety shillings a sack, is a little more than $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ per pound. Consequently, the baker loses $6\frac{1}{2}d.$ by every ten pound of potatoes, which he employs as a substitute for flour.

What an ass, there no, not ass, for we know there was once an ass, which spoke, and spoke very sensibly too ; but what a senseless two-legged brute must this baker have been to commit the fraud imputed to him !

The truth is, that the potatoe is employed, not in aid of the flour, but in aid of the *yeast*. The fermenting quality of the former, joined to that of the latter, become wonderfully efficacious in producing light bread ; and, as the potatoe has nothing very noxious in its nature, it is used for this purpose by private families as well as by those whose trade it is to make and sell bread.

It seems very wonderful to me that the customers of this man should not have discovered the fraud. And, then, the remedy was in their own hands, for they could have gone to another baker.

If he managed the thing so well, if he cheated himself so neatly, that those who ate his bread were unable to discover the fraud, I think, that according to the vulgar notion of SUBSTITUTES, with the sound of which the nation was dinned into absolute stupidity ; I think, that according to this vulgar notion, the man ought to have had a premium for his discovery.

He had, it seems, found out a way of making potatoes into bread with so much art, that it was impossible to perceive, from the taste of his bread, that it was not wholly composed of wheat-flour ; and that it was necessary to hunt after the unfortunate pot and cullender to come at the evidence of his guilt.

It is true, indeed, that the graving-tools of a forger of bank-notes are looked upon as proofs of guilt ; but, then, this gentleman's wares go forth to the manifest detriment of those who take them ; the unfortunate holder of one of his notes but too sensibly feels what he suffers from the fraud ; whereas the eaters of the potatoe-bread stood in need of the ferretting-out of the pot and cullender to give them the first intimation of their having being imposed upon.

This case of the baker appears to me to be a very hard one indeed ; but, it leads one to an observation or two upon the growth of this delicious root the potatoe, which I have before said was one of the greatest evils that England ever knew. This root was, I believe, first imported from America, as was, it is also said, that most loathsome disease, which I will not name ; but, which, from the bottom of my soul, I believe, to have been a much smaller curse to Europe, than this root, which has, of late years, been a subject of so much praise.

It has been so often asserted, that, at last, men appear to take it for granted, that the cultivation of potatoes has greatly added to the quantity of food raised in England. If by *quantity*, people mean *bulk*, they are right ; for, to be sure, it is a monstrous heap of stuff that comes off an acre of potatoes. But, if they mean sustenance, what they say is false.

Ten pounds of potatoes produce no more sustenance than one pound of flour.

Five quarters of wheat to an acre are frequently produced. The

weight of that weight, at 60lbs. a bushel, is upwards of one ton. And it is a very large crop of potatoes, which will amount to ten tons.

Let it be observed, too, that the potatoes being calculated for nothing but the improvident brute creation, leave no straw behind them; no means of restoring to the earth any part of what they have so abundantly drawn from it.—But, this root is become a favourite because it is the suitable companion of misery and filth. It can be seized hold of before it be half ripe, it can be raked out of the ground with the paws, and without the help of any utensils, except, perhaps a stick to rake it from the fire, can be conveyed into the stomach in the space of an hour. We have but one step further to go, and that is, to eat it raw, side by side with our bristly fellow-creatures, who, by the bye, reject it as long as they can get at any species of grain or at any other vegetable.—I can remember when the first acre of potatoes was planted in a field, in the neighbourhood of the place where I was born; and I very well remember, that even the poorest of the people would not eat them. They called them *hog-potatoes*; but now, they are become a considerable portion of the diet, of those who raise the bread for others to eat.

It is not many years ago that a bill was brought into Parliament for the giving of premiums for the cultivation of this ruinous root. It was thrown out, to be sure; but the bare fact of its having been brought in, was a disgrace to the country. Wonderful, however, as it was, to see it proclaimed through the country, that the ministers of state at their grand dinners, had used fried potatoe-cakes, as a substitute for bread, in order to alleviate the then prevailing scarcity of flour, is it not still more wonderful to see a man punished as a criminal for having discovered the means of converting potatoes into bread in so complete a manner, that those who eat of that bread were unable to perceive that it was not wholly composed of flour?

WM. COBBETT.

PRICE OF BREAD.—*Continued.*

(*Political Register, October, 1813.*)

I am glad to see, that a more rational way of thinking is taking place upon this subject. A correspondent wonders how I came at the knowledge of the use which bakers make of *potatoes*. If I am right, what matters it how I came by the means of making me so: if I am wrong, let my error be exposed.

I insert, at the end of this article, a letter from Mr. HECROT CAMPBELL, who, with great ingenuity, maintains the propriety of an *assize of bread*. I confess, that his arguments fail of producing conviction with me; and, I can hardly think, that they have satisfied his own mind. He is driven to say, that he would prefer an *assize on all sorts of saleable commodities* to an abolition of the assize of bread.

This, I think, shows his sense of the desperateness of his case.

But, what am I to think of the following argument of *analogy*?

I had observed, that, if left to itself, the trade of a baker would regulate itself fairly; because the man who sold light or bad bread would *lose his custom*; and, that, admonished by this just and wholesome punishment, other bakers would avoid the example.

To combat this, he asks, whether the same argument of re-action might not be urged in defence of permitting men with legal impunity to *knock each other down*, seeing, that, in the long run, their violence would do them injury?

Now, what *analogy* is there in the two cases? The man who sells me a light loaf or a bad loaf, does not *compel* me to buy it; the man who knocks me down *compels* me to receive his blow.

This is enough to show, that Mr. Campbell was conscious of the weakness of his cause; for, whenever men of ability have recourse to sophistry, it is only because there are no sound arguments to be mustered up.

To the same source I trace Mr. Campbell's remarks upon the pernicious effects of *freedom of trade in general*, which has, as far as I can discover, nothing at all to do with the matter, any more than have his remarks relative to the effects of the depreciation of money.

What can these matters have to do with the assize of bread? Indeed they have nothing at all to do with it; and, when he was stating the fearful increase of *pauperism* in the kingdom, he should not have forgotten, that the assize of bread had been co-existent with that increase.

The TABLE which he has inserted is *curious*; more so, I believe, than correct.

A wide *difference* is made by taking the highest prices on the one side and the lowest prices on the other.

And, though I know that the paupers have increased in a most horrible degree, it is not altogether owing to the wages of labour not having kept pace with the price of bread.

About seventy years ago, when Mr. TULL published his book on Husbandry, he, in a comparative estimate, which he makes of the expenses of two modes of culture, observes, that the average price of *reaping an acre of wheat* is FIVE SHILLINGS; and, in another part of his work, when stating the amount of the crop, he observes, that the average price of wheat is FIVE SHILLINGS THE BUSHEL.

I cannot doubt of the correctness of this; because Mr. TULL was not writing upon the subject of *prices* and *wages*, but upon that of *cultivation*, and was, therefore, under no temptation to strain a point either way.

We find, then, that in the time of this gentleman, the labourer received the price of a *bushel* of wheat for reaping an *acre* of wheat.

And, what is the relative proportion *now*?

I can speak for my own neighbourhood. We have given, some 11s., some 12s., some 12s. 6d., and some 13s. an acre for reaping wheat; and, I dare say, that this is about the average of the kingdom. We have given, then, upon an average, 12s. 1½d. an acre; and the price of wheat at 5l. a quarter, is 12s. 6d. a bushel.

Now, these are facts, which, I imagine, will show Mr. Campbell, that prices are pretty true in regulating themselves, and, that the increased pauperism of the country must be ascribed to other causes than a want of a due proportion between the price of labour and the price of bread.

Depreciation of money has, and can have, no effect upon the man who lives by his labour. That labour will always sell for its proper price; that price will settle itself so truly, that no human wit can lend it any aid; and so would the price of bread, if left wholly to itself.

What, then, can be more unwise than to continue this assize? It must

add to the cost of the article ; because it makes the trade of a Baker more troublesome than it otherwise would be. It tends also to make it, in some degree, *odious*, and it very often leads to some degree of risk.

An argument has been made use of, drawn from the regulations with regard to *gold* and *silver*. But, what analogy is there here ? If I buy a piece of metal for gold, and it be, in fact, some base metal, I am *unable*, perhaps, to discover the difference. It is, indeed, a *fraud* practised upon me. It is a *counterfeit* that I receive ; and it is as necessary to protect me against such a fraud as against the tricks of the makers of base money.

But, can I be ignorant of the weight or quality of a *loaf of bread* ? Are there no scales, or have I no palate ? Or, do I keep the loaf any length of time before I find out the bad quality of it ?

In the case of *hops*, the law requires the planter's name and place of abode to be put upon each package, with a view, I suppose, of preventing the ignorant buyer from being cheated by a seller, who might assert that the package came out of Surrey instead of out of Worcestershire, the former being said to be the best.

I do not see the use of this ; because, it would be very easy for a roguish hop-dealer, to put a Surrey mark and name upon Worcestershire hops ; and, if the buyer does not understand what he buys himself, he ought to employ some one who does.

But, there is more sense in this regulation than in that about bread ; because a man may have his hops in the house for months before he ascertains the quality of them ; whereas, in the case of bread, he ascertains the true state of the matter on the very day that he makes the purchase ; and, in nine instances out of ten, *before he pays* for the commodity.

For the credit of the day, in which we live, therefore, let us hope, that this ridiculous regulation relative to the price of bread will be wholly done away ; and that we shall hear no more about the "*great Iron Pot* and the *Cullender* ;" those implements now become so famous in our criminal processes, as amongst the means of making *counterfeit victuals* !

What will people say, in a few years hence, of a law to punish a man for *converting potatoes into bread* ? For making his bread of *two* sorts of vegetables instead of *one* ; and, for stigmatizing him as a *fraudulent* person, because he has brought to perfection that which, a few years before, a premium was, by the Parliament, about to be offered for bringing as near to perfection as possible.

I re-assert, that no Baker, who understands his *own interest* ; who knows anything of the nature of the materials he uses, will ever make use of potatoes in the making of bread, any farther than is necessary for the purpose of aiding the yeast in the work of fermentation. The potatoe is *dearer* than flour. It requires more labour ; more of the productive quality of land ; it costs more to raise sustenance for a man in potatoes than in flour. And yet, it is only a few years ago since a Bill was actually brought into Parliament (by Mr. Wilberforce, I believe), to grant a *premium for the growth of potatoes* ! Mr. HORNE TOOKER's speeches upon this Bill were excellent. He seemed to be the only man in the House who had any powers of reflection.

Just as if potatoes would not be grown, if people found it to their *advantage* to grow them.

The notions concerning this root are as shallow and vulgar as those

which prevail about the prices of bread and about the monopolies of meal-men. It is a great *bulk*; a monstrous *heap*, that an acre produces; but, as I have before shown, not so much *food* as is contained in the wheat, which would have grown on the same land.

If this root had a tendency to produce prosperity in the country where it was generally cultivated and eaten, Ireland would, surely, not be so supreme in the misery of its people. It may be truly called the *root of misery*.

The general use that it has got into has arisen from the notion that it *saves bread*, a phrase, which, whenever I hear it, puts me in mind of the fact, well-known in most families, that the ale is a *great saver* of the small beer; with this difference in the two cases, that the ale is really better for man than the small beer, while potatoes are not nearly so good as bread, though more than twice as dear.

A considerable portion of the cost of potatoes arises from the difficulty of finding *stowage* for such enormous masses as are necessary to yield any large quantity of human food.

It would require a large house to hold the potatoes sufficient to equal, in point of sustenance, four or five sacks of flour. A good third of this enormous bulk is thrown out at the door after being cooked, and of the rest, who can protect more than three-fifths from the frost, unless, indeed, they are buried in caves or in heaps of earth; and what a business is all this compared to the concise and neat operation of making bread?

I wish very much to contribute my share towards showing the error in the notions respecting this root, because I wish not to see my countrymen living *like hogs*, when, at less expense, they may live like human beings.

It is often complained of, in the conduct of the poor, that, in times of scarcity, they will not buy potatoes, but persist in having bread as long as they can get it. The truth is, they cannot *afford* to eat potatoes. They find, that the white loaf is much cheaper. In short, they find, that they can live upon bread and water; but, that, upon potatoes and water they must die. One would think, that this ought to be enough to convince any reasonable man, that a Baker must be mad, or, at least, a downright fool, to use potatoes instead of flour in the making of bread.

The year 1801, that year of fooleries, saw ministers of state giving their guests *potatoe-cakes* in lieu of bread, by way of *example to the community*. They did not know, that they were eating the *dearer* food; and, be that as it might, what could their conduct *possibly* do? If they eat potatoes, why there were less of *them* for the poor. If the potatoes did really *supply the place* of bread, then they might as well have eaten the bread; if they did not, then the wise men must have eaten some other food to make up for the deficiency; and how was the share of food to the community to be increased by any such measure?

Let us hope, that we have seen an end to these wondrous follies; and that we shall hear no more of well-meaning Lords and Gentlemen goading on their cottagers to stick their little plots of land full of potatoes.

This root has, in a great measure, been *forced* upon the poorer classes of people, who do not calculate, and who readily fall into any specious error. Their stomachs are their best monitors, very sure guides in pinching times; but, in general, they are deceived by the *bulky* appearance of the crop, especially when continually goaded on to this sort of cultivation by their superiors, and those whose advice savours of commands. It

may, therefore, be worth while to endeavour to convince those superiors, that the cottager would do better to cultivate wheat than potatoes.

I shall suppose a man to have a quarter of a statute-acre of land attached to his cottage, which he annually plants with potatoes; and, I think, I shall not be contradicted when I say, that, if this land will bear yearly two tons and a half, or, 5,600 pounds weight of potatoes, it will bear yearly a quarter of wheat, or, at 60 pounds to the bushel, 480 pounds of wheat. Allowing 9 pounds of potatoes to give as much sustenance as one pound of wheat, then, in point of sustenance, there are 1,280 pounds of potatoes left, after equalling the wheat.

Now to the comparative expense :

	POTATOES.			£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Three Bushels of Seed	0	4	6						
Planting	0	2	0						
Digging up and housing	0	18	0						
They give 1½d. a bushel for digging up only.							1	4	6

	WHEAT.			£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
One Gallon of Seed	0	1	4						
Sowing	0	2	0						
Cutting and housing	0	6	0						
							0	9	4
Balance in favour of the Wheat				0	15	2			
Add to the worth of the Straw, of which Potatoes have none..				1	5	0			
							2	0	2
Deduct grinding				0	4	0			
							1	16	2
Reckon the 1,280 pounds of potatoes at £3. a ton				1	11	0			
Balance at last in favour of wheat				0	5	2			

I have not spoken about the labour *in the cultivation*; but, I am quite sure, that, if the wheat be sown in *rows* with the same care, and cultivated with the same labour that the potatoes must have, it will always yield in a greater proportionate degree than is here stated.

There is the *threshing* of the wheat, but then there are the *hulls* to pay for it, not to mention that the *bran* would have paid for the grinding.

Then comes the *risk*. On the side of the wheat there is little, and that only in the harvesting. Both crops are liable to *bad seasons*; but, if a premature frost come, after a previous rain, the potatoes are half spoiled in a single night; nor are they safe at any moment during the whole winter, unless protected in a way that is attended with considerable additional expense.

I shall be asked, perhaps, where the cottager is to get *horses* to prepare the land for his wheat crop. And, where does he get them to prepare the land for his potatoes? Oh! he digs it with a spade. He does, does he! Then, with your permission, unless there be some wise

law against it, I mean he shall dig it for his wheat also ; for I know well that wheat has no more objection to the spade than potatoes have. I mean that he shall *hoe* it, too, just as often as he does his potatoes, not forgetting to *earth it up* on each side just when it is in bloom ; and, I venture to say, that if he does all these, he will have at least 10 bushels, instead of the eight, which I have given him, upon his quarter of an acre of ground.

Now, if these opinions and calculations of mine be correct, into what wild notions have we been led respecting the cultivation of potatoes ! How have we been deceived by their mere *bulk*, without examining into their power of yielding sustenance !—But, after all, my greatest dislike of the cultivation of potatoes, as food for man, is, that they naturally and inevitably produce *filthiness*, and all its concomitant vices, in the habitations of the poor. To bring the loaf upon the board requires some degree of cleanliness, care, and even skill. There must be *preparation*, *forethought*, and *attention*, to bring the produce of the land into the compact and convenient shape of bread, which can be carried to the harvest-field or accompany the plough. Whereas, to set the mouth at work upon potatoes, water and a pot, or even the bare ashes, without any utensil, are sufficient. The paws only are wanted to draw them from the earth or the hoard, and afterwards to lift them to the head. A knife, the utensil, which even savages rarely dispense with, is not necessary to the feeder on potatoes. In short, if I had a desire to keep a people in a state of semi-barbarism, or to bring a people into that state, and had the power to put my wishes in force, I should resort to no other means than that of causing potatoes to be the general food of the country. *Forethought* and *attention* cost neither labour nor money. They are the wholesome exercise of the mind, which, if these be not required of it, soon, from the love of ease, natural to mankind, loses all its powers, and the man becomes but one small degree more dignified than the beast ; and, if you once get him into this state, it is your own fault, if he be not your slave.

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 13th October, 1813.

THE PRICE OF BREAD.

SIR,—As there is not a subject of more general interest than that of my title, so there is none on which erroneous opinions are so much calculated to produce pernicious effects. It would not add to their merits to say that mine are correct, but as the publicity of them may drag forth truths which would otherwise never appear, I trust, they will meet with ready insertion in the Political Register, particularly as they appear not to be mistimed, and actually come from a party to whom its columns have been frequently open upon other subjects clearly connected therewith, if not wholly embracing the present.

The recent exertions of the Lord Mayor of London to do justice between the bakers and consumers of bread, according to law, have called forth the severe animadversions of many, but not more on the supposed impropriety of his Lordship's conduct than upon what is deemed the actual impolicy and injustice of regulating the price of bread at all, any more than that of any other commodity. Those who are of opinion that the Assize of Bread is impolitic and unjust, must, in mine, hold it as correct, at least so far as it regards the freedom of trade, that the happiness which man promised to himself by entering into the social state is better promoted by the full enjoyment of his natural freedom as a tradesman, though not as a man, they will allow, than it can be by giving up a part of the freedom with which he would carry on his trade in the natural state, as the

means of securing the property accumulated by his diminished liberty, the aid and protection of society.

Labouring, as I am, under the conviction that first principles are the landmarks by which, though not the direct course which we must steer, to secure to ourselves all the practicable blessings of society, it cannot be my wish, by thus reverting to elementary rules, to give a false colour to, or draw inferences from, the arguments of those who differ with me in opinion, which is not clearly contained in them; but in candour, can they stop short of the length to which I think they have carried their principles in opposing the assize of bread? If they cannot, am I not fairly at liberty to ask, Can we forget the very ends of society in the pursuit of interest? Can we separate the man from the tradesman, and enable him to enjoy a degree of freedom in the one capacity, which he cannot possess in the other? In the pursuit of our respective trades, are we not as much indebted to the law for the security of our property as we are for the safety of our persons? And if we are, ought we to be lawless as tradesmen, and bound as men? O yes, certainly, say the opponents of the Lord Mayor; for if we are guilty of mal-practices, the reaction of them will recoil upon ourselves, and force us to do justice to our customers. Granted: but will not our misconduct as men do the same thing? Were we permitted with as much legal impunity to knock each other down for the sake of plunder, as the advocates of free trade would have us at liberty to sell by short weight or charge high prices with the view of gain, can any thing be more certain than that the tendency of the violence is to produce a reaction which will sooner or later recoil upon the guilty party? If not, and bearing in mind that by short weight and high prices we can do as much injury to each other, as by blows (broken shins and broken bones excepted) the question again occurs, ought we to be lawless as tradesmen and bound as men, merely because in abstract reasoning, the reaction of our misconduct will recoil upon ourselves and do justice to the victims of our criminal licentiousness? If this question cannot be answered in the affirmative, is it not the price, quality, and quantity of every thing that ought to be regulated, and not those of Bread left to the discretions of men, who making *their power the basis of their right* by the aid of their overgrown wealth; the callousness of their feelings; their ignorance of public duty; or false notions of private interest, may bring irretrievable ruin upon millions before destruction can reach themselves, however certain it may be in the nature of things that it will ultimately overtake them?

When it is recollected, Sir, that nature has not gifted us with equal powers of self-defence, and how much the powers with which we are endowed, are, in many instances, impaired by legal restraints, is there not a something in giving this discretionary power to such men which strongly implies, not indeed that they are more vicious or ignorant than others, but that civilization itself is rather on the decline than otherwise? Yet, Sir, with that boldness, clearness, and freedom of expression for which you are so much and so justly admired, you have not hesitated to call the practice of regulating the price of bread, or of withholding this discretionary power from the bakers, "a relic of barbarism." Is it a relic of barbarism, Sir, to protect the natural and artificial weakness of different classes of the community against the natural and artificial powers of others? Granted, Sir: but of what is the disposition to withdraw that protection the relic? not, indeed, of the barbarity to which you allude, but of the superficial view, pardon me, which you have taken of the subject. For were it otherwise, the regardless of truth and morals, conductors of your country's press, would not have shrunk from the manly task of meeting you fairly in the field of argument; and the chances of your paying that attention to mine, which may be more its due on the score of my probable good intentions, than on that of any merit of its own, would be greatly diminished. But with respect to the question, whether, as the means of promoting the general interest in the greatest degree, the maximin, as you call it, ought to be removed from the price of bread, or laid on that of everything else; greatly, on the principle of choosing of two evils the least, as I prefer the latter, and clearly as it appears to me to be recommended as such by the principles on which I have reasoned, still I would have great difficulty in expressing that preference, did I not, as I think, possess the means of demonstrating, *that as trade has gained its freedom and power, so have men lost their liberty and independence, as a NECESSARY CONSEQUENCE.* You will not consider this as a paradox when you recollect, that "the extreme of virtue terminates in vice;" or, in other words, that "two extremes produce the same effect."

It is no less our pride than our boast, that the freedom of trade, with its attendant prosperity, has been progressively on the advance for time immemorial, particularly since the Revolution of 1688, but more rapidly so since the commencement of the present reign. This being our pride and our boast, it is of course our shame and sorrow, that our forefathers knew no more of the means of rendering themselves prosperous, happy, and free. Be it so; but on whose side does the following too low rather than too high coloured a picture of the rate at which prosperity, happiness, and freedom receded from our view, as the freedom of trade appeared to our sight, leave this shame and sorrow to dwell? That of ourselves or forefathers? for this I presume is the proper time and occasion to attempt the laying of that question to rest, if it belongs to facts to prevent it again from being agitated.

A TABLE, "exhibiting at one view the Depreciation of our Currency: the Disproportion between the Advance made in the Price of Labour and the Fall which has taken place in the Value of Money; with its consequent progressive Pauperism from the Revolution of 1688 to the Year 1812."

YEARS.	Price of Bread.	Value of the pound in Quatern Loaves.	Average Money Wages of Husbandry Labour.	Bread Wages in Quatern Loaves.	Poor-Rates.	Number of Paupers.
	<i>d.</i>		<i>s.</i>		<i>£.</i>	
1687	3	80	6	24	665,362	563,964
1776	6½	37	8	15	1,523,163	695,177
1785	6	40	8	16	1,943,649	818,851
1792	7	34	9	15	2,645,520	955,326
1803	10	24	10	12	4,113,164	1,039,716
1811	12	20	12	12	5,922,954	1,247,659
1812	20	12	15	9	16,452,656	2,079,432

These, Sir, are indubitable results of the freedom of trade; for had all the fund-holders and all other limited annuitants, who are thus robbed and enslaved by the depreciated value of the money which that freedom brings into use, been gifted with the same power to raise their interest, incomes, or salaries, that the tradesman has to advance the price of his commodities; could this damning proof of our growing barbarity have ever stared us in the face? And with this proof at your elbows, would you, Sir, and the decryers of public corruption, free from restraint the only trade on which restraint is laid, in favour of those, who are thus by legal as well as natural disabilities deprived of the power of advancing their incomes, as the tradesman raises the price of his commodities, and that, too, whilst your political opponents are honourably labouring with all their might to preserve it, and so do that justice to the superior foresight of our forefathers, to which their superior knowledge of the means of preserving the liberties and independence of their country, and wisdom in pursuing them, so superiorly entitles them. These, Sir, are the grounds on which I am inclined to prefer the maximum on the price of everything, to the taking it from off the price of Bread; and I trust their importance is such as will induce you seriously to re-consider the doctrines which you have broached in your two last Numbers. Yet, inclined as I am to prefer this arbitrary rule to the freedom of trade on its present principles, it is by comparing its bearings with the effects which that freedom has produced that I give it the preference, loving liberty as I do my life. In the abstract, or compared with the rules of a well-defined freedom, there is no human being that can abhor the maximum more than I do myself, particularly as I am confident that there are other rules by which the progress of the calamities exhibited in the foregoing table may be arrested and their return prevented. The Sun at noon-day is not clearer to our sight than these rules are within our reach; and that too with no more trouble in following the one than there is in looking at the other; compared with the troubles which are borne under the present system, and those which would attend the maximum on a more extended scale. But as I have already occupied too much of your valuable time, to call your attention to this no new

discovery, because it only lay buried under the ruins occasioned by the freedom of trade (if that and not anarchy be its name), I shall only, for the present, subscribe myself, Sir, yours very respectfully,

HECTOR CAMPBELL.

Surrey-street, Strand, Oct. 13, 1813.

TO MR. ALDERMAN WOOD,

ON

THE SUBJECT OF TEACHING THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR TO READ.

(*Political Register, December, 1813.*)

LETTER I.

SIR,

I see, from accounts published in the newspapers, that you are taking great pains to establish a school upon the Lancasterian plan, the main object of which appears to be to teach poor children to *read*, and particularly to *read the Bible*. I have, for some months, had an intention to address you upon this subject, and to state to you my reasons for believing, that an act, arising solely from your benevolent disposition, is not, with sufficient clearness, founded in reason, and that it is not likely to produce the good which you certainly have in view.

The subject naturally divides itself into two parts; or, rather, presents two questions for discussion: 1st. Whether, under the present circumstances, in this country, the teaching of poor children to *read generally* be likely to do good; and, 2nd, Whether it be likely to do good to teach them to *read the Bible*.

Whatever men may think about reading the Bible; however their opinions may differ as to the utility of reading this particular Book, the number is very small, indeed, who think that the teaching of poor children to *read generally* is not a good past all dispute. To that very small number, however, I belong; and my opinion decidedly is, that, under the present circumstances of this country, the teaching of poor children to read generally is calculated to produce *evil* rather than *good*; for which opinion I will now proceed to offer you my reasons, and not without some hope of being able to convince you, that your money, laid out in pots of beer to the parents, would be full as likely to benefit the community.

The *utility* of reading consists in the imparting knowledge to those who read; knowledge dispels ignorance. Reading, therefore, naturally tends to enlighten mankind. As mankind become enlightened, they become less exposed to the arts of those who would enslave them. Whence reading naturally tends to promote and ensure the liberties of mankind. "How, then," you will ask, "can you object to the teaching of the children of the ignorant to read?" But, Sir, when we thus describe the effects of reading, we must always be understood as meaning, the

reading of works which convey *truth* to the mind ; for, I am sure, that you will not deny, that it is possible for a person to become by reading more ignorant than he was before. For instance, a child has *no knowledge* of the source whence coals are drawn ; but, if, in consequence of what he reads, he believes coals to be made out of clay, he is more ignorant than he was before he read ; because falsehood is farther from truth than is the absence of knowledge. A child, in the neighbourhood of Loretto, who had been happy enough to escape the lies of the priests, would know nothing at all of the origin of the Virgin Mary's House at that famous resort of pilgrims ; but, if he had read the history of the Bees' House, he would believe that it came thither, flying across the sea from Palestine ; and he would, of course, be a great deal *more ignorant* than if he had never read the said history.

Thus, then, reading does not tend to enlighten men, unless what they read convey *truth* to their minds. The next question is, therefore, whether, under the present circumstances of this country, the children of the poor are likely to come at truth by reading ; which question, I think, we must decide in the negative.

You will please to observe, that I am not now speaking of the Bible, or of works upon religion. Those I shall notice by-and-by. I am now speaking of *reading in general*. To those who object to the teaching of children to read the Bible, as being above their capacity to comprehend, it is usually answered, that if children learn to read the Bible, they will inevitably read *other things* ; and that out of *reading* will proceed *light*, and the means of giving the people true notions of their *rights* in society. But, here again it is taken for granted, that what they will read, after they have been taught to read the Bible, will be calculated to give them *true notions*, and will inculcate the principles upon which men ought to be governed.

Now, Sir, is this the fact ? Does the press in this country send forth works calculated to produce such an effect ? That is to say, are its productions *generally* of this description ? Or, to put the question more closely, is the *major part* of its productions of this description ? Because, if it send forth more productions which are calculated to give *false* notions, than of productions which are calculated to give *true* notions, it follows, of course, that reading, generally, must tend to the increase of a belief in falsehood, which no one will deny to be the worst species of ignorance.

Let us see, then, what is the real state of this *press* ; this vaunted press, which, in ninety-nine hundredths of the publications which issue from it, is represented as being FREE. Let us see what is the real state of this press.

In the first place, a man is liable, if he write, or print, or publish any thing, which the Attorney-General (an officer *appointed by the Crown* and *removable at pleasure*) chooses to prosecute him for ; any man who does this is liable to be prosecuted, and to be punished in a manner much more severe than a great part of the persons convicted of felony. You yourself remember (and I shall always retain a grateful recollection of your goodness upon the occasion), that I, for writing an article, respecting the treatment of the Local Militia at the town of Ely, was sent to pass two years of my life in a place where there were felons, and men actually found guilty of unnatural crimes. Many of the felons, at that time in Newgate, were punished with a shorter term of imprisonment

than I was; to say nothing of the *fine*, a sum equal to what may be fairly deemed a fourth part of the average earnings of any literary man's whole life.

And, who will say, that, if he venture to utter what is calculated to displease men in power, he will escape such punishment? There are no laws, which set bounds to his pen; there is no settled rule of law which enables him to know what is criminal and what is not criminal. He is prosecuted if the King's officer chooses to prosecute him; and the jury, by whom he is tried, is specially nominated by another officer of the Crown, the accused party having the privilege of objecting to twelve out of forty-eight of the persons so nominated. The Attorney-General may, if he please, commence a prosecution and *not proceed in it*. He may keep a criminal charge hanging over the head of any writer as long as he chooses; and, with the consent of a Judge, he may hold the party to bail for his appearance for as long a time as he chooses to keep the charge suspended over his head. So that such writer, during his whole life-time, may have a criminal charge kept suspended over his head, and, without forfeiting his recognizances and those of his sureties, he cannot, during his whole life-time, quit the country, or be absent at any one term; for, at any term, whenever his accuser pleases, though, perhaps, after his witnesses are dead, he may be commanded to come and take his trial.

On the *other hand*, the Attorney-General may, if he chooses, drop the prosecution, and that, too, at whatever time he may please to drop it. After having charged a writer with a crime, he may keep the charge suspended over his head for months or years; and then, without even leave of the Court, and *without assigning any reason at all*, he may *wholly withdraw the charge*, and relieve the poor creature and his family from their fears.

This is the state of our press as it is affected by the *law*. And, under such circumstances, is it to be expected, that the press will convey, freely convey, *truths* to the people? For, you will be particular in bearing in mind, that the *truth* of any writing, so far from being a *justification* of the author, is not permitted to be *pleaded* in his defence. To utter *truth*, therefore, respecting the measures of the government, the administration of the laws, the weight or the mode of collecting the taxes, the treatment of the army or the navy, the conduct of the clergy, the creeds of the Church; to utter *truth* respecting any of these may, in the eye of the law, be a greatly criminal act, and may subject the utterer to a punishment more severe than that inflicted on a great part of the felons.

We are not inquiring here, whether this law of the press be good or bad. There are those who assert it to be full of justice and wisdom. We will not, therefore, raise a dispute upon the point. We will content ourselves with observing that such is the law; and, then, we have only to determine, whether, under such a law, the press is likely to be the vehicle of *truth*. There are those, who say, that it ought not to be permitted to convey, in an undisguised manner, truths, upon all public matters and concerning all public men, to the people. Very well; but, if this be the case, can the reading of the productions of this press tend to dispel ignorance; can it tend to *enlighten* the people? Can it be any public benefit, can it further the cause of public liberty, to teach the children of the poor to *read*?

Let us, if you please, trace one of these poor boys in his progress of

reading, after he has been taught, at your Lancaster school, to read in the Bible. He is, you will please to observe, not going to live in the house of a father or a master, who has the means or the capacity to direct his studies in any particular channel. He has no one to tell him what publications he ought to look upon as good and what as bad. He has no one to point out to him what is the production of venality and what is not. He must take things promiscuously as they come before him. He has no guide; no criterion of truth; nothing to excite his doubts of the veracity of his author; but must swallow every thing which chance sends into his hands. What, then, will be the probable course of his reading? "*Children's Books*," as they are called, he will naturally begin with. As far as these consist of *sheer nonsense*, they may do his mind little harm; but, past all dispute, it is impossible for them to have the smallest tendency towards *enlightening* that mind. If they rise only a little above the nonsensical, look at them, and you will find, that from one end to the other, their tendency is to inculcate *object submission*. His next series are ballads and songs, which, if they step out of nonsense, go at once into the national braggings, which, while they are applauded as the means of keeping up the spirit of the people, have been one cause of plunging us into, and of prolonging, those wars, which have occasioned our enormous debts and taxes, and have led to the filling of the country with all those military establishments, heretofore regarded as so dangerous to the liberties of England. Addison, who was a very vile politician, approved of these means of keeping alive what is called "*the honest prejudices of Englishmen*." What a base idea! To inculcate undisguisedly the praiseworthiness of *keeping the people in ignorance*; and that, too, for the *good of the country*, and by the *means of the press*! Honest prejudices! That is to say, an honest belief in *falsehoods*; an honest belief that *falsehood is truth*! One cannot help hating the man, who could avow such an idea.

If your pupil live in the country, his standard book will, in all likelihood, be MOORE'S ALMANACK, that universal companion of the farmers and labourers of England. Here he will find a perpetual spring of knowledge; a *daily* supply, besides an extra portion monthly. Here are *signs* and *wonders* and *prophecies*, in all which he will believe as implicitly as he does in the first chapter of Genesis. Nor will he want a due portion of politics. To keep a people in a state of profound ignorance; to make them superstitious and slavish, there needs little more than the general reading of this single book. The poor creature, who reads this book, and who believes that the compiler of it is able to foretell when it will rain and when it will snow, is very little more enlightened than those men who believed most firmly that St. Dunstan took the Devil by the nose; and, there is no doubt in my mind, that, if that legend were now published, they would believe it. You will say, perhaps, that it is only the very lowest of the people who believe in the prophecies of Moore's Almanack; but, is it not the very lowest description of people whom you are attempting to teach? And, when they get out of your hands, must they not be left to themselves? You certainly do not mean to follow them to their hovels to superintend their reading.

But, the great source of your pupil's knowledge, the great source of that *light*, which he is to acquire, will be the NEWSPAPERS. Here he will find a constant and copious supply. And of *what*? Of *truth*? Will he here find bold and impartial statements of facts? Will he here

find plain and fearless censure of public wrong-doers? Will he here see the cause of the oppressed manfully espoused, and the oppressor painted in colours calculated to rouse against him the hatred of mankind? You know, Sir, that he will not. You know, that he will find the reverse of all this. You know, that he will find falsehoods, upon every subject of a public nature; praises of all those who have power to hurt or to reward, and base calumnies on all those, who, in any degree, make themselves obnoxious to power. "Yes," say you, in the ardour of your zeal, "but, there are *exceptions*, my friend; there are *some* of the public papers of a different description." *Some*? How many, Sir? How many out of the 300 or 400 which are published in the kingdom? Are there *ten*? Suppose there are *twenty*. Then there are twenty chances to one against your pupil's imbibing the *truth*; there are twenty chances to one that his reading will produce in him an increase of ignorance, instead of pouring light into his mind. Besides, what is he to find in the very best of these public prints? Will he find any thing like *free discussion*? Suppose a venal wretch to fill his columns with praises of a wicked man in power. Will any one of your twenty newspapers dare freely to investigate those columns, and by bringing proof of the wickedness of the men in power, show their falsehood? You know well, Sir, that no one would dare to do this; you know that no writer, in his sober senses, would think of doing it. What, then, is the undeniable conclusion? Why, this: that the praise, reaching the mind of your *reader*, and remaining uncontradicted, his reading must deceive him; must give him false notions; must, as to a matter of great public importance, make him *more ignorant* than he would have been if he had never been able to read; must make him the partisan of a man, to whom he ought, in duty to his country, to be opposed. We often hear it said, "Let us have *discussion*, discussion will *do good*." But, Sir, what does *discussion* mean? It means, the arraying, by one person, of all the facts, and *all* the arguments that he can muster up, against the facts and arguments of another. It does not mean open-mouthed statement and argument on one side, while, on the other, the combatant is muzzled, is compelled, for his safety, to suppress his facts, and is only permitted tremblingly to state in parables, and argue by hypothesis. In short, *discussion* demands a perfectly unshackled use of all that the mind suggests; and, if this be denied, there is *no discussion*. The Bishop of Llandaff answered Mr. Paine; his Lordship *discussed* the matter with Thomas. But, Thomas's publishers were prosecuted by the Attorney-General, and his book was suppressed; while that of the Bishop not only had leave to circulate freely, but was forced into circulation by all the aid that zealous churchmen and other Christians could give it. I am not here speaking of the propriety or impropriety of this; but, it must be confessed, I think, that it was a singular sort of *discussion*. Yet, of very nearly the same stamp are all the discussions that your pupils will find in our public prints. If, for instance, a report be published of a trial in a court of justice, accompanied with astonishing praises of the wisdom and integrity of "the Learned Judge;" and, if some one were to think that the decision evinced no such qualities in the learned personage, but, rather, the contrary; would he be much inclined to impart his thoughts to the public? If, in a moment of ungovernable zeal, he were freely to discuss such praises, and draw from his facts and arguments an opposite conclusion, would he not, when he came to see his writing in print, set

himself down as ruined? Why, then, talk of *discussion*? Discuss, indeed, we may, and freely, too, all questions relating to the qualities of trees and herbs. There is no danger in writing about dung or potatoes or cabbages. Here your pupils will have a large field; but, as to politics, law, and religion, the army or the navy, peace or war; as to all those subjects interesting to man as a member of society, they will assuredly meet with nothing, issuing from the press of this country, worthy of the name of *discussion*.

Why, then, teach the children of the poor to read? Why waste, in this pursuit, either money or time; seeing that, if you succeed, your success must necessarily tend to the increase of error and to the debasement of the people? It is not the *mere capability of reading* that can raise man in the scale of nature. It is the *enlightening* of his mind; and, if the capability of distinguishing words upon paper does not tend to enlighten him, that acquirement is to be considered as nothing of any value.

The great length of this letter makes me fear to proceed further at present; and, therefore, I conclude with an expression of my sincere respect for your character and your motives.

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 8th Dec. 1813.

TO MR. ALDERMAN WOOD,

ON

THE SUBJECT OF TEACHING THE CHILDREN OF THE
POOR TO READ.

(*Political Register*, December, 1813.)

LETTER II.

SIR,

In the *printing* of my last letter a gross error, or, rather, interpolation, was made, in page 278, where "the history of the *Bees' House*" is spoken of. I never heard of such a history, and am utterly at a loss to conceive how the blunder could have been committed.

When I closed, rather abruptly, my last, I was about to notice the cause, as appeared to me, of the wonderful concurrence of all the sects to promote this work of reading. These sects, which agree in nothing else, all agree as to *this* matter. They all think, or say, that *good must come from reading*. Yet, they must, one would think, be aware, that, by learning to read, the poor will run the risk of reading books, which each sect looks upon as very mischievous. But, the truth is, that each sect pleases itself with the idea, that *all* those who read will become *its* proselytes. But, perhaps, a more powerful cause is the vanity of *literary men*, who are all for the reading scheme. Each of them supposes, that, whatever neglect the present race of readers may show of his writings, a new race will be charmed with them, and, indeed, will read nothing else. Dr. Rees

and Mr. Belsham believe, I dare say, that all the boys, whom you and other liberal gentlemen are causing to be taught to read, will read *their Sermons*. Not at all ! They will read Dibdin's songs, Moore's Almanack, and the newspapers ; and the sermons of these worthy and zealous gentlemen will remain to be read in the confined circles, in which they are now an object of attention.

The newspapers will always have the preference ; and these *must* do harm to your readers, because, in the present state of things, they will, of course, be the vehicles of darkness rather than of light. I have shown before, that there is not, in our press, any such thing as free discussion, when the subject is of a nature interesting to man as a member of society. There is no man in England, who will venture to deny the truth of this. There is no man who will attempt to controvert the proposition. There are, indeed, men, who, in their writings, affect to boast of the blessings of a *free press* ; but, in this they only discover their baseness. They know, that what they say is false, and they say it, in many instances, merely to disguise their shame. They wish to be looked upon as free to utter their thoughts ; and this wish leads them to belie both their opinions and their knowledge.

The law of libel and all its terrors out of the question, there is abundant reason why the press should be *partial* and *servile*. Nay, supposing that no corruption of the press is employed by the Government ; still the press must naturally be almost wholly devoted to it. There is an *influence*, which very greatly surpasses in its effect all direct interference of the Government. I mean the influence of *taxation*. The Government has *a hundred millions a year to expend*. Such an expenditure must make the press its own without supposing one penny expended in purchasing the press. Men who live by writing are very rarely over-rich. They must eat as well as write. They must, therefore, write to please those who have the power to give them the means of eating. Those who receive the hundred millions a year ; those amongst whom that all-influencing sum is distributed have that power ; and, it follows, of course, that those who write will endeavour to please them.

These remarks will appear just to whomsoever will take the trouble to calculate the immense amount of the *advertisements* inserted for the different purposes of the Government, not only in the London but in the country newspapers. These alone form no mean part of the profits of every newspaper which has them to insert. Their insertion is, perhaps, necessary to the affairs of the Government. But, the selection of the newspapers must be with its officers, and they, of course, will give their valuable custom to those papers which please them the most. If you add to these the advertisements of Magistrates, Clerks of the Peace, Sheriffs, Commissioners of Taxes, &c. &c., you will, in this article alone, see quite sufficient cause for the partiality of this part of the press. It is a sort of influence such as a rich gentleman has amongst his tradesmen and his tenants. It arises out of the system of taxation, which makes the Government the *employer* of half the nation. " Liberty of the press," exclaimed a friend of mine, who is now dead ; " a pretty thing, indeed, to talk of liberty of the press in a country where the Government has forty millions a year to expend ! " What would he have said now ? And, what would he have said of the idea of teaching the poor to read the productions of this press, with the hope of aiding the cause of public liberty ?

If your readers should reach so high as *Magazines* and *Reviews*, what will they find there? The productions, for the most part, of men actually in a state of the most mercenary and servile dependence; or the mere partisans of a faction. Works of this sort become daily less interesting. It is well known, that there is, in their authors, no hope of impartiality. The far greater part of the writers of them are in some place or employment, which, to say the least of its effects, must make them partial. In short, a Review is any thing, now-a-days, but what it professes to be.

But, some, at least, of your readers, will dip into *history*. Will they? And what will they find there? From the history, indeed, of *remote periods*, they may collect some truth; but, what is to be expected from a history of the last fifty years? A very pretty specimen of this sort of productions is to be found in the history of Lord Nelson's achievements, in 1799, in *the Bay of Naples*! CAPT. FOOTE, goaded on by a desire to avenge himself on those who had, as he says, ill-treated him, has given the world a true history of those acts; but, in how few instances has the like happened! In how few instances has *truth* been able to make the smallest stand against overwhelming falsehood! To a *lying eulogium* on any person in power who dares to reply in a manner demanded by *truth*! You know well that no man dares do it. You know well, that most terrible punishment would await any man, who should dare to show, that an eulogized person in power was worthy of contempt or hatred. And, this being the case, and writers being at all times to be found to eulogize the great, what benefit, I seriously ask you, can be expected from teaching the poor to read *history*?

Lastly, as to works upon religion. Who dares to express his thoughts without disguise, if his thoughts be in contradiction to what is deemed essential for the people to believe? There are men, who, so far from believing in the doctrines of Christianity, believe those doctrines to be pernicious in their effects. Take it for granted, that such men are in error; but, if they be not permitted to publish their thoughts; if *every one* be not at *full liberty* to say just what he thinks upon the subject, what good is *reading* to do your pupils? If there be a certain set of dogmas, which no man is to speak against, what have your pupils to do but to learn those dogmas from the mouth of a priest of some sect or other? Why should they *read*, if others are not to *write*? In truth, they are not at *liberty to read*, unless any one who chooses may write what he chooses upon this subject. So that, you will find, at last, that you are teaching the poor to read and to believe what others choose they should read and believe, and nothing more.

The recent instance as to a theatrical piece, would in any other state of things, lead men to reflect. The facts are thus related, in the form of a Letter to the Editor of the Morning Chronicle, inserted in that paper of the 9th instant.

"Sir,—Influenced by what I conceive to be the general feeling of my countrymen, I went last night to Drury-lane Theatre in the expectation of seeing a piece founded on the influx of grateful intelligence which has of late so eminently exhilarated, I hope, every individual of these truly happy realms. To my utter astonishment and disappointment, a printed paper was put into my hand at the door of the theatre (the contents of which are, of course, notoriously public), intimating that an interdiction of the performance had been issued by Mr. Larpent, in the name of the Lord Chamberlain, five hours before the period of intended representation, on the sole plea that the licenser had not had sufficient time to peruse a piece of one act sent to his office the Saturday preceding.

"When the glorious and disastrous intelligence of the victory of Trafalgar reached this country, a one-act piece was produced at Covent-Garden Theatre, under the title of '*Nelson's Glory*,' in three days after the news was announced. Surely *the same licenser* who did not then disapprove *one day's notice* (which was all he had) ought not now object to *four days* opportunity, scrutinizing an effort of similar length, the intent of which was equally directed to aid the common cause and common feelings of the country.

"Many instances can be produced of licenses granted to theatrical pieces on less notice than that given in the present case, and where the urgency of immediate production could not be pleaded.

"A proof also exists, that a farce, after being some time in rehearsal at Covent-Garden Theatre, under the title of '*The Two Farmers*,' was suppressed by Mr. Larpent, in his official capacity, because it attempted to draw a line between monopoly and honest dealing; and because, as Mr. Larpent personally informed the author, it was highly improper to give a dishonestly speculating farmer the name of Locust.

"*The Liberty of the Press most happily and properly interests every thinking individual of these realms*; and, next to the liberty of the press (if not immediately connected with it), is the freedom of echoing on the British stage the genuine, praiseworthy, and allow me to say, the providential feelings which have prevented this great, enviable, and commanding country from becoming a province of France, and its inhabitants from degenerating into vassals of the would-be Emperor of the Universe.

"Whatever your critical strictures on the suppressed piece might have been, you would, at least have given credit to the propriety of its intention, and, had it been unworthy of repetition, had rather seen it fairly condemned by a jury of its author's countrymen, than denied a trial on so futile a plea as that which put a veto on

ORANGE BOVEN."

Now, let us, if you please, not pester ourselves about the *one day's notice* and the *four days' notice*, and about who this Mr. Larpent is, or about what miserable trash he may now have put a stop to. Let us, sir, leave all this aside, and pin our attention to this simple fact: to wit; that there actually is a person appointed by the Government, and, I suppose, removable at its pleasure, *whose license must be obtained to every theatrical piece, before the actors dare to perform it*. Now, then, if your pupils should become readers of plays, here, at any rate, they will not read a word but what the Government has previously granted them permission to read. Here there is no pretence of freedom of the press. Here the writing is first examined; and if the agent of the Government does not approve of it, it is suppressed. This is what Napoleon does with regard to all writings; and, really, I think it much better for the managers of play-houses to be subject to this sort of control, than to be left *free to act and liable to punishment for acting*. Here the law is plain; it is here a safe guide: no man can here incur ruin from his ignorance of how far he may go. Here is a person appointed by the Government, to prevent the poor writer from exposing himself to a punishment heavier than that of a great part of the felons. He is not here told, that he has freedom to write; he is not here told that he enjoys that precious liberty: he is told that he is to cause to be read upon the stage just as much as the Government agent pleases, and no more.

This "ORANGE BOVEN," as he calls himself, says that, "*the Liberty of the Press most happily and properly interests every THINKING individual of these realms*," of whom, I suppose, he regards himself as one; and, indeed, his remarks do seem to discover no common reach of thought. But, with due submission to this profound gentleman, who, in all probability, ought to thank Mr. Larpent for keeping his balderdash from the public, I would ask, what is the *difference*, the *real difference*,

between the state of the *stage* and that of the *press*? On the stage you must utter nothing which an agent of the Government has not previously examined and approved of; for if you do, you subject yourself to punishment. Very well; and what can you do in the other case? Why, through the press you can utter nothing which the Attorney-General does not approve of, whether it be false or true, without exposing yourself to a state prosecution, which may bring on you a punishment more severe than that inflicted on a great part of the felons. You are held responsible for all that you publish, and it belongs, and solely belongs, to an officer appointed by the Government, and removable at its pleasure, to call upon you for that responsibility; to choose his time when to commence proceedings against you; to choose, afterwards, the time for bringing you to trial; to suspend his criminal charge over your head as long as he pleases; and, if he choose, and whenever he may choose, to drop his charge against you, and to relieve you and your half-dead family from your fears. "ORANGE BOVEN" may say what he pleases of Mr. Larpent; but, really, I think that that gentleman fills a very friendly and amiable office.

Here, Sir, I close this part of my subject; and I think that, in whatever light the matter is viewed, it is impossible to deny that the teaching of the children of the poor to read is more likely to do harm than good, if by good we mean the enlightening of their minds and making them friends to the rights and liberties of men in society.

I remain, with unfeigned respect, your most obedient and most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

ANSWER TO MR. CANNING'S LIVERPOOL SPEECH.

(*Political Register, February, 1814.*)

It appears, from a Liverpool newspaper, that, a few days back, this gentleman was treated to a dinner by his partisans at Liverpool, at which, it is said, nearly 400 of them attended. At this meeting he is said to have made a *Speech*, which, as published in the Liverpool Mercury, though full of offensive matter; though full of sophistry, and falsehood, and impudence, has on its side, the circumstance of its being uttered in a place, which does not afford it the iron shield of privilege, but leaves it open to be commented on by those, who may think it their duty to deny its statements and controvert its doctrines.

After having dispatched the local topics, Mr. Canning proceeds, in this Speech, to those of a public nature, beginning with congratulating his hearers on the happy change in the situation of Europe, and here he observes, that he and those who think with him, that is to say, the Anti-Freedom party, have a *right to exult*; that there is nothing improper, nothing unbecoming, nothing base and cowardly in their exultation *now*;

because they formerly had to endure *similar exultation* on the side of their opponents.

This is not true. The friends of freedom were not *at liberty to exult*; they dared not openly rejoice at those events, which gave pain to the sons and daughters of corruption; they were charged, as with a crime, of *rejoicing inwardly*. So that there is no *reciprocity* in the case. It is not *turn and turn about*. The liberty to exult is all on one side; and, therefore, the exultation of Mr. Canning, at this time, is as cowardly as the conduct of a man, who makes an attack upon another, while he knows that the law shuts the mouth of the party so attacked.

Nay, even this speech, though delivered at a tavern, and not shielded from being commented on, he knows cannot be *freely* answered; he knows, that there are many of his positions, which, though wholly false, no man will dare to deny in print. He knows, that he has introduced characters and institutions, which he has eulogized, and which might easily be shown to be detestable; but, he also knows, that he is safe here, for that the man who should dare to exhibit them in a *true* light, would expose himself to utter ruin, and to probable death.

Therefore, such a speech is a cowardly speech; it is the act of a man, who is bold behind a wall of brass; it is the bravery of a man who fights only because the hands of his adversary are tied.

If the people of France, assuming the attitude and actuated by the principles of 1792, were to drive the enemy from their territory, or slaughter them on that territory, and were to pursue them to the midst of their own dominions; would any man dare, in England, openly to express, in print, his *exultation* at the change? Mr. Canning knows that no man would dare do this; and, therefore, is his present exultation cowardly and contemptible.

His next topic is, the *cause* of the recent change in the affairs of Europe, and of the reverses of Napoleon. These, he says, and I agree with him perfectly, have *not* been produced by any *change* in the *principles* of the war.

He alludes here to the observations of Mr. WHITEHEAD, that the allied sovereigns have now *got their people with them*; that the war has become a war of the people and *not a war of Courts*; and that, *therefore*, it is that the Allies have been successful. The same sentiments are daily rung in our ears by the MORNING CHRONICLE, who is not willing to allow the Ministers the merit of success, but wishes to attribute it to the "*Whig principles*." When shall we see an end of this superannuated folly!

Mr. Canning says, and very truly, that the principles of the war have undergone *no change*; that no change has taken place in the motives of our Government or its supporters; that the sovereigns of the Continent are actuated by the same principles that actuated them at the beginning of the war against the Republicans; that, in short, the motives of 1814 are those of 1792.

I perfectly agree with him here, and join him in his protest against the claims of the old dotard Whigs to a share in the honour of having so far restored the good old order of things, the regular government of 1792.

But, if I agree with him here, he ought to agree with me, that it is extremely unjust to blame the friends of freedom for appearing to give their good wishes to *all the successive governments in France*. This has been charged upon them, and particularly on the Americans, as a most

glaring trait of *inconsistency*. It has been said, that this their adherence to all the different governments in France, not excepting that of Napoleon, shows that it is the *enemy of England*, and not the *cause of freedom*, that they are attached to. But, if the principles of the war have not changed; if they have continued the same from 1792 until this day; if the same principles led to war against the limited French monarchy; against the Republic; and against a despotic Emperor; if the principles were so steady, was it not natural and necessary, that those who opposed these principles at first should continue to oppose them? The friends of freedom, the American government, for instance, could not fail to perceive, and to regret, that the French nation had lost under Napoleon much of what it had gained of freedom; but, that Government perceiving, that *the principles of English warfare had not changed*; that those principles still continued the same, could not but still lean, in consistency, towards that, with which those principles were at war.

Mr. Canning's assertion completely clears all those who have continued, since 1792, steady in their attachment to the cause of France. *He*, at any rate, ought to reproach no one for adhering to Buonaparte as firmly as to the Republic; for, if the principles of the war, on our part, have *never changed*, that adherence, to be consistent, must have been as strong towards the one as towards the other.

If I am to judge from the tavern speeches of Mr. Canning, he, and all those who are with him, are the bitterest enemies of freedom. To them we may add a herd innumerable of writers in newspapers and other publications, the mere corrupt mouth-pieces of others. Every principle of liberty they are continually at war against. They are the supporters of every thing, of every act, be it what it may, in any part of the world, hostile to freedom. And, when we hear these men, at the same time, railing, in such terms of bitterness, against the present government of France, is it not enough to make us suspect, that, at the bottom, that government is *not* so very despotic? At any rate, is it not enough to make us suspect, that the destruction of that government, and the substituting in its place a something, no matter what, which these known mortal enemies of freedom desire, would not be likely to benefit the cause of freedom?

And, if a man entertain this reasonable, this just suspicion, or, rather, if he be convinced of this truth, can it be expected, that he will wish for the overthrow of the government of France, unless he be well assured, that a government *more hated* by these men, that is to say, a government *more free*, will be established in its stead?

In short, this is the way that the friends of freedom reason. "That person, no matter *who*, that is most hated and dreaded by our worst enemies, is not a person for whose annihilation we ought to wish."

What has here been said will serve as a preface to the next topic of the speech; namely, *the instruments by which Napoleon has been defeated*.

Upon this point we will take the gentleman's very words:

"Gentlemen, there is another question to be asked. By what power, in what part of the world, has that final blow been struck which has smitten the *tyrant* to the ground? I suppose by some enlightened *republic*. I suppose by some nation which, in the excess of *popular freedom*, considers even a representative system as defective, unless each individual interferes directly in the government of the national concerns. I suppose by some nation of enlightened patriots,

"every man of whom is a politician in the coffee-house as well as in the Senate. I suppose it is from such government as this that the conqueror of despots, the enemy of monarchical England, has met his doom. I look through the European world, Gentlemen, in vain; I find there no such government: but in another hemisphere I do find such a one, which, no doubt, must be the political David by whom the Goliath of Europe has been brought down. What is the name of that glorious republic to which the gratitude of Europe is eternally due; which, from its *hatred to tyranny*, has so perseveringly exerted itself to liberate the world, and at last has successfully closed the contest? Alas! Gentlemen, such a republic I do indeed find; but I find it enlisted, and *God be thanked, enlisted alone, under the banner of the despot.* (Applause.)

"But where was the blow struck? Where? Alas, for theory! The blow was given in the wilds of *despotic Russia*. It was followed up on the plains of Leipzig—by Russian, Prussian, and Austrian arms."

Now, this is all mere flippancy; for, *why* should any "*enlightened republic*;" *why* should any nation loving "*popular freedom*;" *why* should any "*nation of patriots*," have been *expected* to strike the blow, or to wish to see the blow stricken, if, as Mr. Canning himself asserts, the principles of the war have *not changed*; if those principles are the same that they were at the outset of the war? *Why* should any "*enlightened republic*" have been expected to join in the war against Napoleon, if the war against him be the same in *principle* as was the war in 1792 against the *Republic of France*?

Mr. Canning thanks God, that he finds the American Republic enlisted under the banners of the *despot*. Suppose this to be as true as it is false, where would be the wonder, if the American Republic were to be enlisted on the side of him, against whom war was carried on upon the same principles as it was carried on against the Republic of France?

But this is not all. America, though enlisted, as he calls it, has sent neither ships nor men to his assistance, while we know, that the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Austria, have been in alliance with him, offensive and defensive; that the two latter, within a few short months, have aided him with their armies to combat and invade the former; and that the latter of the three has even given Napoleon his daughter in marriage. This was something like being *enlisted* under him; nor did the military engagements of the two latter cease, till Napoleon met with reverses of fortune. Amongst the rest of the Allies the sovereigns of Bavaria and Wurtemberg were made *kings* by him, and accepted of his protectorship; and, the Crown Prince of Sweden, a Frenchman, and formerly a private soldier in the revolutionary army, was by Napoleon made heir to the throne of Sweden.

If, therefore, it were as true as it is false, that America were enlisted under his banners, would she find no apology in the example of all these our Allies? No, not in the eyes of the friends of freedom, with whom such an example would be no justification; but, one would imagine, that the eulogists of those Allies ought to hold their tongues, while that example is before the eyes of all the world.

There is not one of those Allies, except the Crown Prince, who has not been an ally of Napoleon *against us*; and, therefore, if the fact had been true instead of false, what ground of reproach would it have been to America to have acted in the same way; unless we also make it a ground of reproach to the Allies?

The truth, however, is, that America has fought, and is fighting, *her own battles*, with her *own means*. She has made no treaty, she has sought no treaty, she has desired no treaty, with France, for the pur-

poses of war. We insist upon taking out of her vessels, upon the high seas, such *persons* as, in the discretion of our naval commanders, it shall seem meet to take, America being at peace with all the world. She says, that we shall not do this. *Thereupon* we go to war. And how can she be said to have, by such war, *enlisted herself* under the banners of Napoleon? Was there ever a more false or a more impudent assertion? The notion of this gentleman, and of all the war faction, is this: that, in order to succeed in a war against France, we have a right to do towards other nations whatever we find best suited to answer our views; and that, if any one of those nations complain, or, at least, if it *resist*, we have a right to consider it as enlisted under the banners of France. The same mode of arguing they have adopted at home amongst ourselves, where every man, who has questioned the principles or policy of the war, has, without hesitation, been denominated a *friend of France*, and, by inference, an *enemy* of, and *traitor* to, England.

But, to whatever degree this notion may prevail *here*, in America it will make no progress. There the people understand their rights; they are made acquainted with the acts and the real motives of their government; they know what they are at war for; they have real representatives, who speak their voice, and who, if they were so minded, could not delude them. The American people will not want the avowal of Mr. Canning to convince them, that the *principles* of the war, on our part, are the *same now* as they were in 1792, when we were at war with the *Republic of France*. They know very well what those principles are, and, it would be strange indeed to see them, in support of *those principles*, enlisted on the same side with those, who, Mr. Canning tells us, gave the blow "in the wilds of *despotic Russia*."

The next topic of Mr. Canning is that of "*instinctive patriotism*," or an *attachment to the soil, prior and paramount to all political considerations*. This is always a favourite doctrine with the enemies of political freedom. "No matter," they say, "what oppressions you suffer; if you be stripped of the fruits of your labour and your genius; if, instead of comfort and ease, you be clad in rags, half-starved, worked like horses, and beaten like asses if you dare to complain; if your Lords buy and sell you as a chattel: no matter, you must still cling to the soil, or earth, where you were born, or you are *unnatural wretches*." This they denominate "*instinctive patriotism*;" and, wherever it prevails, it is very properly so called; for, most assuredly, it is precisely that of the more stupid sort of *beasts*. Thus neat cattle and pigs, though better fed and lodged in a new situation, are always hankering after the place where they were bred. An "*instinctive patriot*" of the former sort lately found its way from Botley to Ringwood, in spite of hedges and turnpike-gates.

But, as to the *fact*, which Mr. Canning takes for granted as being applicable to *all* communities, though I by no means deny, that, in some of the countries whose governments he appears to admire, there may be found millions of these "*instinctive*" or cattle-like patriots, these patriots of the earth, or the dirt; though I do not deny, but am afraid it is but too true, that millions of men are to be found in this state, so degrading to human nature; yet I do deny the fact as applied to any society deserving the epithet *civilized*.

In such a society men, who are strongly attached to their country, have their attachment founded in their love of the laws, the institutions,

the fame of that country, or in that interest, which arises out of the property they own or the profession they follow in it. Take all these from them and then ascertain the amount of their attachment to the mere earth where they were born. What sends so many thousands annually from Ireland, and Scotland, and England, to America? Why do we make roads and build bridges in the Highlands, but in consequence of a report to the Parliament, that it was necessary to lay out money in this way, in order to prevent the inhabitants from emigrating to America? Why have we laws to punish artizans for attempting to leave the kingdom, and for punishing commanders of vessels who afford them shelter? What, in short, is it that has peopled North America, given eight millions of citizens to that Republic, which is the object of Mr. Canning's deadly hatred, and has made her our rival in commerce, manufactures, and maritime war? Not, surely, that "*instinctive patriotism*" that love of one's breeding-place; not, surely, that patriotism, which induced the Ringwood cow to elope from Botley. No: but that desire, which every rational being has to get rid of some evil, or to mend his situation. Mr Canning, in confirmation of his degrading doctrine, quotes Goldsmith, who, speaking of the Swiss peasant, says:

"Dear is that *shed*, to which his soul conforms,
And dear that *hill* which lifts him to the storms."

That is to say, that a poor creature, living on a bleak hill in a hovel, sets great value upon the *hovel and its contents*, and likes the hill, inasmuch as it is the site of the *hovel*. But, what does this amount to, at last, but his attachment to what he calls *his*, and which, miserable as it is, is his *all*? However, a more unhappy illustration could not have been found, it being notorious, that the Swiss get out of their country as fast as they can find shoes to bear them away; that they become lackeys, and builzers, and porters all over Europe; and that, to complete the proof of their "*instinctive patriotism*," they hired themselves as *soldiers* to the French, the Germans, the Prussians, or any body else, and were not unfrequently opposed to each other in battle by the princes to whom they let themselves out to hire, until the French revolution, by an exposure of the infamy of such a traffic, put a stop to it; though now, perhaps, amongst the other good things, which Mr. Canning anticipates from the great approaching change, this traffic may possibly be revived.

There is, however, such a confusion of ideas in this part of the speech, that I must quote it, in the speaker's words, in order, not that the reader may comprehend its meaning (for that is impossible, I think); but that I may not be chargeable with having garbled it.

"The order of nature could not subsist among mankind, if there were not an "*instinctive patriotism*, a love of national independence, I do not say unconnected "with, but prior and paramount to, the desire of political amelioration. It may "be very wrong that this should be so. I cannot help it. Our business is with "the fact. And surely it is not to be regretted that tyrants and conquerors should "have learned from experience that the first consideration suggested to the inhabitants of any country by a foreign invasion, is not whether the political constitution of the state is perfect, but whether the altar at which he has worshipped, and the home in which he has dwelt from his infancy, whether his wife "and his children, whether the tombs of his forefathers, whether the palace of the "sovereign under whom he was born, and to whom he may owe, or fancy that "he owes, allegiance—should be abandoned to violence and profanation?"

"That in the infancy of the French Revolution, many nations in Europe were

"*unfortunately led to believe and to act upon a different persuasion*, is undoubtedly true;—that whole countries were overrun by reforming conquerors, and flattered themselves with being proselytes till they found themselves victims. Even in this country, as I have already said, there have been times when we have been called upon to consider whether there was not something at home which must be mended before we could hope to repel a foreign invader with success.

"Gentlemen, it is happy for the world that this sort of question should have been tried, if I may so say, to disadvantage; that it should have been tried in countries where no man in his senses will say that the frame of political society is such, as according to the most moderate principles of regulated freedom it ought to be: here I will venture to say, without hazarding the imputation of being myself a visionary reformer, political society is not such, as, after the success of this war, and from the happy contagion of the example of Great Britain, it is sure gradually to become. It is happy for the world that this question, as to the value of national independence, should thus have been tried on its own merits; that after *twenty years of controversy* we should be authorized by undoubted results to revert to truth and nature, and to disentangle the *genuine feelings of the heart* from the obstructions which a generalizing philosophy had wound around them.

"What Goldsmith has beautifully applied to the physical varieties and disadvantages of a country has been found to be not less true with respect to political institutions. The sober desire of improvement, the rational endeavour to redress wrong or correct imperfection in the political frame of a government, are not only natural but laudable in man: but it is well that it should have been shown by irrefragable proof that these sentiments, where they exist, *supersede not that devotion to native soil which is the foundation of national independence*. And it is right that it should be understood and remembered, that this sentiment of national independence alone—aroused where it had *slumbered*—enlightened where it had been *deluded*—and kindled into enthusiasm by the *insults and provocations* of the enemy, has been found sufficient, without internal changes, or compromises, of sovereigns and governments with their people, without relaxations of allegiance or abjurations of authority, to connect the nations of the Continent in one common cause, to lead them against their tyrant, and to shake and (may we not hope to overthrow) the Babel of his power?"

Here is, as I said before; such a *confusion of ideas*, that one hardly knows where to begin the work of separating and comparing them and bringing them to the test of reason.

We are told, that it is an "*instinctive patriotism*," a "*devotion to native soil*, which is the foundation of *national independence*." We will, by and by, inquire what is meant by these two last words, the use of which is so common, and the meaning of which is so very vague; but, at present, let us suppose that the speaker means, that the effect of this "*instinctive patriotism*," this "*devotion to native soil*," is, the exertion of a people to keep any enemy out of their country. In other words, that there requires nothing but this love of their native soil to make men fight against an invader; that this feeling, "*this genuine feeling of the heart*," is quite sufficient without any other consideration. But, not to speak of the *fact* again yet, how does this agree with the speaker's observation, that men fight for the *homes* in which they have dwelt; for their *wives and children*, and other objects? They fight, he says, against an invader, because these objects, so dear to them, should not be *exposed to violence*. In short, they hazard their lives in repelling invasion, because they fear that the invader will take away *their property and make them miserable*; and, not because they fear he will insult or dishonour the dirt upon which they walk, or the place where they happen to have been born, and upon which particular spot not one out of five hundred is living.

What becomes, then, of his doctrine of "*instinctive patriotism*," if it be for houses, goods, chattels, churches, wives and children, that men repel invasion? These are under the safe-guard of laws, that is to say, *political institutions*, without which there can be no property, or ownership, in anything.

What becomes, then, of his degrading doctrine; what becomes of his assertion, that a mere cattle-like attachment to the earth, is of itself sufficient to make men fight against an invading enemy?

Even in those countries, where the wretched inhabitants are bought and sold with the estates, in which they are bred, and where the human form is animated with a degree of intelligence little superior to that of a brute, it is not the mere love of the soil which produces resistance to an invader; for, though the vassal be a sort of beast, the lord knows *his* interest, and he drags forth the vassal to war, not from a love of the soil, but from *his* love of the *profits* of the soil. In short, for the sake of *his property*; for fear of losing more than he has any chance of gaining.

But, why need we have made these observations? What need had we of an argument drawn from the reason of the case, when Mr. Canning himself has told us (what, indeed, we well knew before), that, in spite of this fine "*instinctive patriotism*;" in spite of this "*devotion to native soil*;" in spite of this "*genuine feeling of the heart*;" that, in spite of this "*foundation of national independence*," that, "*many nations of Europe were unfortunately led to believe and to act upon a different persuasion; that whole nations were overrun by reforming conquerors, and flattered themselves with being proselytes, till they found themselves victims.*" In plain words, many nations of Europe, in the hope of bettering their condition, received the French invaders with open arms; but, at last, finding themselves "*victims*;" finding that they had been "*deluded*;" being "*insulted*" and "*provoked*" by their new masters, they joined with their old sovereigns to drive the new masters out. Let us take all this for granted; for it completely drives away the notion of "*instinctive patriotism*." Here we see nations, *many nations*, receiving the invader with open arms, because they *thought* he would *better their lot*; and we see them driving him out again, because he had *rendered their lot worse than it was before*.

Here we see "*many nations*" actuated, in this question of invasion, not by any "*instinctive*" feeling about the *soil*; but by motives of self-interest; by considerations connected with their property and political institutions; we see them, in short, making *calculations*, putting the good against the evil likely to arise to them from the invasion of their country; and deciding in favour of the former. We see "*whole nations; many nations*," acting thus; Mr. Canning himself exhibits them to us as thus acting; and yet, with the statement of this fact, this notorious fact, upon his lips, he, from his innate love of cattle-like feeling in the people, he tells his hearers, that a twenty years' war has decided this great question, has put reforming philosophy to shame, and has clearly proved, that "*a devotion to native soil*" alone is the foundation of national independence, and that it is quite sufficient for the purpose of keeping out or driving out an invader, without the aid of any motive connected with political institutions.

Yes, Mr. Canning could not disguise the fact, that "*instinctive patriotism*" had not prevented the Brabanters, the Dutch, the Italians, the Germans, the Prussians, the Polanders, from receiving the French

invaders with open arms, and with the avowed hope of *bettering their condition*; he could not disguise this fact, so well known, and so directly in the teeth of his doctrine; and, therefore, he says, that this "*instinctive patriotism*," this "*devotion to native soil*," this "*genuine feeling of the heart*," "*slumbered*," that it was "*deluded*," till "*enlightened and kindled*" by the *insults and provocations* of the invaders. A strange sort of *instinct* this? Instinct is a feeling wholly unconnected with *reason*; wholly distinct from *mind*. How, then, could it be enlightened; how could it be kindled; how could it slumber; how be deluded?

But, this confusion of ideas, this floundering, this flippant trash, was well enough suited to Mr. Canning's audience. It is possible that he thought that he himself understood what he was talking about; but, whatever might be his thoughts as to that matter, he knew well enough, that his audience was incapable of detecting any absurdity that might escape him. The *darker* the *deeper* he knew for them.

There was, however, to be drawn from this monstrous doctrine of "*instinctive patriotism*," a practical inference of great import to *ourselves*. It was this: that, whereas "there have been times when we have been called upon to consider, whether there was not something *at home*," which must be mended before we could hope to repel a foreign invader "with success." This question, says he, is now settled; *because* we have seen that people who have less liberty than the people here enjoy, have, by the operation of "*instinctive patriotism*" alone repelled the invader.

There the premises are false; for we know, that the nations of Europe did *not repel invaders*; that they received the invaders with open arms, as Mr. Canning acknowledges; and that, whatever they have now done to assist their old masters, has been in the driving out of *new masters*, by whom, as he says, they had been insulted and provoked.

Besides, whatever may be Mr. Canning's opinion of the power of "*instinctive patriotism*," in this country, none of the ministries, to which he has belonged (and he has belonged to almost every one for twenty years past), appear to have placed much reliance upon it. They have acted upon notions very opposite indeed. They have kept on foot a large regular army; they have had an army of reserve; they have had all sorts of militias; they have established camps, built barracks near every considerable town; they have had recourse to yeomanry and volunteers, clothed as soldiers, and placed under officers appointed by the crown and paid by the people; nay, they have brought a very considerable *army of foreigners* into the country, upon the ground, expressly alleged, of their being necessary; districts of England itself have been under the command of some of these foreigners.

Now, if the "*instinctive patriotism*" of a people be sufficient to induce them to repel an invader, and if this "*genuine feeling of the heart*" be not less powerful in England than in Germany, why all these military establishments? Why all the enormous expense of camps, barracks, armies of reserve, yeomanry, volunteers and foreigners, amounting to not less than ten or fourteen millions sterling a year? As a speech-maker at Liverpool, Mr. Canning found it convenient, in support of his principles, as an enemy of reform of corrupt abuses, to broach his doctrine of "*instinctive patriotism*;" but, as a *minister*, he was too wise to trust to that patriotism for the repelling of an invader; or, if he did trust to it, he wisely chose to clothe his "*instinctive patriots*" in uniform, and to furnish them with arms, pay, lodging, coals, candles, and with bread and

meat at a given price. I am by no means calling in question the wisdom of these measures; I am not endeavouring to show, that the camps, barracks, and all the other causes of expense, above enumerated, were not necessary, *in our situation*, for the repelling of invasion; but, I must insist upon it, that the practice of Mr. Canning and his different sets of colleagues has been in direct opposition to the doctrine that he now holds.

Mr. Canning tells his audience, that the Reformers have said, that *without a reform the country could not be defended against an invader*. Now, says he, this is not true, for we have seen the contrary on the Continent, where no reform has been made or promised; and, therefore, the question is *decided* against the Reformers.

In the first place, I repeat, that invasion was *not repelled* on the Continent. It was a *new master* that was driven out; and, in the next place, I deny that the Reformers have ever said, that, *without a reform the country could not be defended against an invader*. What the Reformers have said is this: that, to ensure the repelling of an invader, the people must be better satisfied with the state of the representation; OR, that *an enormous expense must be incurred for the support of an army of some sort in the country*. This is what the Reformers have said; this is what they still say; and is there anything that Mr. Canning, or any one else, can produce in the change of governors on the Continent, or in any of the events there for the last twenty years, which does not make *for*, instead of *against* this position? And, as to what has happened *here*: it is true, that no reform has taken place, and that yet, we have not been invaded with any considerable degree of success; but, the army at home has added many *scores of millions* to a debt, which no peace, no state of prosperity, which nothing short of an event which no minister will dare look in the face, will ever get rid of, or materially diminish.

The money, which this home army has cost, might easily be shown to surpass 10,000,000*l.* a year. This, during the 20 years of war, amounts to 200 millions. Thus, 200 millions of the national debt are due to this cause, and this imposes upon the people of this country 10 millions a year of interest *for ever*; that is to say, about one-half the amount of the Property Tax. So that, if a five per centum tax, or one-half of this terrible tax, under which the farmers and tradesmen and handicraftsmen are writhing with such impatience, should be kept on *after the war*, the country will probably begin to feel, that it would have been better to have *a reform and no domestic army*, during the last 20 years.

The Reformers have asserted, and MAJOR CARTWRIGHT has brought forward arguments to prove, that, with reform, this army might have been dispensed with. It is possible that the Reformers may have been wrong, and that Major Cartwright may have reasoned erroneously; but, his reasoning has never been shown to be erroneous; and Mr. Canning has not now produced anything to shake the assertion of the Reformers.

So that this speech fails in its main object, which was to produce a belief, that, because the French armies had been driven back by nations, having no political liberty, political liberty is not at all necessary to the safety of a country against the attacks of a foreign enemy.

This was the main drift of the speech. The object of the speaker was to impress upon the minds of his hearers, and, through the press, on the minds of the people at large, that *Reform* has not been, and is not *necessary*. This was what he was aiming at. "Here," says he, "we are in a state of triumph; we have not been invaded; we have beaten France;

"we have got out of all our dangers; we have done this *without any reform*, which clearly shows, that no reform was necessary; nay, we see, besides, that nations having not even the name of political liberty in use amongst them, have fought heartily against the French and defeated them; which clearly shows, that '*instinctive patriotism*' alone is sufficient to induce a people to defend their country." And hence the speaker leaves us to infer, that *even if the mass of the people of England were reduced to the state of those of Russia, there would be no danger of their siding with the invader.*

This, *this* is the result at which he aimed. With this object the speech was made. This was the account to which the speaker endeavoured to turn the recent successes of the Allies.

The friends of freedom, under the name of Jacobins, Levellers, and Democrats, or what not, have often been accused of wishing success to the French; of rejoicing at their triumphs; and of mourning at their reverses. This was a very foul and base way of opposing arguments in favour of a reform of notorious abuses; but, really, if Mr. Canning's doctrine, if his mode of arguing, if his inferences were right, the friends of freedom might with pride plead guilty to the charge; for, if the defeat of the French by the armies of nations who enjoy no political liberty be taken to be a proof, that rotten boroughs and sinecure places are good things, and that Englishmen need no political liberty; if such a conclusion be to be drawn from the defeat of the French by the Allies, ought not Englishmen to lament that such defeat has taken place, and is it not natural for them to wish to see the ground of such a dangerous doctrine speedily removed?

According to this doctrine of Mr. Canning, it is not only natural for a man who is attached to the rights and liberties of his country to lament that his own government is successful, but it is his duty to endeavour to prevent such success; because this gentleman tells us, that we are to take that success as a proof, not only that no reform of abuses ought to take place; but, also, as a proof, that no political liberty at all is necessary to the defence and safety and happiness of the country.

Such is the state, to which the prevalence of this abominable doctrine would reduce the friends of freedom in every country in the world where abuses exist. A due regard for their own liberties and those of their fellow citizens would compel them to wish to see their government and its armies defeated.

It is absolutely necessary to show the falsehood and the absurdity of this doctrine in every way that it presents itself to us.

Success in war being, by Mr. Canning, taken as a complete proof, that no reform is wanted in the government which has obtained that success, we may ask him, why he has, for the last twenty years, been crying out against the several governments in *France*; seeing, that under them, far greater successes in war have been obtained than by all the other governments in Europe put together within the two last centuries. If success in war be a proof, or even a mark, of a good government, the French have, for twenty years past, been blest with the best government that ever existed; and yet Mr. Canning has been incessantly scolding and railing against the French government, during the whole of that period.

The American government, too, which Mr. Canning so hates, and the President at the head of which the *Times* newspaper calls a "*hypocritical villain*," must, according to Mr. Canning's doctrine, be a pretty

good one ; for, it is notorious, that its forces have been victorious by sea and land ; that in the war of frigates, they have beaten ours three times out of four ; that, in several instances, their inferior ships of war have beaten ours with an equal force ; that they have defeated us upon the Lakes ; and that they have invaded and possess a large portion of our North American dominions.

The flashy gentleman, as he was dashing along, seems to have forgotten these things ; but we must stop him and pin him down here, and make him acknowledge, that the American government is an excellent one, and that the French government for the last twenty years has been excellent ; or, make him eat his words, and confess, that success in war is *not* a proof that the government obtaining it is excellent and stands in need of *no reform*.

I now come to inquire a little into the meaning of the words "*national independence*," so often made use of by Mr. Canning, and of which he appears to have no very distinct idea. He says, that his famous nostrum of "*instinctive patriotism*," is of itself, without any political considerations, sufficient to ensure "*national independence*," by which, from the context, it would seem that he means the *keeping out of invaders*, for he states the effect of his wonderful instinct to be the defending of property from plunder. But, are nations, then, to be regarded as independent in all cases except while they have invaders in their territories ? May not a nation be placed in a complete state of dependence on others, or on another, without being invaded ? All the world knows, that they may ; and, it is equally well known, that a nation, whose rulers are turned out by foreign aid, and who receives a foreigner for their sovereign, may still be *independent nations*. In that revolution which we style "*Glorious*," a foreigner was put upon the throne of this kingdom, and brought with him foreign troops to assist him against the partisans of our king. No one will, I imagine, attempt to say, that England was *degraded*, or that she lost her *independence*, in consequence of that Revolution. In Sweden we see in the heir to the throne, a *Frenchman*, in nowise related to the Royal Family ; a man who was not long ago a private soldier in the service of France ; a relation by marriage of Buonaparté himself. No one will, I imagine, be inclined to dispute the *legitimacy* of his title to the Crown of Sweden, or to say that Sweden has been degraded, or lost her *independence* by his being placed over her. He is one of our august Allies ; we have, in the most solemn manner, acknowledged his heirship to the crown, and to an island which we have ceded to Sweden.

What, then, becomes of all the outcry about the loss of *national independence* in those countries where Frenchmen have obtained the sway ? Why should Naples, or Italy, be looked upon as *degraded* by their change of sovereigns any more than England was, or than Sweden is, by the change of sovereigns in those countries ?

Why should it be a crime in a Neapolitan, or an Italian, or a Dutchman, or a German, to have favoured and sought for a change of rulers, if it was no crime, but a great merit, as Mr. Canning will not deny it was, for Englishmen and Swedes to favour and seek for such a change ?

The words "*national independence*," like the word "*constitution*," are made to take whatever meaning may best suit the purposes of those, who use them with a sinister view. But, unless Mr. Canning be prepared to go the length of condemning our glorious revolution, and the more recent glorious revolution in Sweden, he must acknowledge that men may love

their country, that they may be very meritorious men, that they may be entitled to every mark of respect, and every epithet of praise, notwithstanding that they effect, or endeavour to effect, a change in their rulers, even with the assistance of foreign troops.

What then, become of all these loose and unqualified invectives against revolutionists? Where is the justice of this sweeping charge of "*folly*" and "*baseness*," preferred against those nations of the Continent, who received with open arms the men who came to change their rulers? We call William the Third our "*deliverer*;" and why are we to call the people of the Continent foolish and base, because they hailed Frenchmen as their *deliverers*?

We are told by the hirelings of the Times and other newspapers, that we can never expect solid peace with France while Napoleon is on the throne, because he is not the *lawful* possessor of the throne. How, then, are we to expect a solid peace with Sweden, where the Crown Prince has no other title than that of the choice of the States any more than Napoleon has; and where the newly introduced prince is not only not a *native* of the country, but a Frenchman. It is true, that Louis XVIII. is alive to dispute the sovereignty with Buonaparté. And, is not the poor King of Sweden, our formerly august and eulogized Ally still alive, also?

In short, this talk about "*national independence*" is, if looked into, mere noise and nonsense. It is a big-sounding phrase, it is a watch-word, a cry set up by the crafty to astound the ignorant and inflame their prejudices. The former make the latter believe, that it was a love of "*national independence*" that roused the people of Russia, Germany, and Holland, to drive out the French. We have no authentic accounts of any such *rousing*. The cause of what has happened is to be looked for in the loss of the grand French army in the frosts and snows of Russia, following upon the heels of an event that no human being could have thought possible, the burning of Moscow by the hands of Russians. To this cause, succeeded by the defection of Prussia, Austria, Bavaria, and Wurtemberg, aided by English subsidies, and by the skill of a *Frenchman* commanding the Swedish and other troops, also aided by an English subsidy; to these causes, purely physical; to numbers and to money, and not to any moral cause; not to any thing proceeding from the *minds* of the people of Europe, we must look for the change in the situation of the sovereigns of the Continent. By *principles* at first, and by *force* afterwards, France extended her influence and her dominion. By *force alone* she has been driven back. Whether she be again to advance is a question not yet quite decided, notwithstanding Mr. Canning so loudly proclaims "*the humiliation of France and the rescuing of Europe*" as being completely finished. But, there is another question in a state of much less uncertainty: namely, whether, let the war end when and how it may, we, the people of this kingdom, will not find ourselves losers by it.

Mr. Canning boasts, that, during the *twenty years* that he has been in Parliament he has been an advocate for the war. That is to say, from the first hour of the war to this day.

He then observes, that, as an avowed advocate for the war, he was chosen by his hearers to represent them. From this, in order to show how wise they were in choosing him, he proceeds to draw a contrast between the situation of affairs *then* and the situation of affairs *now*, and to show how much our affairs have been improved by continuing the war.

This was unfair. He took the wrong periods as subjects of comparison. He, who had been, and who boasted of having been, an advocate for the war from the *beginning of it to this hour*, and who asserted that the principles of the war had always been the same, should have gone back to that *beginning*, in order to make the contrast exhibit a proof of the soundness of his principles and the correctness of his foresight ; in order to show, that his conduct was worthy of approbation, and himself worthy of confidence and support.

Instead of doing this, however, he skips over *eighteen years out of the twenty*, and begins his contrast, in 1812, "when," to take his own words, "two-thirds of the ports of the Continent were shut against you ; "when but one link, as it were, was wanting to bind that Continent in a "circling chain of iron, which should exclude you from intercourse with "the other nations of Europe."

If there had been, in this assembly of 400 persons, but one single man, endowed with common spirit, to stop him, and to cry out to him : "Not so fast ! Go back to the *outset of your twenty years' war* ; name to us the "port that was THEN closed against us in any part of the world, France "herself not excepted, with whom we carried on a commerce more advantageous to England than any she ever knew : and, before you come to "your period of 1812, tell us how many thousands of bankruptcies your "war produced ; how many hundreds of thousands of people it made "paupers ; how many millions it added to our annual burthens ; what "rummaging it made amongst our account-books to get our incomes ; how "many, and what laws, before unknown, about libel, sedition, and treason, the conflict brought into the Statute-Book ; how many millions "your war added to the national debt ; how it banished gold and silver "from the land ; and how many of our countrymen it caused to perish in "battle : tell us a little about all this, and explain to us the *means* by which "we were brought to the situation of 1812, before you proceed to contrast "the latter period with the present."

If there had been but one single man, in this assembly of 400, to stand up and stop him somewhat in this way, I am of opinion, that the orator, though not sparingly gifted in that quality, which is generally typified by one of the most obdurate and impenetrable of metals, would have stood aghast. True, the state of the country is better now than it was in 1812, or, at least, its warlike situation is better ; but what is that to the question of good or evil as relating to the whole of the war, for which Mr. Canning boasts that he has been an advocate ? If a foolish, or wicked servant lose or squander a *thousand* pounds of mine on Monday, am I to applaud his adroitness or integrity, and think myself a lucky man, because he has restored to me *ten* of them on Saturday ? Yet this I must in consistency do, if I were to admit the justice of trying Mr. Canning's politics according to the principle and mode of reasoning which he has resorted to in this part of his speech.

But this I cannot do. No : I must go back to the state of my affairs on Monday ; and then I shall find, that, though I am *ten* pounds better than I was on Friday, I am *nine hundred and ninety* worse than I was before I was so unfortunate as to trust my servant with my bag.

However, I must confess, that, after going through all the cobweb work of the former part of the speech, followed by the last-noticed skipping contrast and empty boasting, my eye darted with eager expectation on the following passage, where, perceiving the words "*compensated*"

and "*gained*," in italic characters, "Oh!" said I, to myself, "here is something *solid* coming at the close: we are now going to see what we have *gained* by this war of 20 years' duration."

Here, you 400 gaping oafs! Take it in again. Swallow it down a second time, while my reader and I divert ourselves at the sight of your scramble for these precious *gains*!

"Can we regret that we did not lie down and die under the sufferings of the inclement season? or did we not more wisely *to bear up, and wait the change*? — Gentlemen, I have said that I should be ashamed, and in truth I should be so, to use the language of exultation, if it were the language of exultation only; but those who have *suffered great privations* have a right to know that they have not suffered them in vain; they have earned a claim not merely to consolation, but to something more. They are justly *to be compensated for what they have undergone*, or lost, or hazarded, by a contemplation of what they have *gained*. We have gained, then, a rank and authority in Europe, which for the life of the longest liver of those who now hear me, must place this country upon *an eminence which no probable reverses can shake*.—We have gained, or rather we have recovered, a splendour of military glory which places us by the side of the greatest military nations in the world.—Twenty, nay ten years ago, while there was not a British heart that did not beat with rapture at the exploits of our navy, there were few who would not have been content to compromise for *that reputation alone*; to claim the sea as *exclusively* our province, and to allow France and the other Continental Powers to contend for superiority by land.

"Let Portugal, now led to the pursuit of her flying conquerors, let liberated Spain, let France herself, invaded in her turn by those whom she had overrun or menaced with invasion, attest *the triumphs of the British army*, and the equality of her military with her naval fame.

"I do not say that these are considerations with a view to which the contest, if otherwise terminable, ought to have been purposely protracted: but, I say, that upon the retrospect, we have good reason to rejoice that the contest was not closed ingloriously and insecurely:—when the latter events of it have been such as have *established our security by our glory*. I say we have reason to rejoice:—that during the period when the Continent was prostrate before France, that especially during the period when the continental system was in force, we did not shrink from the struggle, that we did not make peace for present and momentary ease, unmindful of the permanent safety and greatness of this country, that we did not leave unsolved the momentous questions *whether this country could maintain itself unaided and alone*; or with the Continent divided, or with the Continent combined against it; whether, when the wrath of the tyrant of the European world was kindled against us with seven-fold fury, we could or could not walk unarmed and unfettered through the flames.

