

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF DISTINGUISHED PERSONS.

MEMOIRS OF MRS. JEBB.

(Extracted from the *Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature*.)

To preserve the memory of departed worth, and more especially to display the advantages of intellectual and moral culture, and their united influence in alleviating the pains of bodily suffering, and making age at once happy and venerable, is the object of these brief Memoirs.

Ann, the eldest daughter of the Reverend James Torkington and Lady Dorothy Sherard, daughter of Philip, second Earl of Harborough, was born November 9th, 1735, at King's Rippon, in Huntingdonshire, where her father, being rector, resided, before his removal to Little Stukely, in the vicinity of the county town. As her education was for the most part private, and her early life passed chiefly in retirement, her manners, when she was first introduced into society, were unusually timid and reserved. But, by cultivating a turn for reading and reflection, she had so sedulously improved herself, as to display, even then, the promise of a vigorous and comprehensive mind. In person she was thin and small; her complexion was pale and wan, indicating a very delicate constitution; but her countenance, beaming with animation and benevolence, was strikingly characteristic of her heart.

At a ball in Huntingdon she was introduced to Mr. Jebb, a young clergyman, residing at Cambridge, as a private tutor in the University, and a fellow in Peterhouse. As "their hearts and understandings were formed for each other," a mutual attachment soon ensued, and

they were married, December 29th, 1764, when Mr. Jebb had been recently presented to his first preferments in the church. His connection with the University, however, was not closed with the loss of his fellowship; and his lectures on mathematics and theology were, for several years, most respectably attended. Amongst his friends and pupils he was highly and deservedly esteemed, as well for the superiority of his talents and attainments, as for the integrity of his principles, and the manly independence of his mind. In Mrs. Jebb he had chosen a companion of sentiments and feelings congenial to his own, and regarding her with the liveliest affection, he consulted her opinion on every subject in which he was successively engaged.

Being in the habit of receiving their friends in tea parties, she soon became the life of the company, and was listened to with deference and attention by some of the most eminent characters in the University. Her conversation was at the same time sprightly, argumentative, and profound; and whilst she expressed herself fluently on all occasions, her language was equally happy and correct. Her reputation, therefore, was soon deservedly established, and in matters of the first importance, she was frequently looked up to for advice. Mr. Paley, indeed, who, when rising into eminence as a public tutor, had been introduced to their acquaintance, used sometimes to attack her boldest reasoning, with his quaint and lively repartees. And yet Mrs. Jebb was amongst the first to discover, in his conduct, the germ of that liberal spirit, which afterwards appeared in his writings. But whilst her talents commanded admira-

ration, the sweetness of her disposition conciliated a very general esteem; and in her it was soon discovered that superior powers of intellect were by no means inconsistent with the liveliest sensibilities of a female heart.

At length the great controversy on the propriety of requiring subscription to articles of faith, as practised by the Church of England, led to a more general display of those abilities, which had been hitherto confined to the intercourse of her private life. Mr. Jebb, conceiving every attempt to interfere with the rights of conscience in the interpretation of Scripture to be an infringement of the true Protestant principle, was one of the most active of the clerical petitioners, vindicating, in the boldest language, the justice of their claims to relief. And Mrs. Jebb, who entered into all his feelings, was equally strenuous in their support; by turns assailing the most formidable champions of subscription, whose productions appeared, like her own, in the Newspapers, or whose Sermons and Charges more openly provoked her attack.

Amongst others she addressed herself repeatedly to Dr. Randolph,* Dr. Hallifax,† and Dr. Balguy,‡ in the London Chronicle, under the signature of "Priscilla," detecting the weak points of their argument, and exposing the sophistry by which it was maintained. But superior to the little arts of controversy, she defended her cause by reasoning alone. "Calumny," she observed, in her letter to Dr. Hallifax. March 24th, 1772, "never gained a disciple, never satisfied a doubting mind; invec-

tives may harden the heart, but can never enlighten the understanding; no difficulty was ever solved by abuse."