"These questions, Gentlemen, therefore, have *been solved* by our perseverance under difficulties and discouragements which, when related in history, will appal our posterity more than the actual suffering of them has appalled ourselves."

So then, wholly and exclusively of *military glory*, *military reputation*! And there we stop. This sort of language might have had some sense in it, if addressed to the *army*; if addressed to *military* men; if addressed to those who have no other object than that of the credit and profit of the fighting trade in view. But with what sense could it be addressed to an assembly of merchants, and dealers, and handicraftsmen, who could have not the smallest pretensions, personally, to any share of this sort of *gain*?

But, to this acquisition is, it seems, to be added, a knowledge, or, at least, a *confidence* which we have acquired by the war, that we are able to defend our country; that we have, within ourselves, the means and the courage, to ensure us against being conquered by foreign nations.

Was this, then, *doubted* before the war? Was it ever, before the war, a question with us, *whether England was able to defend herself against*

France? The gentleman says, that *that question* is now decided. As if the question was ever entertained before this unhappy war began.

Now, says he, our *soldiers* have a reputation equal to our sailors. And when had they it not? When were we disposed to yield, in this respect, to the French, or any other nation? It is notorious, that, *before this war began*, it was an opinion grown into a vulgar maxim, that *one* English soldier was equal to *three* French soldiers. I grant, that the opinion was erroneous, and the maxim that of the vulgar, imposed upon by crafty men. But, it is undeniable, that the opinion was generally entertained, that the maxim was on every one's lips; and, it is equally undeniable, that, by the events of this war; by our numerous retreats before French armies; by the occurrences at the Helder, at Dunkirk, at Corunna, and in divers other quarters, this flattering opinion of our superior prowess, this maxim so well calculated to excite a feeling of contempt towards our enemy, have been entirely put out of vogue; and, according to Mr. Canning, they have been replaced by an opinion, founded on proof, that our soldiers are *as good* as those of France; and, that we need not fear their power to invade and conquer our country. A mighty *gain* indeed! A *very great object* to be obtained by twenty years of war!

The drift of Mr. Canning, in this part of his speech, is, however, in great part, to give *Lord Wellington* the merit of having effected this glorious change, so advantageous to our reputation, and so powerful in its effects as to our future security; for, in another paragraph of the speech, he says, that, after the peace, the meanest Englishman, walking the streets of Paris, will be pointed out as a member of that nation which has *humbled France*; will be pointed out as the "*compatriot of Wellington*."

Now, in the first place, France is not *yet humbled*. It is not yet, and, of course, it was not, three weeks ago, time to sell the Lion's skin. And, in the next place, if France be finally humbled, will it have been *by England*? Will no other nation have had a hand in the work? If she be humbled, will it not have been by the joint efforts of *all* the other nations of Europe?

And, suppose that an Englishman were to be looked upon in the light that Mr. Canning says he would. Is it any thing *new* to the world for Englishmen to be thought highly of as soldiers? Just as if Englishmen were nothing in the field *before this war*; as if Englishmen never set a hostile foot in France till led by this Lord Wellington! As if we ought to forget all about the battles of Poitiers, Cressy, Agincourt, and many others. Lord Wellington has barely entered France; he is not *out* of it yet; his campaigns have yet, by their *result*, to show whether it be likely that Frenchmen will, with fear and trembling, look at his compatriots. But, taking his feats, as they now are, what has he done? Why, with two nations of 13 millions of people on his side, and with an army that has cost us about 20 millions a year, he has, at the end of four years, so far got the better of a mere detachment of the forces of France, as to just poke his nose into the French territory. And this is to cover us with *glory*, is it? This is an *acquisition of military glory to England*, with a 20 years' war, and 600 millions of debt, besides six hundred millions more of taxes? Why, Mr. Canning, did we want all this war and expenditure to prove that Englishmen were capable, under such circumstances, to poke their noses into France, when history told the world before, that Englishmen had *conquered all France*; that they actually

held possession of a considerable part of France for centuries ; that so late as the reign of Queen Mary, Calais was an English town ; that so late as only 140 years ago Dunkirk was an English town. And, did we, after the battles of Marlborough and Wolfe ; did we, indeed, want the war ; this long, expensive, and bloody war, to establish the fact, that Englishmen were able to meet Frenchmen in the field.

But, Mr. Canning, you talk of the *honour and glory* that we have *gained*. You have overlooked a little item of this sort which we have *lost*. Amongst the titles of our king, *before this war*, was that of KING OF FRANCE. He was, before this war, " King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland," &c. &c. France is *now* expunged from his title ; a title won by Englishmen fighting in France. It had nothing *real* in it. Our king was not, in fact, King of France. No ; nor was, nor is he, *Defender of the Faith* of the Romish Communion, as Henry VIII. was styled by the Pope. But, the former, like the latter, made part of his honorary appellations. He was not in reality King of France in 1801, when that part of his title was given up ; but, he was in 1801, and he is now, *as much* King of France as he was before your 20 years' war ; and, why has the title been yielded up *since the war* ? I ask you WHY ? I have heard it said, that the king gave it up, because it was become a *disgrace to be king of such a people* ! Upon this principle, if they should return to allegiance to the Bourbons, the title may be *revived*.

No, no, Mr. Canning, that day is gone by. That title will never be resumed. When I was a child my father had to explain to me *why* our king was called *King of France* ; and, in so doing, he had to relate to me the victorious wars of our English ancestors. You and I, Sir, are saved that trouble. All the old guineas are gone (another happy effect of your war) ; the old crowns, half-crowns, and shillings have followed the same course ; our copper coin is new ; so that the great, wide-spreading, ever-present record of the gallant achievements of our forefathers are all vanished. Your children and mine have nothing to tempt them to ask us any questions upon that which is now, in spite of all your boasting, a very painful subject.

I could here, entering upon matter better suited to your audience, show how enormous the *losses* of this nation has been from the war ; I could draw a comparison between the state of the country in 1792 and 1814, as to its Debts, its Taxes, its Currency, its Paupers, its Laws, its Liberties, and its Prospects, which, I think, would wring the heart of every real lover of England. But, confining myself to your own topic, to your own view of the matter ; taking you upon that ground, which you yourself have selected, and upon which to stand and crow in fancied security, with eyes half shut and plumes expanded ; taking you here, I show, I flatter myself, that your promises are false, and that your conclusions are false, even supposing your premises true.

It only remains for me to apologize to the reader for having, as I fear, put his patience to too severe a test. But the poison was so artfully mixed up and kneaded together, that it required time to analyze it and to furnish, as I hope I have, an appropriate antidote.

I may deceive myself in the utility of this antidote, but, in case others, who have the means, may be desirous of giving it circulation, a few Numbers extraordinary have been printed this week, in order to afford them an opportunity of so doing.

WM. COBBETT.

CORN LAWS.

(Political Register, May, 1814.)

THIS subject would require a greater space than I am able here to allot to it. So much nonsense has been published about *protecting* the farmer; so much unparalleled trash, that I hardly know where to begin. I shall confine myself to a mere hint or two; first observing, that, speaking as a grower of wheat, I wish for none of this sort of *protection*.

It has been said, that the manufacturing interest will suffer by any measure tending to keep up the price of corn; and, that to give the farmer security for high prices, must injure the rest of the community.—Now, in the first place, I deny, that it is in the *power* even of a body of men, who have been called *omnipotent*, to cause the farmer to have a high price; the price depending upon the *crop*, and not upon any law or any regulation. But, supposing it possible to give the farmer a high price, how is that to injure the eaters of bread? If the corn be cheap, all other things will be cheap in proportion; and, amongst other things, the produce of the manufactories. The *fundholder* seems to be the only person with reason to complain of high prices; because he has *nothing to sell*. He is an annuitant, whose nominal income is fixed, and therefore, when the loaf is at 1s. 6d. his annuity is worth to him only half as much as when the loaf is at 9d. But if the loaf were to be, and to continue at 9d. for any length of time, *whence is to come the money to pay him his annuity?* A wish has been expressed *to bring things round by degrees to the prices of 1792!* What profound *ignorance*; or, what profound *hypocrisy!* In 1792, or before the war preparations, the whole of the taxes (no loans) raised in the country did not exceed fourteen millions. The taxes raised last year, 1813, amounted (exclusive of loans) to sixty-nine millions. And yet, there are men so devoid of *sense*, or so devoid of *shame*, as to talk of bringing round prices to the state of 1792! The annual interest on the debt (which must *continue to be paid*) is now about forty millions. In 1792, it was nine millions. All the annual expenses in 1792 amounted to less than five millions. Can they now amount to less, even in time of peace, than twenty millions? How, then, are prices to be *brought round* to the standard of 1792? To bring prices to the standard of 1792, you must first *bring round* the taxes to the standard of 1792, and next you must *bring round* gold in place of paper.—So that these wise advocates of *low prices* are beginning their amiable endeavours at the wrong end.

If the wheat were at five shillings a bushel; beer at 2*l.* a quart; beef at 3*d.* a pound; it would make no difference to the farmer, except for the remainder of his lease. It would make no difference to Mr. Coke, or Sir Francis Burdett, or any other landholder, to whom 5000*l.* a-year would be as valuable as 20,000*l.* a-year now is. It would give them the means of living just in the style that they now live. But, then, in both cases, the taxes must be diminished in the same proportion; and, in place of collecting 69 millions a-year, you must collect only 23 millions at most, which would but little more than *HALF suffice for the payment of the interest on the Debt*, leaving the Civil List, the Army, the Navy, and every other out-going wholly unprovided for.

It has been observed, with most brazen impudence, or with more than idiot folly, that it is unjust thus to *put money into the pocket of the landholder*, at the expense of the poor soul who *hardly earns his morsel of bread*. In the first place, Mr. Coke, for instance, if he let his land at 30s. an acre instead of 10s., must pay for servants, for horses, for carriages, for beer, for bread, for everything on which he lays out his money, 3s. instead of 1s. How, then, can the high price of corn give him any advantage over the poorer people who serve him, or who administer to his wants or his pleasures? Besides, he must pay 3s. in taxes instead of 1s. So that, in fact, as far as this goes, it is the Government, or the public, or the Debt, or the State, or, call it what you will, which in the end *receives the difference*.

Those who eat the loaf must, of course, pay the tax. We see very plainly how the tax upon *sugar*, or upon *spirits*, fall upon the *consumer*; but the tax upon bread being collected, not upon the *loaf*, or the *flour*, or the *wheat*, we lose sight of its march to our mouths. But, if it be collected upon the earth, in which the wheat grows; upon the house in which the grower lives; upon the horses that plough the land for the wheat; upon the iron and the leather that make up the harness for the horses that plough the land for the wheat; upon the gig that carries to church the wheat-grower's wife; upon the nag that carries the wheat-grower, the next day, to market to sell the wheat; upon the cloddy-heeled boy, who becomes a gentleman's servant, for his looking after the nag and brushing the shoes of the wheat-grower; upon the dog, whose teeth are necessary to protect the wheat-grower's barns; upon the stamps of the wheat-grower's lease, his receipts, and his notes of hand; upon the sugar, the coffee, the tea, the soap, the candles, the pepper, the salt, the very drugs, and a score of other things, used in the house of the wheat-grower; upon the malt that makes the beer necessary to keep his nerves steady amidst the bewildering of such an accumulation: if the tax be collected upon all these, must it not be paid, at last, by those who *eat the loaf*, made out of the wheat? And if the wheat-grower gets little money for his crop, is it not evident that he can have little money to pay to the Government in any shape whatever? Is it not, in other words, evident, that if wheat (*generally* the regulator of all other commodities), continue to be of the present price, the interest of the Debt cannot be paid?

Mind, reader, I am no advocate for *law* that is now pending. I know, that the thing will, and must, regulate itself. If, by importations from countries where the land is more fertile and less taxed than ours, wheat were to become too cheap to make it profitable to grow it here in the present average quantity, less would be grown here; the capital, the labour, the means of all sorts, now used for the raising of corn, would, in part, be used for other purposes; and some of those who are now farmers would turn their hands to other employments. I see no harm in this. But the thing is impossible. No such effort, it appears to me, can be produced by importations from abroad, the quantity being too small to be of any consequence. I think, that Mr. Coke, and the other advocates of the Bill, proceed upon erroneous notions of the effect of importation. But, at the same time, they are by no means chargeable with *injustice*. Their endeavours, in fact, tend to the protection, not of the *farmer*, but of the *fundholder*, and of those who depend on the *Civil List*. Their endeavours, they being landholders, are very disinterested, seeing that

their inevitable tendency is to enable the grower of wheat to draw money from the eaters of bread, and to pay it over to the Government.—I do not know how it has happened, but no one appears to me to have viewed the matter in this its natural light. Some persons have talked of the *hardship* upon the farmer to pay such heaps of taxes. The hardship consists wholly in the trouble, and the torment, and the humiliation: for the farmer does, and *must* get the amount of the taxes back again from the *bread-eater*. He may not do it for one year, or for two years; but, upon an average, he *must*. The tax pursues the commodity to the *mouth*, as, necessarily, rivers find their way to the sea. I view the wheat-grower as a collector of money to be paid over to the agents of the Government; and, if others did the same, I am of opinion that we should hear much less about the *grasping disposition* of the landholders and their tenants. I dislike the talk about that “*valuable class of men, the agriculturists*,” as the farmers are now called. I do not see any peculiar claim that they have to such an appellation. They till the land for gain, just as a shoemaker makes shoes for gain, and as a merchant, or manufacturer, carries on his business for gain. I see no *obligation* that the community is under to the growers of wheat, who sell it as dear as they can. They are entitled to no special mark of legislative favour; but, as they are the grand vehicle for the taxes, it is the height of stupidity to express wishes to make them an unproductive vehicle.—As very closely connected with this view of the corn subject, I will here notice what has been said about *bringing round our CURRENCY* to the standard of 1796; that is to say, when gold was in free and general circulation. How such an idea came into the head of any one accounted sane, I am at a loss to discover. We were told, that *peace*, upon a firm foundation, would do the thing of itself. It is notorious that a *light guinea* will sell now for 26 or 27 shillings in paper. But the worst, the most foolish part of the conduct of those who entertain the notion of restoring our currency to the standard of 1796, is, that they allow, at the same time, that the paper-money is depreciated; and (*now observe*) that this depreciation has had the effect of *raising prices*.—Very well. It is *depreciated*, and it has *raised prices*.—Keep this in mind, and then ask these wise men, what would be the effect of “restoring the currency to its former *healthy state*.”—These gentlemen, in their anxious desire to restore guineas, overlook *the interest of the debt*. But, is it not manifest, that they ought to have this object continually in their view, when they are talking upon the subject of restoring guineas and *lowering prices*? And is it not also manifest, that, in whatever degree *prices be lowered* for a permanency, the interest of the debt must, in *reality*, though *not nominally*, be *augmented*?—Now, then, what is the annual interest of this debt? I will not plague the reader with any miserable detail about funded and unfunded, and redeemed and unredeemed; but will state, in round numbers, that the debt requires taxes to be paid to the amount of about forty millions a year.

Suppose, then, that *wheat* (to take that article as an instance) be now upon an *average of years*, 27*l.* a load, of five quarters; the paper-money has, at the rate of exchange with Paris, depreciated *one-third* below gold; and, of course, has *raised prices one-third*. Bring the currency back to the standard of 1796, and the consequence is, that wheat will be upon an average of years, 18*l.* a load. Well, then, farmer *Stiles*, whose share of payment of interest of the debt is 27*l.* a-year,

and who, of course, used to pay a *load of wheat*, a-year, must, upon the restoration of guineas, pay a *load-and-a-half of wheat a-year*. This would make the farmer scratch his head, I believe ! It is as clear as day-light, that the restoration of guineas would, in reality, make the debt cost sixty millions a-year instead of forty millions a-year. But this is not all. The Civil List, officers of all kinds, pay, pensions, annuities, fixed stipends of every sort, leases, ground-rents, rent-charges, must all become more expensive by one-third to those who have to pay them. What a revolution would be here ? What smashing, what work for lawyers, and bill-framers ! Besides, as to the *justice* of the thing, I am so certain that it is impossible for it to take place without the utter destruction of the paper, and the debt along with the paper, that it does seem to me superfluous to talk about the justice or the policy of it ; but, for the sake of those who may not be of my opinion as to this point, I will say a word or two as to the *justice* of such a measure, if it were practicable.

The greater part, or, at least, a very considerable part, of the debt has been contracted since 1796 ; that is to say, since the Bank ceased to pay their bills in specie. Of course, those who have lent the Government this part of the money, have lent them *paper-money* of the same, or nearly the same value, with the present paper-money. To pay these people their interest, therefore, in specie, would be to give them one-third more than is really their due ; and, in the same degree, it would be to do wrong to those who have to pay that interest.

The same may be said with regard to all offices, pensions, grants, rent-charges, &c. which have originated since 1796.—But, as I said before, the thing is impossible.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer is reported to have said, that it was *probable*, that the Government would *not* call upon the Bank to pay in specie in six months after the signature of the definitive treaty of peace. His answer was wise. It is really very probable indeed, that the Bank will *not* be so called upon.—Oh, dear ! What curious things this glorious event in France will bring to light, and bring about ! Very probable, indeed, that the Bank will *not* be called upon to pay in specie ! This peace will put many a one to his trumps !

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHAMPTON, ON THE CORN BILL.

(*Political Register*, June, 1814)

MY WORTHY BUT DELUDED NEIGHBOURS,

Having read your Resolutions on the subject of the Corn Bill, signed by Mr. John Rowcliffe, the Mayor of your town, upon which Resolutions, it appears, you are now about to frame a Petition against the said Bill ; and being convinced that the views of the matter taken in those Resolutions are extremely erroneous, I think it right to endeavour to show you that you are in error.

Before I proceed to this, however, I must premise, that I myself disapprove, not only of the proposed Corn Bill, but of any and every Bill or

law, that has been, or can be, passed upon the subject. I look upon such laws as wholly useless, and as always attended with a greater or less degree of injury to the country. I am of opinion, that the trade in corn should always be perfectly free, let its price be what it may; and that the trade in all other products should be the same. I, therefore, would have cheerfully signed your Petition, had it simply prayed for the not passing of the proposed law. But, if your Petition had been handed to me, I would not have signed it; because it seems to me to be founded on, and to give sanction to, wrong notions relative to the causes of high price and public distress; because it seems to me to be calculated (and was, perhaps, by its chief promoters intended) to keep the people of this country in a state of blindness, as to the causes of their miseries, in which state of blindness they have lived for more than twenty years past. Your Resolutions contain many propositions unsupported by reason or fact; but my great objection to them is, that they are calculated to withdraw the minds of the people from the true causes of the distress and miseries of which they speak, and to direct them towards false objects; and, by that means, to put off the period of the application of an effectual remedy. It shall be my endeavour, as it is my duty, to show, that this objection of mine is well-founded; and, in order to do it in a clear and satisfactory manner, I will, as I proceed, quote the several Resolutions, which you have caused to be published, under the signature of your Mayor, who, however, I am very far from regarding as the real mover of the question in your town, there being, manifestly, a stronger hand behind the curtain pushing the matter forward.

Resolution 1st.—“That for several years past the price of wheat and other grain has been excessively high throughout this kingdom, and that the consequent distress has been considerably felt by all classes of society; while the poorest classes have occasionally been sorely and severely tried with all the evils inseparable from dearth and indigence.

Resolution 2nd.—“That this Meeting had earnestly hoped, in behalf of themselves and their poorer fellow-subjects, who have in general borne the calamities of the times with most laudable and exemplary patience, that the return of peace would have alleviated the distress that has been so long experienced, and would have carried comfort and plenty into every part of his Majesty's dominions.

Resolution 3rd.—“That this Meeting are struck with great apprehension as to the effects which they conceive will inevitably follow from the enactment of a Bill which is now depending in the House of Commons, on the subject of the Corn Laws; which must at once sweep away all hope of a reduction in the price of the most necessary article of human subsistence; fearful lest the disappointment of expectations long cherished, during a most protracted and anxious contest with foreign powers, should excite at home, among the suffering classes of the community, a spirit of discontent and dissatisfaction, at a moment when it is most fervently to be wished that this kingdom should find rest from that tedious curse of suspense and calamity, in which foreign ambition and tyranny have so long involved it.”

I wonder why you should have introduced this latter sentiment, seeing that it could do no good, and seeing that the point might be disputed with you. I, for instance, deny, that it was “foreign ambition” and “tyranny” that involved us in the war. But, I will, as far as it is possible, keep all extraneous matter out of the discussion. You assert here, at the outset, that the high price of corn has been the cause of distress; that you hoped that the return of peace would have alleviated that distress; that peace would have carried comfort and plenty into every part

of the King's dominions ; and you fear that, if the suffering classes should be disappointed in that hope, a spirit of discontent and dissatisfaction will arise throughout the country. From this it is manifest, you mean **THAT CORN IS USUALLY AT A LOWER PRICE IN PEACE THAN IT IS IN WAR.** This is an error. It is, indeed, an error into which others have fallen as well as you. The people at Portsmouth have promulgated the same sentiment. Mr. Waithman, in his speech to the Livery of London, is reported to have talked about "the social connection between peace and plenty."

The error is, therefore, not confined to you. But, it is still an error ; and certainly not less subject to exposure, or more entitled to respect because it is a vulgar error. The "social connection" of which Mr. Waithman and you talk, has no existence in fact, and never can have such existence, until there is a connection between peace and fruitful seasons. What does plenty mean ? Why ; abundance proportioned to our wants. And what can possibly make one time more abundant than another, except the difference in the seasons ? Will any one say, that the blights or the mildews pay any respect to peace or war ? Was it peace that gave us the feeding showers, the hot suns, the fine harvest of last year ? Or is it war which has given us the cold dry winds of this last month of May, and the white frosts which we have had, until within these four days ? Does peace give us greater quantities of apples and peaches than war does ? Why, then, should it give us greater quantities of corn ? Upon the very face of the thing, these propositions contain absurdities too gross to be endured. But the error exists, and it is my object to eradicate it, first reminding you, that the idea of an inseparable connection between peace and plenty is directly in the teeth of all those assertions, which the advocates of war have been maintaining for the last twenty years. They have always contended, that the war was not the cause of distress ; that the people were better fed and better clad than they were ever before ; that the nation was at the height of prosperity ; and that veteran placeman, old Mr. George Rose, whom you so highly complimented, has taken infinite pains to prove, that the population has been increasing during all this bloody war ; a proof, according to him, of the increasing happiness of the people. But, now, all at once, he seems to have discovered, that war was a cause of distress and misery ! So it has been, indeed, but not in the way that he would now have us believe.

There are two modes of meeting and controverting any proposition : by reference to experience ; or by the arguments which the case offers. The former is an appeal to facts ; the latter to reason. I shall appeal to both, and with full confidence that the "social connection between peace and plenty" will be proved to be the fruit of vulgar error—an error having no better foundation, perhaps, than the alliteration which two very pretty words offered to the author of some ancient popular ballad.

When these words were rung in our ears at, and soon after the peace of Amiens, I took some pains to ascertain what experience said upon the point. Mr. Addington, who is now Lord Sidmouth, came into office, and made peace in the year 1801. Bread, which had, owing to two bad crops and one bad harvest, in 1799 and 1800, become very dear in 1800, and the first nine months of 1801, became cheap the moment peace was made. That was quite enough. Mr. Addington had given us **PEACE** and **PLENTY**. There needed nothing more. Bread had been dear in the two last years of the war ; and, the moment peace was made, it be-

came cheap. These two facts were put together, and the point was settled for ever. The vulgar notion was planted for the present generation. It was not considered what moment that was when peace was made. It was made in the end of September; that is to say, at the end of harvest; and that, too, a very fine and most abundant harvest. This was wholly overlooked. This was too trifling a circumstance to be noticed. The belly was satisfied, and "peace and plenty" became the standing sentiment. In my inquiry into the truth of this sentiment, I resorted to the actual weekly accounts of the price of the quartern loaf, as recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine*; and the result of which inquiry, I published in detail, in an article in the REGISTER, which article I wrote, as it oddly enough happens, at Southampton, the first day that I ever saw that town, the 18th of August, 1804. The following is an abridged statement of that result. It will give you a view of the average price of the quartern loaf in the several periods of peace and of war for the space of time exceeding half a century. The price is stated in pence, farthings, and fractions of a farthing. The years are stated inclusively :

From 1750	}	Peace	<i>d.</i>
to 1756			5½ ⁷
From 1757	}	War	5½
to 1762			
From 1763	}	Peace	7
to 1775			
From 1776	}	War	6¾
to 1782			
From 1783	}	Peace	7 ¹⁶ ₁₆
to 1792			
From 1792	}	War	11½
to 1801			
end of Sept.	}	Peace	10½
From 1801			
end of Dec.	}	War	9
to 1803			
end of April	}	Peace	
From 1803			
end of April	}	War	
to 1804			
end of July	}	Peace	

Now, as my source of information is open to every gentleman in the country, you will hardly suppose me to be stating here that which is not true; and if it be true, where is the foundation of your fine idea of "peace and plenty?" We see here only one instance out of four in which the loaf is dearer in war than in peace; and that instance will surprise no one, who recollects, as I do, that the harvest of 1800 was so wet, that the wheat grew in the ear over one-half of the kingdom, the preceding crop having been very poor indeed; and that the peace, luckily for the Minister, came in the same month with a very fine dry harvest and a most abundant crop. After this last war commenced, the bread continued to fall in price, as you will perceive by the statement. Yet, the favourite idea, the sweet alliteration of "peace and plenty" continued to vibrate on the ear; and the vulgar, the stupid notion became

rooted in the minds, even of men of talents and general knowledge, who did not give themselves the trouble to inquire, or the time to reflect. But, indeed, why need we recur to former times of war and peace? The wheat was at a lower price last December than it is now. It fell to the lowest price that it has yet been at before there was any prospect of a peace. Was it peace, then, that made it cheap? Is it not to set common sense at defiance to hold such a notion? Experience, which is said to make fools wise, seems to plead in vain when the belly is concerned. At the time when the wheat began to grow cheap, the war existed, and upon a more extended scale than ever. We got no wheat from America, none from France, very little from the Baltic; and yet it became at half the price that it was the year before. Still, in the face of all this; with these facts so fresh before our eyes, we affect to believe that it is peace which makes wheat cheap; and these men, to whom the public look up, who talk about the "social connection between peace and plenty."

Coming now to the other mode of meeting this vulgar prejudice, let me ask any of you, what are your *reasons*, leaving experience out of the question, for believing that peace and plenty are, or ought to be, inseparable associates? Do you think that the people of the country will become less numerous in time of peace, and so the demand become less? Do you think, that, continuing the same in number, their appetites will become more moderate? Do you think that the soldiers and sailors will eat a less quantity on their return home than was sent them to eat abroad? Do you think that the sun will shine stronger, and that the dews and rains will be more propitious? What, then; what, in the name of common sense, do you think? And *why* were you led to hope that corn would become cheaper with peace? Do you think that more will be imported? And, if so, *why*? During the far greater part of the war, we have had all the corn from America that the Americans thought it worth their while to send us. We have always had all the corn that France could spare us. Between England and the Baltic the intercourse has been very seldom obstructed. Why, then, should more be imported *now* than before, when, into the bargain, corn here is become *cheaper* than it was before?

The Portsmouth Resolutions state:

"That, at the present moment, the alteration is more particularly objectionable. Under the pressure of *Taxation*, necessarily occasioned "by a long and expensive war, now happily about to be terminated, the "Country has been induced to look forward to the return of peace as "the means of alleviating their burdens; the disappointment of so "reasonable an expectation, which must be experienced in the increased "price of the necessities of life, is an evil that cannot therefore be "contemplated without alarm." What a jumble is here! What a strange confusion of ideas! They have here thrust together two things so wholly different, that one is at a loss to discover between them the smallest connection. Aye, indeed, it is reasonable enough to expect to pay less taxes; but what has that to do with the price of wheat? Or, if these sons of Neptune, who have really fattened upon the war, meant that the bread ought to be cheaper in consequence of the tax being taken from the land, they ought, in common conscience, to have waited to see the tax taken off the land first. If these gentlemen do really feel any alarm at the prospect of seeing bread continue to be dear, their best way would have been to petition to have the taxes taken from the land and

the horses; for, they may be well assured, that, whoever eats bread must pay, in the price of the loaf, the amount of those taxes.

I will now insert the rest of your Resolutions, premising that it is only on the 7th and 8th that it will be necessary for me to offer you any observations, the rest relating to the detail of a measure which I hope will be adopted, and which detail, if we really understood it, could be of no use except to some one in the situation of a Custom-house officer.

"4thly.—That the allowing at all times of the unrestrained exportation of wheat and flour, and the prohibiting of the importation thereof, at the low duty, until the average price of the aggregate quantity sold in England and Ireland reaches the exorbitant rate of eighty-six shillings per quarter, must necessarily be attended with most grievous consequences, and must effectually and permanently destroy every hope of returning cheapness.

"5thly.—That as the word 'aggregate' comprehends all sorts of wheat, how inferior soever in quality; and also wheat that has been injured by blights, smuts, mildew, heat in the mow, or by damages on ship-board or otherwise; and also Irish wheat, which is altogether of an inferior quality, and which never bears the price of English wheat within from 8s. to 15s. per quarter; the consequence must certainly be, that when eighty-six shillings per quarter is the average of the aggregate quantity, thus including all sorts of wheat, the actual average of good uninjured wheat, such as is brought to the English market, will be from 10s. to 15s. per quarter above that price, before relief can be obtained from any foreign market. That, thus, when this plan shall be felt in its operations, the actual importation price in England will be above one hundred shillings per quarter: which sum is about fifty shillings per quarter higher than the price at which importation was allowed at threepence per quarter duty under the Act of Parliament called Governor Pownall's Act; a law that had for its basis the benefit both of the landed interest and of the consumer: so that the absolute difference between the importation prices will exceed the entire price of wheat at the time when that Act passed.

"6thly.—That a graduated scale for imposing a duty on this most necessary article, must have a tendency to check, and even absolutely to prevent importation, in times of dearth and distress, when it should seem that every encouragement and facility should be afforded to the importers, in the laudable exercise of a branch of commerce, which, at the best, is always subject to innumerable risks. That these risks will be so increased by the effects of the graduated scale, that it can scarcely be expected that any prudent man will venture to send orders abroad for wheat; because, as, at the end of every three months, new returns will regulate the duty on importation, and as various delays may cause cargoes to be four or even six months on their voyage, a declension of price at home in the meantime may actually subject the importer to a duty of 24s. per quarter, while he has also to bear other losses, that in such cases must arise from the late arrival of his cargo.

"7thly.—That since, for so many years, the middling and lower classes of his Majesty's subjects have borne the burden and pressure of the times, in a manner that reflects the highest honour on their good sense, and just value of the blessings of good government and social order, they have a right to expect that, in the present state of things, the opulent land-holders of this kingdom should be prepared to make some sacrifices; that, in consequence of the excessively high prices of corn, hay, and butchers' meat, since the commencement of the war, the land-holders of the United Kingdom, on the expiration of leases held under them, have from time to time raised their rents from one to two hundred per cent., and in many instances still higher, while rectors and lay-rectors have also, with better reason, raised their tithes in like proportion; so that these classes have thus been, in a great measure, if not wholly, indemnified against the taxes and consequences of the war: while gentlemen (not being land-holders), men of slender fortunes, annuitants, tradesmen, and the poor at large, could have no indemnity nor relief whatever; but were obliged to bear the heavy burden of the Government and parochial taxes, both for themselves and for those exonerated as aforesaid.

"8thly.—That a Petition, grounded on these Resolutions, be presented to the House of Commons, praying that they will by no means sanction a plan that

" must inevitably fix the rent of land at a permanently extravagant rate, confirm the load of parochial burdens for the maintenance of the distressed poor, render the most necessary article of subsistence perpetually dear, bar the bounties of Providence from the majority of his Majesty's subjects, and hopelessly discover the pleasing association of peace with plenty and cheapness, that has so long been a source of consolation in the midst of extensive calamity."

Before people make assertions, they should take some pains to ascertain the truth of them. Almost the whole of these which you have here made, are wholly untrue! and, it must be allowed, that Mr. Rowcliffe, who has put his name to them, is, in some measure, answerable for the falsehood.—What does he mean by asserting, that it is the middling and lower classes who have borne the burden and pressure of the times? Has not every landholder in the country borne his share? Have not his land, his house, his windows, his horses, his carriages, his dogs, his servants, his malt, his wine, his spirits, his sugar, his soap, his candles, his salt, his everything, been taxed heavily? How, then, has he escaped the burden and pressure? By the middling and lower classes Mr. ROWCLIFFE must mean the Tradesmen and Labourers; for, he manifestly has no feeling for those who have been farmers: And how has the pressure been confined to those two classes? Tradesmen have raised their prices; labourers wages have nearly been doubled; servants wages have undergone the same change: And who has been paying this advance, but those who have employed those tradesmen and those labourers? How, then, have these classes suffered more than any other class? The common labourer, at Botley, did, until last Autumn, receive, upon an average, about 2s. 8d. a-day. He now receives but 2s. even in the month of June; and his average pay for this year will not exceed 1s. 6d., for the crowds of labourers, who are out of work, it is quite surprising to see. A year and a half ago we were glad to employ any creature that we could find. We have now to pick and choose. It is surprising what an improver of manners this low price of corn is! In 1812, I gave twelve shillings an acre for hoeing, which I can now have done for six shillings, being in no sort of fear of giving offence, if I find fault with the execution of the work. Many men employed in that year, earned, before harvest, from six to eight shillings a-day. None of them will earn, this summer, at the same sort of work, above three shillings. Farmers will judge of the state of our labourers, in 1812, when I tell them, that some men asked me a guinea an acre for hoeing out turnips, drilled in two-foot ridges. I can now have the same work performed by men for about three shillings an acre. I did not give the guinea, to be sure; I had the work done by women, who worked by the day. But I notice it as an instance of our situation at that time. My harvest-men had eight pounds for the twenty-eight days of the harvest-month, including four Sundays. They reaped and mowed, some of them, with pipes in their mouths, as the Hanoverians, in America, used to march to battle. They took the thing very coolly. I can now have more work done for three pounds. If my neighbours gave less in money, they made it up in drink and food. What, then, has the labourer gained by the low price of corn, and how is he to gain by it? How did he bear the burdens of 1812? The fall in the price of corn has been a great injury to him. His clothes have not fallen in price! His salt, his sugar, his candles, his soap will not fall, nor will his heavily-taxed beer fall in price. So that his lot is greatly worsed, and he is everywhere praying for the return of the prices

of 1812. It is not only the farmer's labourer who feels this, but every labouring man, in whatever way he may be employed. The labourers of bricklayers, in gardens, in nurseries, in woods, on roads and canals: and it must be so; for, not being wanted in the fields, they must seek work elsewhere, and thus they must reduce the price of labour in other departments. The lower class, therefore, have felt nothing of the burden of the times. Their very manners have changed with the change in the price of corn. They are, all of a sudden, become humble as beggars. They surround our doors with cap in hand to obtain work. We were the beggars before; but, not now having the same motive to solicit their services, and to put up with their misbehaviour, we resume the tone and authority of masters; yet Mr. ROWCLIFFE asserts, that this is one of the classes who have borne the burdens and pressure of the times, and that the hour is now come, when they had a right to expect, that the masters would make some sacrifices! Mr. ROWCLIFFE seems to think, that the landholder and the farmer (for they go together), ought to pay the labourer the same wages when wheat is 15*l.* a load, as when it is 40*l.* a load. Does Mr. ROWCLIFFE happen to know any manufacturer, who acts thus? Let him consult that venerable old placeman, Mr. Rose, or his son, GEORGE HENRY ROSE, who has the reversion of a 3000*l.* a-year sinecure, whether the manufacturing labourers are not paid in proportion to the price of, and demand for, the products of their labour? Those gentlemen will tell him, that the stocking-weavers wages were, some time ago, lowered to one-half their former amount; that they rioted on that account; that many of them were shot; that laws were passed to punish them, in certain cases, with death. Why, then, does Mr. ROWCLIFFE suppose, that other labourers are not to feel the effect of any fall of the price of the products of *their* labour? But, the truth is, that Mr. Rowcliffe does not reflect at all upon the subject. He takes up the matter upon the vulgar cry; and he puts forth notions which are perfectly absurd. With regard to *tradesmen*, too, does he suppose, that those who own, and those who till the land, will pay them at the same rate at which they paid them when wheat was 40*l.* a load? Will the man who receives 15*l.* instead of 40*l.* have so much work done by smiths, carpenters, wheelwrights, bricklayers, collar-makers, saddlers, tinmen, plumbers and glaziers, as he had done before? He *will* not, because he *cannot*. The consequence *will* be, because it *must* be, that the workmanship in all those trades must fall in price, and that, too, in proportion to the price of corn; and it will be still *worse* than it was before for tradesmen, because, not only must their prices come down, in proportion to the price of corn, but the *extent of their employment must be diminished*; and, as in the case of the labourers, many of them will have no work to do; or, which is the same upon the whole, they will be frequently *out of work*. Mr. ROWCLIFFE should propose a law to *compel* the owners and cultivators of the land to pay tradesmen and labourers as high prices now as they paid them in 1812, and to employ them in the same numbers. Then his conduct would, at any rate, have the merit of *consistency*; but, at present, he exhibits to the world a sad and barbarous jumble of nonsense.

It is asserted that the landowners and farmers (for they must go together) have *indemnified* themselves against the taxes and consequences of the war; that *gentlemen* (not landowners), men of *slender fortunes*, *annuitants*, *tradesmen*, and the *poor at large*, have been obliged to bear,

not only their own share of the *Government and parochial taxes*, but have also borne the *share of the landowners and farmers*. I will not call it *impudence* to make an assertion like this. I will call it folly; incomprehensible emptiness, to assert, that the *poor at large* have paid the *Government and parochial taxes*; and I should not at all wonder, after this, to hear Mr. ROWCLIFFE boldly assert, that the poor-rates have been collected, in part, from the paupers, and even at the door of the poor-houses. Is it possible that this Mayor of Southampton should be ignorant, that the poor-rates are assessed upon the *real property* of the country. Is it possible for him to be ignorant, that it is the *land*, and the *land only*, which is called upon to maintain the poor? Houses, in towns, indeed, bear their proportion, and why should they not? Why should not tradesmen pay their poor as well as the farmers their poor? But, it is notorious, that a considerable tradesman, in a country town, does not pay more to the poor than a little farmer, who rents land to the amount of 50*l.* a year, and who and whose family very frequently work harder and live harder than the poor, whom the laws and the justices compel them to feed. And yet Mr. ROWCLIFFE is not ashamed to give it under his hand, that those whose property has been in land, and its produce, have borne no share in supporting the poor! This is no *particular* hardship upon the landowner or farmer; because what they pay in poor-rates must finally fall upon the consumer of the corn; and they can, in the end, lose by the poor only in proportion to what is *consumed by themselves and families*. But, surely, they bear in that proportion. How, then, can it be said, that they have been indemnified against taxes by high prices of land and corn? I will suppose a case, in order to make this matter clear to Mr. ROWCLIFFE, who, though, I dare say, a very worthy man and magistrate, certainly does want leading-strings upon subjects of this sort.—The landowner, in fact, would lose all the taxes paid by himself and the farmer, if they did not fall upon the consumer. But, to get rid of all complexity here, we will suppose the case of a man *cultivating his own land*; for he is both landlord and tenant.—Now, suppose him to be relieved from the plague of those multifarious papers which are tendered to him by the tax-gatherer. Suppose him to know nothing about poor-rates. Suppose there to be no tax upon his leather, iron, hemp, salt, sugar, soap, candles, horses, dogs, or anything but his land; and, suppose that land to be taxed at 3*l.* an acre, which is probably less than he now pays in one shape or another, directly and indirectly. Suppose his farm to be a hundred acres. Suppose him to grow upon it 300 quarters of wheat (and nothing else) at 4*l.* a quarter. His produce is worth 1200*l.* a-year. Take off the tax, and his wheat will sell for 3*l.* a quarter, because he can afford to raise it now at 3*l.* as well as he could before at 4*l.*; and because, the cultivation of the land, like all other pursuits of gain, is, and must be, subject to the unerring and unchangeable laws of competition.—For, if his wheat continued to sell at as high a price after the tax was removed as it did before, his pursuit would become so profitable, that capital and talent and industry would crowd into it from all directions; and thus would competition reduce his gains to their former standard. It is manifest, then, that the tax falls upon the consumer of the wheat; and this is Mr. Rowcliffe's idea; but he seems to think, that the grower of the wheat never eats any bread himself. This would be a little too hard. The Jews (God's chosen people) were forbidden to muzzle the ox employed in treading out the corn. Would Mr. Rowcliffe not suffer

those who grow the corn to fare as well as the beasts they use in growing it? Be this as it may, the fact is, that the growers of corn do eat some of it. They make a part of the consumers of their own crops; and, as in the case supposed, the grower would probably consume in his family about eight quarters of this wheat, he would, in fact, bear 8*l.* of the tax to his own share.—The notion of Mr. Rowcliffe is, that the cultivator ought, somehow or other, to pay the tax, and not charge it in the price of his wheat! Does this happen in other trades? The rum, in Jamaica, is worth, perhaps, 2*s.* 6*d.* a gallon. But, by the time that it reaches the lips of those who drink it, it is worth 20*s.* or 30*s.* a gallon. Would Mr. Rowcliffe have the rum-grower pay out of his own pocket all the charges of cooperage, wharfage, freight, insurance, storeage, brokerage, and tax, amounting to from 17*s.* to 27*s.* a gallon, and then sell his rum at 2*s.* 6*d.* a gallon to the nervous ladies, who give themselves the comfortable *coup-de-grace*, by drinking hot grog before they go to bed? I do not know what may be Mr. Rowcliffe's trade. Perhaps he is a tallow-chandler. Candles pay a pretty decent tax. I do not know what it is. Suppose it to be 6*d.* a pound, and the price of the candles 1*s.* a pound; why does not Mr. Rowcliffe sell his candles for 6*d.* a pound? Why does HE "indemnify himself against the tax?" And, if he does "indemnify himself" against the tax on his candles, why is not the grower of wheat to indemnify himself against the tax upon his commodity?

By this time, my good neighbours, you will, I think, begin to fear, that you have promulgated something very much like nonsense, under the name of your worthy chief magistrate; but you have the consolation of not being singular; for your sentiments, if a set of crude self-contradictions ought to be called sentiments, are, it must be confessed, pretty general throughout this enlightened country; nor should I at all wonder if they were to become a set of axioms in those illuminating seminaries, the Lancasterian schools.

We have, however, not done yet.—It is asserted, that the Corn Bill, if passed, would "confirm the load of parochial burdens for the relief of the distressed poor." I have above stated, that I disapprove of the Bill; but, supposing it to have a tendency to keep up the price of corn, how is it to tend to keep up the amount of parochial burdens? The land keeps the poor; and, if what you said before was true, that the wheat-growers will gain by the Bill, how is the Bill to add to their burdens? That the high prices do not make paupers is clear from the incontrovertible fact that wages keep pace in price with food; and that high price of corn tends to cause employment, which, under low prices, would not, and now does not exist. What, then, is the foundation of this assertion, that the Bill would "confirm the load of parochial burdens?" As it were for the express purpose of furnishing a suitable cap to this climax of absurdities, you charge the advocates of the Bill with an endeavour "to bar the bounties of Providence from a majority of his Majesty's subjects!"—Why do you not, at once, charge them with a design to fix a blanket between the sun and the earth? Will the Bill, think you, prevent the crop from being abundant and the harvest fine? Will it tend to impede the show-ers? Good Lord! What nonsense does the belly suggest to the tongue and the pen! Where, I pray you, is Providence to produce these bounties? In England, I suppose: and will the Bill keep the wheat from the mouths of you and Mr. Rowcliffe? If you mean, that it will keep fo-

reign wheat from your mouths, do you suppose, that, if you were to live upon foreign wheat, that wheat would still be grown in England? Can you possibly imagine; have your bellies so far got the better of your brains, as to cause you to believe that men will grow wheat here if you live upon foreign wheat; and that the culture of wheat in England will not diminish in the exact proportion to the quantity of wheat imported? Suppose, for instance, that candles were allowed to be imported at 5*d.* a pound as good as Mr. ROWCLIFFE's (who, for illustration sake, I suppose to be a tallow-chandler), which he sells at 1*s.* a pound, there being a tax of 6*d.* a pound, which he has to pay, do you think that Mr. ROWCLIFFE would make any more candles? Do you not think, that he would withdraw his capital from such a concern? Though the worthy Mayor does not seem to understand much about political economy, he has surely too much sense not to see that he must be ruined by continuing his trade. If Mr. ROWCLIFFE were to protest against such importation of candles, while the tax remained to be imposed upon his candles, would you charge him with the malicious design of keeping you in the dark? Why, then, do you charge the growers of wheat with the design of barring the bounties of Providence, because they are compelled to pay taxes, which keep their wheat at a higher price than foreign wheat can be imported at? I allow that their fears are unfounded. I allow that importation would not have the effect which they dread; but, if their fears be groundless, they are justified by your hopes and expectations. You assume, that the importation of wheat would cause the wheat in England to sell at a lower price, and then you blame the English wheat-growers for objecting to the importation, until they be relieved from the tax and the currency, which cause the necessity of a rise in the price of their commodity.

This expression, "the bounties of Providence," is mere cant. Bread is no more a gift of Providence than shoes, or stockings, or coats, or hats, or knives, or crockery-ware, or soap, or candles; and yet you say not a word about the laws which forbid—which wholly exclude, the importation of such articles? Why does not the farmer complain, that the ports are not open to bring him shoes and stockings, and his wife's gowns and linen cheaper than those of home produce? Why is a law of "protection," as it is called, to be refused to those only who cultivate the earth? Mr. Waithman, too, must get into a puzzle-wit about the landed interest and the trading interest. He must talk, too, about intercepting the bounties of Providence; he must talk about withholding from the people the blessings of a plenteous harvest. What! does he think that the advocates of the Bill mean to throw the corn into the rivers? How else are they to withhold these blessings? Does he think that they will not sell their wheat? What, then, does he mean? What sense is there in the ground which he took?

There is one more assertion in your Resolutions, which I must notice, before I proceed to show you the real causes of the dearth of which you complain. You say that the landlords have augmented their rents since the commencement of the war, and that the owners of tithes have, "with better reason," raised the price of their tithes.—As you do not condescend to give reasons for anything you assert, it is not surprising that you should have omitted to give any here. I believe it would have puzzled Mr. ROWCLIFFE to assign even the shadow of a ground for this assertion.

The clergy would, of course, rise their tithes in order to enable them to pay their taxes, and to purchase food and raiment of increased price : and pray, Mr. Mayor, why were not the landowners to do the same ? What better reason had the parson than the squire ? You may be a very enlightened and enlightening man ; but if all your candles, and all the candles in Southampton, were lighted at once, I do not believe that they would enable you to discover any ground for such an assertion as this. The phrase is parenthetical, and I cannot help thinking that it must have been put in at the suggestion of some reverend gentleman, who was amongst the farmers and these celebrated Resolutions. The landlord receives money from the land in the name of rent, the parson, in the name of tithe. Say, then, Worshipful Sir, why the latter had "better reason" than the former to add to the amount of his former receipt.

The real causes of high price have, my worthy neighbours, been sedulously hidden from you. The causes are the taxes, and the depreciation of our currency. You, of the town of Southampton, have no right, taking you as a body, to complain of either. You have all along been supporters of the war. You have all along supported a man who has been one of the greatest of sinecure placemen. You have supported all measures relative to the Bank and the paper-money. You have decidedly approved of the causes of that enormous expenditure and debt, which must perpetuate the taxes, and continue in circulation the paper-money. You have been amongst the first to produce these high prices, of which you complain. Not a few of you have shared, along with Mr. Rose and his family, in the profits of the debt and taxation. It is not, therefore, very wonderful that you should shun, with great care, any reference to the real causes of the high price, and seek to fix the blame upon landowners, parsons and farmers.

At the Portsmouth petitioning Meeting there was a Mr. Grant, who is reported to have repeated the old saying of "*Down corn down horn,*" and who followed up this stroke of wit with gravely observing, that he hoped to see the time shortly, when meat as well as bread would be sold at the old prices. How far this witty gentleman, whose head was manifestly affected by the prospect of a full meal ; how far he meant to go back, it would be hard to say ; but, perhaps, his hopes extended no farther back than the peace preceding the war against the French Republic ; the war for regular government ; and, as old George Rose called it, for "the blessed comforts of religion !" But this Mr. GRANT seems to have wholly overlooked the taxes imposed since 1792, up to which period, as we have seen before, the quartern loaf was sold at an average of 7*d.* If Mr. GRANT had looked over his shoulder at the Dock-yard, and then turned towards Spithead, he would have seen a cause for the quartern loaf's rise, and for its continuance at its present price, at least. If he looked at the new buildings in and about Portsmouth ; if he had thought of the millions of which Portsmouth had been the gulf, he would have hesitated before he railed against the growers of wheat, and the breeders and fatters of cattle.

During the peace, from 1783 to 1792 inclusive, the quartern loaf sold at an average of 7*d.* and 5-10ths of a farthing. Call it 7*d.* During this last year, it has sold at an average of about 14*d.* The whole of the annual taxes, raised during the late peace, amounted to about fourteen millions. The whole of the annual taxes, raised during this war, has been, upon an average, about forty millions. We have seen that the

taxes, that all the taxes of every sort, paid by the landholder and wheat-grower, must fall finally upon the eaters of the loaf, they themselves being loaf-eaters as well as other people; and need we go any further for a cause of the average rise in price of the loaf? Suppose that candles had (I do not know that they have not) been taxed during the war 2*d.* a pound, would they not have risen 2*d.* a pound? And, would you not look to the tax, as the cause of the rise in the price? And, if the wheat-grower has had to pay, and still has to pay, double, and more than double, the sum of taxes that he had to pay before 1792, will you not ascribe the rise in the price of his produce to the same cause? Or, has the profound belly discovered any rule of reason and of right, which distinguishes, in this respect, the farmer and his produce from all other men and all other things? Mr. WAITHMAN, who certainly had bestowed little reflection on this subject, got to floundering about this matter. The powerful cause, *taxation*, he could not wholly get out of his head, and yet he talked about the bounties of Providence being intercepted. He observed (I wish, with all my heart, he could have held his tongue!) that "a great deal had been said about protecting duties; but, when he saw, "that there was a duty of 17½ per cent. upon land from the Property-Tax "alone, were we to have no relief from THE FALLING-IN of that and "other burdens?"

Yes, Sir, but let it fall in first! Take away the wheat-grower's taxes before you expect his produce to return to the prices of 1792. You begin at the wrong end, good citizens. Would you not begin by removing the tax from Mr. Rowcliffe's candles, before you called upon him to reduce the price of his candles? Would you not take off his tax, before you permitted an importation that would knock him up in his trade? The belly has no feeling for anything but itself. It keeps crying, Stuff me! stuff me! without any regard to the means or the consequences. Say anatomists what they will, Mr. WAITHMAN, the belly has no bowels. "I'll show you," says CONGREVE, "a soldier, with his heart in his head and his brains in his belly." Have we not good reason to suppose, that this sort of organization is now become common throughout the country?

The taxes alone are sufficient, not only to account for the late average price of bread, but for its continuance. Reason, common sense, forbids us to expect, that peace, or any political event whatever, will, upon an average of crops, reduce the price of wheat, until the taxes, with which that article is loaded, shall be taken off; and when they are taken off, how is the interest of the debt to be paid? So that, my worthy neighbours of Southampton, when you see Mr. Ross again, pray move him to make a battle about taking the tax from the loaf; and if he will be so good as to get the tax removed, and to cause guineas to circulate in place of Bank-notes, or will put the paper at its former value, then I will pledge myself to sell you bread at the prices of the last peace. But, until then, you must expect to pay, upon an average, 14*d.* for your quartern-loaf, whether the prayer of your petition be heard or not.

Mr. GRANT, "the down corn down horn" gentleman, talked of returning to *old* prices; but did he not mean to include, in articles of price, the *paper-money*? A good golden guinea, such as was current at 21*s.* in 1792, will now sell for 27*s.* So that the guinea has *got up* as well as the corn. A guinea, in 1792, would exchange for no more than 21*s.* in paper; it will now exchange for 27*s.* in paper; and paper is the

thing which regulates our prices. When, therefore, the loaf is at a shilling, as it is called, it is, in reality, at no more than 9d. of the money of 1792. This fact the people of Southampton have blinked. This fact has been kept out of sight. Mr. ROWCLIFFE talks about the enormous price of 86s. a quarter; but that is only about 57s. 6d. of the money of 1792! And yet this is wholly overlooked, and the landowners are abused and burnt in effigy for wanting to secure this price. They really deserve it, however, for at all interfering in a measure, the sole tendency of which is to *prevent the taxes from falling off*, and from leaving the interest of the debt unpaid. I have before stated it, but I will again state it to you, that the proposed Bill is a MEASURE OF THE GOVERNMENT; that its object is to keep the taxes from falling off; and that if certain gentlemen, zealous for what they think the good of agriculture, have become its advocates, they have not rightly understood what the real interests of the wheat-grower are. I shall suppose, now, that the Bill does not pass, and (though I am sure it cannot be) that wheat comes down to 5s. a bushel, or 40s. a quarter. The whole of the prices of the country must follow it. The labourer will get about 10d. a day; and this rate will run through all the trades in England. A horse, which now costs the farmer 40*l.* will cost him from 12*l.* to 15*l.*; consequently, the taxes must come down in the same proportion, supposing none of them to be repealed (which I do not believe they will be); for, if the taxes continue the same nominally, they must fall off in amount. The Property-tax, for instance, is 17½ per centum upon land. Reduce the wheat from an average of 15s. to an average of 5s., the rents follow the price of wheat; and the Government will get only a third part of what it has lately gotten from the land.

Southampton "annuitants," do you begin to smell your danger? Do you begin to see that if you will not pay the taxes in the price of the loaf, and let others pay them quietly along with you, you will have to look sharp for the dividends on your annuities? You must be blind, indeed, if you cannot see, without the aid of Mr. Rowcliffe's candles, that it is you, and not the wheat-growers, who would be ruined by the fulfilment of your wishes. It has been stated in those oracular instructors of the people, the London newspapers, that Sir Somebody CALL, in Cornwall, has lowered his rents in proportion to the price of corn; and the wise editors of these papers, by way of a hint to the landholders, say, that they hope the example will be generally followed. Well! now, suppose the thing done all over the country. Would not the Property-tax fall off immediately to the extent of one-half of its amount? Who would be the losers? Not the tenants, clearly. Not the landowners; for wages, horses, food, all would come down to the reduced level. But, whence is to come the 40 millions a year for the payment of the dividends at the Bank? I will tell you what, my good neighbours, you ought to have resolved to do. You ought to have resolved to petition the Parliament to pass a law to compel the landowners to lower their rents, and the renters to lower the price of the corn, and all of them to continue to pay the same taxes, every year to the same amount, that they now pay; for, I do positively assure you, that, if you do not continue to pay the same annual amount in taxes, the interest of the debt cannot be paid. There would have been something savouring of tyranny in this proposition; but, at any rate, it would not have been downright nonsense.

No, my worthy neighbours, you have had your war; you have had

your frolic; you have had an expensive rout; and you must be contented to pay the reckoning. You, who have been open-mouthed for war for so many years, ought to be amongst the last people in the country to object to continue to pay a tax upon your loaf, in order to discharge regularly the interest of the money, borrowed for the purpose of carrying on that war. Have you ever, upon any occasion, moved a tongue against the expensive measures of the last twenty-two dismal years? Have you ever endeavoured to check the enormous expenditure that has been going on? Have you ever set your faces against any act of profusion in the public concerns? Have you ever uttered a syllable disapproving of any of those measures which have produced the debt? Never. But, on the contrary, you were amongst the first to pledge your lives and fortunes for the carrying on of the war. You have always supported a placeman, and a sinecure placeman, too. You have been famous for the profits which many of you yourselves have derived from the war; and you have been amongst the most forward to bellow forth invectives against those who were anxious to prevent the enormous expenditure which produced the taxes and the debt. You ought, therefore, to have been the last to expect, or to hope, to be relieved from the natural and inevitable effects of taxation.

I *disapprove* of the Corn Bill, not because it is unjust, but because, in the end, it will do no good to the grower of corn and the landowner; will expose them to unfounded calumny. I dislike it more particularly (and, indeed, that is all that I really care about relating to it), because it will in case of future high prices of corn, which will assuredly come, give the public mind a wrong direction, and induce the deluded people to rail at millers, and farmers, and bankers, instead of looking to the real causes of what they complain of, and seeking a remedy in the removal of those causes by legal and constitutional means. This is my ground of dislike to the Bill, against which, upon that ground, I would gladly join in a Petition; but I cannot put my name to a mass of heterogeneous matter, the offspring of ignorance and the source of delusion.

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 4th June, 1814.

TO MR. COKE, ON THE DISPUTE ABOUT CORN.

(*Political Register, May, 1814.*)

SIR: It has surprised me very much to see that you have given yourself any trouble about the *Corn Laws*. The people, who thrive by spreading delusion, were sure to abuse you. They were sure to represent you, who are so liberal a man, in all your transactions in life, as a *grasping monopolizer*; as a man wishing to pinch those very poor, who are fed out of your fortune. They, who, by hook or by crook, pocket part of

the money which you pay in taxes, were sure to hold you up as an oppressor. Had I been in your place, Sir, I would have left the passing of Corn Laws to those who are for raising great sums of taxes from the produce of the corn. It was not discreet in you, give me leave to say it, to expose yourself to the attacks of the herd of vulgar politicians, whose brains seem to be in their bellies. Only look at the trash which they are publishing upon this subject, and of which the following, from *The Times* newspaper, of the 23d inst, is a pretty good specimen :

" In my former remarks, I predicted that if the present measures for making a total alteration in the Corn Laws were persisted in, in the spirit then shown, a very few days would see the tables of the two Houses of Parliament covered with petitions. My words have been fulfilled and are fulfilling, and yet there are persons so desperate that they would endeavour to force on the measures alluded to, not only by precipitation, but by intimidation. They would brand every opposition to an unreasonable monopoly of the public food with the name of sedition.

" They have even dared to stigmatise as seditious the conduct of a gentleman, whose long and laborious public life leaves us in doubt which most to admire, the hardihood or the folly of the slanderer. This violent and factious calumny, I trust, will not deter any upright servant of the public from doing his duty. The true sower of sedition is he, who, stimulated by a spirit of rapacity and extortion, urges the precipitate adoption of measures, which must of necessity throw the whole empire into confusion, and render the landowners of the country objects of suspicion and hatred to the manufacturing and mercantile interests, without any real benefit to the great body of the agricultural population.—Sir, the return of peace, after so many years of a war which has convulsed Europe to its centre, naturally presented to people of all classes in this country the cheering hope that the burdens which they had borne with unexampled patience should be fairly and equitably lightened. None, but the wild and visionary, thought, that all our evils were suddenly to vanish ; none but the grossly selfish and avaricious imagined, that in time of peace they were to enjoy the exclusive advantages which the war had thrown into their hands. I have not heard that the officers of the army and navy have thought of petitioning Government to continue their full pay and allowances, or that the proctors and agents in the prize courts have ventured to pray for a supply of business at the public expense. I suppose the dealers in Omnium must be satisfied to see their golden harvest pretty much curtailed ; and the Contractors for the supply of naval and military stores must experience a considerable falling off in their profits. In short, property will shift its channels. Government cannot and ought not to embark and keep up any particular species far beyond its natural level. It may and it ought to take care that the fall should not be too violent. *Motos componere fluctus*. That is all it has to do. But some greedy and avaricious individuals have hit upon a plan to perpetuate, as they foolishly think, their own extravagant gains, at the expense of the community. Fools ! not to see that they will in vain strive to raise themselves on the depression of their country. Viewing this nefarious scheme in the light I do, I must assume that its original inventors were not among the national representatives."

Thus, you see, Sir, you have obtained the honour to be put upon a level with officers of the army and navy, proctors and bailiffs of prize courts, dealers in omnium, contractors, and the like. Well ! It is just. It is really just. For the country gentlemen of England, to their submission to the Minister of the day it is, that they owe what they now experience. It is to this that they have to attribute, that every saucy placeman and pensioner now flouts them to their face. It is to them that we owe the want of a Reform, which would have protected them a great deal more effectually than all the Corn Laws that ever were invented. They were afraid of a disorganizing spirit, and

they now feel the effects of their conduct.—Look, Sir, at the language of this man. He calls your efforts an endeavour to secure a *monopoly* of the PUBLIC food! you are charged (for it is *you* who is meant) with calumny on an “upright *servant* of the PUBLIC!” When it suits their purpose, they call such people *servants of the King*; but, upon this occasion, they call them *servants of the public*! You are accused of *rapacity* and *extortion*. You! who, I dare say, never took so much rent as you might, without any difficulty, have obtained. You! who are known to be so generous a landlord and a master, and such a liberal encourager of industry and virtue, and who have spent so large a portion of your time in pursuits tending to the benefit of others! And all this you are taunted with by a caitiff, perhaps, whose fortune is made up of a part of the taxes, collected from your own estate! But, again, I say, it is your own fault, and the fault of the other country gentlemen.—You must bear the grating sound of the words, which tell you that you have been a *monopolizer*, and that you want to continue the monopoly. How it must please you. How soft it must sound to your ears, to hear yourself confounded with those, whom you have been *paying* out of your estate! To hear the amount of your rents, a large part of which go to pay the *contractors*, reckoned amongst the BURDENS of the people, which ought to diminish along with the gains of the contractors. The *burdens* which people expected to be lightened, we are here told, included the *price of the loaf*; and the landowner is here exhibited as more avaricious than the contractor, because he wishes to perpetuate his *extravagant gains* even *after the war is over*, at the expense of the *community*!

There is no *reasoning* with this. It is too outrageously impudent to reason with. It is, however, the popular talk of the day. This corrupt press and the Lancasterian schools, will, upon this subject at any rate, beat reason out of the field. The number who eat bread so far exceed those who grow wheat, or own lands, that the odds against you are fearful indeed; and that was a fact well known to the false and cunning loon who was making this attack, and who, while he was, perhaps, one of the causes of the pauperism that covers the country, had the address to throw the blame upon you, whose income has gone to enrich him and to prevent the poor from actually starving.—No, Sir; had I been in *your* place, they never should have heard my voice in support of any law, the professed object of which is to protect the *farmer*, but the real tendency of which must be, if it has any effect at all, to *keep up the amount of the taxes*. In the last Number of the REGISTER I made this proposition as clear as day-light; or, at least, if I did not, it is out of my power to make it, or anything else, clear. If I had been a landowner like you, I would have said nothing. It should, for me, have been the act of the Ministry and their majority. I should have viewed myself, in the question, not as the owner of property, but as a channel, or funnel, or conductor of taxes; and a very trifling portion of arithmetic would have enabled you to know, that low prices were as good for me as high prices. Perhaps, for I speak without book, there may be raised in England and Wales four millions of quarters of wheat. If it sell for twelve millions of money, the Government cannot have so much taxes out of it as if it sold for twenty-four millions of money. Indeed, they can have only half as much. It is the business of those, therefore, who want the taxes, to endeavour to keep up the price of corn, and not your business, who are

merely a funnel for the taxes.—The wild notion of the writer, above quoted, is, that you have *profited* from the war! That you have been one of those, who *shared in the good things of the war*. And that now you wish to keep up your *full pay* after the war has ceased! Just as if you had not been paying wages and prices and taxes in due proportion to the price of corn; and just as if the paper-money, which actually exchanges at 30 per centum loss against the money of France, had made no difference in the thing.—However, Sir, all sorts of absurdities you will hear upon this subject; and we are not yet come to the period when the clamour will be loudest. If the harvest of this year should be bad; if blights should come very generally; if a mildew should, for our sins, pay us a visit. In short, if the crop should be remarkably unproductive, you must be sensible, that we shall see wheat again at eight pounds a quarter. *Then!* Then you will hear the outcry about *monopoly!* Then you will hear the clamour about the *Corn-laws*, especially if the American war should continue, and there should be a short crop on the Continent.—It appears to me, that Sir Francis Burdett takes the wise course in these matters. He knows very well, that it is not he who profits from high prices. He knows that he must pay in proportion to his rents and the price of corn. He knows, that he cannot stay, for one moment, the regular march of things. And he, therefore, always holds his tongue as to these matters of petty legislation. *Law* cannot give you price any more than it can give you sunshine and showers. The whole quantity imported in a year makes so small an addition to the amount of the crop, that it is of no consequence worth notice; and that *peuce* does not and cannot make any material difference permanently in the price of corn, is a proposition which experience has proved, and which reason would easily have proved, if experience had been wanting. If the Ministers thought, that, by passing a law, they could keep up the price of corn, they, upon that notion, acted wisely; because they, by keeping up the price of corn, kept up their taxes; and they discovered no little address in getting the landowners for their allies in the thing, because these, as being, according to the vulgar idea, the parties most interested in the passing of the law, would naturally bear the greater portion of the blame. What I regret is, though I never had the pleasure of even seeing you, that you should have so acted as to have come in for your share of the popular odium on this account. You! who can have no interest in the success of the law, supposing that success to be ever so complete.—Already, you see, Sir, the misled rabble have begun, and in your own country, too, to hang *bakers and millers in effigy!* This is the work of the base and prostituted press, whence the Lancastrian children are to imbibe their principles. The baker and miller gain nothing by the high price of corn, which, before they make into flour, they are compelled to buy. And yet they are hanged in effigy!

Now, Sir, the truth is, that the clamour arises, and will arise, with those, who, in one way or another, live upon the public money. They are always in fear of some *terrible change*, which, be it what it will, must oust them from their fatting-stalls. They are always for keeping the poorer classes *quiet*.—Cheap bread is one of the most effectual means of doing this; and, therefore, they are always railing against monopolizers, grasping landlords and farmers, cheating millers and bakers. The cold sweat comes upon them when the quartern loaf mounts apace. From

this source comes all the clamour; and of this clamour you will never see an end, while there are so many persons who live upon the taxes.

Peace is a horrible object to many thousands, and, indeed, some hundreds of thousands, of these persons. They perceive that *their* allowance will be curtailed; but what must it be to them, then, if the loaf be still of the same price? They do not consider, or rather, they are incapable of perceiving, that (difference of *crops* aside) the price of the loaf must depend upon the amount of taxes imposed on it through the funnel of the landowner and the farmer, and upon the value of the paper-money compared with that of specie. *Peace*, which has blessing in its sound to the rest of mankind, has quite upset this description of persons. They fear that the rabble, who have been expecting cheap bread (though it was *cheap before*), will be disappointed, and may make a noise.—What these people seem to want, therefore, is, that bread may become as cheap as it was *before the war*, and that all the *present taxes may still continue* to be paid! Oh, no! thank you, gentlemen! The loaf pays the taxes, and, if you must have cheap bread, you must have less taxes.

But, Sir, why do I plague you with this, and why should you plague yourself with it?—Let those who live upon the taxes, stand forward in the measures, intended to make them productive. You have none of the gain, and why should you share the odium?

WM. COBBETT.

CORN BILL.

(*Political Register*, June, 1814.)

INSTEAD of an *answer*, or any attempt at an answer, to my Address to "my worthy but deluded neighbours of Southampton," I have received three most *abusive anonymous letters* from that town. This is not a proof, at any rate, of the weakness of my arguments. This is so far from displeasing me, that it affords me great satisfaction; because I conclude, that the few base and brutal people in Southampton (and what town is wholly without such?) are enraged at perceiving, that I have produced conviction in the minds of all the better-informed, impartial, and worthy part of my neighbours. Southampton is not less distinguished by the general good sense and good manners of its inhabitants, than by the goodness of its situation and the beauty of its environs, to which even Sir Henry Inglesfield's pen has not been able to do justice. But, for all this, the people of Southampton possess no particular privilege, as to any *publications* which they may choose to make. When they choose to appear in print, they must submit to have their productions criticised; and if the criticism be at all worth their notice, it is worth something better, at any rate, than anonymous abuse.

One of these anonymous letters reminds me of my being so long in *Newgate*. But, though it might be very wrong in me to write about the flogging of English Local Militia-men, and against the use of German troops upon that occasion; though, as Judge Grose said, that act might be nearly bordering upon *high-treason*; though it might be very just to imprison me two years and make me pay a thousand pounds for that offence; what had all, or any part of this to do with my arguments on the

Corn Bill? What had the Corn Bill to do with the flogging of English Local Militia-men, and the employment of German troops? If any one, in answer to Lord Bacon's philosophical works, were to remind the reader, that that famous Lord Chancellor was punished, at last, for taking bribes, the reader would certainly believe, that the writer wanted the power to answer the philosophy of Lord Bacon.

It would have pleased me to receive, or to see in print, some *answer*, with or without a *name*, to my Address. I could then have cleared up whatever remained doubtful in the minds of my neighbours, for whom, speaking generally, and leaving the Rose politics out of the question, I really do entertain as great a respect as for any set of inhabitants that I have ever known, the Quakers of Pennsylvania always excepted. I showed no want of respect for them; and, if any of them had thought me in error, I produced grounds sufficient, at any rate, to warrant the expectation of an *answer*. The answer might have been as cutting as you please. That is all fair; but, if anything at all was said, there should have been an attempt, at least, at an answer.

One of these anonymous writers reproaches me with calling Mr. Rowcliffe a *tallow-chandler*, when it appears, he is a *wine-merchant*. I did not say he was a tallow-chandler. I really did not know that he was any trade at all. I sent into our village to ask what trade he was of, and nobody here could tell me. I merely *supposed* him, for argument's sake, to be a tallow-chandler, as I might, for argument's sake, suppose the Lord Chancellor to be a tallow-chandler, in order to enforce what I might have to say, in opposing any principle, or statement, of his.

I really did not know Mr. Rowcliffe personally, nor had I any knowledge of his calling or profession. I presumed, as it became me to presume, that he was a very worthy *citizen* and *magistrate*. But it was clear to me, that either he was very ignorant indeed of the subject on which he had, under his hand, put forth a publication, or that he had been led, to oblige others, or to gratify his own whim, to publish what was not true. I believe, in fact, that he was wholly ignorant of the subject. But a man may be a very worthy gentleman, and a very worthy Mayor, and yet no political economist. And the only fault I impute to him, is, that of having made a publication on a subject, which he did not understand; a fault, to be sure, which is not very rare; but, at the same time, it is a fault which every one who *appeals to the press* must run the risk of seeing exposed. Besides, it was a *duty* in me to expose this fault, because Mr. Rowcliffe had promulgated some errors of a very dangerous tendency. He had pointed out the growers of wheat as objects of public hatred. Now, though as a *wheat-grower*, I do not care a pin, for my own part, for any popular feeling or prejudice; yet I was, surely, fairly entitled to show that my calling was not one which ought to expose me to such prejudice. This consideration had, however, no weight with me; nor was I actuated by any predilection for the calling of a farmer, whom I regard as no more useful in society than a shoemaker or a tailor, or a wine-merchant, and (merely on account of his calling) to be entitled to more respect. My motive was, that of *putting the public right*, as to certain important points, with regard to which Mr. Rowcliffe's publication was misleading them. And, surely, if I was able to do this, it was my *duty* to do it! Upon what ground, then, do I deserve abuse instead of an answer? Unless, indeed, the Mayor of Southampton can show, that the publishing of false notions and nonsense, without liability to expo-

sure, be amongst the privileges secured by the Charter of that ancient Corporation. If, indeed, Mr. Rowcliffe had kept his Resolutions in his closet; if the town had deliberated in secret; if no publication had been made by them, then the thing would have been different. But Mr. Rowcliffe, or the town through him, had thought proper to put the result of their deliberations into the public newspapers. They had appealed to the sense of the public at large. And were they, above all the rest of the world, to expect security against criticism? He who resorts to the use of the sword is an assassin, if he does not suppose that the sword is to be opposed to him; and he who resorts to the use of the press, if he knows, or expects, the press not to be open against him, is a coward of the basest description; a description which I am far from supposing to apply to Mr. Rowcliffe, who, I should hope, instead of partaking in the base feelings of these anonymous writers, will, if he be convinced of his error, thank me for having pointed it out.

As to the subject itself, it is done with, for the present, and, I hope, will never be revived. The CORN BILL is thrown out; and, while I express my pleasure thereat, I cannot help lamenting, that similar energy is not shown in petitioning upon other subjects, far more interesting to the people. It is painful to observe, that the fear of dear bread; that the paltry consideration of the price of the loaf, in which the mass of the nation are in no degree interested; that the imaginary difference in the price of food should set the whole country in a flame, and produce the instantaneous rejection of a law, proposed and supported by the Government, while the people are torpid as stocks and stones, as to all those matters in which their *rights* and *liberties* are involved. By pointing out to them the *real causes* of the high price of provisions; namely, the *taxes* and the *depreciation of the currency*, I show them, that, if they wish to reduce prices, they must prevail on the Parliament to take off taxes, and restore the currency to its former value. *Here* their petitioning would have some sense in it; but, in their recent proceedings, there is no sense at all.

If the people of Southampton, or any part of them, are disposed to reject my arguments and statements, I refer them to Mr. Huskisson, who, in his place in Parliament, has said the same that I have said. Let them attack *him*, and not me; for, surely, if we are both in error, he is more to blame than I am. *He* was, many years, a *Secretary of the Treasury*, under that Heaven-born Minister, Pitt, having, for his fellow in office, that veteran placeman, Mr. George Rose. He ought to know the real causes of high price, and the likelihood of a fall if there be any. Yet *he* says as I say. Attack *him*, then, and not me.

A correspondent, for whom I have the greatest respect, seems not to have clearly understood me, as to one or two points. He says, that I assert, that a taxation and a depreciation of the currency are the real and sole causes of the high price of corn, an assertion, says he, not warranted by the fact; for taxation and depreciation continue, and yet *corn is cheap*. My correspondent, intent upon the main drift of the argument, omitted to observe, that I everywhere qualify my assertion by saying, that these are the sole *permanent* causes; the sole *average* causes; or the sole causes, on an *average of years*. These qualifications I have invariably used; and I have, to a tiresome repetition, stated, for fear of this very objection, that the *variation* in the price, between one year and another, depends wholly on the *amount of the crop*, and the *weather of the har-*

vest, with the exception only of that gradual and imperceptible rise, which, year after year, the taxation and depreciation are producing. We have a proof of this *gradual progress* in the price of the loaf at the present time, compared with the price of the loaf in 1802 and 1803. Great crops and fine harvests then brought down the price of the quarter loaf, at one time, so low as *eight-pence*, in London. The great crops and fine harvests of the two last years have not been able, as yet, to bring down the loaf to less than about *eleven-pence*, in London. This shows, that the very largest crops and finest harvests are unable to contend against their two powerful opponents, taxation and depreciation, which march on, steady and inflexible, like one of our own battalions, unaffected by the chilling frosts, or by the rays of the sun; while the crop is affected by every blast that blows, and by every ray of heat that lights upon the earth.

Another point, on which my correspondent has remarked, is this: You say, he observes, that the Bill would *not be unjust*; you say, that corn is *as much* entitled to a protecting law as candles are; you show clearly, that in whatever degree wheat is imported, *less will be grown in England*: and yet, you are an *enemy* to the Bill.

But, as to the *justice* of the Bill; a measure may not be at all *unjust*, and yet very *inexpedient*; which, it is my opinion, is the case with regard to this Bill. And, before my correspondent concluded, that there was something *inconsistent* in my being an enemy to the Bill, and, at the same time, saying, that the corn was *as much* entitled to protection as candles are, and that the importation of corn would cause *less to be grown in England*, he should have waited to hear me say, that CANDLES OUGHT TO BE PROTECTED, and that it would be AN EVIL to cause *less corn to be grown in England*. My opinion, which I have before explicitly stated, is in opposition to both these. I see no reason for protecting English-made candles; and I see no harm that could arise from our sending away our copper and tin, and steel, and cloth, and crockery-ware, and getting, from finer climates, corn, oil, and wine, in return. If men do not raise corn, they will not lose money by raising corn. If they have not capital employed in farming, they will not have to pay taxes upon land, horses, &c., and will have no poor-rates to pay. If the country (though the idea is absurd) were wholly fed from abroad, those who are now farmers would find something else to do.

But, my grand objection to the Bill, an objection which over-balances everything else, is, that, in case of future high prices, it would have given a *wrong direction to the public outcry*. It would have set the people to clamouring against landlords, farmers, millers, and bakers, and have thus taken their attention away from the real causes of public distress. This alone was sufficient to make me oppose the Bill. I know that taxes must be raised; that prices, upon an average of years, must keep pace with the taxes and the currency; that, if the taxes be not laid so directly upon the farmer, they must reach him indirectly; but, the difference would have been, that, if the Bill had been passed, all the blame would have been laid upon the grower of corn, and the manufacturer of it into bread.

I do not say, that this will not be the case as it is; but it would have been *sure* to be the case, if the Bill had been passed.

WM. COBBETT.

CORN BILL.

(Political Register, September, 1814.)

I HAVE before me the Report of the Committee of the House of Lords, on the subject of the Corn Bill.—The manifest object of the “*inquiry*” of this Committee is to lay the ground for a Bill to prohibit the importation of corn, until our own corn will sell at such a price as shall enable the grower to grow it and to pay his rent and taxes.—As it is my opinion, that a Bill of this sort will be again brought forward, I shall, beforehand, put in my protest against any such measure.—I have several objections to it; and, that I may have the better chance of being understood, I shall state and explain, as clearly as I am able, the grounds on which they rest, under distinct heads.—I must first, however, premise, that I do not see any *injustice*, towards the rest of the community, in the passing of such a Bill as was proposed last year. I dislike such a Bill, because it would be injurious to the *country at large*; because it would do *general* harm; and not because it would benefit the farmer at the expense of the community.—The state in which this country now is, is a very singular and critical state. A long and expensive war has created taxes enormous. These taxes (to say nothing of those necessary for the new war with America) must be kept on, or it will be impossible for the Government to pay the interest of the National Debt. To pay these taxes, and the poor-rates, which latter alone amount to nearly half as much as the whole revenue of France, *prices* must be, on an average of years, kept up to nearly the point of the last five or six years. To keep up prices to this point the products of the earth in other countries must be excluded, and especially the products of France, lying so near to us, and now become infinitely more rich in agricultural productions than at any former period.—France, in consequence of her happy Revolution, seems to have become a *new country*. She has now an abundance of all the necessities of life, and her superabundance she is selling to us. There is annually a great fair for neat cattle at *Barnet*, in Hertfordshire. Hither are brought the cattle from Scotland, Wales, Devonshire, and elsewhere, to be distributed amongst the numerous graziers and stall-feeders of the southern and eastern counties of England. When exhibited at this fair, the *cattle cover* a space of ground about *two miles in circumference*. Now, I have no scruple in saying, that I am fully convinced, from my own observation, and from information gathered nearly upon the spot, that the French have, since the month of May last, brought to, and sold in this country, a *far greater number of neat cattle than are brought in any one year, to this great national fair*.—Let any one estimate the effect of such an importation. The effect really has been the lowering of the value of every man’s neat stock *above one-third*.—France, therefore, freed from the feudal system, freed from the dronery of the monasteries, freed from tithes, possessing a happier climate, and paying lower wages for labour, can, does, and will undersell the growers of corn and breeders of cattle in

England. Besides the neat cattle above-mentioned, the French have brought, and are daily bringing, great numbers of swine, fat as well as lean; of sheep, fat and lean, and the fat of surprising fatness; of poultry, of all sorts, of the finest quality; of butter, eggs, fruit, and even garden vegetables.—It would really seem, that two or three new counties of England had risen out of the sea, teeming with food, without having any one to eat it.—The effect of this must be, it has been, it is, and it will be, the lowering and the keeping down of the price of these articles in England, Ireland, and Scotland. For, though these products *arrive* on the coast they have their effect all over the kingdom. They swell the general quantity, in the same way, and with as perfect regularity, as your hand, put in on *one side* of a bucket of water, makes the water rise in *every part* of the bucket.—Therefore, if you pass a law to “*protect the farmer,*” as it is called, against the importation of *corn*, why not include cattle, sheep, and hogs, which form nearly one-half of his property, and which are as necessary as bread?—My objections to such a law are 1st, that, *it being a benefit to mankind in general, that countries should be at liberty to supply each other with their products, such a law would be hostile to that great and beneficent principle.*—Why should such a war be made against nature; against the *universal good of man*? Why should we, who live in a less happy climate, and who labour under many disadvantages, unknown to our neighbours; why should we not participate of their superabundance? Here is a person of fixed income in England. Why should he not eat the cheap beef, mutton, and pork, raised by his neighbour in Normandy? “*Why!*” exclaims the farmer and landlord: “*Why!* why, because we are compelled to pay as much tax and poor-rate as if none of this supply came from France to supplant ours in the market. Take off the taxes *created by the war*; take off the poor-rates, *created by the war*; take off these, place us where we were in 1792, and we shall be able to supply you at as cheap a rate as the French can.”—In answer to this, I have to observe, in the first place that, if there be any fault in the creation of the taxes, who is more to blame than the *farmers and landlords*? Did they, in any one instance, *oppose the war*? On the contrary, did they not *address* the King to undertake it and carry it on? Did they not, in all parts of the country, pledge their *lives and fortunes* for the carrying on of the war? Did they not say, that they were ready to spend their last shilling, and the last drop of their blood, in the cause of Kingly Government against Republicanism? And, did they not, by voluntarily arming themselves as *Yeoman Cavalry*, actually support, physically support, the war-party, against all the remonstrances and attempts of the opponents of the war? Were these professions insincere? If they were, those who made them deserve no pity; and, if they were sincere, ought they to grumble and growl at the loss, which they are now sustaining, seeing that the object of all their prayers is attained; namely, the fall of Republicanism, and the re-establishment of Monarchy in France? The debt which now swallows up more than half of the taxes, arose necessarily out of the war; the expenses of the new war against America have a like source; the increase of the poor-rates is attributable to the same mighty cause. And, as the farmers and landholders were amongst the forwardest in support of the war, must they not be unreasonable indeed to object to pay their share of those taxes? Yes, they are, indeed, willing to pay their share of the taxes; but they wish to have *such high prices* as will enable them to do this without any distress, any

loss, any falling off in their flourishing state. But, gentlemen, this is unreasonable. You have had what you wished for. You have destroyed Republicanism in France, and are now giving a drubbing to the Yankees; and, will you not *pay* for this? Do you think, that the soldiers and sailors, and contractors and paymasters, and barrack-people, and pursers and purveyors, are not to be *paid* for gratifying you? You huzza at the grant of an immense sum to Lord Wellington; you almost kiss the shoes of the gallant Duke; you are ready to *cram* your fists down the throats of those who do not feel disposed to bawl as loud as yourselves. *Grant!* yes, gentlemen; but what is the *grant* without the *money*? A grant does not mean *words*. Palaces and splendid equipages, and pleasure-grounds and ample domains are not made of *parliament*. It is *money*; money, good gentlemen, that the grant means; whence, then, is the money to come but out of the taxes? whence are the taxes to come but, in part, at least, out of your pockets? And, as it is in the nature of taxes to produce poverty and misery, what right have *you*, above all men living, to complain of bearing your share of that poverty and misery?—You appear to have thought, that the taxes you were paying would support a war, which would so completely ruin the people of France, that they would not recover in a century, or, at least, before we should be at them again with another war; and you were exceedingly gratified at being told, that Napoleon had left nothing but old *crippled men, women, and children*, to till the land. How surprised you must have been to see the wheat, barley, oats, neat cattle, sheep, hogs, and poultry of France come crowding upon our shores, the moment that peace was made! These old cripples, and the women and children of Napoleon, must have been very busy in the fields! The truth is, that, while England, by that war against the Republicans of France, which you were so eager to support, has been loading herself with unredeemable debts, and unbearable taxes, the people of France have been tilling and enriching their country; they have been multiplying its means of increasing population; they have been freeing it from those restraints, those bars to agricultural improvement, which before kept them poor and miserable amidst the richest gifts of nature. You have been, for years, amused with lies, which your evil passions, your hatred and envy, led you to believe; and you now find the sorrowful truth forced upon you in a way that makes you *feel* as well as *hear*; and, which is not the least galling part of the change, you find your own countrymen, who joined you in hallooing for the war; you find the colonels and captains, and barrack masters and pursers, all exclaiming against you, because you want to sell them a loaf at a shilling, when they can get it from the people of France at ninepence, notwithstanding Napoleon left none but old crippled men, women and children, to till the land!—There is in our statute-book a law, punishing with *death*, and death too, of the most horrible kind, any man who should send from this country even a *bushel of potatoes* to France, when the people of that country were thought to be in a state of *famine*. This law was passed at the outset of the war against the Republicans of France. They were not starved. They set themselves to break up the parks, to turn the monasteries into farm-buildings, to make the drones labour for their bread. The result is, that they have enough to *spare* to reduce our prices one-third; and you have the mortification to find, that those who have become captains by the war, prefer the French cheap loaf to the English dear loaf.—One of the charges against Napoleon was, that he had

ruined agriculture; that he had left the farmer *no market* for his produce. It seemed odd, indeed, that the farmer should be at a *loss for a market* for what the *old crippled men, women and children*, were able to raise. But this was the assertion; and he was cursed, through all our edifying prints, for this his tyranny. Well! He is put down. The French farmer has a *market* in England; and the moment he sends his produce to it, that moment would you pass a *law to stop him*. Yes, you would have a law passed to deprive the French farmer of that very market, for having deprived him of which you so heartily cursed Napoleon! You would have a law passed for the purpose of making the French farmer endure, during peace, that very evil, which you abused Napoleon for causing him to endure, during war!

With reflections like these in my mind, it is impossible that I can pity (I speak generally, of course) the farmers or the landlords. But it is certain, that they cannot grow wheat, with the present taxes, so cheap as the French, who pay so little tax and no tithe, can send it hither; and that, unless the French be prohibited from sending their products hither, many of our farmers must be *ruined*.

Eh bien! And what then! They endeavoured to ruin the people of France. *Ruin*, however, is a word of indefinite meaning. A man calls himself *ruined*, if he cannot ride as fine a horse as he has been used to ride. The truth is, that, if no law of prohibition be passed, agriculture in England (if the present taxes continue) must, in some measure, decline; part of our food will be raised in France, now freed from feudal shackles and tithes; part of the capital now employed in farming will be withdrawn from it; part of those who now till the land must be driven to other occupations. And where is the *harm* of all this? Is it for this reason that the fertile fields of France are to be closed against us? What! are the big-bellied, bluff-cheeked, port-guzzling, loud-talking farmers of England, whose daughters play upon the piano, to be *ruined* by the sale of the produce, raised by the *old crippled men, the women and children* of France!

We know that, before the Revolution, a principal article of food, in France was the *frog*. In our favourite national song, "*O, the Roast Beef of Old England!*" the air of which, on the drum and fife, we hear, in our streets, calling our sons of Mars to their dinners, it is said, that the "*shirtless Frenchman, meagre, pale and lean,*" lives upon "*soup meagre, frogs, and salad.*" How, then, must this Revolution, which, we are told, "*humanity* ought to deplore," have changed things in France, since you, the farmers and landlords of England, want a law passed to prevent the French from sending their *spare* not *frogs* and *salad*; but their *spare bread*; and when these frog-eating people do actually send us, not only a great deal of bread, but thousands upon thousands of milch cows, heifers, oxen, fat hogs, fat sheep, and poultry, and eggs and butter in prodigious quantities. How must this Revolution have changed things in France!

But, if the farmers in England be ruined, and the landlords be obliged to lower their rents one-half, *how are the taxes to be paid?* That is a question, with which I never embarrass myself. I never ask how they can be paid, or how they can be dispensed with. It is for those who hallooed for the war against the French, and who now halloo for the war against the Americans, to discuss those interesting questions. The war has been, and is, the cause, and the sole cause, of the taxes; and, there-

fore, to halloo for the war was to justify, and call for, additional taxation. So that it is beyond all measure stupid as well as base in those who hallooed for war to complain that they have the expenses of it to pay.

A *free intercourse* between nations is a right of human nature. I disapprove of imposts upon wine, oil, sugar, and every thing else; and though I am aware, that it would be no more unjust towards the manufacturer of *cloth* to permit French cloth to be imported duty free, than it is unjust towards the manufacturer of corn to permit French corn to be imported duty free, it does not follow, that, because the entry of cloth is prohibited, I must agree in the propriety of prohibiting corn. I am glad, that, at least, there are *some* articles, in which the trade is free; and, especially, as the wide difference in the prices of these articles compared with those of our own, must necessarily give rise to reflections, which may finally lead to those inquiries, as to the real causes of this difference, which inquiries may do a great deal towards producing an event, so much to be desired by every well-wisher to the cause of freedom.

It is very certain, that the Government is in a dilemma upon this subject of the Corn Bill, which, if I mistake not, must, if passed with effect, become a *Cattle Bill* too. If the Government bring in such a Bill, the Captain and Barrack-master will complain, that they are thereby compelled to buy their bread dearer from the English farmer than they could get it from the French farmer; and if no such Bill be brought in, these gentlemen may begin to complain, that proper means are not adopted to raise taxes, out of which is to come their half-pay. The dilemma is a pinching one, I must confess; but I must leave the partisans of the war, the most prominent of whom are the farmers and landlords, to get out of it as well as they can. I have, indeed, heard of a scheme, which I will just mention, though I, by no means, give it as feasible, or as having my approbation. It is this: to apply to the farmers of France, who have but little Government tax to pay, and who have *no poor-rates* nor any *tithes* to pay, to make, annually, a collection amongst themselves, and send it over to be distributed amongst the farmers of England. At the first blush, indeed, it does appear reasonable, that those who have the *profit* of agriculture should bear a part, at least, of its burdens. But this scheme is impracticable; and, therefore, I must, as I said before, leave the remedy wholly to the *partisans of the war*, past as well as present.

Of all the motives to intercourse between nations no one is so powerful as the want, on the one part, of the *necessaries of life*, of which, on the other, there is a superabundance. Our intercourse with the baker and butcher is much more constant, and of greater importance, than that with the carpenter or mason. We are better acquainted with their persons, their manners, their character, and with the immediate causes of their prosperity or decline. So it is between nations; and, as I am thoroughly convinced, that it would be of the utmost importance to this country to make its people well acquainted with the state of France, and with those causes which have led to that state of prosperity and abundance, which enable her farmers to come here *in person*, and undersell ours in our own markets and fairs, I do most anxiously hope, that no measure will be adopted to put a stop to, or to restrain, in the smallest degree, this amiable and promising intercourse.

I must defer, till a future number, my other objections to *any law*,

tending to prohibit, or restrain, the importation of the products of the earth from any foreign country, and especially from France.

WM. COBBETT.

CORN BILL.

(*Political Register, October 1814.*)

I BEFORE notified my intention to oppose with all my might the projected bill in all its stages, which intention nothing shall prevent me from carrying into effect, regarding, as I do, this project as one of the most outrageous attempts on the rights of mankind that ever was entertained.

I have read, with great attention, the Reports of the Lords' Committee, and the evidence subjoined to them. To enter into an examination of this mass of evidence; this jumble of crude matter; this mixty maxty of guess-work, facts and speculations; this book of the philosophy of conceited farmers and land-surveyors; to point out the absurdities, the downright contradictions, the flagrant foolishness of men, who, while they complain that corn is *too cheap*, that is to say, too abundant, call for a Corn Bill in order to induce people *to make new inclosures*, which, as they say, would cause *more corn to be grown*; to go into anything like detail in such a case would, I should think, be to insult the understandings of my readers.—I shall, therefore, content myself with stating that the main point, to which the evidence and the Reports tend, is this: that it is for the good of the nation, *that something should be done to prevent wheat from being sold under 10s. a bushel*. But, first of all, I must notice the *source* of this evidence. Who are the *witnesses*? Persons who have come, upon being called upon to come by the Committee. The Committee state, that they endeavoured to get before them some of the persons who had petitioned against the Corn Bill last year; but then no such persons appeared; from which the Committee conclude that the petitioners had no distinct notion on the subject; or, that they objected to a *hasty* passing of the Bill without inquiry, and not to the passing of the Bill altogether. I cannot tell whether the invitations to these petitioners were very pressing. *My* objection to the Corn Bill was pretty well known to their Lordships. I dare say they had heard too that I was a *farmer*; and I have the presumption to suppose, that they must have thought me pretty nearly as capable of affording them information upon the subject as some, at least, of the moral philosophers, whom they examined. Their Lordships did not call *me* before them. If they had, they would have saved me the trouble of stating my objections through this channel; for they would have found me not so ready, as their other witnesses were, to support the pretensions of the project. Their Lordships might dislike my *politics*; but that could have no weight in a question like the present; and as to motives of self-interest, if the Bill be for

the protection of the farmer, I must have been the best possible witness, seeing that my declared opinion was *against* the Bill.

What are the grounds upon which this Bill, if again brought forward, are to rest? Why these: that by prohibiting importation to a certain extent, wheat will be kept up to 10s. a bushel; that the farmer will then be able to grow it; that he will then take care to provide a supply for the nation; and that, by this means, inclosures will go on, and a security be obtained against scarcity.

In the first place, it is impossible, under some circumstances, to keep wheat up to 10s. a bushel; and it is arrant nonsense to talk of it. If the crop be a very large one, wheat cannot be so dear as when the crop is very small. Besides, if every acre of any farm produces five quarters this year, and only two quarters and a half the next year, would you have the price the same in both years? Cannot the farmer afford to sell his wheat at 5s. in the former year, as well as he can afford it at 10s. in the latter year? And in what case is this notion of the 10s. to apply? In years of great crops or years of small crops? When is it that he can afford to grow wheat at 10s. a bushel? Is it when he has forty bushels to an acre, or when he has only sixteen or twenty bushels to an acre? It is clear, that, if a law ought to be passed to keep wheat up to 10s. a bushel (on the ground that the farmer cannot grow it for less), the law ought to extend beyond the prohibition of imports. It ought to provide also against the effects of *great crops*. It ought to provide some means of compelling the people *always* to buy wheat at 10s. a bushel. I leave the reader to guess at the outcry which such a proposition would occasion; and yet, monstrous as is the idea, what does it contain of a nature more monstrous than the proposition, that something ought to be done to *insure* the farmer 10s. a bushel for his wheat; seeing that, as is asserted, he cannot grow it for less?

It is asserted, that, by securing to him a high price, the farmer will be induced to grow so largely as to supply amply all the wants of the nation. But, if all these wants can be supplied at a *low* price, is not that as well? There stands France ready to supply all deficiencies; and why would you say to her, "You shall not supply us with cheap bread, because our farmers are ready to supply us with dear bread?" Has not this something monstrous upon the face of it? You want a supply. That is your object. And, when the supply is tendered you turn from it, and say, "No, our own farmers will supply us at double the price;" and, if we buy bread of you at sixpence a loaf, our farmers will turn sulky upon our hands, and will not grow us any wheat.—What would be thought of a proposition to prevent the people of Kent from sending wheat into Surrey and Middlesex? Yet, where is the difference? It is easier to convey wheat from Norway to Kent, than from Canterbury to London, or to Guildford. France is, I grant it, *a new country*. Her happy Revolution, by sweeping away the Corvees, the Gabelles, the Game Laws, the Feudal Laws and Rights, and the Tithes; by turning the convents into commodious farm-buildings, the gardens of the monks into yards, their cloisters into ox-stalls, their dormitories into pig-styes, their cemeteries into dung-holes, and their chapels into barns. The Revolution, by these and other means, has made France a new country; has added to her capability of producing subsistence; has given her the full and free use of all the means that nature had allotted her. It must also be confessed, that, *as things now stand*, the English farmer meets the French farmer

under circumstances of great disadvantage. About a fortnight ago I met, between Alton and Petersfield, an Englishman driving a herd of French cattle. He had brought them from Emsworth, and had been to France for them himself. From him I first learnt, that the importation of French cattle was put a stop to. I asked him how he liked France. He said very much, indeed; for that, in that country, there were neither *tithes* nor *turnpike-gates*. I endeavoured to convince him, that there was no hardship in the establishment of turnpike-gates, seeing, that, if the roads were not maintained in that way, they must be maintained by a tax of some sort, which would not be so fair, because it now fell upon persons like him and me, who *used* the road, and not upon those who never used it. And, as to *tithes*, I asked him if he was a married man; if his wife had been churched; if his children had been baptized. He answered in the affirmative; and, I then asked him how he could expect these comforts, together with those of the hearing of prayers and sermons, and of having his body interred in consecrated ground after he had, on his dying bed, received remission of all his sins. How he could expect these things, unless tithes were paid to support the priests and bishops. He said all the farmers grumbled at the tithes, and said, that if they were as free from burdens as the farmers of France, they should be able to sell cows and corn so cheap, that no one need go to France for them.

"Aye, my friend," said I, rather nettled, perhaps, at this grudging towards the church, "but do you not see those farmers and their wives and daughters 'tramping to church every Sunday; do they not make a terrible outcry if any 'part of the clerical duties are neglected; any of the forms unobserved. Do they not want marrying and churching, and baptizing, and confirming, and the 'sacrament, and the absolution? Is there not a gentleman, dressed in long robes, to read prayers and to preach to them? Is he not constantly on guard 'to preserve them against the machinations of the devil; and, if any one were, 'like a worthy friend of mine in Hertfordshire, to deny the existence of the 'devil, would not the farmer and all his family fly at him, and, if possible, tear 'his eyes out of his head? Do they not applaud the sending of a man to rot in 'jail, or to be pelted on the pillory, who denies the truth of the religion taught 'by the church? Do they not call such a man by all manner of vile names? Well, 'then, with what justice does the farmer complain of tithes. Does he suppose, 'that a gentleman, who has been at College, and learnt Greek and Latin to 'enable him to cope with the devil; does he suppose, that a gentleman of this 'rank in life is to work all the Sunday to wipe from the farmer's dirty conscience 'all the accumulated fraud and hypocrisy of the week, and to have nothing for his 'labour, though the book of our faith tells him that the labourer is worthy of 'his hire? Does he suppose, that, though the same holy book tells him, that a 'man has no advantage if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, that he 'saves his soul too dearly with a *tenth part only of the crop*? What!" added I, in the ardour of my zeal, "would the Hunks carry it to Hell with him and tender 'it as a bribe to the Devil, rather than cheerfully yield it here on earth to the 'minister of God's word?"

My auditor, though apparently a butcher, seemed struck at this discourse, and a little boy, in a smock-frock, who was with him, was ready to fall down upon his knees. I had not time for further observation, and rode off with the satisfactory reflection, that I had given a new train of thought to two members of this "most thinking nation." No, no; I am for none of these *stupid* attacks upon tithes, had in the natural selfishness of man, and fostered and supported by the philosophers of the agricultural societies. If any man will tell me, that he is ready for getting rid of tithes in the *same way* that the French got rid of their tithes; that

is to say, by seizing on the church property, and turning the churches into barns and stables; that is to say, by a sweeping Revolution, I shall understand him; but, when I hear him railing against tithes with the litany hardly clear of his lips, I must set him down as a fool, or a knave, if not both at the same time. In the meanwhile, however, to return to my subject, it must be allowed that the great changes which have taken place in France, have given to French agriculture very considerable advantages; but as the French have purchased these advantages by a Revolution, and as our farmers entered into the yeomanry cavalry to prevent a Revolution here, it is unreasonable in them to expect to participate in these advantages. From everything I hear, and, indeed, I see quite enough, I am convinced, that, in ordinary years, France is able to supply us with food equal in amount to that of all our countries on the border of the Channel. This ought to be regarded as a great blessing. *This is the best possible security against scarcity, which will never be found in the high price of corn at home.* We have now, thanks to the peace, a country to resort to for food, when our own crops fail. It is nonsense to talk of *hoarding* up corn out of our own produce. We eat nearly all we grow in years of the greatest plenty. What, then, are we to do in years of *scarcity*? Do as we did before. Pay 2s. for the quartern loaf! And this we shall do, if this Bill pass; because the French, not *sure* of a market here, will raise little more than what they want for home consumption. But, let this Bill be rejected; let this project be scouted by Parliament; let the French farmer be *sure* that he has a market amongst us, and he will sow freely; he will always be able to supply our wants.

I must confess, that I was, when I wrote upon this subject some time ago, deceived as to the capacity of France in this respect.—I placed little reliance on importation. But France, I now find, is, in this regard, *a new country*. She is a land of milk and honey compared to what she formerly was. She was pouring in upon us food of all kinds, till a stoppage was put to the entry of cattle, and till other articles of food were taxed at our custom-houses. In this country, you cannot go by a farm-house, or over a heath, without seeing French cattle, sheep, or hogs. We were eating turkeys at 4s. each, and geese at 2s. before the stoppage took place. How many a waiting, watering mouth has this stoppage disappointed!

One effort of this will be precisely the contrary of that which was expected from it. The stoppage will produce *emigration* with those who live upon their income; that is to say, those who live only to eat and drink and talk. They would prefer three turkeys to one; and as the turkeys cannot come to them, they will go to the turkeys; and then our farmers will lose them as customers altogether. It has been stated, in the public prints, that there are already 40,000 English families in France. Take them at an average of 7, servants and all, and you have a departed population of 280,000 people, who, it is to be observed, are none of them *paupers*; these, to the amount of a million and a half being all left behind to be supported by the rich and the middle class who remain, and who have, of course, a heavier weight of taxes than before, seeing that so many of the contributors are gone away.—So that the prohibition of French food will, to a certain extent, only increase the evil, which it is intended to prevent. Would it not be better to suffer the cheap food to come, and thus retain the customers for cloths, houses, goods, and fuel, and the payers of taxes?—Men must eat. They like to eat at home best, but they will rather go to a cook's-shop than starve. Besides, the French

can supply them with cheap drink as well as cheap food. There is some difference between a bottle of wine at 5s. and a better bottle at 1s. There is some difference between a house at 100l. and a better house at 20l. Let all be safely settled in France, and let the French Government (rejecting the advice of our malignant newspapers), adopt a wise system of *naturalization*, and allow of the possession of real property by aliens; and the corn-law people will soon see, that all their prohibitions are worse than useless.

There is something so monstrous in the idea of compelling people to purchase their food dear, when they can purchase it cheap, that human nature revolts at it. If a law were passed to compel a man to buy his loaf of one baker, who sold it at 2s., while the baker in the next street sold his bread at 1s., what would be said of such a law? What would the oppressed man do? Why, it would require another law, and a most severe one, too, to keep him in the country, to retain him in existence under such an abominable law. Yet, in what respect would such a law *differ* in its nature from the law now talked of? Here is the French farmer ready to sell us his wheat, landed in England, at about 7s. a bushel; and the proposed law is to make us give 10s. to the English farmer. Next year, perhaps, the French farmer may be able to supply us at 5s. a bushel; and are we not to purchase of him till ours will not sell it us for *more than* 10s.? I confess, that such a law would be no more unjust than many other prohibitory laws that I have heard of. I think, that there ought to be no prohibitions against importations of any sort. I think that commerce should be quite free. But, because there are prohibitions, I am not bound to approve of additional prohibitions. Because I cannot remove the imposts upon French wine, I am not bound to approve of imposts upon French corn and cattle.

WM. COBBETT.

CORN BILL.

(*Political Register, January, 1815.*)

It is now evident to me, that our ministers mean to propose a law to put a stop to the importation of Corn. I am confirmed in this opinion by the language of the *Courier* newspaper for some time past; and especially by the following article, which appeared in that paper of the 23rd instant, and which article I am *morally certain* came from a source of authority. The reader will see, from the ability with which it is written, that it never could come from the same pen whence proceed the articles of the Editor of that paper; and the form and place of it, if the reader could see them, would strengthen the opinion. After inserting it, I shall endeavour to show, how it blinks all the main points, how fallacious it is, how it is calculated to deceive and to mislead.

“The Meetings upon the Agricultural State of the Country are become universal. This is a subject which we touch always with delicacy, and almost with dread. It is one of such vital importance, one in which a false step, or

"an erroneous doctrine, may do such incalculable mischief, that we fear ever to pronounce any decisive opinion. What suggestions we throw out, we throw out with diffidence and hesitation, convinced of our being more in want of information, than able to communicate any. But there are some facts upon which there can be no doubt, and upon them we may safely reason—and in reasoning upon them, we are quite sure that we shall not deserve, in the words of Mr. Burke, to be classed amongst 'those wicked writers of newspapers, who would inflame the poor against their friends, guardians, patrons, and protectors.'—Upon this subject, more than any other, there are prejudices so strong as almost to resist the evidence of the strongest facts, and these prejudices are infinitely aggravated by the number of idle tales spread about *by the industry of faction*, and greedily devoured by the malignant credulity of mankind. When grain is dear, the prejudice is against monopolizers; when it is cheap, then the cry is, to give the utmost license and encouragement to importation, in order that it may become cheaper still, and thus, as we have heard it said, to be *revenged on the farmer*. But revenge ought not to be exercised against the farmer. Revenge on the farmer would soon be accompanied with a much wider vengeance upon the avengers—they would themselves become at no remote period the victims of their vengeance. Evils, however, at a distance we are too apt neither to see nor care for. 'Have not farmers (is the common cry) been making immense fortunes for the last twenty years? Have they not been living upon the distresses of the people? And ought not the latter to have the advantage which the late harvests and peace have given them, to have bread at as cheap a rate as possible?' We answer each of these questions,—That the farmers have been making immense fortunes for the last twenty years, is an assertion which it is as easy to make, as we believe it would be difficult to prove. But if they had, how would that bear upon the subject? The price, however high it was, did not depend upon them. It arose from causes *over which they had no control*; from deficient seasons, and from the state of the Continent, with which all intercourse was prevented. But allowing, for the sake of argument, that they did make large fortunes, that must have been a public benefit, inasmuch as the increase of their capital would naturally lead them to extend the agriculture of the country, to improve bad land, and bring the waste into produce. The answer to the first question involves in it an answer to the second.—Upon the third we very willingly observe, that we are for the people having this necessary of life as cheap as possible; but we would not purchase an unexampled cheapness to-day, *with the certainty, or even the risk, of having dearthness to-morrow*. By the return of last Saturday's *Gazette*, we find that the average price of wheat was 3*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* the quarter, or 7*s.* 11*d.* the bushel: Barley, 1*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.*; and Oats, 1*l.* 3*s.* 9*d.* This cheapness arises from two causes—the admitting the free importation of corn, and the consequent necessity under which the British farmer has been of bringing his grain to market. The generality of mankind, looking only at the present result, will rejoice, and we are not surprised at it, and feel disposed to look with an evil eye upon anything that would disturb it. Forbearance, and the want of all interference would be a greater disturber than any other cause. For let but the system of encouraging the free importation of corn be continued, and the vengeance which the ignorant would inflict upon the British farmer would be complete. He would not enter the lists of competition with the foreign grower, for *he would not cultivate grain at all*. But the British farmer ought not to be so dealt with, nor ought the food of the people of England to depend upon foreign countries. There is not a more obvious principle than this, that men will not apply their industry and their capital to the growing or manufacturing an article which they cannot sell at a price higher than it cost them in growing or manufacturing it; a price that shall enable them if not to lay something by, at least to maintain them. Wheat and Barley at the last prices quoted in the *Gazette*, are at a less price than the expense to which the farmer would be put by growing them, including *wages to labourers, keep for horses, repair of waggons, cost of the seed, and rent to the landlord*. Of course, then, he will direct his industry and capital to other channels; he will not grow grain; he will not make land hitherto barren, productive in corn; he will not bring the wastes and heaths into cultivation. There will comparatively be no English corn grown. 'Very well,' we hear some say, 'what is that to us, provided we still have abundant supplies open to us?' But softly!

"it is a great deal to them—a great deal indeed! In the first place, the foreign grower, when he finds that he has nothing to fear from the rivalry of the British farmer, will raise his price. This is obvious—*When he knows you must depend upon him for the commodity, he will increase his terms.* There is not a plainer commercial principle than this. Here then is the first inroad upon the cheapness which you flattered yourself would be so permanent. But you must not forget another circumstance—that peace cannot be perpetual, and that wars must take place.—Nay, that foreign powers may be *more likely to go to war with us*, thinking that they have the means in their hands (we, depending upon them entirely for grain) of compelling us to accept terms and to make concessions. We put a case—Poland will be annexed to, or under the control of Russia. It is from Poland we derive the largest continental supplies of foreign corn. Should we go to war with Russia, she might shut all her ports, Russian as well as Polish, and prevent the exportation of grain.—What should we do then? We might procure it from other parts, from the Barbary States and from America. But would not the price be much increased upon us, those Powers always keeping in mind that *we must depend upon them?* Well, but this is not all—you have formed your calculations and your hopes upon the certainty of the harvest never failing upon the Continent, of there being always fine and productive seasons. If the harvest should fail and a scarcity ensue, where can you look to? To the British farmer? *No; you have turned your back upon him.* But there is another thing to be considered, *grain may be cheap, and yet be less within the compass of some than when it was dearer.* If agriculture be discouraged, the farmers will not want so many labourers, the ploughman, the thresher, and the reaper, *will not be wanted*—and thus will those persons 'starve amidst cheapness.'—But it has been said, let the farmer look to his landlord, who having raised his rent in proportion to the increasing price of grain, ought now to be lowered to the level at what it was before such increase. There is much reason in this, and it will operate, no doubt, upon the landlord. If he find that he cannot get a high rent paid, but that he can get a lower one, of course he will prefer the latter. The cessation of the Property-Tax will be another relief; but these of themselves will not be sufficient. We take our stand upon this ground, which cannot be shaken; that the British farmer should have an interest in cultivating grain. Has he that interest at the present prices? No. What is the remedy? Clearly that the *foreign grower should bear some of the burdens that he does; that he should pay a duty upon importation*; that this duty should make the price of foreign corn equal to a price which the English farmer ought to get for British corn. Mr. Burke thought a farmer ought to make 12 per cent. upon his capital after paying his rent. Later writers and witnesses examined by Parliament, think 10 per cent. a sum much less than is made in almost all other trades. At the present price of grain the farmer so far from making this interest upon his capital must lessen that capital by cultivating. What the price should be per quarter to enable him to pay his rent and gain so much upon his capital, we presume not to state from our own knowledge. Some of the witnesses examined by the House of Lords declare that wheat ought to be 4*l.* 16*s.* a quarter, or 12*s.* a bushel to produce this effect. Others fix it at 4*l.* or 10*s.* the bushel; none lower. At 3*l.* 15*s.* or 9*s.* 4*d.* per bushel (see the Reports of the House of Lords), all declare the farmer could not be able to pay his rent and get 10 per cent. upon his capital. The present average price, according to Saturday's *Gazette*, is 7*s.* 11*d.* the bushel. We have thus fulfilled our intention of collecting a few facts, which we have endeavoured to place in a prominent point of view, offering such reasons as they are suggested to our minds. We are quite sure that we speak without partiality or prejudice ourselves. We are neither farmers nor merchants, neither growers of home nor importers of foreign corn. Our chief anxiety is to remove, if possible, some prejudices, knowing that he best promotes the interests of the poorer classes and of British agriculture, who encourages and promotes the interests of the British farmer. 'If the price of the corn,' says an eminent writer, 'should not compensate the price of growing of it, the most serious evil, the very destruction of agriculture itself, is to be apprehended.'"

Now, though this article is written with great ability, and with even greater craft than ability, it will require, I trust, not a great deal to be said, to show that its tendency is to deceive the people, and to entice

them, by a fallacious statement, into an acquiescence in a measure for *making corn dear*; that being the undisguised object of the writer.—Before I proceed to the main points, let me notice the insinuation, that objections to a Corn Bill have been owing to the “*industry of faction*.” What then, is OLD GEORGE ROSE become the leader of faction? He, who wrote a pamphlet to convince the people of England, that, if they did not quietly pay the war-taxes, the French Republicans would deprive them of the blessed comforts of religion? He has, indeed, been very *industrious* upon this occasion: but has his been the “*industry of faction*?” Have the petitions of “*the loyal*” of Southampton, Portsmouth, Winchester, and hundreds of other cities and towns, proceeded from “*the industry of faction*?” Oh, no! this will never do. The promoters of the measure cannot now raise a cry against the Jacobins. That humbug is over for ever.—Who told this writer, that any body ever said, that *revenge against the farmer* was the object of the opposers of the measure? This is pure invention. It is an invented fact, whereon to build a fallacious argument.—But, we are told here, that the high prices arose from causes, *over which the farmers had no control*, that is to say, in part, at least, from the *war*. It is not true (though it has nothing to do with the point at issue) that the farmers were wholly innocent here; for, they were notoriously amongst the foremost to uphold *PIRR* in making war and in carrying on war, against the Republicans of France. That has been accomplished, which they tendered their lives and fortunes to accomplish. The republic of France has been destroyed; the Bourbons have been restored; liberty has been nearly put out in that country; and, really, if our farmers were to suffer in consequence of what has taken place, they certainly would come in for their full share of meriting that suffering. Now we come to the subject:—The argument is this: that, unless corn is *dear*, the English farmer *cannot grow it*, because it would not bring him enough to enable him to pay *wages of labour, keep of horses, repair of waggons, cost of seed, and rent to the landlord*.—Now, how fallacious is this! Is not the corn which the horses eat, and which is sown for seed *cheap*, if corn be cheap at market? Are not the wages of labourers, the prices of wheelwrights, and the rent of land *cheap*, if the corn be cheap at market? Why, then, should not the English farmer be *as able to grow cheap corn as dear corn*? And what becomes of all the terrific statement about dependence upon foreign nations, about the extortioning of the foreign farmer, about scarcity, about the ruin of the labourer, and the like? Is it not notorious, that wheat used to be 5s. a bushel in England? Nay, is it not notorious, that it used to be 2s. a bushel? How did the farmer live in those days? Was the labourer starved in those days? On the contrary, is it not notorious, that the *paupers have increased with the high prices*? Will any man have the confidence to deny this? And if this cannot be denied, what reason is there to be alarmed at the prospect of continued cheapness? What reason is there to suppose, that the farmer will be *unable* to raise *cheap* corn, seeing that his labourers, his smith, his wheelwright, his collar-maker, his seed, his rent, will all keep pace with the price of his corn? If these items amount to a hundred pounds a year when wheat is 40s. a quarter, and to two hundred pounds a year when wheat is 80s. a quarter, is not the farmer *as able* to raise the forty-shilling wheat as the eighty-shilling wheat? How came this writer to be so indiscreet as to mention *horse-feed* and *seed* amongst the outgoings of

the farmer? These *must* be at a low price, if his market corn is at a low price. They consist of the same sort of corn that he has to sell. How, in the name of common sense, then, should he have to complain of the amount of these outgoings, and, at the same time, complain of the *cheapness* of his corn? But, the truth is, that the absurdity of these positions arises from a very material *omission* in the enumeration of the farmer's outgoings; to wit; the TAXES! which, *direct and indirect*, amount to more, aye, to *double as much*, as his labour, horse-feed, seed, implements, and rent, all put together. The direct taxes are upon his land, his property, his horses, his house, his windows, his gig, his dogs, his man-servant, and to these must be added his poor-rates. He pays about 17s. a bushel tax out of every 20s. which he lays out in salt; and, in a large farm-house, the Salt tax amounts to about 10l. a year. He pays more in tax upon malt than his barley, of which the malt is made, amounts to. He pays a tax upon the soap and candles, and tea and sugar and wine and spirits used in his house. He pays a tax on the leather and iron used in his implements and his harness. And, be it observed and remembered, that he pays a tax upon the beer, the gin, the tea, the sugar, the salt, the soap, the candles, the shoes, the tobacco, *used by his labourers*. For every quart of beer drank by the ploughman, at a public-house, the farmer pays about 4d. in tax. The brewer and maltster first pay it; the publican pays it to them; the labourer pays it to the publican; the farmer pays it to the labourer; and, as the farmer must be repaid, he must, of course, charge it in the price of the next corn that he sells.—*Here*, then, is the real cause of the *necessity of high prices*. It is the GOVERNMENT, and not the FARMER, who stands in need of high-priced corn.—Oh! ye *Cokes and Westerns*, be not; be not, I pray and supplicate you, *made the tools of the taxing system!* I know well that neither of you wish for high prices in order to increase, or keep up your own incomes. Your wish is to protect, to secure the well-being of, a description of persons, as to whose pursuits you are laudably enthusiastic. But the real *tendency* of your exertions is to protect and promote the taxing system, and thereby to enable the Government to keep up, during peace, a standing army and all those means of patronage, heretofore unknown in England, and the keeping up of which tends to the total extinguishment of even the *great* country gentlemen, the little ones having all been swallowed up long ago.

Stand here, I pray you, and *reflect*, before you proceed another inch.

You perceive, clearly, that the writer, whom I have quoted, under pretence of protecting the farmer, and promoting agriculture, aims at *keeping up the taxes*, that is to say, an immense military establishment and patronage, which it is your interest, and the farmer's interest, and the country's interest, to see reduced to nothing, seeing, that we now want no standing army any more than our forefathers did.

I have read a long letter of Mr. WESTERN to show, that it is just and necessary to pass a Bill to protect the farmer. The reasonings of that very able letter are unanswerable, *if we admit, that the taxing system must remain in full vigour*, which the author seems to admit, and which I wonder that he should have admitted. It is clearly shown, that the English farmer will not grow corn, unless he is put upon as good a footing, at least, as the French farmer. But, then, it is not shown, that *this* cannot be accomplished *without a Corn Bill*; and yet, this ought to be shown, and clearly shown, by those, who, in open hostility to the com-

have above described.—For these reasons, I, who am a farmer by taste as well as in fact, and who am deeply interested in the prosperity of agriculture, detest and abhor, from the bottom of my soul, the idea of any measure tending to raise, or keep up, the price of corn; and, if there be but one man in all England found to petition against such a measure, I will be that man.

WM. COBBETT.

CORN BILL.

TO THE PEOPLE OF HAMPSHIRE.

(Political Register, February, 1815.)

THE "AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY," who hold their meetings at Winchester, have framed a PETITION to Parliament for a *Corn Bill*; that is to say, for some law to prevent corn from being brought from abroad, until the price of English corn, is higher than it now is; or, in other words, a law to make corn dearer than it now is. This petition they have published in the County papers, and, it appears, that they have sent blank Petitions to the several Market-towns in the County, there to be signed, for the purpose of being presented all together. For the greater part of the gentlemen, who have adopted this measure, I entertain respect; and those whom I do not know, are, I presume, equally entitled to the respect of their several neighbours. The motives, too, of these gentlemen, I suppose to be laudable.—But, I am convinced, that they have taken an erroneous view of the matter, and that the measures they recommend would be injurious to the people at large and to landowners and occupiers themselves. Therefore, if any sufficient number of persons are willing to stand forward in opposition to the abovementioned petition, by means of an open Meeting of the County, I shall be happy to join in such opposition.—In making, however, this proposition, it will be justly demanded of me that I state the *reasons*, on which the opposition is to be founded; and this I shall now do in as clear a manner as I am able consistent with brevity.—The Petition states that all the *expenses* of a farm are *nearly as high as ever*, and that the taxes are full as high. The latter is correct; the former is not. Our wages at Botley were from 15s. to 18s. a week; they are now from 10s. to 12s. a week. Bricklayers, Carpenters, Smiths, Wheelwrights, have all come *down one-fourth* in their prices. *Horses* have fallen in price a full *third*, if not a half. *Timber* has fallen in an equal proportion. The food for the horse and the seed for the land must always be in price upon a perfect level with the market corn.—Well, then, what are the *other expenses* of a farm? The *rent* and the *tithe*. The latter must keep pace with the price of corn, seeing that the tithe-owner always takes his tenth, whether it be of cheap corn or dear corn; and, as to the rent, if the tenant has now the worst of it, the landlord has had the worst of it, and will have the worst of it again, if corn should become dear

from causes other than bad seasons.—Besides, the real great cause of the present low prices, is, the *three* abundant and dry harvests which we have had in uninterrupted succession; for, though in *some parts*, the wheat was much blighted last year, the deficiency of crop was far from being *general*, and it was the wheat *only* that was not a most abundant crop, and of that grain there was a *prodigious quantity* on hand of the crop of the year before. Now, when a farmer grows five quarters upon an acre, is it reasonable for him to expect as *high* a price per quarter as when he grows two quarters and a half? Are not the five quarters at 40s. a quarter as good as two quarters and a half at 80s. a quarter?—The consequences of making corn dearer than it would be, are *first*, the making of all other food dearer: *second*, the ruin, in a short time, of many of our manufacturers, because it is impossible to believe that we could expect goods as cheap as those which would be made in countries where food is to be had for a third part of the price of that which would be eaten by our manufacturers, and amongst the articles of our manufacturers, the raw materials for many come from our own soil, as wool, skins, flax, lead, iron, tin, copper and coals; *third*, persons of fixed incomes, who are great consumers of our produce as well as employers of our tradesmen, would go to France and to other countries, where they could live upon cheap food, in cheap houses; and have cheap servants, horses and carriages; and, soon after these would follow many of our manufacturers, and these the most clever and enterprising; *fourth*, our commercial ship-building would follow the fate of the manufactures, and also the employment of our ships as carriers, seeing that the ships of other countries, particularly of America, would be built so much cheaper and would also sail so much cheaper.—These are only a part of the consequences to be apprehended from any measure, calculated to make corn dear; but they are quite sufficient to induce me to oppose such a measure. If I am asked, how the English farmer is to contend with the French farmer, while the former has so many and such heavy taxes to pay, of which the latter knows nothing, I answer, *take off English taxes*, till the English farmer is able to contend with the French farmer; and *then* I'll warrant it, that we beat the farmers of France, that we undersell them, and that our manufacturers live as cheap, and sell cheaper than any manufacturers in the world. I am clearly of opinion, that taxes may be taken off to *this extent* without any injury to the *credit*, the *safety*, or the *peace* of the country; but I must be very plain upon this head, and expressly say, that with those *who do not think that this ought to be done*, I wish not to join in any petition against a Corn Bill; because I am certain, that it is impossible for MORE THAN ONE-HALF OF THE PRESENT TAXES TO BE RAISED, UNLESS THE PRICE BE KEPT UP, ON AN AVERAGE OF YEARS, TO ABOUT 120s. PER QUARTER OF GOOD WHEAT. To reduce the taxes one-half, the whole of the standing army must be disbanded; the Horse-Guards must lose its brilliancy and power; the Navy must come back to its state of 1788; and a vast reduction must be made in the Civil List.—I am for THESE REDUCTIONS and for NO CORN BILL. With persons who are for no CORN BILL and are AGAINST THESE REDUCTIONS I cannot join; because it would be joining in senseless clamour and popular delusion.—There is yet another point of great importance to mention. During the late war, several laws were passed restricting the *liberty of the Press and of public discussion*. I will join in no Petition, *which does not include a prayer for the repeal of*

these laws, for a repeal of the *Alien Act*, and for a *constitutional reform in the representation of the people in the Commons' House of Parliament*. With those who regard the belly and the purse, and are careless about their rights and liberties as Englishmen, I wish to have nothing to do. For the sufferings of such persons I have no compassion; and, indeed, the more they suffer the better I am pleased.—To men of other minds I now address myself.—It is inconvenient to most people to go to any particular place to sign a *Requisition to the Sheriff*; and, therefore, I publish the following *Circular Requisition*, in imitation of the Circular Petition of the Agricultural Society. This Requisition may be copied upon a sheet of paper and signed by as many persons, in any town or place, as choose to sign it. The paper, thus signed, may then be sent to me, at *Botley near Southampton*, before the *1st day of March*; and, if I receive Requisitions, the signatures to the whole of which amount to *one hundred*, I will wait upon the Sheriff with them. If I do not, I shall have done my utmost in opposition to the Corn Bill; I shall leave the dear loaf and heavy taxes to jog quietly on together; and to hear the whinings and grumbings of those who feel the grievance, and yet want the spirit to use the lawful means of getting rid of it, will be an ample compensation to me for the portion of the grievance that will fall to my lot.

To the High Sheriff of the County of Southampton.

SIR,

We, the undersigned Freeholders and other Landholders, 'Tradesmen and Manufacturers, of the County of Southampton, perceiving, that in various parts of the Kingdom, evil-disposed or misguided persons are endeavouring to prevail on the Legislature to impose Duties on the importation of Corn, and, being convinced, that such a measure would grievously oppress the labouring classes, would be ruinous to tradesmen and manufacturers, would, in the end, be injurious to the growers of corn and the owners of land themselves, and might possibly disturb the peace of His Majesty's dominions, request that you will be pleased to convene a Meeting of the County on a day as little distant as may be convenient, in order to take into consideration and to discuss the propriety of presenting a Petition to the two Houses of Parliament, earnestly praying that no such measure may be adopted; and also praying for the repeal of laws, hostile to our rights and liberties, passed during the late war, and for a constitutional Reform in the Representation of the People in the Commons' House of Parliament.

Date —

N. B. The letters conveying the Requisition must be *post paid*; as it is not reasonable that I should be put to any expense on account of it.

WM. COBBETT.

CORN BILL.

(Political Register, February, 1815.)

THIS measure has been mentioned in the House of Lords, upon the presenting, by Lord Hardwicke, of a Petition from the County of Cambridge, in which the Petitioners state, that they are wholly unable to contend with the growers of corn, in countries where the farmers pay *no tithes*, *no poor-rates*, and comparatively very little in *taxes of any sort*.

Well said, Cambridgeshire! So, then, here are "the loyal;" the old, loyal "*Yeomandry Gavaldry*;" the gallant men, whose swords glittered like lightning, a few years ago, against the poor Jacobins, who were safe enough under the warrants of the Secretary of State; here are these "the loyal" *par excellence*, crying out, by a side-wind, against *tithes*, *poor-rates*, and *taxes of all sorts*; that is to say, against the *established church*, and against the very existence of that system of sway, to uphold which they often pledged themselves to spend their "*last shilling*," and the *last drop of their blood*." What, then, would these men insinuate, that the French people *are better off* than we are; that they have *gained* by that Revolution which has been so much abused; that, in getting rid of tithes and taxes, they have really been, upon the whole benefited! Do they confess, that we are come out of the contest *worsted*? How does this agree with all the bonfires, and bell-ringing, and ox-roasting, and Serpentine River, and Green Park rejoicings? What! do they confess, after all, that we have *lost* by the 22 years struggle?

But *tithes*; why do they name tithes, unless to ask for their *abolition*? Nay, unless to ask for the sending of the Bishops and Parsons to grass? If, now, any one were to write against *religion*, and to say, that it was useless, how these persons would grind their teeth at him, and grin with delight at seeing him sent to starve and rot in a gaol. How they would bellow forth *Atheist*, *Blasphemer*, and all sorts of vile appellations. If any one were to *ridicule* the rites and ceremonies of marriage, baptism, churching of women, confirmation, visitation of the sick, the Lord's Supper, absolution, consecration of church-yards, burial of the dead, how they would stare at him; how they would rejoice to see him ruined, and killed by inches. And yet, they aim a much more direct blow at all these things by insinuating, that they cannot sell bread so cheap as they would be able to sell it, if the *tithes*, which support the Church, did not exist.

We are upon the eve, I imagine, of some *great change* in public matters. The war has left all its heavy load behind it, and has lost all its profits. To raise the means of supporting that load, the Government must adopt some measure to *keep up prices*. The farmer who grows 100 quarters of wheat can get on if the Government demand 50 quarters towards the payment of the debt expenses, and the army, navy, and royal family, and other things; but, if the Government demand 90 quarters of it, the farmer cannot go on. And, it is quite useless to "*Erchequer him*;" for, dreadful as the fulmination may be, it cannot make him pay that which he *has not*.—Let me make this matter as clear as day-light.

Farmer Gripeum pays, in all sorts of taxes, direct and indirect, 200 pounds a year to the Government. He grows 50 quarters of wheat. If his wheat be 120 shillings a quarter, the Government demand about 32 quarters of it; but, if his wheat be 60 shillings a quarter, the Government demand about 64 quarters of it, which is 14 quarters more than poor Gripeum grows, who is obliged, therefore, to sell cows, pigs, sheep, and everything else, before the year is out, to make up the deficiency, to pay his rent, labour, and to find him clothes. It is manifest, therefore, that Gripeum must be ruined if he cannot sell his wheat at a high price as long as the demand of the Government continues to be heavy. But, then, if he sells his wheat dear, the baker must sell his bread dear; so that it comes, at last, to this: heavy taxes make dear bread: it is the loaf that is taxed, and the consumer pays the tax.

If it be resolved, that the taxes *shall not be reduced*, a Corn Bill must be made; for, without it the taxes cannot be collected. I, for my part, expect to see wheat, before next harvest, 6*l.* a quarter; and this ought to be no subject of complaint with those *who are for the army's not being disbanded*. They wish for the army to continue, and, really, I am for no dispute with them about the matter; but, then, they cannot suppose, that our ministers, liberal as they are, can keep up the army out of their own pockets. The question is this: are you for a standing army, or Cheap Bread.—Both you cannot have. There are no petitions against the former, and, therefore, it would be unreasonable and unjust to expect the latter.

It appears, that a county meeting in Kent has been held for the purpose of petitioning for a Corn Bill.—The *people* (for the people they are) overset the Meeting, and committed some violences. The *Courier* blames them; but did not this man, *last year* promulgate the very errors, upon which these people have acted? Now he has found out, that the Government cannot collect the taxes without a Corn Bill; and, therefore, now he is *for a Corn Bill!*—There is one precious confession in this paper. It is as follows: "*The division of property in France, however disastrous its ultimate effects, has created a far greater and more universal tillage than existed before the Revolution.*" Pray, reader, mark well these words; and, pray do recollect, that this same man a thousand times told us, and swore to the fact, that Buonaparte took away all the able men, and left none but old men, women, and children, to till the land! But, the main fact is: France grows *more food* in consequence of *her revolution*; her land is *tilled better* in consequence of *her revolution*: revolutions which put down *aristocracy* and *priesthood* produce cheap bread by causing more corn to be grown. This is what we are now told in the "*loyal*" newspapers. I am glad, at any rate, if the measure is to be adopted, that such men as *Mr. Coke*, *Mr. Western*, and *Mr. Whitbread*, mean to leave it to the GOVERNMENT. It is, as I said last year, *their affair*, and not the affair of the farmers and landowners. Not a word would I say, if I were *Mr. Coke*; not a vote would I give, for the measure. It is a question which lies wholly with the Government, the army, and the fundholders. If prices are very high, all these may yet be supported; if prices are not very high, they cannot.—Where now is the famous OLD GEORGE ROSE, "*the friend of the people*?" Why does he not now come forward? Wheat is *dearer* than it was when he opposed the bill before. Where is the worthy old man now? His creatures at Southampton, too, are quiet as mice, thought they have felt

such benefits from the imports of wheat from France.—It would provoke almost any man but me to see himself robbed as I am by these newspaper writers. All that they now say in the way of argument to show the necessity of high prices, was said by me, last year, in my Address to the people of Southampton. They have absolutely nothing new; no, not a single thought. I, in that one article, furnished them all with the arguments that they are now filling their columns with. But, they always avoid the *point at the heart*. They always avoid the exposition of this great fact: that *high prices are necessary to farmers only because the taxes are high*. They always avoid this point; this thrust at the left side.—I have shown before that all *other* expenses keep pace with the price of corn; and that, as far as they go, cheap corn is as good as dear corn to the farmers. It is the *taxes*, the *taxes*, the *taxes*, the *taxes*, the *taxes*. They *do not* keep pace with the price of corn. They fall upon cheap corn with the same weight as upon dear corn. Soap, salt, leather, sugar, tea, candles, tobacco, malt, land, horses, windows, houses, property, and many other things, are all taxed as heavily now as when wheat was 40*l.* a load of five quarters. It is not the *farmer* who wants a Corn Bill: it is the *Government*, that it may be able to get taxes.—I now wonder what the *City of London* will do. *Consistency* calls imperiously on it for a petition against the threatened Bill; or will it, too, like that fine, venerable old scientific placeman, Mr. Rose, find out a reason for not doing, *this year*, what it did, under similar circumstances, *last year*.

WM. COBBETT.

CORN BILL.

(*Political Register*, March, 1815.)

FINDING that it would be too late to present a Petition after calling together any part of the County, and resolved myself to state, to one, at least, of the Houses of Parliament, my reasons for objecting to this Bill; resolved to show, in the most formal manner, that I, at any rate, rejected the *protection*, which has been so much talked of, I drew up, and forwarded to Earl Stanhope, a petition, of which the following is a copy. This step became the more necessary as it was, in some sort, my duty to make it known to the House of Lords, that the High Sheriff of Hampshire had *refused to convene a Meeting of the County*, and, thereby to show them, that they would have had a petition from this whole county, had things taken their natural and usual course. Upon this occasion I may be fairly looked upon as signing a petition in behalf of a great majority of the inhabitants of Hampshire; or, at the very least, in behalf of the 581 gentlemen, who signed the Requisition. I will now insert the Petition, and then add such remarks upon the subject as appear to me likely to be useful,

To the Lords Spiritual and Temporal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The Petition of WILLIAM COBBETT, of Botley, in Hampshire, dated on the 17th day of March, 1815,

HUMBLY SHOWETH :

That your Petitioner on the 10th instant, delivered to the High Sheriff of Hampshire, signed by your Petitioner himself, and by five hundred and eighty-one other inhabitants of the County, many of whom are freeholders, landholders, and land-cultivators, a Requisition in the following words ; to wit :

" Sir,—We, the undersigned Freeholders and other Landholders, Tradesmen and Manufacturers of the County of Southampton, perceiving, that, in various parts of the Kingdom, evil-disposed, or misguided, persons are endeavouring to prevail on the Legislature to impose Duties on the importation of Corn, and being convinced, that such a measure would grievously oppress the labouring classes, would be ruinous to Tradesmen and Manufacturers, would, in the end, be injurious to the Growers of Corn and the Owners of Land themselves, and might possibly disturb the peace of his Majesty's Dominions, request that you will be pleased to convene a Meeting of the County on a day as little distant as may be convenient, in order to take into consideration and to discuss the propriety of presenting a Petition to the two Houses of Parliament, earnestly praying, That no such measure may be adopted, and also praying for a repeal of laws, hostile to our rights and liberties, passed during the late wars, and for a constitutional Reform in the Commons' House of Parliament."

That the said High Sheriff has refused to call such Meeting of the County, and that, therefore, your Petitioner, deeply impressed with the injurious tendency of any law to prohibit, or restrain, the importation of Corn, has thus humbly presumed to make his individual appeal to the Wisdom, the Justice, the Humanity of your Lordships.

That your Petitioner does not presume to be competent to judge of the precise degree in which the Merchants, Traders, and Manufacturers of this kingdom may be affected by the proposed law ; but while common sense tells him, that it must seriously injure these classes of the community, that it must so enhance and uphold the price of shipping, freight, and manufactured goods, as to transfer the building of ships, the employment of ships, the making of goods, together with vast numbers of our best artizans to countries where the necessities of life are at a much lower price : while common sense tells him, that to uphold the price of food is to drive from their native country great numbers of persons in search of better living on their incomes, leaving their share of the taxes to be paid by those who remain, and that, too, out of diminished means arising from a diminished demand for their produce, their manufactures, and their professional labours ; while common sense says this to your Petitioner, his own experience, as an owner and cultivator of land, enables him to state with more precision, to your Lordships, the grounds of his conviction, that any law tending to raise, or keep up, the price of Corn, will prove in the end, to be no benefit, but an injury to the owner and the cultivator of the land.

That your Petitioner has seen, with great surprise, that, in certain Petitions obtained privately and sent from this County, it has been asserted, that the *Expenses* of a farm remain nearly the same as when Corn was at the late high price. Your Petitioner's observation and experience enables him most positively to contradict this very material fact. When Wheat was sold at an average of 100 shillings a quarter, the weekly

wages of a labourer in this neighbourhood, were from 15 to 18 shillings, and that now, when the average price of Wheat is about 60 shillings a quarter, the weekly wages of a labourer are from 10 to 12 shillings. The price of Brickwork, which was 50 shillings a Rod, or Perch, is now 40 shillings. The price of Smith's and Wheelwright's work is experiencing a proportionate fall; and the price of plough and cart-horses has fallen a full third.

But, there is another great head of expense, to which your Petitioner is particularly anxious humbly to solicit the attention of your Lordships, as it is intimately connected, not only with the comfort of the great mass of the people, but with their political, civil, and moral conduct; namely, *The Poor's Rates*, which, in the Parish of Bishop's Waltham, where the land of your Petitioner principally lies, have been reduced in such a degree, that your Petitioner has had to pay, in the said parish, during the year just now expiring, one-fifth less than he had to pay during the last year,* with the pleasing prospect of a progressive diminution in this head of expense and in the vast numbers of those persons, who are now included under the degrading appellation of paupers; who, in entering the pale of pauperism have, in general, left behind them all those sentiments of independence, of patriotism, of love of liberty, of hatred of oppression, for which the very lowest classes of Englishmen were, in former times so highly distinguished, and have, along with the name and garb of paupers, assumed the tone and the manners of slaves.

For the practical, the undeniable proof, that high prices have an immediate tendency towards the creating of paupers; your Petitioner humbly begs leave to refer your Lordships to the official documents amongst the records of your Right Honourable House, where it clearly appears, that pauperism kept in check for a long series of years by the native spirit of the people, was let loose like a torrent over the land by the enormous prices during the late wars, which, in depriving men of their food, deprived them, and even their children of that shame which had before kept them from the Poor-List; and, therefore, your Petitioner cannot but view with profound sorrow, that a legislative act should be in contemplation, having, as he firmly believes, a tendency to prevent for ever the restoration of the labouring classes to their former state of comfort, of independence of mind, and of frankness and boldness of manners.

Your Petitioner is well aware, that, unless prices be raised and upheld, it will be impossible for the owners and the cultivators of the land to pay the taxes that will exist after the Property-Tax shall have ceased; he is well aware, that to ensure them a high price for their Corn is the only means of enabling them to pay these taxes; but, then, he is clearly convinced, that a very large part of those taxes might be dispensed with; that the army and navy, which swallow up so considerable a portion of them, might be reduced to the state in which they were previous to the late war, and that the whole of the public expenses (exclusive of those attendant on the National Debt) might be reduced to what they then were, namely, six millions a year; and thus without raising the price of Corn, the credit, the safety, the honour of the nation, might all be amply provided for and secured.

For these reasons your Petitioner humbly prays, that your Lordships will not pass any law to prohibit, or restrain the importation of Corn;

* In the parish of BOTLEY a still greater reduction has taken place.

and, as the nation, once more, happily sees the days of peace, he also prays for the repeal of all the laws, *laying new restrictions on the Press*, passed during the late wars; and, further, he most humbly but most earnestly prays and implores your Lordships to take into your early consideration that subject, which, in point of real importance, swallows up all others: namely, the state of the Representation of the people in the Commons' House of Parliament.

And your Petitioner shall ever pray,
W^M. COBBETT.

Thus it appears to me that I have done everything which I had the power to do against this Bill, which, I am afraid, will, in spite of all our efforts, become a law.—It is proposed, I see, by the City of London to petition the *Regent* not to give his assent to the Bill. I hope that this will be done, and that the Regent will listen to the voice of so large a part of the nation as have expressed their abhorrence of the Bill.—I shall be exceedingly happy to have to communicate to my readers, that the Royal Prerogative has, in this case, been exerted in behalf of the Petitioners.—In the meanwhile, I hope, that it will be clearly understood, that the owners and cultivators of land would *not be gainers* by the Corn Bill. But if they have exposed themselves to public hatred by becoming the humble cat's-paw of those who want to *keep up the taxes*, I am not one of those who pity them. I have often enough warned them against this; and, if their short-sighted selfishness has blinded them and made them deaf, let them get their eyes and ears open as they can.—They have petitioned and voted to *have their Corn made dear*, when they should have made a stand for the reduction of the expenses and the taxes. But it would really seem, that they wish for a large standing army in time of profound peace; and, that they want high prices to enable them to pay the taxes, necessary to keep up this army.—Sir GILBERT HEATHCOTE, Sir FRANCIS BURDETT, Mr. CALCRAFT, and some others are exceptions; but, what but the senseless fanaticism of agricultural societies could have induced such men as Mr. COKE and Mr. WESTERN to enlist themselves under the banners of *Taxation!*

I have been much vexed at the sentiments in many of the Petitions against the Bill. The Petitioners, always upon a false scent, ascribe the Bill to the *Landowners*, though they see it *brought in by the Ministers* and supported by all the settled *Ministerial Majorities*, in exactly the same way that every place-bill or war-bill or grant-bill or tax-bill is supported. Can they not see, that it is really a *government measure*? Why do they fly with such fury at the Landholders who, if the Bill pass, will only be enable by it to pay the Government *the taxes* which it wants to keep up its great establishments? However, as the avarice of some Landholders, and the folly of others, have let them into the snare, let them get out of it as they can.

W^M. COBBETT.

LETTER
TO A CORRESPONDENT IN AMERICA,
ON
THE EXPENSES, THE TAXES, &c., OF GREAT BRITAIN, COMPARED
WITH THOSE OF AMERICA.

(*Political Register*, November, 1814.)

Botley, England, Nov. 15, 1814.

DEAR SIR,

Your request would, long ago, have been attended to, if I had had more leisure for the task. For your valuable information, relative to your agriculture, your flocks and your manufactures, I am much obliged to you; and, if the two countries were at peace, you should receive from me all the useful information, which it is in my power to give you upon several heads, which I shall not touch upon in a letter passing through the *press*, but which, I hope, the restoration of harmony between our two countries, may, in a year or two, at most, make it convenient for me to communicate to you through the ordinary channel of the post.

You wish to know what is the amount of the annual expenses of our *Government*; what is the amount of the taxes paid to the Government; what is the amount of our *poor-rates*; what is the amount of our *tithes*; and you wish me to show the comparison between these and the expenses and taxes in America. You also wish to have my account of the state of the people here; or, in plainer terms, you wish to know, how we stand as to *modes of living*, and as to *crimes and punishments*, compared with the people of your Republic.

To perform this task as it ought to be performed, is, I am afraid, beyond my power. I do, indeed, know more about these matters than many of my neighbours; but I cannot hope to discharge the task to your satisfaction, who are so accurate in all your statements and calculations, and who, with all your indulgence in other respects, are not to be satisfied, unless you find others as accurate as yourself. Nevertheless, I will do all that I am able to do, in return for the very valuable information, which I owe solely to your attentive kindness, and which serves me as a guide through those numerous errors, with regard to your country, into which I see others of my countrymen continually falling.

I am happy that, you have not called upon me for *opinions*; that you have not called upon me for *conclusions*, drawn from premises that I am to state; that you confine your request to an account of *mere facts*; that you have not wished to expose me to the mortification of seeing the effort of my facts destroyed, or perverted, by the superior talents of those, who might, with merciless hands, lay foul of my feeble attempts at an application of these facts to the sustaining of any political theory. It is, I perfectly agree with you, the best and fairest way, in such a case, to

content myself with bare facts, leaving the reader, whether public or private, to draw his own conclusions; because the points of controversy, if any arise can be at once decided; and, because that reader, who is not competent to draw just conclusions from facts clearly stated, is not worth the attention of the writer, and is of little more consequence in society than a worm or a fly.

In speaking of the EXPENSES of our Government, I must confine myself to the *annual* expenses, and, in this case to the last year's expenses; that is to say, the year which ended on the 5th January, 1814. As, in the comparative part of my statement, I must speak of *dollars* on your side and of pounds sterling on our side, I will, for the sake of easier assimilation, take the dollar at *five* shillings, instead of *four shillings and sixpence*, which is its real sterling value. But the state of our paper currency will fully justify this advance; and indeed it would justify a further advance. This, however, is not material enough to induce us to enter into any laboured calculations on the subject; especially as it is contended here, by a great majority of the Government financiers, that our paper has undergone no depreciation at all.

To begin, then, with the expenses of our Government, in *Great Britain* only, for the year ending on the 5th of January, 1814, the total sum expended was 113,968,610*l.* 16*s.* 10½*d.* I speak from documents, laid before the House of Commons, and, therefore, I run no risk of error or of contradiction. This was the total sum, exclusive of the expenditure belonging to Ireland. To go into a *detail* as to the several particulars would fill five or six Numbers of my REGISTER; but the great *heads* of the expenditure it may be worth your while to know. These were as follows:

Charge on account of the National Debt for the year	} £41,897,375 17 5½
Civil List	1,028,000 0 0
Courts of Justice, Mint, Salaries and Allowances, Bounties	} 234,937 19 7½
Allowance to Members of the Royal Family, Pensions, &c.	} 332,412 7 4½
Civil List of Scotland	113,176 4 8½
Other Bounties and Pensions, and Militia and Deserters' Warrants	} 391,056 1 11½
Navy	21,996,624 9 4½
Ordnance	3,404,527 11 11
Army	29,469,520 10 3
Remittances to other countries, Hanover, Austria, Prussia, and nine other Powers ..	} 15,994,832 14 1
Miscellaneous Services at Home and Abroad ..	4,010,349 18 4½
	<hr/>
	£118,872,813 15 1½
Deduct Sums for Ireland, &c.	4,904,202 18 3
	<hr/>
Total Expenditure of Great Britain	£113,968,610 16 10½

Now, as to the comparison between the expenditure of this Government and of yours, I must speak of the latest period of which I have any knowledge of your expenditure; and though you are in a state of war and of unprecedented expense, you must bear in mind that we are in a state of war also. I find an account of your expenditure in Mr. Madison's speech

of the 20th of September, 1814, which speech, by-the-bye, many persons here think will be his *last*, except that which the *Times* newspaper supposes he will make at his exit from the world.

Mr. Madison speaks thus on the subject of your finances :—"The monies received into the Treasury, during the nine months ending the 13th of June last, amounted to 32 millions of dollars, of which 11 millions were the proceeds of the *public revenue*, and the remainder *derived from loans*. The disbursements for public expenditures during the same period exceed 34 millions of dollars, and left in the Treasury on the 1st of July near five millions of dollars."

Taking your expenditure without fractions, then, it would be for the last year, 47,550,000 dollars, while ours was 455,874,443 dollars. So that our expenditure, exclusive of poor-rates, tithes, and county and corporation government is more than *nine times* as great as yours. The population of the two countries, leaving out our *paupers*, is, as I shall show, by-and-bye, *nearly equal*, the greater population being, however, I believe, on your side. The paupers must be left out, as you will perceive, because it is impossible that they can contribute in any way whatever towards the means of meeting this expenditure.

But *expenditure* is of little importance when compared to *receipts*, or *taxes*. Here it is that we touch closely upon men's pockets. The means of expending consists, in part, of *loans*. These loans may, or may not, ever be paid off. You, may, perhaps, pay them off by *lands*; we may pay them off by some yet unknown means. What we have to look at, in the most attentive manner, therefore, is the amount of the *TAXES*; because this is what the people really *pay*.

The amount of our taxes, paid into the Treasury, during the last year, was 74,027,583*l.* 17*s.* 8*d.* We are very precise in the keeping of our accounts. According to Mr. Madison's statement, in his speech, the money paid into your Treasury during the last year, was 14,550,000 dollars.

In dollars our taxes amounted to 296,110,335; which is rather more than *twenty times* the amount of your year's taxes. But you must bear in mind that there is a considerable difference between the amount *collected*, and the amount *paid into* our Treasury. Amongst other deductions from this latter sum there was the sum of 3,504,938*l.* 11*s.* 5*d.* deducted from the gross receipt, or collection, for the purpose of paying the "*charges of management*;" that is to say, for the purpose of paying the persons employed in the assessing, the supervising, the surveying, the inspecting, the collecting, the receiving, the transmitting, &c. of money paid into the Treasury. Now, 3,504,938*l.* 11*s.* 5*d.* is 14,019,754 dollars. So that that the bare expense of the getting together of our taxes amounts, you see, to very nearly as much as *the whole of the taxes raised upon you*; that is to say, if Mr. Madison's statement be correct. And suppose each of these persons, one with the other, to receive 50*l.* or 200 dollars, a year, here are wages for 70,098 men, constantly employed in the business of the taxes, while supposing you to pay your tax-gatherers at the same rate, you have only 3,504 persons constantly employed in this way.

The POOR-RATES form another item of English taxation, in addition to the above; and a very important item it is now become. If you do not know the nature of this tax and of its application, it may be necessary to state, that this is a tax levied upon all householders and landholders,

for the support of such persons as are too poor to support themselves. It is assessed and collected by persons, appointed by the taxed people, in every parish, called *Overseers of the Poor*; but, before they can proceed to collect any rate, they must have the approbation of a Justice of the Peace, who is, as they all are, appointed by the Crown. In the distribution of this money, the Overseers are again liable to the *control of the Justices of the Peace*; for they may, upon the application of any pauper, order, without appeal, the Overseers to relieve the said pauper, in any manner that they please. This, therefore, is a tax, not paid into the Treasury, but disposable under the jurisdiction, and at the discretion, of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace.

The office of Overseer is performed without any pay. It is a *duty*, or *service*, which every taxed householder is liable to be compelled to execute.

Now, then, as to the amount of this tax, which, you will observe, forms an addition to that of the Taxes already noticed, it was, in the year 1803, when the Report was laid before Parliament, 5,348,205*l*. For the *last year* I have only computation to guide me; but, that assures me, that the nation paid in poor-rates, last year, 7,896,556*l*.; or 31,586,224 dollars, being more than *twice the amount of all the taxes* which you paid during the last year, if Mr. MADISON's statement be correct. But that I may not expose myself to the risk of being charged with a wrong computation, I must first state, that no official account of this important matter has been laid before Parliament, since 1803; and that, therefore, I am forced to resort to computation, the grounds of which I will now explicitly state. I have the means of coming at the exact amount of the poor-rates in *Bishop's Waltham parish*, where my farm lies, for the last year. This is a parish subject to no fluctuation of prosperity; it has no manufactories in it; it has a small country town, and a large track of arable, meadow, wood, and waste land. Therefore, I may very fairly take the increase of the poor-rates here as a criterion of the increase of the poor-rates of the whole country, especially, if we find, from the official reports, that the poor-rates of this parish had, for nearly thirty years, up to 1803, kept a very nearly exact pace with the poor-rates of the whole nation. There were three different periods, at which the report of 1803 took the poor-rates of the whole nation, and also the poor-rates of Bishop's Waltham parish; and the statement was as follows, observing, however, that, as to poor-rates, we speak of only *England and Wales*, Scotland not being under the poor-laws.

<i>England and Wales.</i>		<i>Bishop's Waltham.</i>	
In the Year		In the Year	
1776	£ 1,720,316	1776	£ 581
1784	2,167,749	1784	670
1803	5,348,205	1803	1,595

It is quite surprising to observe how exact are these *proportions*; how regularly this parish kept pace, for twenty-seven years, with the whole nation, in the increase of its poor-rates. But, in order to leave no room for cavil on this head, the subject being one of the utmost importance, we will see what proportion this parish, according to its population, had of *paupers* in 1803, there being no account of the nation's number of paupers previous to 1803, and there being no likelihood that we shall ever see another.

England and Wales.

Population 8,872,980

Paupers 1,256,357

Exclusive of persons in almshouses.

Bishop's Waltham.

Population 1,773

Paupers 236

Now, if you multiply the paupers by *seven* in both instances, you will find that they amount to nearly the whole of the population; making it appear, that in 1803, there were nearly *one pauper* to every *seven persons* in the parish of Bishop's Waltham, as well as throughout England and Wales. It was said, in our newspapers, that the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia expressed their surprise at seeing **NO POOR PEOPLE** in England. If this was true, it is clear, that their Majesties did not look in the *right places*. We now come to the result. The poor-rates in Bishop's Waltham parish, instead of the 1,595*l.* to which they amounted in 1803, amounted, *last year*, to 2,355*l.* 18*s.* 6½*d.*, as I know from the poor-book now lying before me, and of which sum I *myself* paid more than 100*l.*, or 400 dollars. If, therefore, this criterion be a good one, and such, I think, it cannot be denied to be; if, in 1803, Bishop's Waltham paid 1,595*l.*, while England and Wales paid 5,348,205*l.*, England and Wales must, *last year*, have paid 7,896,556*l.*, seeing that Bishop's Waltham paid, in the same year, 2,355*l.*, throwing aside the shillings, pence and farthings.

I return, then, to my former statement, that the poor-rates alone of England and Wales, exclusive of Scotland, where, however, there is something paid in support of the poor, amounts to more than double the sum, which was last year (a year of great expense), paid by the whole of the population of America into the Treasury, in taxes of all sorts, direct and indirect.

Then comes another question; namely, what is the relative population of the two countries? I have not the account of your last *Census* at hand. I think it made your total population amount to between seven and eight millions. At *this time* I cannot suppose it to be less than 8,000,000. Take, then, the 5,348,205*l.* of poor-rates in 1803, observing that then there were 1,256,357 paupers, and you will find, that we must have now upwards of 1,800,000 paupers, provisions being, at this time, as cheap, if not cheaper, than they were in 1803.

Deduct, therefore, from the 8,872,980 (the population of England and Wales), the 1,800,000 paupers, and there are left, *to pay* the 7,896,556*l.* of poor-rates, only 7,072,980 persons, including women and children. The *paying* population, as to poor rates, is, at any rate, smaller than the population of your Republic; and the sum paid exceeds, as I have before stated, *twice* the amount of the *whole of the taxes of every sort*, which you paid, last year, into the Treasury of the United States, if Mr. Madison's statement be correct.

Turning towards another view of this interesting subject, we perceive, that, if we exclude the paupers, as we rationally must, the poor-rates alone amount to more than *one pound sterling*, or *four dollars*, a head on the whole of the population of England and Wales. Our poor-rates alone amount to this on the whole of our population; while, according to Mr. Madison's account, the whole of your taxes of every sort, paid into the Treasury of the United States, do not amount to more than two dollars a head on your population, even supposing your population to be now little more than 7,000,000.

The **TITHES** form another part of our taxes, I do not mean to speak

of them, as some most *loyal* men do, as being peculiarly odious ; or, indeed, as being odious at all, either in their nature, or the mode of their collection, in which latter I have never experienced anything severe or vexatious ; nor do I believe, that, as far as the clergy are the owners of the tithes (for they do not own more than about the half of them), their rate, or collection, is often severe, or unfair, or even troublesome. Still, however, the tithes, which Arthur Young, in 1792, estimated at 5,000,000*l.* in England and Wales, must be looked upon as so much money raised from the land ; and, certainly, it would not be raised, if there were no Established Church ; no State Religion. In short, the tithes, as far as the clergy are the receivers, must be looked upon as so much money received and expended by the Government ; so much money given by the Government to a description of persons, eminently calculated to repay it in support. Nevertheless, I will not include the *tithes* amongst the *taxes* of the nation. Lord Sheffield, indeed ; he who predicted, in his book, published in 1783, that you would soon wish to return to your *allegiance*, which, as he made it out, would be found necessary to your very existence as a people ; that same Lord Sheffield, in a speech to a meeting of wool-growers, lately reckoned *tithes* amongst the causes of our farmers being unable to maintain a competition with those of *neighbouring countries*. I do not give so much weight to tithes ; but, still, they must not be forgotten ; and when a Report to the House of Commons, made in 1803, states *the whole rental* of the kingdom of Great Britain at 28 millions, you will perceive, that if we take the tithes at Mr. Arthur Young's estimate of 1792, the tithes amount to more than *a-sixth* of the whole rental. Indeed, they must amount to a great deal more ; because the tithe consists of a tenth of *the whole of the produce of a farm* ; and, of course, it is a tenth of the rent, the labour, the taxes, the capital, the manure, and all other out-goings, and of the profits into the bargain. So that the tithe of the *produce* cannot, I should suppose, be less than *a-fourth* of the rental ; and, of course, that they amount to about 7,000,000*l.* in England and Wales, at this time ; Scotland paying no tithes. But, then, it must be observed, that the *Church* does not receive more than the half of this sum. The rest is the property of lay persons. It is, in fact, private property, and is sold, or rented, as other private property is. Upon the subject of tithes, therefore, I shall not enter into any comparison between your country and ours. All the world knows, that you have *no tithes*, and no compulsory payments on account of religion of any description ; all the world knows, that the Episcopalians, the Quakers, the Catholics, the Presbyterians, the Baptists, the Lutherans, the Calvinists, the Methodists, the Menonists, the Moravians, the Dunkards, the Swenckfelders, the Seceders, the Unitarians, the Swedenburgers, and many other descriptions of Christians, each condemning the opinions of all the others ; together with Jews and Deists, who laugh at the whole of them, have their assemblies in your country ; and that any one of them, or even of Atheists, may become your President, Vice-President, or a Member of the Congress, without any question being asked him with regard to his religion ; while it is equally well known, that no man can be a magistrate, or fill any office of trust in England, unless he first give a *test* of his being a member of the Established Church, the *head* of which Church is the King, who has the absolute appointment of all the Bishops and Deans, and of the greater part of the beneficed Priests. These facts being merely mentioned, I need add nothing further on the subject, except that

we have many persons punished in England, for publishing works on the subject of religion, while you have no such punishments; and, we have recently seen a man imprisoned for eighteen months, and put in the pillory, for re-publishing a work here, which had been first published in your country. Which system is best, and which worst, it is not my present object to inquire. My business, upon this occasion, is merely to state facts, which no one can deny, leaving it to the reader to form opinions and draw conclusions.

We will now, then, return to the *taxes*, which we will take in the aggregate, on both sides of the Atlantic; and then, taking the *population* of each country, we shall see how much *we* pay per head, and how much *you* pay per head. There must be a little confusion here, in our part of the statement, because we have regular poor-rates, by law, in England and Wales, while Scotland has no such law, though there are collections there also for the support of the poor. This, however, cannot be accurately come at. I will, therefore, leave it wholly out, and look upon the poor-rates of England and Wales as raised upon the whole of Great Britain. I will here leave out the shillings, pence, and farthings.

<i>Great Britain.</i>	£.
Amount of Taxes paid into the Treasury	74,027,583
Paid to the Taxgatherers for collection and management ..	3,504,938
Amount of Poor Taxes	7,896,556
Total	£85,429,077
	or
Dollars	341,716,306

But now, in taking the aggregate of *your* taxes, you will see the necessity of my including those which are raised upon the people in the *several States*, for the support of the several *State Governments*, which taxes, of course, form an *addition* to the taxes paid to the general Government of the United States.—My materials for ascertaining the amount of these *State taxes* is not quite so perfect as I could wish. Yet I have means to do it to the satisfaction of any one, whose object is that of arriving at truth. In 1805, Benjamin Davies, of Philadelphia, a man of great research and of great accuracy, published, in his “*New System of Geography*,” an account of the revenues and expenses of *eight* of the States; correct information from the other States, on this head, not being apparently at his command, or within his reach. This, however, is quite sufficient for our purpose; for no reasonable man will suppose, that these eight States, and those the principal ones, do not furnish a fair criterion whereon to found an estimate of the whole. His account stands as follows, in dollars and cents, or hundredths of a dollar.

STATES.	TAXES.	Tax per head on the Population of the State.
	<i>Dollars.</i>	<i>Cents.</i>
Vermont	10,800	12
Massachusetts	116,000	21
Connecticut	19,534	7
New York	Rich in Public Funds, &c.	—
	Carried forward	40

	Brought forward.....	40
New Jersey	27,000	12
Pennsylvania	397,863	67
Maryland.....	58,000	16
Virginia	377,703	43
South Carolina.....	70,000	35
		<hr/>
		8)213
		<hr/>
	Average.....	26 $\frac{1}{2}$

It appears from Benjamin Davies's account that these taxes, or rather these resources, arise, in many cases, from the *interest of stock*, of which the States are the owners, and which make part of the public debt in America. In other cases they arise from the *sale of lands* belonging to the States. He represents New York State to be owner of 2,000,000 of dollars, in stock, and to hold numerous shares in canals, &c. &c. But I shall suppose, that the whole of this money is raised in *taxes* upon the people, and paid out of their pockets. It will then come to this, that each inhabitant of the American Republic pays, in this way, and on this account, 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ *cents*, or hundredths of a dollar.

You have also, in the great towns, some *poor* to assist. I am quite in the dark upon this head, except as far as observation of some years ago can guide me. This item, therefore, I will take at a guess; and, if I allow that the poor cost *nearly as much as the State Governments*, no one on this side of the water, at any rate, can complain of the estimate. I therefore take the State taxes, including poor taxes, at 50 *cents*, or half-a-dollar a head upon the whole of your population. I know that you will say, that this is a monstrous over-rate as to your poor taxes. But I am resolved not to be complained of on the other side. As to *road-rates, turnpikes, watching and lighting, and paving and watering, of cities and towns*, I do not notice these in either country, seeing that they are for the immediate benefit of those who pay them.

We will now return to our comparison between the distribution per head, of our taxes and of yours.

Our year's taxes, including poor taxes, we find amounting to 341,716,308 dollars. Our population in Great Britain, in 1803, was as follows:

England and Wales	8,872,980
Scotland	1,607,760
Army and Navy	469,188
Convicts in the Hulks	1,410
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Total.....	10,951,338
Deduct Army and Navy	469,188
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	10,482,150
Deduct Convicts on board the Hulks	1,410
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	10,480,740
Deduct Paupers	1,800,000
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	8,680,740

I make no deduction for prisoners in our gaols, whether for crimes or debts; though, as I shall, with sorrow, have to state, by-and-bye, these are worthy of very serious notice, even in the comparative view which we are now taking. I suppose that I shall not be contradicted, when I say, that it is impossible, upon any rational ground, to include soldiers, sailors, convicts, and paupers amongst the *payers of taxes*; and that, therefore, the deductions, which I have made, will be allowed to be necessary to the correctness of the comparison. But, to get rid of the chance of a cavil being raised; to put it out of the power of any human being to object to my basis, I will distribute our taxes amongst the whole of the population, and will even take that population at its amount previous to the enormous emigration of natives, and *re-emigration* of foreigners, which the peace on the Continent of Europe has produced. Taking the whole of the population of Great Britain, therefore, at 10,951,338, it appears, that, for *each person*, old and young, male and female, there were taxes paid, last year, to the amount of 31 dollars and 20 cents (throwing away a fraction); or, in sterling money of England, 7l. 16s. This, you will observe, is for every soul, whether pauper, soldier, sailor, debtor, convict or other criminal.

On your side I will take the population, of every description, at only 7,500,000, though it is notoriously much more. Your United States taxes, last year, amounted to 14,550,000 dollars, which, distributed amongst your 7,500,000 people, imposes upon each a little *less than two dollars*; and, if we add the taxes of the State Governments and the largely estimated poor-taxes, as above, each person in your Republic paid, last year, including every species of tax, the sum of 2 dollars and 50 cents, or 12s. 6d. of our money; while, as we have just seen, there was paid in Great Britain, for every soul, including soldiers, sailors, paupers, debtors, convicts and criminals in prison, the sum of 31 dollars and 20 cents; or 7l. 16s. of our money.

Really (for I must break out a little here) Mr. Madison does appear to have boasted *betimes* of the *fortitude* of your people; of the *cheerfulness* with which they bear the *burdens* which the war imposes on them; of their *giving the taxes* direct and indirect, with *promptness and alacrity*! Let him, before he talks in this way, put the people into our state of trial. Let him try the whole population, man, woman and child, pauper, soldier, sailor, debtor, convict and criminal prisoner, with 31 dollars and 20 cents each, instead of two paltry dollars and a half; and, *then*, let him talk, if he likes, of their fortitude and patriotism. Our Lords and Gentlemen, in our honourable Houses, talk, indeed, with good grounds, of our *unexamplified patience* under our *burdens*. This compliment, which Parliaments, in former times, seldom bestowed on our and your forefathers, and which, to acknowledge the truth, they as seldom merited, is fully due to us. But, really, Mr. Madison has begun a little too soon to compliment his fellow-citizens on their quality of *bearing burdens*. Their twelve-and-sixpenny-patience will be thought very little of on this side of the water, where we bear, taking paupers, soldiers, and all, *eleven times as much*, without even a whisper, in the way of complaint. There was, indeed, a few years ago, a man of the name of Carter, in Staffordshire, who published an article, which was understood to contain a censure on his Majesty's Commissioners of Property-Tax, in that county; but he was soon led to feel sorrow for his conduct; and, since that, the country has not been disgraced by one single soul, found to follow the evil example, or to

be, in the like case, offending. Mr. Madison, says, that his fellow-citizens will *proudly* bear their burdens. But, can they bear them so *proudly* as we have borne, and still bear, ours? Has he heard of the bonfires, the ringing of bells, the roasting of sheep and of oxen, the feasts, the balls, and the singing parties, which took place, while the Kings, our friends in the war, were here last summer? Has he heard of the joy at the sight of the exhibition in the Green Park, and at that of the sham naval fight on the Serpentine River, which formed so apt a representation of the Lake of Champlain and its outlet? Mr. Madison must come hither (and the *Times* newspaper expects to have him here), before he can form the most distant idea of the extent and value of *our patience* and *loyalty*. The sum which one good farm pays here, in the various kinds of taxes, would, if attempted to be collected in America, set a whole township, if not a whole county, of your grudging Republicans in mutiny; and compel the Magistrate to call out the horse-soldiers, if there were any at his command. Let us hear no more, therefore, of Mr. Madison's twelve-and-sixpenny-patience. Let us hear no more of his boasts of the fortitude of his Republicans, till their *fortitude* makes somewhat of a nearer approach towards ours.

If you will excuse this digression, into which, you will confess, I was so naturally led, not to say, dragged, I will now return to my statement of facts, proceeding next to a view of the *crimes* and *punishments* in this country.

As to our *criminal code*, you, who are a lawyer, know full as much about it as I do, except as far as relates to the *experience* in cases of *libel*. It is merely of the number and description of crimes and punishments that I am now about to speak; and, as in other cases, I shall not deal in vague surmises or general observations; but appeal to authentic reports, and build my statements on the unerring rules of arithmetic. Sir Samuel Romilly, who has, for many years, been labouring to effect a softening of our criminal code, caused, in the year 1811, an account to be laid before Parliament of the crimes and punishments, as far as they came before the *Judges*, for several years preceding. Owing to some cause, with which I am not acquainted, the account came no lower down than the year 1809; and it extended no further than England and Wales, leaving out Scotland, where, as I am told, there are, in fact, but very few crimes and punishments, though the Sheriffs and other Officers of Justice, in that country, are pretty expensive, and are paid out of what is called the Civil List. The summary of the account, of which I have spoken above, is as follows:—

	<i>Persons.</i>
Committed for trial	2721
Convicted	1573
Sentenced to suffer death	372
———— to be transported	401
———— to be imprisoned, whipped, fined, &c. &c.	800
Actually put to death	57

Besides these, you will observe, there all the persons who were tried at the *Quarter Sessions*, in the several counties; that is to say, the Sessions held by the *Justices of the Peace*, four times in every year, where as many of the Justices as choose to attend form the Court, having one of their own body for Chairman. At these Sessions the offences of a less heinous nature are examined into and punished. But the Justices can sentence to *imprisonment*, *whipping*, *fine*, and, I believe, they can *transport*. This is the great Court for the trial of persons charged with thefts of an inferior order; and, I should suppose, that the number of criminals brought before these Courts, is twice as great as that of the criminals who are reserved for trial before the Judges, who go into some counties but *once* in the year, and into none, except Middlesex, more than *twice*; whereas the Court of Quarter Sessions is held every three months. However, as I cannot speak here from any authentic document, I shall leave this as a thing whereupon for you to exercise your judgment.

As to any *comparison*, on this point, between our country and yours, I am wholly destitute of any authentic document, relative to America, touching crimes and punishments. I can, however, speak as far as my own observation went. I lived in Philadelphia about *eight years*, with every disposition to find fault with every thing that I saw, or heard of, that was amiss. During that time, I never heard of any person, except in one instance, being tried for his or her life; I never heard of a murder, a highway robbery, or of a house being broken open. I never heard of an execution of death on any person, except (the instance above alluded to) of three men, hanged, on the banks of the Delaware, for piracy and murder; these men were foreigners; and such was the horror of an execution, even in such a case, that the executioner was obliged to be disguised in such a way, that it was impossible that any one should recognise either his person or features, being brought to the spot, in a carriage, under an escort of constables, and taken away, in a similar manner, so as to make it almost impossible for him to become publicly known. Philadelphia, at the time I speak of, contained about 70,000 inhabitants.

It is, as I observed before, impossible to come at any exact statement, on this subject, in the way of *comparison*; but a few facts, notorious on the two sides of the water respectively, will serve to aid you greatly in forming your opinions as to this matter. Here we have laws to guard our *turnip-fields* from robbery, and very necessary they are; for without them there is no man, in any part of the country, who could depend on having the use of his crop, even of that coarse and bulky article. To steal corn out of a *field*, after it is cut, is punished with *death* by our laws; and if we had fields of Indian corn, as you have, which is a delightful food for several weeks before it be ripe, I cannot form an idea of the means that would be necessary to preserve it from being carried away. As to *poultry*, no man in England has the smallest expectation of being able ever to taste what he raises, unless he carefully locks it up in the night, and has dogs to guard the approaches to the hen-roost. In America, at within ten or twelve miles of Philadelphia, it is the common practice of the farmers to turn the flocks of turkeys *into the woods*, in the latter end of August, there to remain until towards winter, when they return half fat. A farmer in England would no more think of doing this, than he would think of depositing his purse in any of the public foot-paths across his fields. In order to preserve their fences, the farmers

sometimes resort to this expedient : they bore holes into the stoutest of the stakes, which sustain their hedges ; put gunpowder into those holes ; then drive in a piece of wood very tightly upon the powder ; so that the stolen hedge, in place of performing its office of boiling the kettle, dashes it and all around it to pieces. This mode of preserving fences I first heard of at *Alresford*, a town at about twelve miles distance from Botley ; and though it certainly does appear, at first sight, a very cruel one, what is a man to do ? The thieves are so expert as to set detection at defiance ; and there is nothing but his fences between him and ruin. I have known a man, who assured me, that, by the stealing of his hedge, in the month of March, and letting into his wheat-land the flocks from the commons, he lost more than 300*l.* in one night and part of the ensuing day. A few weeks ago I myself had a *fire*, by which I lost a couple of barns and some other buildings. At this fire a numerous crowd was assembled, many of whom came for the purpose of rendering assistance ; but one man was detected, while the fire was yet raging, *stealing the lead and iron work of a pump*, fulfilling the old saying, that nothing is too *hot* or too *heavy* for a thief ; and it required the utmost of my resolution and exertion, aided by three sons and half-a-dozen resolute and faithful servants, to preserve, during the night and the next day (which was Sunday), the imperishable and portable part of the property from being carried away. I will just add upon this subject, as an instance of the baseness of our press, that the *Times* newspaper published, upon this occasion, a paragraph, stating, that I had most *ungratefully* driven away “the *honest rustics*,” who had *kindly* come to my assistance. It is very true, that I did drive the “*honest rustics*” away ; but I succeeded in putting a stop to their thefts, which would, I verily believe, have been nearly as injurious as the fire. Since the fire happened upon my premises, a gentleman, who had a similar accident some years ago, has assured me, that almost every article of *iron* was stolen from his premises. It is notorious, that, in London, the thieving forms a very considerable part of every such calamity. But the thing which, better than any other, bespeaks the nature of our situation, in this respect, is the exhibition of notices on the top of garden-walls and of other fences, menacing those who enter with the danger of death from *man-traps* and *spring-guns*. Peter Pindar has immortalized these by introducing them into a poem, where he ludicrously represents the King as intent upon “catching his living subjects by the legs.” But he must have well known, that, without them, neither King nor subject could possess the produce of a garden. Sometimes the *traps themselves* are hoisted up upon a sort of gibbet, in the day-time, in order to inspire greater terror ; and, it is only a few months ago, that we had an account of a man being actually killed by a *spring-gun*, in a nocturnal expedition in a garden at Mitcham. Besides these we are infested by gangs of itinerant thieves, called *gipsies*. The life of these people very much resembles that of the savages, whom I have seen, on the borders of the *River St. John*, in New Brunswick ; except that the latter gain their food by hunting and fishing, and the former by theft. The *gipsies* have no settled home ; no house, or hut, or place of dwelling. They have asses, which carry themselves, their children, their kettle, and their means of erecting tents, and which tents are precisely like those of the North American savages. The nights they employ in thieving. Sheep, pigs, poultry, corn, roots, fruit : nothing comes amiss to them.—What they steal in one place, they spend in another place ;

and thus they proceed all over the country. They commit acts of murder and theft and arson innumerable. The members of this moving community are frequently hanged, or transported; but still the troops of vagabonds exist; and, as far as I am able to judge, are as numerous as they were when I was a boy. But still the great evil, in this view of the subject, is the want of honesty in the labouring class, to whatsoever cause that evil is to be ascribed. Those writers on rural affairs, who have urged the employing of *threshing-machines for corn*, have counted, amongst the greatest of their advantages, that they protected the farmer against the *thefts of the thresher*. Various are the ways, in which corn is stolen by those who thresh it; but I will content myself with one, the information with regard to which I derive from a very respectable neighbour. He perceived that his thresher brought a large *wooden bottle* with him to work every day. Being winter time, he could not conceive what should make the man so very thirsty. He watched him. Never saw him drink. At last he accosted him in his way home, and, after some altercation, insisted upon examining the bottle, which he found to be full of wheat. Thus was this man taking away three gallons of wheat every week, which, at that time, was not worth less than six shillings. It was this, I believe, and this alone, which made my neighbour resolve to use a threshing-machine.

Such is by no means an overcharged view of *our* situation in this respect. Of the causes which have led to it I shall not speak; indeed, I do not know that I am competent. That it is not owing to a *want of penal laws* is very certain. I am unable to say, whether your country, at this time, be better or worse situated as to this matter. At any rate, I shall enable you to make the comparison; and as such comparison, if clearly and candidly made, might be of great use to the people of both countries, I think it is not too much for me to hope, that you, in the public manner of which I am giving you an example, will communicate that comparison to me. But, if you can do it, let us have *authentic documents*. It would be perfectly easy to obtain a year's account of all the commitments, convictions, and sentences, in your Republic. I should not fear executing such a task with an expense of 20 dollars; and as the execution of it would give to the world a piece of the most interesting and most valuable information, I will not fear that you, who have all the means in your hands, will decline to undertake it. If you do undertake it, I know that you will execute it with a strict adherence to *truth*; and, if so executed, it must be productive of great good. Both countries must profit from it, especially if peace should, happily, be restored between them.

As to the *mode of living* in this country, compared to the mode of living in your Republic, I cannot, in this letter, enter into the inquiry, which would take up more room than I have at present, and also much more time. It is, however, a most interesting subject; because it speaks, at once, to the great object for which civil society was framed; namely, the *happiness of the people*. Even now, however, I cannot refrain from giving you a notion of the manner in which our *labourers* live. I am, strange as it may seem, enabled to appeal to *Parliamentary authority* here also. There is now before me a Report of a Committee of the House of Commons, on the subject of the Corn Laws. This Committee report the evidence of certain persons examined by them; and, amongst the rest, of a great landholder, in Wiltshire, named Bennett, who, upon be-

ing asked how much a labourer and his family ought to have to live upon, answered : " We calculate, that every person, in a labourer's family, should " have *per week*, the price of a gallon loaf, and *threepence over for feeding* and *clothing*, exclusive of house-rent, sickness, and casual expenses." This Report was ordered, by the House of Commons, to be printed, on the 26th of July last.

Now, " a *gallon loaf*" weighs, according to law, 8lb. 10oz. avoirdupois weight. This is the allotment for seven days, for one person ; but, then, as you will perceive, Mr. Bennett and his neighbours allow threepence, or five cents, a week more, or suppose, a cent per day more, for *feeding* and *clothing*. The particulars of the *feeding* and *clothing* that can be had for threepence per week, or 13 shillings a year, it would, perhaps, be difficult to ascertain, without immediate application to Mr. Bennett ; and, as that is out of my power, I must leave these particulars to be come at by your powers of divination ; adding, however, that, as far as my observation has reached, Mr. Bennett's account appears to have been tolerably correct.

I am, with sincere esteem,
Your Friend,
WM. COBBETT.

FIVE LETTERS

TO

LORD SHEFFIELD,

ON HIS SPEECH AT LEWES WOOL FAIR, JULY 26, 1815.

(*Political Register*, August, 1815.)

LETTER. I.

Intended to show, that the real Cause of the Distress of the Farmers is not to be looked for in the low Price of Wool and Grain, nor in the existence of Tithes.

Botley, August 9, 1815.

MY LORD,—Your Lordship's Speech, or Report to the Wool-growers, at the late fair at Lewes, pressingly invites me to offer some remarks on it, an invitation which I the more readily accept, as it will, for an hour or two, at least, waft my readers and myself, in the respectable company of your Lordship, away from the degrading and abominable scenes of Europe, to a country, where mankind seem likely to live unyoked for a century yet to come, and where we may yet hope to see arise the means of avenging, in time, the cause of the oppressed.

Your Lordship expresses your disappointment that the prosperity of the wool-trade has not returned : " I had," say you, " flattered myself " that after the *failure of the American embargo and non-importation*

" measures, and also of Buonaparte's attempts by decrees to ruin our trade, and that the difficulties respecting our foreign intercourse were removed, that the *trade in wool and woollens would return to its former state*, and proceed steadily, as heretofore; but the mischief I had foreseen, and had repeatedly represented, as also the *necessity of checking that mischief*, has increased in a most extraordinary degree, and infinitely beyond even what had been apprehended."

I will stop here, for a moment to observe, that you have omitted any mention of the American war. You will see, by and by, that the American embargo and non-importation measures were *not* attended with a failure. You will see, that they had the wonderful effect of assisting in creating flocks of Merino sheep, manufactories of cloth, cotton, linen, iron, steel, leather, gunpowder, &c., &c., and in the construction of machinery of all sorts. This I shall show you by and by; but, amongst the causes of the depression of wool, why not mention the *American war*? That war lasted longer than the embargo and non-importation measures. It was far more complete in its operation; and yet you pass it over in silence. My opinion is, that you would not have passed it over in silence, if the events and the result of it had not been what they were. If these had not demonstrated to the world the excellence of free government, I am persuaded, that you would have put this war in the list of impediments to the wool-trade. The omission, however, as far as related to your auditors, was perfectly safe; and, if you had ascribed the fall of their produce to the malignity of the *stars*, they would have been just as attentive and just as full of belief as you had the happiness to find them.

Your remedy for *this evil of low price of wool* is the old remedy: a *tax on all wool imported*. To be sure: as the hop-growers of Farnham would, if they could, have an additional tax put upon the hops of Kent; and as farmer Gripeum would have all the wheat in the country blighted, except his own. You say that the same arguments that were made use of in defence of the Corn Bill will apply with equal force to a Wool Bill; and here you are very right. But, you should have shown that those arguments were sound; and, not having done this, you only said that a Wool Bill would be as wise and as just as a measure, against which petitions were presented from every part of the country, and which was, towards the period of its adoption, discussed with regular troops drawn up round the House of Commons.

If, when his Majesty, in his wisdom, was pleased to confer a title on your Lordship, he had at the same time endowed you with a capacity to embrace, in one view, the whole of the interests of a community, to comprehend and to develop abstruse matters of political economy, he would have provided you with a shield against criticism, which, when you venture into the press, that bare title does not afford you. As yet, whatever we find in print about *wool*, at any rate, we may freely comment on; and, your Lordship will be so good as to excuse me, if, upon this occasion, I should sometimes seem to forget the *Lord* while I am answering the *author*. I am about to lead your Lordship into new scenes. The sight, which it is my intention to open to your view, is one of such novelty and such grandeur; I am about to exhibit to you proofs of such astonishing enterprise and improvement; such a wonderful revolution in the most important affairs of human life; that I must beseech you to call to your aid, if possible, an expansion of mind commensurate with the interest and the magnitude of the subject.

But, before I venture to lift you to this point of elevation, let us, if you please, discuss the subject of your projected Wool Bill ; let us, before we cross the Atlantic and the Alegany, see if we can come to something like common sense on the question which you have now again set in agitation.

You see the farmers distressed ; you see them breaking ; you see the newspapers filled with notices of sales of their effects. The immediate cause of this is the want of money. *The cause of that want*, however, you do not seem to understand ; and, if you do understand it, you keep it out of sight. You say it is the *low price of their produce* ; you would, therefore, compel the mass of the people to pay them a *higher price*, not seeming to reflect, that, if you could succeed, you would only produce, in other classes of men, just that quantity of distress and ruin, of which you wish to relieve the farmer.—If your Lordship was attacked by a ruffian, who aimed at putting out one of your eyes, and were to aim at your left eye, should you think you had done much by warding his bayonet from that eye to have it thrust into the other ?

But, my Lord, the *foundation* of your reasoning, if reasoning it must be called, is unsound ; namely, that the distress of the farmer arises from the *low price* of his produce. In the time of Mr. TULL, that is to say, seventy years ago, wheat was *five shillings a bushel*. It is now *from eight to nine shillings a bushel*. If low price be ruin, how could farmers have lived in his time ? It is not, then, *positive* low price, it is *relative* low price, which, not to deny you very confined common sense, I must understand you to mean. Well, then, can you show, or can any man living show, that labour, tackle, horses, and seed, do not *always* bear, upon an average of even a very few years, an exact proportion to the price of wheat ? In Mr. TULL's time wheat was five shillings a bushel, and the price of reaping an acre of wheat was five shillings. Wheat is now from eight to nine shillings a bushel ; and the price of reaping of an acre of wheat, in this part of England, is nine shillings. In other parts it must be much less, labour being always higher here than in almost any other part of the kingdom. This is the price that I and my neighbours are actually giving at this moment. As to the present day, I state facts that are notorious ; and, as to the age of Mr. TULL, thousands have his work in their hands.

If, therefore, from the very nature of the thing itself, it were possible that the price of labour (including smiths, wheelwrights, and horses) should *not* descend and ascend, step for step, with that of wheat, which, upon an average of years, is the standard of the price of all other products of the earth, we have proof positive, that such has not been the case in our own country. How, then, must that mind be constructed ; how narrow its views ; or how perverted its faculties, which can see the cause of ruin to the farmer in the low price of his produce ?

You ascribe his ruin to the *want of a sufficiency of money*. Right so far ; but, there are *two* ways in which a want of a sufficiency of money may come : the first is by not receiving a sufficiency : the other by the disproportionate greatness of the demands upon what is received. The man who has five hundred a year may be in no want of money ; while he who has twenty thousand a year may become a bankrupt. The farmer always does, because he must, receive enough money proportioned to the labour on his farm : its receipts and expenditures here regulate each other with the greatest correctness : but, if there be a demander of money,

whose demands never lower with prices; who pays no respect to seasons or any other circumstances; who comes for large sums many times in the year; who will not wait a moment; who needs none of the usual forms of law to obtain payment, but who, at once, lays hold of the crop or the utensils; and, withal, whose demands are continually increasing; if there be such a creditor, it is very clear, that, as prices fall, the farmer must sink into ruin.

Now, has not the English farmer such a creditor? His taxes, direct and indirect, far exceed the amount of all his other outgoings. Let us suppose, then, a man on his own land, who paid a hundred pounds a year for labour and a hundred and fifty pounds in taxes, when wheat was eighteen shillings a bushel. He was then able to live. If the wheat be nine shillings a bushel, his labour will cost him fifty pounds, and if his taxes fell down to 75 pounds, he would be still where he was. But his taxes continue to be 150. It is manifest, therefore, that the taxes, and the taxes *only*, are the cause of his ruin.

Your Lordship does, indeed, *allude* incidentally to our taxes; but, then, this allusion is accompanied with nothing to induce the belief that you wished to point the attention of your hearers towards them as a *cause* of that ruin of which you were speaking; much less do you hint at any hope of relief in this all-important respect. You say: "If the landed interest (in which I include the land-occupier) will not *make known its grievance*, it cannot expect attention or *redress*, and it will be responsible for the ruin that will fall on the growth of fine wool. For if the wool of all countries, *untaxed* and *untithed*, is to be poured in upon us without restriction, every man the least acquainted with the subject will agree with me that it never can be worth while to raise fine wool in this kingdom; and the agriculturalist will aim only at *quantity*, neglecting the quality of the wool."

Here, again, what a jumble of ideas! Why should he aim at *quantity* if his prices are depressed by any cause, no matter what, seeing that, upon an average, the coarse *must* bear a proportion in price to the fine? These are notions which might be excused in a farmer or a wool merchant; but they become not one, who sets himself up as a political economist. They belong to the sheep-fold and the carding-house. How nature has been thwarted. What mischief has been done by perverse man's setting her laws at defiance!

But, my Lord, you talk of *grievance* and of *redress*, and then you talk of the "*untaxed* and *untithed*" wool of other countries. Was it not then to be expected, that you were going to propose to make other nations adopt our taxes and tithes, or, to induce our Government to remove them? Neither of these do you propose, however; but, in their stead, a tax, more tax, to be paid on our coats and blankets, and on the goods which our manufacturers export. And, then, the *confounding of taxes and tithes* as the cause of relative expensiveness; as the cause of the English farmer's inability to contend with foreigners; though not calculated to excite surprise when coming from the lips of a vulgar, uninformed farmer, it is so grossly absurd that it really fills me with shame at hearing it uttered by an English gentleman. During six centuries the land of England has yielded tithes; and, surely, English farmers have seen prosperous days! If the farmer did not yield tithe, would he not pay the full worth of it in additional *rent*? Where, then, is, where *can be*, the difference to him? If the purchaser of an estate were not to yield tithe,

would he not pay the full worth of it in the purchase-money? Where, then, can be the difference to him? Far otherwise is it with the taxes. These are not of sixteen turies standing, and hardly of six years. They are a clear addition to the out-goings of the farmer; their amount, like that of the tithe, is not proportioned to the value of the crop; but keeps always to its full height whether the crop be small or great, dear or cheap. If, indeed, you had spoken of tithes as the means of supporting a body of men, having enormous weight in the state, and invariably, *as a body*, ranging that weight on the side of political and military power, you would have spoken of them in a manner becoming a gentleman of liberal ideas; but, to point them out as a cause of the ruin of the farmer, and that too, in a mere pecuniary point of view, was to emulate the conduct of those grudging and unfeeling clowns, who and whose wives have all along been bawling for war in the cause of "*Religion and Social Order*;" who have been branding as *Jacobins* all those that wished to see an end to that war; and which clowns, groaning, at last, under its consequences, now, like the much-more-to-be-pitied canine unfortunate, unconscious of the real cause of their sufferings, fly for vengeance on all that falls in their way.

Still, I have taken but a very limited view of the subject. Yet, if your Lordship's head turn at the first step of the staircase, how am I to get you to the top of St. Paul's? The task is hopeless. Unable, therefore, to stretch your mind to the measure of such a view; unable to make you capable of seeing, how, even the taxes laid upon the farmer affect him *no more than they affect all the other classes of the community, except those who live upon those taxes*, and that it is a *general* and not a *partial*, a *lasting* and not a *temporary*, depression that the nation now feels; unable to accomplish this object, I shall proceed to that part of your speech, where you express your expectation of *speedily seeing an extraordinary demand for wool*. This, however, must be the subject of another letter. —I am, your Lordship's most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

FIVE LETTERS

TO

LORD SHEFFIELD,

ON HIS SPEECH AT LEWES WOOL FAIR, JULY 26, 1815.

(*Political Register, August, 1815.*)

LETTER II.

Intended to show, that his Lordship's Hopes of a more flourishing Trade, in consequence of the Devastations in other Countries, are fallacious.

MY LORD,

After expressing your disappointment that prosperity had not returned to the wool trade, in consequence of the "*failure*" of the American *embargo* and *non-importation laws*, and the cessation of the "*continental*

system," of Napoleon; after skipping over nearly three years of war with America, a strange skip on the part of a person who became known to the literary world by his writings on American navigation and commerce; after ascribing the low price of wool and other produce here, and the consequent depression of the farmer, to the importation of produce from abroad, grown on untaxed and untithed lands; after exhorting the landlords and farmers to apply for a law to make foreign wool pay a duty, or, in other words, to make foreign wool higher-priced in England, instead of exhorting them to apply for the abolition of tithes and the reduction of taxes, which the premises seemed to point to as the only rational conclusion: after all this, your Lordship comes to *new grounds of hope*; you discover, in the fall of Napoleon, and in the present state of foreign nations, "sufficient ground to expect an extraordinary demand for wool."

The passage, I alluded to, is as follows:—

"But I should add, that there is *sufficient ground to expect an extraordinary demand for wool*, in consequence of the complete subjugation of those who have so long *disturbed* the world and deranged its commerce. France and the other countries *which have been overrun by desolating armies are exhausted* and will not immediately re-establish their former occupations, and *settle to manufactures*, it is therefore most probable there will be a very unusual demand for those of woollen, not only from the countries alluded to, but also for those countries which *used to be supplied from those parts which have been ravaged by war*."

Whether it discover any great degree of benevolence, and whether it be wise in an Englishman, thus to describe the hope of our prosperity as built on the devastation and misery produced in other countries by wars, by invasions, of which it is well known that we even boast of having been, by the means of our money, the principal cause; whether this discovers much benevolence and wisdom in an Englishman I leave others to decide. But, I think myself able to show, able to convince any rational man, that your Lordship is as much deceived in your present expectations as events have proved you to have been in your expectations of four years ago.

The "extraordinary demand for wool," which you anticipate, is to arise from the *exhausted* state of other countries. Now, my Lord, we will leave *America* aside for separate observation; and then let me ask you, whether Spain, Saxony, Silesia, Holland, Sweden, are *less* likely to grow wool *now*, than they were *three years ago*? France never exported wool. Whatever may be the *political* evils now to be expected, is there any reason to suppose that the continent of Europe, *settled in peace*, will not *grow as much wool* as it has grown during its years of war? What, then, as far as Europe is concerned in the *growth* of wool is to cause an "extraordinary demand," for our farmer's wool?

But, the benignant armies have devastated in such a way that other nations will not "soon settle to manufactures," and, therefore, woollens will be wanted from England to supply the place of those which were formerly made abroad. Does your Lordship think that we shall thresh the *French* into the wearing of our woollens? And, do you think that the *exhausting* of the nations of Europe, that is to say, the making of them poor, will tend to make them *better customers* than formerly? You should not think so, seeing that you tell your hearers, that the ruin of the farmer produces that of the tradesman, seeing that the former is the *customer* of the latter. Observation *enabled* you to reason correctly enough upon what was passing just under your nose; but you appear not to have

been able sufficiently to enlarge your mind to extend that same reasoning to a larger scale.

Besides, supposing your notion of the suspension of continental manufactures to be correct, does not that notion make directly against your main hope; namely, an increase in the price of wool at home? If those manufactures were to be wholly suspended, the *whole* of the wool of the Continent must come here; and, would *that* tend to enhance the price of wool in England? Thus it ever is with a mind incapable of enlarged views. It catches hold of detached ideas; it puts them forth one at a time without combination; it gets entangled in confusion and absurdity.

But, your Lordship appears to me to be completely in error even as to the devastating effects of war and invasion. The injuries of invasion are great, very great; but, as has been proved by numerous examples, these injuries are seldom of lasting duration. Armies pillage, rob, violate, murder; but, in a country of any considerable extent and population, they can actually commit these violences only on a comparatively small part of the property and persons. In the invasions of Napoleon he always took care, not only to protect, but to cherish and promote, every science and every art. He hoped to remain master of the greater part of his conquests, and, therefore, he everywhere favoured the pursuits of industry. The agriculture and manufactures of Germany suffered but little from his irruptions. He *dispersed*, indeed, but he did not *destroy*, the flocks of Spain. While he left a sufficiency behind, his invasion stocked many other countries in Europe with fine woolled sheep; and, as I shall by-and-by show you, the United States of America. The two staple commodities, in all countries, are *man* and the *earth*. From these all the rest arise. Numbers are killed in wars; but what are two or three millions, and that is beyond all computation when compared with the population of Europe? The earth, the climate, cannot be changed. The character of a people for industry, cannot be changed very suddenly. Men cannot be made to forget what they know. Invading armies oppress and often murder; but the invaded soon revive, unless some dead-weight on them be left behind. Belgium, the theatre of everlasting wars, conquered and re-conquered many times in every century, has always continued to be the most populous and most flourishing part of Europe, even the environs of London not excepted. The United States of America, invaded by English and German armies in every quarter; all their cities and towns alternately taken; a formidable division amongst the people themselves; intestine as well as foreign war assailing them at one and the same time; a government without credit and without money, not only carried their point in war, but as soon as peace returned, started at once in a career of prosperity that astonished the world, and that completely falsified all the predictions of those who had foretold that feebleness would be the consequence of their independence, amongst which foretellers your Lordship occupied a distinguished place.

I have not yet heard it proposed to burn the several manufactories in France. The *Times* and *Courier* newspapers recommend the murder of a great number of people; applaud the requisitions imposed upon the French; would have the country dismembered; but, I have not heard even them point out the burning of the manufactories, though, perhaps, they look upon that as understood amongst "*the measures necessary to the security of England.*" But, even this would answer us no profitable purpose. These manufactories would soon rise up again; and, if

they did not, France would be supplied from other countries than this. If from this, our payment must be in *her produce*. She would rise again quickly in one way or another; and nothing that we can do against her will have any very *durable* effect as to her prosperity, while every day of war is adding to those taxes, which are the real cause of the depression, of which your Lordship complains, and of which no man living expects ever to see any diminution, except as the consequence of an event, of which most men turn from the contemplation as something too distressing for the mind to endure. England, in following the advice of the writers I have mentioned above, might still add much to the sufferings of her neighbours; she might lacerate and tear them a good deal, but still the terrible and incurable disease, which she has contracted during the war would cling to her bowels, and in the work of palsyng her limbs, would only be assisted by the prolonging of a state of hostility.

One would have imagined, that past experience with regard to France herself would have prevented your Lordship from indulging such fond hopes of seeing other nations *ruined* by devastating armies. The first ten years of her revolution drove all the great proprietors from their houses; stripped them of their estates; reduced all the opulent merchants to beggary; ruined all the manufacturers and broke up their concerns; produced a bankruptcy of the Government; laid the people under contributions. Yet, how did we find France in 1814? So full of prosperity; so rich; with so little debt; with such improved agriculture and such flourishing manufactures, that we were compelled to pass a law to stop the importation of her corn, while she stood in no need of either our woollens, linens, or cottons. Nay, it is *the recollection of the evidences of prosperity, that we then saw*, which is now urging on our base and foolish writers to call for her destruction by means of German armies in our pay.

What becomes, then, of your Lordship's *hope*? What becomes of the "*good ground*" of your new expectation? Even NOW: already, while there is a civil war in France; while half a million of English and German soldiers are there, living at free-quarter; even from the Departments where some of those soldiers are, the French are now, at this very moment, bringing in their butter, poultry, eggs, fruit, &c. &c. to *Portsmouth* and *Southampton*; and, after paying a duty upon them, selling them at less than half the price at which we can afford to sell similar articles! To throw such a country back, to make it tributary to our agriculture and manufactures, even for one year, would require the power of the Deity and the malignity ascribed to the Devil; and, though there are persons enough, who manifestly possess the latter, they are, happily for mankind, not in possession of the former.

If, then, there be so little foundation for your hope with regard to Europe, on what can you build that hope on the other side of the Atlantic? But, I will reserve the discussion of this question as the subject of another Letter, it being of too much importance to be mixed, in any way, with inferior matter.—I am, your most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

FIVE LETTERS

TO

LORD SHEFFIELD,

ON HIS SPEECH AT LEWES WOOL FAIR, JULY 26, 1815.

(Political Register, August, 1815.)

LETTER III.

Intended to show, that Manufactures of all kinds are carried on to a great extent in America, and that Machinery has been put into use with great success in the making of Woollen and Cotton goods.

MY LORD,

It is America to which I now solicit the honour of calling your attention. If you will oblige me by laying aside, for only half an hour, your solid columns of exports and imports, your laborious details of outward and inward trade, your two-and-two-penny and three-and-three-penny accounts of wool prices, I promise to lead you into scenes of such novelty, such enterprise, and such interest, as shall make you forget, for the time, the tyranny and cruelty, the meanness and baseness, the profligacy, the perfidy, and the hypocrisy, now acting upon the theatre of Europe.

You, my Lord, wrote a book, soon after the first American war, the objects of which were, to point out the means of *keeping back* the navigation and commerce of America, and to show, that she could not become a manufacturing country: I was of this latter opinion about six years ago only. Three years of embargo and non-importations and dispersions of Spanish flocks convinced me of my error, which, as soon as I perceived it, I hastened to retract; and, before the last war began, I endeavoured to convince our Ministers, that if they still persisted in their right to impress persons out of American ships on the high seas, they would, in the space of a few years, find manufactures rising up in America that would astonish them. In short, I predicted, in my Letters to the Prince Regent, *before the war began*, that, if he did enter on that war, he would, at the end of *seven* years, render the United States wholly independent of England for manufactures; or, at least, *enable her to dispense* with English manufactures.

The war did not last *three* years, and yet this important revolution in human affairs was accomplished; and, be you assured, my Lord, that it will form an epoch in the annals of the world.

But, *how* shall I convince your Lordship that what I say is *true*? That is the great point. *Hearsay* regarding a country at such a distance is nothing. A newspaper account would not be much better. A book written by some American might mislead; for writers have a point to

carry, a doctrine to establish, an opponent to beat, or a bias, at any rate, to yield to. Even an *official* account, published by the American government, *might* be incorrect and overcharged; for your Lordship and I have seen many such accounts in England. What am I to do, then? Bring some persons who have been upon the spot, and have actually *seen* what they describe? I have no such persons at hand. I have not a single American acquaintance; and, besides, I live out of the world. How, then, am I to convince your Lordship, that the Merino Flocks; the Fulling Mills, some going by steam and some by water; that the Cloth Manufactories; that the Cotton Manufactories; that the Spinning Jennies; that the Iron Mills; that Wire Manufactories; that Crockery-ware Manufactories; that the Powder Mills, Cannon Foundries; that the Manufactories of Flax and Hemp; and that a great many others, and all others, as far as I know, exist in America? Why, my Lord, since you will believe nothing but *your own eyes*, for which I do not blame you; and, as I cannot take you to America, I will *send* the Merino Flocks, the Manufactories, and the Bales of Goods, *into Sussex to you*.

I have taken a parcel of American newspapers, that came to me altogether about a month ago, and which were published in February, March, April and May last, or the greater part of them. I have cut out of these advertisements of Merino Sheep, &c. &c., FOR SALE. They come, as you will see, from almost *every State in the Union*. Some are from Boston, some Baltimore, some Philadelphia, some from New York, some from Albany, some from Pittsburgh; thus embracing what may fairly be deemed the *whole country*. And, besides, these newspapers have come to me quite promiscuously. They have been sent by persons whom I do not know, and without any other motive than that of showing me civility. Of some of these papers I have only a single number; of others two; of others nine or ten. From *Pittsburgh* I have only one number, and that is of a paper called the *Commonwealth*; and yet, in this one paper, matter is contained sufficient to establish all I say.

This is certainly a *new way* of describing the state of the manufactures of a country; but, really, I do not know of any other so good. To make such a description correctly, a man must go himself to collect information all over a country. The difficulties of doing this are many and great. Here we ask no questions, rely on no reports, listen to no stories, expose ourselves to no deception. We *know* that these advertisements *speak of things that are*. We have here, indeed, merely a SPECIMEN of what is going on. Out of *three or four hundred American newspapers*, I have received and quoted from only about *eight or nine*. What, then, must the *whole* of them present? Besides, we are not to suppose, that a quarter part of the factories and goods, &c., &c., are mentioned in any paper at all. So that, what we have here is a mere SPECIMEN; but, it is quite sufficient to enable us to form a sound judgment upon the subject.

That I have *fabricated* these advertisements is not to be believed. I could not have invented so many names, dates, and circumstances. Besides, I put the name and date of each particular newspaper. If falsely, I am exposed to detection on both sides of the water, many of the papers being in other hands, in England, as well as mine. No: the advertisements must be genuine; and they form one of masses of presumptive evidence, which is preferable to any positive proof upon oath.

Your Lordship will soon see, that, in some of the advertisements, Ame-

rican goods and English goods both are offered for sale. I wished to leave each advertisement *entire*, just as I found it. I have only further to observe here, reserving my further remarks till by-and-by, that I have not thought it necessary to follow any particular *order* in placing the several advertisements. They are placed in the order in which they happened to fall under my scissors. They form, as they stand here, an undigested mass of evidence; but, it is evidence of that sort, which is impossible to fail of producing conviction. *Attention* in the perusal is all that is wanted. I shall *number* the advertisements for the sake of more easy reference in my subsequent remarks.

I cannot resist the temptation to indulge myself, before I go any further, in a few remarks upon this advertisement. I am here at *home*. In this *Bustleton* I lived for some time. My most intimate friends were the principal landowners of the spot. Upon the banks of this *Pennepack* Creek I have, I verily believe, shot at more Partridges than there were English and Hanoverian soldiers sent against America during the last war. What was my surprise at seeing (for here I really *see* it) a *Colton Manufactory* upon the *Pennepack* on the *Bustleton Turnpike-road* and in a *populous neighbourhood*! Fifteen years ago, there was not a turnpike-road, and, as far as I can recollect, there were but *eleven houses* of all sorts *within a mile* of the spot here described. *Bustleton* is on the level, after rising the hill from the Creek; and, I believe, the principal part of the land on both sides of the road, was owned by my friend THOMAS PAUL. He was a Quaker, a sensible, active, and most benevolent and public-spirited man. He was about to erect a *School-House* when I came away; but his town contained only his own house, a tavern which was his, a large house which he had built for a doctor, and, I believe, two or three small houses besides. Yet, we see, not only that there is at this place a cotton manufactory, but a *populous neighbourhood*, capable of supplying it with hands. Before I have done, I shall show you how towns grow up in America. Thus it is that men flourish and increase in a soil of freedom. Taking it for granted, that you will believe these details about *Bustleton* and the *Pennepack* to be true, seeing that, if false, I expose myself to the contempt of all America, I shall now proceed, without interruption, to the insertion of the Advertisements.*

Here, my Lord, I close my extracts. Instead of 39, I could have made the number 100 or more. But, not being necessary to any rational purpose, I have declined making the list any longer. And, now, leaving your Lordship to pause for awhile and to ruminate over these indisputable facts, as they lie heaped up before you, I will, in my next Letter, endeavour to show you how they apply to the subject of our discussion.

I am your most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

* These Advertisements are 39 in number and take up great space, therefore we omit them. They are sufficiently described, however, in the text.—Ed.

FIVE LETTERS

TO

LORD SHEFFIELD,

ON HIS SPEECH AT LEWES WOOL FAIR, JULY 26, 1815.

(Political Register, August, 1815.)

LETTER IV.

Intended to show, that so extensive is the growth of American Wool, that some of that Wool is exported to England, and that, though the importation of Wool is great in proportion to the whole quantity used, to impose a Tax upon importation would be injurious to the country.

MY LORD,

In proceeding to apply to the subject before us the matter contained in my last Letter, I must beg your Lordship to observe, that it is not only proved, that almost every sort of manufactory was going on in America *during the war*; but, that, as appears from the date of many of the advertisements, if not from all of them, they were neither dropped, nor likely to be either discontinued, or apparently, to be rendered less active, by the *peace*; all the advertisements being dated *after* the peace was proclaimed in America, and many of them in the month of *May*.

You see, in No. 33, that *sugar* and *indigo* are produced on the banks of the Mississippi and in the territory of the United States; you know that *cotton* is one of the great staple commodities of Carolina and Georgia; that *tobacco* is the native of Virginia; you see that *hemp* and *flax* are largely cultivated and manufactured; you know, that *Indian corn*, the cultivation of which characterizes the fairest and richest part of Europe, and is the criterion of fertile soil and good climate, is produced in abundance, throughout the whole country, fourteen hundred miles in length; you know that timber is everywhere in abundance; you see that salt, iron, lead, copper and coal mines, are there, and stone and marble and slate quarries; you see, that machinery of every sort, and worked by every kind of power, is in motion; and, have you still the expectation, or the hope, that America is *dependent on England* for the means of tilling her land, clothing her people, or furnishing her dwellings, or fighting her enemies?

But, the objects more immediately before us are WOOL and WOOL-LENS.—I have shown, I think, pretty clearly, that there is no reason to expect your hoped-for extraordinary demand for English Wool from the change of affairs in Europe. And, on what does that hope rest when you look at America? No. II. shows you that *Merino Sheep* are, in flocks in America. And, observe, that Pennsylvania, a very few years ago, had scarcely

any sheep of *any sort*. The States to the Northward,' according to Mr. Livingstone's account, abound much more in sheep of all sorts. No. XIV. shows you that Wool, in all its varieties, is a great article of commerce; and, No. XVI. shows you, not only that wool is a great article of commerce, *but that it is sent from America to be sold in England!* You see here that there are merchants, *who take consignments of Wool with orders to ship to England;* and this is at *Boston*; not at New York, which State Mr. Livingstone belongs to and resides in. I know, that several cargoes of American fine wool were sent to England more than four years ago. I saw the samples myself. But, this advertisement, which proves the *frequency* of the thing, is worth the personal observation and testimony of a hundred witnesses sworn upon the Gospels.

Now, my Lord, when I come to treat of the extent to which American *manufactures* will be carried in peace, and which will depend, perhaps, in a great measure, upon the laws that shall be passed there, I shall speak with great diffidence; because the subject, on the score of foreign policy, as well as on the score of internal prosperity, demands an extent of knowledge as to the whole of the interests of that community, which it would be presumption in me, or in any man not upon the spot, to pretend to possess. But, with regard to *the capacity of America to grow wool and export it to England*, I can speak with nearly as much confidence as I should upon her capacity to send us cotton or tobacco.

That the soil of America is fertile is well-known; and, it has now been proved, that it is well adapted to the breeding and keeping of sheep. It has been proved, because such numerous flocks already exist. The only question, then, is, whether the American farmer can grow wool *cheaper* than the English farmer, and, from that cause, can afford to sell it at a lower price. Lower it must be sold, in order to open a market for it here, because it must come loaded with the charges of freight, and other expenses, from which our wool is exempted. The price, at which the American farmer *does* sell wool, I have nothing to prove; but, I know, that the price of *wheat* is the criterion, whereby to judge of the price, at which he can *afford* to sell wool. Now, we see from No. XXXVIII., that the price of wheat is *one dollar and twenty cents a bushel*. That is to say, a dollar and a fifth. Call it *six shillings* of our money. This is at Pittsburgh; but, it must be a pretty fair average. If, then, our farmers are sinking into ruin with wheat at 9s. a bushel, it is clear that the produce of the earth can be raised *one-third* cheaper there than it can here. A third, or 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ per centum, will, I should suppose, amply meet all charges on a raw-material like wool. So that, at this moment, with our *low prices*, our *ruinous prices*, the American farmer can meet us in our own market, even in the infancy of his flocks.

But, we must not stop here. We cannot stop here. Produce must rise in England, or the taxes cannot be paid. Wheat cannot stand at 9s. a bushel. Upon an average of the last ten years, it has been 12s. a bushel; and, to enable us to pay the taxes, it must go even higher than that. Wool, however, must keep an even pace with the wheat, or wool will not be grown; and, how is it to keep that pace, if importations of "untaxed" wool be permitted, without a tax imposed on it here?

"Well," you will say, "and do I not recommend the *taxing* of foreign wool?" Yes; but what would that effect? Why, just as much *evil* to the manufacturers of cloth, as *good* to growers of wool? Indeed, in the *end*, it would be an evil to the former as well as to the latter.

But, before I proceed to show to what extent your proposed measure would affect the manufactures, it is necessary to make a few observations as to the relative quantity of wool *grown* and wool *imported*. You say, that of wool imported, the quantity, in 1789, was 2,660,828 *lbs.* and that in 1814 it rose up to the *appalling* quantity of 15,712,517 *lbs.* I dare say that this statement is correct; because you had the actual account of imports to refer to. As to the quantity of wool *grown in the country*, it is *impossible* for any one to state it with any thing like precision. The wool is not *taxed*; neither the grower, nor the dealer, nor the manufacturer, is compelled to keep or render any account of it. Yet, a writer in the *Courier* of the 8th inst. says that "your Lordship *must be well acquainted with the amount of it*, which, so long since as 1800, was 192,000,000 *lbs.*" Hence he is led to ridicule your alarm at the importation of 15,712,517 *lbs.* in a year.

If this statement of the quantity of the *home growth* were correct, your proposed tax, would, indeed, have nothing in it very serious to the manufacturers. But, besides that it is next to impossible that any one should be able to come at the amount of the home growth, this statement is so monstrous as to shock even the credulity that gives a currency to Moore's Almanack. This gentleman has heard of *millions* so uncountable, that he thinks nothing of hundreds of millions. The average weight of a sheep's fleece is 4 *lbs.*, consequently there must be 48,000,000 of sheep in the country *shorn* every year, or 4½ to every human being, including the cities and towns. Ewes are, on an average, killed at 4 years old, wethers at 3, and lambs at 4 months. They are, then, killed on an average, at 29 months old. They live one year before they yield any wool. Thus, for every sheep that is *shorn*, there is one killed in every 17 months. So that, including a fraction, there must be *killed every year*, 34,000,000 of sheep and lambs; or, 3½ to each human being, man, woman, and child, paupers, gipsies, felons and all. The average weight of sheep is about 60 *lbs.* and of lambs about 36 *lbs.* The number of sheep killed far exceeds that of lambs. But, suppose the average weight to be 50 *lbs.* Then there is for each human being 175 *lbs.* of mutton in a year, or very nearly ¼ *lb.* a day, for *beggars, paupers, babies* and all, observe. But this is not all. The neat cattle nearly equal the sheep in amount of meat. The hogs surpass the sheep in this respect. So that here is 1½ pounds of meat, besides fish and poultry, every day in the year for every human being, sucking babies and all, when it is well known that *millions* of even the fathers and mothers do not taste a morsel of animal food from month's end to month's end, and sometimes hardly a morsel of bread, their chief diet being tea and potatoes. What monstrous absurdity!

But, the *wool*? what shall we do with the *wool*? Suppose it all to be made into the shape of broadcloth and that each yard in length requires 3 *lbs.* of wool. It would not require so much, but suppose it did. Here are 64,000,000 of yards in length, and 128,000,000 of *square yards of cloth*. There are 3,097,600 square yards in a square mile. Leaving out fractions, then, here is cloth enough made in *one year*, without the wool imported, to *cover 40 square miles*! The very skins of the animals would cover 10 square miles! If this statement were correct, the idea of hiding the sun with a blanket would not be so very absurd.

We have, then, no means of ascertaining, with any degree of exactness, the quantity of the home growth. But, it is rational to suppose, that the

15,000,000 of *lbs.* imported are not less than a *fourth* of the whole quantity of wool manufactured in the country. The amount of *all the woollens* exported last year was 5,600,000*l.* sterling; and suppose only one-fourth of the woollens to have been sent abroad, leaving three-fourths for home consumption, the whole of the *manufactured woollens* would have amounted to 22,400,000*l.* sterling. If we allow a *third* of the cost of the woollens for the raw material, and put the wool upon an average at 3*s.* sterling a pound, we shall find that the whole *amount* of wool before it was manufactured amounted to 7,400,000 and some odd pounds sterling, and that the whole *quantity* of it was 54,000,000 of *pounds weight*; which is not *four times* as much as the quantity of wool imported, and which wool, I believe, is *nearly all* of the fine quality.

Whether I am wrong in my supposition that *not less* than one-fourth of our woollens are exported, and that the raw material amounts to *not more* than one third of the price of the manufactured goods, I must leave, as I do with great deference, for the reader to decide; but, I must be very wide indeed of the mark, if the quantity of wool imported does not bear a proportion of, at least, a *sixth* in value to the wool of home growth.

It is clear, therefore, my Lord, that the importation of wool has a very great effect on the price of wool grown at home. But, lay a tax upon wool imported, and the consequence is, a *rise in the price of manufactured woollens*; for, to suppose, as you appear to do, that the manufacturer does not *now* and *always*, upon an average of transactions, *sell at as low a price as he can afford to sell*; to suppose that ever-active and all-seeing competition is not sufficient upon an average of years, to apportion with the most scrupulous precision, the profits of unfettered trade, is a notion so well known to belong exclusively, and of Right Divine, to the mob, that for any gentleman to attempt to encroach upon it is to set at open defiance every principle of justice and humanity.

The consequences of a rise in the price of manufactured woollens would be, first, a diminution in the consumption at home, unless you could by some sort of gipsy conjuring trick convey the sums into all our pockets necessary to meet the rise of price. The same would take place as to exports. But much *more* might take place as to our foreign trade; for, if you were to prohibit the importation of wool altogether, it would be manufactured abroad; and as *price* is the great and true and everlasting regulator, the moment wool became so cheap elsewhere as to enable other countries to work it up and sell it at a lower price than we, that very moment would the export trade disappear. What is true as to total prohibition is true as to prohibition in part. For though the countries sending wool hither would not, *all at once*, begin to manufacture their *own* sufficiently to shut out our woollens *entirely*, they would do the thing by degrees; and so truly would the prohibition operate as to leave not a fraction of cause unaccounted for in the effect.

From this general view of this part of the subject, I should now proceed to the particular case of America; but, I must postpone that till my next, in which I hope to be able to show, not only that no tax ought to be laid upon imported wool, but that the Corn Bill ought to be repealed.

I am your most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT,

FIVE LETTERS

TO

LORD SHEFFIELD,

ON HIS SPEECH AT LEWES WOOL FAIR, JULY 26, 1815.

(Political Register, August, 1815.)

LETTER V.

Intended to show, that the Situation of England compared with that of America, is such, and the inducements to Emigration so great, that, in order to preserve our Manufactures, not only ought there to be no Tax upon Wool imported, but that the Corn Bill ought to be repealed.

MY LORD,

The situation of England, compared with that of the United States of America, is such as to induce every man to emigrate to them, who professes any degree of knowledge in the making of machinery and manufactures, or, indeed, who possesses enterprise in any art or science, and who is not bound to England by ties which cannot be broken. The number of the former is very great. There are always a great many persons, who wish to better their lot; who aspire to something more than fortune has given them. And the number of these, in agriculture as well as in arts and manufactures, must be greater now than ever, seeing the general depression, which at present reigns in England, with the most gloomy prospect for the future.

Taxes, no matter by what part of the community paid, in the first instance, or in what shape collected, produce, according to their amount, a diminution of the means of living in all those who *do not share in them* after they are collected. The mob, both high and low, are eternally backing on the Government to tax what they call *luxuries*. Just as if the taxes on wearing hair-powder, on armorial bearings, and on sporting dogs, did not descend, through the hair-dressers, powder-makers, seal-cutters, dog-breakers, and game-keepers, to the bakers, butchers, chandlers' shops, tailors, shoemakers, farmers and labourers. We have an additional tax on *Bachelors*. "Oh! aye! tax *them* as much as you please," exclaim the ripened spinsters. But, my good ladies, do you think, that the taking away of a part of their fortunes will quicken their disposition to indulge in that greatest of all *luxuries*, a wife? Do you not see, rather, that what is taken from the bachelor produces a ramification of privations, some of which reach even you, my dears, who so loudly applaud the tax? Such notions as this, as they have had their rise amidst a belief in hobgoblins; amidst all sorts and sizes of superstition; so they will vanish for ever, when common sense shall indignantly kick down the last jug of

Holy Water, and scatter the last manuels of stupidity and deception to the winds.

Taxes are necessary, in some shape or another, to pay for their services, those who carry on the public affairs, in which I include the business of the public defence. But, if they be carried to an enormous amount; if the book-keepers, the over-lookers, &c. of a manufactory, for instance, take away so much that the working people are reduced to half allowance, the former may cut a brilliant figure, but the concern must languish and decay; and the working people will, the moment they are able, endeavour, by a change of place, to better their lot.

This is the state in which England now is, including amongst the working-people, all those who receive no share of the taxes; because they who live upon the proceeds of their private incomes suffer in the same degree, according to their wants, as the poorest labourer suffers. That which is now taken from the people in England forms so large a part of the produce of the estates and labour (including that of professional men), that every one feels the hardship to be most pressing. And, we all know besides, that this pressure is not now to be of *temporary duration*. We all know now, that the pressure is to last *for ever*, unless, which is little less appalling, the burden be shaken off by a total overthrow of the funds.

It is frequently said, with what folly or impudence we shall soon see, that the *trade and navigation* of the country have *kept pace* in their increase with that of the *taxes*. The best way will be, not to show, by reasoning, the utter absurdity of this; but, at once, to go to the Government's own documents, laid before Parliament, and, from them, to prove its falsehood. In order to take away all pretext for saying, that I am comparing a state of peace with a state of war; that I am reckoning the heavy expenses of the present, or late, years, as if they were to last for ever, I will take in no taxes, at present, but such as are *to last for ever*. That is to say, the taxes on account of the *debt*, the capital of which, as all the world now sees, never can be paid off, or diminished, without a *sponge*. Well, then;

In 1789, the taxes raised on account of the debt amounted to £9,000,000
In 1814 to £43,000,000

Now, if the exported produce and manufactures, if the imports, and if the number of men and boys employed in the merchant service, in 1814, were nearly *five times* as great as in 1789, I should be ready to say, though I see the people sinking every where under the taxes, there is some reason to doubt even the evidence of my own senses. But, the following table, which I take from the accounts laid before Parliament, and for the correctness of which table, I am answerable in the eyes of a public who have these authentic documents in their hands, will show what sort of *pace the trade and navigation* have kept with the taxes demanded by the *debt*. I have taken three periods; but with regard to the first period, I have in my possession no amount of *exports* and *imports*.

YEARS.	Taxes raised on account of the Debt.	Value of Exports of British Produce and Manufactures.	Value of Imports into Great Britain.	Number of Men and Boys employed in the Merchant Service in all parts of the British Dominions.
	£.	£.	£.	
1789	9,000,000	—	—	108,962
1800	21,000,000	39,471,208	25,641,053	143,661
1814	43,000,000	36,092,167	30,091,801	172,786

N.B. The account of *Exports* for 1800, embraced produce and manufactures of *Great Britain only*, while that for 1814, included those of *Ireland also*—The *Imports* from *China* and the *East Indies* are not included in either year, because they are omitted in the account for 1814, in which account it is stated, that the time, allowed by *law*, for presenting an account of those Imports was not arrived.—The merchant seamen include many thousands employed in the *Transport Service*.

Now, to make good the assertion, that the navigation and trade have *kept pace* with the taxes paid annually on account of the debt, from 1789 to 1814 inclusive, the number of merchant seamen in 1814 ought to have been nearly 544,810 instead of 172,786. And, to have made good the same assertion, as relating to the period from 1800 to 1814 inclusive, the Exports ought to have amounted, in the latter year, to rather more than 78,942,416*l.*, instead of 36,092,167*l.*; and the Imports ought to have amounted to rather more than 51,282,106*l.*, instead of 30,091,801*l.*

This shows how ignorant, or what cheats, those men are, who would persuade, and who do persuade, this "MOST THINKING nation in the world," that the *ability* of the country keeps pace with the *demands of the Government*.

Here, however, before I proceed to compare our situation with that of America, I must observe, that a deduction ought to be made from this fearful amount on account of the *depreciation of our currency*. We pay in paper, which is now in fact, a *legal tender*. It sometimes requires more, and sometimes less, of this paper to buy a guinea, as bullion is more or less plenty in the market. But, as the average price of a guinea of full weight is about 28*s.* in paper, let us take the depreciation at a *third*. Then we pay on account of the debt, in the money of 1789, only two-thirds of 43,000,000*l.*; or 32,000,000*l.*, leaving out the thousands. But this is more than 3½ times what we paid on account of debt in 1789; and, therefore, for the navigation to have *kept pace* with the taxes on account of debt, from 1789 to 1814 inclusive, there should have been in the last-mentioned year, 381,367 merchant seamen, instead of 172,786; and, if we a little mend the matter by this deduction, what a blow do we give to the *concern* on the other side? For, if we insist on a depreciation in the paper to the amount

of a third, for the sake of lightening the burden of the taxes, common honesty calls upon us to *deduct a third from the value of the imports and exports.*

Thus, it does not signify much how we turn the thing about. On every side it presents a permanent increase of burden without any adequate increase of *ability to bear*: the certainty of decline thus far, of present distress, and the most gloomy prospect as to the future.

Compared with this situation of England, how stands that of America? But, before I make any observations as to what that situation *is*, it may not be amiss to remind you of what, in 1783, *you* foretold *she would be*. In that year, just after the conclusion of the first American war, your Lordship wrote a book, the three principal objects of which appeared to be, to keep up the spirits of his Majesty under his recent loss of dominion; to keep up the spirits of the nation by causing them to believe, that America was not at all likely to become a manufacturing and commercial country, or a naval power; but that, in order to prevent the latter, we ought to employ all the means in our power, amongst which means was the *withholding of all protection* of American vessels FROM THE BARBARY POWERS, and the *inducing of the other great maritime powers to do the same.**

I will not attempt to characterize this last sentiment, the mind that could have given birth to which must have received appropriate punishment in seeing this same America, not asking *protection* from any of your "great maritime powers;" but sending a squadron of ships of war across the Atlantic, and chastising the Pirates, as far as regards her, into a submission to the principles of humanity.

America has *taxes* and a *debt* too. But, this is not a debt that must necessarily last for ever, or be wiped off with a sponge. It is a debt, at this time, of 27,000,000*l.* sterling, or 108,000,000 of dollars.

* The following has been published (Aug. 19) in the London newspapers, as the list of the American Fleet, employed against the *Algerines*:

<i>Ships.</i>	<i>Guns.</i>	<i>Commanders.</i>
Independence	74 ..	Com. Bainbridge
Washington	74 ..	— Chauncey
Guerriere	44 ..	— Decatur
Java	44 ..	Capt. Perry
Macedonian	38 ..	— Jones
Constellation....	36 ..	— Gordon
Congress	36 ..	— Morris
Ontario (ship from Holland)	18 ..	— Elliott
Erie	18 ..	— Kidgeley
Epervier (brig)	18 ..	— Downs
Firefly	18 ..	— Rogers
Boxer	16 ..	— Porter
Chippawa	16 ..	— Reed
Saranac	16 ..	— Elton
Flambeau	16 ..	— Nicholson
Spark	16 ..	— Gamble
Spitfire	14 ..	— Dallas
Torch	14 ..	— Chauncey
Lynch.....	14 ..	— Storer

N.B. It was stated in the London Prints about three weeks ago, that our Prince Regent had made the Dey of Algiers a present of a frigate, completely fitted out with rigging, guns, &c.—It would be mortifying enough if this should have been the frigate, which Commodore Decatur is said to have captured from his Majesty of Algiers.

The capital of our debt (of *Great Britain*, for Ireland has her debt too, in an equal proportion), is now a thousand millions, laying aside odd hundreds of thousands, and out-standing debt. Suppose our population, even now that the foreigners are all gone away, to be 10 millions, here is a debt of 100*l.* a soul, taking in babies, paupers, gipsies, beggars, soldiers, sailors, sepoys, prisoners in jails, and convicts on board the hulks; yea all, from those who feast on strawberries at five guineas a pint, down to the troops of ragged and squalid wretches, whose Sunday's dinner consists of rumps and burrs from the skinners, or of bullock's liver from the slaughter-house. The population of America is now, to *your* great surprise, eight millions; and, therefore, the capital of her debt amounts to not quite 3*l.* 10*s.* a soul. Whether the skinners and tanners in that country have *now* any customers for the fragments of flesh, that have been left by the butcher, is more than I can say; but, if she adopt our system of *poor-laws*, and couple with the institution a suitable proportion of *cant*; if she suffer, in any degree, however small, the quantity of relief of the distressed to be regulated by the quantity of godliness professed by the object of that relief; if she do this, or, in the most trifling degree, lean towards it, she will soon find, that a premium for misery and hypocrisy will operate, as all other premiums do, to increase the quantity of that on which it is bestowed. She, when it is too late, will find, to her sorrow, that fleshy bits of skin, and sheep's trotters, and bullock's liver, are not things to be thrown to the dogs. If her people should live to see that day; if they should live to see pauperism established by *law*, they will see all hospitality, all real charity vanish; all the paternal, and filial, and fraternal offices of life exchanged for those of the poor-house; and, instead of an erect and independent race of labourers, proud of their *rights* and *liberties*, they will see a crawling, fawning, canting herd, knowing not the meaning of such words, and, like the beasts of the field, caring for nothing but the satisfying of their hunger, without the smallest regard as to the means. If the people of America should live to see that day; if they should be so foolish as to draw over them, though by slow degrees, this blistered shirt, they will wish, that, as in the days of their bold and hardy forefathers, their country were a howling wilderness.

However, as yet, this greatest of all calamities has not made any very considerable progress in America, and it will be the fault of the people if it ever does. There are no common beggars, no gipsies, few soldiers by profession, at present few unproductive sailors, no sepoys, the prisoners in jails are few, none in hulks. But, be there what there may of these several descriptions of persons, the capital of the debt of America amounts to only 3½ pounds sterling a soul, while that of ours amounts to more than 100 pounds sterling a soul.

Let us now see the *progress* of the debt in America. The latter had the misfortune to *start* with a debt; to set out in the world with a debt upon her back. It was a misfortune, and a very serious one, because it gave rise to a spirit of speculation, of adventure, of gambling, which has been productive of lasting and very mischievous effects. The debt, at the outset, or in 1790, amounted to 72 millions of dollars; and, before the last war, it was reduced to 40 millions of dollars. That war has brought it up to 108 millions of dollars, or 27 millions sterling. But, in the meanwhile, she has *purchased* LOUISIANA, so necessary, as we have seen, from the affair at New Orleans, to her *security*. And, she has,

somehow or other, got a pretty tolerable navy, which, as experience has proved, is no less necessary to that security. I am aware, that she *must* keep augmenting this navy. She will NOW see, that her *bare existence*, as an *independent* nation, depends upon her having, at the end of even *five years*, a navy of at least 30 ships of the line, with a proportionate number of vessels of war of an inferior size. The notion, that it was her true *policy* to keep out of the European quarrels must, by this time, be exploded. It was wise to *wish* it; but wishes and possibilities are different things. She sees what jealousy, what envy, what hatred arising from *foreboding fears*, she has inspired. She is not to be deceived by the fawning professions, which, for temporary convenience, deep-rooted enmity may assume. She knows that her navy is the infant Hercules, and that it must make haste and grow, or be strangled in the cradle. She knows how easily quarrels are hatched, when people have a mind to quarrel. Knowing all this, and a great deal more that might be mentioned, she will not, in peace, neglect, one moment, to be well prepared for her defence, and thereby preventing, if possible, the recurrence of war. She cannot hide her situation from the world. She cannot go on growing populous and commercial in a corner. The world sees what she will be, if she be left quiet; and, therefore, she may as well begin to prepare without any attempt at disguise. And all this the American Government, and the American people, know as well as I know that I am now writing. I most ardently wish, that there may never more be war between England and America; that the people of the two countries may never more be engaged in shedding each other's blood; that the rivalry may in future consist in the arts of peace, and in acts of hospitality and benevolence. But, without reference to particular foreign countries, it is *certain*, that, for America to have a chance of remaining at peace, for any length of time, she must be well armed, and, in all respects, prepared for war.

This navy will be a considerable expense; but, if it were to cost 50 millions of dollars in the space of *five years*, how amply would that cost be compensated by the preventing of a war with any power in Europe? Yet, even this expense, which I grant *must* be incurred to render the country *safe*, would carry the taxes to a mere trifle compared with ours, and would, besides, be met by a more than proportionate increase of population, trade, navigation, and all the other sources, whence taxes are drawn.

How *able* America is to accomplish this grand object, and to pay the interest of her debt, and even to clear it quite off, at the same time, will appear upon comparing the increase of population and commerce with that of her debt.

My materials for doing this are not so ample as I could wish; but, I think, they are sufficient for the purpose. In 1790 the Debt of America was 72 millions of dollars; her population less than four millions; and her exports, domestic and foreign, 19 millions of dollars in amount. In 1800, her population exceeded five millions; her exports 69 millions; and her debt was 82 millions of dollars, she having, in the meanwhile, built, fitted out, and manned, several frigates and other ships of war. In 1810, her population rose to more than seven millions, and her debt sunk down to less than 60 millions of dollars; but her exports fell off to 60 millions of dollars, owing to causes resembling war. *Now* her population must exceed eight millions; her debt amounts to 108 millions;

but, then, she has, during the last period, *purchased Louisiana*, and *acquired a navy of 81 ships of war*. What she will naturally be, at the end of a very few years, I must leave your Lordship to say; but what she is now, compared with what she has been, the following table will partly clearly show :

YEARS.	Population.	Amount of Exports of Domestic Produce and Manufactures.	Amount of Exports of Foreign Produce and Manufactures.	Total Amount of all Exports.	Annual Interest of the Public Debt.
		<i>Dollars.</i>	<i>Dollars.</i>	<i>Dollars.</i>	<i>Dollars.</i>
1790	3,929,326	—	—	19,012,040	3,611,865
1800	5,303,666	—	—	69,366,000	4,100,033
1810	7,239,303	36,321,000	24,116,000	60,437,000	2,689,110
1815	8,208,021	—	—	—	5,431,930

N. B.—The population of 1815 is computed. The increase from 1810 to 1815 is supposed to have been *half* as great as that from 1800 to 1810.—The cause of the falling off in the Exports from 1800 to 1810 was, the sort of *half war* that was going on at the latter period. Our *Orders in Council* had produced the Non-importation and Embargo measures, which, of course, diminished the Exports by, probably, nearly one-half.

Without pretending to ascertain and to state *precisely* what the exports of the United States *now* amount to, it is very clear, that the *capacity of America to bear* has far exceeded any *increase in the demands of the Government*. Her exports of domestic produce and manufactures can, at this time, hardly amount to less than 60 millions of dollars, or 15 millions of pounds sterling; so that, if we regard (as our Ministers always pretend to do), the amount of exports as the criterion of the capacity to pay the interest of debt and other taxes, here is America with 15 millions of exports, and an interest of debt of 1,357,982*l.*; and Great Britain, with an export (including Ireland) of 36,000,000*l.*, and interest of debt of 43,000,000*l.*

But, let us put America in the *worst possible light*, in order to build upon nothing in the way of conjecture. Let us take her exports *now* to be no more than they were in the time of embargoes, orders in council, &c. Even then she has an export of domestic produce and manufactures of 9 millions of *pounds* to set against our 36 millions. Thus, even in this worst of all possible lights, she will stand, compared with England :

	Exports.	Interest of Debt.
England	£ 36,092,167	£ 43,000,000
America	9,080,000	5,431,930

Having thus put the matter in a light not to be misunderstood, and to leave no possible ground for cavil, I venture to offer as an opinion, that *peace*, which will infallibly give new wings to American commerce and

navigation, will clip the wings of English commerce and navigation. Great part of what has lately swelled out the latter, consisted of *Transports* in the pay of the nation, and did, in nowise whatever belong to commerce, and form no part of the means of bearing taxes. We have already seen crowds of sailors going to the Admiralty to complain of *want of employment*. They have been to the *Lord Mayor of London* on the same errand! As if he could create commerce! As if he, though a very loyal man, could find work for them, or cause bread to descend from the clouds. Is this the case in *America*? Oh, no! There peace makes the wharfs full of business. Every man and thing belonging to the sea is called for from twenty voices at once. It is said, that, in order to procure the chance of employment for our native sailors, all *foreign* sailors are to be *sent home*. Those in our *Navy* may be thus disposed of; but, a law must be passed before merchants can be compelled to prefer ours before foreigners; and a law, too, precisely opposed in principle to the laws already in force; and, even in the case of the Navy, violating the principles of common justice, seeing that our laws make *British subjects* (as far as rights and privileges go), of all *foreign mariners* who may have been a certain time on board of English ships. "Every *foreign seaman*, "who, in time of war, serves *two years* on board a *British ship* is ipso *facto* NATURALIZED." This is the LAW; and, therefore, if it be true, as the newspapers tell us it is, that the Government is going to *send home* all the foreign seamen to make room for the employment of our own, it is going to do a deed, which I will leave your Lordship, or anybody else to characterise; for I will not beggar my sentiments by doing it in the way in which alone I should *dare* to do it. But, if this deed were to be done. If it were to take its place in the list of the deeds of 1815; the consequence would be, that the seamen, thus *sent home*, would be ready to man the ships and carry on the commerce of *other countries*, who will, now that the seas will be open again, stand in need of them.

Peace, so far from *reviving* commerce, will, in all human probability, have a contrary effect in England. The late wars have been different in their effects on commerce from former wars. They swept the sea of all commerce but our own. They made all the world tributary to us. The profits of the world's commerce centered here. By the means of our loans and taxes we obtained a force sufficient to effect these purposes. But, this cannot continue in *peace*. Other nations will have each its share of commerce. Our Navy, withdrawn from the Ocean, will leave the nations of the world at liberty to communicate with each other. And, as every ship of ours must sail loaded with a part of our debt, other nations will be able to sail and carry goods cheaper. If we attempt to prevent this by *force*, it is war again. More loans. If we remain quiet, we sink in the general scale, and particularly with regard to America, which *must keep rising* in the commercial scale.

As to *Manufactures*, whether the Government of America will pass laws to protect their own against ours I know not. That will depend more upon its view of *political* effects on a larger scale than that of mere custom-house calculations. But, it is pretty certain, that something will be done in this way, as the President recommended it in his last Message to the Congress. So that our manufactures, going loaded with their full share of our erroneous and everlasting Debt, together with freight, insurance, and shipping expenses, and having to encounter a pretty heavy duty in America, must, even as things now stand, have a hard struggle to

make their way to any great extent. At any rate they will go upon a very different footing from that on which they formerly went. And yet you would lay a tax upon the *Wool*, of which the principal of manufactures is made. And you applaud the tax upon *Corn*, which tax enhances the wages of the man who makes the woollen goods. Yes, such is the state of things, in which you would adopt measures to make woollens higher in price than they now are.

The inducements to migrate to America are so great, that everything should be avoided which tends to discourage the manufacturers at home. You will say that there are *laws* to punish those who *entice manufacturers to go out of the kingdom*, and also those who attempt to *export machines*. What *use* these laws are of your Lordship will easily guess, now that you have seen so many *machines* at work in America. In 1811, I told your Lordship that this would be the case. I was at that time (Nov. 2, 1811) endeavouring to prevent the war; and in answer to those who pretended to laugh at the effects of an embargo in America, I made the following remarks, now well worthy of being called to mind :

"In the articles, upon which I have been observing, mention is made of a design on the part of the American Government to *lay an Embargo*, at which measure our writers affect to *laugh*. They say that America has tried it *before*, and was glad to abandon it.—They do not advert to the change that has since taken place in the situation of America; they do not perceive, that, since the year 1807, America has reared manufactories nearly equal to the supply of her own wants. *Lord Sheffield*, at the last *Lewes Wool Fair*, fell into the same mistake. He there told his hearers, that America must deal with us for cloth; that she could obtain it in no other country; that, if she excluded our woollens for a year or two, she must make up for it by larger importations afterwards. How deceived he was! How little did he know of what had taken place in America during the last four years! How little did he know of the immense quantity of woollens, since that time, fabricated in the American States! The present non-importation law will tend to increase the manufacturing establishments in America; manufacturers will follow the manufactories; and capital will follow, too, where capital is wanted. Of the raw material America will have a superabundance, and manufacturers are soon taught.—The following paragraph from the *Times*, three days ago, will afford a specimen of what is, and long has been, going on: 'Yesterday se'nnight a discovery was made at Liverpool, which is of considerable importance to our manufactories. In consequence of private information received by Mr. Miller, Superintendent of Police, at Liverpool, that a man of the name of Hugh Wagstaff had arrived in Liverpool from Manchester, for the purpose of conveying implements used in manufactures to America; Mr. Miller found Wagstaff out, and watched his movements. He observed him go several times on board the American ship called the *Mount Vernon*, bound to New York. The information Mr. Miller had received stated, that the implements were in boxes; and yesterday se'nnight he observed Wagstaff assisting in loading a cart with boxes, and then watched them to the water-side, and continued his observations till he saw some of the boxes put on board the *Mount Vernon*; the offence not being complete till the boxes were put on board. Mr. Miller then took Wagstaff into custody, and seized twenty-three boxes. On opening them they proved to contain *spindles, which are used in the spinning of cotton*. The prisoner was taken before James Drinkwater, Esq. the Mayor, and has been committed to Lancaster Castle, for trial at the ensuing Assizes, under the Act of 21 Geo. III. chap. 37. Does the reader believe that these spindles would have been purchased if there had not been hands in America to use them? The Non-importation Act of America would have prevented the landing of the spindles; but the shipper knew, doubtless, beforehand, that he could ship them without risk, and that a relaxation of the law would be obtained in his favour.'—Well, the spindles will not go in this instance; but, is it to be believed, that prevention will take place in all cases? And, if that were possible, what then? Why, then the *Spindle-makers* would go to the place where spindles are wanted to be made."

Now, my Lord, who was right and who wrong? I do not know what was done to *Mr. Wagstaff*; but, I know this, that I have shown you 600 cotton *spindles* at work in one mill on the Pennepack Creek; and, you may see, that they are an article of *common sale* in that country, whither *Mr. Wagstaff*, less than four years ago, was shipping them. This shows how utterly impracticable is the enforcement of any such laws. I remember a Yorkshire Clothier, who very kindly called to see me, in Newgate, in 1810, 1811 and 1812, while I was imprisoned for two years for writing about the flogging of the English Local Militia-Men, at the town of Ely, under the superintendence of German Troops. To this gentleman I used to foretel, that America would soon make her own cloth. He smiled, and said he supposed she would in *half a century*. There are only four years gone yet of the half-century. I have forgotten his name; but he has not forgotten mine; and, if he will write to me, when he comes to London again, I will send him up my Albany suit of clothes, that he may judge how long it will be before his half-century will expire.

Nevertheless, I suppose, that a great deal of woollen goods will still be exported to America from England, unless new obstacles are created. But, it will, perhaps, require but very little to turn the balance against us. Beyond a *certain price* we cannot go, as it is now evident, for it is now *proved*, that America can, and does, make large quantities of woollen goods of all sorts. Let her demands diminish much and the manufacturers will follow. They will go, and they must go, where they are wanted; and, besides, by going thither, they pay off their share of our Debt; or, which is the same thing to them, they leave us, who remain, to pay the interest of it, *till they come back*.

As to *working* manufacturers, they follow each other like the sheep of a flock. One goes; he writes home to another, that he may dine every day upon good meat, and once a week, at least, upon turkey or goose. Away goes another; and so on. And, the worst of it is, that the young, strong, unmarried and *enterprising* go, leaving behind those who are aged, feeble, timid, or encumbered with numerous families. Those who go will be such as have full confidence in their health and abilities; while those that remain will have an eye to the poor-house. As to mechanics and manufacturers, emigration is a sieve, that lets through the grain and leaves the chaff behind.

And *how* is this great evil to be prevented? I do not know, that it is to be prevented at all; but, I am sure it is not to be prevented by laws made to *punish* emigration. If prevented, it must be by affording the manufacturers *full employment at home*; this cannot be, unless we can sell cheaper than any other country; and, if *wool* and *food* be a great deal dearer here than in any other country, it is *impossible* that we can *long* continue to sell cheaper. The obvious conclusion, then, is, that we should do everything in our power to keep down the price of the raw material, and of the food of the manufacturer; and, therefore, that, not only ought there to be no tax laid upon wool, but that the Corn Bill ought to be repealed.

And now, my Lord, in taking my leave of your Lordship, suffer me to express my hope, that, after comparing the undeniable facts, contained in these letters, with your prophecies of 1811, you will resolve never to prophesy again; or, at least, if you should, that the *Wool-growers* will not again keep their wool, at your recommendation, in expectation of a higher price. Lord Chichester, it appears, told these persons, assembled

at Lewes, in 1811, that they were *under great obligations* to your Lordship, without whose information, they would have been *under great difficulty to form a conjecture as to the real value of their wool*. Just as if the *Market* would not have taught them ! By following your Lordship's advice, some of them kept up their wool, of which a continually falling price must have made them sorely repent. The old adage that "a thing is worth what it will bring," applies to every vendible commodity, to all trades, to all countries and to all times. The *Market* is the only criterion of value with the trader of sense : other grounds of calculation are left for the visionary and the speculator.

I am your Lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 18th August, 1815.

TO THE

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.*

(Political Register, October, 1815.)

LETTER I.

" Something must be done."

Botley, 25th Oct. 1815.

SIR,

This phrase is in the mouth of every man of every class in the country, which feels itself, at the end of this long pursuit of glory and of happiness, in a state somewhat like the citizen, who, after having passed forty years amidst smoke and noise and stench, in order to amass the means of living easily and tranquilly and happily for the remainder of his days, mopes about in his country-box like a fish out of water ; or, like a new married man, who has been for months up to head and ears in love, and who, at the end of about four or eight days, according to circumstances, begins to wonder what ails him. A Frenchman told me once, in Philadelphia, that in about a week after he was married, he was seized with the idea, that he was not the same identical person that he was before, and that he looked in the glass and felt his arms and legs (" *Je me touchoit*," were his words) to ascertain the fact. In the course of a few weeks, however, he found that he really was the same man as before, with a suitable diminution of spirits, or, what is vulgarly called pluck.

Such, or thereabouts, is the present state of feeling in this country. Every one is disappointed. Every one, however ignorant, begins to perceive, that this career of war and this harvest of glory, have not yielded happiness. People do not know *how* it is ; but, they know, that they are *all in distress*. They see that we have reduced the French nation to submission to the Bourbons ; they see that we have imprisoned Napoleon

* Mr. NICHOLAS VANSITTART, afterwards created Baron BEXLEY.—ED.

for life; they hear of the intended Waterloo column; they see that the Church and all our venerable establishments have been preserved unto us; they see hundreds of English and Hanoverian knights created; they see *peace* and even *plenty*; and yet they are miserable. Agriculture languishes; trade follows agriculture; nobody has money to pay rent, taxes, or debts.—A *Corn Bill* has not *protected* the farmer. The cheapness of food has not lessened the misery of the poor. Nothing sells. The nation perishes in the midst of the spending of the produce of successive abundant harvests.

This state of things draws from every one the phrase at the head of this Letter. The Banker, when he sees himself compelled to refuse his usual discounts, tells his applicant, that "*something must be done.*" The farmer (formerly so gay on his yeomanry-cavalry-horse, and so ready to hack the Jacobins), when he is offered 17 shillings instead of 37 shillings a head for his South-down Ewes, squeezes out his thick lips, swells his nostrils, shrugs up his shoulders, throws his jolterhead on one side, with a nod, and exclaims, "*By — zummert must be done!*" The landlord, who has vociferated for war, taxation, sedition and treason-bills for two-and-twenty long years, when his steward, instead of ten thousand, brings him five hundred pounds in money and half a hundred notices to quit, observes, with one of Lord Burleigh's shakes of the head: "Really, Mr. Trusty, Government must do *something*. Parliament meets in February. I do not know what the Chancellor of the Exchequer means to propose, though I am very intimate with him; but *something must be done.*" The tradesman, who has, for months past, used the door-knocker much more than his hammer or scissors, when, for the twentieth time, he is told to *call again*, goes muttering away, that "*Something must be done.*" In short, all agree, that it is impossible to go on long in our present course. The parson, the lawyer, the doctor, the very lowest of labourers say that a change of *some sort must* take place. The "*loyal*," as they call themselves, observe, very seriously, that Parliament must do *something*; and, the *Jacobins*, as they are called, with more of curiosity than sorrow on their countenance, say, "Now let us see *what* will be done."

All persons, of every class, are now Sir, looking to *you*. Some think, that you can conjure money into their pockets; others that you can pay the soldiers, sailors, judges, placemen, pensioners, and the Royal Family somehow or other without money. The farmers generally most firmly believe, that you can raise the price of their produce, for which you would have their blessings and the curses of the rest of the country, especially the army, the navy, and the annuitants. What you will do it is hard for me to say; or, rather, *what way* you will go to work; for, in substance, I know, that you *must* do, in the course of about two or three years, one of three things. You must diminish the interest of the debt; you must cause large additional quantities of paper-money to be issued, so as to bring the guinea back again to be worth 28s. or 30s.; or you must suffer the whole of the paper system to go to atoms.

The people do not perceive the real cause of their distress. The farmer sees his wheat fall from 15s. to 7s. a bushel. He ascribes it to the defeat of Napoleon, and says that *he* was the *best friend of the farmers*. Others think, that things will *come about*. Others damn the French, and say that it is their produce that lowers ours in price. Others curse, most unjustly, the parsons, and say that it is the tithes which we pay, and

which the French do not pay, which is the cause of our ruin; and, a stupid man in Wiltshire of the name of *Bennett* has actually written and published a long pamphlet to show, that the parsons have no right to what they receive. Nobody sees, or, at least, appears to see, that their distress arises from *the debt and the military establishment and other fixed expenses, entailed on us by the war*; and from the attempt which is now making to bring us upon a *par of exchange* with other countries, by *diminishing the quantity of our paper-money*.

I contended, with Mr. Huskisson, that wheat must continue to be, on an average, about 15s. a bushel, or that the taxes could not be paid in sufficient amount to meet interest on the debt, and to pay the other expenses of the year. You are now trying the experiment of disproving that position; but, I shall soon see you, I think, compelled to give it the most complete sanction. Again, the Bullion Committee formally declared, that, by *drawing in their paper judiciously*, the Bank might be able to pay in gold and silver at the end of two years. I contended, that this was impossible, *as long as the interest of the debt continued to be paid*; for, that, if the quantity of paper were to be so *diminished* as to bring the pound-note to be worth 20s. in gold, *the people, who pay the taxes to support the funds must all be ruined*; and this ruin is now actually taking place in consequence of *an attempt to raise the value of the paper*. The Bank, in endeavouring to follow the advice, and to act upon the principles, of the Bullion Committee, has plunged agriculture and trade and rents and debts and credits all into confusion. And was not this a consequence for any man of common sense to foresee? If his head was not clear enough to conceive the idea, was it not so plainly marked out for him in my "*Paper against Gold*" as to be palpable to one almost an idiot? Was it not as plain as your nose is upon your face, that the land (from which all ability to pay taxes proceeds) could never pay interest in paper worth 20s. in the pound, for money which had been borrowed for it, and salaries (including pay of soldiers and sailors) which had taken place, in a paper worth 12s. or 15s. in the pound? When Wheat was 15s. a bushel, the land was able to pay; but, if Wheat be, by a diminution of the quantity of paper, made worth only 7s. a bushel, can it still be able to pay? The Corn Bill is, as I always said it would be, wholly unavailing. But, what a monstrous absurdity, to deal out a Corn Bill, with one hand, in order to *protect* the farmer; and, with the other hand, to mow him down by a diminution of the paper-money.

To make this matter plain to you, Sir, if it be not already so, let us suppose the interest of the Debt and the other expenses to be paid in *wheat* instead of money; and, that farmer Gripeum is assessed at 500 bushels of Wheat, leaving him 200 for his landlord, and 300 for other purposes, and that he never grows anything but Wheat. All of a sudden the Government comes and demands 1000 bushels, instead of 500. It is clear, that the landlord goes without his rent, and that Gripeum must be instantly ruined, if he has no extraneous fund to resort to; and, this can be the case in comparatively very few instances. Well, now, how does this differ from the paper operation? In consequence of the great quantity of paper-money, Gripeum can pay his share of the interest of the Debt and of the Expenses of Army, Royal Family, &c., by selling 500 bushels of his Wheat; but, the Government, or the Bank, or both, or the *Thing* that sways, call it by what name you will, diminishes the quantity of paper so as to compel poor Gripeum, whose helmet shone so bright

against the Jacobins and Levellers, to sell the whole of the 1000 bushels to pay his share of the interest of the Debt and of the Expenses incurred by the Anti-jacobin war. Now, where is the *difference* in the two cases?

I have, you will say, supposed an *extreme* case. I have supposed Gripeum to be wholly swallowed up at once, helmet, uniform, horse, and all; but, if these extreme cases have not very frequently occurred, the effect is only different *in degree*; and, because the farmers are not *all completely smashed at one blow*, you are not to suppose, that the blow is ineffectual as to the total smashing. The greater part of farmers have, they *must* have some *capital*; that is to say, the amount of a year or two's produce, over and above the demands of the current year. Some have money at use. For these cases, they flee to the capital to sustain them under the first blow, and to obtain a little time for them. Some are able to stand two or three blows. But, I imagine, that a second blow will, if inflicted, nearly turn them up; and, in the meanwhile, the work of retrenchment goes on, and particularly that of diminishing the use of taxed articles. The tradesman feels, twitch for twitch, with the farmer. One is the Belly, and the other a Member. The latter was highly delighted, last year, when he saw the farmer's produce falling, and said, that *he*, the tradesman's turn of enjoyment was now come. But, as I told the worthy Mayor of Southampton, Mr. ROWCLIFF, it would come to pass, so it has come to pass, that the tradesman would soon find, that if Gripeum became *poor*, those who lived by selling his wife baubles, and himself drink and clothes, would wholly starve or must turn out to beg. Gripeum, after all, will stand the storm longer than Crispin, Snip, and Boniface. He'll nail his shoes, make his wife patch his coat, and go home from market hungry and thirsty. He has always something that he can eat, and malt, though taxed, keeps pace with the price of his wheat in all but the tax. Whereas they must live, if they live at all, upon the profits and superfluities of the land. Thus is the depression felt through all the veins of the community, and thus do you experience a degree of embarrassment, which that bold botherer, Pitt, never had to encounter. He got over the stoppage of cash-payments at the Bank, by reports of Committees, subscribing combinations, false alarms, and divers other devices, calculated to deceive a people full of fear of the enemy, and easily duped from their natural credulity. But, yours is a case that can receive no aid from trick and contrivance. It is not now a question of jacobin or anti-jacobin; it is no question of alarm; no question about religion or government; no Yeomanry Cavalry, Loyal Associations, or Volunteer Corps, will now avail. No appeals from the forum or the pulpit will be of any use. It is not a matter of seditious or treasonable practices. There are no Corresponding Societies, or Pop-gun plots. It is not a question of *passion*, but of *money*. The means that would put down a thousand market mobs will now avail nothing. Majorities and minorities are here out of the question. No acts of Parliament or proclamations; no societies for the suppression of vice; no Lancaster Schools; no Bible Associations, will do any good.

Thus, Sir, have I just opened the subject. In future letters I shall go fully into it; and, in the meanwhile, I remain your most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

(Political Register, November, 1815.)

LETTER II.

QUACK REMEDIES.

SIR,

The fetid hospital, which excites loathing in all other persons, is the natural element of Quacks. The hollow cough of the consumptive is music to their ears. They chuckle with delight at the tumbling out teeth and the half-disguised limp, from which other people turn with disgust. How these gentry, the political and financial Quacks, now revel and enjoy themselves! Here they have a patient of consequence enough to employ them all. Here is a nation disordered, without knowing what is the matter with her. Her Physicians, after many and long consultations, prescribed her the bitter dose of a Corn-Bill, which they were actually compelled to make her swallow by force. A year's experience has shown, that this remedy is so far from effectual, that she has, ever since she was drenched with it, been growing worse and worse*; and, as is always the case, the Quacks are now coming forth, each with his phial in his hand, to apply their *simple remedies*.

One of these dealers in "simples" has made his application through this Register. He uses the signature of F., and, his last letter (see page 118), he dates from *Paris*, on the 21st of October. This gentleman, who, being anonymous as a writer, cannot complain if I make very free with his nostrums, professes to show, that the vast accumulation of debt and the consequent enormous amount of taxes do not at all tend to injure the nation. He insists that the debt and the taxes are *good things*. He calls the debt so much riches acquired by the nation. He says, that if it were ten times as great as it is, we should be ten times as rich as we are. But, in addition to all this, he was so unfortunate as to say, that he

* We have, what are called, *Agricultural Reports* published at the end of every month, in the newspapers. The following is an extract from the Report for last month, which I have taken from the *Times* newspaper:—"Monthly Report for October. The continuing declension in the prices of Bread, Corn, and other grain, is operating so generally against tillage husbandry, that its consequences are likely to extend from individual to considerable *national distress*. The accounts from every district, of the numerous farms being abandoned by the tenants in an uncultivated state, must so far diminish our produce of grain, as to render it doubtful whether, a short time hence, we may be able to raise a sufficiency, from our own soil, for our own consumption. Though exportations have taken place of the foreign wheats, which Government permitted to be brought in, to such an impolitic excess, a bulk of it still remains to depress the agricultural interest of the British dominions, so that it may be found difficult to apply any saving REMEDY for a calamity so extensive and disastrous.

would point out an *effectual remedy for the present distresses of agriculture and trade.*

This, if you did me and him the honour to read his letters, must have been very consoling to you ; for, I will venture to say, that you and Lord Liverpool, and George Rose and Dr. Beeke, and Mr. Chalmers, with all your heads laid together, do not know of any means of enabling the farmers to pay their rent and taxes other than that of sending forth new bales of paper-money, so as to raise the guinea to be worth 30s. or 33s. On the morning of Weyhill sheep-fair, I was coming home through WHITCHURCH, where, as you know, is the *Mill* at which the Thread-needle-street Bank Paper is made. I met a farmer going to the fair with a flock of very beautiful South-Down Ewes. "Very handsome, farmer—" "What will they go at?"—"About a pound. It's giving them away." "Sold the same stock last year for 39 shillings."—"What is the reason" "of it, farmer?"—"I don't know, Sir; but nobody has got any" "money."—"That must be your fault, I think, in this neighbourhood."—"Why so, Sir?"—"Why? That *mill there* makes money for the" "whole nation. If I were you I would go to MR. PORTAL, tell him my" "case and that of my neighbours; and, I dare say, that he and his em-" "ployers would, in the course of a week, or ten days at farthest, make" "those pretty creatures worth 40s. or 50s. each, instead of 20s."—He stared hard at me and my horse from head to foot; tried to work his features into a sort of a smile; went on after his flock, but could not help looking back at me now and then, till the winding of the road put us out of sight of each other. I dare say his noddle was shaken. A gleam of light would, in all likelihood, find its way through the jumble of notions that made up the furniture of his skull. He would tell his wife and son of it at night, and they would get, in the end, at something like a rough sketch of the thing. If one had the use of all the pulpits in the nation for only a *single hour*, how clearly might this mysterious matter be explained! At the end of that hour, I would set deception at defiance, though aided by the natural gullibility of the people, and by a press the most powerful and most prostituted that ever was known in the world.

But, to return to Mr. F.'s REMEDY (for having kept you so long from which demands an apology, especially when I consider the state of anxious expectation you must naturally be in), you will see, that it has, at least, *simplicity* to recommend it; and, what will not please you less, the Government has no need to meddle with the application. I will give you his *remedy* in his own words; first observing, however, that I had expressly called upon him for his remedy, he having, in his first letter, so boldly asserted, that he had a remedy at hand. I, you will please to bear in mind, had, in my Letters to Lord Sheffield, ascribed the distress of agriculture to the *taxes and paper-money*, and had proved, as I thought, that these being the *cause* of the distress, it was something to be done *with them* that the remedy must consist of. No, said he; for the farmers *have flourished* under these same taxes; and, *therefore*, it cannot be that the taxes are the cause of their present distress. They *have flourished* amidst bales of paper-money; and, therefore, it cannot be the paper-money that now produces their ruin and the ruin of the tradesmen, dependent on rents and profits of agriculture. He forgot, that a *paper-system* enabled those who were at the head of it to cause any fall or any rise that they pleased in prices. However, he laughed at me, said he knew the *real cause* of the distress of agriculture, and that he had a *com-*

plete remedy in his pocket. I, therefore, called upon him for his remedy. I could not imagine what it could be; but, I have got it, and I now do myself the honour to lay it before you. I will not apologize for the length of the extract, seeing that you must be anxious to possess this valuable recipe in ample detail.

"Now the question is, how are we to prevent these *occasional* checks, and particularly such as the one we are now labouring under; *how are we to keep our agriculture constantly prosperous.* This I apprehend we can only do by securing to the farmer a *fair* price, at all times, for his grain; in other words, such a price as shall *always* leave him a reasonable profit; without this he will not *always* be disposed to extend or keep up his culture, and with it he will. Now there can be no doubt, that the human race is disposed to increase on the *average* faster in most countries, at least, than the supply of subsistence can be increased. But it is the tendency of population to increase *regularly*; and owing to the uncertainty of the seasons only, if nothing else prevented the increase and supply of subsistence, cannot be made regular. This year the crop perhaps may not be equal to more than half the consumption; the two following years, it may be almost double the demand for each of them. In consequence of this, and *some other circumstances*, such is the change which has just taken place with respect to our commercial connections with the rest of Europe, and knowing or *believing* that we can depend on a supply of grain from abroad, in case of a deficiency at home; owing, too, to the cessation of the war, and of the large demands for grain for the army and navy, &c., &c., the public opinion and feeling have been brought to such a state, with respect to the amount of demand and supply, and the relative price of grain, that nothing could be more ruinous to the farmer, than an abundant crop for a year or two in succession. Notwithstanding the smallness of the crop of this year, grain is now selling for much less than it has cost to grow it. This is AN EVIL, which, in time, WILL REMEDY ITSELF perhaps, but not before it has done great mischief. The establishment of *public granaries*, for the purchasing of grain by Government, in plentiful seasons, and storing it against a time of scarcity, would, in all probability *completely counteract the evil.* But this even is not absolutely indispensable.—*The farmer himself may always obtain a fair price for his grain.* He is, perhaps, the only tradesman, who can at all times command an adequate price for his commodity, and it is for his *grain* alone that he can do it. If fodder and herbage be scarce, the farmer is obliged to part with his cattle at such a price as he can get:—he has not enough for them to eat, but corn eats nothing itself, and there is no substitute to be found for grain, for the food of the great mass of society. The demand for it, too, is so great and incessant that a *determination not to part with it for less than a fair price could not fail in three weeks or a month at most, to bring it to a fair price.* It is the interest of every part of the community—of that of the manufacturer as well as the farmer himself, that this should be the case. How can manufactures for the home trade prosper if the farmer and his connections, that are to wear and use them, are not thriving and prosperous? How can manufactures for foreign consumption prosper, if the farmer and his connections, who must consume the greater part of the articles for which they are exchanged, be poor and unable to purchase them? Besides, if this were not so, the difference between a fair and what would be a ruinous price for his grain to the farmer, will make no perceptible difference in the price of our exports; nay, in consequence of the effect which the greater demand for foreign produce would have on the foreign exchanges, a fair price for growing grain, and the prosperity of the farmer, would be absolutely beneficial to the manufacturer for foreign consumption. But, in short, and be this as it may, the farmer *may* obtain a fair price for his grain if *he chooses*, and he cannot obtain more *in reality*, because, were he to attempt it, he would run the amount of his expenditure as he had ran the price of his grain above a fair price. With respect to his own interests, therefore, he is a *fool* if he do not obtain a fair price, and with respect to those of the country, he is *little better than a traitor* if he do not. It appears to me, too, that the same description of character will apply very well to all such as shall wish the farmer to sell his grain for less than it costs him, or that he should not make a determination, absolutely necessary, no less for the public interest than for his own.

"THE REMEDY, then, for the difficulties which the farmer suffers, as well as the evils which threaten the safety and interests of the country, appears to be SIMPLE and easy of application. All that remains is for the farmer to apply it; and supposing that he does so, let us just take a cursory view of what will probably be the consequence. Assured and confident that he shall obtain a price allowing a reasonable profit for his produce, the farmer will not hesitate to extend his culture. To effect this, an increased agricultural population will be necessary. To supply them with implements and clothes, &c., an additional number of blacksmiths, carpenters, wheelwrights, tanners, harness-makers, shoemakers, tailors, hatters, shopkeepers, grocers, &c., will be wanted also. Then will follow the parsons, to take care of the souls of the new population; the physicians and surgeons of their bodies, and the lawyers and attorneys of their property. The man of letters, too, and the printer will be wanted, to supply them with literary instruction and entertainment, and the player with spectacle and amusement. Room also will be found for a new set of idlers, as well as unproductive labourers of every description, and for manufacturers to clothe them all. In short, so long as you can and do extend your culture, and keep increasing the means of subsistence, so long will you make fresh elbow-room for every class of society. But as soon as you cease to do this, so soon will society begin to feel crowded and uncomfortable. Where the paper-money system has been fairly established, capital can never be wanting, neither generally nor individually, to carry on improvement. If an individual have laid out all his capital in reducing waste land to culture, or in a manufacturing establishment, he would be entitled to and obtain credit with his banker, and with his fellow-tradesmen, for the full amount of his disbursement in this way. In short, let but the former demand, and he will obtain a fair price for his grain, and then, there will, I am persuaded, be nothing to prevent the progress of our country in wealth and improvement, so long at least as it is capable of being improved."

Now, Sir, are you not much obliged to me for making known this admirable "*remedy*?" Here is all embarrassment done away at once. Are you not made happy by this discovery? The farmer has nothing to do but to *demand* in order to *receive*. "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you: ask, and you shall find." Little as I *expected* from the discoveries of my correspondent, he really has fallen short even of that little; and, though I cannot say, that he has very much surprised me, I dare say he has quite astonished some of my readers, who, from the bold manner, in which he promised, would naturally expect something that would be, at least, ingenious and plausible. Could they possibly have supposed, that his remedy would consist of a recommendation to the farmers to *demand a fair price*; to *resolve to have a fair price*; and of calling them *fools* and almost *traitors*, if they did not make such demand and form such resolution?

Let me, however, if I can, have the patience to show, in its true light, the absurdity of these notions. You see, Sir, how he has entangled himself. Deceived by a false glare, this gentleman, who is a man of talents and an enemy of war and bloodshed and slavery and corruption, has become the partizan of those things which have been the main supporters of these scourges of mankind; namely, National Debts and Paper-money. He appears to have formed a theory in their favour, and to have dressed up some pretty paradoxes out of that theory. But, these are hardly dry from the press, when the ruin of Agriculture stares him in the face, and asks him *is this prosperity*? *Is this the happy effects of your enriching system*? Nettled at this question, which I thrustured home upon him in a way not to be easily turned aside, he now answers, that the farmers are *fools* and *half-traitors* if they do not obtain a fair price *by force*; by forming a *resolution to have it*; and he adds, that this "*remedy*" is

simple, and easy of application!" Is it possible to be serious, while remarking on such notions?

To be sure, Sir, we farmers are men very careless of our interests. We are persons very backward at *asking enough*. Farmers are quite simpletons, who will take almost anything that any body will give them. They never make any inquiries about how much can be got at one place more than at another. They never refuse to sell to-day for less than they might have had yesterday. They never haggle, no not they, about a half-penny in twenty shillings. They never expend ten shillings in horse-flesh, or shoe-leather, or time, in order to get half-a-crown in price. They never, after drinking ten grogs over a deal, split a difference to the amount of a shilling. They never, after hearing from their neighbour that he is going to buy a flock of sheep, for instance, go quietly home, saddle their horse, and make the purchase in his stead, leaving him to enjoy the mental benefit of his disappointment, and the bodily benefit of his journey. No: they do none of these things. They are a simple, easy race of men, that know, poor fellows, very little about getting money, and still less about holding it fast after they have got it. They are so frank too! They tell all the world how much they give for their land, and how much they make by it. If they have a good bargain in their farm, they never attempt to disguise it from their landlord. They never assume a poor mouth while they are hoarding up money. If selling you a horse that has a latent disease, they are sure to apprise you of it; and, if you happen to offer them, through ignorance, more for anything than the thing is worth, they never fail to refuse to take it, and to endeavour to enlighten you on the subject. They never sell a cow with a bastard calf by her side. They never co-operate with the butchers in killing a pig, or a sheep, to save its life. They have no foresight; no thought for the morrow. And, then, they are so totally divested of all pride. They never, happening to be Churchwarden, white-wash the Church during the year, in order to have the deed recorded for the purpose of sticking their names in the record over the Church-door, that all mankind may be sensible of their consequence. High-spirited, as well as simple in their manners, they never, no not they, lick the dirt of the boots off their Landlord, affect to relish the wit of his steward, and to admire the beauty of her Ladyship and of his Honour's children, while they are, if their purse be full, insolent towards all the rest of the world. But, the characteristic, by which they are distinguished, more than by any other, is that with which we set out; namely, a shyness, or backwardness, a sort of silly conscientious scrupulousness, which prevents us from asking as much for anything as the thing is worth.

But, still, wheat did sell for 25s. a bushel, and barley for 20s. not many years ago; and that, too, notwithstanding this silly conscientiousness. Now, whether the 25s. were "*demanded*" by the farmers, or whether that price was *offered* them, I will leave my correspondent to decide; but, certain it is, that they *took* it. That is to say, they took all that they could get, and so, I assure him, we do now. What a strange idea; that the farmers are able to *force a price!* to *compel* people to give them a certain sum for their grain! What a barbarous notion, to suppose that all the farmers in the country would be able to *agree* and to co-operate in this way, or in any other way, and that, too, without any law to bind them; a notion that would have been thought absurd, even in the ages of the thickest darkness!

If it were *ask and have*, as this gentleman supposes, does he think, that the yeomanry cavalry gentry would not still trample on the Jacobins and the old women and boys? Does he think, that they would, with piping tone, call for a "mug of mild ale," instead of the dozens of bottles of port that they called for, with Hector-like lungs, in good anti-jacobin times? They are now smarting for their deeds of those days. They, more than any other people in the country, even more than Brooke Watson's Mansion-house subscribers, were the cause of the war against the French Republic, and of the continued prosecution of that war. The army and navy have been crowded with their sons and dependents. They drew forth their swords to destroy all who opposed that war. The war is over, and they are paying the cost of it, while the paper-money has been so managed as to reduce their means more, a great deal more, than one-half.

"*Resolve!*" How are they to resolve to *have a fair price*? And who is to say *what is a fair price*? Have they not been resolving to their utmost? Have they not been keeping, and do they not always keep, and ought they not always to keep, their grain till their interest dictates them to sell it? Are there not many who *must* sell as soon as they house, to pay taxes, labour, debts, &c. Could the farmers of one single parish possibly form a non-selling association that would hold together for a week? How, then, is this to be done by all the farmers in these islands? If any one were able to embody such a corps, it would be, perhaps, *Mr. Benett* (whose name the printer spelled wrong last week); and he, instead of thinking such a scheme practicable, threatened to go and live in France, unless wheat sold dearer than 8s. or 9s, a bushel, and now it sells for less than 6s. 6d. If he be in despair; if such a man resort to an attack on *tithes*, as making part of the evil, how are you to expect any combinations, any determinations, any force, of the kind my correspondent talks of? The people in Wiltshire laugh in the face of Mr. Benett, when he threatens to go to France, and so would all the people laugh, if all the farmers were as silly as he. "Go to France! Go hang yourselves; and then go to the devil," would they say, if we were empty enough to hold such language. The truth is, the farmers were the great pillars of Pitt and his system. They drew their swords for him, for Addington, for Pitt again, for Perceval. They were the loudest, the most hardened, and the most brutal of all the enemies of freedom in England. Whatever was to be done, there were they ready with their helmets and sabres. They were the principal cause of that debt and of those everlasting taxes that now press them to the earth; that now almost literally squeeze them down into their own dunghills.

Pity it is, that they cannot *suffer alone*; but, and here my correspondent is perfectly correct, they cannot feel a blow, though it be ever so trifling, which is not felt by every other class of the community. If the cultivator of the land be ruined, so must the owner, so must the tradesman, so must the manufacturer, and so must every one, *who receives nothing out of the taxes*. Those whose incomes, in whatever shape, are derived from the taxes, are now in a flourishing state. He who lent his money to the Government six years, or only four years ago, now receives nearly ten per centum for that money; but, this can no more go on, than Botley Mill can go without the aid of the stream that runs down from Bishop's Waltham. The miller, however much a conjuror he may be, cannot give motion to the wheel without water; nor can you, though as

clever a man, perhaps, in your way, as our miller is in his way, satisfy the demands of the fundholders, and of the army and navy, and of placemen and pensioners, and judges and royal family, unless the taxes, to a sufficient amount can be collected; and this never can be done, for another two years, unless wheat be double its present price. To double the price, paper-money must come out till the total quantity of it in circulation equals what it was some years ago; and, the moment the paper comes out again to this amount, down comes its value, and up goes the exchange in favour of other countries.

Thus you are, Sir, in what we country people call a *cleft-stick*, and, if you ever had your finger in that situation, you need nothing more to convince you of the aptness of the figure. You are squeezed from both sides by a force so equal, and you are so completely incapable of obtaining relief, either by pulling or by thrusting, that it requires but a slight effort of the imagination to transform your Chancellorship into an unfortunate finger. Your predicament is, in the history of your system, a perfect novelty. The abundance of the paper-money, its constantly increasing quantity, has always, till of late, been the threatening evil. But, now, the evil presses equally from the other side. The abundance of the paper-money, though it ruined many people, caused the farmers, landlords, and active traders to flourish. It raised prices and caused discontent amongst the miserable; but, what were their mutinies? They were soon put down. All that stirred were *quelled*. Now, there is nobody to quell. The poor are pleased. They approve of all your doings. But, unfortunately, the poor do not pay the taxes. Loyal souls as they are, paupers, gipsies and all, their *will* is good towards the State; but they have not the means. The farmers would pay, too, if they could. They would grumble, curse, cry, and pay; but, their money is gone; or, rather, it does not come. It is useless to threaten them. They do not resist, and are not disposed to resist. Exchequer writs they may receive; but Exchequer writs cannot create the means to pay. It is a submissive, passive description of persons, who now smart. The time of suffering for others is gone by; and, if they do share a little with the rest, their satisfaction at seeing the result verify their predictions, and making those feel who never felt before, is much more than an ample compensation for their share of the suffering. Oh! how the Loyal Yeomanry Cavalry threatened the Jacobins! What bloody oaths they swore against the enemies of the war. How they admired the speeches of Pitt and the pamphlets of John Bowles! Well, they may read all these now, if they like, and what will suit them very well, at a cheap rate. Loyal pamphlets and even songs will, however, not tend to make money more plenty; nor will they assist you, Sir, in affording the "*remedy*," of which I shall treat in my next letter.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

(*Political Register, November, 1815*)

LETTER III.

REAL REMEDIES.

SIR,

Before we come to speak of these, I must notice a little more of the quackery that is now going forward. That instrument of knaves, and oracle of well-dressed fools, the *TIMES NEWSPAPER*, which, upon wrong, false, and base grounds, *opposed* the Corn Bill, and repeated, to a sickening degree, all the vulgar and brutish trash about "peace and plenty," and about the *justice* of the farmers and landlords now "*contenting themselves with moderate prices*;" this bell-wether of the well-dressed rabble now has found out, that "*the declension in the prices of bread-corn, and other grain, threatens to produce great national distress.*" It tells us, that, all over the country, "*numerous farms are abandoned by the tenants in an uncultivated state*;" and that it is the *foreign corn now lying in the warehouses, that keeps down the price of our own corn.*"

It is very true, that the declension of price is producing the effect that is here ascribed to it. No improvements of the land are going on. Farmers are drawing in their expenditure in all directions. They are lessening the number of their horses and of their labourers. Every sort of work that will admit of delay, is delayed, or given up. The land is either badly tilled or is left wholly untilled in numerous cases. And, thousands upon thousands of farms, are thrown back into the hands of the owners. The cultivators of the soil are fleeing like Lot, without the need of any injunction not to look behind them.

But, that, which this stupid man points out as the *sole cause* of this great national evil, really makes no part of the cause. The Corn Bill did not make wheat dearer than it was before, and yet he ascribes the low price to that Bill not having gone far enough. He ascribes this low price to the large store of foreign wheat now in England, though the law does not permit that wheat to be sold here, and does permit it to be carried away to other countries. This is a cause quite of the sort to be discovered by one whose optics are of a kind to enable him to see nothing that is of less bulk than a sack of wheat.

The Corn Bill forbade the importation and sale of foreign wheat, unless the price of wheat in England was 10s. the Winchester bushel. Foreign wheat might be brought here and *warehoused*, but it could not be sold here, until wheat was 10s. a bushel. Thus stands the law. Now, if all the wheat in the whole world were *warehoused* in England, why should that induce me to sell my wheat at 6s. 6d. a bushel, as I now

do? If, indeed, my wheat brought *nearly* 10s. a bushel, I might be tempted to hasten my sales a little on account of this store of foreign wheat; but surely my present price is such as not to be at all affected by that store any more than it would be by a store of stones or of wool.

But, if this were the case; if this store of foreign corn caused our corn to sell cheap, the owners of it must be fools indeed to keep it here, and must have been fools to bring it here. *They*, at any rate, must have thought that its being stored here would not produce any such effect; and yet, they are full as likely to understand this matter as the stupid, though prostituted writer of the Times Newspaper, who, while he is *blaming* the Government for suffering so much foreign corn to be brought into the country, and is ascribing to that the present ruin of the farmers and of all connected with them, never once thinks of apologizing for the brutal part he took last year, in opposing the Corn Bill, which he represented as "a *boon* to the landed people *out of the purses of the rest of the community*."

I, too, opposed the Corn Bill, but upon very different grounds. I opposed it, 1st, because it tended to keep food at a high price, and, thereby, to drive people out of the country, and, amongst others, manufacturers, to the injury of England; 2nd, because it tended to keep us aloof from the rest of the world; but, principally, because its object was to enable the land to pay the *present taxes*, which the good of the country required to be diminished, by the reduction of the army and of the pay, salaries and pensions of those, whose pay had been fixed at a high rate, or raised, on account of the high prices. But this sneaking caviller appealed merely to the bellies of the mob and to the purses of the annuitants. Not a word did he say about the *taxes*; not a word about the expenses of Government; not a word about the *pay of the army and navy*; not a word about the pensions and salaries and allowances and grants, all fixed, or raised, in dear-corn times.

But, Sir, as I am now about to talk of *real remedies*, we must take all these matters into view; for, is it *just*, that the people who have to pay the taxes should have no consideration bestowed on them, while so much consideration has been bestowed on everybody else? Let us see how this question stands. Prices are now much about the same as they were before the Anti-Jacobin war. But, is this the case with the pay of the army, navy, judges, police-justices, clerks, &c. &c.? You know very well that it is not. You know very well, that, on the *express ground of the rise in prices*, millions have been paid to the Royal Family; that their allowances have all been augmented *on that ground*. You know also, that the salaries of the Judges, that the pay of the soldiers and sailors, that the salaries of the police-justices, that the pensions and allowances to Ambassadors; in short, that all expenses have been raised, for many years past, and that some of them have had augmentation upon augmentation, *on the express ground of the rise in the prices of the necessities of life*. Well, then; now that the necessities of life have fallen in price a *full half*, ought not the pay, salaries, &c., to fall also, at least, back to the old mark? What pretext can there be for now paying these persons at the rate of dear-corn prices?

Some few years ago the average price of wheat was 15s. a bushel; or, let us come to the loaf; for that is nearer to the teeth of a judge or a soldier as well as of a labouring man. The average price, for years, of the quartern loaf, in London, was 18d. The average price is now, and has

been for a long while, 11d. Green Bacon was 17s. a score. It is now 10s. Malt was 16s. a bushel. It is now 9s. Bread, meat, and beer are the things on which the people live, or ought to live, and may live well; and though the Lord does not live upon them, his servants do. Upon this comparison of prices, we have lowered the pay of our labourers, smiths, wheelwrights, &c. The men to whom we used to give 30d. a day, we now give 20d. I used to pay a shilling for job-work where I now pay eightpence. There is as yet some irregularity; a good deal of disputation; the men are loth to come down; many change masters; but, when they come to a new master, they lower their price. Work, however, stands still in the meanwhile, and much diminution of cultivation takes place. Many, running about to seek the old prices, at last, get no employ at all. They go to the *parish*; but, what takes place then? Why, the Justices compel the parish to *feed* them; but, the parish compels them to *work*; so that, after all, they do the work *cheaper* than they might have done it at first.

A dialogue between me and one of my labourers will give you as correct a notion of the state of the country, in this respect, as you will be able to obtain from the Board of Agriculture, though that Board of wise men costs us some thousands a year.

L.—600 rod of water-furrowing at 9d. a score rod, 1l. 2s. 6d.

Mr. C.—But 9d. a score is too much, Emery,

L.—*Too much*, Sir! Why it always used to be *a shilling*!

Mr. C.—Yes, but flour *used* to be 20s. a bushel, and now it is 10s. at the same mill.

L.—*Flour* is cheaper, to be sure, Sir, but *every thing else* is as dear as ever.

Mr. C.—Will you give me 18s. a score for a nice fat hog?

L.—No, Sir. (*With a smile and twist of the neck.*)

Mr. C.—But, you know, that, one year, since I have lived at Botley, hogs did sell for 18s. a score; and that, for years, they sold at 16s. or 17s.

L.—Yes, Sir, but a man wants something else besides *bread* and *bacon*.

Mr. C.—I know he does. He wants some good, fresh, hearty *beer*.

L.—Beer, Sir! How is a poor man to buy beer at 6d. a pot?

Mr. C.—Why should he buy it at 6d. a pot, when he can have a bushel of malt for 9s., and hops for 1s., enough to make 21 gallons of as good beer as any man need wish to drink. Beer that will make him feel bold when he has drunk a pot of it.

L.—I *never* brew, Sir.

Mr. C.—Pray then, what do you drink? You must drink *something* with your victuals. What is it?

L.—Tea, Sir!

Mr. C.—Tea! And how much a week, and how much sugar? And what do they cost you?

L.—Why, Sir, we have 1½ oz. of tea, and 3lb. of sugar. The tea costs 1s. 6d. and the sugar 3s.

Mr. C.—So, here is 4s. 6d. a week, laid out by my servant with the nabobs and the West Indians, when you might have four times as much nourishment out of *half* a bushel of malt. *Two* weeks, at this rate, would cost you 9s. while, for 10s. you might have four full pots of good beer a day for *three* weeks. But, this is not all; during three weeks you lay out 13s. 6d. to obtain whatever nourishment 9lbs. of

sugar yields; while, if this 13s. 6d. was laid out in $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushel of malt, you would obtain for it the nourishment which $37\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of sugar yields; because it is a well-known fact, that every bushel of good malt contains, at the least, 25lbs. of sugar.

L.—(*With a laugh like that of Cymon when he first discovered Ephigenia sleeping by the fountain.*) Ah, Sir! But how is a poor man to get it out?

Mr. C.—Why, as you do the bitter useless taste of the stuff that you call tea; and which, for the greater part, is, perhaps, composed of the leaves of the *ash* or the *black thorn*: that is by *brewing*; only, instead of brewing *three times every day*, you need brew only *one time in three weeks*; or, if you prefer it, only one time in six, nine, or twelve weeks.—No wonder that you go so late in the morning to your work. No wonder that you are shuffling home a mile or two to dinner, instead of bolting out (as I did when I was a boy) with your meat and bread in your satchel, and your beer in a wooden bottle, slung over your shoulder. No wonder that you are all as thin as owlettes, and that that son of yours there, who is 19 years old, and is five feet nine inches high, is, as you told me last summer, “too weakly to do man’s work.” No wonder that his knees bend under him, and that he has a voice like that of a girl, instead of being able to carry a sack of wheat and to jump over a five-barred gate.

L.—Aye, Sir, it is easy to talk; but how am I to brew without barrels, or anything to brew with?

Mr. C.—All these would not cost you as much as you lose by tea-drinking in one single quarter of a year. But, besides, does the tea-kettle, with its everlasting cookings, summer as well as winter, cost you nothing? Do the tea-pots, spoons, cups and saucers cost you nothing? Do you pay nothing, in the course of the year, to those vagabond pedlars, whom I frequently see in the village with their moveable houses and their crockery-ware, whose license to traffic they seem to interpret into a commission to plunder, the tax upon whose licenses does not amount to a thousandth part of the injury they do in their tramping through the country, and who, indeed, you may look upon as your friends, because they tear and burn the hedges that you are employed to make and to mend. Do you give none of your money to these wretches, instead of giving it to the cooper and the brazier?

L.—(*Having had time to bethink him.*) Why, now, there, Sir; there are *potatoes* as dear as ever. A poor man cannot get a bushel under 3s.

Mr. C.—And what business has he with potatoes, then? This trash is *always* dearer than flour. Ten pounds of potatoes are equal to one pound of flour in point of nourishment, and no more. And yet you buy potatoes for *cheapness*. This is your *economy*. You give 30s. for the same quantity of nourishment that you can get for 10s. And this, too, in a smaller bulk, more cheaply prepared for the stomach, liable to no waste, convenient to carry to your work, at any moment ready to be eaten. This is your *economy*; but, I must say, that I do not so much blame you for this, when I consider how many great writers on food, and how many wise lawgivers have lent their hand in the misleading of you. This potatoe diet constitutes,

however, a component part of the tea-drinking system. Neither will permit you to sally out in the morning as soon as your eyes are open. Both demand candle-light and an hour for cookery. Both send you forth with something wet, warm, and weak in your belly, to face the cold winds and soaking rains, or the melting sun. Both bring you home at noon, through all sorts of weather and from all distances. Both leave you, if thirsty in the interval, to drink at the pump or the brook. Both tend to make you poor, weak, ill, and unhappy. Both tend to multiply your cares, to give you a brood of puny children, to lower your spirit, to impoverish your blood, and to shorten your days of labour and of life. But, I see the people are going to the Methodist Meeting, and, as I suppose you want to go too, let us come to a settlement.

L.—Your son did, indeed, Sir, make the bargain for 9d. a rod.

Mr. C.—Very well a bargain is a bargain. But, as it was an error, which, if it had made against you, I should have corrected in your favour, so ought you to correct it in my favour; and, you will perceive, that though the prices of our produce have fallen *one-half*, I have reduced your price but *one-third*.

L.—I do not know, I'm sure, Sir, how that is; I'm no scholar, worse luck's mine.

Mr. C.—Very true; but that bread and bacon, and malt are only half the price that they used to be when you had a shilling a rod? You are scholar enough for that?

L.—Your son did, indeed, Sir, say 9d. a rod.

Mr. C.—Very well, then; here, take the 1*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* I say it *ought* to be but *one pound*. You, therefore, in conscience, owe me 2*s.* 6*d.*, and when you pay it me, I will employ you again, and not before.

L.—Good morning, to you, Sir.

Mr. C.—Good morning to you.

I could not help giving you the whole of this dialogue, Sir, tea, potatoes, pedlars, and all; for they are the three scourges to England. With regard to the two former, you have no power; but you may, and I hope you will, relieve us from the latter. The hawker's and pedlar's tax yields scarcely anything. It is not enough to defray the expense of even a midling sinecure-place; and the *licenses*, which it gives to these people to protect them against the operation of the Vagrant Act produce, in all parts of the country injury immense. They invade our fields, burn our hedges, steal our roots, clover, vetches, poultry, sheep, and horses. They encamp like gipsies, who, for the greater part, have licenses too. They have houses on wheels, or horses or asses always ready to pack off. Locks, bolts, and bars may do for a *house*; but who is to lock out of a farm-yard people as cunning and as active as foxes? Fields no one can lock up; and who is to stand sentinel all night over his yard and his enclosures?—They induce servants to rob their masters; they let cattle into corn; they do all sorts of mischief; and I have known persons forbear to seek justice against them, lest they should set fire to their houses, barns, or ricks. There is something foolish, if not base in those who prefer dealing with them to dealing with settled tradespeople, who have rent and taxes to pay, and who make, in some sort, part of the same family. Nine times out of ten they cheat those who deal with them; and, though these persons have their eyes open, I do not think that either policy or morality justifies the Government in *licensing* such a nest of cheats and

thieves, and, in effect, giving them its countenance. When you catch them lurking about your premises, they are always "coming to the back door," and they have a "license." My dogs generally rush out in great haste, to ascertain this fact, which puts an end to the matter. But, even this is a plague; and why should we endure this plague? Seriously, therefore, Sir, I hope you will inquire into this evil. Ask any gentleman, who lives in the country, whether I have overcharged the picture; and, if you find that I have not, you will surely give us relief; for here you have it completely within your power to afford relief. In point of *revenue* the loss occasioned by these people must be very great. They are, for the greater part *smugglers*; for who has such frequent and fair opportunities? They traverse the kingdom in a month. They move by bye-ways. They know all the safe recesses. Lose sight of them once, and, like a hare that has got out of the sight of a greyhound, they are safe against further pursuit. The license that is granted to *one* instantly creates a *gang*. We see, very frequently, half-a-dozen big rascals prowling about with an ass or two, or with a cart and horse. Only think of the vast numbers that are thus poured out upon us. They are seen under a hedge with their kettle cooking mutton and vegetables, one, perhaps, stolen 50 miles distant, and the other 20 miles distant. Who is to pursue, who to trace, who to detect, or even suspect, a band of thieves, who start from Botley in the evening, steal a sheep 15 miles distance towards the east at midnight, and dine under a hedge by the side of a common, at another 15 miles to the north-west? Sleeping during the day, they are ready for work when night sets in. When the farmer's wife puts out her candle, the peril of her poultry begins. The farmer's time of going out and coming home is well known to them. They watch the shepherd from the fold. Who is to be a match for such bands? While it is notorious that they do infinite mischief, I cannot, for my part, discover any *possible* good that they do. Whatever they sell would be sold by settled tradesmen. The profits in trade which they make would be made by settled inhabitants. Three or four fellows following a couple or three asses laden with crockery-ware, or any other goods, *cannot* be employed profitably to the community. It is impossible; and, therefore, permit me again to express my hope, that the protection which these people receive, and, indeed, the encouragement, will be withdrawn. I do not complain on my own account. These gentry never injured me, except in the burning of a hedge once or twice, before we became acquainted. They are admirable judges of character, and smell powder further than a crow. They know every thing and every body. Know who keeps dogs, and who keeps guns. The aged, the feeble, the timid, are their prey. It is, therefore, not in my own behalf, that I appeal to you against these licensed marauders, but in behalf of the defenceless part of the cultivators of the land.

In returning from this digression to the subject of *reduction of wages*, I am sure, Sir, you will not only see the justice, but the *necessity* of my reducing the wages of my labour *one-third*, when the price of my produce is reduced *one-half*. And, I hope you will agree with me, because I cannot see how you can well differ from me as to this point, that the pay and allowances to the king, queen, princes, princesses, placemen, pensioners, clerks, police-justices, soldiers, judges, sailors, commissioners, governors, &c., &c., ought also to be reduced, at least, in all cases where they were fixed at a time of high prices, or raised expressly to meet those prices.

It is very well known, that, in consequence of the rise in prices the pay of the soldiers was nearly doubled. The pay of the judges and police-justices was raised expressly on that ground; and, on that ground were immense sums granted to the Royal Family. I could refer to Pitt's and George Rose's speeches to prove this; but, the fact is notorious. If, therefore, the *times*, as the term is, justify me, and, indeed, *compel* me, to bring my labour back to the cheap-corn price, why should not the pay and allowances above-mentioned come back to the cheap-corn price? I am aware, that this would make a devil of a stir; but, *why should it not be done?* My water-furrower demurred on account of his being *no scholar*; but, this is a pretext of which the parties above-named will not, I am sure, except the soldiers and sailors, attempt to avail themselves; though I must confess, that I have seen some persons in pretty high life nearly as dull of apprehension, upon such subjects, as this delver of the earth.

Those who are paid by the *nation*, stand with regard to the nation, in the same sort of relationship, as to their support, as my labourer does to me. In the former case, indeed, it is the real masters, who *receive* the pay. Sometimes, when a sinecure, or a pension, is about to be given to a great man, he condescends to call himself a "*public servant*." But, as the DEBT is called the *public* Debt, or the *People's Debt*, those who receive the public's money must be considered fairly as the public's servants. If the Debt be the *People's*, why should not all the rest be theirs? At any rate, it is the people who *pay*; and ought they to pay as highly now as they did in dear-corn times? They *cannot*. I know that very well. But, I am now talking of the justice and reasonableness of the thing. You will soon find that they *cannot*; but, I am endeavouring to convince you, that you ought not to attempt to make them do it.

Suppose our labourers were to attempt to *force* us to pay them dear-corn prices, would they not be very unjust and very unreasonable men? But, pat to my purpose, there has, of late, been a combination of the sailors of merchant-ships, in the North of England, the object of which combination was, to compel the owners of the ships to pay them as high wages as they have heretofore received. What was the result? Did the owners pay them the high wages? No. Troops and armed vessels and yeomanry cavalry marched and sailed against them, broke up the combination, and set the mutineers adrift to find higher wages where they could.

To be sure, it was very unjust in these seamen to endeavour to compel those who employed them to pay as high wages as before. The freight, the hire of vessels had fallen; the shipowners received less than they had before received; and how were they to pay the same sum in wages to their people that they had paid before? But, Sir (and now I touch you to the quick), if this combination of the mariners was unjust; if their object was wicked; if they deserved punishment for endeavouring to compel the shipowners to continue to pay them in dear-corn prices; what will they deserve, be they who they may, who shall endeavour to compel the public to continue to pay its servants in dear-corn prices; and, especially in cases where the pay has been augmented, expressly upon the ground of the rise that had taken place in the prices of the necessaries of life? Rents are come down nearly a half, corn the same, labour a third already. And shall the landlord, who is pulled down from 2000*l.* a-year to 1000*l.* continue to pay as highly as before, towards the support of the royal family, the soldiers, the judges, the sailors, the

police-justices, the ambassadors, the commissioners, and all the endless list of clerks, placemen, pensioners, and others paid out of the taxes? The pay, or salaries, or allowances to the royal family, the soldiers, the judges, the sailors, the police-justices, and, indeed, of most others in public pay, was fixed by *Act of Parliament*; by Act of Parliament it was augmented on the express ground of the rise in the price of the necessaries of life; and cannot it be *reduced* now by Act of Parliament? Will 'Squire Jolterhead, who approved so highly of the augmentation when his rents were doubling in amount; will he not now wish for a reduction, when he sees those rents reduced to *less* than their former single amount, and his tenants quitting his farms in spite of covenants?

To make this matter still plainer, if possible: suppose 'Squire Jolterhead to pay as much in tax as the salary of one of the Judges amounts to, or as is equal to the pay of 200 soldiers. The salary or pay, we will suppose to amount to 3000*l.* a-year. Jolterhead pays this sum cheerfully enough, in taxes, direct and indirect, while his income is 6000*l.* a-year. But, reduce his rents to 3000*l.*, and how does Jolterhead stand then? Now, this is precisely the state of the case. For, as to Jolterhead's *compelling* his tenants to pay him rent up to the old mark, that is as completely impossible, at present prices, as it is for him to coin their carcasses into sterling money. Their *leases*, if they have any, are of no use to him. Farmer Gripeum, if he *can*, will not play a losing game, with his eyes open, more than one year, or two at most. He tells Jolterhead, that he must lower his rent. The latter refuses. The former, after eighteen months of forbearance, *does not pay*. The landlord distrains; but, Gripeum takes care to empty the barns and sell off the cattle before the distress-warrant comes. The landlord takes all, or if anything be left, it is over-due to the taxing folks. Gripeum is a bankrupt. He *keeps no books*. "But he must *swear*." Yes, to be sure; and swear he will. He retires to a cottage; he jobs about, or his sons do it for him. If he had adhered to his lease, he would have been left without a morsel of bread to put in his mouth.

Now, Sir, I do not ask you whether this *will* not be the case; I do not ask you whether it *must not necessarily* be the case; but, I ask you, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, who ought to know something about the writs, processes, distresses, or whatever else you may call them, that issue from your Court to compel the payment of taxes, whether this *be not actually the case now*, in every part of the country. And, if it be so, I ask you whether it be *possible* for the landlord to pay half as much in taxes as he has hitherto been paying; and, whether it be not both just and necessary to reduce the allowances of all those, who are supported by the taxes, to the standard of the landlord's present receipts?

If we were to adopt the monstrous supposition, that you and your vigorous colleagues would persevere in demanding the present amount in taxes from the landlord, without causing the value of the paper-money to fall to its former amount, what would be the consequence even to the Exchequer? Why, you would receive all Jolterhead's income; but you would get not a brass farthing from any of those, who, in consequence of his custom, are now paying your taxes. You would have the golden eggs, but you would destroy the poor goosy, who though not at all to be pitied, has been, and is, a very useful creature to you.

Reduce the taxes, then, you *must*; or, you *must* favour us with more paper-money. I have here shown you one object of fair, just, and prac-

licable reduction. This, therefore, is *part of a real remedy*. No very great part, I allow; but a part which must strike every one at first sight. A measure dictated by the plainest reason, and reducible in its execution, to the rules of common arithmetic; as thus:

	£	s.	d.
Civil List, wheat 15s. a bushel	1,000,000	0	0
Do. Do. 7s. 6d. Do.	500,000	0	0
Judge's Salary, wheat 15s. a bushel	3,000	0	0
Do. Do. 7s. 6d. Do.	1,500	0	0
Soldier's pay, wheat 15s. a bushel	18	4	0
Do. Do. 7s. 6d. Do.	9	2	0
Police Justice's pay, wheat 15s. a bushel	600	0	0
Do. Do. 7s. 6d. Do.	300	0	0

Nothing can be more easy; and, if there be any injustice, or any impolicy, in the measure, I should be glad to see it pointed out. If it be shown to be unjust or impolitic, I shall be the first to acknowledge the error, as I always am when I commit errors.

This is something that men can understand. It is reasonable and clear. It is not a wild rant about *importations*, and *scale of prices*. It is proposing to lessen the demands upon those who are unable to pay what is now demanded of them. This, as far as it goes, is a *real remedy*, and a *simple* one too. To talk of the *good time* that the farmers and landlords *have had*, is the grossest of all follies. The time was no better for them than for all active traders; and that truth those traders have *now* discovered. But, Sir, if the farmers and landlords did thrive, is that any reason why they should be able to lose now? Did you ever know a horse, kept upon chaff, go the better for having lived the year before upon oats and beans? When farmer's carter-boys grumble at not having a hot dinner for once, the maids, giving them a souse on the side of the head, bid them live upon their loose fat. Such an answer may become well enough a great laughing, masculine wench, when addressing herself to a growling young chap as fat and as lazy as was the hog that he feeds on; but it becomes not people in decent clothes, and especially those who write, or who make speeches, when addressing themselves to classes of persons, who, with their dependents, make nine-tenths of the community, and who cannot become poor without impoverishing everybody else, except those only who live solely upon the taxes.

If the farmers did thrive; if they did ride tall, fat horses, and drink butts of port and madeira; if their wives did dress fine, and had gay carriages; if their daughters did play upon the piano, and sing, in vulgar accent, the loftiest of compositions; if they did dance at horse-race and election balls, till they reeked like their father's dunghills; if they did clasp their hands together, bend their necks, and leer up at the ceiling in reading the soft balderdash of Southey or Walter Scott; if they did curse the Jacobins by the litany of John Bowles; if they did spend their winter evenings playing at cards, or back gammon, by the light of mould candles, instead of knitting stockings and mending sacks, as formerly, by the light of a rush. If they were all thriving thus, did not others thrive too? Did not the horse-dealer, the vintner, the coach-maker, the tailor, the shoemaker, the haberdasher, the milliner, the music and dancing master, the inn-keeper, did not John Bowles and Southey, and Walter Scott thrive too? Did they not share in the benefits of all the farmer's "*good times*?" Aye, and they must all share in the evils of his bad times; and they do

most amply share in them at this moment. What! do the tradesmen and their wives think to flaunt about in their buggys, while the farmer resumes the walking-stick and woollen spatterdashes, and his wife, as formerly, brings her butter and eggs to market, with a clean apron in her basket, to be folded up again as soon as the market is over? Do the tradesmen's daughters think, that they are to continue to be *misses*, while those of the farmer are to come down to *Moll and Bess*? Do the former suppose that their pretty ankles are to be set off with silk, while those of the latter are to be wrapped round with worsted? No faith, Miss Crispin must do as her grandmother did; she must put on black stockings, pin up her gown tail, boil the pot, and, instead of having a servant to wait on her, must prepare for the service of others. *All* has been sublimated, and, if the farmers come down, *all* must come down. Aye, and John Bowles and Southey, and Walter Scott must find their level as well as the rest. The chariot-riding proprietor of the Times must return to the humble trade of his father; John Bowles must write last-dying-speeches and confessions; Southey must make and sing his own ballads, and Walter Scott write Christmas carols and new histories of the Children in the Wood.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

(*Political Register*, December, 1815.)

LETTER IV.

*Something to be done still.—Marquis of Buckingham and Mr. Benett.
—Another branch of a Real Remedy pointed out.*

Farnham, 30th Nov. 1815.

SIR,

Seeing that you must naturally be anxious to know what is the full amount of the REMEDY, which I have to propose to you for the evils, which now torment the country, which fill the jails with farmers, which keep the landlord's pockets empty, and which produce so much employment for the coroners and their juries, I should hasten to apologize to you for the lapse of two weeks in my correspondence. But, Sir, there are others, other individuals than you, and other classes than the yeomanry cavalry, who are entitled to my attention. The caunting governor of Massachusetts, who, in a speech to the legislative assembly, called the friends and restorers of Ferdinand and Louis "*the bulwark of religion*," required to be reminded of it, at a moment when the Inquisition was in activity in Spain, and when the Protestants in France were complaining of their throats being cut. Besides, these loggerheaded farmers and their landlords have no claim to any preference. Their time of suffering is come; but, let them have patience; let them wait my pleasure, as they applaudingly saw so many Jacobins wait the pleasure of those, whom, for so

many years, they, the loggerheads and their landlords, supported. These men discovered no impatience while the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act* kept so many men in jail, for so many years, without ever being brought to trial, and even without their offence being specifically made known to them. They, so far from disapproving of such measures, applauded them; they voluntarily armed themselves and came forth with prancing horses and glittering helmets to support those who adopted these measures. They said that the sufferings of the Jacobins were necessary to the safety of the nation and the upholding of the throne. Adopting, therefore, their own sentiment, I call upon them to be patient under their suffering. Let them keep the public tranquillity and prosperity of the church and the throne constantly in their eye, and, so long as these objects are secured, let them think nothing of losing their property and going to jail.

It is curious to observe what a taste for reading this race of men have, all of a sudden, acquired. While their purses were full, they contented themselves with the singing of loyal songs and getting drunk at market. They hated the Jacobins so much that they would not read a word of their writings. It is curious to see how they now come sneaking to endeavour to get a paper that is out of print in order to hear a little about these Remedies. I am sure I have not flattered them much, and that I do not mean to do; but, yet, they are become very keen readers. They honour me with a tolerably large portion of their hatred; but, they have so much at stake; they are pinched so hard; they suffer so acutely; they are so full of apprehension for the future, that they cannot refrain from asking what I now think. If there were a Gipsy, who could tell them their fortune, for two-pence and a mug of beer, as truly as I can, they would not expend a shilling or two in Registers. But, they know, that the truth is to be bought only at this shop; and, the time is now come, when men in general are sincerely disposed to get at the truth.

Since the date of my last letter to you, the Peace has been announced. But, how dull, how mournful the scene! No bonfires in the country-towns and in the villages. No illuminations, except *Ex-Officio* in London. No feasting. No roasting of whole, and almost of live, oxen, sheep, and hogs. No temples of victory in the Green Park, nor sham sea-defeats of the Americans on the Serpentine River. What can be the cause of this, Sir? Is this peace? Yes; it really is peace; but, it is peace under such dismal circumstances as to shut up the hearts of the people against every feeling of joy. The shoutings of war and of victory are over. The drunken nation has had time to take a short nap: and it is now, half-reeling, half-sober, half-sick, half-well, called upon for the reckoning. With muddy head and trembling hand, qualmish and gloomy, the animating fumes of the liquor gone, and its deleterious dregs only remaining, the late boisterous, bottle-bold nation, is sunk into that state, which, in the case of individuals, produces a resort to rope and rat's bane.

Every one you meet, no matter where, still keeps observing that "something must be done;" but, strange to say, that at the very moment that Peace is proclaiming, every one appears to hope for war! "Don't you think that there will be war?" is a question that every man puts to his neighbour. War with France; war with America; war with somebody; and, it would seem, no matter with whom, or on what ground. If this hope and expectation were confined to persons of the naval and military professions, it would be different; but they extend themselves

through the whole mass of the community. Every one wishes for and expects *war*, because he *feels*, that, as we are, in point of taxes, we cannot go on in *peace*. The landlord may *lower his rents*; but that, if general, would not produce any general good, and if partial, as it will certainly be, must do harm. I give those landlords, who have voluntarily lowered their rents, credit for *good intention*, but I do not give them much credit for wisdom. The *Remedy* must be *general*; it must be a *legal* remedy, and must apply impartially to *all* men; all rents, all debts, all dues, all obligations between man and man; or it will only tend to add to the *confusion*, which already exists, and which is every day receiving an accession of strength.

From the rumours that I have heard, I should suppose that some such remedy was in contemplation. The MARQUIS OF BUCKINGHAM, it is said, has told his tenants, that, when *Parliament meets*, some measures may be brought forward to *relieve them*. I have my information upon this head, from the Salisbury and Winchester Journal of the 13th inst. which contained the following paragraph: "It is *reported*, that the tenants of the " Marquis of Buckingham have sent in a petition, urging the necessity " of a *reduction* of their rents, on the score of the low price of produce, " to which the answer given was, that the Marquis could not, at present, " say anything to it; but that, on the Meeting of Parliament, *some measure* " *sure WOULD be brought forward*, which *might* relieve them!"

Now, Sir, whether this be authentic, or whether it be a charitable invention of the proprietor of this paper to keep up, for a little longer, the spirits of his gaping, though greedy race of readers, I shall not pretend to determine. But, upon the supposition, that the statement be correct, I have to observe on it, in the first place, that the Marquis has done very right in rejecting the petition of the tenants; for, if wheat had risen to 40s. a bushel, instead of falling to 6s., and he had "sent in a petition" to them to *augment* their rents, can there, in the whole compass of our copious language, be formed a combination of words capable of expressing the feelings of repulsion, with which they would have received such a petition? Oh! how they would have hectored, swore, and smacked their whips! How they would have sneered; what jokes they would have cracked upon their landlord! With what contumely, with what insolence, they would have loaded him! Therefore, it was acting like a wise and just man to reject their petition; but, as to the *relief*, which this paragraph holds out the hope of, and which paragraph, observe, I do not impute to the Marquis, I am afraid, that the case is not quite so clear.

You will perceive, Sir, that it is stated *positively*, that *some measures WILL be brought forward*; but, it is only added, that these measures MAY *relieve* his Lordship's tenants. If it be any little peddling thing about taking off *the tax on agricultural horses* and the *tenant's Property-tax* and the tax on his *windows and house*, and the like, you may as well keep your measures to yourself; for I can assure you, that such measures, *without fresh issues of paper-money at the same time*, will not save one single tenant from ruin. If, indeed, you were to take off, in addition to the above, all the duties of *Customs* and *Excise*, which they and their *labourers* pay; if you would let them, without tax, make their own malt, candles, and soap, or buy them untaxed; if you would let them have their salt at 2s. 6d. instead of 20s. a bushel; if you would let them have sugar at 3d. a pound instead of 1s.; if you would take off the tax from their *shoes*, the iron, the tin, the wood, the leather, the metal of all sorts, used about

their tackle, and in their houses; if you would let them have rum and brandy and hollands at 2s. 6d. instead of 25s. a gallon; if you would suffer them to marry without a stamp-duty; if you would forbear to stamp their leases, their receipts, their bills and notes; if you would suffer the legacies of the farmer to go without deduction to his relations; if you would do all this and a great deal more, if I could think of it, then, indeed, your measures not only "*might*," but would, *relieve* the Marquis's tenants, and all the classes of the community that are now in distress from what is, whimsically enough, called the *badness of the times*. But, to the mere taking off of the assessed and income taxes, far preferable would it be to make each farmer a present of one of Walter Scott's humbug ballads of the "Scottish Border." This he would fling into the fire. It would not deceive him. While the hope held out by the other would probably lead him on to utter ruin.

There is a Mr. BENETT, in Wiltshire, who, sometime ago, at a meeting at Warminster, said, that, unless something was done to *protect* the land, he would remove, with his family, to France. The land was "*protected*;" the Corn Bill was passed; and the distress has been becoming greater and greater ever since. Amongst the staring, gaping, astounded crowd of landlords and farmers, this Mr. Bennett, who now imputes a great part of the blame to the *tithes*, seems, in my mind's eye, to raise his head. Forward I thrust my arm and seize him by the ear. Come; come along out of the crowd with your book in your hand; and, while I have you by the souse, let me see whether I can drive into your head something like a correct notion of the real cause of the distress of which you complain.

As to *tithes*, they were levied upon your land, long before the land belonged to your ancestors. You bought the land, or it descended to you, legally charged with tithes. If, therefore, the tithes *do not belong to the Church*, it is very clear that they *do not belong to you*; but, if taken from the Church, must, in justice, revert to that community, in whose behalf (whether wisely or not) they were granted to the Church. Then, as to their effect upon the prosperity of one of your tenants, for instance, what difference is it to him, whether he pays 50*l.* a year more to you, under the name of *rent*, or 50*l.* to a rector or vicar, under the name of *tithe*? Besides, tithes have *always* existed. And, have there not been *good times* for farmers? If tithes make farmers poor in 1815, why not give the merit of the dear years to tithes?

No, no. This is all nonsense. Your book is the effect of anger at a diminution of income; and, not being able to discover the true cause, you have seized on the old vulgar invectives against tithes, without, however, having the courage to propose to sweep away the powerful political body who are supported by those tithes. Look *here* now! Do you see this account? Very well. Then you see that in 1812 the country had to pay about 70 millions in taxes; and *here* you see, from this account, that it has nearly the same sum to pay in 1815. Now (mind what I say, or I'll pinch your ear), you see by this price-current, that, in 1812, the good guinea in gold was worth nearly 30*s.* in the paper in which you paid your taxes; and, by this other price-current, you see, that, in 1815, the good guinea in gold is worth only about 21*s.* 8*d.* in the paper in which you pay your taxes. Consequently, as the *nominal* amount of your taxes is still *the same*, you now pay, in *reality*, nearly a third more than you did in 1812, and the Government, the placemen, the judges, the army, the navy,

the Royal Family, and the fundholders, &c., &c., receive nearly one-third more, in reality, than they received in 1812. If I were not afraid of puzzling your brains, I would go on to show you, that they receive, and that you pay, a great deal more than *a third* more than in 1812, because, by taking any given proportion of paper, or money, out of circulation, prices of commodities must be lowered, *not only* in that proportion, but also in the further proportion of the multiplied powers which that money had in its movements from hand to hand.

But, so far as the *third* goes, the matter is quite clear to you, I hope.

What nonsense is it, then, for you to rail against the tithes as the cause of the distresses of agriculture! Come, come, Mr. Benett; acknowledge your error like a candid man. Acknowledge, that it is the Government and the Bank, and not the poor Parsons, that are now working you and your tenants. If you ask me *why* the Government and the Bank thus work you; if you ask me *why* they have raised the paper-money in value so as to lower your corn in price, and, in effect, to double your taxes; if you ask me *why* they have done this, I can only say, that I am not so presumptuous as to judge of their motive, or, at least, to suppose them actuated by any evil motive; but, I can say very confidently, that, be their motive in doing it what it may, I am very glad they have done it. You, Mr. Benett, and the rest of the Wiltshire Petitioners for the Corn Bill, told the Government, that you had *cheerfully* paid all the taxes for the prosecution of the war; and, you further said, that you would *continue* cheerfully to pay those taxes, provided you were *protected* by a Corn Bill. Well, the Corn Bill was passed; you have had all the benefits of that Bill. What, then, have you, or any of you, *now* to complain of?

Thus, Sir, I dismiss, for the present, this Mr. Benett, who is, however, a subject to be returned to; for, to suffer such a low pretender to literary talent, such a retailer of vulgar pomposity, to pass unexposed, would be to despise the voice of justice. My Lord Buckingham is a person of a different stamp. He is a legislator, and, from his experience in state-affairs, his opinions are entitled to great attention and respect. Therefore, without pretending to vouch for the correctness of the statement in the Salisbury Journal; and, indeed, without attaching any weight to the assertion in that paper, I will merely suppose it possible, that the Noble Marquis did tell his tenants, that, when Parliament met, some measures would be brought forward for their relief, and then I will hazard a speculation as to the character of those measures.

That there are but two ways, in which the farmers *can* be relieved, is, I think, quite certain; namely, *lowering the value of the circulating medium*; or, *lowering the nominal amount of the taxes*; for, as to Corn Bills, they have failed. Indeed, it was always pure folly to suppose that they would not fail. To adopt either of the two modes is a work of wonderful delicacy; and yet, "*something must be done*," and that, too, I think, this very winter. The landlords will go up to town with very long faces. They have their taxes and the interest on their mortgages to pay. They have received little more than half as much as they used to receive. They will be out of humour. Your Noble Colleague, last from France, will have a very fine story to tell them; but what are fine stories to a man with an empty purse? They will be thinking much more about their rent-roll than about the catalogue of the Louvre. They will, doubtless, chuckle at the recital of the treatment of Napoleon and his friends. They

may, perhaps, forget their own cares, while hearing of the *vigorous* acts of *Louis le Desire*; but, still the rent-roll will, at last, be uppermost; and your Noble Colleague will have to apply himself, in conjunction with you and the rest of the Ministers, to the arts of quieting.

While wheat remains at the present price, the *whole of the produce of the land* will hardly pay the taxes on it, direct and indirect. For the *last year* not more, probably, than half the rents will be paid; and, for the next year, I verily believe, not a quarter part of them. At any rate, a tremendous defalcation will take place; and, it is now time to begin to think of the means of meeting the consequences of this defalcation.

There is wonderful speculation as to *what will be done*. I mean amongst the landlords and farmers; for, as to the fundholders, they say, that all is now going on right. They say, that, in lending their money to the Government to carry on the war, they, in fact, lent it to the landlords, who, if they had been just towards their country, would have paid all the expenses within the year; that, not choosing to do this, they, by Acts of Parliament, authorising loans, did, in fact, borrow the money of them, the fundholders, and that it would be little better than swindling for them now to attempt to shuffle off, by saying, that it was the *ministers* who borrowed the money, seeing that the ministers never could have got a penny without the security of an Act of Parliament; that is to say, without the express authority of the Lords and Gentlemen. Thus, say the fundholders, the landlords are become indebted to us. We have a full and clear right to as much of their incomes as shall be found necessary to pay us our interest at full; and if, unhappily for them, they should have little or nothing left for themselves, all that we can say is, that the war was not *our* concern; that they freely chose to go to war and to carry it on; that it was their titles and dignities that were in danger, and not ours; that we lent them our money at their own request and at as moderate a rate as we could afford; that we even went out of our way, sometimes, purely to oblige them; and, that, if we are obliged now to have their estates sold in order to obtain the payment of our interest; though we shall feel great pain in reducing high-blooded persons to such a state; though we shall be grieved to the heart to be compelled to have their studs and their kennels and their venerable mansions brought to the hammer, we really demand no more than our just due, and shall always be able to sleep with quiet consciences.

The landlords, on the contrary, say, that all is now wrong; that all is now out of joint; that the fundholder is receiving a much larger amount of interest than he ought in conscience to receive. They say, that, though they did authorize the raising of money, they did not do it for their own sakes alone; that the property of the fundholder was protected by the war as well as their titles and dignities; that they passed loan-bills as *representatives of the nation*, duly elected, and deriving their authority from sources of unquestionable purity; that they never meant that their estates should be subject to seizure, or distraint, on account of these loans; that those who lent their money to the ministers, lent it on the *proceeds of the taxes*, and not upon their landed estates.

"*Agreed!*" says the fundholder; and, all I demand is, *that those taxes continue to be collected!* But, if they cannot be collected without

first driving your tenants to jail, and next, bringing out Exchequer Writs against the premises, it is clear, *that your estates must, at last, be sold in order to pay those taxes.*

Of the *argument* the fundholder certainly has the best side ; but, then, the *Debtors* are the *Law-makers*. Still it is a puzzling matter ; and I much question whether your Noble Colleague, notwithstanding all his great experience, aided with the science of many high-dutch Doctors, will be able to know what to do with it. It is not a case where *vigour* alone is required ; nor is it one of those cases, where, like that of *the Union*, weighty arguments are sufficient. It is not a case of rebellion or mutiny. It is not, in short, like any case that has hitherto presented itself. It is quite a *new case*, and I shall be greatly disappointed if the treating of it does not form an epoch in the history of political medicine.

But before, long before, we come to the *Grand Remedy* in full of all demands, there are many parts, or branches, to be spoken of. I mentioned one of these in my last Letter ; and I have learnt, that the Yeomanry Cavalry relish exceedingly the proposition of lowering the salaries, pay, and allowances of the Judges, the soldiers, the Police-Justices, the Royal Family, the Ministers, &c., &c., to the standard of the price of corn. There is, however, another source, not a little copious, and which, perhaps, Lord Buckingham might have in view. I mean the *Sinecures*, not only for the *future*, but for the *past*. The Noble Marquis's Father received, for 20 years, or more, about 30,000*l.* a-year, I believe. Now, this makes a sum of 600,000*l.*, besides the interest ; a sum of great magnitude, even in a national point of view. There are many other sinecures of very large amount, and which have existed for a great number of years. I am not going to propose any thing like *legal* force as to these ; but I will not think it impossible, nor even improbable, that the sums, thus received from the public may be returned to it, in this time of general distress, by way of voluntary offering. *One* sinecure would not be much ; but, if the Ardens, the Garniers, the Seymours, the Wellesleys, the Bathursts, the Pratts, the Knoxes, the Thurlows, the Fitzroys, the Beresfords, the Kenyons, the Hutchinsons, the Laws, the Lenoxes, the Dundases, and many, many other noble personages, were to come into this scheme, it would, altogether, I assure you, make a thundering sum. I know, that I shall be told, that these noble families have richly merited all they have received, in this way as well as in all other ways and shapes. Of this fact, you will understand me, I mean to raise not the smallest doubt. But, you will excuse me, Sir, if I am of opinion, that, when the necessities of the country shall pinch very hard, the probability is, that they will, in this way, come to its aid.

This, therefore, I regard as another branch of a *real remedy*. It would be so many millions brought in *diminution of taxes*. Perhaps it might serve to do away the tax on soap and candles. This would be *real* relief to the country. The miserable expedient of *lowering rents* can answer no good purpose. What the tenant does not pay, the landlord *cannot have*. Of course *his* means are diminished ; so that what is gained on the one hand is lost on the other. And yet, the tenants cannot pay their *present* rents. At any rate, the present taxes cannot be paid.

The yeomanry cavalry, with great numbers of whom I have the happiness to be acquainted, entertain a notion, not that the funds must be *swept away*, but, *that the interest of the Debt must be lowered*. But,

the fundholders say *no*. No, no! If 'Squire Clip-acre cannot hold his estate and pay his debts and taxes, let him sell it, like an honest man, and get clear of all his plagues by the Insolvent Act. We'll warrant you, that some of us will buy it, and carry it on in his stead. "The transfer," say they, "of forty millions' worth of landed property would be wonderfully beneficial to the nation." Really, Sir, they appear to be wholly destitute of the bowels of compassion. To hear them talk, one's heart bleeds for the ancient and venerable families whom they now threaten to send to the parish. And, yet, as you well know, the fundholders really have furnished the means of carrying on this war to its present glorious end. I do not know what is to be said in answer to them. Some years ago, when I proposed the application of a *sponge*, the yeomanry cavalry were ready to knock me on the head. *Then* they wanted to borrow more money. *Then* their wheat was 20s. a bushel. But, *now*, when the war is over, *they* begin to talk of a sponge, especially as their wheat is worth only 6 or 7 shillings a bushel.

In concluding this long and desultory Letter, I will just mention to you, that I have received an humble petition from Farmers Gripeum, Graspall, Cheatum, and others, with a request that I would forward it to the Old Lady in Threadneedle-street. I shall not comply with their request; but, I will, at a convenient season, forward it to you.—I remain, in the meanwhile, your most humble and most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

(*Political Register, December, 1815.*)

LETTER V.

REDUCTION OF PROPERTY-TAX.

Botley, Dec. 6, 1815.

SIR,

That "*something must be done*" is a point, on which we are all agreed. But, in my last Letter, I ventured to assure you that no little peddling measure, such as the taking off the tenant's Property-tax, or his Assessed Taxes, or both, would answer any purpose. What was my surprise, then, when I saw in the *Courier* of yesterday, a paragraph purporting, that the assessments of the Property-tax for the present year are to be *reduced*, as a relief to the farmers! But, if you have no objection, I will, before I proceed any further, insert this paragraph in my Letter. It runs thus: "The *Lords Commissioners of the Treasury* have directed *printed instructions* to be issued from the principal office for the affairs of taxes, "to the district commissioners for the general purposes of the Property-tax Act, authorizing them under certain conditions, *to reduce the as-*

" *assessments under schedules A and B, in proportion to the reductions*
 " *bonâ fide made in the rents of the current year, in consequence of the*
 " *depreciation in the value of agricultural produce.* Special meetings
 " of the said Commissioners will be generally held in their respective
 " districts, for the purpose of carrying this measure into effect, and due
 " notice will be given on the church-doors of the days and places of such
 " meetings, as is usual respecting appeals in the affairs of taxes."

This appears to me to be a very extraordinary paragraph. In the first place, I am puzzled to know how the Lords of the Treasury came by the authority to reduce the amount of any man's taxes. I have looked into the Act of Parliament, and I can find no clause that gives them any such power. If they can reduce one man's taxes, they can, I should think, reduce another man's taxes; and if they can reduce, why should they not augment? If they can do all this, why should the Parliament meet at all? For, if taxes can be levied, or taken off, by the Lords of the Treasury, the Houses really appear to meet for very little purpose. However, this is, now-a-days, to be considered of little consequence, when compared with the *sort of reduction* that this paragraph tells us is about to take place.

The assessments are *made* for this year. We have all had notice of what we have to pay, or, rather, of the amount of what will be demanded; for, as to *paying*, that, in many cases, is wholly out of the question. The charge being made, and the bills sent in, we expected either to pay in full, or, to pay poundage, like other bankrupts. But now, it seems, some of us are to have our bills shortened, "*in consequence of the depreciation in the value of agricultural produce.*" I say, *some* of us; for, it seems, that it is only some of us, who are to be thus favoured; and that, too, that part of us, who have the least reason to receive that favour. For, it is only in cases where *rents* have been reduced this year, that the taxes are to be reduced. Can anything be more unreasonable, more unjust, than such a principle of reduction?

Let us suppose a case: Farmer Gripeum has a landlord, whose kindness exceeds his understanding, and who reduces Gripeum's rent from 200*l.* a year to 100*l.* a year. Farmer Polecat's landlord sees the matter in a different light, and though his farm is of precisely the same value as that of Gripeum, and the rent is exactly the same, he has had to pay the full 200*l.* in rent. Now, pray, Sir, upon what principle of equity is it, that Gripeum's tax is to be reduced one-half, and that poor Polecat is to experience no reduction at all? If the tax were to be reduced in cases where the rent has *not* been diminished, there would appear to be some ground for the distinction; but, as the intention is represented in this paragraph, it is absurd as well as unjust.

But, where is this thing, if once attempted; if once entered on; if once begun; where is it to *end*? How many cases of appeal and complaint must be made! How various are the cases! What a turmoil throughout the country! What confusion! Take care, Sir: you are now touching the very spinal marrow, if it be really true, that such instructions have been issued. Suppose a farmer to hold a farm upon an *old and low lease*; but that the Taxers have made him pay the same as if his lease was of late date and high, and have made him pay the landlord's also upon this additional value, it being impossible to make the landlord pay for more than the real rent? Will you not reduce *this* farmer's tax? You cannot, according to the rule laid down in the above paragraph;

but, would not this be monstrously unjust? Then again, in case of the man *who occupies his own land*. His rent cannot have been reduced, because he has no rent to pay; but has not the value of his produce sunk as well as that of the produce of the *renters*? And will you compel him to pay plump up to the old mark, though the ground of the reduction applies to him as well as to any other man? The cases are of infinite variety; and, *who* is to decide upon them? What a scene is now approaching us! Decisions necessarily at *discretion*, with all the prejudices and all the passions of men mixing themselves, and necessarily mixing themselves, in every discussion and deliberation!

Besides, if the reduction is to be confined to the tax on lands, the rents of which have been reduced, what is to be done in the case of lands where the tenants have paid *no rents*, and have been *unable to pay any*? Are these tenants, who are no longer in their farms, and have no money to pay the landlord, to pay the tax in full; or is the landlord, who has received no rent, or whose farm has been quitted from want of means in the tenant, to pay the full tax for both? Again, many farms have been without tenants the whole or the half the year, and, of course, there has been no reduction of rent. Is the landlord, who has since been in possession, to pay, in these cases, the tax in full, according to the last assessment? Is he, because he has been able to obtain *no tenant*, to pay the full amount of the tax, while those who have had tenants at a reduced rent are to pay only a part of the tax? Verily, if this be true, the end is, in good earnest, fast approaching.

But, why reduce the Property-tax on the land only? Since the assessments were made for this year, have not the people in trade suffered? Are they not to be considered? And Debts and Mortgages, are they not to be reduced? Are they to retain their nominal amount; and are placemen and pensioners and all expenses to continue at their present rate? If you begin, Sir, you cannot stop. You must go on straightforward, or all will inevitably tumble to pieces. You have now got hold of a thing that you do not know how to handle. As long as there was nothing to do but to make and issue paper, the concern throve exceedingly. Croakers talked about the ruinous Debt; but the farmers and landlords found that they had *plenty of money*, and they left the debt for posterity to pay, as they thought. They never imagined, that an attempt would be made to make *them* pay it, or any part of it. They never imagined that, while the taxes were 70 millions a year, their wheat would sell at six shillings a bushel.

The reduction of the Property-Tax, supposing it to extend to *all lands*, is nothing. It will not save one single farmer one single day from jail. It has been stated in all reports of the evidence, taken before the Houses of Parliament, that the farmer, with the present taxes, cannot *live*, if wheat be less than 80s. a quarter, barley than 40s., oats than 30s. Wheat is now at 55s., barley at 28s., oats at 24s. A quarter of each put together at the former price make 150s., and at the present price, 107s. Now, suppose a farmer to grow 100 quarters of each, he sells for 215*l.* less than a LIVING price. What, then, signifies your taking 10*l.* or 15*l.* off in the article of Property-tax? It is like throwing out a bundle of ham-mocks to lighten a sinking ship.

In the country, it is thought pretty generally, that the taxes will be paid *this year*; but, that this year will be *the last*. This is a wrong notion. The taxes will fail by degrees. Pretty fast, I allow; but all branches

will fall off in nearly the same degree, except the *pedlar's* tax; for that will increase, as it arises from licenses, which enable people to avail themselves of the privilege of sleeping under hedges. The tradespeople feel the effect of the want of money even more than the farmers. The innkeepers feel it in a very striking way. Where 20 farmers used to dine at market at the expense of 10 or 15 shillings a head, 5 do not now dine, and they not at more than 3 shillings a-head. Wine was their drink; they cracked their bottle while they sang "*God save the King*," and cursed the Jacobins. Now they rise no higher than a glass of grog; and that made, perhaps, of smuggled brandy. The market-day was, in all parts of the country, a day of gayety and of bustle in the towns. The shops were filled with customers. The villages and farm-houses sent in their money. Now, they have no money to send in. All is poverty. Nobody can either make purchases, or pay debts.

I have not time, at present, to lengthen this letter. In my next I shall enclose you the Petition, spoken of in my last, from Gripeum and others. Their case is really distressing; they urge their claims with great force; but I am convinced, that you will not be able to save them, though the goodness of your intentions cannot be doubted. They have all set their cavalry horses to plough and cart; they would, if they could, turn their swords into ploughshares. But, to bring down the dress and pretensions of their *wives and daughters*, that is the difficult matter; that is the effort, under which the greater part of them will sink, and pretty nearly as much unpitied by their neighbours as the prosecuted Jacobins were unpitied by them.

The observations made by me, in my last Letter but one, as to the justice and necessity of reducing the pay of the Royal Family, Soldiers, Judges, Sailors, Placemen, Police-Justices, &c. &c. have, I assure you, Sir, made a great impression. People, who used to call me a Jacobin, say that that proposition is perfectly fair. You will hear of it, I think, through other channels, before it be long. This will be a bustling winter with you; and I give you joy of it, with all my heart. But, whether the Landlords stir, or not, I shall be equally amused. I shall observe their movements with a watchful eye. I think I shall be tempted to go up once more and look at their faces, to see what an empty stare they will give each other; how amazed they will seem to be that their estates have slipped through their fingers; how insipid the Waterloo Story will seem to their ears; how dull of apprehension they will be on the subject of the Waterloo Column; how little they will seem to care about the stripping of the Louvre and the Museums. I think I see them now, turning their ears from all these topics, as a cat, which has been whipped for pigeon-killing, turns her head from a dead pigeon flung down before her. I will certainly ride up to see them.

In the meanwhile, hoping that you will hold them to their former professions of readiness to spend their "*last shilling*" in the cause,

I remain, Sir, your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

(Political Register, December, 1815.)

LETTER VI.

*Enclosing a Letter to the People of America, on the Present State of
the Mother Country.*

SIR,

We have been so often told from high authority, that our Government, laws, and the whole of our political and civil state, are objects of *envy* with all other nations, that there is nothing to wonder at in the fact of our believing the assertion to be true. And really, as things are at present, I do not know but the French have reason to envy us. As to the Germans, they always had reason to envy all the world, the Negroes not excepted; and the Dutch, and the Danes, and the Swedes are, perhaps, now in a situation little better. But, there is *one country*, Sir, which, if the people there envy us our lot, they must be of a very envious disposition indeed. At any rate, whether the Americans be disposed to envy us, or not, it is but right, that they should know what our situation now *really is*. They have seen us *in war*: they ought now to see us *in peace*. They ought now to be shown, in a very clear manner, what are the consequences of a twenty years war against Jacobinical principles; what are the consequences of borrowing hundreds of millions of pounds; what are the consequences of the triumph of royalty and aristocracy over democracy. They now see England triumphant in Europe. They see France at her feet. But, they ought to know *how she herself feels*. This they will never know through the corrupt channels of the London daily press; no, nor through any other channel than this. The cowed-down English press is bold only in uttering falsehoods, and those falsehoods are chiefly calculated to dupe the people at home, and to deceive foreign nations. While the hurly-burly of war was going on; while men's minds, in all countries, were agitated with alternate fear and hope, the voice of truth could seldom obtain a hearing, even in the few cases in which truth was permitted to utter a word. But now, things have changed. The passions of men have cooled. The hurly-burly no longer swallows up their attention. They either read not at all, or they read that only which has in it something that the mind can dwell on. Truth (as far as she dares go) and reason, and knowledge, have now their fair chance. This, therefore, is the season for those to labour, who wish well to the cause of truth.

In the United States of America, there is a faction, or a body of men to whom I wish to give no ill name, nor ascribe any bad motive, who are continually holding up the English Government as worthy of imitation. These men do not, perhaps *think* much about the matter; but, they have *taken their side*; and, be it Pitt, Addington, Perceval, Castlereagh, no matter who, they are for the English Government. The triumphs over

France, though procured in the way that we have seen, are ascribed to the wisdom of this Government. What the conduct of this Government *really has been abroad and at home*, including Ireland; to express this *plainly*, and *without any disguise or shuffle*; to describe all the *real motives* of this Government, all the *characters of the principal actors*; to speak of all these *in print* as two of us *speak of them to each other by the fire-side*. *This! oh! dear Sir! this, this*, is the thing to be done! To be able to do this; to have a fair prospect of doing this; to expect confidently to see the day, when, upon this all-interesting subject, TRUTH will step fearlessly forth and challenge the champions of corruption, is ample repayment for twenty imprisonments and twenty fines.

In the meanwhile, however, let us put, or endeavour to put, these Americans right as to the consequences of the late war *upon us*; for, unless they are informed of these consequences, they may imagine that to create a debt of a thousand millions sterling for the purpose of carrying on a war of 22 years is a desirable thing. And, it is the more necessary to give them this information, as, from reading our periodical works, most of which are as cowardly and corrupt as need be, they will naturally suppose that *prosperity* and happiness reign in every house in this kingdom.

Therefore, Sir, you will greatly oblige me, if you will have the goodness to send the enclosed letter, under your frank, to some one of your Agents, or Consuls, in order that it may be published in the United States, where I am certain it will produce a very salutary effect.

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

On the Present Internal Situation of England, as far as regards Finance.

It is natural for everybody to wish to hear of their relations, and, therefore, I presume, that it will not be disagreeable to you to hear of the Mother Country, who, though you have had some pretty serious quarrels with her, has such an affection for you, at the bottom, that I verily believe, that she would, even now, forget all the past, if you were to express the smallest desire to throw yourselves into her maternal arms. At any rate, indifferent as you may feel towards England in the light of a relation or parent, you must wish to know how she is, as a nation, at the end of 22 years of war, and under a Debt of about a thousand millions sterling.

You have seen her, by one means or another, succeed in the subjugation of France. You have seen all Europe acting at her nod. The little check she received in her short war against you, Europe has almost forgotten already. And, if she could now go on with prosperity in peace, her example would stand on high, and call for the imitation of all the nations of the earth; that is to say, the example of a nation, that, in order to succeed in war, mortgages every inch of land, every stick and stone, in her dominions.

For many years the partisans of war have been triumphing in what they called the falsified predictions of their opponents, who foretold bankruptcy and utter confusion from the enormous amount of the Debt. The former held up the increasing new enclosures of land; the increase of new roads, canals and bridges; and the increasing high-living of the

rich, together with that of all the signs of wealth : these they held up to us as so many proofs of the benefits of war, debt, and taxation. And, indeed, after the stoppage of cash payments at the Bank of England in 1797, which produced very little injury at first, and, in the end, great benefit to the war and paper system, the opponents of that system had very little to say. There then became *no bounds* to the means of the Government, which, from that moment, obtained an effectual hold on the whole of the money's worth things in the whole country.

But, still this could not go on for ever. It was clear, that, sooner or later, these issues of paper-money must, if continued without interruption, produce what all such issues, in all countries, have, at last, produced ; namely, the total blowing up of the whole system, and, perhaps, of the Government along with it. Yet, to attempt to *lessen* the quantity of paper-money, it was easy to foresee, would be attended with effects nearly as serious. Effects, indeed, of the same sort, though differing so widely in their *immediate* cause.

An attempt of this description *has now been made*. But, before I speak to you of this attempt, and of its *consequences*, which have plunged this whole country into financial confusion, let me beg your attention to a passage in my work, now republished, and entitled, " PAPER AGAINST GOLD."

Of this work, as being, at this time of great interest, at least, in my opinion, I have ordered some hundreds of copies to be sent to Mr. JOHN MORGAN, of PHILADELPHIA, while the remainder of the edition are for sale by Mr. BAGSHAW, of Brydges-street, Covent-garden, London. If this be deemed a *Puff*, it is, at any rate, without disguise. I wish this work, the greater part of which was written in the years 1810 and 1811, NOW to be read *attentively through* ; now, when the people *feel the pinch*. In this work I have given the history of the rise and progress of our paper-money. I have embodied in it my principles on the subject of national debts, taxes, and bank-notes. I was abused and scoffed at. I have now republished, in two Volumes, what I then wrote, together with some additions. And, if I have any reputation in England, or in America, as a political economist, by *that work*, as verified, or as falsified, by events, let that reputation be tried, and let it be fairly confirmed, or let it be blasted for ever. Whatever calumniators may affect to think of my motives, whatever degree of contempt, hatred, and envy they may have affected, and may still affect to entertain for my writings, it is notorious, that, for nearly twenty years, without any aid from any quarter whatever, with hosts of literary foes in both countries, with all the weight of power and even of the popular torrent against them in both countries, and loaded with all the odium which never fails to attach to that which assails all sorts of follies and vices, and never flatters anybody ; it is notorious, that, in spite of all these disadvantages, and a hundred others that might be named, these writings have continued to have, for nearly twenty years, during which, more than twenty professed, and hired, and paid opponents have sunk into utter oblivion, great influence on the minds of men. Now, with all the value that I attach (and it far exceeds every other thing of value) to intellectual powers, I here renounce all pretensions to any, and will be content to pass for a driveller for the rest of my life, if events do not substantially confirm the doctrine of " PAPER AGAINST GOLD."

As a necessary preliminary to a description of the present state of this

country, you, in America, ought to be reminded, that "*Paper against Gold*" was called forth by a Report, made to the House of Commons, in 1810, by a Committee, called the *Bullion Committee*. This Committee recommended, that the Bank of England, at the end of a certain period, should be compelled to pay in *real money*. The House rejected this proposition, at last. The whole history of the proceedings is contained in my work; but this was the main point. I contended, that *the Bank never could pay in gold, as long as the interest on the National Debt continued to be paid in full.*

Now, observe, *Peace* being come; no pretext being left for *not* paying in gold; the *law*, which authorizes the Bank to refuse payment in gold being about to *expire*; a *renewal* of it being necessary, unless gold payments can be made. This being the state of things, as to the Bank, an attempt appears to be making to acquire the ability of paying in gold. I contended, you will bear in mind, that this could not be done; and now I will quote my own words, from the first Volume of "*Paper against Gold*," pages 446, 447, and 448.

"Need I say any more upon this subject? Is it not something monstrous to suppose, that it would be possible for the Bank Company to *buy* gold in quantity sufficient to be able to pay their notes in it? 'Well,' say others, 'but the Bank Company may *lessen the quantity of its paper by narrowing its discounts.*' To be sure they might; and the only consequence of that would be, that *the taxes would not be paid*, and, of course, that the soldiers, the judges, and all the other persons paid by the public, would have to go without pay. The *discounts* make a part of the system; and, if it be put a stop to, that is neither more nor less than one of the ways of totally destroying the system. To *lessen the quantity of the paper* is, therefore, impossible, *without producing ruin amongst all persons in trade, and without disabling the country to pay the taxes, at their present nominal amount.*

"But, suppose all other difficulties were got over, did these gentlemen of the Bullion Committee ever reflect upon the consequences of *raising* the value of money to what it was before the Bank Stoppage? SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, in his speech, during the Bullion Debate, told them of these consequences. He observed, and very justly, that, if money were, by any means, to be restored to the value it bore in the year 1796, the interest of the National Debt never could be paid by the people; that interest, he observed, was now 35,000,000*l.* a year; and, if the value of money was brought back to the standard of 1796, this interest would instantly swell to 43,000,000*l.* of money at the present value. All the grants, pensions, fixed emoluments, pay of soldiers, judges, chancellors, clerks, commissioners, and the rest would be raised, in point of real amount, in the same proportion; so that, it would be utterly impossible for taxes to such an amount to be raised. And, if it were possible, it would be frequently unjust; for, observe, all the money (making nearly one-half of the National Debt), that has been borrowed since the Bank Company stopped paying in gold and silver; all the money borrowed since that time; all the loans made in the name of the public since that time, all the money thus lent to the public, as it is called, has been lent in *depreciated paper*; and, that which has been so lent this year has, if guineas are at 27 shillings, been lent in paper, 27 *shillings* of which are worth no more than a guinea. And, are the people to be called upon to pay interest upon this money in a currency of which 21 *shillings* are worth a guinea? This would be so abominably unjust, that I wonder how any man like Mr. HONORABLE ever came to think of it. He expressly stated, that the paper was now worth only 15*s.* 10*d.* in the pound; of course he must have known, that this was the sort of thing of which the loans, for some years past, consisted; and yet, he would have had a law passed, the effect of which would have been to make the people pay interest for this money at the rate of twenty *shillings in the pound*. This is what never could have been submitted to: not because the people would have *resisted*; that is not what I mean; but it is what could not have been carried into effect, and for the same reason that the man could not have two skins from the carcase of the same cat. If the quan-

"tity of the Bank paper were diminished, *its value would rise*; and, if its value rose, the value of the interest upon the National Debt would rise also; therefore, to enable the people to continue to pay the interest upon the Debt, the amount of the interest must be *lessened*, and what would that be but a *partial sponge*? So that, turn and twist the thing, whatever way you will, you still find it the same; you still find, that the system must go on in all its parts, or be put a stop to altogether."

Now we come to the illustration of these doctrines by what is actually passing in England, where all is convulsed as far as money is concerned. The paper-money has been greatly diminished in quantity. The guinea, which, at one time, was sold for nearly, or quite, 30s, is now worth only 21s. 8d. The paper is nearly as good as the gold. The value of the paper is *raised*; and, now, mind, I say, that, if the paper keep at its present value, or anything near it, for two years from this day, and if the sums raised on account of the National Debt continue, during that time, to be what they are now, I will be content to pass, for the rest of my life, for that most degraded of human characters, *an idiot*.

The consequence of this rise in the value of the paper-money has been a fall of *more than a half* in the price of *grain* of all sorts, and of nearly a half in that of all other agricultural produce. The farmers and the landlords have been strangely puzzled to know the cause of this fall. As it took place, or began to take place, about the time of the *Peace* of 1814, they ascribed it to *the importations from France*. These, doubtless, had some effect; but, they were wholly inadequate to the effect really produced. The landlords, alarmed for their rents, called for a Corn Bill; that is to say, a law to prevent the importation of corn, when wheat was under 10s. a bushel. This law, after a great deal of noise and nonsense, was passed; and the price of wheat has been *falling ever since*, till, at last, it is come to about an average of 6s. a bushel, all other grain being lowered in price in the same proportion, and cattle and produce of all sorts keeping pretty nearly even pace with them.

Now, figure to yourself Farmer JOGTRROT, whose share of the expenses of the National Debt is 30*l.* a year. In order to pay this to the Tax-gatherer, he used to sell *forty bushels* of wheat, the average price being, for many years, about 15s. a bushel. But now he is obliged to sell a *hundred bushels* of wheat in order to get money enough to pay his share of the expenses of the Debt. *How long* do you think he can endure this? And, you will observe, that his *rent*, and all the *direct taxes* to pay the expenses of Royal family, judges, soldiers, sailors, &c., continue the same in nominal amount as they were previous to the fall in the price of his produce.

In some cases the landlords have *lowered their rents*. But though this be a little, and a very little, relief to the farmer, the income of the landlord is diminished in whatever proportion he has lowered his rents; and, in that same proportion are diminished *his* means of paying taxes. The farmers and landlords consume less of taxed articles; they thus endeavour to defend themselves against the *indirect taxes*; but, as everything that they can buy is taxed, the tradespeople suffer here along with the revenue. Thus everything, labour and all, is become "*cheaper*," as they call it; and every one is in a state of decay, except the Placeman, the Pensioner, the Soldier, the Sailor, and the Fundholder.

Never, in the history of the world, was so great a change produced, in so short a time, in any community. Paper-money is like drams, or opium. It produces an exhilaration that is quite wonderful; but, the depression

that follows is not less striking. It animates and sets in motion every fibre in the frame of society; but it leaves behind it a morbid melancholy, a listlessness approaching the inactivity of death. In a *caricature*, published some years ago, *John Bull*, in the shape of an animal corresponding with the name, was represented as loaded with taxes from his horns to his tail, and *Pitt* as feeding him with *one-pound notes*. Never was anything more apt. As long as this feeding was liberally kept up, John went on, under every addition to his load; but, now that the feeding has been curtailed, he begins to stumble.

The whole of society here has been puffed up by the abundance of paper-money. I will give you an instance. Thirty or forty years ago, and, perhaps, twenty-five years ago, the farmers, who used to attend the market at Farnham, the town where I was born, used to walk to the market, or ride a tame old horse, to sell their corn. When they had done this in the market-place, they used to return to the place where their horses were put up, and there drink a pint of beer, price 2d., and perhaps add 2d. worth of bread and cheese, or get a dinner for 6d. or 8d. and then go home. The greater part of them were dressed in smock-frocks, or very plain and coarse coats. How surprised was I, when, happening to be at the head Inn in the town, on my way to London, about 15 years ago, and hearing a roaring of "*threc times three*," and a thumping of tables and rattling of glasses and bottles, I learnt upon inquiry, that it was *the farmers after their market-dinner*! But, not much more surprised, than I was *the week before last*, when, happening to stop at the same Inn a whole day to write my Register, I found, though it was a market-day, everything as quiet as a Quaker Meeting. The retrograde movement has been more rapid than the advance. Nothing short of *wine* has of late years been drunk at these market-dinners. That beverage has, in a twinkling, wholly disappeared. The far greater part of the farmers now go home without dining at all. At the sign of the *GEORGE*, at Winchester, the waiter told me, last week, that the farmers used to spend from *ten to twelve* pounds of a market-day, and that now they do not spend more than a pound or thirty shillings. Thus, here is at this Inn alone, a diminution of receipts, from the farmers only of more than 500*l.* a year. Judge you, then, if our Ministers cannot, of the effect of this upon rents and taxes. However, they will very soon be fully able to form a correct judgment on the whole matter, though I am by no means certain that they will be able to apply the suitable remedy.

An artificial currency is a most dangerous medicine for a disordered state; and I say this with a pretty full knowledge of the free use that you are making of the same drug. It gives to society a false glare; it introduces speculation; it creates sudden fortunes; it substitutes trick and luck for industry and talent; it builds palaces with one hand, and fills jails and poor-houses with the other.

When I saw the plain-dressed and industrious farmers of Pennsylvania, it seemed to me that I was still amongst those of England, the former being, I confess, rather more hospitable and better informed; the natural consequences of their easy circumstances and of the universal fashion to *read* which prevails in America. But, the English farmer has, of late years, become a totally different character. A fox-hunting horse; polished boots; a spanking trot to market; a "Get out of the way, or by G—d I'll ride over you," to every poor devil upon the road; wine at his dinner; a carpet on his floor; a bell in his parlour; a servant (and sometimes in

livery) to wait at his table; a painted lady for a wife; novel-reading daughters; sons aping the young 'squires and lords; a house crammed up with sofas, pianos, and all sorts of fooleries.

Another consequence of this change has been a great diminution of the *number of farms*. Three or four, and sometimes ten, have been thrown into one. The little farmers have almost all disappeared from out of that class, and have sunk into the class of labourers. Hence the present depression is the more severely felt. So great a portion of loss now falls upon one man, that the whole race stagger under it. You will easily judge of the degree in which this class of men have been elevated, when I tell you that Mr. ARTHUR YOUNG, whose hardihood, as a writer is equal to his talents, insists on it, that even the farmer's *bailliff* ought to have a *bottle of good port* every day with his dinner; which alone, you will bear in mind, would cost the farmer 365 dollars a year.

This work of sublimating farmers out of their senses has been promoted by the nobility and gentlemen of great estates, who have, by the means of agricultural societies, cattle-shows, and the like, given every encouragement to this class of men to become conceited and presumptuous. The *King*, too, must have a *farm*. It was "*Farmer George!*" What a "thinking people" your kinsmen on this side of the water are! Between the commercial people on one side and the farmers on the other, the far greater part of the country gentlemen in England have been fairly squeezed out of existence. The three great estates near the place where I was born were the BISHOP OF WINCHESTER's castle; MOOR PARK, occupied by the descendants of Sir William Temple, where Dean Swift relates that he used to run up the steep hill; and WAVERLY ABBEY, which belonged to Sir Robert Rich. When I returned to England I found Moor Park in the hands of *Mr. Timson*, and Waverly Abbey in those of *Mr. Tomson*, the one a dealer in *Spirits* and the other a dealer in *Wine*. The Bishop stands his ground yet; and his old castle-walls, and his lofty elm-trees. And, really, it was a consolation to me to find *something* as I left it.

I should not mind this sweeping away of the little old aristocracy, if a worse had not come in its place. Nor should I so much mind the elevation of men in trade, who, in general, have had some opportunities of seeing the world, and are, from long habit polite and liberal. But, the *farming aristocracy* is the object of my abhorrence. Here you have all the meanness of the crouching tenant coupled with the arrogance of birth; all the insolence of wealth unchecked by any of those sentiments of honour, which are seldom wholly wanting in men of birth and education. This was the class of men, who, more than any other, and more than all others put together, were the cause of the long and bloody war which has just been brought to a close, and whom Major Cartwright always called the "*Body-Guard of the Borough-mongers.*" Amongst all other classes of men there have, at times, appeared something like liberality, something like feeling; but, amongst these men never.

Notwithstanding all this, however, they will not sink *alone*; they will press down some classes under them, and pull down others. If they return to their former simple state, all the middle class must come down too. If they cease drinking wine, using carpets and sofas, riding fine horses, using coaches, dressing their wives and daughters in silks, and sending their sons to boarding-schools, tradesmen and their families must come down too. Whether the whole of society will undergo a revolution I know not; but, this I do know, that the *whole* must undergo such a revo-

lution, or it must all resume its state, and go on as before, as long as it can.

To return now to the question of *finance*, you must clearly perceive, I think, that it is impossible for the Government to collect the former amount of taxes in this new state of things; and, that, in fact, to lessen the quantity of the currency one-half, is *to double the amount of the tax*. The Government appears to perceive, that it cannot enforce the collection of the direct taxes up to the old standard; but, the direct taxes make a comparatively small part of the revenue. It is the *Excise, Customs, and Stamps*; and, in these no deductions by *authority* will be wanted. The people will themselves make the deduction. They *must* make the deduction; for they will not have the money to lay out. If the farmers, for instance, have left off drinking wine at market, will they not leave it off at home, where they can do it snugly without being perceived by any one? Will not their wives and daughters use less sugar and tea and coffee? Will they not be more sparing of paint, perfumes, and slops? Will not less soap and candles and salt be used? Less spirits? Aye, and less beer and ale too. Will not fewer people pay for marriage-licenses? Yes, and fewer people will marry. Will not fewer stamps be wanted, and of less amount? The lawyers already find their briefs fall off; for law is a luxury that few men can afford to enjoy, even when money is plenty. An empty pocket is a great promoter of forbearance, and the finest check in the world to a litigious disposition. The *advertisements* (on which there is a heavy tax) have fallen off a third in number. The newspapers and the almanacs have prodigiously decreased in sale. Books are not printed to more than three-fourths of even the last year's amount. Paper of all sorts; and, in short, every taxed article, be it what it may, has undergone a diminution in consumption.

I need not say that this will be, or has been, the case; for it is manifest, that it must be the case. If there be only half as much money in circulation as there was before, only half as much can be laid out; and if there were twice as much, twice as much would be laid out; for, *the whole* of a people can never hoard a farthing. What one saves, he lends to another to spend, and thus the whole is always kept in circulation. Now and then an old man, or a monkey, or a jackdaw, takes a piece of money and pokes it into a hole; but these are instances not worthy to be deemed an exception.

It will be said, that, if the Government receive only half as much tax, in *nominal* amount, as it did before, it will, in *reality*, receive the same sum that it did before, seeing that the price of every thing has fallen one-half, so that, at last, the Government will be as rich and able as if no diminution had taken place. This would be true if the Government had no *annuitants* to pay, and no *fixed* salaries and allowances to discharge. But, as it happens, the contrary is the case. The expenditure consists of fixed salaries and annuities. These must be paid up to their full amount; or, *a law must be passed to lower them*. To pay them up to their full amount, for two years, while the guinea is worth no more than its present price, I say is impossible; and, to pass a law to *lower the interest of the annuities* is the *grand conclusion* of the drama.

Which, then, do you choose, Sirs of the Funds, a fresh and most copious issue of paper, that will bring up the wheat to 15s. a bushel; or, an abatement of your interest? I am aware, that by the means of *arrears*, you may get through the present season. Besides, men have not, all at

once, exhausted their capital. They keep up a little while after their legitimate means are gone. But, it is next season, that they must come to book. You have your choice, then, and I would advise you to apply for a re-opening of the flood-gates of paper-money. Your annuities will fall in value as much, perhaps, as they would by a lowering of the rate of interest; but, the thing will not *seem* to be what it really will be; and, besides, if an openly avowed lowering once take place, recollect the powerful effect of *precedent*!

The necessity of lowering the rate of the interest on the Debt is generally talked of in the country. I have heard of it for months past. But, it is not so easy a matter as people seem to imagine; for, though it might answer the purpose as to the *public* debt, it would leave *private* debts as they were before, which would create universal confusion. No: if this course be taken, it must go into all the engagements between man and man. *Leases*, for instance, must be submitted to revision, and must undergo a reduction. *Marriage Settlements* must be revised; for, if the value of money has risen since a settlement of this sort was made, is the party who has to pay, still to be bound by the letter of the covenant? If a settlement were made, five years ago, to pay a widow ten thousand pounds out of the proceeds of an estate, then worth twenty thousand pounds, and the estate were to be sold next year, and sell for only that ten thousand pounds, ought she to have it all, and leave the children beggars?

These are only specimens. They are two amongst a hundred cases, in which this course of lowering of interest present difficulties. And, then, again as to the Fundholders themselves, besides the most tremendously dangerous precedent of lowering the rate of interest, their cases are of endless variety. Some of them lent their money at a time when the guinea was worth no more than 21s.; others when it was worth more than 29s. The lowering of the interest of all alike would be manifestly unjust.

I am aware, that to make fresh and copious issues of paper would also operate partially; but, this appears to be the least evil of the two; or, at any rate, the least *immediate* evil. There is a talk of establishing throughout the country branches of the Bank of England; but this is nothing without fresh and copious issues of paper-money. Such issues would soon set all to rights again: we should again mount on paper-wings and look down with scorn and contempt upon the world beneath.

Thus have I endeavoured to give you, the people of America, some idea of the operations of this *grand machine*, which has worked such wonders in the world; which, by the means of a printing-press, a ton or two of rags every year, and an engraver's tool, has done more than all the powder, ball, cannon, swords, and muskets that Europe contains, or ever did contain. Let me advise *you*, however, to be cautious of attempting imitation. I am aware, that, if there be a nation, resolved to make use of such a machine, other nations must use it too, or fall at her feet. But, it is a machine not to be resorted to, except in cases of the last necessity; and then it should always be knocked to pieces before it has destroyed those by whom it has been employed. *Yours* is, as yet, a poor, little, weak, ricketty thing, that might be demolished, and forgotten in a year; but, if you, instead of destroying it, go on adding to its size and strength, it will at last overpower you, and bury in one common grave, your union, your morals, and your liberties.

If you ask me what the *press* is about in the midst of this scene, I have only to refer you to my former descriptions of that press. The London press, or, at least all that part of it, which is much in vogue, is so corrupt, so venal, so much a concern of mere bargain and sale, that nothing passes through it, which can lead any man, not upon the spot, to form even a guess at the real state of the country. There are numerous country newspapers, and some of these have very wide circulation. But, such masses of nonsense as they put forth, you can form no idea of. These are, if possible, more venal than the papers in London. They are, as I once before observed, the gutters flowing from the great common sewer of filth in London.

As a specimen of the means of delusion, which they practise, take the following from the "*Western Luminary*," published at Exeter: "The "*NATIONAL DEBT* now amounts to 814,386,900/. The *well-balanced* "*mind* will never contemplate this burden, but in due connection with "*its great equivalents*; the *independence it has secured*, the vast "*accumulation of honours*, and the national pre-eminence it has purchased. The power of the Sinking Fund, which is now 14 millions "*per annum*, is equal, at 5 per cent. compound interest, to the paying "*off this debt*, in 27 years."

This "*Luminary*" sets out with a falsehood. The Debt is, in fact, more than a thousand millions, including the outstanding part, and exclusive of that of Ireland. Then come the "*equivalents*;" and, what are these? "The *independence it has secured*." What does this mean? Was not England as independent before the Family of Hanover came here as she is now? One would almost suppose, that the writer meant *your* independence; for *that* this Debt has certainly secured.

But, "the vast accumulation of *honours* and *national pre-eminence* it has *purchased*." So, then, our honours have been *purchased*, according to this? What we have accomplished, this writer confesses, has been accomplished by *money*, a point which I am by no means disposed to dispute with him; but, then, who will envy us such *honours*? There has, however, occurred one case, in which this powerful agent was able to obtain us no honour; I mean the case of America, who has defeated our ships of equal force, who has, with *inferior* force, defeated and captured whole squadrons of our navy; and who, at the very moment that she was driving our invading army, with tremendous slaughter, back to the sea, signed a peace with us, in which we wholly abandoned terms, which we had before declared to be terms which we would never abandon. And this she did, too, while we were at peace with all the world besides. This was the close of a war, in which she was engaged against us *single-handed*. But, this part of the history of the 22 years, the Exeter writer, Mr. FLINDELL, seems wholly to have forgotten. He can see "a *vast accumulation of honours*" in the crushing of France by the means of more than a million of *foreigners* in the *pay* of England, aided by the King and his party in France; but, he can see no loss of honours in the having been really discomfited in a single-handed war against America. Thus it is that delusion is kept up by the means of these prints, while, you will observe, no man *dares* answer in the manner in which they ought to be answered.

You would certainly not believe, if you did not see it, that any man in England would have the impudence, at this day, to talk seriously about *paying off* the National Debt. This writer quite coolly tells us, that the

Debt may be paid off in 27 years! GEORGE ROSE told the "thinking people" the same story twenty years ago; and I do not know, that the Exeter printer is not now as much believed as ROSE was then. "But, what signifies the Debt," say some of these writers: "We owe it all to ourselves." In this way the apprehensions of the people have, for years, been *hushed*. But, from the account which I have given you above of the state of the country, you will clearly perceive, that it *does* signify something, and a good deal too. You will perceive, that this Debt and its companion, Paper-money, are actually taking away one man's property and giving it to another man. You will perceive, that a system of Paper-money, emanating from a government, or, at all dependent on, or connected with, a government, if that system be carried to such a length as to supersede the use of real money, does, in fact, place every man's property in the hands of that system; and, you will perceive, that this may happen, too, as it has here, without any *design* on the part of either Governments or banks. And, if you do perceive this, let the example be a warning to you.

In this country, exclusive of Ireland, there are about a *thousand Country Banks*, which all issue notes of their own. Till of late, the holder of *these* could demand payment in real money, though he could not demand it of the Bank of England. In 1811 or 1812, a law was passed to enable the Country Banks to refuse payment in real money, and to tender payment in Bank of England Notes. It was about this time, that the system appears to have received that serious blow, which has finally led to the present state of things.

It is quite clear, that the Country Banks, to be able to pour out their paper freely, must have a prop, direct or indirect, from the Bank of England, in whose Notes their own are payable. And, it is equally clear, that, in proportion as this prop is strong or weak, the Country Banks will enlarge, or narrow, their issues. From what motive, or in what way, these props have been weakened I know not: but, it is very certain, that the issues of the Country Banks have been diminished in an astonishing degree. Thus, the quantity of the circulating medium having been diminished, *prices have fallen of course*; and, having fallen one-half, the taxes, though still the same in *nominal* amount, have, in *effect*, been *doubled*, and the Judge, or Placeman, or Soldier, who, three or four years ago, had a salary of a certain amount, now does, in reality, receive the double of that amount.

I will run the risk of wearying you with repetition rather than leave any part of the subject imperfectly explained, as far as my power of explaining goes. And therefore, I will again call your attention to the manner in which this revolution in property is effected by the means of a paper-money system. Suppose a community to consist of three men, who buy of and sell to each other all the articles that they severally stand in need of; and, suppose the whole quantity of money possessed by the three to be 100 shillings. By some accident, no matter what, all at once another hundred shillings are put into their hands. It is manifest, that, as the *number of purchases* and the *quantity of articles* would continue the same, the *price of each must be doubled*; seeing, that all the 200 shillings would now be used instead of the 100 shillings; for, as was observed before, *the whole of a community never can hoard*. Take the converse of this. Reduce the 100 shillings to 50; and, the consequence is, the price of every article is reduced one-half. Neither of these

changes would produce any distress, or inconvenience, in this little community, provided that no one of the three were in *debt* to either of the other, and provided, that in the addition and diminution of the number of shillings, each fared like his neighbour. But, supposing them to be A, B, and C, and that, in the former case, at the time when the additional quantity of shillings came, A owed B 20 shillings, would he not pay him that 20 and keep another 20 to himself that he ought to pay him? Would not B lose, in fact, one-half of the debt due to him? And in the other case, suppose, at the moment of the reduction of the number of shillings to 50, A and B owe C each of them 20 shillings, and he demands payment, are they not both bankrupts, having, instead of 33s. 4d. each, only 13s. 4d. each?

This last is our case now. The owners of the Funds, the Royal Family, the Army, the Judges, the Police-Justices, the Navy, all the Placemen, Pensioners, all the Commissioners, Taxing-Officers, Clerks, &c., have a demand upon the people at large for a certain fixed sum annually; call it 70 millions. But, no matter what it is: it is a *fixed sum*. If one half of the money, no matter by what means, is taken out of circulation, is it not clear, that the people at large are reduced to the situation of A and B in the case last supposed as above? The case of a whole people is, indeed, a little more complicated; but, in the principle and in the effect, it is precisely the same.

As far as *the direct taxes go*, and for the present year, all is perfectly simple. It is manifest, that A and B, who are the people at large, pay the double of what they paid before. But this cannot be the case *long*. For instance, as to the Property-tax; A pays, as landlord, 10*l.* upon a rent of 100*l.* But, his tenant cannot, or will not, in future, pay him more than 50*l.*: and, perhaps, not more than 30*l.* Consequently, A will pay to the Government only 3*l.* where he paid 10*l.* before. Thus, from 15 millions a-year, the Property-tax would fall to about 5 millions. In the Assessed Taxes, that is the taxes upon horses, windows, carriages, houses, dogs, servants, &c., a proportionate reduction will, of necessity, take place. The income being reduced one-half, or two-thirds, so must the expenditure. The *stamps*, a monstrous item of taxation, consists of payments, in great part, *according to the value* of the thing sold, transferred, mortgaged, lent, bequeathed, leased, &c. Now, if an estate will sell for only half as much as it did before, or mortgage for only half as much as it did before, is it not clear, that the stamp-duty must fall off one-half in its amount? The goods sold at auction will, of course, keep pace in price with other things; and will not the auction-duty fall off in the same proportion? Of all taxed articles, and exactly in proportion to the weight of the tax, less will be used in proportion to the diminution in the quantity of money. Of *wine*, for instance, more than half the amount of which is *tax*, not a fifth part of the quantity will, probably, be consumed.

This is so clear to me that I am surprised, that the Fundholders should not be amongst the foremost to wish for new and copious issues of paper. They are afraid, and not without reason, that the issues of paper-money would, in a short time, reduce, in fact, their dividends to one-half, or less, of their nominal value. But, if, on the other hand, taxes cannot be collected to pay them more than one-half, or less than one-half, of the nominal amount of their dividends, is not this way of losing the most dangerous of the two? I think it is; because, as I before observed, if once a re-

duction of the interest expressly begins, no man can tell, or surmise where it will stop.

The present winter will, I think, bring forth most useful information for the world. I think, that it will decide the question, whether it be possible for a nation, with safety to itself, and without the risk of general confusion, to go on heaping debt upon debt to the amount of a thousand millions sterling. It is certain, that, as an individual, so long as he can borrow as much money as he pleases, he will be able to do, as to trade, commerce, or agriculture, almost whatsoever he pleases; so it is certain that a Government, as long as it can borrow in the same way, will be able, in the affairs of nations, to do almost what it pleases, especially when it has to cope with Governments that cannot borrow. But, it is pretty evident, that, as in the case of the individual, so in the case of the Government, when the source of borrowing, or the capacity of paying interest stops, it must be in a worse state, than if it had never been able to borrow.

Sir JOHN SINCLAIR, in a pamphlet, published in 1810, says, in opposing the propositions of the Bullion Committee, that "the *abundance of circulation*" (speaking of bank-notes not convertible into gold and silver) "is the great source of our *opulence and strength*, and a *mine of national prosperity*." What is become of this "*mine*" now? To be sure, *as long as it will last*, the abundance of paper-money is equal to a mine of gold; but, a mine of gold would produce ruin, if a man were to contract debts upon a scale calculated on its duration for ages, and if the mine were suddenly to give out in his life-time. Such men as Sir JOHN SINCLAIR seem to have proceeded upon the position, that there was never to be an *end* of, nor any check to, the issues of paper-money. I should like to hear what the Baronet says *now*. But the truth is, that all the Defenders of the paper-system, so bold in 1810, now stand aghast. A state of things has arisen, which they never contemplated; of which they never had the most distant idea. The land, from which all real prosperity must proceed, now feels a most dreadful pressure. The palsy, which has seized it first, is fast creeping over every class in the community. All is becoming stagnant. The means of paying taxes are, in every quarter, daily and hourly and rapidly diminishing, while the wants of the Government cannot be materially diminished, without some measure, which will make the hollowness of the system stand openly exposed to the world.

At this momentous crisis, and before any measure be even brought forward, I have chosen to repeat my former opinions, to re-place them before the eyes of my readers, and to call the attention of these either to the fulfilment or the falsification of my predictions. My position always has been, and it still is, that, either the paper must continue in a depreciated state, or, that the interest of the Debt cannot be paid in full; in other words, that the Bank must, in peace, as well as in war, continue to be protected by law against demands of cash-payments, or, that the interest of the Debt must be lowered.

All over the country, people are talking about the *lowering of rents*. In some places landlords are complained of for not *lowering*. In Devonshire, it appears, that a man is threatened with a prosecution for libel for having attacked a Landlord on this score. In 1810, Lord KING was abused for calling upon his tenants to pay rents in specie. A law was passed to protect tenants against such demands. And, is it just *now*, to abuse Lord KING if he do not *reduce* his rents? Were the tenants to

have all the advantages of depreciation ; all the advantages of high prices ; and is Lord King to have all the disadvantages of low prices ? I have before shown, that, to reduce rents, will not better the condition of the Government or the Fundholder ; but, the question here is, whether the tenants can, in justice, call upon the landlord to reduce his rents, as they never rose them on account of high prices. When men are in distress, they are out of humour : they have not time, and are not in a disposition, to listen to reason. Eight Lords protested against the Bill for compelling Landlords to take payment in paper-money ; and a ninth, LORD HOLLAND, added to his protest these words : " For the reason assigned on the other " side, and because the repeal of the law for suspending Bank Payments " in Cash is in my judgment *the only measure which can cure the in-* " *conveniences already felt*, and avert the yet greater calamities which " are impending from the present state of the circulation of the " country."

Upon this I observed, in "*Paper against Gold*," page 468, as follows :—

" In the protest of the eight peers I heartily concur ; but, I do not agree with " LORD HOLLAND in his addition to it, if his lordship means to say, that it is " *possible to resume cash payments at the Bank*. To pay the notes in gold upon " demand, agreeably to the promise upon the face of the notes, is certainly the " only cure for the inconveniences already felt and the calamities now impend- " ing ; but that it is utterly impossible to adopt this cure is to my mind, not less " certain. His Lordship proceeds upon the notion of Mr. HORNER and the Bul- " lion Committee, namely, that the cause of the depreciation consists in an *exces-* " *sive issue of paper*, which is very true, if you compare the quantity of the paper " with that of the gold, or of the real transactions of purchase and sale, between " man and man ; but, which is not true, if you compare the quantity of paper " with the amount of *the Dividends payable on the National Debt* ; and, I would " beg leave to put, with sincere respect, this question to LORD HOLLAND : ' If " cash payments were restored, and money, as must be the case, were restored " to its former value, *where* does your Lordship think would be found the *means* " of paying the Dividends ? "

Cash payments are *not*, indeed, restored, nor anything like it ; but, the paper has, by some means or other, been *diminished in quantity*, and, without restoring cash-payments. LORD HOLLAND, I dare say, sees clearly enough, that it will be difficult to find the means of paying the dividends at the Bank from taxes raised on the country, even *this year* ; and, I can hardly suppose, that he thinks it *possible* to do it for a year to come.

Before I conclude, I cannot help addressing a few words to the English *Landowners*, who, last year, did the work of the Ministry, and very foolishly incurred almost all the odium of the Corn Bill, in the passing of which they were, in reality, not at all interested. That measure was said to be for the *protection of agriculture* ; but it was, in fact, for the *protection of taxation*. The Ministers at first seemed *indifferent* about the matter, and, indeed, rather *discountenanced* SIR HENRY PARNELL, who, in 1813, proposed the Bill. But finding, in 1814, that nobody else would undertake the thing, they undertook it themselves ; and, then, the London newspapers, who had in the most outrageous manner abused Sir Henry Parnell and the Landowners, tacked suddenly about, and abused still more outrageously the opposers of the Corn-Bill.

One would think that this would serve as a caution to the Westerns and the Cokes, especially since they have seen, that the Corn-Bill produced none of the effects that were expected from it ; that they were merely *supporters of taxation*, and that they loaded themselves with ill-will for

nothing at all. Mr. WESTERN, who wrote pamphlets, I believe, as well as made speeches, must by this time, begin to discover, that it was not, as he thought, for the farmers, that, in reality, he was pleading; but, for the Placemen, the Army, the Navy, and the Fundholders. The Landlord, and his Tenant will be pressed hard *this year*, and some of them *next year*; but, theirs are commodities that very soon find their proper level, and that nothing can wholly sweep away. If wheat were to fall to 5s. a bushel, which is not improbable, Mr. WESTERN and his tenants, instead of 15s. in taxes would pay 5s. His 3,000*l.* a year would soon be as good to him as his 9,000*l.* are now, or have been for years past. His Property-tax would be 300*l.* a year instead of 900*l.* a year. All his expenses would bear the same proportion. He would have a coachman for 7*l.* a year instead of 21*l.* His coach-horses would cost him 20*l.* each, instead of 60*l.* I am aware that his style of living would be less *showy*: but, so would that of everybody else; and he would still keep his proper place and suitable state in society. Men are always more eager about *gaining* than they are about *keeping*; and this is the true cause of the errors of the Landowners last year.

If, therefore, the Landowners be wise, they will, this time, be *silent*. Notwithstanding my jeer, at the close of my last letter, their estates will not, if they be not egregious fools, "*slip through their fingers*." They have only to stand, and let the thing take its course. They cannot be made to pay direct taxes beyond their incomes, another year. One year will not ruin them, though it may many of their tenants. If they contribute largely towards the indirect taxes, it is their own fault. That is no concern of anybody. That is the fault of no Minister. Let them do as their forefathers did: drink strong beer and eat beef at breakfast, and banish wine from their tables, and they will find that no Minister can reduce them to ruin.

Even the farmers will be ruined, those that are ruined, by their own folly. They will not curtail their expenses sufficiently. Sugar, tea, coffee, wine, spirits, are now numbered amongst their *wants*. If a rich farmer had resolution enough to bring his style of living down, at once, to the proportion of wheat at 5s. a bushel, he would be as well off as he was four years ago. He would live a less *showy* life. He would have no sofas, carpets, and parlour bells; his wife and daughters would wear no silk shoes, and would certainly use neither paint nor perfumes. The Novel-trade, of which they are a main prop, would decline. But, there is the Bible-Society to supply them with matter for reading, and Bibles, are, too, printed upon untaxed paper. However, if wheat continue at 6s. or 7s. a bushel, down the farm-houses must come to the old mark. The change will not be a change for the worse; the country will be full as happy as if wheat were again 15s. a bushel; and, the only difficulty will be, where to find the money for the Government people, the Army, the Navy, and the Fundholders; a difficulty with which, as far as I can see, the Landlords and Farmers have nothing at all to do.

The Tradesmen must follow the Landlords and Farmers. They must all come down, if any come down. It will be a less *luxurious* community; that is all. Those that live by furnishing mere luxuries, will turn their hands to other kinds of labour. One wine merchant will suffice for a whole city; nor do I despair of seeing the time, when this article will, in country towns, be dispensed only, as formerly, from the apothecaries' shops.

Ridiculous as you, in America, who drink Madeira wine like water, may think this, I assure you, that to this it must come, unless new and copious issues of paper-money take place. By paper-money we have been raised up, and down we must come, unless sustained by paper-money. It is quite curious to see how the thing works upon us. A little while ago, nobody thought it worth while to look at the *copper-money* that he took in 'change. Faith! we already begin to count the *pennies*, and even the *half-pennies*. They begin to be something of value. This is a fact worth a thousand essays on the National Debt and Sinking Fund. I used, when I breakfasted at an inn, to give the waiter 6d. I now give him 3d. I used to dine on the way from Botley to London; I now make a stout breakfast, at home, last the journey. At the different stages, when people travel in post-chaises, they give the post-chaise driver money, as he receives no wages from his master. To bring these gentlemen down to the present standard of wheat is the most difficult task that I have to perform. Far as you are from me, and though there is the sea between us, I would undertake to convince you of the justice of this much sooner than I would undertake to convince them of it. I generally begin thus:

"What do you give for the Quartern Loaf, now, my lad?"

"Eightpence, Sir."

"Eightpence! why that is not half so much as you used to give."

"No: blessed be God, Sir, it is come down."

"Here, my good fellow; here is eighteenpence for you."

"Eighteenpence, Sir! why, you always used to give me half-a-crown?"

"That's very true, my good fellow; but, you now buy your bread, and I sell my wheat, for less than *half* the former price."

"I don't know, not I, anything about that."

"But, you told me just now, that the loaf was sold at eightpence, and you blessed God for it; why should you want to extort from me as much as if the loaf sold at twenty-pence?"

"Aye! aye! (raising his voice) I don't know anything about that!"

"Well, but let us act justly——"

"No, I don't know anything about that!"

"But——"

"No, I don't know anything about that."

"Well, then, if you won't listen to——"

"No, no, I don't know anything about that."

By this time I am in his successor's chaise, and away I go, leaving the whole inn-yard in commotion, landlord, landlady, chambermaid, cook, ostler, boot-boy and all, listening to the repetition of the dialogue, and wondering what I could mean.

The grand cure for all this is, however, what really is adopted. People travel in a humbler style. Those who used to go in post-chaises, now cram themselves into a stage-coach; and those who used to go in the stage-coach now go on the stage-coach; while those who used to go on it, now go upon their *feet*. The consequence of this to the Fundholders and the Government, is, that there is *less post-horse duty* paid (3d per mile); fewer chaises, post-horses, post-boys, waiters, ostlers (for all of whom a tax is paid) are kept; more inn windows are stopped up; less wine and spirits are drunk upon the road; less sugar, tea, coffee, and salt, candles and soap are used at inns; and, in this way the revenue will soon begin to experience a great diminution.

I should now conclude with an apology for the length of this letter;

but, I could not, in a shorter space, give you the information, which I wished you to possess, and which I am sure you will receive from no other quarter. Our newspapers are dumb as to useful truth; and, besides, the ignorance of the greater part of their editors is equal to their venality. In the *Edinburgh Review*, the authors of which being yet out of place, or, at least, the greater part of them, you may, perhaps, read something about the "distresses of agriculture," accompanied with unintelligible observations about "capital" and "exchanges," in the style of their countryman, Adam Smith, whose darkness has given him the reputation of being deep, and from whom the greater part of our professed economists have learned to talk glibly about what they do not understand; but, from the *Edinburgh Review* (and I beg you to bear in mind what I say,) you will receive nothing that will enable you to form any notion of the real situation of this country.

WM. COBBETT.

P. S. Since writing the above, that is, this 12th of December, 1815, I have received, from DEAL (a town near the mouth of the Thames) a letter from MITCHELL, Editor of the "*National Advocate*," at New York. This letter informs me, that Mr. Mitchell has sent me a parcel of American Newspapers, in a way *not subject to postage*. But, by the very same post, comes a letter from London, informing me that a parcel of American Newspapers, postage *nine pounds sixteen shillings*, has been tendered by the Post-office people for me in London, and that it has been, of course, sent back, not paid for to the Post-Office! This is the *second* time, of late, that I have been served in a similar manner. The history of the matter, I suppose, is this: the ship was *bound to London*; but, off Deal, a post-office boat boards her, and takes out of her all letters, and all parcels not regularly shipped as goods; and so, up comes the parcel of newspapers, sent by Mr. MITCHELL, and is *weighed* and charged to me as an *enormous great letter*; a *Mammoth-Letter*! This is, I must suppose, all perfectly lawful and fair; but, it does *not suit my taste*; and I will find the means of doing without it, and that, too, in a very short time. It is curious, however, that the *Courier* and the *Times* have New York papers by *this conveyance*! What liberal people *their proprietors* must be to pay such sums in postage! Now, does not the American reader perceive the necessity of the PLAN, which I notified in my last Register? Does he not perceive, that, to keep up a regular and speedy communication with America, I am *compelled* to resort to some such plan?—As long as the two countries are at *peace* I *will* have such communication. I defy all the world to prevent me.

I am very much obliged to Mr. MITCHELL for his present; but, I shall never set eyes on it. Whom it will fall to I cannot tell. It is curious to see how admirably we are guarded. This package could not come nearer than DEAL without being arrested in its progress to me. I once had a barrel of apples that was longer in getting from London-Bridge Custom-house to Pall-Mall, than it was in coming from Philadelphia to London. The apples, like the package, did arrive, at last; but, the former were rotten, and the latter became forbidden fruit by being loaded with *Forty-five Dollars of Postage*. Talk of the Wall of China! It must be a fool of a thing compared to the fence that surrounds us. "Oh! 'tis a nice little, *tight* little island!"

TO THE
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

(Political Register, December, 1815.)

LETTER VII.

On the Proposed Reduction of the Property-Tax.

Botley, Dec. 13, 1815.

SIR,

I am afraid that you will think that I am troublesome ; but, really, the thing seems to press so fast upon us, that *once* a week is not sufficiently often for me to address you. Your letter to "Mr. CHARLES TAYLOR, M.P." has just reached me in the *Morning Chronicle*. The whole article, in which paper, is as follows :

"THE INCOME-TAX.—The following document relating to the subject of the Income-Tax may afford our readers some satisfactory information. Charles Taylor, Esq. M.P. of Hollycomb, near Liphook, let a farm from Michaelmas, 1814, and in April following, the tenant being insolvent, he was obliged to take back his farm without any rent, and in so bad a state that the produce to Michaelmas, 1815, would not pay the labour, rates, and taxes, *yet both landlord and tenant's taxes were demanded of him for the rent it was assessed at.* The question naturally asked of the Government was—Will the demand be enforced in the Court of Exchequer?—To this case, which is likely to prove not an uncommon one, the following reply was made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer:—

(COPY.)

"Downing-street, Nov. 27, 1815.

"SIR,—Having received from various quarters representations respecting the Property-tax chargeable on land, in cases where a reduction has taken place in the rent, I have delayed replying to the letter which I had the honour of receiving from you, on the 11th ultimo, until the subject had undergone a full consideration. I have now the satisfaction of informing you, that instructions have been lately given to the Board of Taxes, which, it is hoped, will be found effectual for removing any reasonable ground of complaint upon this point.

"I have the honour to remain, Sir, your very obedient servant,

"N. VANSITTART."

"Chas. Taylor, Esq. M. P."

How pat I hit Mr. Taylor's case, Sir, in my letter to you, at page 419 ! How can the regulation, which you allude to, if it had been truly described, apply to Mr. Taylor's case ? Mr. Taylor has not lowered his rent ; for he has received none at all ? Whence, then, your "*satisfaction*" at being able to announce this measure to Mr. Taylor ? I asked the question : "Is the landlord who has received no rent or whose farm has been quitted for want of means in the tenant, to pay the full tax for both ?" This was my question. And how have you answered it ? There has been no reduction in Mr. Taylor's rent. What does he tell you ? Why, that his tenant could not pay his rent to

March; that his farm has fallen into his own hands, and that the produce to Michaelmas would not pay the *labour, rates, and taxes*, "and YET" (mark the consequence) *both landlord's and tenant's tax were demanded "of him for the rent it was assessed at."* To be sure it would be very hard for Mr. Taylor to pay this tax; but is it not equally hard for the man, who, like me, tills his own land, to pay both landlord's and tenant's tax, when I am precisely, in common with my neighbours, in Mr. Taylor's situation? He took to his farm with all the crops in the ground in April. He has found, that the produce has not paid *labour, rates, and taxes*; and can I not safely swear, that the produce of my farms have not paid labour, rates, and taxes? Yes, and so can all my neighbours, though as industrious and as skilful farmers as any in all England, and occupying, generally, as good land. We have been existing upon our "loose fat," for two years past; but we cannot exist in this way for ever.

Now, Sir, I beg you not to take it into your head, that I am arguing for myself. You, who are a brother *author and political prophet*, must know very well that nothing is to be put in competition with our fondness for the success of our writings and our prophecies. I am much more anxious about these than about the produce of my land. If I can find yours on any old bulk, or in the warehouse of any trunkmaker, I will one of these days bring them out. In the meanwhile I wish you to endeavour to enforce the rigid collection of the Property-tax, and I would keep silence, above all things, were it not for the sake of securing the reputation of a prophet, in foretelling that you will not succeed.

Amidst the unparalleled gloom of the country, a gleam of sunshine comes forth in the account of the *killing of the brave Marshal Ney*. But, the knock at the door, while the happy family is enjoying the recital, awakens apprehensions of the approach of the tax-gatherer; the smile of happiness vanishes; the exhilarating feeling, inspired by the state of France, quits the heart, and back comes the gloom with additional darkness. The *Times newspaper*, like Satan peeping with eye askance into the Garden of Eden, endeavours to cheer us up with an account of the financial embarrassments of the American Government, embarrassments, which, if they produced a bankruptcy of that Government, would not be felt for a week. The *vitals* of America are not yet affected. The debt of the Americans arose out of ours. We resorted to such means, and they, to defend themselves, resorted to such means too. But, compared to ours, their Debt is nothing.

Now, Sir, where is all the outcry of the opposers of the Corn Bill at Gosport, Southampton and London? Where are the expectations of my worthy neighbour, Mr. Grant, who exulted in the prospect of cheap meat as well as cheap corn? And, the worthy Mayor of Southampton and Mr. Waithman and Mr. Birch, who saw so much happiness approaching them in "*peace and plenty*." I told them at the time, that it was the Fundholder more than the Landlord and Farmer that ought to apply for a bill to keep up prices. I told them that such a bill was a bill to *protect the taxes*, and not the farmer; and therefore, though upon directly opposite grounds, I opposed the Corn Bill with all my might.

Within this year and a half, I have twenty times asserted, that the Property-tax could not be collected, unless the prices rose to their old mark. This prophecy has been accomplished already. It cannot be collected; a *part* is expressly announced to have been given up. But it is next April, or May, that we must wait for to see what is to take place.

In the meanwhile, if the *Pitt Club* should assemble, I hereby put in my claim to a ticket at the feast of the "*Heaven-born Minister*," whose system now begins to be in a fair way of being put to the test.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

WM. COBRETT.

TO THE
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

(*Political Register*, December, 1815.)

LETTER VIII.

On the Advantage, which the WHIGS are endeavouring to take of the present Embarrassments of the Country.

SIR,

Pleasant as was the vein of my correspondence with you, on the subject of finance, it must, however disagreeable to me, be interrupted for a week, in order to give me an opportunity of addressing you on the subject of the efforts, which the Whig faction appear to be making to take advantage of your present embarrassments. To be sure, you may well imagine it ridiculous for me to plague myself with anything that this old battered, worn-out, faction are doing or wishing for; but, be that as it may, I cannot refrain from stopping their mouths, whenever I see them beginning to open them. For, though they are down *now*, it is not impossible, that, in the times that are approaching, they may endeavour to rise, and, that they may, if the public be not warned beforehand, succeed in causing some persons to believe, that, *if they had been in power*, the present distresses would never have been known.

I gather the above-mentioned intention on their part from an article in the *Morning Chronicle* of the 18th instant. This print is their oracle; this print has been, and yet is, one of the most mischievous in the whole country; because, it is chiefly owing to this print, that the idea of an "*Opposition*" has been kept in existence, when, in fact, there has been no such thing as an opposition, according to the old idea attached to that word. This idea has served to *amuse* the people, or, at least, a part of them; to excite false hopes; and thereby to produce the events that have brought us, by degrees, to our present state. The editor of the *Morning Chronicle* well knows, that there has, in fact, been no opposition party for many years; that is to say, no opposition such as formerly existed in England. Mr. MATHEW CAREY, of Philadelphia, who has written a very clever book, called the "*OLIVE BRANCH*," and which I would cause to be republished here, IF I DARED, observes, that we, in England, have always a *Country Party* as well as a *Court Party*. Mr. Carey has, very likely, been deceived by this very *Morning Chronicle*, who knows well,

that all talk about *party* and *opposition* is now a mere fraud; and, indeed, Sir, you know as well as anybody, that there has been, for more than 30 years, no such thing as a body of Members of Parliament answering to the description of the *country party* previous to the American Revolutionary war, since which war the magnitude and influence of the Debt have wholly overwhelmed all the considerations, out of which a Country party arose. It is, therefore, imposture to pretend, that any such party exists. But, as to the persons whom the *Morning Chronicle* is holding up as your opponents, it is notorious, that they have, in one way or another, aided and abetted in carrying into execution all the schemes which have finally produced the distresses, which Mr. PERRY of the *Chronicle* appears to *lament*. It is right that this charge should be proved; but I will first insert here the passage, to which I have been referring.

"A most erroneous opinion seems to prevail with respect to the notice lately issued, in pursuance of the Property-Tax Act, for Meetings of Commissioners, to regulate the assessments under Schedules A and B, according to new agreements between the landlords and tenants. It has been commented upon as the spontaneous act of Ministers, evincing their desire to relieve the agricultural interest. Now, if our readers will take the trouble of referring to the Debates, in the beginning of May last, they will find it to have been the original intention of the CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, to have enforced the prior assessment of the year 1814, without any allowance; and that after a considerable struggle on the part of the gentlemen on the opposite side of the House — after they had assured him of the fact, that many tenants were then in jail — he relinquished his plan, or rather was convinced of the folly of persisting in it. The consequence was that a clause was introduced into the present Act, which reserves the powers given to the Commissioners under the Act of 46 Geo. III. c. 65, and under these powers the proposed abatements will be made. Thus, then, at once, vanishes the pleasing delusion that Ministers, amidst the circle of gaieties in which they revolve, were alive to the distresses of the country. Never at any former period, were these distresses so much felt. The weight of Taxes and Poor Rates is so great, that the landlords in many parts, can procure no rent at all — the clergy, of course, are losers in their tithes, and the shopkeepers, who have chiefly depended upon the agriculturalists, have no other means of satisfying their creditors, than by becoming bankrupts. Hence we see the frightful increase of Commissions in every week's Gazette, exceeding all former times. Indeed, so great is the number, that a new court is talked of for bankrupt business only — offices for reference are opened in the Metropolis, and the list of dividends and notices form a volume! — Are these the halcyon days so long promised? — Is this the splendid result of all the sacrifices which, year after year, we were called upon to make? If all the private wrongs and miseries occasioned by the profligate waste and expenditure of the late war could be brought into detail — what a melancholy catalogue they would represent! Many thousands of families have been reduced from a state of independence to absolute ruin — and the parish workhouse (that scene of human wretchedness and suffering) is now become the common asylum of those 'who have known better days.' — Surely the men who boast of governing upon the 'Pitt principles' — if it were only for the show of a little consistency, may be prompted to some plan of economy and retrenchment, whereby the burthens oppressing the great mass of the people may be lightened — if it were only out of some little regard to the memory of their Patron Saint, by way of palliation, for the falsification of all his mighty promises!! Economy and retrenchment are our only hope, and must be the order of the day. — We are aware that to a certain class we shall appear very uncourtesy — little less than barbarians, with reflections such as these, to break in upon the festivities in which Ministers may be now engaged. But it is our duty to endeavour at least to awaken them from their apathy; for as Mr. Fox once observed — 'In times like these, when the nation is groaning under a load of taxes which it is scarcely able to support, instead of affecting gaiety

“and ease, our rulers ought to manifest the same symptoms of mortification and distress which pervade the community.”

All this, summed up together, means this: that the people ought to thank the *Ministers* for the intended abatements in the Property-Tax; that it was Mr. Perry's “*Opposition*,” who caused the act of Parliament to provide for it; that it was delusion to believe the *Ministers* alive to the distresses of the country; that these distresses are unparalleled, and that Mr. Perry's party are the men to put an end to them.

Now, Sir, was there ever a more gross attempt at imposition? Let us take the article as it lies before us. You are represented as not being alive to the distresses, which the people now feel, especially on the score of the Income, or Property-Tax. But, Mr. PERRY, the Editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, appears to forget, that it was his own party, when in power, who raised this tax from $6\frac{1}{4}$ to 10 per centum. Were *they* alive, then, to the distresses of the people? Is it not being very bold; is it not showing a great disregard of character, to pretend, that his party have more feeling for the people than you and Castlereagh have?—We are next told of the number of Bankruptcies, and of the many thousands of families, which have been reduced from a state of independence to absolute ruin, *by the profligate waste and expenditure of the late war*.—Well, suppose this to be the case, though I do not dare to say that it is; what then? Have not the party of Mr. PERRY had their full share in urging on that war? They had, when in power, overtures made to them to put an end to the war; and, is it not notorious, that they broke off the treaty on the ground of *Hanover*? Is it not notorious, that they refused to make peace for England, unless *Hanover* was restored to the King? Besides, who are this *party*? Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, Lord Sidmouth, was in place with them. And had these men no hand in the war? Mr. PERRY himself *got a place*, when his party came into power. Did not he, then, support the war? Aye, and was he not amongst the most loud and most shameless of all the applauders of the burning of the buildings at Washington? Did he not applaud the conduct of Ross and Cockburn to the skies? Did he not call that act “the *most brilliant dash* of the whole war?” Nay, did not his party pledge themselves to support the war against America, unless she was content to give up the question of impressment? This they were told at the time was the most serious of all her complaints, and yet they pledged themselves to support a war against her if she did not quietly acquiesce. The public will remember (if, indeed, they ever do remember anything), that Mr. PERRY was amongst the foremost, and during the late American war, to *blame* the *Ministers*; but, *for what*? Not for going to war; not for the manner in which they instructed their commanders to behave towards the people who fell under their power; not for any of those acts of the war, of which the Americans have so loudly complained. No, his *blame* was not directed against the *Ministers* on any of these accounts, but, on the contrary, he founded his blame on what he called the *negligence* and *slowness* of the *Ministers*, whom he exhorted to send against the Americans *such an overwhelming force* as would *put an end to the war at once*, and, of course, by the subjugation of America. And, yet, to hear Mr. PERRY now; one would imagine, that he was the mortal enemy of the late war, and the sincere friend of freedom! Of the same description has been the conduct of his coadjutors, the Edinburgh Reviewers. If we look back into their work, we shall find them pursuing exactly the same track.

America was always, by the whole party, even including *Mr. Alexander Baring*, asserted to have been the *aggressor in the war*; and, if this was acknowledged, how inconsistent is it to find fault with the Ministers for having incurred debts by pursuing that war!

If we look back to the discussions in Parliament, do we find that any one man of this party ever condemned the war against America? When she was compared to an *assassin*, who attacked us in the *dark*, was there a single tongue to repel the charge, or even to call the truth of it in question? Did not this party vie with the other in voting thanks to, and a monument to perpetuate the merit of General *Ross*, who commanded the land forces at the burning of the buildings at Washington, and who was killed in the attempt to storm the city of Baltimore? Did any one of this party ever make any motion on any of the acts of the war, related in the "*American Exposition*?" No: but they made motions enough about what they called the *remissness* of you and your colleagues in carrying on the war; though, as far as I could perceive, you did, and I delight in doing you the justice to say it, everything that lay in your power to sink, burn, and destroy the Americans by sea and land; to invade, overrun and subjugate their country; to pull down their Chief Magistrate and their Government, to make them an example for all the world to shun, and an object for all the world to hold in derision. I must, Sir, do you and your colleagues, the justice to say, that you all, severally and jointly, appeared to me to do your utmost to defeat, to disgrace, and destroy the Americans; and that, if you did not succeed, it was not owing to any remissness on your part, but to that courage, skill, love of country, and good sense, which you had to fight against, and which, in spite of all my warnings, you did not expect to meet with.

The MORNING CHRONICLE tells us now, that "*the men who boast of governing upon the Pitt Principles*," ought to endeavour to adopt some plan of economy, "*by way of palliation for the falsified predictions of all the mighty promises of their Patron Saint*." And, Sir, who are these men? Why Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, and several others, who went with Pitt from the beginning, and Lord Grey, and Mr. Ponsonby, and the rest of those who joined the former, and who all voted a monument to Pitt upon the express ground of his public services. But further I appeal to you, Sir, I appeal to every man who recollects what has passed upon the subject; I appeal to the Parliamentary debates for the last ten years, whether Mr. PERRY's whole party have not, during that time, been constantly contending, that *they, and not you and your party*, were acting upon the true Pitt principles; and whether they have not boasted of this even more than you. It has been a rivalry resembling that of the public-house keepers in and near Gosport, on the subject of *Alton ale*. "*Alton ale sold here*," says one; "*Fine Alton ale*," says another; and a third says, "*Real Alton ale*." The truth is, that both parties have not only professed to act upon Pitt-principles, but they have acted on those principles; and, therefore, they have nothing to reproach each other with upon that score. It is very true, that Pitt's mighty promises have all been falsified. But, were they not falsified long ago? And did not Mr. PERRY know that they had been falsified when Mr. PERRY held a place under the Grenville administration?

However, are not Mr. PERRY's own promises, those which he makes now, as likely to be falsified? He now talks of *retrenchment* and *economy*. These, he says, are our *only hope*. Does he think, that, though his party

were as extravagant as any, *your* savings would uphold the system? Does he think, that if you were to reduce the civil list, and the navy and army, full 4-5ths, that taxes enough would be collected to support the system? Does he think, that while wheat sells at six or seven shillings a bushel, taxes can, for two years, be collected to pay the amount of the dividends? If he does think this, I pity him.

All this talk about *economy* is now idle. It would do something; but nothing effectual. We are arrived at that state when economy becomes unavailing. Fifteen or twenty years ago economy might have preserved the system for a considerable number of years, if no interruption of the economy had taken place. But, now it is too late for economy to do more than make a *small part* of a real remedy.

Mr. PERRY is angry at the *festivities* which are now going on amongst you. But, why should you not *feast*? Mr. Perry did not mourn, when he was *in place*. There was frolicking enough in those times, and yet wide-wasting war was going on. The truth is, that this is all mere factious cavil. It is the *system* that has produced the present unparalleled distress, and that system clearly appears to me, and, I believe, to the public, now to be fast drawing to a close. The only ground of difference of opinion seems to be, whether it will tumble to the right or to the left.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

(*Political Register*, December, 1815.)

LETTER IX.

On the Strange Notions of the Edinburgh Review, for October last, on the subject of our Finances.

SIR,

In a former Letter I observed upon the number of quacks, who were coming forth with their remedies for the great national disease, which now seems to be approaching fast to a crisis. I do not lump these Reviewers along with the common herd of financial empirics; but I am afraid, that, in the discharge of my duty as a public writer, I shall be compelled to show, that, in this instance, they have been writing about that which they do not at all understand. Their observations would not call forth anything from me, did I not think it likely, that those observations may, if suffered to pass unnoticed, tend to lull the people into false security, at a moment when their minds ought to be prepared for the averting of danger. Were the *Edinburgh Review* one of those feeble and inefficient publications, which travel but a few miles from the spot where they are printed; or, were it the production of the mere hirelings of the press; in either of these cases

the lucubrations in question might have passed quietly to oblivion. But, the authors of this work are men of distinguished talent ; and, though belonging to a profession, which in this country, has, in a mass, become tainted with servility, they, at least, assume the garb of independence, and play the assumed character so well, that, to persons unacquainted with the real facts, they must appear to be perfectly free from all undue influence.

In the Review for October last, at page 541, the Reviewers take the title of a pamphlet on Finance by *Mr. Walter Boyd*, tell us the number of pages it contains, and the person by whom it is published ; and, then they enter upon an article of their own, which they bring to a conclusion, at the end of ten large and well-packed pages, without ever, from first to last, saying one word of, or quoting one word from, the pamphlet of Mr. Boyd. They appear to have regarded Mr. Boyd's production as wholly unworthy of any examination on their part. They, in action, say to their readers : " Never mind Mr. Boyd. Listen to us. We will give you something worth the trouble of reading."

Authors, who treat other authors in this supercilious way, should be very sure, that their own matter is of a very superior quality. They ought not especially upon the same subject, to expose themselves to the charge of a want of sufficient knowledge. And yet I will venture to say, that the public has seldom seen, upon this, or upon any subject, an article worse written, or more destitute of clearness and correct notions than that, to which I am now doing myself the honour to solicit your attention.

The Reviewers, after a long and greatly confused train of observations on the expenses of the late wars, the burdens which those wars have left behind them, the distress which those burdens have created, and the happiness which would have abounded, if such burdens had not been imposed, proceed to what they propose "*now to be done in order to better our condition.*" This is the part of their article which alone is worthy of particular attention. They propose that the *war taxes shall cease* ; that the other taxes shall continue ; and that seven millions a year shall be taken from the Sinking Fund for the purpose of carrying on the Government. We will now read over the passages which contain the reasons, upon which this proposition is founded.

"The best ground for claiming it, a ground quite sufficient and wholly irresistible, is the fact which no man can deny, that the people are sorely oppressed with their heavy burthens. Every straw, therefore, that can by possibility be taken off their load, must forthwith be taken off. Let us cast our eye for a moment over the state of the account which the prospect of peace seems to present. There were levied during the year 1814, the last for which accounts have been laid before Parliament, taxes to the enormous amount of 76,893,913*l.*; the net produce of which was 68,781,238*l.* Of this sum 24,562,073*l.* are war taxes ; which were originally imposed, upon the ground that the exigencies of the war required them ; and paid, upon the faith that with those exigencies they should cease. There remains of net permanent revenue 44,219,160*l.* The expenses of the national debt for the same year amounted to 43,033,237*l.* ; but taking into the account outstanding demands and the loans and unfunded debt of the present year, before the war can be wound up, an addition of a million and upwards must be made to this annual charge ; so that the whole permanent revenue will do no more than pay the interest and other expenses of the debt. It may be said, then, that the continuance of the war taxes becomes a matter of necessity, and that they will do little more than pay the peace establishment ;—and perhaps not even that, according to the magnificent ideas which some people entertain of what is fitting for so great and so rich a country. But this inference must not be submitted to without examination. Of the 44 millions and a quarter, which is the estimated expense

"of the debt, a large portion viz. about 15 millions, belongs to the sinking fund. Let us, however, take it at 12, after making the deduction for the operations which have lately been practised upon it. Can any man devise a reason against taking seven millions of this sum in aid of the public necessities?—This would leave a sinking fund of five millions, which would, gradually, perhaps as quickly as is either advantageous or safe, in time of peace pay off the debt. * * * * *

"The breach of faith with the public creditor will hardly be urged against this necessary measure, after the ease with which the inroads of 1813 was suffered to be made upon the *sacred* fund; and besides, it must be recollected, that the question is one of necessity, and only presents a choice of evils; the faith of Parliament being pledged to the people, that the war taxes shall cease with the war, in fully as solemn a manner as it ever was to the loan contractors, that the sinking fund should remain untouched till the debt should be extinguished. Can any man pretend, that the people of England would have submitted to the Income Tax, if they had not been told that it was for a season—and that beyond the moment of urgent necessity, no attempt would be made to enforce it? Surely, if there be a preference, in such a dilemma, they should be spared whose claim rest upon what they have so long endured, rather than they who have all the while been driving a trade with Government; and that, like other trades, attended with some risk, but ending in great profit.—The persons who have contracted for loans, and they who have subsequently, by purchases, come into their places, deserve every degree of respectful consideration; they have rendered inestimable services to the country in the course of its struggles; and to them the country must again look, should fresh struggles become unavoidable. But if so large a fund as five millions be left to accumulate, without any new loans, it seems only asking them to bear their share of the general difficulties, if the rest of the fund is employed in the relief of the community at large. Besides, it must be remembered, that sooner or later, some modification of the fund will be absolutely necessary upon other grounds. Were it allowed to accumulate until nearly the whole debt stood in the name of the Commissioners, 35 or 40 millions a year must be suddenly thrown loose, in a manner extremely detrimental to the national capital—for this change must, of necessity, take place at a time when wealth will have greatly increased, and the channels of employment been much narrowed—so as to render the difficulty almost insuperable, of finding means to invest such annual sums as we are supposing to be instantaneously set free. It seems a much wiser thing to diminish the powers of the funds, at a moment when the revenue is so urgently wanted, and when no other means of obtaining it, compatible with the public safety, can be devised. * * * * *

"The fund to which we have been referring as the only one that, properly speaking, remains within our reach, is seven millions a year. To something like this, then, the expenses of the country should be reduced. * * * * *

"This is the language of necessity, and ought to be spoken from one end of the country to the other, as often as any attempt is made to plunge again into extravagant courses. In the mean time, much may be done towards reducing the expense of the civil establishment; and if that and the military together should exceed the seven millions which we have to spend, recourse must be had to the least exceptionable of the war-taxes,—that is, to a small part of the excise and customs. As for the Income-Tax, it is on every principle so oppressive, so contrary to the *principles of the constitution*, so destructive of individual security and comfort, that we cannot suppose a free people will endure it one instant after the termination of the crisis which alone justified it."

Do you not wonder, Sir (I do), that the Edinburgh Reviewers were not ashamed to publish this last sentence? That they were not, after all that we have seen during the last 20 years, ashamed to talk about the *people's not enduring* the Income-Tax? About the "free people's not enduring" the Income-Tax, because it is contrary to the *principles of the constitution*?" However, I will say nothing further upon this subject here, though I certainly shall in another place. I will here confine myself as closely as I can to the subject of finance.

As to the measures now to be adopted, the substance of what the Reviewers say is as follows: That the people ought to be immediately

ceased of as much of their burdens as possible ; that the war-taxes ought to cease ; that there ought to be a very low peace establishment ; that the Fundholders ought to be paid the full amount of their interest ; and that seven millions ought to be taken from the Sinking Fund to support the peace establishment. The *account*, they say, stands thus :

The *net* produce of the whole of the taxes, in 1814, was.....£68,781,233
Of these the *war-taxes* yielded..... 24,562,073

Amount of the *net* permanent revenue 44,219,160

The expenses of the National Debt for the same year, including the additional interest on loans made during *this* year, and also including the annual expense of the Sinking Fund (*as nearly as possible*)... 44,219,160

The sum annually collected in taxes to support the Sinking Fund.. 12,000,000

The sum necessary to defray the expenses of the Civil List, Army, Navy, &c. being the peace establishment 7,000,000

The sum to be collected in future to support the Sinking Fund..... 5,000,000

Nothing can be plainer ! How neatly the account is made out for you ! Who said that you had any embarrassments to struggle with ? A single ray from these Northern Lights opens your eyes in a moment. Goldsmith tells a story of an impudent pretender to skill in pictures, who, in criticising the works of the most celebrated masters, would sometimes go so far as to take a brush out of his pocket and affect to improve the tints. And, really, when you look at the above, why should you suppose this to have been an imaginary character ?

These Reviewers seem in good earnest, to imagine, that the Sinking Fund is a *parcel of real money* ; but, of that more by-and-by. Let us first remark on their notion of the *taxes*. The war taxes, they say, may cease, and then they have left 44 millions of *permanent* taxes ; or, as they term it, "*permanent revenue*." Now, though the jargon of the Treasury is certainly well enough calculated to mislead and confuse people in general, we might have expected, that these sharp-sighted gentlemen, these scrupulous meters of sentences and weighers of words, would not have been, by mere sounds, led into conclusions so grossly erroneous.

By *permanent* taxes is meant, taxes imposed by laws, which have no limit as to their duration ; by *war-taxes*, such as are imposed by laws, which end with, or soon after the war. But into whose imagination did it ever before enter, that, because the law is permanent, the *sum* yielded by the tax must also be permanent ? Yet, that this is the notion of the Reviewers is clear, else all that they have said, all their calculations, their account, and all their subsequent reasoning, are not worth a straw. It is quite clear, that they look upon it as *certain*, that the permanent revenue will, *as a matter of course, continue to produce 44 millions*. This is the very basis of their proposition ; and yet I will bet their worships (and so will you, I am sure) the worth of all their wigs and gowns, that if wheat continue to sell, till next harvest, at the present price, these taxes, *permanent* as they are, will not, during 1816, produce 30 millions.

The "*permanent revenue*," as it is called, consists of Customs, Excise, Assessed Taxes, Stamps, Post-office Taxes, and a few others of insignificant amount. Is it not clear to every one, except to the Edinburgh Reviewers, that the produce of these taxes must depend upon the quantity of money in circulation ; or, in other words, upon the different degrees of prices

current in the country? Does any man suppose, that, when wheat sells for 6s. a bushel, the farmer will have as much money to lay out on taxed articles (the taxes continuing *the same*), as when wheat sells for 12s. a bushel? I have in my sixth Letter, explained this matter so clearly, that I will not dwell longer upon it at present.

Here, then, is an end of all this fine remedy at a single blow; for the 44 millions not being produced (if that should be the case), you have not the means, which these gentlemen have had the generosity to provide for you. They have pared you down to seven millions, instead of the 19 that you calculated on, for the Civil List, Army, Navy, and other expenses of Government; but, whence are even these 7 millions to come, if the permanent taxes do not yield more than 30 millions? If, however, the 44 millions be not quite enough, they say, that they would permit a trifling part of the *Customs* and *Excise* war-taxes to remain. Generous indeed! They do not perceive, then, that the Customs or Excise can, by any possibility, yield *less* than they did in 1814. *Prices* and *Paper-Currency* are things of too little consequence to attract the attention of their enlarged and profound minds.

They observe, further on, that "the *fund* of 7 millions is the only one, which, *properly speaking*, remains *within our reach*." Properly speaking, this is *no fund* at all. Properly speaking it is 7 millions which were, last year, raised in taxes to pay part of the sums turned over to the commissioners who purchase stock for the Government. Properly speaking, this 7 millions may not be gotten, next year, from the same source, or from any new source; and, therefore, "*properly speaking*," it is most wretchedly absurd to represent it as a *fund* at all, more especially as a fund always *within our reach*.

If I proceed further in pointing out the errors of these writers, it is not to insult you by seeming to suppose, that you do not clearly perceive them, but to show to persons not so well informed upon such subjects, that these are guides, who, with all their pretensions to superior light, are, as to matters of political economy, at any rate, not to be implicitly relied on. In adverting to the pecuniary distresses of the agriculture of the country, they observe, without the smallest hesitation, or qualification, that, were it not for the expense of the late wars, and the consequent burdens they have left behind them, "the *overgrowth* of "corn would not have *afforded* the smallest cause of uneasiness. At "present, the landowner and the farmer are distressed, *because* grain "is cheap *while every thing else is dear*. The price of every thing "which the landed *interest* buy, is made up in more than one-half of "taxes. Were *those* removed, *they* never could feel the injury arising "from *cheap corn*; for, in a very short time, *that* would be balanced by "the lowering of all *other prices* in proportion; in the present unnatural "state of things, prices may *lower* a little, till they reach the part which "consists of taxes, but there their fall must necessarily be arrested."

In another part of their Number, these Reviewers observe, during their criticism on what they call "*Irish oratory*," that orators, as well as poets, have their *licenses*; and, it would appear, Sir, that *critics* have theirs also; or, it will be very difficult to justify the liberties here taken with grammar. Talk of *bad writing*, indeed! They thus talk in the case of Mr. TWEDDELL; but, can they produce us, from the pen of Mr. Tweddell, or any body else, writing so *bad* as this? In one part of this same number of their Review, they affect to trace the origin of a new-

coined and foolish word to "the *American dictionary*." I wonder in what dictionary they have found the word "*lower*," as used by them. In the Scotch dictionary, I suppose; for, never did it find its way into either an English dictionary or into English conversation.

However, it is not of their *writing*, bad as it is, that I complain; it is of their erroneous, their vulgar, notions; of their want of knowledge of their subject; or, more properly speaking, of their boldness in treating of a subject, of which they were so much wanting in knowledge. The "*overgrowth of corn*," they tell us, "would not have afforded the smallest ground of *uneasiness*." And, has it "*afforded*" any such ground? Certainly not, except amongst very foolish persons. For, Sir, what is it to me, whether I grow 100 quarters of wheat at 4*l.* a quarter, or 50 quarters at 8*l.* a quarter? In the one case *quantity* gives me what *price* gives me in the other. Into what head did it ever before enter, that a good crop and a fine season were injurious to the farmer? And, if, in any case, they can be injurious to him, why should they be more injurious to him on account of the *taxes*? Will not 4 quarters of 4*l.* wheat go as far in paying taxes as 2 quarters of 8*l.* wheat? What, then, is the meaning of these profound political economists, on the other side of the Tweed?

The next sentence tells us, that "the landowner and farmer are distressed, because *grain* is cheap, while *every thing else* is dear." Now, Sir, the wool, the meat, the hops, the flax, the cheese, the butter, and some other articles of produce, far surpass the *grain* in amount, when sold; and, if all these be *dear*, the cheapness of grain cannot be so very serious a cause of complaint. But, the truth is, that they are all *cheap*; or, correctly speaking, they bear an exact proportion, in general, to the price of grain. However, suppose our Critics to *mean* (for it will not do to tie them down to their *words*), that every thing is dear, which landowners and farmers *have to buy*. Is this *true*? Certainly it is not. *Labour* is their most expensive article. This has fallen in price more than a *third*. Horses have fallen in price *more than a half*. The *seed*, the *horse-feed*, the two other great articles, must always keep pace with the price of grain; for, indeed, they consist of grain. What, then, are the things which the landowner and farmer buy at high prices? Tea, sugar, coffee, tobacco, iron, leather, soap, and candles, salt, wine, beer, stamps? And do not all other descriptions of persons buy these at as high prices as the landowner and farmer? Where, then, is the ground of that distinction, which confines the distress to the latter?

There is a great blunder, too, in supposing, that the *same quantity* of these taxed articles will continue to be consumed. Less will be consumed in consequence of the low price of corn, or, the *price* will be lowered. Thus, in the case of tea, which has an *ad valorem* duty, less tea will be consumed, or less of the tea of *high price*. This is the way, in which the payers of taxes will save themselves; and this is the way, in which our Northern Critics will find their "*permanent revenue*" to be diminished.

Here, Sir, we would leave them to the enjoyment of their profound reveries, but their notions respecting the *Sinking Fund* are really too curious to be suffered to escape without more particular observation.

After telling us, that the burden of taxation ought to be lightened of about one-third of its weight, and that 7 millions of the Sinking Fund ought to be applied to the expenses of the year, they say, that the Fund-

holders must be punctually paid their interest, because they have been so serviceable in helping the Government to carry on its wars; but, that the application of 7 millions as above, will not endanger the value of their property; and, that the 5 millions remaining will redeem the Debt fast enough. Indeed (and now comes their bright thought), they assert, that the *greatest of dangers* would be, that the Sinking Fund would accumulate to such a degree, that, at last, it would become terrible from its magnitude. For, say they, when the *fund* (they always regard it as a heap of *real money*) amounted to 30 or 40 millions a year, and the commissioners had thus got the *whole Debt* into their possession, "all this" must be suddenly *thrown loose* in a manner extremely detrimental to "*national capital*", so as to render the difficulty almost insuperable of "*finding means to invest* such annual sums as we are supposing to be instantly *set free*."

Sir, do you understand them? Though I dare not say that I do, I think I can guess, that they must, after all their railing against debts and taxes, look upon them as absolutely necessary to the safety of the nation even in a mere pecuniary point of view. But, what can they mean by the *letting loose of capital*, and by the *difficulty* of finding the means of investing it?

What is the *Sinking Fund*? It is no *fund*. It has in its nature nothing to entitle it to that name. A fund means a collection of money. Is this thing a collection of money? Suppose the taxes to be paid in guineas. The people pay twelve millions of guineas this year to be paid over to the Sinking Commissioners. They go and purchase up *stock* with the twelve millions of guineas. The stock thus bought stands then in their name; but the guineas are *gone*. Next year they would receive from the people more than twelve millions of guineas, and they would go too. If the Commissioners thus kept on till they had bought up all the stock, they would not have a guinea in hand. They would need no more to buy stock with. There would be an end of the Debt; and all the alteration that would take place would be this: the people, instead of having so many guineas a year to pay to the Commissioners, would have none to pay to them, and they would keep, and otherwise employ, the money which they used thus to pay in taxes.

And this is what these sages of Edinburgh call *letting capital loose*! This is the sad event that they are so much alarmed at the thought of! If I now pay 100*l.* a year towards the Debt, and the Debt becomes extinct at the end of this year, I shall, next year, have nothing to pay towards it. But, will it do me any *harm* to have the 100*l.* left in my hands? If not, what harm can it do the nation to have the whole of the charges of the Debt put an end to? And what sense is there in this talk about the *accumulation of capital*; and about the *letting of capital loose*?

If there be any sense at all in the passages here referred to, it must mean, that the putting a stop thus suddenly to so large an amount of taxes would leave so much money in the people's hands, that they would not know what to do with it; and, that, hence would come great public distress. I have shown how absurd this notion is, supposing such a thing as paying off the Debt *possible*; but it is curious enough that the Reviewers, in another part of this same article, should themselves have discovered great *benefits* in paying off the Debt, and in the leaving of the amount of the taxes in the hands of those who used to pay them. After observing, that the whole of the Debt, which existed, previous to the late

war, *might have been cleared off*, if it had not been for that war, the Reviewers proceed thus: "We might have had good French wine for "eighteen-pence a bottle; porter at less than 2d. a pot; and a post-chaise at seven-pence or eight-pence a mile. *The accumulation of wealth in every hand* would have been the sure consequence of this "state of things. Not only our enjoyments would have been incalculably multiplied, but our farms would have increased; and thus a new "source of comfort and of wealth have opened upon us, from the increased cultivation of the country, and improvement of its manufactures." And yet, these are the very same philosophers, who are afraid of paying off the Debt too speedily *now*, lest the letting loose of so much capital should prove *detrimental* to the nation.

It must be confessed, that this is a subject, as to which very strange and confused notions have long prevailed. But, we have certainly a right to expect, if it be treated of at all in such a work as the Edinburgh Review, to see it treated of with something like ability, something like a knowledge of the matter. It is said, that Mr. HORNER sometimes writes these financial articles, and sometimes Mr. JEFFERY; the same who forgot whether he had ever heard the name of America mentioned in England. I do not believe that Mr. Horner can have written this article. His own observation in England would have prevented him from putting forth such absurdities as we here find. After all, however, if he should pass for the author of this very weak production, he must look upon it as an evil naturally inseparable from the enjoyment of the vast advantage which an anonymous work gives him in other respects. What I have to say further upon this article, and upon other parts of their work I shall address to the Edinburgh Reviewers themselves, and send it to them, probably, *by the way of New York, or Philadelphia*; for, their behaviour with regard to the affair of *Mr. Tweedell and Lord Elgin* is so abominably *unjust*, that it must not and shall not pass without exposure. If they say, that their *fears* prevented them from acting justly, the answer is, that they might have held their tongues: their *fears* could not compel them to speak. They are very bold in attacking Sir Nathaniel Wraxall. But on this subject, I shall address myself directly to them. I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO
SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, BART.,

ON THE
DISTRESSES OF THE COUNTRY, AND ON THE MEASURES TO BE
ADOPTED TO PREVENT CONFUSION AND DEVASTATION.

(Political Register, August, 1816.)

Botley, August 7, 1816.

SIR,

"What does Sir Francis say?"—"What does Sir Francis mean to do?"—"What is Sir Francis about?"—These are questions that I continually bear asked, go where I will; and I verily believe, that that time.

long ago foretold by me, is now at hand, when more will depend on your exertions and your influence, than on those of all the rest of the public men in England. Therefore, though I am not one of those, who think you ought to be *incessantly speaking*; that you ought, in imitation of the late Mr. Whitbread, to stand with your mouth everlastingly open, like a chicken that has the *gapes*, I cannot help feeling a strong desire, that great activity may now mark your public life; that life which, every man knows, you have devoted, in great part, to the liberties and happiness of your country. I am aware that it may be deemed somewhat presumptuous in me to offer advice, or any thing that shall look like advice, to a person whose conduct has invariably borne the stamp of profound political knowledge as well as of public spirit. But I know you will have the goodness to excuse anything which proceeds from an anxiety to promote the public good; and, therefore, I will here lay before you the result of long and attentive observation respecting the distresses of our country, and also respecting the causes of those distresses, and the remedies which ought to be applied.

As to the existence of the distress, nothing need be said. That is now acknowledged by those, who so long endeavoured to persuade the world, that the nation was in the highest state of prosperity. The deplorable descriptions of the distresses in the manufacturing districts, though very afflicting, are not, however, those which produce the most serious impression upon my mind. I am much more deeply affected by the general, though silent distresses of those whom we call the country people. I have the good fortune to live in a part of England, where the labouring people are better off than in any other part of England that I have ever seen. We live here amidst immense woods and coppices. We have large forests round about us studded with cottages, which are in general the property of labourers, who, in addition to the great blessing of health, enjoy all the numerous resources of large gardens, and sometimes little fields, cows, pigs, geese, bees, &c. The work in the woods occupies the whole of the winter; the felling of the oak timber every month of May, is equal to a harvest in point of profit to the labourer, and even surpasses the harvest as it furnishes him with an abundance of fuel, and employs every woman and child able to work. These various occupations with the spade, the grub-axe, the hatchet, the saw, and the plough, produce that which is natural to be expected, a race of adroit and enterprising labourers. The arable land is in general pretty good: there are very few of those large farms which are to be found at some distance from this spot; a great portion of the land is cultivated by its owners, and in the best possible manner. We are at a very small distance from the sea, which would bring us fuel at a very reasonable price, did not the woods themselves furnish our labourers in abundance. I have, several times, been more than a hundred miles from home in different directions; and, a pretty attentive observer of what I see, I have always returned confirmed in my opinion of the comparative happiness of the labourers in my own neighbourhood.

Indeed, until within these three years, very little distress was known here. But, now, it has found us out, and it threatens to involve us in one general mass of misery. I could name numerous individuals, who are actually become a sort of skeletons. It is useless, however, to enter into descriptions; and I need only tell you that since my return from London, in the month of March, more than three hundred labourers have applied to me for work, and none of the three hundred have I been able

to employ, though the nature of my crops require a great many hands. I see scores of young men, framed by nature to be athletic, rosy-cheeked, and bold. I see scores of young men formed by nature to exhibit this appearance; I see them thin as herrings, dragging their feet after them, pale as a ceiling, and sneaking about like beggars. Is it, Sir, *compassion*, which ought to predominate in my heart when I behold these men? Is it not, rather, *indignation* at the cause of this degrading metamorphose?

What is it, I ask myself, that can have changed men in this manner? What is it that can have brought into a state of inexpressible misery, a set of the most industrious, laborious, and careful people that ever lived upon the face of the earth? What is it that can have brought misery under the roof of the man, every hour of whose life, except those required for sleep, is employed in providing for the wants of his family, and employed, too, with the greatest skill as well as with the greatest industry? What is it that can have produced this effect in the midst of a fertile country cultivated like a garden?

These are the questions which I ask myself; which every man of public spirit has long been asking; which the whole nation is now *putting home to the Government*; and which the partisans of that Government are endeavouring to evade by every trick that hacknied subterfuge can invent, and that the most offensive impudence can play off. This question, however, must be answered. The real cause of the calamity must be exposed, at last; for, unless I am greatly deceived, the distress is even *now* only beginning. It appears to me, that, in addition to its natural progress, from bad to worse, it will receive a strong push from the adverse *season* of this year. From all the observations that I have been able to make, I am of opinion that bread and meat, and, of course, all sorts of food will be high in price during the next winter. This opinion is founded on the well-known fact that one-half at least of the crop of *hay* has been totally destroyed. I mean that it has been rendered wholly unfit for food for animals of any sort; and, though, doubtless, it will return hereafter in the shape of manure, for *this year* it is destroyed. As to the corn, of all descriptions, a *backward harvest* is invariably injurious in every part of England. I have never before known a year when some wheat in this part of the country, was not reaped in July; and, I believe, that none will be reaped this year before the last week of August. Independent of present appearances, therefore, the wheat *must be* a failing crop; because if it remained green to a very late period, it is *sure* to be assailed by what we call the blight in the *straw*, which is equally sure to take at least one-half of the flour out of the grain. But, if such is likely to be the effect of a backward harvest *here*, where we are fifteen days, at least, forwarder than they are in the centre of England, what is to be the case in the *North*? In addition to the presumption founded upon general experience, I perceive that the wheat is already greatly affected by blight. Within a circuit of several miles, taking in hill and valley, I have minutely examined the state of the wheat; and, it appears to me that if the whole of England be as unfortunate in this respect, as it is in this part of it, the crop will be very small in amount, compared to what it is on an average of years.

If I am right in these opinions, *the price of corn will be high*. But, you will please to bear in mind, that the farmer cannot be benefitted by high price proceeding from such a cause. If, indeed, my crop were large

or as large as an average of years affords, then I should be benefitted by the high price; or, at least, I should have more money to expend in labourers' wages. But if the high price proceed from the diminution in the quantity of my crop, I acquire from that high price, no additional means of paying my labourers. If I grow a hundred quarters of wheat and sell them for eight hundred pounds, I am in no better state than I should be if I grew on the same land two hundred quarters of wheat, and sold them for eight hundred pounds. *My situation, so far, is nearly the same; but what is the situation of my labourer, in one case, compared with the other? If the high price of my wheat arise from a diminution in the amount of my crop, that high price gives me no means of adding to the wages of my labourer, while the price of his food keeps an exact pace with the price of my corn. I should still be unable to give him more than twenty-pence a day, while he would be compelled to purchase his bread at double the price which he now pays for it.*

Appalling as it may be to contemplate such a prospect, the state of things which I have just been supposing, is, I verily believe, likely to take place during the ensuing winter. For, you will please to observe, that if the price of food be kept down by *importation*; if the natural effect of a failing crop, be counteracted in this unnatural manner; if I grow but a hundred quarters of wheat from the land, on which I ought to grow two hundred quarters, and if, in consequence of importation, I obtain four hundred pounds for it, instead of eight hundred pounds, I am inevitably ruined, and rendered utterly unable to support the poor, either as labourers or as paupers; so that, in this case, we must all sink together.

It appears to me, therefore, very clear, in any view that I can take of the matter, that a great falling off in the crop of corn, added to the destruction which has already taken place, of the crop of hay, must produce a fearful addition to the miseries of the country; and, that such a falling off in the crop of corn will take place, I could almost venture to assert, *as a fact within my own knowledge*. I am aware that there will not be wanting persons to say, that my opinion in this respect is founded on my *wishes* much more than on my observation or my reason.—And I will not be hypocrite enough to say, that I would not wish even for a bad crop of corn, if I thought it would produce a constitutional reformation in the Government, and the lasting happiness of the country. But I do not believe that a scarcity of food would produce such an effect. The patriotism which is inspired by the wants of the belly, is of a sort that I do not admire. The resistance, which was made by Hampden, was much the more glorious, on account of the trifling amount of the sum for which it was made. I wish to see the people animated by the principle of liberty, and not by the calls of hunger. But, after all, the calls of hunger, if we come to that, must be listened to; and, therefore, it becomes those, whose station, or whose character gives them great weight in the country, to consider *beforehand*, what measures they shall adopt, or recommend, if the state of things which I am anticipating shall arrive.

Far be it from me to suppose, that you entertain the most distant idea of seeing your wretched countrymen relieved; of seeing the madness of hunger soothed; of seeing devastation and uproar put a stop to, by the paltry means of subscriptions, clubs, soup-shops, and those other contemptible devices that are now resorted to for the purpose of *quieting* the sufferings of a community. The evils, Sir, that afflict a whole people, you well know, are to be removed by nothing short of means, which flow from

the Government itself. As well might the paupers of a parish rely for relief on the voluntary contributions of each other, as for the nation to rely for relief on the voluntary contributions of the people in general. The evil has arisen from the measures of the Government: and by measures of Government it must be remedied; or, as sure as my pen is now making marks upon this paper, this country is destined to witness in a short time, that which its rulers seem not even yet to be aware of. As I observed many months ago, and you would have observed long before me, the miseries produced by the *system*, must, in the end, if left unredressed, *redress themselves*. Great power, which has been long growing together, however it may exert itself, however severe and cruel its effects, will last a great length of time after its character is gone. A system of sway, such as I am contemplating, will maintain itself, a long while after it is openly reprobated by every man who lives under it. But, *at last*, the misery which it occasions becomes so intolerable, that it can no longer be endured. It is impossible. It is almost physically impossible that millions of human beings should *quietly* perish with hunger, or with misery, which occasions death; which manifestly produces death. This is altogether impossible; because the inducement to preserve life by abstaining from violence becomes, in such a state of things, less powerful than the inducement to preserve it by the means of violence. If I am sure to die for seizing the dinner of another man, still I seize it if I am sure to die with hunger for the want of food; because, at any rate, by seizing the dinner, I secure my life a little while longer.

In order to know what are the remedies to be adopted, the cause of the evil ought first to be ascertained. The cause of the evils which now oppress this nation, is now pretty well understood. In spite of all the workings of corruption through the means of the press; through the means of the endless number of taxgatherers; through the means of officers, placemen, pensioners, as numerous as the sands by the sea; in spite of all that these persons have been able to promulgate, in order to disguise the truth. In spite of the silencing powers of the Attorney-General, this great and important truth has made its way into the minds of the people: namely, that *heavy taxation*; that the demands made by the Government on the purses of the people; that these have been the cause of the national distress. Long has this truth been contending against the falsehoods which have been opposed to it. But the truth has triumphed at last; and the triumph, which appears to have been completed by the gallant assistance of LORD COCHRANE, a few days ago, merits a monument to its fame infinitely more than the Battle of Waterloo.

It is so plain that taxation, when it goes beyond the superfluous means of individuals, must produce misery, that one is really at a loss to conjecture how any man of common understanding can be found to deny the position. In a former letter, which I did myself the honour to address to you, I proved, from the experience of America, that taxation had this effect. In the Register of August 3, I inserted an account of the price of *labour* and also of *food* at New York. It has been a constant theme with the writers on the side of corruption, to exhibit *America* as being in a state of distress. "*Even America*," say they, "*feels more distress than is felt by England*."—*All the world*, they tell us, *participates in the miseries of these times*. *All over the world*, the situation of the people is a great deal worse than it is here. "*Thousands*," say they, "*who have emigrated to America, are become beggars in the streets, and*

have applied to our Consuls to be sent home." That is to say, of course, to the poor-houses in England; yes, those poor-houses, of which Sir Robert Heron gave a description during the last Session of Parliament!

You will perceive, Sir, that this has been a great card to play off. If these tools of corruption could have succeeded in making the nation believe that the people in *America* were suffering in the same degree with themselves, the conclusion would be, that heavy taxation, great standing armies, enormous sinecures, pensions, grants, &c. did not tend to produce this national misery; or, at least, that great national misery might exist where those things did not exist, it being well known that they do not exist in *America*. It was, therefore, of importance, that this assertion respecting the state of *America*, should be met by such a contradiction as the truth would warrant; and, in consequence of my ambassadors being stationed in that country, I was enabled to give such contradiction by merely quoting from the dispatches of those gentlemen.

You perceive, Sir, or, at least, I have perceived, that this notion respecting the state of *America* has been circulated all over this kingdom by the means of a prostituted Press; of which Press the provincial newspapers are not the least base and corrupt part. In almost the whole of these papers this notion has been most strenuously inculcated. But, you perceive, that the present state of *America* is *precisely the reverse* of that of England. Numerous bankruptcies are taking place there. But, Sir, I beg you to mark the difference in the two cases. I beg you to observe what description of persons it is, who are breaking up in *America*. They consist of persons, who have purchased largely in English goods. The pressure here has produced a pressure there. But, *here* in England, it is not to a few dealers in foreign goods; it is not to speculators in banking and in funds; it is not to the *fictitious* part of the community; it is not to these moveable sands, that the ruin is confined; it has extended itself through every class of the people; and, in striking at the cultivators of the soil; in blasting *their* prosperity, it has begun at the root of national wealth and comfort, and whence it must reach the very topmost twig. Is this the case in *America*? So far from it, Sir, that agricultural produce in that country has *greatly risen in price*, and, what is very curious, it has been rising in price all the while that ours has been falling. You will be surprised to hear it, but it is nevertheless a fact, that pork and potatoes, and other necessities of life, have actually been *imported into America from Ireland*, and, *as my Ambassadors inform me, have sold to great advantage*. This will convince you of the flourishing state of agriculture in *America*. The influx of mouths in the great cities on the coast has been such, that even the produce of the soil of that country has been unable to supply them with food at so low a price as the food could be obtained from Ireland, though in Ireland the wretched people are starving. These are curious facts. They give rise to ideas such as seldom, I believe, enter the heads of those who compose meetings like that recently held at the City Tavern. The people of *America* want no corn-bills nor meat-bills. The farmers there want no *protecting* laws. The Government demands scarcely anything from them, and, therefore, they know very well how to protect themselves. But the main thing to keep our eyes upon, is, the fact, that the common, the coarsest day-labourer, receives *six shillings and sixpence* per day, while bacon sells for *eightpence* per pound, and beef for *sixpence* per pound. This fact is quite enough of itself

to convince every man that the people of America are not only not in a state of distress, but in a state of great ease and happiness. The daily pay of a common labourer at Botley is *one shilling and eightpence*, and the price of bacon at Botley (English bacon) is *ninepence per pound*. So you see, Sir, that the labourer in America has three times as much to eat, drink, and wear, as the labourer at Botley has.

It is a very humiliating reflection to us that this state of things should exist. It is not owing to his superior labour or his superior skill, that the American is so much better off than the Englishman. Few people are better acquainted with the character of the labourer of both countries than I am. The Americans (speaking of the natives) are very adroit, active, bold, and enterprising. To see them at work with an axe, a stranger would be surprised. From the nature of things they become very able labourers. But, they do not work so hard, nor nearly so hard as the labourers in England; nor are they so careful of their dwellings, so perseveringly neat in their gardens. In short, I have never seen any man in America mow or reap nearly so much in a day as is common with the labourers in England. I believe that there may be something in the excessive heat of the summers in America, which, by producing lassitude, naturally produces an habitual disinclination to excessive toil, such as our men undergo, and such, indeed, as they pride themselves in being able and willing to undergo, the accusation of laziness being one of the most serious that can be brought against a man, that is to say, in the country. But, there can be no doubt that the labourers in America are less inclined to work very hard, *because they can live well with little work*. Be the cause, however, what it may, they toil much less than our men toil, while, as you will perceive, they have three times as much for that which they perform. They have sixty-three pence for a day of light labour, while our men have twenty pence for a day of heavy labour; while they purchase their bacon at eightpence per pound, and while our men purchase their bacon at ninepence per pound.

These facts it has been the constant endeavour of the emissaries of corruption to keep from the knowledge of the people of England. They have had very good and substantial reasons for those endeavours. They have perceived clearly enough, that if the people of England were made fully acquainted with the facts that I have now stated, they would naturally ask *what was the cause* of this mighty difference; that they would naturally ask how it *happened*, that the people of America, proceeding from the same stock with themselves, being of the same character with themselves, having the same manners and same fashions as themselves, should be so well off with less labour than they themselves perform? This question the people of England must inevitably ask; and, it is the true *answer* to this question, that the emissaries of corruption have justly dreaded. You will, I hope, and, indeed, I am sure you will, give me some credit for my perseverance in opening that communication with America, which has furnished me with the materials for exposing the falsehoods and disconcerting the projects of the enemies of *Reform*. For, to this point we come at last. We shall presently see that the difference in the state of the two countries, so painful for us to contemplate, because it is so humiliating to England, arises, not from any superiority in the labour or the skill of the Americans, but from the circumstance of the Government demanding so very small a portion of the fruit of men's labour, while our Government demands so very large a portion of it.

And, this circumstance we shall find to arise wholly from the difference in the state of the representation of the people in the two countries.

But, before I proceed any further, I must beg leave to solicit your attention to an article which appeared in the great *Whig-print*, the *Morning Chronicle*, of the fifth instant. I deemed this article to be of considerable importance; because, though I give Mr. Perry credit for possessing much better principles than his party, generally speaking, it is difficult to believe that he would have published this article, unless he was pretty well convinced that he spoke the language of a considerable number of gentlemen of some weight. If this be the case, as I believe it to be, the article may be considered as a sort of *proclamation* from the party. You have often expressed your wish, and, indeed, have done every thing in your power to obtain the accomplishment of that wish, that the gentlemen who compose the opposition, would see the necessity of quitting the paltry contest for place and power, and would cordially join you in the cause of reform. I do not perceive, indeed, any very clear declaration in favour of that great measure; but I see in this article, that which leads me to believe, that there are some men of consequence amongst the Whigs, who begin to perceive, that it is impossible much longer to carry on the present system, the present scale of taxation and expenditure.

"It is the peculiar province of the historian to mark many minute events in the transactions of an Empire, as they are frequently discovered, after a lapse of time, to have given birth to most important results; and we will venture a prediction that the accidental turn of the debate at the City Meeting of last Monday, however trifling the circumstance in itself, will prove the forerunner of no ordinary consequences. For a great length of time, there has been an universal complaint and soreness in all parts of the kingdom, at the inconsiderate expenditure of the public money, and the profuse and lavish scale upon which the late war was carried on, for an indefinite object, and contrary to the advice of all sound Statesmen — and now that the chief promoters of this system, which has exhausted the very vitals of the country, begin to see and to feel their error by the melancholy situation of all classes of society, they would gladly resort to any trick or artifice, for diverting the general censure they so justly deserve. Hence it is, we have found during last Session, an uneasiness and anxiety on the part of Ministers, even on discussions irrelevant to the subject, to impress upon the community an idea, that the distresses of the country are but the natural consequences on reverting from a state of warfare to a state of peace; omitting to mention that such a change must, of course, be felt in a greater or less degree, in proportion to the proper management, or improvident waste of our resources during the contest. It was in furtherance of this object, that the proposed resolution for the City Tavern had been previously framed at a *private meeting*; and with this view, the Ministers were resolved on giving the utmost splendour and dignity to the meeting itself. But the project *has failed*—and never were a set of men more completely bewildered at the event. A sudden thunderclap, in the midst of the serenity of a bright summer's day could not have disconcerted them more. They are at a loss where to look, or which way to direct their steps, for wherever they set their feet, *whether amongst the rustics in Kent, or the more refined population of the metropolis*, the same hollow sound is reverberated from the groans of a suffering, yet a patient—from an insulted, yet a noble and generous people! The labouring hands are in a state of extreme wretchedness, but why are they so? Because all the middle classes are so borne down by taxation, they are obliged to deprive themselves of those comforts which contributed to the employment of the poor. 'The Gentry have no money to spend'—is the exclamation from all the retail-shopkeepers; and at the same time their expenses are increasing by a most alarming increase of poor-rates. The inevitable effect of all this is, that bankruptcies are multiplying daily, to an extent beyond all precedent. Not many years ago, twenty Commissions in one Gazette, was a

"circumstance sufficiently remarkable to be whispered through all the Courts in Westminster Hall; and now we have fifty Commissions in a week, as a matter of common occurrence. The office of a Commissioner of Bankrupts, not long since, was deemed scarcely worth the acceptance of a junior Barrister, and now it has become a source of great patronage to the LORD CHANCELLOR, being averaged at upwards of six hundred pounds per annum—and although many of the gentlemen bearing this appointment are frequently seen assisting at more than one commission at a time, they can with difficulty keep up with the march of ruin and devastation! Such are the results of our carrying on a war at an expense (including interest on the National Debt) of 110 millions per annum! It was quite preposterous and absurd to suppose a country like this could bear it, and our readers will give us credit for the uniform and consistent manner in which we have ever raised our voice against so profligate an expenditure. No taunt, no threat, could ever make us deviate from our remonstrances, foreseeing, as we did, all the evils which have arisen, and which are no longer to be disguised. Is it not, therefore, a mere mockery to call for a subscription of a few thousands, as an alleviation of these distresses, which can only be alleviated by a sincere and effectual retrenchment! But this retrenchment, say the Treasury writers, who begin to be truly alarmed, is the fatal measure to be averted if possible—'Take any shape but that, and their firm nerves shall never tremble.' And mark the inconsistency of the Ministerial advocates—it is now with them of the utmost importance to distribute a few thousand pounds—and yet we are perpetually accused of recommending a paltry and 'pitiful economy,' when we complain of the misapplication of 70,000*l.* of the public money in purchases at Brighton—of Mr. Rose's sinecures and revisions—of Mr. Canning's embassy, so conveniently managed for him in a pecuniary point of view—and of Lord Arden's enormous sinecure of 30,000*l.* a year. His Lordship cannot have received less than half a million sterling from this source—but then this is a 'vested interest'—and all the pensioners have vested interests, and it would 'be indelicate to disturb them.' There is no *indebtedness* in raising taxes by warrants for distress and sale!—We offer no comments. Such facts speak in language too intelligible, and we must conclude with expressing our earnest hope that Ministers will give ear to the *warning voice in time!*"

Does not this call to your recollection, Sir, the loads of abuse that were heaped upon you, when, in your famous letter to the people of Middlesex, you said that the country must be at last totally ruined, unless "*the leaves were torn out of the accursed Red Book?*" When Mr. Perry, Mr. Whitbread, and others, were assailing you on account of that letter, they little imagined it would seem, that they themselves would be compelled in the end, either to adopt your doctrine, as Mr. Perry has done here, or to abandon their country! However, doing you justice to remind them of this, let us now hope that they will, before it be too late, show that they, too, have the virtue to prefer their duty towards their country in the preference to their indulging of a silly perseverance in error. Mr. Perry concludes with expressing his hope that the Ministers will attend to the *warning voice in time.* You have long been warning the *Whigs*, and other gentlemen of the country, of their danger. You have a hundred times told them, that, if they did not step forward in time, they would be too late in their endeavours to preserve their property. To them, therefore, Mr. Perry might address his *warning voice* even with more propriety than to the Ministers themselves. In the midst of the days of false alarm; when scarcely anybody took time to reflect on what was the real danger of the country; when almost all were infected with the fatal delusion; that the war was necessary to the safety of England. In the midst of the madness of those days, and in spite of the loads of odium which you had to sustain in consequence of that madness with which almost every man was infected; by which reason, if not led astray, was, at least, kept in silence. Even in those days, you had the

courage to stand forward and to foretel the very evils which have now come to pass. Let us hope, therefore, that the country gentlemen will now unite with you in the procuring of the adoption of those measures, which you have been so long and so strenuously recommending. It is useless for them to complain of a lavish expenditure; it is useless for them to trace the sufferings of the country to the source; it is useless for them to have discovered at last, that the giving of one-half of the income of the farmer to persons who do not labour, must inevitably impoverish that farmer and his labourers. It is quite useless for them now to perceive and to acknowledge all this, if they be resolved still to stand aloof from those measures which can alone restore to the farmer and his labourers that which is now taken from them. They, feeling ashamed at their past reprobation of your endeavours, are too proud now to come forward and do that which they must be convinced ought to be done. But, this, Sir, is a false pride; it is a mean pride; it is "meanness that soars, and pride that licks the dust." It is no mark of the mind of a gentleman to persevere in error; but it is a mark of injustice, on the contrary, not to acknowledge, and to be forward to atone for, an error injurious to the country. There is now, however, a consideration, too powerful, one would think, to be resisted by false pride; and that is, that, if these gentlemen do not now act the part that becomes them, they run a risk of being stripped of even the appearance of family dignity. The transfer of their property from themselves to others has long been going on; but they now see, unless they be quite blind, that the unfortunate millions, who are *beneath them*, can no longer be kept quiet without some very material change in the management of the affairs of the country.

From the comparison, which I have been able to draw, between the situation of the American and that of the English labourer, is it not reasonable to conclude, that it is the *weight of taxation* which is the cause of misery? In America the taxes do not amount to more than about *two dollars*, at the utmost, for each individual. In England they amount to more than *forty dollars*, for each individual, excluding the paupers. The difference in the state of the people of the two countries is thus accounted for at once. Why do not I give my labourers *sixty-three pence per day each*? Because I have so much to pay in taxes, that I have only twenty-pence per day to give them. If there be a farmer and ten labourers, who divide amongst them the whole of the fruits of the farm, must they not of necessity be better off than a farmer and ten labourers, upon a similar farm, one-half or more of the fruit of which is taken away in the shape of taxes? I have before noticed the fallacy, held out by the tools of corruption, namely, that it is *not the taxes* which produce the misery. because, say they, the misery has been increasing while the taxes have been diminishing. It has been proved to them, Sir, a hundred times over, that the taxes *have not been diminished*. It is notorious, indeed, that even the nominal amount has not *yet* been diminished, as far as the direct taxes go. But the fact is that no reduction which is even intended to be made in the nominal amount will make up a fifth-part of the *addition*, which has been made since the peace in the *real* amount, by the alteration which has taken place in the value of the currency. Suppose me to have paid in taxes three hundred pounds a year while my wheat sold at fifteen shillings the bushel; and that I now pay two hundred and fifty pounds a year in taxes, while my wheat sells for ten shillings a

bushel, are not my taxes, in fact, *augmented* in the proportion of one-fifth? It is false, therefore, to say that the taxes have been diminished. They have been augmented, while the means of the nation have been, and still are, gradually decreasing. The war afforded a plentiful harvest to great numbers of persons, whose occupations, of various sorts, enabled them to draw the property of other nations into England. This source is not only dried up, but the poverty into which the industrious classes in those countries have been plunged by that same war, together with the vengeful feelings and hostile commercial measures, which our war monopoly has induced them to adopt, have had a terrible effect on our commerce and manufactures. Thus the resources of the country have been drying up, while its taxes have been in reality increasing. The consequences are, that state of distress in the employers, which has next reached the labourers, which has increased, in the space of one twelvemonth, the number of paupers four-fold, and which number, during the next winter, will, I verily believe, from the cause which I have above stated, be doubled.

For my part, Sir, I do not see any possibility of the greater part of small farmers escaping ruin; and if this be the case, what is to prevent confusion and devastation? Scarcely a day passes over my head, that I have not applications from persons who wish to emigrate to America. Doubtless, great numbers will find their way thither. But what are *scores*, or even *hundreds*, when the question is the providing for millions?—The Chancellor of the Exchequer observed, in his speech at the opening of the last Session of Parliament, that “that Englishman must be *base* indeed, who would not prefer seeing his country in its present state, to seeing it in the state in which it was previous to the war.” Now, Sir, I say, that base indeed must be that Englishman, who, with unmoved heart and with dry eyes can see the industrious, the laborious, the youthful labourers of England, rejected by the fields that used to find them employment, and seeking for a plank to bear them to foreign lands in search of food. Can you, Sir (I am sure you cannot) think with any degree of patience on scenes like these, which are occurring, you will please to observe, not in this part of England only, but in every part of England. What! are we come to this at last? Are we come, at last, to see Englishmen, famed above all other people for the love of their country, for their being proud of their country, for their enthusiastic attachment to the name of their country: have we lived, at last, to see the monopolisers of loyalty, those who have had the insolence to represent us as levellers and traitors; have we lived to see these very men using their utmost exertions, resorting to every species of falsehood in order to restrain Englishmen from deserting that *Old England*, in which words every thing interesting and animating to their hearts was formerly contained?

Yes, Sir, we have lived to see this, and, at the same time, to be insulted by these same men with the accusation of being *base* unless we exult in the change; unless we view this new, this unnatural, this monstrous state of things, with exultation!

However, it is for us, Sir, and particularly for *you*, to occupy our minds much less with reflections on the insolence of these men; than with what ought to be done to stay that general destruction, with which we are menaced. It being admitted on all sides, except on the side of open, barefaced, profligate, unrelenting corruption, that the weight of

the taxes, compared with the means of the payers of those taxes, is the great cause of the calamities which now exist, and of the greater calamities, which we have every reason to expect, who, except a fool or a hypocrite, will pretend, that there is any other *remedy* than that of a diminution of taxation? You, Sir, have never been seen amongst those, who, from ignorance, or from whatever cause, have proposed miserable palliatives for great national evils. A hundred pounds, more or less in the amount of a job; a thousand more or less in the amount of a sinecure; even half a score flagrant abuses of this sort have never formed the object of your animadversions. You have left it to others to obtain popularity by the use of this sort of clap-traps. The objects which have engaged your attention, and called forth your exertions, have been such as were worthy of the man, who, while scarcely any other man dared speak his mind, stood forward the advocate of the rights of the people. From you, therefore, we expect no *tithe-project* no *pamper-project*; no scheme for *dividing waste lands* amongst the poor, because the said poor have no bread to eat, and of course no money to buy tools to cultivate, nor manure to enrich the said waste lands; no project for making *game saleable* by gentlemen, in order, I suppose, that the poor may buy it; no project for subdividing the country into new districts, in order that the rich and poor may hold joint-committees for the management of those funds which the former are to give for the maintenance of the latter. No, Sir, we expect from you no pitiful expedient; no palavering; no whining about *charity*; no cant about feeding the people with *faith*, when they really are fainting for the want of food. We expect from you, Sir, a serious, a strenuous, a resolute effort, to obtain, in a legal way, the adoption of such measures as shall reduce the sums now taken by the Government from the employers, and to leave in the hands of those employers more than they now have, to give to those who do the labour. We are well satisfied, Sir, that if you undertake this task, you will do your utmost to accomplish it. I assure you that, from my own knowledge of facts, I am convinced, that the whole country will support you upon this occasion; and that it is now looking towards you with the greatest anxiety. To go on as we are now going, all men are convinced we cannot. This is a point upon which the mind of every man is made up. There is no longer that talk against supposed *violence*, which used to be so annoying. The fault which most people find now is, that you appear so *patient*. You always said that this would be the case, and the prophecy is completely accomplished.

To know *whereabouts to begin* to lop off expenses is rendered difficult only by the great number of the objects. That all sinecures, pensions, grants of whatever description, except for services to the public which can be *proved* to have been performed; that all these should be abolished, no man will doubt, who wishes for any reduction at all. But, can there be anything more reasonable and fair, than that all the salaries, all the allowances, all the pay, under whatever name, of persons in public employ, or of persons maintained out of the taxes; can there be anything more fair, or more imperiously demanded by strict justice and honest dealing, than that all these, which were fixed when the labourer's wages were high, should be reduced to the standard of the wages of the labourer at this time? Can there be anything more just than this? You remember, Sir, well, that the salaries of the *Judges*, for instance, were doubled, during the war, and that it was done expressly on the

ground of the high price of provisions and of common labour. Say that it was just to do this, and I think it was just and proper; but, upon the very same principle, ought not the salaries of the Judges now to be reduced? It is well known that the wages of common labourers have been reduced nearly half in amount, and why then, should not the salary of the Judge be also reduced? I mention the instance of the Judges, because the fact of the rise is upon record in the Statute-Book. But the same may be said, with equal truth, of almost all salaries and allowances. These, especially if you take into view the enormous charge for the *Staff* and contingencies of the army, amount to *millions*. Here, indeed, there is a substantial saving to be made, even without any diminution of the standing army. But, this army may also be reduced if proper measures be adopted, to a mere nothing. The constitutional mode of defending the country, and of preserving its peace, has been so minutely laid down by Major Cartwright, that you, I am sure, are well convinced that England stands in need of not one single regular soldier in the time of peace; and, Sir, I am sincerely of opinion, that there needs no more than a regular proposition of that mode, at this time, to render it extremely difficult, and even perilous, for any ministry to reject its adoption.

Without going any further, therefore, except that it would be a shame to overlook, for one single hour, the use that is made of that great mass of property, called *Crown-lands*, without going any further; without trenching upon any of the necessary means to uphold the Naval power, and to secure the safety and perpetuate the greatness of the country; without trenching upon any of these means; without meddling with the property of the Church; without any new modelling of poor-laws; without any risk of driving our poorer neighbours to distraction, without any *agrarian projects*; without anything, in short, other than the lopping-off of expenses, which are perfectly useless to the nation, such a diminution might be made in the demands of the Government as would enable the employers to augment, in the proportion of one-third, the wages of those who depend solely on their labour.

And who is there to *object* to such measures as these? Why, Sir, that most desperate of all the tools of Corruption, the writer of the *Courier*; he objects, and, I will take the liberty to insert his words, in order that you may see what are the *grounds* on which his objection is founded. The article, which I am now about to lay before you, is an answer to that which I have before extracted from the Morning Chronicle, and the main object of it is to induce the readers of the *Courier* to believe, that the abolition of sinecures, &c. would be of no use; that it would have no tendency to relieve the distresses of the people. The writer begins with pointing out the mode of *relieving* poor labourers, by raising money wherewith to *purchase employment for them!* Or, rather, his mode of *regulating starvation!* Yes, Sir; you have lived to see your beloved *Old England* reduced to such a state as to be insulted with the proposing of projects for supporting almost its whole population by means of as low a description as those by which cattle are supported. You have lived to hear a miserable hireling of the Press speak of nine-tenths of the population of England, not only as beings divested of all notions of property, but as animals destitute of mind sufficient to discriminate between that which is good and that which is noxious!

"We understand that in Lanarkshire, Glamorganshire, and other Counties, the idea was thrown out of employing men *half-work*, or *two-thirds work*, has

"been acted upon with much advantage: that is, for a Manufacturer, or any
 "other person employing labourers, who finds he has only full employment for
 "half or two-thirds of the number he formerly employed, to continue employing
 "the whole number, but only at half-day wages or work, or two-thirds, by which
 "means, though the men will not be able to earn so much wages as formerly,
 "they will still not be totally destitute or thrown out of habits of industry.
 "Another suggestion has been *transmitted TO US*, that from the funds, now
 "collecting, a certain sum proportioned to the distress of the district shall be
 "sent down to a *Committee of Gentlemen residing in it*, and possessing the best
 "local information, which Committee should use it as a *working fund*, and,
 "instead of distributing this money, as is usual, among the poor families, *which*
 "*may encourage laziness*, and have a tendency to *destroy independent spirit*, let
 "the Committee look out for some employment for the labourer.—The amount
 "of the subscriptions will probably not enable the Committee to give above one-
 "half of what labourers usually earn. But by thus employing the poor, their
 "habits of industry would not be injured. The wages would be no temptation
 "to draw off those who are usefully employed in field labour; yet, small as they
 "are, would be eagerly grasped at by such as are actually in want, and would be
 "the means of saving many a family from severe privation. And one recom-
 "mendation we cannot make too strongly; it is, that in any efforts making, or
 "plans devised, for the relief of the poor, *we should avoid anything that may tend*
 "*to inflame and irritate them*. It is therefore with concern we have seen in
 "some papers attempts made to induce a belief *that Government are obstinately*
 "*determined to withhold all retrenchment*, and that Parliament ought to be *sum-*
 "*moned instantly to compel them to adopt a different line of conduct*. Other
 "attempts are made to hold up particular persons possessing sinecures to popu-
 "lar odium, and, possibly, to popular outrage. Two Noblemen are selected by
 "a Paper this morning. *But why select two only? Why not add others whom we*
 "*shall not name?* If the labouring classes are told that their distresses could be
 "alleviated by the taking away *all incomes derived from sinecures*, they might be
 "tempted or persuaded that there are OTHER INCOMES which might bear
 "reduction. The transition is not difficult, as the experience of the French
 "Revolution too fatally proved. The mind, in a *state of inflammation or agita-*
 "*tion*, is not very much inclined to reason.—*Guerre aux Châieurs! Pair aux*
 "*Chamieres!* was the cry of the French Reformers and Philosophers. And
 "what was the effect? The palace was destroyed, and the cottage also: both
 "were involved in oppression, poverty, and ruin. Mr. Burke has said, *that were*
 "*every RICH man's throat cut, the poor would not have a meal the more for it*.
 "And with respect to sinecures, however objectionable they may be, except for
 "long and meritorious services, still the *abolition of them all would not tend to*
 "*give employment to the labouring classes*.—Now as to the system of retrench-
 "ment—it is asserted, *without inquiry or investigation*, that Ministers are *with-*
 "*holding all retrenchment*. So far is this from the fact, that *almost their whole*
 "*time is occupied in investigating every department of the State, for the purpose of*
 "*making retrenchments*. It will be for Parliament to decide whether they have
 "done what they ought. But let them have the common privilege of English-
 "men—a fair trial—do not let sentence be passed before conviction. It is not,
 "however, to some of our daily cotemporaries only that we address these
 "remarks. The *Edinburgh Review*, just published, closes a long article upon the
 "distresses of the country, by a sweeping unjust condemnation of Ministers.
 "The grand evil or cause of the distress, is stated to be excessive taxation. And
 "it is added, '*unless means are speedily devised for lightening this intolerable bur-*
 "*den, all other methods of relief appear to be unavailing*.' Now, unless the object
 "of the Reviewers be to raise a clamour, ought they not to have stated that
 "means had not only been devised, but actually executed, for lightening this
 "burden? that seventeen millions of taxes had already been taken off. The
 "Reviewers then proceed to assert, that 'the Ministers are resolved to keep up
 "'an enormous and unprecedented peace-establishment—and as they have not
 "'the means of paying for it by the produce of the taxes, over and above the sum
 "'raised for the interest and charges of the debt, they are determined to reserve
 "'the Sinking Fund, in order to use it in paying for the establishment. But the
 "'truth is, that they will not lower the expenses of the country; and to keep
 "'the seat nearly the present amount, they are prepared both to maintain the un-
 "'bearable load of our present taxation, and to encroach upon the Sinking Fund.'

"Surely the writers of this cannot have taken the trouble to read the debates of last Session, in which Ministers stated the reductions that were intended to be made in our Peace Establishment in the course of the next and ensuing year; for if they had, they could not have ventured such an assertion against Ministers, that they were determined not 'to lower the peace expenses of the country.'—Those who really feel for the distresses of the country *will apply themselves to the present rather than to the past.* Those who attempt to raise upon them a clamour against Government, are, we suspect, much more anxious to convert them to *party purposes*, than to find a remedy or an alleviation for *them.*"

After a few moments spent in admiration of the unparalleled impudence of this filthy scribbler, who really lives upon the sweat of the people of England, and who puts himself forward as the author of plans for administering food to them, pray, Sir, mark the earnestness with which he deprecates the touching upon any thing, calculated to influence and irritate the poor by causing them to believe, that the Government are obstinately determined to withhold all retrenchment. *Why* are we to avoid every thing of this sort? Why are we not to tell the people what is the truth? The ministers, we are told by this writer, are engaged almost the whole of their time in endeavouring to find out the means of retrenching; and that it will be for *Parliament* to decide, whether they have done what they ought to do in this respect. This is what the impudent Pitt used to say, when he was attacked on account of any of those measures which have at last led to the present state of things. When detected in any of his blunders or his jobs; when his bank could no longer pay in cash; when his friends Melville and Trotter were brought forth; when his own transactions with Benfield came to light: upon all such occasions, when even he could find out neither pretext nor subterfuge, he appealed, like his protégé, GOVERNOR ARIS, from his assailants, from his detectors and accusers, to the *Parliament*. But, Sir, we do not choose to stop for the purpose of making any such appeal. The people are now in a mood to exercise their own judgment. We *know*, that the Ministers have made no retrenchment worth speaking of, and we can perceive no symptoms of their intention to retrench. This writer tells us that the Ministers ought to have a "*fair trial*," and he says, that this is the *common privilege of all Englishmen*. What sort of trial does he mean, Sir? Does he mean that they shall have a *Special Jury*? For that was the only species of trial that I could obtain; and, upon the same principle, when these ministers are to be tried, we ought to select the Jury. But, good God! what trial do they want, more than they have had? Have they not already had five and twenty years of trial? Are they not the continuation of Pitt's ministry? Do they not meet annually and boast of this? What further *trial*, then, do they want? Besides, did we not see with what desperate attachment they adhered, during the last session of Parliament, to every branch of expenditure? Did we not see that they parted with their power of spending money as if it had been their heart's blood? What trial, then, are we to give them further? No, Sir, the nation is now well convinced, that not only these men, but that their system also, has been tried long enough, and that there is an absolute necessity of a speedy and radical change.

This writer, in the *Courier*, answers the complaint against sinecures, which has been made by the *Morning Chronicle*, by observing, that, "if the 'labouring classes are told, that their distresses could be alleviated by taking away all incomes derived from *sinecures*, they might be persuaded, that there are OTHER INCOMES which might bear reduction;" thereby

giving to men like you a *broad hint*, that if sinecures should be abolished, *your estates will be taken from you by the labouring people*. Oh, no, Sir ! The labouring people of England are not such brutes as to be unable to perceive the distinction between property which a man has derived from his industry, his talents, or which he inherits from his ancestors, and a heap of money which is annually received out of the taxes, that is to say, out of the labour of the people, for *doing nothing*, that being the strict sense of the word *sinecure*. The people of England, kept down as they have been, are not such brutes as to be unable to perceive, that there is a great deal of difference, indeed, between the rents which your fortunate tenants pay you, and the many thousands a year paid to GEORGE ROSE at the public expense. They know the difference, very well, between a man like you, who in one shape or another, pay probably, ten thousand pounds a year in taxes, and a man like Lord Camden, who receives thirty thousand pounds a year, and, probably, a great deal more, out of the taxes. The people of England are not so stupid, as to be unable to perceive, that they participate with you in the produce of your estates ; that it is impossible for those estates to flourish in your hands, or rather in the hands of your happy tenants, without shedding blessings upon all who dwell around them. The people of England still remember, those who are old enough, and those who are young still hear their fathers say, how much they owed to the hospitality which formerly reigned throughout the country, and particularly in the mansions of the gentlemen. Those mansions they now see abandoned, literally abandoned, I mean. They see the ancient inhabitants actually driven forth by the tax-gatherer, and the scenes of former plenty and mirth they see changed into a miserable solitude.—No, Sir, if the writer in the *COURIER* hopes to deter you from doing your duty by the dread of losing your estate, he is as ignorant of your character, as he supposes the people of England to be ignorant of the character of those against whom you have so long contended.

It is in vain also that he trumps up the old bugbear, the *French Revolution*. "The transition," says he, "is not difficult, as the experience of "the French Revolution *too fatally* proved. The mind, in a state of inflammation or agitation, is not very much inclined to reason : *War to the gentlemen's mansions ! peace to the cottage !* was the cry of the French Reformers and philosophers. And what was the effect ? The palace was destroyed and the cottage also : both were involved in oppression, poverty and ruin." This is the old hackney cheat. It has a dose of terror for some of the country gentlemen, and for the whole of their wives. But, the history of the French Revolution, if rightly viewed, would operate in producing terror on the other side. What was it that *gave rise* to the French Revolution ! What was it that *excited* the cry of "*War to the gentlemen's mansions ! peace to the cottage !*" What was it that *gave rise* to this cry ? The hireling scribe says, that was the cry of the French Reformers and Philosophers ; but Mr. Arthur Young tells us ; he tells us, who was a witness of the scenes, that this cry was excited by the innumerable oppressions and the tyranny exercised under the Bourbons, and especially by a long list of vexatious and grinding taxes ! These were the causes of the French Revolution ; these were the causes of the vindictive cry against the nobility and the priesthood. Therefore, Sir, this writer, in referring to the horrors of the French Revolution, furnishes a subject of alarm at the delay of reformation ; and the wives of the country gentlemen, who must be base and foolish indeed, if they have less spirit or less sense

than the greater part of their husbands have discovered, will, if they see the history of the violences of the French Revolution in its true light, urge their boobies to step forward, while there is yet time; and to use all the influence they possess in endeavouring to produce a diminution of the taxes, the grinding weight of taxation having been the principal cause of those scenes in France, which are now brought forward in order to prevent any attempt at reform of any sort.

After referring to the bloody scenes of the French Revolution, the hiring naturally enough comes to a saying of the pensioned Burke, which, is "that" "were every RICH man's *throat cut*, the poor would not have a meal the "more for it." This is one of the frauds in argument, made use of by that corrupt, crafty, and clever man. We are not proposing to cut any body's throat. We are proposing no violences of any sort. We are proposing to adopt measures of justice, and will not believe that to do men justice has a tendency to urge them to cut throats, or to commit any outrages whatever. Besides, when have we said, that there ought not to be *rich* men in the country? When have we said that any man's estate, which he has fairly acquired, or has received from his ancestors, ought to be taken away from him? This is no doctrine of ours. We, on the contrary, wish that every man should keep his own, and that the incomes of some *ought not to be taken away for the purpose of being given to others*. We complain that great sums are taken out of the pockets of the people, and given to those who do nothing for the people; we express a wish that this practice may be put an end to, because it tends to produce misery amongst the people; and, in answer to this complaint, the false BURKE is brought to tell us, that if every rich man's throat were cut, the poor would not have a meal the more for it!

But, Sir, it gives me pleasure to be able to say, that sophistry like this; that all the arts of hypocrisy; that all the cant of those who affect such a tender concern for the people, have, at last, been completely defeated, and that there does exist, from one end of the country to the other, a clear and decided opinion, that to the waste of the public money, on barracks, military academies and asylums, to an immense standing army, a most enormous staff establishment, to innumerable sinecures, pensions, grants, allowances, commissionerships, with all their endless retinue of officers, clerks, messengers, doorkeepers, &c, there does exist, throughout the whole country, a clear and decided opinion, that to these causes are to be principally ascribed all the distresses which the country endures, and which is daily and hourly covering it with shame and degradation, and sapping the foundations of its strength and its fame. I beseech you, therefore, Sir, to step forward to assist and to protect us. I am quite certain that the country will be responsive to your voice. I would fain hope, if I could, that many country gentlemen will be ready to co-operate with you in all lawful endeavours (and no other endeavours will you make) to rescue their country from ruin. But if you are still destined to stand alone, or, at least, to have the assistance of no one but your gallant Colleague, who has so nobly dealt corruption a mortal blow, I am quite satisfied, from every thing that I have seen or heard, that you will have the support of the people. You have frequently declared that you have no new scheme to adopt; that you want *nothing new*; that you wish to overturn nothing that is agreeable to the Constitution of the country; that you wish to deprive the Crown of none of its prerogatives, the Nobility of none of their privileges, the Church of none of its dignities or dues; but that you wish the people to enjoy fully their rights also,

and that to obtain them this enjoyment, you will exert yourself to the utmost of your power. The people concur with you in opinion ; thy are impatient to hear your propositions distinctly laid before Parliament ; and they are ready to assist you by every lawful means at their command.

I am, with the greatest respect, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO
SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, BART.,

ON THE
BOOK OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

(*Political Register*, September, 1816.)

SIR,

The book, of which so much has been said, has at last been published by Mr. Clement, in the Strand. For a great many years you have been accused of drawing *gloomy* pictures of the state of the country. You have been, by the sons and daughters of Corruption, by those who fatten on the miseries of the country, accused of endeavouring to make men discontented with the best and wisest of governments. The hour of vengeance on these reptiles ; or rather the hour of justice, is now arrived. For the very creatures of this Government are now representing the state of the country in colours much more gloomy than even your eloquence would be able to come up to ; and that very press, which they have so long made use of to misrepresent and abuse all those who oppose them, and at the same time to mislead the people ; that very press has now, though against their will, been made the instrument of justifying you and condemning themselves.

How many times have you predicted, that the country would be ruined ? How many times have you told the people that landowners were become little better than stewards for collecting money to be paid over to the Government ? How many times have you told them, that the war, which was carrying on against liberty abroad, must end in the total debasement of the whole nation, and finally produce a revolution at home, or a state of slavery nothing short of that of the negroes in the Island ? Well do I remember, too, the prophetic words of that celebrated man, that martyr in the cause of freedom, Mr. HORNE TOOKE, who was vilified for your sake, while you were vilified for his sake ; well do I remember his prophetic words, while he was in that assembly, where you have so long laboured for the good of your country, and from which assembly he was afterwards excluded by an Act of their own passing, as he had been in the early part of his life, shut out from a BAR, the character of which is now become notorious to all the world.—“ I know,” said he, “ that you

" will continue the war. Your object is to prevent the people from enjoying their right of choosing their representatives. You intend, by this war, to destroy liberty for ever. But you will be deceived. The cure will arise out of the excess of the evil. The debt which you will create by this war will ruin yourselves, and will produce at last such a mass of misery, that the people, unable any longer to endure it, will shake it off, though many of them may be destroyed in making the effort."

It is a subject of deep regret, that this man is not now alive. He, on the one side, and Pitt and Dundas on the other side, should have lived to see this *book of the Board of Agriculture* ! This book, which is the work of the creatures of the Government, has made good the predictions of Mr. TOOKS to the very letter, as far as events have hitherto gone. And, as to the future, it is utterly impossible, that anything can arise to prevent a change, which will approach very nearly.

This book is by far the most interesting document that ever was laid before the public in England. It comes from the creatures of the Government ; and it relates to matters of the greatest importance. It furnishes undoubted proof, that the country has been brought into a state, out of which it cannot emerge without some *great change*. This being the case, it follows, of course, that we shall not now be deemed so very impertinent, if we take upon us to offer our opinions respecting what sort of change it ought to be.

In the present letter, I shall not attempt to call your attention to any great part of the detail of this book. Indeed, I have not time. The book has but just reached my hands, and it will require an attentive perusal in order to exhibit its contents in a contracted form. In another letter I will endeavour to make this exhibition. At present I will confine myself to a few points, which I deem of the greatest importance.

We shall see by-and-by that more than half the letters, of which the book consists, complain loudly of the *weight of taxes* ; but, the Board of Agriculture, in their part of the book, seem very anxious to lay the greater part of the blame upon the *poor-rates*. These rates ought not, however, Sir, to be considered as a *tax*, because a *tax* denotes something *taken away by the Government*, and not something which is raised upon one man *for the relief of another man*. This is a distinction which people in general overlook, but which distinction, in inquiring into the causes of the miseries of the country, ought to be constantly kept in view. The poor-rates have existed a long-while. There appears to me to be nothing radically vicious in them. There will always be unfortunate people. There will always be the aged, the infirm, and the helpless. The vast amount of the poor-rates is no more an argument against them, than the vast amount of the taxes in general is an argument against all contributions towards the support of Government. As far as the poor-rates operate in leading people to be lazy and careless, they must be considered as an evil ; but it is notorious, that the poor-rates in England produced very little effect in this way, until the weight of taxation brought on by the American war, rendered the poor-rates triple in amount to what they had been before. The poor-laws were enacted in the reign of Queen Elizabeth ; and, towards the close of the reign of Charles the Second they amounted, in England and Wales, to no more than about *two hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year*. It was not till towards the close of the American war, it was not till after this present reign began, that the poor-rates were

deemed an evil; and they would still have appeared to be no evil at all, if the wars in which we have been engaged against the liberties of mankind had not brought on us such heavy demands on the part of the Government and its creditors, that ruin must necessarily fall upon somebody, and that, at last, the number of those to be kept upon food barely sufficient for their existence, necessarily became very great in proportion to the rest of the community.

The poor-laws had originally in their contemplation the relief of the aged, infirm, and the helpless. And, Sir, what could be more amiable in its principle than a code of laws, which said to the world, "there shall be no human being destitute of food and raiment in England, be his misfortunes or his ailments what they may?" This code compelled the rich and the fortunate to come to the assistance of the friendless sufferer. It is not unjust to take from me a part of my income, in order to prevent my neighbour from starving; because his lot might have been mine without any fault on my part, and because that which I now pay to him in the shape of poor-rates, would be paid back to me if misfortune should place me in his situation. Considered in this light, there is really nothing degrading in making application for relief from a parish. The Vagrant Act, a most excellent law, forbids *begging*. And with justice it forbids, as long as the parish contributions provide amply for the wants of the aged, the infirm, and the helpless. Taken together, the poor-laws and the vagrant-laws were a protection to the country against any portion of that degradation of the people, which must always accompany common begging.

But, Sir, when by the weight of taxation, pressing upon the farmer and tradesman, these had not a sufficiency left to give in the shape of wages, the means of maintaining their workmen and their families; when from this all-ruining cause, the young, the able, the healthy, were compelled to come for relief in company with the aged, the infirm, and the helpless, then the dreadful work of degradation began; then it was, and not till then, that the labourers and journeymen of England, the strength and pride of their country, began to change their character; then it was that they began to lose their spirit; then it was that they sought to obtain as much as they could without labour; then it was that they began to see that the way to live a comfortable life, or, at least, to live a life of laziness, was to appear as poor and wretched as possible.

All the hirelings of the Government have endeavoured to throw the blame upon the poor-laws, and for reasons obvious enough. But, even within my memory it was deemed, amongst the labouring people, a very severe calamity, to be compelled to apply for parish relief. Forty years ago a labouring man, even with ten or twelve children, never thought of applying for relief except in case of some particular distress. There was a spirit of independence amongst this class of persons, wholly unknown in the present day. But, how has it happened that the poor-laws should have existed for so many ages without having produced any complaint until of late days? The nation has been frequently at war since the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth. It has had a revolution or two. There have been many projects on foot, and many great changes effected; but, amongst all the subjects of complaint, the poor-laws have never formed one until of late years. Why, indeed, should they? They provide for the wants of the unfortunate out of the means of the fortunate. They are manifestly calculated to regulate the mode, in which we shall yield to each other mutual support and comfort. But these laws are now

attacked by the friends of Corruption as if they sanctioned a species of robbery. As if they were an oppression! What! will they call it oppression for us to be called upon to relieve our poor and unfortunate neighbours; and will they call it no oppression for us to be called upon to contribute the sum of seventy millions a year to be disposed of in wars, subsidies, sinecures, salaries, and in paying the interest of a debt contracted by the Government for its own purposes? The money which is collected from us for the relief of the poor, is collected in consequence of an assessment made by ourselves in our respective parishes; we collect it ourselves; we distribute it ourselves; we bring one another to account; and we manage the whole business, something in a bungling manner to be sure, but generally without any waste, and always without creating any dependant on the Government. We know very well that all which we collect and distribute is necessary to be collected and distributed. We lament very much that the amount is so great, but for the most part, we feel that we are only doing towards others that which those others would do towards us, if fortune were to make us change places. And yet the hirelings of the Government would fain make us believe, that the poor-rates are an oppression, while it is no oppression at all to be compelled to pay the immense sums, which the Government draws from us for its purposes, and with regard to the distribution of which we have, neither directly nor indirectly, any sort of control.

But, before I proceed any further, permit me to insert here what the Board of Agriculture says upon this subject; after which I will proceed with my remarks.

“ Poor-rates.

“ The letters containing returns descriptive of poor-rates, are to the following purport :—

	Letters.
“ Letters in which the rates have increased since 1811 and 1812.....	147
“ N. B. In 54 of these letters, the proportional rise is given, and “ amounts on the average to 43 per cent.	
“ Letters in which the rates have decreased.....	29
“ N. B. In 8 of these letters, the proportional fall is given, and “ amounts on an average to 28 per cent.	
“ Letters, in which the rates are stationary, that is, neither higher nor “ lower than 1811 and 1812	77
Total.....	253

“ But this table gives by no means a sufficient idea of the distress at present arising from this heavy tax, as in a variety of instances the farmers who lately paid to these rates have been obliged to give up their farms, and are actually become paupers themselves, receiving parochial allowance like other paupers; and this increased burden in many other parishes occurs, while some farms are unoccupied, or run waste; and in the cases of the most favourable, the burden falls with increasing weight on the landlords. The letters contain many complaints that while the manufacturers, who have occasioned the chief burden, pay scarcely any thing to the rates, the accumulated weight falls on the occupiers of land.—The complaints almost universally made of the increased, heavy burden, and most mischievous consequences to the industry of the people, which result from poor-rates, form a conspicuous feature among the complaints of the correspondents; insomuch that many apprehensions are expressed of this system being permitted to continue, and increase till it will absorb, in union with tithes, the whole rental of the kingdom, leaving nothing more to the landlords of it, than that of acting as trustees and managers for the benefit of others. But the surprising circumstance of this result is the increase being so general at the very period in which, from the reduced price of provisions, a directly contrary effect might have been expected. To find that rates have

"risen, while the principal object in the support of the nourishment of the poor has fallen in price above 100 per cent., *seems to be extraordinary*; nor could such a result have been found, but in administration liable to so many objections. We cannot be surprised at a great number of these correspondents, calling with anxiety for *regulations* in a system, which tends directly to annihilate all industry. The extreme burthen arising from poor-rates, is a subject which can *never have too much attention paid to it*; and its nature can be well understood only by reference to particular cases: thus, it deserves attention, that this tax has been collected in certain districts in Wales, in kind, if the expression be permitted; that is, the substances necessary for the support of the poor, taken instead of the value in money;—it may be presumed, through a want of circulating medium. The amount to which this tax can arise, may be understood by referring to the case of Halstead in Essex, where it rises to 5s. 6d. in the pound for one quarter of a year, taken at one-fifth under the rack-rent; and at Coggeshall, in the same county, much higher; and in a parish near Sandwich, in Kent, they amount to 22s. per acre. Such facts require no comment. *The abuses to which this administration is liable*, may be felt from the Somersetshire case, of parish paupers becoming claimants as creditors on the effects of a bankrupt."

Thus you see, Sir, that, at last, instead of blaming the *Government*, the blame is actually thrown upon *its victims*! These Gentlemen of the Board seem, however, to be strangely puzzled. They are what my grandmother used to call *posed*; and I believe verily, that if the good old woman were still alive she would be full as able to make a rational statement upon the subject as these gentlemen are. They call the poor-rates a *heavy tax*; a *heavy burden*. Certainly it is a heavy burden, but what has made it so? Why, the heavy hand of the Government, which has reduced so many persons to the state of paupers. Nay, these gentlemen themselves tell us, that, in many cases, the farmers, who lately paid to the poor-rate, are actually become paupers themselves, and are receiving allowances *like other paupers*.—To be sure they are; and this exemplifies that which I had the honour to address to you but just now. I said, that I who am paying to the poor-rate to-day, may have to draw from the poor-rate to-morrow.—Will these gentlemen say, that these *farmers are to blame*? No, they will not dare to say that. It would be impudence unbearable for them to assert that, or for them to insinuate it. Why then do they insinuate that *any other paupers are to blame*? None of the paupers are to blame. The burden, they tell us, "falls with increasing weight on the *landlords*." To be sure it does. First, the tenants' labourers have become paupers; next the tenants have become paupers, and next, the small landlords will become paupers; last of all, if it could possibly go that length, the great landlords would become paupers. But the thing will stop before it comes to that point. In order to avoid becoming paupers, that is to say, *parish* paupers, great numbers of landlords have nestled themselves in under the wings of Government, and have thereby got into the receipt of a part of the money which it collects, and which collections is the cause of all the pauperism.—We are here, Sir, driving into the very *heart's core of the system*. These kind Gentlemen of the Board of Agriculture have let us into it. They have opened the way, not entirely of their own accord, for they have been in some measure compelled to open it. But, at any rate, they have opened it. They have exhibited themselves stuck fast in the mire of the mischief; and, in the act of pulling them out, we shall show to the people, as clear as daylight, the nature, the extent, the tendency, and the origin of that mischief.

The complaints, we are told, almost universally made, of the increase

and heavy burden of the poor-rates, form a "*conspicuous feature*" in the case. To be sure they do. They form the only feature worth looking at. To this point it comes at last. The poor-house is the last stage, short of death by actual starvation. And, Sir, have not I, for thirteen years past, been endeavouring, almost incessantly, to turn the attention of the people towards this conspicuous and horrid feature? When the impudent Pitt, that shallow boaster, that eloquent quack, that child and champion of corruption; when he used to be exhibiting his flashy accounts of the increase of imports and exports, and when his Sancho, George Rose, used to be publishing his lists of New Roads, New Canals, and New Enclosures, I used to answer their frothy trash by bidding them look at the *increase of the poor-rates*. It has at last been discovered, even by the moles of the Board of Agriculture, that the poor-rates are the grand criterion of the state of the nation. The discovery comes somewhat late; but it will be extremely useful, unless a fact so awfully admonishing be disregarded, and if it be disregarded, utter confusion must follow.

The Board tells us, that apprehensions are expressed by its correspondents, that, "*If this system be permitted to continue, it will absorb, in union with tithes, the whole rental of the kingdom, leaving nothing more to the landlords of it, than that of acting as trustees and managers for the benefit of OTHERS.*" We will talk about *tithes* by-and-bye; but, Sir, can you imagine any thing more *mean*; can you imagine any thing more cowardly, than the sentence here quoted? Trustees and managers for the benefit of *others*? They can see, then, the degraded situation of the landlord, as far as the amount of his rents, or of the worth of his estate, is to be handed over to prevent his poor neighbours from starving; but they cannot perceive the degradation which he endures as far as he is the trustee and manager for the Cannings, the Roses, the Huskissons, the Castlereaghs, and the M'Mahons. It is all very well, it would seem, for the country gentleman to be a trustee and a manager for the benefit of those gentry; but he becomes a degraded man when called on for a portion of his income to afford relief to those who till the land, who make our clothes, and who build and repair our houses. This may be a very good sentiment for a Government Board; but I am very sure that it will be rejected with indignation by you and by every gentleman of landed estate who has got one spark of English spirit remaining within him.

But, what do these Gentleman mean by the poor-rates *being permitted to continue*? Do they imagine in good earnest, that the poor-rates can be *abolished*? in other words, do they mean, when they are talking about complaints against the poor-rates, to urge the Parliament to pass a law to do away those laws which now afford relief to paupers? Do they really imagine that they can persuade or compel two millions of the people to submit to starvation? If they do not mean this, I should be glad to know what they do mean; and if this be their meaning, the wickedness of the idea is exceeded only by its folly. I am aware that there are projects on foot for *preventing the poor from marrying*! What a horrid state must that country be in, when men can patiently listen to a project from preventing children from being born; for producing celibacy; for encouraging a state of life, which has always been held in disrepute, for saying to the young men and young women of the country, "be not fathers and mothers?" What a state must a country be in when such a project can be listened to? We are come indeed to a pretty pass, when

we can endure to be coolly advised to set our faces against the very first principle of nature. However, it is certainly true, that it is a calamity for a child to be born in the present state of our country. But, what does reason and justice say that we ought to do then ? Why to make a change in that state, to make the situation of our country such, that it shall again be a subject of joy *that a child is born* ; that shall make Englishmen once more congratulate one another upon the birth of their children ; that shall make the father take to his arms the new-born infant with the anticipation of a life of happiness and freedom, and not receive it as he now does with the forebodings of an addition to his misery. It is our duty, and I am sure, Sir, that you will not neglect your part of it, to make this important change ; and then we may leave to the Cannings and the Roses, and others like them, to profit if they choose from the doctrines of Mr. MALTHUS.

The notion is, that there has been a *grand mistake*, as to the *meaning of the poor-laws*. It seems to be intended to do something, that shall prevent *able men*, with small families, or with no families, from obtaining parish relief. Certainly, Sir, upon the first blush of the proposition, nothing can appear more reasonable or more just, especially as we know very well that the poor-rate was intended for the relief of none but the helpless. I take the liberty, Sir, though perhaps I am impertinent in so doing, you having, I dare say, viewed the matter in all its bearings : nevertheless, I cannot refrain from taking the liberty to request your particular attention to this point ; because the arguments for this alteration are specious, and because I know that they will be made use of.*

That the poor-rates ought to be applied solely to the relief of the aged, the infirm, and the helpless, is admitted ; and, if it were not for the enormous demands of the Government, this principle might, and would be acted upon, as it formerly was. But, those demands are now so great, that the farmer and tradesman have not the means of affording their labourers and journeymen a sufficiency in the shape of wages to furnish them with the necessaries of life. At this time, now that the evil of taxation has arrived at nearly its highest pitch, the farmers and tradesmen have not only not the means of giving sufficient wages to those who do work for them, but they have not the means of giving any employment at all, and, of course, of giving any wages at all to a considerable portion of the journeymen and labourers. Consequently there are many labourers and many journeymen, who can obtain no employment and no wages. They must accordingly starve, unless relieved by the parish. And if one of these men were to come to you, you being an overseer of the poor, should you not regard him as a person in a *helpless state* ? You certainly would, and you would do as we do, that is to say, afford him relief. It is no fault of his that he is not at work. He is ready to work if you can find him employment. Employment cannot be found, but food must be found for him, or he and hundreds of thousands of others will find food for themselves.

So that, after all, you see, Sir, that the observations of the Board amount to very little more than nonsense. They talk about the *abuses of the administration* of the poor-laws. How they strain at a gnat and swallow a camel ! Mr. WINDHAM once told WILBERFORCE, when the latter

* This alteration was made by the Whigs in 1834. See 4 & 5 Wm. IV. c. 76.
—ED.

had made a long harangue against the profligacy of bull-baiting, while he said not a word about the much greater profligacy of the black-legs at the horse-races in Yorkshire, that he put him in mind of the butcher, who was running about swearing for his knife, when he had it in his *mouth* all the while. The gentlemen of the Board of Agriculture seem to be affected with the same sort of blindness as Wilberforce. They can see minute objects clearly enough, but huge ones seem to be too much for their vision. They can see, or they pretend to see, abuses in the administration of the affairs of the parishes; but they can see no abuses at all in the administration of the affairs of *Government*, though some of its paupers receive nearly forty thousand pounds a year each. They can see that the farmer is pressed down by the eight millions a year which is collected in poor-rates; but not one word do they say about the sixty or seventy millions a year, which are raised, or attempted to be raised in *taxes*! The eyes of these gentlemen are of a singular quality. They would deny the poor man, who cannot find work, bread to save him from starving, but not one penny do they propose to take from the enormous sinecures of Lord Camden, Lord Ellenborough, Lord Melville, Lord Grenville, or any of the rest of them. The Landlords, according to these gentlemen, must do something to prevent themselves from being any longer trustees and managers for the benefit of the poor; but the Board of Agriculture, which consists of good fat placemen and pensioners, appear to see no reason why the Landlords should not continue to act, under the Cannings and the Roses, as trustees and managers for the benefit of the Board of Agriculture and for all the endless swarm of those who live upon the taxes.

The country, however, will, I am persuaded, see this matter in a different light. For my own part, I think myself bound to contribute to the relief of my poor and distressed neighbours. I think, that they have not only a legal, but an equitable claim upon me. Many of them have, in their better days, contributed towards the support of other paupers. Had they no other claim, they have the claim, which hunger and nakedness give them. But, what claim have the Cannings and the Giffords upon me, or upon anybody else. How has Mrs. HUNN, or Mrs. Fox, or Lady LOUISA PAGET, or Lord DUNMORE's daughter, or Mrs. MALLET DU PAN, or any of the rest of that set; how have they obtained a claim better than that of the unfortunate labourers and journeymen of England?

No, Sir, we shall not suffer the unfortunate poor to be left under the hedges to starve, while these people are wallowing in luxury; and I trust, that, before the next winter be over, we shall convince the Board of Agriculture, that if they do not choose to take a view of the real causes of the misery of the country, we shall convince them, I trust, that the real causes of this misery are not only seen, but that the nation will never rest until those causes be removed. They tell us, that the "extreme burthen arising from poor-rates is a subject which *can never have too much attention paid to it*." In one respect this is right enough. It is indeed impossible to pay too much attention to that desolating pauperism which has been the result of the funding and taxing system. But, what these gentlemen mean is, to draw off our attention from the *cause* of the increase of the poor-rates. They want to draw us aside from our pursuit of this cause. Well they may, for we should find that they themselves make a part of it. They will, however, find themselves very much deceived. They will find, that we know, that it is the immense load of taxes which has pressed the people down into the poor-houses, and, now that they are there these gen-

tllemen recommend any remedy except that which alone can be of real service, namely, the taking off a very large part of those taxes, and thereby restoring to the farmer and the tradesman and the landlord the means of giving in the shape of wages, that which is now given in the shape of parish relief.

These Gentlemen of the Board give us instances of the great amount of the poor-rates in certain parishes. In one place they tell us that they exceed twenty shillings in the pound, taken at only one-fifth under the rack-rent. In another parish they say, that the poor-rates amount to *twenty-two shillings per acre*. Well ! And what then ? If the poor-rates, the whole of which amount to eight millions a year, press thus heavily upon the land, what must be the pressure of the *sixty millions*, which the Government takes from us for its placemen, its pensioners, its contractors, its army, its barracks, and its debt, contracted by it for carrying on its wars against the people of America and the people of France ; for the burning of the city of Washington, the sacking of Alexandria, Hampton, Frenchtown, &c., of and for the restoring the detested dynasty of the Bourbons ? If we are to make some change in order to relieve ourselves from the pressure of these eight millions ; if we are to pay constant attention to this object ; shall we pay no attention to the greater object of relieving ourselves from the pressure of the sixty millions ?

The Board of Agriculture must have thought the nation blind, when it put this set of observations upon paper. It long has been blind enough ; but the days of its blindness are passed never to return. The Board tells us that it is a "*surprising circumstance*," that the poor-rates should have increased in amount, at the very period when the food of man had fallen in price a hundred per cent. It would really be giving the Board of Agriculture credit for even a greater portion of ignorance than they are fairly entitled to, to suppose them sincere in this observation. The whole of their proceedings show them to be superficial men ; but to suppose them to be so very ignorant, as to be surprised, that the poor-rates should increase in proportion to the diminution of the means of paying wages to the labourer and the journeyman ; to suppose them to be so profoundly ignorant as this, would be to carry our charity to too great a length.

If the farmer's produce fell one-half in price, and if all his taxes continued to be the same as they were before, how did these wiseacres imagine that he was to find money to pay the same number of labourers that he paid before ? If indeed one-half of his taxes had been taken off, then he would still have been able to pay the same number of labourers, though at reduced wages. Do not the wiseacres see, that a *reduction of wages*, as well as of the price of food, has taken place ? This was all right and natural ; but no reduction of taxes has taken place *as yet*, except in the Malt-tax ; and when the Property-tax and the Malt-tax have both ceased to operate, the burthen of taxes which will remain will be still so heavy, that it will be impossible for the land to support them and to pay for its former quantity of labour. If the Gentlemen of the Board should happen to read what I am now doing myself the honour to address to you, they may perhaps begin to believe that other causes than those of mal-administration of the poor-rates have produced the miseries of which their book seems to be no bad exhibition.

Before I take my leave of this topic, I think it necessary to notice what a person who is called Dr. MACQUEEN communicates to the Board relative to the poor-rates. He writes, as you will see, upon a variety of subjects ;

but that part of his communication, to which I am desirous of drawing your attention at this time is, that which contains his revilings of the poor; that is to say, of the labouring men in England, who, with all their faults, and in spite of the degrading influence of a remorseless system of taxation, are still the most laborious people in the whole world. I have never heard of this gentleman before; but from the very tone of his letter, I will venture to say, that he was not born and bred in the country in England, and that he knows no more of the real character of the country people than he knows of what is passing in the moon. What I find under his name is as follows:—

Dr. M. Macqueen.—Three of my own farms are now vacant. One containing 404 acres, another of 400, and a third of 250. These farms I am obliged to cultivate at an enormous expense, to prevent the lands running into a state of ruinous waste. I pay Property-tax for landlord and tenant, tithes, poor-rates, heavy road-duties, &c. without any return for one year, at least; and the produce afterwards expected, I fear, will prove a very inadequate return to the various charges incurred. I have lost, besides, 1600*l.* of arrears of rent by the late tenants selling their crops and other property clandestinely, and then running away, or becoming insolvent. These farms are situated in the best part of Bedfordshire, and at the distance of less than fifty miles from London. The rent of the whole, at an average, did not exceed 25*s.* or 26*s.* per acre, exclusive of tithes. One of my oldest tenants, holding a farm of above 400 acres, has given me notice of his intention to quit at next Michaelmas. Another farm of 300 acres was thrown up at last Easter, but is now let to another tenant. Of the various evils that combine against the agricultural interest, *tithes and poor-rates*, as these are now constituted, appear to me to have the most extensive operation, *far more than the Income-tax, or perhaps the whole war-taxes together.* Tithes should never be paid by the farmer.

They operate as a discouragement to his industry and enterprise, and are a constant source of ill-will towards the Clergy and the Established Church in general, especially in the many instances where they are gathered for the benefit of some rich dignitary, or other man of rank, whom the parishioners never see nor hear.—In regard to the poor-rates I always view these as *coupled with the idleness and depravity of the working-classes.* And on this subject I would observe, that the morals as well as manners of the lower orders of the community here have been degenerating since the earliest stages of the French Revolution. *The doctrine of equality and the rights of man* is not yet forgotten, but *fondly cherished, and reluctantly abandoned.* They consider their respective parishes as their *right and inheritance*, to which they are *entitled to resort*, under every real or imaginary grievance, howsoever it may have been incurred. And if their request be not granted, they fly to the next Magistrate, who is frequently the parson of the parish, and obtain an order to the overseers. Hence they are become *careless and improvident, negligent* as to their labour, and *impatient of control*: of their earnings too, a large proportion is *spent at the alehouse*, a misconduct for which they deem themselves *accountable to no authority.* To obviate this complicated mischief, *Saving-Banks should be encouraged*, the landholders themselves, and the principal farmers, ought to be members of such institutions, by way of giving them encouragement. The Magistrates should be *more numerous and armed with much more power than they hold*, by the existing laws. The poor and labouring man should be taught to depend chiefly on himself, on his industry, sobriety, and good behaviour, and to expect relief only in cases wherein the distress was *urgent and manifest, and proceeding from causes that are natural and inevitable.* Hence would follow an amelioration of their conduct and comforts, together with a diminution of the *intolerable contributions* that are now levied for their support. Connected with the morals and conditions of the lower orders, I would remark on the great number of *ale-houses* in every part of the country, the common resort of the men when the business of the day is closed. These houses are now almost all bought up by the neighbouring brewers, who place in them trusty servants to sell their sophisticated composition,—a soft, liquorish, intoxicating liquor, *extracted from cheap and secret ingredients.* Thus they absorb a very large portion of the earnings of the people, and amass to themselves *sumptuous for-*

"*tunes at the expense of the industry and morals of the labouring-classes. This traffic ought assuredly to be put down by some legislative authority. No public brewer should be allowed to possess an ale-house, but every encouragement given to publicans to brew their own beer, and the number should be considerably reduced. I should think one-third of the present number were amply sufficient. The Magistrates should not only be more in number than they now are, but the Magistracy ought to be confined chiefly, if not entirely to country gentlemen, to the absolute exclusion of the clergy. It is my opinion, that the ecclesiastical and civil functions should be always left separate, as by their union, on great and small occasions, confusion and mischief have too frequently been the result. The Lord-Lieutenants of the Counties should have the power to name as many Magistrates as they judge right, under a strong penalty in the event of refusal.*"

From amidst this farrago of remarks, assertions, and opinions, we collect this fact, that Dr. Macqueen is ready with his pen, to assail anything but the Government. The labourers, the clergy, the keepers of public-houses, the brewers, and their beer; every thing and every body are exposed to his lash except the Cannings and the rest of that tribe, who collect from us and dispose of the sixty millions a year. I should be glad to know from Dr. Macqueen whether he can prove his assertion, that the common brewers make their beer out of a composition extracted from cheap and *secret ingredients*. If he cannot *prove* this, he is a slanderer; and for my part, I believe what he has asserted as applicable to brewers in general, is *wholly false*. There is an improbability on the face of it, seeing that it is impossible to obtain, for the same sum of money, the same degree of strength to beer, from any other material, as is to be obtained from malt. As to the use of drugs calculated to produce intoxication, the idea is as foolish as the assertion is scandalous; for, Sir, is it to be imagined, that the people in general would continue to use such drugs for *any length of time*? And besides, is it not manifest, that the *competition* between brewers themselves must necessarily correct any such evil if it existed? In every country-town, as well as in London, and in every bunch of villages or hamlets, the public-houses are divided between different brewers, and between those brewers and persons who brew their own beer. Now, according to Dr. Macqueen's account, the labourers are very fond of this said article called beer, and in this respect his account is very true. But, then, we must suppose that these same labourers are pretty good judges of the strength, and other qualities of beer; and we must also suppose, that they will spend their money in those houses, where the best beer is to be obtained. Accordingly, if the Doctor's charge against the brewers were well-founded, we should see in a very short time, that no brewer's beer would be drunk, and that all the labourers, and other drinkers of beer, would go to the *free houses*, as they are called, that is to say, houses which do not belong to brewers. This, however, is so far from being the fact, that, in nine instances out of ten, where the house is a free house, the beer sold at it is purchased of some common brewer, and whoever knows anything of the country, knows that brewers' houses are seen filled with customers, while other houses, with their home-brewed beer, are almost destitute of custom. I have only noticed this matter for the purpose of showing what silly notions got into the heads of these gentry whose fingers are everlastingly itching for petty legislation; and who seem to be disposed to cause Government interference to be introduced into every transaction between man and man. I do not say, that there is no brewer, who, to revive the

spirit of flat beer, or to soften the taste of sour beer, does not resort to some sort of drug. But, I know very well that this is done in private families, and have every reason to suppose that it is done by publicans who brew their own beer. It is only in these cases, that such a process can be supposed to be resorted to, and the greater the quantity of beer brewed by any one brewer, the less probability there is of his being under the necessity of using such means, because his run is quicker, and because he has greater powers of renovation. From the same cause, the great brewer is enabled to sell stronger beer than the publican who brews his own beer. His expenses are very great; but they are *proportionably* less than those of the publican who brews his own beer; and, Sir, be you assured, that, in spite of all the noise and nonsense that has been said and published upon this subject, this is the *real and only cause* why there are so many of the public-houses in the hands of common brewers. To suppose any other cause, would be to suppose, that the common brewers had not only the power of obtaining licenses to the exclusion of other persons, which is notoriously not true, but it would be further to suppose, that there was no competition between themselves; and that they were all united in the combination, and all participating equally in the general mass of profits. But, after seeing the Parliament pass the *Brown Bread Bill*, in 1801, ought we to be surprised at anything of this sort from the pens of petty low inventors, like Dr. Macqueen?

This gentleman falls with great virulence upon the working classes. According to him, they are careless, improvident, negligent, and impatient of control, idle, and depraved. It is impossible to say what sort of people the Doctor may live amongst; but, as applied *generally* to the labourers of England, this charge is very far from being true. That they are degraded in their own eyes; that they are thievish in many instances; that they resort to all sorts of meannesses in order to obtain an additional mouthful of food, is very certain. And what is the *cause* of this? Their poverty; their extreme poverty; their wretchedness; the state of misery in which they live. And what is the cause of this misery? The want of a sufficient quantity of money in the shape of wages. And what is the cause of this want? The cause is the heavy taxes, which take from the farmer and the tradesman those sums of money, great part of which would otherwise go to the labourer and journeyman, for the decent support of himself and family. I have before shown, in a letter addressed to you in January last, that in America the labourer was receiving three times as much in the shape of wages as the labourer was at the same time receiving in this country, while the price of provisions was lower there than it was here. I at the same time showed, that there was an absence of crime in America, proportioned to this difference in the situation of the labourer in the two countries. When, therefore, Dr. Macqueen was falling with such violence upon the faults of our labourers, justice should have induced him to trace those faults to their right cause, and not have suffered him to leave the invective against our countrymen naked and unexplained. But this would not have suited Dr. Macqueen, whose object, like that of the Board of Agriculture, seems to have been, to withdraw the attention of the people from the Government and its enormous demands. Indeed, he says that the poor-rates (and the *tithes*) appear to him to be far more oppressive than *all the war-taxes put together*. This doctor, you see, looks upon eight millions a-year; for we must leave out the tithes for a reason which I shall state by-and-bye; he

looks upon these eight millions a-year as being more burdensome than the twenty-millions a-year paid in war-taxes, and to which he seems to have very little objection ! I would make a trifling bet that the Doctor is not without a feeling of interest in the taxes ; for, upon any other supposition his opinion seems to be wholly unaccountable.

There is one charge, which the Doctor brings against those, who he calls the "lower orders," which is worthy of particular notice. He says that they consider their respective "parishes as their *right and inheritance*, to which they are entitled to resort." By parishes he must mean the poor-rates ; and, let me ask the Doctor if the poor-rates are not as much, at least, the right and inheritance of the poor labourer, as the *sinécure places and pensions* are the right of those, to whom they have been granted ? When it has been proposed to do away these enormous charges upon the country, the answer has been, that the holders enjoy them by *law*, and that to take them away would be *robbery*. But, it seems, that it would be no robbery according to this Doctor's notion, to deprive the poor of the means of existence. The fact is, that, as I have shown before, the helpless poor have a right, in equity as well as in law, to relief from the rates ; and it remains for Dr. Macqueen to show us what equitable right the Roses, the Cannings, the Seymours, the Giffords, and the Laws, and hundreds of others, have to their *sinécures*.

Another charge of the Doctor against the working classes is still more worthy of notice. He says, "that the morals as well as manners of the "lower orders of the community have been *degenerating* since the "earliest ages of the *French Revolution*. The *doctrine of equality* and "the *rights of man* is not yet forgotten, but *fondly cherished*, and reluctantly abandoned." If this were true, what an excellent lesson is here for those who set about putting down principles and opinions by force of arms ! PAINÉ should be alive to hear this. He should be alive to hear it asserted by the fast friends of the system, that they had spent a thousand millions of money in vain, to endeavour to extinguish the principles inculcated in his celebrated book. The truth is, however, that the people, generally speaking, never entertained the notion of equality in its odious and ridiculous sense ; and I am not at all afraid to assert, that it is a falsehood to impute to them the cherishing of any such idea. They would not understand any person who should talk to them about *equality*. It is a thing that they have never heard of, and against which all the habits of their life would protest. But, Sir, you see in the Doctor, what you see in the Board of Agriculture itself ; namely, a desire to keep the eyes of the people from the Government in this discussion, and to attribute the distresses of the country to any person other than those who have squandered the means of the nation, and to anything other than the taxes, which are the real cause of all the distress.

While the Doctor, however, appears in one paragraph of his letter, to be the bitter enemy of revolutionary notions, I must do him the justice to say, that he makes ample amends in another paragraph, by asserting broadly and boldly, that "*tithes should never be paid by the farmer*." It was here that the French Revolution began. This was the first great blow struck by the republicans in France ; and, it would be curious enough for us to behold, as I verily believe we shall behold, the enemies of the French Revolution, at the end of three and twenty years of bloodshed, coolly propose, as a just and equitable measure, that very measure which was the first to be adopted by the revolutionists of France. So well

have they managed the matter, and so true it is that *extremes meet*, that these enemies of freedom and just government have at last, after execrating every change for the better, come of their own accord to the proposition of changes which nothing but the most desperate circumstances can possibly justify; and the clergy of the established church, who thought that the safety of their property and of their rank called upon them to join the enemies of reform, may now have leisure to repent of the part they have taken, when they see that property openly assailed, not by the reformers, but by those very associates with whom they co-operated in the preventing of reform !

As to the justice and expediency of abolishing tithes, I would first observe, that a very large portion of the tithes are *private property* to all intents and purposes, and that the clergy have no more interest in them than I have. Besides this, a great deal more than half of the church livings are, as you very well know, private property also, and are bought and sold with as little ceremony as stalls in Smithfield, or seats at the Opera, or in any other big house of assembling. They are, too, bought and sold *lawfully*. Their value consists in the amount of the tithes which are attached to them. And yet this Doctor says, with the most perfect unreserve, that tithes *ought never to be paid by the farmer*; and of course, *ought never to be paid at all*; for if the farmers ought not to pay them, it would be very difficult, I imagine, to find out anybody else to pay them. Here, then, is a pretty good sweep at private property;—a pretty good stroke in the levelling way;—a pretty bold step in the revolutionary career. The Doctor is a very apt disciple of PAINÉ, without seeming conscious of his merit; and it will, I imagine, make the clergy grind their teeth, when they perceive, that they have all this time been lending their powerful assistance to men who now turn round upon them, and are for discarding them as a useless burden !

In this case, as in the case of the poor-rates, we may observe, that it remains for our adversaries to show, how it has happened, that this great *evil of tithes* has remained *unperceived for such a series of ages* ! Tithes have existed in England for at least seven hundred years. England has been great, free, and happy, during a large portion of that time; and yet tithes have been collected during the whole of that time. Why then, Sir, should the distresses of the country at this time be looked for in the existence of tithes ? The tithes, as I need not attempt to demonstrate to *you*, cannot by any *possibility*, be in themselves injurious to the cultivator of the land, unless that cultivator be unjust and unreasonable. When he purchases a farm, or takes the lease of a farm, he makes his calculations, including not only the full amount, but also the possible inconvenience of the tithe. He reckons the tithe as well as the rent. The tithe is one of the deductions from his profits as much as the rent is; and it would be full as reasonable to say that rents are *injurious to the farmer*, as to say that tithes are injurious to the farmer. This is so manifest; the case is so plain, that I will not longer dwell upon it, even considering this letter to you as a vehicle of observations addressed, in fact, to the mass of the nation. I am aware that to rail against parsons and against tithes is now become very popular; but this is a mode of obtaining popularity, which I am very sure you would be the first to condemn, though you would, perhaps, be inclined to agree with me, that the clergy, in having joined so heartily with the enemies of freedom, would merit such treatment at the hands of their friends.

But, Sir, besides the obvious objection to the seeking of popularity by the flattering of any prejudice, and particularly a prejudice founded in gross error, there is this greater objection to our joining in this cry against tithes; that we thereby aid the cause of our great enemies, and assist them in drawing off the attention of the people from the squanderings of the Government; from that enormous load of Government taxes which, and which alone, is the real cause of all the sufferings that are now felt in the country. If we agree that poor-rates, or tithes, or game-laws, or public breweries, or a want of Corn Bills, or of a bounty on the exportation of corn; if we agree, that these are the causes of the national distress, we fall into the trap of the enemy, and we in fact join, in so much, in the deceiving of the people, who ought to have constantly kept before their eyes the great cause of their misery, and ought to look for no remedy other than that of a Parliament chosen by themselves.

It is now become pretty evident to every body, that if the people had been fully represented in Parliament, this enormous load of taxes would never have existed; and it is not less evident, that the load will continue, as far as the taxes can be collected, as long as we are in want of a reform. It is clear enough, indeed, that the taxes to their present nominal amount, cannot be collected; but still the weight will be felt as severely, and still more severely, because the burden will be as great as can possibly be borne, and will continue to spread ruin around us. There is nothing therefore short of a reform of the Parliament that can be of any real service; and it is of the greatest importance that the people should be cautioned against being amused with any petty schemes and devices. If the enemies of reform choose to assail the church property; if they choose to begin any revolution of this sort, in the name of all that is ridiculous let them do it. But, I hope that the work will be theirs; that it will be their own undertaking, and that the reformers will not be thereby amused, and withdrawn from their own proper object.

All sort of schemes are afloat. Never was a nation so stocked with *schemers*. There is nothing too high nor too low for them. They soar at one moment, and dive the next. Expedients which would put pick-pockets and shoplifters to shame are brought forward with serious faces and in pompous accents. There must be a reform in Parliament, or a Bethlehem big enough to hold half the nation.

One would naturally have expected that the Board of Agriculture, after having taken so much pains to collect information, would, before they sent this collection to the press, have been prepared to recommend some general measure in the way of remedy. But, instead of this, they say, that, "if it be asked what *conclusions* are to be drawn from these facts, "those conclusions will, *of course*, suggest themselves with the *greatest clearness* to the members of the legislature!" You will laugh at this manner of slipping their heads out of the halter. Yes, they have seen how amazingly clever the members of the legislature have been in drawing conclusions and discovering remedies. Clever, however, as they have been, they have now got that which will puzzle them. The Parliament, by a very bold figure, has been described as being omnipotent; but, if they find a remedy for the present distress without blowing up their system, I shall have no scruple to say, that they are literally and truly omnipotent.

In the meanwhile the landowners are crying out aloud. They have, in the book now before me, given vent to their grief in language which it

does one's heart good to hear. Some of them complain of having been ruined, and others, that their ruin is approaching. Will they then, at last, join in calling for a reform? I think they will not; and indeed, seeing what their past conduct has been, it would be almost a dishonour to the cause for it to receive their support.

In another letter, I will notice the several remedies proposed by the correspondents of the Board of Agriculture. In the meanwhile, I remain, with the greatest respect,

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO

SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, BART.,

ON THE

REMEDIES PROPOSED BY THE CORRESPONDENTS OF THE BOARD
OF AGRICULTURE.

(*Political Register*, October, 1816.)

SIR,

Before this time, you will, I dare say, have read the whole of the Book of the Board of Agriculture, and will, I am sure, have viewed with a mixture of contempt and indignation the several *remedies*, proposed by the correspondents of the Board. I will, nevertheless, take the liberty to offer you some observations upon these proposed remedies, the list of which I will here insert, with a remark of the Board subjoined to the list, which remark, though I mentioned it in my last letter, will merit, by and by, some further animadversion.

" Remedies proposed.

" 1. Letters, proposing the repeal or reduction of taxes	205
" 2. ———, proposing the reduction of rent.....	90
" 3. ———, to commute tithes	47
" 4. ———, to prohibit or lay heavy duties on the importation of all land " produce	58
" 5. ———, to give a bounty on the export of corn	31
" 6. ———, to increase paper circulation	21
" 7. ———, to regulate Poor-rates, and especially by subjecting all property " to bear its fair share	34
" 8. ———, to raise the price of corn, &c.	19
" 9. ———, to establish corn rents	7
" 10. ———, to repeal the Act for warehousing foreign corn.....	12
" 11. ———, to lend Exchequer Bills on good security	2
" 12. ———, to continue the Bank Restriction	2
" 13. ———, to encourage emigration	1
" 14. ———, to give the same favour to agriculture as to manufacture, as " the principal remedy; but many allude less decisively to " the same system	16

" 15. Letters, to reduce the interest of money	3
" 16. ———, to establish public granaries, the corn to be purchased by " Government.....	8
" 17. ———, to encourage distilleries	2
" 18. ———, Government to take into their own hands the management " of the poor'	2
" 19. ———, proposing to regulate the cottages with the addition of lands	7
" 20. ———, to repeal the Game Laws	1
" 21. ———, to lessen the quantity of land intended to be sown	2
" 22. ———, to give a bounty on the cultivation of hemp	1
" 23. ———, to take off the tax on draining-brick	1
" 24. ———, the Bank of England to establish branch banks	1
" The great object of the Board in these inquiries has been to collect facts.	
" If it be asked ' <i>What conclusions are to be drawn from these facts?</i> ' Such, will,	
" of course, suggest themselves with the <i>greatest clearness</i> to the <i>members of the</i>	
" <i>legislature</i> . With this expectation before us, we <i>cannot but be surprised at the</i>	
" <i>anxiety felt, and the apprehensions expressed</i> by many of the ablest persons	
" (being magistrates of extensive jurisdictions) amongst the correspondents,	
" whose letters are the basis of this general result."	

What will the world think, Sir, of a *couple of dozen of remedies* for the evils which oppress a nation, whose Government has the assurance to tell it that its situation is the envy and admiration of the universe? This impudent Government, with these four-and-twenty remedies before it, will not be disposed, I imagine, to concur in the doctrine of the bible, "that in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom."

It is hard to know where to begin the work of exposure, where the mass of error is so great, and where one error so imperceptibly runs into, and mixes itself with another. The first remedy proposed, and in favour of which there appears to be one-half of the correspondents, namely, the *reduction of taxes*, is indeed a real remedy. But, with the exception of about four of the correspondents out of two hundred and five, this reduction is spoken of in a way, which clearly shows that the writers have no idea of a reduction to the extent that is become absolutely necessary. There is here and there a hint at the transfer of estates from the landowners to the fundholders; but no correspondent has ventured to say, that a reduction of the interest of the debt ought to take place; nor are there more than two, who propose a reduction of the army, or any reduction of expense on the part of the Government. Yet, Sir, unless reduction takes place in all these departments, how, in the name of common sense, can there take place any reduction in the amount of the taxes? All, therefore, that is said by the book upon this subject, or nearly all, is mere empty sound. It leads to no rational conclusion; it points to nothing practical, and can tend to produce no sort of good, other than that which is to be derived from this general confession of the evil of excessive taxation. Why all these gentlemen have been so shy of coming to the point, is clear enough; to have pointed out the Army, the Civil List, the Sinécures, the unmerited Pensions, or the interest of the Debt, as objects whereon to exercise reduction, would have been to assail the Government, and that was what the greater part of these gentlemen wanted the courage to do. *Circumstances* will, however, very soon make the attack which these gentlemen have been afraid to make. For, to collect sixty millions a year in taxes, in the present state of the country, is absolutely impossible. To this point I was sure it would come. "The play is over," said that slave of the Government, the COURIER, "and now let us go to supper." This he said, in an exulting strain, when the brave and generous Napoleon had

fallen into the clutches of the Castlereaghs and the Jenkinsons.—“ No,” said I, “ we cannot go to supper yet. We must first *pay for the pleasure of the play.*” This we are now doing; and all the weepings and wailings and gnashing of teeth contained in the Book of the Board of Agriculture, will not shorten the period previous to the supper-party.

That the taxes must be reduced is very certain. Nearly forty millions a year are raised in *indirect* taxes. These will in a short time *reduce themselves*. It is impossible that it should be otherwise, for reasons, which I have stated to the public a hundred times over, and which reasons would, I am sure, suggest themselves to you, long before they ever were stated in print. The truth is, that the direct taxes will not be collected to the amount of one-half of the assessment that has been made. It is perfectly useless for the collectors to send round their *threatening letters*, to tell people, that they are *defaulters*, and that *Exchequer processes will be issued out against them*. All this is perfectly useless. It will not put money into the pockets of those who have none. In the way of *example*, seizure will be of no use, seeing that the non-payment proceeds wholly from inability. If the taxes be collected by seizure, the Government strikes down to the earth one of the payers of taxes by every such seizure. It acts the part of the boy with his goose. It gets one golden egg, but it puts a stop to the ladder for ever. Yet this part has it been acting all over the country; and this part it must act, in order to obtain anything like the amount of the taxes now due. The threatening letters of the Government agents are now lying before the far greater part of the farmers; no wonder that the newspapers tell us, that these latter have hurried their corn to market in an “ *unripe and damp state.*” They are endeavouring by these means to avert the danger that threatens them; and thus a premature harvesting and a great destruction of corn has taken place; the corn thus hurried to the market, falls into the hands of monied men, and however high a price it may finally bring, the low price at which the farmer is compelled to sell it will be his ruin. To such a point of distress have the people in the country been brought by this horrid system of taxation, that *Truck*, or *Barter*, is beginning to take place, in the lieu of purchase and sale. A man, instead of buying a horse, gives a cow and a calf for a horse; a hog is exchanged against a heifer; a sheep is given in exchange for some other animal; and so on. In one part of Wales, the Book tells us, that the *poor-rates* are collected in *kind*; that is to say, that the farmers, having no money to pay, give the overseers wheat, potatoes, or other articles of food, in lieu of money. The Board express their dignified indignation at this; but does not the Government take its taxes in kind too, when it comes and seizes the corn and the cattle of the defaulter? Yes, and in a more cruel manner too, for it lays its hands on what it pleases; and it is not content to take as much as will pay it at the full value of the several articles; but it begins a sale at auction, and it keeps on selling, at any price, till it has got the amount of its demand, adding thereto the enormous expenses of the law.

It is therefore, Sir, utterly impossible, under these circumstances, for taxes to be collected to the amount of sixty millions a year. The paper-money, as I have always said, must be sent forth in quantity sufficient to keep the price of wheat steady at fifteen shillings a bushel or higher, or the interest of the debt cannot be paid, to say nothing about the army or the civil list. Whether the paper-money can be got out again, is a

question about which I have always expressed myself to be in great doubt; but, if this be not done, the interest of the debt must be lowered, or the *estates of the landowners must actually be seized upon and transferred to the fundholders*. Such is the result of a long and bloody war, which has put off Parliamentary Reform, and which has restored tyranny and persecution in the fairest part of Europe. And, if one could suppose it possible that the Waterloo Column scheme could now be persevered in, this result ought to be inscribed upon every side of that column.

The Board of Agriculture tells us that too much attention cannot be paid to the subject of the poor-rates. There is another subject, however, which merits a greater portion of attention at this time. When during the discussions on the Bullion Report, the time of the House had been occupied for many nights with speeches abounding in all sorts of absurdities; and after the opposition, with Mr. Horner at their head, had been contending that gold and silver ought to be restored to circulation at the end of two years from eighteen hundred and eleven, and the ministry had been contending, that, though the restoration of gold and silver to circulation was *extremely desirable*, it was not expedient *just at that time*, to adopt Mr. Horner's proposition: after all this talk on both sides, I remember well (and your words are upon record in the debates) that you told them both, *that if gold and silver were restored to circulation, the interest of the debt could never be paid*. Gold and silver are not yet restored to circulation; but a mere approach towards it has proved to the nation, that you, who have never been a talker about *finance*, as the pack of briefless lawyers call it, understood more of the matter than both the factions put together, aided by all their clerks and all their dealers in paper-money, with all their piles of figures and all their rates of exchanges. This is a fact, which is indeed worthy of being borne in mind by the nation. None of these prating and wig-pated men; none of these Horners and Ponsonbys and Percevals and Vansittarts appear to have had any knowledge as to causes and consequences on such subjects, more than so many magpies. Indeed, how should they? The very habits of their life have given them a turn of mind, which absolutely disqualifies them from taking an enlarged view upon any subject of national concern. Be this as it may, however, we have now before us the *proof*, that you were right, and that both these factions were wrong. It is not, therefore, too much to hope, that some part, at least, of those persons who were so long deceived into the belief, that you had not the good of the country at heart, will now be convinced of the contrary, and that they will also be convinced, that the only way, in which they can rationally assist in the rescuing of their country from its present distressed and degraded state, is to give all the support in their power to those strenuous efforts which all the friends of freedom and of humanity now look for at your hands, and in which expectation I am sure they will not be disappointed.

The second remedy proposed is, what think you? A reduction of *rent*! What exceeding folly is this! One would wonder how the Board came not to be ashamed of putting such a proposition upon paper as containing a remedy for a national evil. A distressed farmer, indeed, may very well say that this is a remedy for him; but what sort of a remedy is it for his *landlord*, and for all the dependants upon his landlord? Nor is it any remedy for the *poor*, seeing that in whatever degree the farmer obtains relief, and is thereby enabled to give employment to the poor, the landlord is depressed and is unable to give employment to the poor. But,

as we shall see, by and by, the far greater part of these remedies are extremely well characterized by the old saying of *robbing Peter to pay Paul*, as, indeed, every remedy must be, which does not strike at the root of the evil, namely, *the taxes imposed by the Government*. There is, however, in this project of reducing rents, something of a *revolutionary* tinge. The proposition, to have any sense in it, must mean, that landlords in general should be *compelled* to reduce their rents. This would be a neat little touch in the *levelling* way. But, as I said in my last letter, let these gentlemen *go on*, and we shall soon see that their wars against revolution will end in a revolution of their own making.

The *third remedy* is, to *commute tithes*. If to commute means to *abolish*, or to *diminish*, there may be something like sense in the proposition, that is to say, if those who make the proposition are desirous to reduce the power and influence of the clergy. But if to commute means the mere *changing of the mode of payment*; how can this possibly be a remedy for national distress? If I pay in *money* the full value of my tithe, what do I gain by putting an end to the collection in kind? Besides, in nine cases out of ten, the tithes are not now collected in kind; so that this proposition must contemplate an abolition or a diminution of tithe. Considering that so many of the clergy have, for the last thirty years, been such fast and efficient allies of the boroughmongers; considering that they have fallen so far from the character of their predecessors in the reign of James the Second, when the Church of England stood foremost in the ranks against despotism; considering this, one might be excused for leaving the clergy to be dealt with as it might seem meet to their associates in hostility against the rights and liberties of the nation; but even then, we who scorn to be the agents of delusion, ought to observe, that the proposed diminution or abolition of the property of the clergy could not possibly operate as a remedy for national distress; seeing that, in whatever degree the means of the landlord or tenant would be augmented in this way, the means of the clergy would be diminished; and in whatever degree the landlords and tenants would be enabled to give more employment than they now give, the clergy would be compelled to give less employment. There would be a little shifting of distress from one part of the community to the other, but the mass of distress would be the same; and in this case, too, the distress would remain pretty equally divided through the several parishes as it now is. A few days ago, in a parish in which I have some concern, there was a proposition on foot for the parish to contract to keep a turnpike-road in repair, in order to get something for the labour of the poor. An obstacle arose as to the legality of such a contract, and the scheme was not adopted. But a much better reason for rejecting the scheme would have been, that, in whatever degree the parish purse would have been relieved in this way, it would have been loaded by the throwing out of work the individuals now employed upon the road. But it is ever thus with men who do not reflect somewhat deeply. They always lay hold of something that floats upon the surface; after a time they perceive their error; another scheme equally superficial is adopted; and thus they go on blundering from scheme to scheme, augmenting rather than diminishing the calamity, which it is their object to put an end to.

The *fourth, eighth, tenth, and fourteenth* remedies are all of the same tendency. The object of them is to *raise the price of corn and other produce of the land* by means of prohibition to importation. The con-

sequence of every law of this sort, would be to make the price of food, upon an average, somewhat dearer, or higher in price. But what end would this answer? It could only answer the end, in so far as it operated to make every other article dearer. It would, in all probability, diminish greatly the commerce and manufacturing of the country; and it certainly would greatly diminish the navigation of the country. It would take from the cultivators of the land a considerable portion of their customers; and it would send amongst the agricultural labourers rivals from the trading and manufacturing classes. It requires a much sounder head than nature has thought proper to place upon the shoulders of Mr. Western, to trace measures of this sort to their effects. If that gentleman had been capable of taking a clear view of these effects, he never could have proposed a *tax upon linseed* as a remedy for the distresses of Agriculture. What! are those distresses which so manifestly have arisen from the diminution of the quantity of paper-money, and which diminution has made the farmer give two bushels of wheat to the Government, instead of the one bushel which he gave it before; are distresses, arising from this tremendous cause, which has swept away property as effectually as a West-India hurricane sweeps away the sheds and sugar-canes of the Planters; are distresses like these to be remedied by the non-importation of corn or seeds or wool or any other article of the produce of the land? Far, I am sure, from a mind like yours, is every such puerile idea. If it were not for this overwhelming torrent of taxation, doubled in its force by the sudden blasts of the banking and funding system; were it not for this irresistible and desolating scourge, our ports might be open to all the world; they might be crowded with the ships of all nations, laden with the produce of every soil and climate; and the exchange of commodities of all sorts might be carried on, unencumbered by the vexations of Custom-houses, and uncontaminated by the roguery of tide-waiters, Custom-house officers, and smugglers. But, such men as Mr. Western, when they feel an evil pressing upon a class of the community, to which they happen to belong, think of nothing but shifting it from their own shoulders, without any consideration for the other shoulders on whom it must fall. I am not one of those who look upon commerce and an export of manufactures as necessary either to the happiness or the power of England. Exhibitions of imports and exports have been one grand means of delusion. I am of opinion that England would always be as much the mistress of the ocean without foreign commerce as with foreign commerce. But in considering of remedies for the present distress, we must take the nation as it now stands, and view it as divided into classes deriving their means from trade, commerce, navigation, and manufactures. The well-being of each of these classes contributes towards the well-being of agriculture, and the well-being of agriculture towards the well-being of each of those classes. What nonsense is it, then, to talk of giving the "*same favour*" to agriculture as to manufacture? As if it were a *favour* to prevent the importation of manufactured snuff, when it is well known, that the importation is prevented only for the purpose of loading the snuff manufacturer with an enormous tax; or rather, for the purpose of loading *snuff-takers* with that tax. The farmer, I believe, thinks, that he already pays dearly enough for many articles the raw material of which comes from foreign countries, and yet these gentlemen call it a *favour* to the manufacturer to prevent the importation of goods made out of those raw materials.

These schemers would have a prohibition against the importation of tallow, hides, linseed, &c., and yet, in the very same breath, they complain of the high price of *candles and of leather*! The fact is, that the high price of these articles proceeds from the heavy tax which the Government lays upon them; but this is what the greater part of these gentlemen always appear to wish to keep out of sight. If tallow and hides were forbidden to be imported at all, and the tax on the home-raised tallow, or candles, and on the home-raised hides, were the same that it is now, candles and leather would be still dearer than they are now, and therefore, the evil would increase on the one side as much as it would be diminished on the other. It is here as everywhere else, that a *diminution of taxes* is what is wanted; but here these agricultural people are blindly seeking to *obtain price* by prohibition of importation, which would only augment their expenses in part, while they ought to be seeking to bring down taxes to a level with their means of paying them. Many of these correspondents are fundholders, or they are closely connected with persons who are fundholders; and therefore, they are straining every nerve to get at some means to obtain money to keep up their payment of taxes, because, unless they can do that, they plainly see that the fundholders cannot be paid. Hence all these schemes for *raising the price of corn*, of which schemes we are now going to see another!

The *fifth*, the *eleventh*, the *sixteenth*, the *seventeenth*, the *twenty-second*, are all of one and the same character. The fifth proposes a bounty on the exportation of corn; the eleventh proposes to lend Exchequer Bills to the farmers; the sixteenth proposes to establish public granaries, and for the Government to purchase corn to put into them; the seventeenth proposes to encourage distilleries; the twenty-second proposes to give a bounty on the cultivation of hemp! What PORE said of the *poettasters*, who pestered him in his cottage at Twickenham, the public may say of these agricultural schemes. What *sort* of look these latter may have I do not know, but if the offspring of the brains of PORE's gentry exceeded in wildness what we have here before us, well might he doom them to Bedlam. To make it rational to propose to give the farmers *relief* by means of a bounty on the export of corn or on the cultivation of hemp, the proposition ought to have two adjuncts, to wit, first, that the farmer should pay no part of the tax out of which the bounty was to come; and, second, that the rest of the community, who would then pay the bounty, should have (from God knows what source) just as much money left to expend upon farm produce as they had before they paid this tax! What insufferable follies; what solemn buffooneries, has not this agricultural distress brought forth to the world! And, as to the loan of Exchequer Bills to the farmers, who is to pay the interest of these Exchequer Bills? Who is to pay off the principal of the Exchequer Bills? And what is this after all, but a loan from the fundholders to the landholders, which must be finally paid, if paid at all, by the transfer of the property of the latter from their own hands into the hands of the former? Public granaries! And *whence is to come the money*, wherewith to purchase the corn to put in the public granaries? O! "from the *Government*," to be sure. "The corn to be purchased by Government," thus say these agricultural gentlemen; and exactly in this sort of phrase talk the sharpers and thieves and plunderers about Dock-yards and Barracks and Arsenals and Custom-houses and Excise

Offices. To hear this talk, one would suppose that "*Government*" was a very rich and generous thing, having an immense estate of its own, instead of being what it is, the collector of enormous sums drawn away from the people at large. If Government, therefore, were to purchase the corn, the taxes must be *augmented before the purchase could be made*; and Squire JOLTERHEAD, who, I dare say, is a great advocate for this scheme, would look very foolish to be called upon for his share of this tax. But, Government would sell the corn again! And what then? If it sold the corn for less than it gave for it, Squire Jolterhead would have to pay more tax next year. If it sold it for more than it gave for it, then Squire Jolterhead would have to make up the difference to his labourers and tradespeople in an additional price for their goods and labour, or else, in the shape of poor-rates. As to the *encouraging* of distilleries; in what way is it proposed to do this? A very excellent friend of mine, a native of the "*sister kingdom*," which we treat in such an unsisterlike manner, calls spirituous liquors *concentrated bread*; and he insisted, during one of his kind visits to me while I was in prison, that, when I saw a fishwoman come reeling out of a gin-shop that happened to be opposite my windows, I ought not to say that she was *drunk*, but that she had *over-eaten herself*. Little did he imagine, I dare say, that the solemn-faced correspondents of the Board of Agriculture would so far adopt his notion as to recommend this species of concentration with a view of relieving the national distress. To be sure a glass of gin requires less room for stowage than a quartern loaf; and as a very large portion of the people are now without house or home, stowage may be a matter of consequence. But that the farmer would *obtain a better market* for his corn in consequence of the same money being laid out in barley made into gin, than would otherwise be laid out in barley made into beer or into bacon, it is a proposition not to be believed for a moment, and, indeed, is an idea never to find a place in the mind of any one who is not either an inhabitant of Bedlam, or a correspondent of the Board of Agriculture.

The *sixth, twelfth, and twenty-fourth* remedies may be classed together, as they all have in view to restore to, and to keep in circulation, a greater quantity of paper-money than now is in circulation. To be sure this would stave off the evil. As I have all along been saying, and as every man of sense well knew, it is impossible to pay the taxes to the amount of sixty or seventy millions a year without the aid of a depreciated paper-money, and this is precisely what you said during the debate on the Bullion question. It is now seen how empty were the heads of those, who proposed to restore gold and silver to circulation, without, at the same time, taking off one-half of the taxes. But, in fact, to follow the advice of these gentlemen, that is to say, to continue the Bank Restriction in peace, and to increase the quantity of paper-money by the means of branch Banks, would be neither more nor less than an issue of *assignats*. It would be, what probably will be, a paying of the creditors of the Government in depreciated paper made for the express purpose. When during the year 1815, I was spreading about my opinions upon this subject; when I was insisting that the interest of the debt must in part, at least, go unpaid, or that the quantity of paper-money must be augmented; when I was spreading about these opinions, I knew they were correct, but I did not expect to see the Board of Agriculture giving their sanction to them in so solemn a manner. This remedy, however, would appear now to be impracticable. For, if the mi-

nisters could have done it, they would have done it long ago. It seems, that they thought, that you were wrong; that they could glide by degrees into gold and silver payments, without depriving themselves of the means of paying the interest on their debt. I had told them a thousand times over, that they never could restore gold and silver to circulation without blowing up the funding system. But, they were foolish enough not to believe me; and they called me *Jacobin* and *Leveller*; very good names but very bad arguments. Now they are told by their own creatures, that this doctrine was perfectly sound. Let them, however, now do what they will, they cannot escape out of the mire into which they are plunged. If they could discover any means of sending forth new bales of paper-money, they would only stop the ruin which is pressing upon one part of the community, to force it upon another part of the community, while their paper-money and their funds would become the scorn of the world.

The *fifteenth* remedy, which is, "*to reduce the interest of money,*" has indeed some sense in it, and if the gentlemen mean to reduce the interest of the debt *from five per cent. to two per cent.*, and the interest on all other sums due since the year 1812 in the same proportion, and if to this be added a proportionate reduction in all the other expenses of the Government, including a total abolition of all sinecure places and unmerited pensions and grants; if this be the meaning of these gentlemen, then I am of opinion, that their remedy would be a *real one*. There would then remain (for the sinking fund must be dropt) about twenty-four millions a year to be collected, which sum might possibly be raised without a fictitious currency. But if they mean any thing short of this, they may as well hold their tongues; and if they do mean this, or if they mean to take any part of the interest of the debt off, they recommend that which the Chancellor of the Exchequer was pleased to denominate a *breach of national faith*. Breach it may be on the part of those *who have borrowed the money*; that is to say, those who have had a majority of the Boroughs; but, breach or breach not this measure must be resorted to, or the estates of the landowners will all be transferred from them. It is useless to endeavour to blink this question; it must be brought forward. The loyal gentlemen in the country may feel great pain at making the proposition; but made it must be, as I believe, in less than six months' time. The effect that will be produced by the making of such a proposition is not easy to imagine, much less to describe. When the time of making it comes, we shall see who will still have the courage, or rather the impudence, to extol the wisdom of Pitt and Perceval, and Canning and Castlereagh.

The *seventeenth*, the *eighteenth*, and the *nineteenth* remedies relate to the *poor-laws*, upon which subject I dwelt pretty fully in my last letter. As to the *ninth* remedy, namely, to establish *corn rents*; the *twentieth* remedy, to repeal the *game-laws*; the *twenty-first* remedy, which is to lessen the quantity of land sown; and the *twenty-third* remedy, which is to take the tax off from draining-brick; these are really too childish to merit attention. If they serve any purpose at all, it is to show that the heads of the people have been turned by the bewildering distresses in which they are involved. But as to the *poor-laws*, there remains a good deal yet to be said; for, this is the most terrific object in the eyes of these gentlemen; and so it ought to be in the eyes of the Boroughmongers; for to this point it comes] at last; the people are suffering for want of food, and they remember the old adage, that "hunger will break through

stone walls." One gentleman says, "the poor-rates are the greatest of our evils; an evil to the growth of which no bound is fixed, and which unless some timely check be given, will, forty years hence, render the nominal landowner of an estate only a trustee to manage it for the benefit of the poor."

I remarked, in my last letter, on the baseness of thus railing against the poor, while the railer said not a word against the sinecure places and pensions; but we will see presently what sort of *benefit* the poor actually derive from the Poor-laws. To hear these gentlemen railing, one would suppose, that the poor people were at least, comfortably fed and lodged and clothed. Let us, therefore, take Sir RICHARD BROOKE's account of this matter. This gentleman, who lives in Northamptonshire, tells us that the poor men, whom the overseers are compelled to relieve, or to find work for, are *let out to the highest bidder*, perhaps from *twopence to eight-pence* a day, the parish paying the labourer the difference between what is offered for him and the sum ordered by the magistrates. After this Sir RICHARD BROOKE gives a statement of the several allowances to paupers, to which statement I beg leave to implore your attention.

The statement is this: "That the magistrates order all overseers to support, or allow, men who apply to them, per *week*, as follows:

"A single man. 5s.

"A man and wife, 6s.

"A family, 5s. for the two parents, and 2s. for each child.

"If the overseers can show, that the family *earn any thing*, their earnings form *a part of the allowance*."

Thus, Sir, we have under their own hands; we thus possess, under the hands and seals of a Government Board, the scale according to which the labourers of England are now fed. We have here the money amount of their food; and we will now see what is the amount of the *quantity* of that food. Let us first take the allowance to the *single man*. Bread is now, at Botley, 11½d. the quartern loaf, weighing 4lbs. 5oz. So that a pound and a half of bread a day, 24 ounces (leaving out a fraction), will amount to 2s. 4½d. a week. Bacon is 11d. per pound; and, six-and-a-half ounces of bacon a day will amount to 2s. 7½d. a week. Thus are the *five shillings* disposed of.

Now, Sir, let us see the man seated at his meals. In 24 ounces of bread there are about 63 *mouthfuls*; and, in 6½ ounces of bacon, after allowing for boiling and bone, there are about 15 *mouthfuls*. So that there are 21 *mouthfuls* of bread and 5 *mouthfuls* of bacon for each *meal*! This is the diet of the *single man*; and, as the man and wife are allowed 6s. between them, their meal will consist of about 14 *mouthfuls* of bread and 3 *mouthfuls* of bacon each. A child (and some children require food equal to a man) will have about 9 *mouthfuls* of bread and 2 *mouthfuls* of bacon. And you will please to observe, that they will none of them have anything for *drink, clothing, fuel, or lodging*!

This is, I think, the very lowest degree in the scale of human misery and degradation. We have here an account of the smallest quantity of sustenance that can be given to man, woman, and child, *without exposing them to immediate death by hunger*. And, the Book contains ample proof, that *millions* of our countrymen are now reduced to this wretched state, with a prospect of a very large addition to their numbers.

If, Sir, this state of misery had been the consequence of any of those calamities, which no Government could have prevented, our feelings,

upon the occasion, would be different from what they now ought to be. But, not only might this misery have been prevented by the Government, by its abstaining from all interference in behalf of the despots of the Continent; not only might the great cause of this misery have been wholly avoided, but even *at this time* the Government, by reducing the taxes, has it in its power to alleviate this terrible misery.

Is it possible, Sir, to contemplate, without the utmost indignation, the quantity of food allowed to English labourers, contrasted with the "*Grand Dinners*," of those who wallow in wealth drawn from the fruit of the toil of those labourers? And, is it possible, that this state of things can long be endured? How a man like Sir RICHARD BROOKER could put his dismal account upon paper without, at the same time, expressing his indignation against those who have brought the country into this state, is to me most wonderful.

We are often told by those who live upon the taxes, and who are therefore enemies to all reform, that the sinecures, for instance, are of *no amount*; that they are a *mere trifle*; and that the pensions, grants, &c., are the same. But, if we place the amount of a few of these in comparison with the allowances to our wretched labourers and their families, we shall find, that every thousand pounds, which is expended in sinecures and pensions, would maintain 76 labourers on the Northamptonshire scale. Therefore, the twelve thousand pounds a year, allowed to CANNING, while he was at Lisbon, would have kept 912 labourers during each of those years. The two sinecures of WILLIAM GIFFORD, who is now the editor of that servile publication, the *Quarterly Review*, and who was understrapper to CANNING, in the conducting of the *Anti-jacobin newspaper*; this man's two sinecures, which he has possessed for several years, would maintain 46 labourers, and this man has never in his whole lifetime performed any sort of service for the public. He was the son of a shoemaker at Ashburton, was bred up and educated out of charity by a clergyman, became tutor to Lord Belgrave, now the rich Earl Grosvenor, afterwards became the literary hack of Canning, as before mentioned, and is now in possession of two sinecures, amounting to upwards of six hundred pounds a year. Will the gentlemen of the Board of Agriculture pretend that this Gifford is not as much a burthen to them as 46 unfortunate labourers are? Yet, not a word do they say upon this score; not a whisper of complaint that the landowners are the trustees and managers of their estates for the benefit of such men as GIFFORD and CANNING.

The two sinecures of Lord ELLENBOROUGH would maintain 1064 poor labourers, and the sinecure of his son as *Marshal*, would maintain 61 poor labourers. The sinecure of the MARQUIS CAMDEN would maintain about 3000 poor labourers; and thus I might go on until I had discovered the means of supporting a very considerable part of all the paupers in England.

Must it not now be manifest, Sir, to every man in England, that whatever is taken from the public at large for such purposes, whether it be collected in the shape of taxes or fees, must finally come out of the pockets of the people, and, in proportion to its amount, take from the farmer and the tradesman the means of giving employment and of paying sufficient wages? I think that this fact is now become evident to every body; and, I am also persuaded, that, encouraged by your exertions and the exertions of others, who will, at last, I hope, co-operate with you, the

whole country, following the example of London and Westminster, will now call aloud for the redress of those intolerable grievances.

The town of *Nottingham*, always amongst the first to give proofs of its good sense and public spirit, has already obeyed the call of the citizens of Westminster, and has agreed to a petition for a redress of grievances, and particularly for a reform of the Commons' House of Parliament. This town, to belong to which is an honour worth all the stars and garters in the kingdom, is not only distinguished for its hearty detestation of tyranny in all its shapes, but, it has always discovered a perfectly correct judgment in the objects of its detestation, a remarkable instance of which was the implacable hatred which it bore towards *PERCEVAL*, who, though he deceived a great part of the nation, was unable to deceive the people of Nottingham. If political pilgrimage were in fashion, or if I had leisure to perform a pilgrimage to such a distance, I certainly would go for the express purpose of taking by the hand some score or two of the people of this excellent town.

I have not room at present, to insert the account of the proceeding at Nottingham upon this occasion, which I shall do at some future opportunity; but I cannot refrain from observing, that through the whole of the speeches, the resolutions, and the petition, there is a degree of intelligence, eloquence, force of argument, and evidence of talent, such as I have rarely met with; and I think it impossible that the effect upon the public mind in that part of the country should not be very great. There is no charge of Jacobinism to be brought against this meeting, which was legally assembled, and at which the Mayor of the town presided, giving, greatly to his honour, all his support to the propositions which were brought forward.

But, we shall see, I trust, a great many more Nottinghams in our country. The people have long been deceived; terror and a corrupt press have long kept the people in the dark. The time is now come, I trust, when they will speak boldly, and if they do that, redress will follow.

There is yet one remedy to notice, and it comes from Mr. *EDWARD MOOR*, who, it appears, is a Magistrate in the County of Suffolk. This remedy is, *to encourage emigration!* to encourage emigration! to do that which the hired newspapers have falsely accused me of doing; and upon that false accusation have most grossly abused me.

You must have perceived, Sir, in several of the Ministerial prints, pretended letters from America, representing the English and Irish emigrants as being in a state of great distress; and they have gone so far as to assert, that thousands of these emigrants have applied to the English Consul to be *sent home*, with a view, I suppose, of obtaining some small portion of the 63 mouthfuls of bread and the 15 mouthfuls of bacon, which the labourers in Northamptonshire are allowed per day. I have always observed, Sir, when I have been writing upon this subject, that America was an unfit place for any persons, who did not go thither with the ability and with the resolution to *labour*, and that too in some trade, in some handicraft business, or in agriculture. For persons, not thus qualified, I have always said, that the change would hardly be for the better, and might possibly be for the worse. Upon the breaking up of commerce and shop-keeping, and speculating pursuits in this country, which breaking up began to take place about two years ago, thousands of petty clerks, and others who wished to live without labour, hastened away to America.

This was not the sort of persons wanted in that country, which was already, as every country will be, overstocked with young gentlemen, who prefer white and soft hands to hands that are dirty and hard. And, besides this general overstock of empty heads and white hands, the Commerce of America and her tribes of speculators have experienced, as I said they would experience, a great *shock*. To you yourself, Sir, were my letter intended solely for your perusal, I should think it very impertinent, though your kindness might excuse me for it, to observe, that it is impossible for such a revolution to take place, as has taken place with regard to the circulating medium and the commercial concerns, of this great Commercial Nation, without producing an almost simultaneous effect in all other Commercial Nations. One commercial Nation is to another what one great Merchant is to another. It is impossible that England should become bankrupt, or that great commercial bankruptcies should take place in England, without producing great commercial embarrassment and numerous bankruptcies in America, seeing that the transactions between the two countries during each year, amounts to so many score of millions. And, it is very curious to observe, that, the moment the Bank of England, the old Lady of Threadneedle-street, the fruitful Mother of all Banks, all depreciation, all corruption, in the whole world; it is very curious, that the moment she began to draw in her issues, the paper system in America was brought to a crisis, and measures were taken for getting rid of that dreadful curse, a paper-money not convertible into gold and silver, which measures I perceive are now about to go into effect. This has produced an unprecedented stagnation of Commerce in America, which, added to the effects of bankruptcies in England, and the loss in the trade with us, owing to our poverty, have led to that state of things in America, which have probably produced great distress amongst the numerous soft-handed tribe before mentioned.

But, Sir, as to emigrants, who are able and willing to work, to get their living by the *sweat of their brow*, the representations of our hiring newspapers are totally false. The debt is so small in America, the Government so economical, the people so fairly represented, that, generally speaking, that country never enjoyed more prosperity, as a proof of which I have only to inform you that *Agriculture flourishes* beyond all former example.

I am happily, upon this subject, able to produce other proof than that which comes directly to myself from America. Mr. DRAKARD, the proprietor of the *Stamford News*, who, as you, I am sure, have not forgotten, was one of the victims of the Perceval administration, has published a letter, from an English farmer who emigrated to America a year or two ago. I will here, Sir, insert this letter, just as I find it published by Mr. DRAKARD, and you will be pleased to see how exactly it corresponds with what I have published upon the same subject.

DEAR SIR,

George Town, July 30, 1816.

I should have wrote to you before this, but concluded you and the rest of my friends would hear of our safe arrival. I therefore thought it best to wait a few weeks, that I might be able to give you and my friends in general some information from my own knowledge of what I had seen and heard respecting America. We arrived at Baltimore on the 22nd of June, after a passage of fifty-six days, which is considered rather a long one; but upon the whole it was not an unpleasant one. We were all sick the first week, but after that time the sea had but little effect upon us. I could smoke my pipe on the quarter-deck with some pleasure, and have often wished, that some of my friends who had such a

terrible dread of the sea had been with me; in fact, crossing the Atlantic (in a good vessel) is not worth mentioning, as an objection, to coming to America. Any of our friends who intend coming, need not be particular as to what part they come to, whether New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore, as there are conveyances by steam-boats from all the above places. I find America to be a very rising country, and *every person that can do any thing that is useful is welcome here, and will be well paid for what he does.* Journeymen's wages in all kinds of trades, such as joiners, bricklayers, stone-masons, blacksmiths, shoemakers, tailors, saddlers, wheelwrights, &c. &c. are from 1½ to 2 dollars a day, and *there is plenty of work for all that come, and will be for many years.* All tradesmen may do well; they have great profits upon all they sell. You may inform Mr. — that a saddler is an excellent business; they charge very high for their articles, and they supply the farmers with gears for the horses they use in the waggons and carts, and most of these gears are made of leather, much more so than in England; there is also a great deal of harness wanting for carriages. I was soon tired of being at George Town, doing nothing; therefore I wished my friends here to get me a small farm, not wishing to engage with any thing upon a large scale at first; and *I soon met with a very pleasant situation, about eight miles from the city of Washington, where I now reside.* You may inform any of our friends who wish to come here to farm, that *I can purchase land close to where I live, principally cleared of timber and fit for cultivation, at from 16 to 20 dollars an acre, 4 roods to the acre.* They are in general bad farmers in this country, and do not make half so much of their land as they might do. *There are some thousands of acres to sell in this part of the country, within eight or ten miles of Washington and George Town.* The price of wheat is 2 dollars a bushel, and other grain in proportion. Give my respects to —, and tell him that he can have a situation either in the farming or his own business as soon as he comes. I have made a great deal of inquiry respecting situations for bankers' and merchants' clerks, but find they are rather difficult to be obtained, and when obtained not so good as trade. Brewing ale and porter is an excellent business: the demand for both increasing daily, and the profits being very good. If any person had come over with me that understood malting, I would have engaged in the brewing business, in preference to any other concern. When I get my business closed in England, which I intend to have done as soon as possible, it is quite likely that I shall go into the concern:—the more I inquire after it, the more satisfied am I of its answering. *Labouring men of good character are much wanted here: the meanest hand will get a dollar a day; and HE NEED NOT BE HERE A DAY WITHOUT GETTING WORK.* If any of our friends come over in the fall or spring, be sure to send by them, for me, 2lb. of white turnip-seed, 2lb. of Swede turnip, 1lb. of cabbage-seed, 1lb. of brocoli, 1lb. of Scotch kale, and 1lb. of Brussel sprout seed. Also send a few ounces of onion, parsley, radish, &c., mark the different parcels, and let them be packed safe;—they are all very dear here. A gardener in this part of the country is as good a business as can be followed: they may make a fortune very soon, if they have property to begin with, and are steady and understand their business. Tell—what I have said upon the business, and if he or any other gardener should come, tell them to bring with them from 100*l.* to 400*l.* sterling worth of all kinds of seeds, but principally what I have ordered you to send me. If any one comes, let him come to me, and I will get him from 30 to 50 per cent. profit on all he may bring. Let small seed be included, such as mustard, celery, onion, radish, &c. &c. All kinds may be sold here at a very great profit. — has got a situation just by my farm, to superintend a water-mill, and I expect — going into a store, either in the city of Washington or George Town. Washington is improving very rapidly, and has been ever since the English were *so good* as to burn the public buildings, which were very fine, and are now repairing. I hope when they are finished they will erect a stone to tell posterity what country it was that committed such *violent outrages* upon defenceless places; but it has done good to the city for many miles round. The Government is now firmly established there, which was not the case before the burning of the public buildings. The result is, that all kinds of landed property has increased in value very much, both in the city and for 10 miles round, and will continue to increase.

"If any of my friends come here I will give them all the advice and assistance that I can towards getting them situations. Schoolmasters and mistresses are

wanted here, and are well paid for teaching; they are about establishing some schools upon the Lancastrian plan: masters understanding the mode of teaching might get well paid. The prices of what you would call a common school for girls such as my ——— or younger, to do plain work, are 3 or 4 dollars a quarter."

I have only just to observe here, Sir, that this gentleman says, that the *meanest labourer will get a dollar a day*; that he need not be a day without getting work; and that wheat is *two dollars a bushel*. Contrast this with the *dollar a week*, which is allowed to the poor labourers in Northamptonshire, where the wheat is also *two dollars a bushel*; and when you have done that, you will be able to judge what sort of persons those must be who think themselves *unfortunate* in having changed England for America.

But be this matter as it may, I have never recommended emigration to any one. On the contrary, I have always said, that England, well-governed, is the best country in the world; and I have further said, that it is a shame for any man to quit his country, on account of its miseries, while there is the smallest chance of his being able, in any way whatever, of lending his assistance in restoring her to freedom and happiness. This is the doctrine that I have always preached; and, Sir, to what a pass are we come, when an English country gentleman, a magistrate in his country, can coolly recommend to the Government to encourage the people to quit their native land; to advise the Government to adopt measures for *getting rid* of the people! He wanted the courage to tell the Government to remove the burdens that press his unfortunate countrymen to the earth. He says that he was in the hourly habit of witnessing the miseries of the people; and, did it not become him, then, to tell the Government what was necessary to do away these miseries? Yes, but he wanted the courage to do this. He could no longer endure the sight of the misery, and therefore he recommended to drive the miserable objects far away from their country and their friends.

There was a time, Sir, when an English country gentleman would as soon have thought of committing a murder as of committing so base a proposition to paper. No, Sir, the people will not flee from their country. They will teach Mr. Moor, that they have as much right to remain in England as he has, and that they have a right too, and a *perfect right*, to comfortable lodgings, and to a sufficiency of food and of raiment, *in exchange for their labour*. What! shall the Royal Family have a right to be maintained in the manner that they are maintained; shall all those whose living in splendour is derived from the public purse, tell us that they have a right to what they receive; and shall the labourer and the journeyman and the tradesman and the farmer when they are reduced to misery by the overwhelming force of taxation, and by the vicissitudes of a paper system, in the creation of which they had no hand whatever; shall they when reduced to misery from these causes, and these causes are acknowledged by this very book to have produced their misery; shall they, when thus reduced to misery, be told to seek relief in a foreign land, and to abandon for ever the hope of again beholding any portion of what is most near and most dear to their hearts? No, they are not to be told this! They will not be told this, and hear it with patience. They will remain in their country with the hope of seeing better days; and there is not a man of them, of honest heart and sound body, who may not contribute towards her restoration to that freedom and happiness which were

formerly her lot, and which made her in reality, and not in empty boast, the envy and admiration of the world.

As to the means, Sir, by which this restoration will be effected, it would be presumption in any one to speak with any degree of confidence. But, when all agree, that some great change must take place; and when the friends of reform wish that such a change may take place, one may be allowed to conjecture, as to what will probably be the course of events. It will be impossible for taxes to be collected during the next year, to the amount of fifty millions, unless new issues of paper come forth, which I do not now think to be probable. Besides the effects of the general and increasing misery of the labouring classes, the landowners, seeing themselves upon the verge of utter ruin, will be disposed to seek relief in some way or other; and they will soon discover, that there is no other way than that of reducing the expenses of the military establishment and of the Government debt. Some member of Parliament will propose such reduction; a great deal will be said about *national honour* and *national faith*; you and your colleague, and perhaps one or two more will justly say, that as far as the debt goes, the nation has very little to do with the matter. But at last divisions will take place. That will be quite enough. The blow has already been struck, and the symptoms of mortality will then make their appearance. The old lady in Threadneedle-street is merely patched up for show. She is like the "beautiful young nymph" of Swift. Run but your finger against her cheek, and you make a hole. Her reputation is so very tender, that if you breathe upon it, it is gone.

A proposition to lower the interest of the debt, though it were rejected by ten to one, would put every hackney coach in requisition to carry the sellers out to the Stock Exchange. In such a state of things all men of common sense would see that a change, a great change, of some sort or other, was become unavoidable; and let us hope that a vast majority of the people, and even the Government itself, would prefer that change which is agreeable to the constitution, which would produce no violent convulsion, which would unite all parties, and which would afford the best, and indeed the only chance of extricating the country from its difficulties, by giving the people perfect confidence in their rulers; namely, a constitutional reform of the Commons' House of Parliament. Until this change take place, there never can, in my opinion, be real peace in England or in Ireland. It is useless for men to talk of the power of the Government, or of the strength of its army. If it were possible to keep soldiers stationed in every street of every town, that would as effectually destroy the funds as an Act of Parliament would, if the Act were made for the express purpose. Credit is a thing not to be kept up by force of arms, any more than principles are to be put down by force of arms. The noisy and impudent Pitt, when he wished to draw immense sums immediately out of the pockets of the people, told them, that such sums were necessary to keep down the amount of the debt, and that the debt was the *best ally of France*. This debt is, as it has turned out, the best ally also of the people of England; and it will be a curious instance of retribute justice, if this debt which was contracted to support a war against freedom abroad and reform at home, should, at last, as I verily believe it will, insure Parliamentary reform to England and restore liberty to France.

I am, Sir, with great respect, your most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO

SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, BART.

WHAT GOOD WOULD A REFORM OF PARLIAMENT NOW DO ?
AND IN WHAT MANNER CAN IT TAKE PLACE WITHOUT
CREATING CONFUSION ?

(*Political Register*, October, 1816.)

Middleton Cottage, 7th Oct. 1816.

SIR,

These are the questions which the sons and daughters of corruption now put to us. They can no longer deny the existence of the corruption; the declaration of some members, that they thought *no worse* of Castlereagh and Perceval for their conduct in the case of Quintin Dick, and the avowal of others, that the traffic in seats was as notorious as the sun at noon-day; these declarations have silenced those who had the impudence to contend for the *purity* of the present thing. They, therefore, give that up, and now contend, that if a Reform were to take place, it would *do no good*, and might *throw the country into confusion*. And, proceeding upon these grounds, they ask us the questions, which I have placed at the head of this Letter, which questions, it shall now be my business to answer, seeing that we now certainly, in my opinion, approach the hour of *Reform*, or that of *confusion*. At such a moment, it is proper that we should be able to show, not only that Reform would *do good when carried into effect*; but, that, if *now* entered on, it may be carried into effect without any risk of creating violence and confusion. This I think myself able to do to the satisfaction of every impartial man in the kingdom.

With regard to the first question ("What good would a Reform of Parliament do?") I ought first to observe on the *impudence* of such a question. When a man comes into a court of justice and sues for any thing which he claims as his *right*, the Judge and Jury do not ask him what *good* the thing will do him, if he gain his cause. The only question with them, is, whether his claim be *just*; whether he has a *right* to the thing for the recovery of which he sues. What should we say to a thief, detected with our plate in his possession, if he were to say, that he would keep it, because, in his opinion, it would do us *no good*, if we got it back? But, this is an old trick with wrong-doers, who are always ready to pretend, that the wronged party has not suffered any real injury by the wrong; or, at most, but little injury, or little comparative injury. The man who is robbed upon the highway suffers, in general, but a trifling loss; the recovery of a few shillings is not worth the half of his trouble; but, this consideration does not save the robber from the gallows. It being acknowledged, therefore, that representation ought to precede taxation; to be represented by persons chosen by themselves being the

undoubted right of all the tax-payers in the kingdom ; the people may surely be permitted to judge for themselves as to the *use* they shall make of their right when they shall obtain possession of it ; and thus, we might, if we chose, dismiss this question without another word.

But, Sir, the cause is too good for its advocates to shun discussion upon it, at any time, or under any circumstances. In setting about to state the *good things*, which would be accomplished by a *Reform*, such is the crowd of objects which present themselves, that the difficulty is to determine where to begin and what order to pursue. But, if the Reform did no more than put an end for ever to scenes of notorious bribery and corruption, to all that meanness, lying, drunkenness, violence, fraud and false-swearing, which spread themselves over the country at every general election ; if the Reform did no more than put an end to these, would that be *no good* ? Talk of *religion* indeed ! Circulate Bibles almost by force ! Set up schools and societies to make the people more moral ! Declare, as the Judges do, that Christianity is a part of *the law of the land* ! And, at the same time, suffer to exist a system of election, which *necessarily* produces every species of crime known to the law, and every species of vice which is a mark of human degradation ! The existence of this enormous evil is notorious to all the world. There is not a man in the country, who is not well acquainted with the horrid scenes of infamy produced by every general election ; and, therefore, that man who pretends to labour for a reformation in the morals of the people, and who does not do his best to procure an abolition of this fruitful cause of all the worst sorts of immorality, must of necessity be a hypocrite, and, accordingly, ought to be held in detestation ; for what can be more detestable, what more worthy of our abhorrence, than the conduct of a man, who professes an anxious desire to make the people *virtuous*, while he is, either actively or passively, giving his support to a system which he *knows* must, as long as it exists, fill the land with deceit, fraud, drunkenness, breaches of the peace, and perjury ?

Without going a step further, therefore, here is a *good* quite sufficient to justify our endeavours. But great as this good would be, it does not surpass many others which would be the consequence of a Reform of the Parliament. It is now manifest, that the Government is embarrassed for the means of paying the interest of its debt ; that the agriculture and trade of the country are ruined ; that the shipping of the country are rotting. The question of our enemies points, therefore, to this : “ Would “ a Reform remove the embarrassments of the Government ; would it “ *revive agriculture and trade and navigation all of a sudden* ? ” No. But because I cannot restore to life the valuable horse which my servant has killed, ought I to keep that servant, and give him the care of my less valuable horse which is yet alive ? If a gentleman has a steward, who has brought his estate into dilapidation and nearly ruined both landlord and tenants, does that gentleman, when he takes a strict look into his affairs, keep the same steward in his employ merely because no new steward can replace his estate in the situation in which the former steward found it ? No. In order to prevent total ruin, ruin to his children as well as to himself, he appoints another steward forthwith, and as soon as he can attend to any thing else, he takes measures to punish the knave, who has brought him to the verge of beggary.

It would be impossible for a Reformed Parliament to restore to affluence or competence the hundreds of thousands of persons who have lately

become insolvent. It would be impossible for a Reformed Parliament to find the means of paying away 60 or 70 millions a year. It would be impossible for a Reformed Parliament to prevent the mortality from taking place in cases where the mortal stab has been given. It is impossible for the present Parliament to pay much longer, the interest of the debt in full; and, a Reformed Parliament certainly would not attempt it. But a Reformed Parliament would do a great many good things *at once*; and, in the space of a *very few years*, it would restore the country to ease and happiness.

I. It would do away with the profligacy, bribery, and perjury of elections, and would thereby, in one single act, do more for the morals of the people; than has, since the system has existed, been done by all the Bible Societies and all the schools that have ever been set on foot, and all the sermons that have ever been preached.

II. A Reformed Parliament would instantly put an end to that accursed thing, called *Parliamentary interest*. Promotion and rewards and honours in the army, the navy, the church, the law, and in all other departments, would follow *merit*, and not be bestowed and measured out according to the number of votes that the party or his friends, were able to bring to the poll in support of this or that set of people in power. Thus would the nation be sure to have the full benefit of all that it needed of the best talents and greatest virtues that it possessed. It was from this cause, Sir, and this cause alone, that America shone so bright in the late contest. The world was *surprised* to see naval and military commanders spring up as it were spontaneously out of lakes and woods; and the people of England were utterly astonished to see their ships and armies either captured by, or fleeing in disgrace from men who had never before been heard of. But, if we had considered, that the President of the United States, had, in the choice of his commanders, the whole of the nation lying open before him, and that he had no particular interests to consult in the determination, we should have been less surprised. If he had had boroughmongers or members of corporations to consult in his appointments; if the lady of this man, or the sister of that man, or the father of another, and so on, had had the dictation of his appointments, the Porters and Decaturs and Chaunceys and M'Donnoughs and Jacksons and Browns, might have remained to till the land, while the protégés of corruption were letting in the legions of the enemy to devour its produce and enslave its inhabitants. This, Sir, is the people, to whose conduct and institutions we are to look. They are a people like ourselves in all things, except where our institutions have an effect different from theirs. What should make crimes so rare amongst them, and great public virtues and talents so abundant? Why should that soil more than this be fertile in great military and naval skill and courage, caught up, all at once, out of common life? Nothing but this; that there the executive is unbiassed in its choice, and has the whole of society to choose from; while here, there is a borough faction, whose pretensions and power supersede the legitimate power of the executive, a power which would instantly be restored to it by a Reformed Parliament. It is well known what heart-burnings there are in the army and navy on this score. *Parliamentary interest* is well understood amongst the gentlemen of those professions. *Merit* is a thing, therefore, little sought after, because worth very little when acquired. Of all the professions and ranks of society, none ought more anxiously to wish for a Reformed Parliament than the officers in

general, and even the privates, of the army and navy ; and yet there are men so stupid as to suppose, that these bodies would present a great obstacle in the way of Reform. As ambassadors, consuls, &c., the Americans send their *most able* citizens, while ours consist of persons, chosen from the motives before mentioned. The superior talent of the American diplomatists is universally acknowledged. Indeed, what Englishman can refrain from blushing at the endless proofs, which the last twenty years have given to the world of this superiority, which is made the more conspicuous by the language of both countries being the same ? Yet is there no scarcity of talent of this sort in *England*. But the talent, to be available by our executive, must have the borough interest at its back ; and as that is seldom the case, we are exposed to all the shame which bungling agents never fail to bring upon a nation ; and, notwithstanding that a tribe of underlings of greater talent than the chief are generally selected to accompany him, we have seen many of their public papers so obscure and so ungrammatical as hardly to have a meaning ; to say nothing of the want of knowledge, of argument and of force which they almost invariably exhibit. All this a Reformed Parliament would put to rights. The best talents, would, in this important department, also, be called forth into the country's service. There could exist no motive for sending an unfit person on any foreign mission. Every person so sent would know that reward and honour would follow his merits, and that disgrace and punishment would follow misbehaviour. In the Church, too, the Crown, the Bishops, and even private patronage would be freed from *this source* of undue bias. Borough interest would no longer open the path to rich livings, while it closed them against learning and piety and true charity unsupported by that interest. And thus would it be in every department. And, Sir, would this not be a *good* ? This good would operate *instantly*. It would be completely in the power of a Reformed Parliament to effect it ; and it is hardly to be believed that it would be possible to find a king, who would not be glad to be thus restored to the free use of his lawful authority.

III. A Reformed Parliament would, in the space of one single week, carefully examine the long list of *Sinecures*, *Pensions*, *Grants*, and other emoluments, of individuals, derived from the public purse. They would critically distinguish between those which had been granted for public services, known and acknowledged, or capable of being proved, and those for the granting of which no good reason could be assigned. They would inquire also into the *duration* of these several grants, would ascertain the aggregate sums which the parties had received in this way, would ascertain the means of the present possessors, would trace the public money back to its source, and would then adopt such measures thereon as justice might point out. And, would this be doing *nothing* ? Would this be *no good* ? Would it be no good to curtail this enormous head of expenditure ? Would it be no good to leave a large part of this money in the hands of the farmers and tradesmen, in order to assist them in paying the poor-rates and other *necessary taxes* ? Do you think, Sir, that it would be an easy matter to persuade a Reformed Parliament, that GEORGE ROSE ought to receive *ten thousand pounds a year* ? Or that Canning ought to have received more than that sum per year while he was at Lisbon, whither he went, in part, at least, as it was avowed, for the *recovery of the health of his child* ? Very proper, would a Reformed Parliament say, for you to go and endeavour to restore your child to health ; but not very proper for you to be maintained

there as an *Ambassador*, while the King had no court there, and did not live in the country. And, a Reformed Parliament would tell him, that the people of England had no more reason to care about the health of his son, than about that of any pauper in any of the workhouses or out, upon an allowance on the Northamptonshire scale. A Reformed Parliament would, with great difficulty, be able to perceive the propriety of paying the amount of the *Sinecures* of Lords Camden, Liverpool, Ellenborough, and the rest of that description, and would be inclined to believe, that to put an end to these was a more likely way to keep labourers out of the poor-house, than collecting pennies out of the scanty earnings of those labourers to be put into George Rose's Saving-Banks. A Reformed Parliament would not forget to inquire *why* Mr. Ponsonby and Lord Erskine receive four thousand a year each, and are to receive it for life : *why* Mr. Huskisson is always to receive twelve hundred pounds a year when he is not in an office which brings him more than that sum ; *why* his wife is to have a good fat pension after his death if she should outlive him ; *why* Mrs. Mallet du Pan and William Gifford are kept by the public ; *why* the Seymours receive such immense sums, and the Somersets ; *why* Lady Louisa Paget and numerous other dames of quality receive incomes out of the public taxes. The *why* and the *wherefore* of all these items, and hundreds upon hundreds of others, would a Reformed Parliament scrupulously examine ; and, having made their examination, they would, I imagine, lay the pruning-hook about them with some effect.

IV. A Reformed Parliament would, without a day's delay, set a Committee to work to inquire into the amount of the *salaries* of all persons in public employ. They would ascertain, whether the said salaries of such persons had been raised in consequence of the rise in the *prices of provisions and labour*, which took place some years ago. It would soon be discovered, that the salaries of the *Judges*, for instance have been *doubled* within the last twenty years, and that the ground, upon which the augmentation took place, was the rise in the prices of provisions and labour. This being the undeniable fact, and it being also undeniable, that the prices of provisions and labour have come down to their *former amount*, a Reformed Parliament, freely *chosen by all the tax-payers*, would say, that the Judges' Salaries ought to be reduced to *their former amount* ; and, if any one grumbled at this reduction, a Reformed Parliament would call him a most unreasonable and unjust man. The same would be done with regard to the *Police Justices*, and other persons appointed by the Government. Great crowds of people in office would be *dismissed* wholly, and their salaries saved ; but a Reformed Parliament would not be under the necessity of turning mere *clerks* out to starve. The fault has not been *theirs*, if they have been unprofitably employed. The expense of affording them a decent maintenance, in proportion to their talents and length of service would be trifling, and they would receive it, except in cases where their introduction or promotion had sprung notoriously from *Borough interest* ; for between men thus fostered, and other men, a distinction would necessarily be made. More than a million a year of expense would thus be lopped off in a week, without any one act of cruelty or injustice. Let the spawn of the Borough-corruption return back to feed on the flesh that its parent has collected ; but let the hard-working clerk and his family find food at the hands of national generosity.

V. Precisely the same principle would guide a Reformed Parliament in its reduction of the army, and its siftings of the navy. In all cases

where promotion or rewards could be traced back to the borough interest, the hand of a Reformed Parliament would be unsparing ; but, to all meritorious men, of all ranks, it would show how liberal a people fairly represented can be. Be the *cause*, in which sailors and soldiers have fought, what it may, *they* have incurred no blame. Their wounds ought to be regarded, and so does the length of their service, as proofs only of their valour ; and it would be one of the first principles of a Reformed Parliament to reward and hold in honour valiant men. A Reformed Parliament would suffer no man to be in a sailor's or a soldier's coat. If an impostor, they would whip him ; if a real soldier or sailor, they would give him ample means to have house and home, and to be well fed and clothed. But a Reformed Parliament would see no necessity, I imagine, of a Commander-in-Chief's office, with an enormously expensive Staff. They would see as little necessity for supporting, at an enormous expense, *academies* where the sons of borough-voters and other protégés are educated (in some cases under foreign masters) *in the art of war*, and who are thus, from their earliest youth, separated and kept as a *distinct caste*, from the rest of the nation. A Reformed Parliament adopting the maxim of BLACKSTONE, that all such establishments are abhorrent to the principles of the English Constitution, would support no such thing ; but would look upon the nation as most secure, when under the protection of the arms of freemen, commanded by their natural leaders, the gentlemen of England, selected for their skill and courage by a king uncontrolled and unencumbered by borough interest and family intrigue. If possible, still less necessity would a Reformed Parliament see for Barracks, Fortresses, and Depôts in the heart of England. Such a Parliament would devote these places to demolition and sale for useful purposes. Rows of officers joined together by the arm, like chain-shot, lounging up and down the streets of towns, and thrusting the tradesman and farmer from the pavement, would be an object of which a Reformed Parliament would soon rid the country. Long swords, dragging the ground ; lofty caps and brass helmets, tied under the chin ; whiskers, muffs, tippets, jackets, bark-boots, false-calves, false-shoulders, and the whole list of *German* badges and frippery, would fly away before the acts of a Reformed Parliament, as the dust and dead leaves and rotten limbs of trees fly through the air before a thunder-storm in Carolina ; and we should once more behold the plain and warm English coat envelope the bodies that contain the brave and honest hearts of our countrymen. In examining the *half-pay list*, a Reformed Parliament would proceed, not so much with an eye to *economy*, as with an eye to *impartiality* ; for, as to *compassion*, no man who has served as a soldier or a sailor ought to be exposed to the pain of exciting such a feeling. A Reformed Parliament would inquire upon what grounds such large incomes are awarded to some officers on the *half-pay* and *retired list*, whilst so very small a pittance is awarded to others. They would soon discover, whether the same person, in many instances, does not, in fact, receive emoluments under different heads and names of allowance. They would judge whether one man ought to receive, for no very distinguished exploits, as much as twenty other men, each of whom has been exposed to as much risk as that one man ; and, whatever else a Reformed Parliament might do in this respect, certain I am that they would never suffer hundreds of midshipmen, who have faced death in a thousand shapes, to starve in our streets, or become paupers. As to this matter, a Reformed Parliament would first take care than an *impartial distribution* was made ; and having seen that, they would rely

upon the justice of the people to afford the means of any necessary augmentation.

VI. A Reformed Parliament, elected by the people themselves, and having no reason to suspect that any *secret* enemies of the Government could have any power to do mischief, would have no occasion to expend money in "*secret services*." Here would be a saving at once equal to the comfortable support of all the discharged midshipmen. A Reformed Parliament, chosen by the people, and re-chosen *yearly*, could have no idea of expending money for any *secret* purpose. It would openly avow all its objects, and would scorn to owe its safety to the aid of spies and informers. It would need no eaves-droppers, and pot-house toppers, to give it information of the people's feelings and complaints. The poll yearly taken would fully instruct it upon these heads. The real agent of the people, it would meet and hear what the people themselves had to say, and it would obey their wishes, which never could be contrary to their *interests*, unless nature should take the singular frolic of moulding men's minds in such a way as to make them desire that which would do them harm. A Reformed Parliament would, therefore, want no "*secret service money*;" it would need no hired scoundrels to inform against this man or that man; to mark out this man as a friend, and that man as an enemy of the Government; this man as loyal and that man as disloyal; there would be none of this disgraceful spy-work; none of those devices, by which neighbours, friends, families, are set together by the ears; none of those infamous proceedings, which tyrants adopt upon their favourite maxim of "*divide and destroy*." Under the guidance of a Reformed Parliament no man would rise up into riches as a reward for *betraying a friend or a client*. The word *traitor* would be used in its proper sense. It would be applied to the miscreant who would pry into the bosom of a man, and then sell the secret; to the Attorney who should undermine the cause, or the Advocate who should aim at the life or reputation of his employer. A Reformed Parliament would set the example of holding such perfidious and mercenary monsters in abhorrence.

VII. Nothing would be improved by a Reformed Parliament more than the reputation of *the Bar*. The Government under the influence of, and controlled by, a Reformed Parliament, would stand in need of no acute men, bred to the law, to lay traps for, and catch, the people. It would have no desire to find out the means of prying into every man's mind and purse. The taxes would be such as were necessary; they would be simple in their nature, obvious in their source, impartial in their distribution amongst the payers, and easy in their assessment and collection. It would require no *law-lords* at the Boards; it would not require the keen education and inexorable habits of a lawyer to be a collector or supervisor. Acts of Parliament on fiscal affairs would not swell into volumes any more. The people would understand the duties they had to perform towards their Government; and the gentlemen of the Long Robe, rescued from the disgrace of being tax-gatherers and surchargers, would, as they formerly did, raise their heads boldly in Courts of Law and Justice, having their eyes fixed upon fair fame, won in their profession, which, in itself, has always been considered as learned and honourable. As to the tribe of small lawyers, who possess, or are expecting places, they might be told to seek "*compensation for a loss of profession*" by becoming turnkeys or jailors' clerks; but, Sir, as was proved in the case

of your old friend, "*Governor Aris*," the office of *prison-keeper* ought never to be entrusted to any man without great caution. This would be making a furious sweep at the Bar ; but, lowering the number, would be raising the character of that body, and we should again see study, learning, eloquence and integrity, the means of raising lawyers to fortune and honours. We should again see the Bar possessed by men, who would scorn to truckle to the underlings of Ministers, and, for the sake of mere bread, become the third or sixth clerks in the offices of Government.

VIII. The *Press* would be what it ought to be. Perfectly free to utter the words of any man, who confined himself within the bounds of *truth*, as to public men or public matters. A Reformed Parliament would want nobody to assist it in blinding the people. It would stand in need of no deception, no fraud, no falsehood. The hireling crew of editors and authors would, indeed, severely suffer. They would be reduced to beggary, or exalted to the gallows for robbery or theft ; but, what do the people owe them, except it be ill-will and curses ? They have been amongst the most efficient instruments in producing our ruin ; and they, at this moment, are labouring with a degree of malignity, which, while it demonstrates their sense of the desperateness of their cause must go to the account of their demerits, whenever that account shall be settled. A Reformed Parliament need care nothing about the press, in any way, but for the protection of the freedom of that guardian of public morals. The Parliament would have to meet their constituents *annually*. Their conduct could never be misrepresented with any degree of effect. There could, therefore, be *no motive* for hiring the press, which would become what the press always ought to be. A Reformed Parliament would naturally be anxious for the instruction of the people in political matters, but it would effect this desirable object by the frequent discussions which annual elections would give rise to, and by the promulgation of its acts amongst all classes of the people, the acts being written in plain and intelligible language, and stripped of all that uncouth jargon and that cumbrous tautology, by which craft obstructs the pursuit of common sense. All the filthy and base intercourse between the underlings of office and the hirelings of the press would cease. There would be no sinecures given to such men as Canning and Gifford ; and all the swarm of reptiles, who now fatten in this way, would die, or be no more heard of.

IX. A Reformed Parliament would not leave the Civil List and the "*Crown Lands*," as they are called, in their present state. In this time of public distress, a Reformed Parliament would think it reasonable, and, indeed, necessary, that the Civil List should be greatly reduced. The enormous sums now swallowed up under that name almost surpass belief. We see, that the President of the United States of America, who is the Chief Magistrate of a people equal in number to the people of England and Wales, including Scotland, perhaps ; whose country has a quantity of trade and commerce not much less than this country has ; and who was able single-handed to carry on a successful war against the undivided power of England ; that Chief Magistrate, a man chosen for his wisdom, experience, and great talents, has no more allowed him than *six thousand pounds a year* ! Yet, America is well governed, and so well governed, and so happy are the people, that there is no misery in the land, and there are not as many crimes committed there in a year as are committed in England and Wales

in *one week*, or, perhaps in *one day* ! To what, Sir, are we to ascribe a difference so disgraceful to us ? Shall we hear it asserted that we are *naturally a murdering and a robbing race* ? If our Government were to do this, it would not answer its purpose, for the Americans are of the *same race*. But, we reject with indignation the unjust idea. We are naturally as honest and as kind as the Americans are. It is our *misery*, and that alone, which produces such a mass of crimes in England, compared to what is committed in America. And this misery arises, as every one now sees, from that pressure of taxation, which forces men into the lists of paupers and beggars. When a man becomes a pauper or a beggar ; when *want* is continually staring him in the face ; when hunger gnaws his stomach and cold pinches his limbs ; when his present sufferings are merely a foretaste of that which awaits him later in life ; when hope has ceased to linger in his bosom, then comes despair, and with the remaining energies of his mind and body, *he seizes by force or by fraud on that which he cannot obtain by labour*. This is the *beginning* of crime ; and we have here the true and *only* cause of the difference between us and the Americans in this respect. The President's six thousand pounds a year is an example worthy of imitation in England, especially in this season of horrible distress. The hirelings of the press tell us, that we have *secured our Constitution* by the *sacrifices* that we have made. You know, and the people now see, *what they have secured* ; but, be this as it may, if it be acknowledged, that *we have made sacrifices*, let us ask what sacrifices the Royal Family, the Judges, the Placemen, the Sinecure-men, the Pensioned Ladies, the Police Justices, and others, have made. Their incomes have been *augmenting* during the whole of this long *season of sacrifices* ! This is a curious matter. Well might Canning and Gifford, in the Anti-Jacobin newspaper, call upon the people for sacrifices, while they themselves and GILLRAY the Caricature-man, were obtaining sinecures and pensions ! Well might George Rose call upon the people for *sacrifices* for the preservation of the Constitution, while he, from being a Purser in the Navy, was rising to the receipt of 10,000*l.* a year *out of those very sacrifices* ! It is now acknowledged, even by the very hirelings themselves, even by that most corrupt of prints, the *Times* newspaper, which was conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity, and which has never belied its origin ; even by this vile hireling it is now acknowledged, *that great and general distress prevails*. Well, then, will none of those who wallow in luxury, out of means derived from the public purse, *do anything in the way of making sacrifices* ? Will Canning and Gifford still cling to their sinecures ? Will Rose and all the rest of them do the same ? Will they tell us, that we still ought to pay them to the full amount ? Will Lord Grenville and Mr. Ponsonby and Lord Erskine and Lord Donoughmore and hundreds of others ; will they say, that the people have no right to call upon them for sacrifices ? Will the Seymours and the Somersets still hang on ? Be it so ; but, surely the Civil List, which has had so many hundreds of thousands added to it during the season of the people's sacrifices, ought now to be greatly reduced. If each of the junior branches of the Royal Family were allowed as much as the President of the United States is allowed, and if the king were allowed *ten times as much* ; this, surely, would be enough. It will be time early enough to talk of *splendour* when the nation shall again be relieved from its distresses, and when the number of paupers shall have diminished. It will then be time enough to

have *grand dinners* and sumptuous *fêtes*. Besides, the President governs America very well without any *splendour* at all. No country upon earth is so well governed; in no country are there so few breaches of the peace; in no country is the law so implicitly and cheerfully obeyed. Why, then, need our Royal Family be so anxious to secure the means of living in *splendour*? Splendour may serve to dazzle slaves, but it never can be an object of respect with free men. If a reduction such as I have here spoken of were made, a million of pounds a year would thereby be left in the pockets of the people, instead of that sum being annually taken from them by the tax-gatherers. This would be the *true* way of enabling the farmers and tradesmen to pay wages sufficient to keep labourers out of the poor-house. Mr. VANSITTART's scheme (poor man!) was, to raise taxes first, and to give those taxes to persons, who, in consequence of that, would be able to *lend* the amount of the taxes to those who had *first paid* the said taxes! But, this notable scheme is not, I think, half so good as that of *leaving the money in the pockets of the people*, who, by the taxing scheme, are not only compelled to pay the *tax*, but the *tax-gatherer* also. A Reformed Parliament would, therefore, infallibly reduce the charges of the Civil List in somewhat nearly the amount that I have mentioned, and, in doing this, they would really render a great service to the Royal Family as well as to the people. A Reformed Parliament would, too, ascertain the precise amount of the *King's private property*. This is an odd thing; or, at least, it sounds oddly to me.—*Whence comes this property?* The fact, however, is, that the king has a mass of private property; that property is *in the funds too!* And, what is most curious of all, the "*Whigs*," while in power, passed an Act, which *exempted this property from paying Property-tax*, while they nearly doubled that tax upon the property of every widow and orphan who had property of the same sort! So much for *Whiggism*; but, that there is property of this sort belonging to the king we know from this Act of Parliament. As to the *amount* of it there are different assertions. But, it cannot be a mere *trifle*. Now, Sir, while this fund exists, I think a Reformed Parliament would easily convince the Regent, that the people might, during the present distress, be spared the paying of *anything at all* for the support of any part of the Royal Family. That the king, whose allowance has been augmented, in the shape of "*arrears of Civil List*," many times during the last twenty-five years; and which augmentations have taken place on the express ground of the *increased expense of the necessities of life*; that the king should, during this time, have had money to *lend to the Government*; that being the case, in fact, when money is placed in the funds; that this should have been the case, that the king should have had private property of this sort, under such circumstances, appears wonderful to me. But such is the fact, and I am very confident, that a Reformed Parliament would endeavour to prevail upon the Regent to consent to a measure for making this money available in the present time of distress. Nor would a Reformed Parliament overlook the *Crown Lands*, which in fact, are now the people's lands. A Reformed Parliament would remember, that the Crown was formerly supported by its *own estates* without any charge upon the people, except in particular cases; that *Wars* were sometimes carried on out of the means afforded by these estates; and that, when this Royal Family received a fixed sum per year out of the taxes, the public became proprietors of the Crown estates. The sum fixed on was 800,000*l.* a year. This sum has

been prodigiously swelled ; and, what is very curious, the estates, which maintained the families and courts of former kings, now yield *scarcely sufficient to pay half-a-dozen sinecures* ! Mr. HUSKISSON, who has a contingent pension of 1200*l.* a year with a reversion of half the amount to Mrs. Emily Huskisson, his wife, is the chief steward for the management of these estates ; and, a Reformed Parliament would, I imagine, just take the liberty to ask Mr. Huskisson *the reason of this wonderful non-productiveness*. A Reformed Parliament would *go back* in their inquiries upon this subject. They would sift out an account of the *grants* of parts of this immense estate, within the last 25 years. They would see what sums had been received, and of whom, and by whom, for the renewal of leases, and for alienations, of parts of this public estate. They would inquire into the causes of tracts of land being taken in by individuals in the *New Forest* and other *Forests* and *Chases* ; and they would, with very little difficulty, ascertain the amount of the immense quantities of timber that have been felled, and what has been done with the amount of the trunk, lop, top, and bark. A Reformed Parliament would have nothing to do but to send one of their own body, with power to take evidence on the spot, to ascertain all these matters to a scruple. This immense estate, or rather, this long list of immense estates, if managed in the way that a Reformed Parliament would cause them to be managed, would, I am satisfied, go a considerable way in defraying all the expenses which would be *necessary* in the governing of this country. The *Droits of Admiralty* would also be a subject of strict inquiry with a Reformed Parliament, who would never sleep till they had before them, in black and white, a full account of all the receipts and all the disbursements upon this ample score. When they had that account before them, they would know what to do ; and there can be no question, that they would do what *justice* should demand at *their hands*.

Now, Sir, though a Reformed Parliament could not, all at once, relieve *all* the existing distress, I think it is evident, that a Reformed Parliament would be able to do *a great many good things*, and to afford the nation *a great deal of relief*. The question of our enemies is, therefore, already more than answered. They now see "*what good*" a Reform of Parliament would do ; and, if they could turn round upon us, and say, that all these things *can* be done without a Reform of Parliament, we deny the fact upon the best possible ground, namely, that nothing is to be done, till Borough-elections are put an end to. But, besides, if they tell us, that all these things can be done by the representatives of Old Sarum, Gatton, Queenborough, Corfe Castle, Winchelsea, &c., &c., why have these things not been done, or attempted ? There has been wanting either the *will* or the *power*, and it is, to us, no matter which, since the effect has been the same.

X. But, can a Reformed Parliament make wheat 15*s.* a bushel *with* a plentiful crop and fine harvest ; can they bring back Southdown Ewes to 40*s.* instead of the 18*s.* which they now sell at ; can they make a cow and a calf, which now sell for 7*l.* be worth the 20*l.* which they were worth four or five years ago ; can they, by any means, bring back the paper-money, and puff the bubble up to its former size ? NO. And, if they could, they would not. " Why, then, a Reformed Parliament could not continue to pay the interest of the Debt in full ? " NO. And, if they could, they would not, except to those individuals who should be found to have a fair claim to such payment ; and, to pay them,

a Reformed Parliament would find ample means, without a harassing system of taxation, and without any one act of injustice or of harshness towards any individual or any body of men. There are fundholders of different descriptions. It is certain, that a man who has acquired his property in private life is entitled to that property, fairly estimated; but, the bubble of paper-money has shifted property from one man's pocket to another man's pocket. By this species of legerdemain one man's cow has been changed into *five pounds' worth* from *twenty pounds' worth*, for this is really the proportion as to lean horned cattle. Upon the *whole* of that sort of farm produce, which is not affected in its price by the seasons, a fall of much more than *one-half* has taken place. Whatever is fit for the *mouth*, or for *immediate use* in any way, sells at *some price*; but, there are some things, such as colts, weaned calves, store lambs, which really will bring nothing worthy of the name of *price*. Many men follow chiefly the rearing of sheep; and they are now selling for 9s. a-head what they ought to sell, according to their expenses, at 25s. a-head. Can it be just, then, that the bubble, which has so lowered their property, should not lower the property of the fundholder? Suppose A. and B. to have started in 1812, each with a thousand pounds in his pocket. A. lent his money to Perceval and the rest of them, and B. went to farming. A. was to get five per cent. for his money, and B. the profit of his money and his labour. A. had to receive of B., in taxes, the amount of about seventy bushels of wheat; for seventy bushels of wheat cost then about 50*l*. This was fair as long as the bubble continued; but, the bubble gets a crack; and things are so changed, that A. demands and receives of B. more than one hundred bushels of wheat instead of the seventy which it was clearly understood that A. was to receive. And, if A. be paid in *all sorts* of farm produce, which is the case, he receives more than the *double* of what he ought to receive, according to the fair interpretation of the implied contract at the outset. It is, therefore, manifestly unjust, that this rate of paying and receiving should continue. Indeed, the thing is *impossible*, but if it were possible, it would be unjust. A Reformed Parliament, therefore, after making every reduction in expenses that was practicable, would betake themselves to this great task. They would inquire who the Fundholders were, when they deposited their money; they would compare prices at the different times; they would hunt out the receivers of public money; they would see the extent of the nation's means, and they would, in a very short time, and with the greatest correctness, allot to every one his real due. Such a Parliament would be the best *friend* of the Fundholder, because it would *begin* by lopping off almost every expense except that of the Debt, and would thereby secure the best and only chance of his being paid. At any rate the lot of the Fundholder could not be *worse* than it must inevitably become in the present progress. With a Reformed Parliament an accommodation, a composition, would take place; but, if the bubble finally-burst into thin air, without a Reformed Parliament, such a composition may become wholly impracticable. No persons, therefore, ought to wish for a Reformed Parliament so earnestly as the Fundholders, the greater part of whom are now, from ignorance, its decided enemies. They have a sort of vague fear, that a Reform of Parliament would lead to their utter ruin, and they have still ringing in their ears the sounds, created by knavish horror-mongers, about the *French Revolution*. The causes of that Revolution would, however, if they

rightly understood them, produce a very different effect on the mind. It is very notorious to all men who have read upon the subject, that it was the *extravagances* of the French Government which produced the Revolution. These extravagances, which imposed intolerable burdens upon the people, *were persevered in*, in spite of all the complaints of the people, at a moment *when the taxes pressed them to the earth*. But, at last, the Government could no longer collect the means of paying the interest of the debt. Still it persevered in the extravagance. It could not, however, by all its cruel edicts, wring from the people a sufficiency of money to pay the just demands upon it, and at the same time to support its army and its swarms of lazy dependants. In this dilemma it called the *Notables together*, and they recommended *Reform*! Still there was time for the Government to have saved itself from destruction and the country from bloodshed. But the Government, urged by the blood-suckers of the country, endeavoured to support the old system; discovered insincerity in all its professions for the public good; allied itself in wishes, at least, with those who had gone abroad to invite the aid of hired soldiers; the people became enraged; vengeance thrust calm reason from her seat; and the throne, the noblesse, the church, all were hurled down in an instant. From the Government, vengeance marched with fire and sword against all its friends. Property became exposed to the caprice of succeeding men in power; and, in the uproar, the opulent Fundholder thought himself happy to escape with his life to some dirty hiding-place, there to reflect on the important truth, that *TIMELY REFORM would have secured to him the possession of his fortune*. Happy would it be, if, profiting from this dreadful example, the body of Fundholders would now join their efforts to those of the friends of *timely Reform*. The hirelings bid us be warned by the French Revolution. Let them take the awful warning to themselves. They are for ever reminding us, that that Revolution has ended in *despotism*. We, therefore, wish for a Reform that shall *prevent* Revolution. But, Sir, if they will have it, that our Government will *never yield* upon this point, and that if we have a Reform we shall not have it without a Revolution, we will not believe their assertions; but if we were to admit them for argument's sake, even *then* we should see no reason to desist from our efforts to obtain Reform, being convinced that the *example of France ought not to alarm us*. We have, in this country, a *form* of Government that we like; we have great Constitutional principles and laws, to which we are immoveably attached, which our brethren in America have firmly and most wisely adhered to, and which nothing can improve. These are land-marks for us, and would be our sure and certain guide. Whereas the French had never possessed any fixed principles or laws of this description. They were "*all at sea*;" and no wonder, if, in the midst of their rage their vengeance and their torments, they committed great errors in the organization of an entirely new sort of government, which the people had never before heard any thing about. Therefore, Sir, we are not to be *scared* by the hirelings who tell us (very falsely, I hope,) that the Government will *never yield*, and that we shall not have Reform *without Revolution*. But, we do not, I hope, stop here; for, if we could believe it *possible*, which we cannot, that England would, *in the end*, derive no greater benefit from a change than France has derived from her change, *still we ought to proceed*. For, Sir, in spite of every thing, that the Bourbons, aided by a million of

men in arms, have been able to do, still the state of France is a state of *blessedness*, compared to what it was before the Revolution. France now possesses the *Code Napoleon*, instead of the cruel feudal system. France, in spite of invading and watching armies, has not been, and will not be, replunged into the barbarism of the seventeenth century. Religious toleration cannot be gotten rid of, though murders are committed in the name of Jesus Christ. The Priests will never regain their power, and the petty tyrants of the Noblesse are for ever ejected from their privilege of robbing and insulting the people. To see a Foreign army in their country to uphold the Bourbons against the wishes of the people must give the latter pain; but, they are much better off than before the Revolution, when they were liable to be robbed and beaten, without daring to resist, by any of the myrmidons of the Crown. And, in truth, it is not more humiliating; it is even less humiliating, to be kept in awe by a Foreign army, brought into the country on purpose, than by an army of one's own country, consisting of our own countrymen, paid, fed, and clothed by ourselves. In the former case, it is an open acknowledged submission to Foreign force; to the superior power of a conqueror; but in the latter case, it is a sort of sneaking degradation, which seeks to hide itself even from the eyes of the degraded party himself, who vainly imagines that, in shutting his eyes to his own disgrace, he can hide it from the rest of the world. Supposing, therefore, that things were to *remain* in France as they now are, the French have *greatly gained* by their Revolution, besides having inflicted just punishment on the greater part of their oppressors, and that is a *clear gain*, an enjoyment possessed and past, which nothing can deprive them of. But things will not *remain* as they are. The French Revolution is not yet *ended*. It cannot stop where it is, and the events of every day tend to impress this truth on our minds. However, even the view that present circumstances present, induces us to conclude, making the very worst of every thing we see, that the example of France contains no one argument against the most strenuous exertions in favour of Reform in England. To return to the Fundholders, Sir, the notice of whose false alarms has led me into this digression, I think they ought to see much more cause for alarm in the continuance of the present system, than in a Reform that would put an end to it. Several of the Correspondents of the Board of Agriculture, *Magistrates*, and, of course, "friends of Government," tell the Board, that, if *something be not done*, they do not believe, that *the peace of the country can be preserved*! By which they must mean, that the people will rise and help themselves. This is *revolution* at once; or, at least, *open rebellion*. So that it is their opinion, that one of these will take place, *unless something be done*. And, what is to be done other than taking off the taxes in the way that I have proposed? And who will do that but a Reformed Parliament? Thus, then, the Fundholders must, I should think, at last, clearly see, that their only chance of escaping ruin is in a *Reform*; that while the choice of the country in general lies between *Reform* and *confusion*, their own particular choice lies between Reform with *something*, and confusion with *not a farthing*. A Reformed Parliament would "*preserve the peace of the country*," I'll warrant it. They would hasten with sincerity and energy to remove the pressure which the people feel; they would instantly put an end to that everlasting source of ill-will and bloodshed, the *religious disabilities* of Catholics and Dissenters; they would throw

open the doors of promotion and honourable reward to men of all religious denominations ; and would thereby put an end to those bitter animosities, which, while they make men persecute each other, render the whole mass more completely subject to oppression. A Reformed Parliament would, at once, recall the army from France, and disclaim, in the most distinct terms, all intention or desire to interfere in the domestic affairs of other nations, expressing at the same time, its anxious wish to see civil and religious liberty flourish in every part of the world. This is the way, that a Reformed Parliament would proceed, in order to preserve the peace and restore the happiness of the country.

Having now, Sir, shown that a Reformed Parliament would be *able to do something that no one will deny to be good*, unless he be an eater of taxes, I should next proceed to answer the second question ; namely, “ *in WHAT MANNER can a Reform take place without creating confusion?*” but, as this is a subject that requires to be treated of somewhat in detail, it must be postponed till another week.

In the meanwhile permit me to congratulate you on the noble efforts which the friends of freedom are making in the *City of London*, and on the triumph of those efforts. The re-election of the Lord Mayor, excellently sound and brave and public-spirited man as he is, is nothing compared to the demonstrations upon this occasion in favour of those principles, which are now prevailing in every quarter, namely, the principles of Reform.—There was a time, when a man like the Lord Mayor would not have obtained a hundred votes in the City. Singular, that the Pitt crew, by persevering in a poll, should seek to proclaim their own disgrace ! But the truth is, that they can hardly believe that what they now behold is a *reality*. Their insolence cannot yet recede from its former point. I do not so much wonder at this, seeing that I myself, though, for 12 or 13 years, occupied in coolly foretelling the blowing up of this system, am actually astounded at what I see around me. The *statue of Pitt* would appear to have been placed in the Guildhall, by his corrupt friends and jobbers, for the express purpose of now carrying back the recollection of the Livery to his innumerable acts of oppression and insolence. Without this object in their sight, they might be induced to stop short in their reflection ; but with this before them, the trial of Tooke and Hardy, the Transportation of the Scotch Patriots, the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, the Treason and Sedition Bills, the Laws to cramp the Press, the Bastille and “ Governor ” Aris, the Loan to Boyd and Benfield, the Bank Restriction Act ; all these, and a thousand other things, rush in upon the mind. No wonder that Mr. Thompson was led into vehement language, when, with the miseries of his country in his mind, he happened to turn his eyes towards this statue. But, the more *solemn* the proceeding, in the removal of this object, so justly hateful to the eyes of the friends of freedom, the better it will be. It was *voted* into the Hall by the enemies of the country ; let it be *voted out* of the Hall by its friends. It is, indeed, a deep disgrace to the City of London that it should remain there ; for, as long as it so remains, will the City be justly accused of entertaining bad principles, or of want of courage to assert good ones. This was the man who first set that mischief on foot, which has, at last, covered the country with misery, after having enslaved a great part of Europe. He was a cold, a hardened, a merciless man. The cool manner in which he pursued Messrs. Tooke and Hardy, the evidence he gave on their trial (to say nothing about

that of his friend *Wilberforce*), his Cold-Bath-Fields proceedings, these ought never to be effaced from the minds of the people of England and Scotland; and the useful sort of *public instruction* would be, to give a true account to the people of his acts and those of his underlings and successors. However, we have lists of the *Members of the Pitt Clubs*, which may serve to guide us in the selection of those who are entitled to the largest share of our resentment. A short time will show, whether these combinations of men will have the impudence to persevere in insulting the people; but, whatever they may do, the days of their glory are gone, never to return, and the days of their shame are at hand.

I am, with great respect,

Your most obedient Servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO

SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, BART.

IN WHAT MANNER (CAN A REFORM OF PARLIAMENT TAKE
PLACE, WITHOUT CREATING CONFUSION?)

(*Political Register*, October, 1816.)

Botley, October 18, 1816.

SIR,

Having, in my last letter, shown that a Reform of Parliament *would do a great deal of good*, it shall now be my business to answer the second of the questions, which *fear*, at the suggestion of *craft*, is continually putting to us. Before, however, I proceed to show, that a *timely* reform might be, and would be, effected without the smallest chance of creating confusion, a preliminary remark or two are called for on the conduct of those crafty and corrupt men, who suggest this question to the ignorant and the timid.

Why should any body suppose, that *confusion* would be created by restoring the people at large to the enjoyment of the most important of their undoubted rights? We know well enough what infamous confusion now reigns at every general election. Why, then, is *confusion* so much dreaded? It will be shown, by and by, that a Reformed Parliament would be chosen by means the most simple, the most quiet in their operation, the most fair, and the best calculated to prevent those scenes of tumult and violence, and beastly conduct, which now disgrace elections; but, before proceeding to the detail of these means, let us again ask these pretended lovers of peace and harmony, *why* they suppose, that a *Reform of Parliament*, above all things in the world, would be likely to create confusion?

The Habeas Corpus Act could be suspended for seven years at one time; new treasons could be invented; addition upon addition to the severity of the penal code; punishment heaped on punishment for the sake of collect-

ing a revenue ; a fiscal system diving into every man's most private concerns ; persons empowered to enter our houses, take account of our windows, horses, dogs, carriages, and servants ; numerous Acts of Parliament, *each exceeding the New Testament in bulk*, to impose taxes and penalties upon the people ; a system of watching us so close that no man can be said to have anything private ; balloting for a militia, for a supplementary militia ; a volunteer system ; a yeomanry cavalry system ; an army of reserve system ; a levy-en-masse system ; a local militia system. All these, and a hundred other schemes and measures, adopted, undone, re-adopted, abandoned, exchanged, modified ; and, at every step, *penalties and forfeitures*. All these have taken place, and no *confusion* seems ever to have been apprehended, though complexity and vexation, and pains and penalties, made the most conspicuous figure throughout the whole series. But, now, alas ! when a *reform* is talked of, though nothing be in contemplation but a mere restoration of the undeniable rights of the people, and the putting an end to corruption, profligacy, and waste, *confusion* is affected to be apprehended !

Confusion in what ? In the mode of the election ? There is now a greater bulk of laws, and cases, and decisions, and expositions, and reports relative to elections ; these now amount in bulk to more than any man could read through *in seven years*, allowing himself time barely sufficient for eating and sleeping ! This, Sir, you know to be a fact. And yet, the "*harpies*," as the noble old Major calls them, affect to be alarmed at the *confusion* that the putting an end to this shocking system will create ! The *confusion*, which exists at elections, as they are now carried on, is notorious. A considerable part of the people come out of the scandalous strife with black eyes, bloody noses, broken limbs, or disordered minds ; and yet, the *peace-loving "harpies"* fear confusion from the *opposite* of this system ! No, Sir, what they really apprehend is, that confusion amongst the *people* would cease, and that confusion *to themselves* would begin. This is what they apprehend ; and without saying another word, *they are answered*.

But for the satisfaction of persons, who really mean well, and who have been alarmed by the horrors, hatched by these base and crafty deceivers, I will show *in what manner* a Parliamentary reform would take place, without the smallest chance of creating any confusion other than *confusion to the harpies*, who now prey on the nation's vitals. If a set of magpies, or carrion crows, were engaged in tearing out the eyes, and pecking away the flesh of a poor unfortunate flock of sheep, to fire amongst them with a good charge of shot would certainly "*create confusion* ;" but, not confusion *to the sheep*, who on the contrary, would, I imagine, find themselves relieved from confusion. In sultry summers, the maggots, which are engendered in the fleeces of our flocks, proceed by degrees till they eat into the flesh of the animals, who discover their pain by stopping suddenly, then starting, then running their noses against the ground, then looking round at the part affected, then lying down, then jumping up and running away : they sweat all over ; the tears run down their faces ; fever leads to madness, and madness to death. But, the faithful shepherd comes in time, and by the application of his *shears* and his *wash* creates confusion amongst the filthy devourers, and restores the flock to ease and to happiness. No question, Sir, that the Magpies and the Carrion Crows, and that the Maggots too, if they could squall, would cry aloud against the reforming shepherds ; but, the flock, I take it, would be very grateful

to them for their exertions, and would entertain no fear of experiencing *confusion* from the change.

When I say, that a reform of Parliament might be, and would be, effected without the smallest danger of producing confusion, I must, of course, be understood to make the assertion with this condition, namely, *that the present Parliament would agree to the measure in the form that it shall be proposed*; for if they will not, if they be resolved to persevere in rejecting the prayers of the people for reform, then, of course, a reform cannot possibly be effected *without* confusion. If this be what the sons and daughters of corruption mean as the source of confusion, they are right enough as to the *effect*, but it will then remain for them to find out a *justification* for the *cause*. But I must pre-suppose the consent of the present Parliament to the prayers of the people: and, in that case, I am able to prove, that the reform would take place without any chance of creating confusion amongst the people; and without putting at hazard the lives and properties of any portion of the rightful owners of the country.

Another objection of the harpies, is, that the Reformers are *divided in opinion amongst themselves* as to the *precise details* of the reform which they pray for. What petty and what base cavilling is this! Do we not know, that no bill of any great importance was ever passed without such a division in the opinions of its advocates? Do we not always see, that the *principle* of the bill is first made matter of discussion, that blanks are left in it to be filled up in a Committee; that, in this Committee, *alterations* and *additions* are made; that after all this, the bill is frequently *amended* by the Lords? Nay, does not the bill, when it becomes a law, frequently contain a provision for its being further altered during the same session of Parliament? Indeed, what proposition, what measure, ever was, amongst any body of men, introduced in any other way? And, what impudence, then, is it in the advocates of bribery and corruption to tell us, that, though these are as "notorious as the Sun at noon-day," they ought to continue to exist, because those who wish to put an end to them have not, every man of them, signed *before-hand*, an instrument binding himself to the precise regulation to be adopted to prevent their return? At this rate, too, how could *any law* ever be passed? It is the *majority* who decide; but the Reformers are required to be *unanimous*. They are so as to the *principle* of the measure; and they will, as in all other cases, insist, that the detail must and shall be left to a decision by a majority.

However, it is necessary to state somewhat of the *outline* of the Reform that we seek; because, as is the case in most other good causes, there are *sham* reformers, who mean any thing but that which the people wish for and want. What the people seek is a real reform; a restoration to the whole of their own rights, without violating the rights of others. The rights of the people, according to Magna Charta, according to the constitution and the ancient laws of the kingdom, are, *That they are to be taxed only by their own consent*; and that they shall *YEARLY choose their representatives*. That every man who pays a *tax* of any sort into the hands of a tax-gatherer, shall, by his representative, *give his consent to such a tax*, which he cannot do, unless he vote at elections for members of Parliament, who impose the taxes. It is also an essential, that the election should be *annual*; because the ancient law says so; and because we know from fatal experience, that a *three years'* Parliament voted themselves into a *seven years'* Parliament; and that the *seven years'* Parliament have loaded us with a debt, the interest of which is

pressing us to the earth, and the principal of which has been employed in supporting French emigrants, in subsidizing Germans, in restoring the Bourbons, the Pope and the Inquisition, and in other ways equally beneficial to the country.

It is quite necessary, that the people should be put on their guard against the *triennial trick*. It has already been begun to be played off by the hirelings of one of the factions. The object of it is to divide the friends of Reform. Mr. Fox played it off *thirty years ago*; and he at last played a good pension into the hands of Mrs. Fox and her daughters, though he never, *after he was in place*, once talked even, of Parliamentary Reform. It is, therefore, quite necessary, that the people should be cautioned against the tricks of these sham Reformers, who are only so many enemies' spies in the camp of Reform.

This is an old, and has often been a very successful trick of a crafty enemy. "*Divide and destroy*" is the maxim of tyrants. First they openly oppose; but, when that is like to fail, they seek to undermine by dividing. They, better than any body, know the history of the *bundle of sticks*; and they seek to separate the bundle, that they may snap them one at a time. As to the *detail* of Reform, it is of little consequence; but the main principles must be adhered to inflexibly; these are, that *every man who pays a tax of any sort into the hands of a tax-gatherer, should vote for members of the Commons' House; and that Parliament should be chosen annually*. To make the right of voting consist in possession of this or that species of property; to make freehold or copyhold or leasehold or lifehold a title of voting, would be to rob the people of their right; and, to allow a man to be a representative for more than a year without being re-chosen, has in it neither justice nor common sense, to say nothing about its being contrary to the spirit of the Constitution, and to the *very letter* of the ancient laws of England.

Upon this subject I beg leave to introduce the opinion of that most learned lawyer and excellent man, Mr. Baron Maseres, who has for so many years been Cursitor Baron of the Exchequer, and whose exertions in the cause of civil and religious liberty have been exceeded by those of very few men. In 1812 this venerable lawyer and patriot (whom, I suppose, Canning would call a Jacobin) republished letters of the famous General Ludlow, in which letters there is the following passage: "What! was it a *gracious favour* to secure us the sitting of a Parliament once in *three years*, when the ancient laws gave us a right to annual Parliaments?" Upon this passage Mr. Baron Maseres inserts, in a note, the following remarks of his own, which remarks are well worthy of the attention of every real friend of Reform.

"The statute of the 4th year of King Edward III. Chapter 14, A.D. 1331, is in these words: 'Ensement est accordé que Parlement soit chacun an une foitz; ou plus, si mestier soit.' That is, 'Item: it is accorded, that a Parliament shall be holden every year once; and more often if need be.' And in the 26th year of the same King, chap. 10, it is enacted as follows: 'Item: pour maintenance des dits articles et Estatuz, et redresser diverses mischiefs et grevances, qui viegnant de jour en autre, soit Parlement tenu chacun an, si comme autrefois estoit ordeigné par Estatut.' That is, 'Item, for maintenance of the said articles and statutes, and redress of divers mischiefs and grievances which daily happen, a Parliament shall be holden every year, as at another time was ordained by Statute.'

"And this statute was regularly observed to the end of the reign of the great King Edward the Third and through the greater part of the following reign of King Richard the Second; as is clearly shown by that learned and zealous friend

"to public liberty, Mr. *Granville Sharp*, of the Middle Temple, in pages 159, 160, 161, &c.—170, of a very able tract, entitled '*A Declaration of the People's national Right to a share in the Legislature*;' of which a second edition was printed in the year 1775, for Benjamin White, Bookseller, in Fleet-street. And, amongst the several instances which he has there cited of successive years in each of which a new Parliament was summoned by the King, by a new writ of election; he mentions some years in which two, or more, new Parliaments had been summoned, by different writs of election, in the space of a single year, or without royal prorogation of the preceding Parliament, to meet again at another day, in the course of the same year, as has been the practice for the last two centuries. So that it may truly be affirmed, that in those ancient times the people enjoyed the privilege of electing new representatives in Parliament, either once in every year, or more than once, if the King found it necessary to have a second Parliament before the expiration of a year.

"This seems to have been a very useful privilege, as it tended much to strengthen the connection between the Members of the House of Commons and their constituents, or electors, of whom they are representatives, or, in the language of the writ of election sent to the sheriff, the attorneys, or persons who have received from them, full and sufficient powers to consult with the King and his council, upon the important matters relating to the state of the kingdom, that shall be laid before them, and to consent, on the behalf of their constituents or electors, to the resolutions that shall there be taken concerning them. 'Ita quod Milites plenam et sufficientem potestatem pro se et communitate Comitatus prædicti, et dicti Cives et Burgenses pro se et communitatibus Civitatum et Burgorum, divisim, ab ipsis habeant ad faciendum et consentiendum illis quæcumque de communi consilio (favente Deo) ordinari contigerint super negotiis ante-dictis; ita quod, pro defectu hujus modi protestatis, dicta negotia ineffecta non remaneant quovis modo.' See *Elsyng's Method of holding Parliaments in England*, pages 68 and 69.—For hence it seems evident, that according to the ancient and original constitution of the House of Commons, there ought to be a general agreement, or concurrence of opinion, upon the subjects, for the discussion of which the Parliament was to be assembled, between the electors of the several counties, cities, boroughs, and the persons they were so to empower to represent them, and act for them: and, surely, that agreement, or concurrence, would be much more likely to take place, if the elections were to occur once, or more than once, in every year, than if they are renewed only once in the course of seven years, as may be the case according to the laws now in being.

"Now, if this good old law were to be revived, would there be any danger of such violent and expensive and often ruinous contests, at the time of elections, as are seen in the present mode of proceeding, when the general elections occur only once in about six years? For, as the representatives would be constantly disposed to cultivate the good opinion of their constituents, and by their conduct in Parliament, to promote their interests and wishes, as far as their own consciences and judgments would allow them; in order to be re-elected by them in the next year, it is probable that there would be much fewer contested elections, and changes of the representatives, than there are at present. And from the harmony that would generally subsist, between the Members of Parliament and their electors, the dignity and respectability of the House of Commons would be increased, and the confidence of the people, in the wisdom and uprightness of their measures, would be restored; and the resolutions that would be taken by them, would be generally allowed to be in reality, what they are now often called and pretended to be, the true expressions, or declarations, of the sense of the people at large, on the subjects to which they relate. It seems probable, therefore, that the revival of this good old law, for choosing new Parliaments every year, would be attended with very happy consequences, and give general satisfaction to the nation.

"And if this law for annual new Parliaments were to be revived, it seems reasonable that the day for the said annual election, and likewise the day of the meeting of the Parliament for the dispatch of business, should be certain known days in the year, fixed by the law, just as the first days of Hilary and Michaelmas Terms are in the King's Courts of Justice in Westminster-hall, for the beginning of the Sessions of the King's Judges in those Courts, for the decision of suits at law; to the end, that the right and duty of the two Houses of Parliament to assist and concur with the King in the important business of

"making new laws, and repealing, or altering old ones, as occasion should be, might be universally known to be an essential, permanent, regular, and indispensable, part of the constitution of the British Government as much as the administration of justice by the King's Judges in his Courts at Westminster-hall, and not a temporary and occasional instrument of Government to be employed only at the King's pleasure, whenever he should think fit to have recourse to it; and that no future King, who should happen to be afflicted with the malady of King Charles the First, 'an inordinate love of arbitrary power, and a strong disposition to make himself an absolute Monarch, over his people,' should be tempted to tell his Parliament, as King Charles did his in the year 1627, 'To remember that Parliaments are altogether in his power, and that, therefore, as he finds the fruits of them to be good or evil, they are to continue, or not to be:' as is shown above in page 33.

"And, if this salutary old law were to be revived, the first day of the month of October in every year (if it were not on a Sunday, and in that case the 2nd), would probably be found to be a convenient day for proceeding to a general election; and some day about the middle of the following month of November, as for example, the 17th (if it were not on a Sunday, and in that case the 18th) to be convenient time for the meeting of the Parliament for the dispatch of business. The 17th of November was the birthday of that great Princess, Queen Elizabeth, who governed the nation forty-three years with great wisdom and justice, and in great harmony with her Parliaments, and, by their advice and assistance, delivered the English nation a second time from the yoke of the Pope's authority, and the cruel persecutions that had been lately practised under it, and established the Protestant religion on a solid and lasting foundation; and also caused the laws to be administered, in her Courts at Westminster-Hall, in a stable and uniform manner, by learned and upright judges, well selected for the purpose, whereby property of every kind became more secure and valuable than it had ever been before: and who likewise greatly encouraged and advanced the trade of the nation, and laid the foundation of its navigation and maritime power. These were great and eminent services to her subjects, which have justly made her memory dear to their posterity; and (to use the words of *Mr. Thomas May*, in the beginning of his excellent History of the last Parliament of King Charles the First), '*they were accomplished by the justice and prudence of her Government, by making the right use of her subjects' hearts, hands, and purses in a Parliamentary way.*' It seems, therefore, that it would only be a just tribute to her merits and memory to make a choice of her birth-day, the 17th of November, in every year (being in a part of the month that is very convenient for the purpose), for the first day of the meeting of the new elected Parliament."

Here, Sir, we have not only an account of the *law* of the case, but we have the opinion of a man of great learning and talent, and with more than three quarters of a century of experience to guide him. Here is no Jacobin, at any rate, though I dare say, the impudent spawn of the Green-Room would condemn him to eternal flames, if they could, as a Jacobinical Reformer. We have here some of the powerful *reasons* on the side of Annual Parliaments: and, indeed, no further reasons are necessary to be stated, because the thing is so manifestly proper, that the reasons for it cannot fail to suggest themselves to every mind. All, therefore, that the Reformers have now to do, is to adhere to the above-stated main points. *Every man who pays a direct tax to have a vote; and Parliaments to be elected annually.* These being adhered to, the detail cannot do harm: these given up, no detail can do any good.

Having thus shown what the principle of the Reform ought to be, and having supposed, that the present Parliament will agree to and pass a Bill, brought in for carrying a reform into execution, I shall now proceed, not to state all the details of such Bill, but to *show how easily a new and Reformed Parliament might be chosen and returned.*

As every male tax-payer would have a vote, and the number of members for every county in the three kingdoms would, of course, be propor-

tioned to the number of the inhabitants within each county, there would be very little difficulty in apportioning what number of members each county should send. We have the *population-book*, recently enough compiled. Suppose, therefore, the whole of the population to amount to 15,000,000, the whole number of members to 658, as it is now, and Hampshire to contain 300,000 inhabitants; the *question* with regard to Hampshire, would be, if 15,000,000 return 658, how many ought 300,000 to return, and the *answer* would be 13 members. Thus would the proportion be determined with the utmost facility; or, to prevent fractional parts, it might be settled that every 20 or 30 thousand inhabitants should be a title to a member. These would be matters of minor consequence, however, and would admit of a very easy arrangement.

It may be thought by some persons that the number of members sent by each county ought to be proportioned to the number of *tax-payers* in each county, and not in proportion to the number of *inhabitants*. I am of a different opinion, because, after all, those who pay no direct taxes ought to have some weight; and they ought, at any rate, to be as nearly represented as possible. But, if it were resolved on to take the numbers of *tax-payers* as the criterion, nothing would be more easy than to obtain an account of those numbers. It would be collected in less than a month. And I would engage to make out the scale of proportion, and to settle the whole matter with the greatest accuracy in the space of one week from the time of receiving such account. Where, then, is the difficulty so far? And, where is the fear of *confusion*?

The number of members for each county in England, Ireland and Scotland being fixed on, and it being settled that every payer of a direct tax should have a vote, the next thing to be considered would be, *in what manner the election should take place*. "Aye," say the *harpies*, "now let us see what a pretty *bustle* you will kick up!" No, Sir, we should have no *bustle* at all. We shall have no *canvassing* attorneys and agents galloping throughout the country; no lying, fawning members, giving false shakes of the hand to a poor fellow, whom they pass by the next month as if he were a dog; no filthy knaves kissing men's wives and daughters, and *spewing gold* into their mouths, as my father told me he once saw at *Haslemere*, and as I myself very nearly saw in the borough of *Honiton*, where the people openly avowed that the sale of their votes was their "*blessing*." We shall have no ribbons and flags; no drums and trumpets; no election-balls, at which the higher and lower orders of the sons and daughters of corruption mix in base and filthy familiarity. No rattling of post-chaises to the county-towns; no hogsheads of muddy beer served out in the streets to a deluded and debased populace; no drunkenness, no riots, no bruises, no murders. But, in lieu of all these, we should have one day in each year spent by sober and thoughtful citizens, in deliberately exercising the important right, and performing the great duty, of choosing proper persons to speak their wishes in the making of laws, and in guarding the rights, the honour, and the freedom of their country.

You have often said, that you want NOTHING NEW; and so we say all. Even in the regulations for the taking of the voice of the people, I, for my part, see no necessity for any one *new establishment*, or for any one *new office*, or new officer. Our excellent *form* of government; our excellent *ancient laws*; our excellent modes of carrying on the business of a nation, leave us *nothing new* to wish for. The Election would take

place on one and the same day throughout the whole of the United Kingdom ; and, as I shall now proceed to show, might be all completed, the returns made, and the new Parliament assembled in the space of one month.

On the day fixed on by the law, of which due notice would be given in every *parish* by posting at the church-doors, and also from the pulpit, if that was thought necessary, the *Churchwardens* and *Overseers* would meet *at the Church*, where there would be a *box*, into which the Voters would put each his ballot, on which he would have previously written, or caused to be written, the names of those men whom he wished to be chosen for his county. Let us suppose, then, the parish of Botley to be the particular scene before us. The county is to give thirteen Members, and every voter is, if he chooses, to vote for thirteen men. *Nicholas Freemantle*, for instance, having heard all that has been said for this man and against that man (for he would hear a great deal), writes down thirteen names upon a bit of paper, takes it in his hand, and away he goes to the Church. The Churchwardens, who have the charge of the ballot-box, ask *his name* ; the Overseers look into their rate-book to see whether he be a *tax-payer* ; finding his name there, they bid him put in his ballot ; which done, home he goes to his business. If the Overseers do not find him to be a tax-payer, he, of course, does not vote.

Between nine in the morning and five in the afternoon should be the hours of polling. In large cities, there might be *numerous ballot-boxes*, with additional copies of the rate-book, and deputies to the Churchwardens and Overseers. At Botley, and in almost every parish, there would need but one ballot-box, and the Election would be over and completed without even a *bustle*, by twelve o'clock in the day.

On the next day, the Churchwardens and Overseers would, being all assembled together, open the ballot-box, and make out their return. They would take out the several ballots, write the names of all the persons voted for upon a piece of paper, and ascertain from the ballots how *many votes each had got*. They would then, on the same day, transmit by the hands of the senior Churchwarden, not only the *result* of their investigation, but also *the whole of the ballots*, to the High Sheriff of the County, who should be ordered to be present, and in constant attendance at the County-town, for the purpose of receiving the parochial returns, and for other purposes, to be mentioned by and by. The Churchwardens and Overseers should make their return in somewhat the following words :

" Botley, Hants, October 2, 1817" (*for such, I hope, will be the date*).—" We the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Parish of Botley, in the County of Southampton, hereby certify to the High Sheriff of the said County, that, in obedience to the law, we held in the said Parish, an Election for Members of Parliament, on the first day of this month ; that, after keeping the poll open during the hours prescribed by the said law, and punctually observing all the provisions thereof relative to the receiving of votes, we have opened the ballot-box, and having, with great care, examined the several ballots, find, that for A. there are 71 votes, for B. 54 votes, for C. 19 votes, &c. ; and that we have put all the said ballots into one parcel, which we have sealed with our seal, and have herewith transmitted the same to the High Sheriff, in order that he may verify, or correct thereby the return which we have above stated."

Now, I will venture to pledge my life, that an Election like this would

take place, not only without *confusion*, but without the loss of one single day's work in the Parish, except with the Parish-officers themselves, which could not possibly be a matter of any great moment, especially if they were allowed to charge for their time in their usual annual accounts, and which no human being would grudge.

With what facility, with what celerity, would these returns all find their way to the High Sheriff, a copy of each being recorded in the Parish-book, to provide against accidents! Then would come the duty to be performed by the High Sheriff. He, with his Deputy, and with a sufficient number of Clerks (four would be amply sufficient), would first compare each parochial return with the ballots; when all the parochial returns were verified, or corrected, in the presence of the Chairman of the Quarter Sessions and the Clerk of the Peace, the High Sheriff would make out a County Return in somewhat the following manner:

"Winchester, 10th October, 1817.

"I, A. B., High Sheriff of the County of Southampton, hereby certify, that I have received the Returns from all the Parishes in the said County, of the Votes taken for Members of Parliament on the first day of this present month; that I have, in the presence of the Chairman of the Quarter Sessions and of the Clerk of the Peace, carefully compared all the said Returns with the respective parcels of ballots, transmitted to me; that, after such comparison and verification, or correction in case of error, I have found, that this County has given for A. so many votes, for B. so many, &c., and that A. R. T. S. M. N. O. P. Q. W. X. H. and K. are the thirteen persons, who have more votes for each of them than any other person has had in this County, at this Election; and that I have deposited, under my hand and seal, and also under the hands and seals of the Chairman of the Quarter Sessions, and of the Clerk of the Peace, the said Parochial Returns and parcels of ballots, together with a copy of this Return, in the Office of the High Sheriff of this County.

"A. B. High Sheriff.

"Signed in the presence of
"C. D. Chairman of the Quarter Session.
"E. F. Clerk of the Peace."

This return might be sent to the Crown-office, and there kept till the Parliament should meet. The Sheriff, on the very day of closing his return, should make proclamation in his county, and which proclamation should contain a copy of the return; so that the people would, at once, be informed on whom the election of their county had fallen.

Now, Sir, can you conceive it *possible* for any *confusion* to arise out of a series of proceedings like these? We should have no rioting, because there would be nothing to irritate; no drunkenness or bribery, because no fortune could drench, and much less bribe, forty or eighty thousand voters; no *false-swearing*, because we would have *no swearing at all*, from the first to the last; no ill-blood and spite amongst neighbours, because no man (unless he chose it) would let any other man know whom he voted for. We have a great advantage over our brethren in America as to our *instruments* in this business. They have no churchwardens and overseers, *known to the law*, and are, therefore, compelled to choose what they call *Judges of Election* in their several townships, which they do, very quietly indeed, at previous meetings. The same might be done in Ireland and Scotland, where the parish-officers are not exactly upon the same footing as they are here. But these are mere trifles. A day's thinking amongst any half-dozen of men of sense would produce every

regulation that would be of any importance in the conducting of the business.

The churchwardens and overseers are now elected annually by the majority of the tax-payers in the parishes. They are always, and necessarily must be, persons of consideration in the parish; they are entrusted with its real property and its money. There can, therefore, be little danger of their *wishing* to make a false return, and still less of their *daring* to do it: and, besides the penalty, in case of detection, on *any one* whether parish-officers, sheriff, chairman of the quarter sessions, clerk of the peace, or any other person concerned in making or conniving at a false return, or in obstructing an election, or retarding the transmission of a return, should be so heavy and so disgraceful as to preclude almost the possibility of the commission of such a crime.

All would, therefore, be regularity, celerity, truth, fairness, instead of the disorder, the tardiness, the falsehood, the foul-play that now prevail. Rousseau has observed, "that the English are free only fourteen days in "seven years; and that the use which they then make of their *freedom* "proves that they ought to be *slaves* for the rest of the period." To be sure, the use that is now made of the fourteen days is such as to deserve execration; but it is not "*freedom*" that exists during the fourteen days. There is the mistake of this writer. We are not now free during the fourteen days: these days are only so long a time for the base and corrupt in low life to revel at the expense of the base and corrupt in high life. It is a season resembling nothing that ever was heard of amongst men, except the Saturnalia in Rome, during which the slave-owners let loose their slaves that they might indulge in all sorts of beastly excesses, in order that their own children might, by the odiousness of vice, be terrified into virtuous and decent habits of life. A reform would effectually rid our country of this stain on its character—this deep disgrace—this infamy of infamies.

I have no *fondness of any scheme* of mine, but I am wonderfully attached to your idea of seeking *nothing new*, if we can make use of what we possess already. All that we complain of are *novelties*. We want no new divisions of the country; we want no military and taxing "*districts*;" we want no "*divisions*;" we will take the boundaries of ancient standing; we will take the officers of ancient standing; we will take the Churches and the County-halls for the scenes of our operations; we want nothing but the constable's staff and the sheriff's wand in the way of force; we want no *discipline* and no *commanders*, but those which the laws of peace afford us in abundance.

The voting by *ballot* is, in my opinion, the best; but the other mode would create no difficulty in the execution. *Viva voce*, if that be thought best; and then the voter has only to read his names, sign his card, and put it in the box. There would arise from this no other difficulty than that which would arise from the possible ill-will, which, in some cases, a man's voting on one side, or the other, might excite against him from his friends or employers. I am for the ballot; but, it is not a matter of very great consequence; because such ill-will would, if expressed, or acted upon, become extremely odious; and because there would be very little motive for its being entertained.

There is a thought occurs relative to the persons, who are now entitled to vote as *free-men* of cities and boroughs, and who, unless they were

tax-payers, would be cut off from the exercise of this privilege. But, if it were judged reasonable, that the present free-men, though not tax-payers, should continue to vote in their towns and cities, that would be a matter of no moment : but unless resident there, they should not be permitted to vote, because they would, if tax-payers, have a right to vote in any parish, in which they might reside. In short, this would make part of the *detail*, and it would be a matter of very little consequence in which way it should be settled. In some cities it might be best to vote by *wards* instead of *parishes*, as long custom is not easy to overcome. In extra-parochial places, the adjoining parishes would be the place of voting. But one year would put all these things to rights.

The *exclusions* from the right of voting should, it seems to me, be confined to *foreigners* and to persons convicted (by a *common jury* of course), of *infamous crimes*, and especially of crimes against the rights of election, which should be deemed infamous in the highest degree.

As to the *qualifications of members*, they should consist, not of a pocket full of money, nor of a sham estate, nor of a good thumping notoriously false oath ; but of such qualities and endowments as the voters might take a fancy to. Who ought to judge of the qualifications of the persons employed besides the person who has to employ him ? An estate, whether in money or in land, does not confer wisdom or integrity. The people would be the best judge of whom it was their *interest* to choose. If a whole people were left to choose measures for themselves, is it to be believed, that they would choose measures injurious to their interest, especially if free and ample discussion were on foot ? Is it to be believed, that the people would choose men whom any one could prove to have been guilty of what was injurious to them ; or whom any one could prove to be likely to wish to do them harm ? Is it to be believed, that we in the country, should vote for gipsies or tramps ? Or that the people in cities would vote for swindlers and pickpockets ? “ *Demagogues*,” of whom the sons and daughters of corruption are for ever telling the people to *beware*, would find few to vote for them. To hear *Demagogues* harangue may possibly amuse a small part of the people ; but it is one thing to be amused by a mountebank, and another to entrust him with the making of laws affecting our property and lives. But, the fact is, that the real “ *Demagogues*” are all on the other side ; for *Demagogues* are *deceivers*, and not those who utter *truth*, in language however violent. Upon this head, therefore, there would need no one measure of precaution. The people would, for the far greater part, choose men of good character and of some ability ; and if any country found itself deceived, the deception could not be very detrimental, seeing that, at the end of the year, they would take special care to choose other persons.

To those who have the insolence to affect to apprehend, that the tax-payers, if left to their own free choice, would choose foolish and wicked men to represent them, and to impose taxes upon them, the *answer* is in America, where the people not only freely choose *one house*, but the *other house too*, and the *Chief Magistrate into the bargain*. And do they choose penny-less *Demagogues* ? Do they choose fools and robbers ? It is notorious that they choose for the far greater part not only men of distinguished talent, but men of wealth and estate, whose means have enabled them to study, and whose fortune has kept them out of the

reach of temptation to do wrong. Why then, should we suppose that the people of England or Ireland would fix their liking upon fools or knaves? The truth is Sir, that this assertion is only another of the instances of the impudence of the *spawn of the green-room*, and the like of them.

There need be none of those odious exclusions of Members of Parliament from being *Ministers* or *Pensioners* or any thing else. These are only so many miserable palliations for a deep-rooted and wide-spreading disease. If a person was so remarkable for his talent or his wisdom as to be an object of choice both with the king and the people, why should not his talent and his wisdom be used by both? These pitiful exclusions are odious, because they are grounded upon the presumption of *corruption* existing, and, indeed, upon the still more odious presumption, that the king is the enemy of the people. Besides, we know how *nicely* they are got over now; and that they are, in fact, no exclusions at all. The whole of these miserable *precautions* would be rendered unnecessary by the annual occurrence of an election. If the King chose a Member of Parliament to be one of his Ministers, and the Constituents disapproved of their Member being a Minister, why they *would not re-choose him*; that would be all. He would soon be before them again. There would be *no time* for heart-burnings upon the subject. The evil, if it were thought one, would be speedily redressed, and that too without any clamour or any upbraidings.*

The *harpies* appear to be extremely uneasy at all the *Meetings* in Palace-yard, in the City, at Nottingham, at Bolton, in the Counties. Would they really wish to *get rid of them for ever*? Let them, then, come forward for *reform*; for, most assuredly, there would never be any other Meeting any more, except at the annual election. We should never more hear a word about *public* petitions. The means of redress for every grievance would be *constantly at hand*. There would be no meetings and no tumults, because there could not possibly be any ground for any such. The ancient law, above quoted by Mr. Baron Maseres, gives this very reason for annual Parliaments: "Item: "for maintenance of the said articles and statutes and the redress "of divers mischiefs and grievances, *which daily happen*, a Parliament "should be holden *every year*, as formerly was ordained by statute."—So that this was *no new law* even in 1331; and does not the *same reason* exist for Annual Parliaments now? An annual *new* Parliament, too, because in those days, the Parliament was always *elected every time that it was called*; and not the same set, as now, called together year after year, which has no tendency at all to afford the people a chance of any redress, and can have, therefore, no tendency to induce them to be quiet, or to cease to meet and to petition. At this very moment, for instance, the country is all in a commotion of meetings and petitions.—Meetings are every where called, and about to be called, *to take into consideration the distresses of the country, and the remedies to be adopted*. But, if all the tax-payers had just chosen men to represent them in Parliament, what need would there be of any such *meetings*? The people would have no ground for meeting in this partial manner, and with minds so

* I do not pretend to give this as a *plan fixed on*. It is a mere *sketch* of what *might* be done. The detail would be a matter of no difficulty.

heated with their sufferings. They would know, that they had chosen the fittest persons they could think of to consult on the state of affairs, and would patiently wait the result of their consultations, and would submit with fortitude to whatever sufferings they had to endure.

Would a Reform, then, produce *confusion*? No: but it would, because it must, produce, order, peace, and harmony. This the *harpies* know as well as we do; but it is not order, peace, and harmony that they want. They want confusion amongst every body but themselves. They love to see one part of the people armed against the other part. They want the country to be miserable, that they may wallow in ease and luxury.

But, Sir, it is now time to *talk no longer*. The time of *acting* is come, and of this I am extremely happy to hear that *you* are fully sensible. There is *no violence* wanted. The country now understands the cause of its ruin; it knows that the remaining mode of seeking redress, is, by *petition and remonstrance*; it is ready to perform its duty, and there only wants an *uniformity of movement* to send you to the House loaded with the people's prayers. The application for a Reform in the shape of a *Bill*, ready prepared, is all that will then be wanted, and for the making of this application the nation with confidence looks up to *you*. Lord Milton said, that he "*wished to cometo close quarters with the Reformers*," a wish which will, I trust, very soon be gratified. The House is fond of things "*in a tangible shape*," and I hope their fancy will now be pleased as much as it was in the case of the Duke of York and Mrs. Clarke. When a *bill has been brought in*, or even *moved for leave to be brought in*, every one will see in detail that which is wished to be done. The people will, then, in a very few weeks, know to a *certainty*, whether they are to expect a Reform or whether they are not. The state of uncertainty, in which they now are, is the worst state in which they can possibly be; but, I venture to predict, that it is a state which will not long endure.

One would imagine, Sir, that it was impossible for any body to be so blinded by their wishes as to expect, that things can go on as they are. There is, indeed, nobody except downright fools that do expect it. Every one believes, that some *great change must take place*. That it cannot, without reform, be a change for the better, I am quite sure; and I have heard of no man who pretends to point out any means of producing good without a reform. I have shown, I think, that a Reform may now take place without any chance of creating confusion; but I will by no means take upon me to say, that at a *future period*, even Reform will prevent confusion. The confusion and bloodshed, which took place in France, were laid to the charge of the Revolutionists; but those who merited the charge were *the Government and its adherents*. Mr. Arthur Young, who was travelling through France during the first of the violences in that country, observes, in his *Travels*, written upon the spot, that all the outcry directed (in England and elsewhere) against those, who were burning country-seats, and ill-treating the noblesse and their families should have been directed against those, who by their loads of vexatious taxes and impositions and other acts of tyranny, and by the refusal of all redress, *drove the people to madness and despair*. It is in vain to tell men that they are in danger from violating the law, when they feel that it is impossible for them to be worse off than they are.

I have thus, Sir, I think, given the *harpies* an answer to their two questions, and proved that a Reformed Parliament would *do a great deal of good even now*, and, if speedily adopted, would take place *without producing confusion*.

I am, Sir, with great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

END OF VOL. IV.