In addressing Dr. Randolph, on the 28th of April following, she says,

"I have observed that in most compositions where reason and argument have failed, innuendos and invectives have been called in to supply their place; and this, even in religious disputes, although such conduct manifestly tends to destroy those seeds of humanity, which it is the grand design of all religions to cultivate and improve; and more particularly the design of that benevolent religion, the religion of the gospel. Whether persons are led into this way of writing, through a zeal for the cause they support, or are provoked to it by the abusive language of an adversary, it must be allowed that it is a deviation from that meekness and forbearance, which ought to be the characteristic of a Christian divine. I would therefore willingly suppose, that the innuendos and invectives, which in various parts of your CHARGE are thrown out against those, whom you call reformers, escaped your pen without design, and even unnoticed by yourself. And if so, when you see them gathered together, you must be astonished at the seeming want of justice, as well as of Christian charity, which you there have shown to a set of men, with most of whom perhaps you are totally unacquainted, and whose characters, if known, might claim your approbation and regard. You insinuate that they wrest the Scriptures, would purposely carry the wrong way, are deceivers, &c. Knowest thou not that it belongeth only to the Searcher of hearts to determine the sincerity or insincerity of thy brother, to his own master he must stand or fall." And after re-

* President of Christ's College, Cambridge, and Archdeacon of Oxford.

† Afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph.

‡ Archdeacon of Winchester.

ferring to the persecuting spirit which had disgraced the advocates of different systems, she continues : " Not so did the meek and humble Jesus ; to establish his doctrine, he blessed and cursed not ; he prayed for his murderers ; and when his disciples would have called down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans, because they would not receive him, he rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of : ' to establish his doctrine, he patiently bore the scorn, the derision and opposition of men ; he went about doing good."

And to Dr. Balguy she says, March 29th, 1774,

" Unfetter the mind, and let it inquire freely, and the knowledge of the Scriptures will increase ; and as Scripture knowledge increaseth, truth will appear more plain, and must in the end prevail ; and every error, whether Popish or Protestant, which the darkness of ignorance hath occasioned, must vanish away, as the false conceptions raised by the horrors of the night when the day appeareth."

Dr. Hallifax felt the keenness of Priscilla's pen so poignantly, that he called on Wilkie, the publisher, to advise him to print no more of her *Letters : for it was only Jebb's wife !* Her success against Dr. Randolph was afterwards more strikingly displayed, by the decided testimony of Mr. Paley, in his " Defence of Bishop Law's Considerations," where he so quaintly and happily observed, " See this whole charge answered in the London Chronicle by Priscilla.—The Lord hath sold *Sisera* into the hand of a *woman !*"

Mr. Jebb, being convinced of the necessity of some essential reforms in the discipline of the University, for providing, in the active employment of students of every order, against those early habits of dissipa-

tion which too frequently arise from its neglect, repeatedly proposed the establishment of public, annual examinations, where their proficiency, in an enlarged course of study might be regularly ascertained. In this laudable design he was supported by men of the first character and respectability, who, uninfluenced by any personal consideration, were anxious for the improvement of the youth committed to their charge. A formidable opposition, however, was soon excited, in which Dr. Powell, master of St. John's College, whose own society was distinguished by the advantages of superior discipline, and some other heads of houses, unfortunately took the lead. In the controversy which arose on this occasion also, Mrs. Jebb engaged ; and after a few articles in the *Whitehall Evening Post*, she published separately a " Letter to the Author of an Observation on the Design of establishing Annual Examinations at Cambridge. In this little tract, she ably repelled the objections of Dr. Powell, the supposed observer, and his adherents, and demonstrated the important benefits which must arise from the adoption of so salutary a scheme.

As Mr. Jebb, in his *Theological Lectures*, had never disguised his belief in the Divine Unity, as opposed to the received opinions, he grew uneasy under the discharge of his clerical duties, and was as little satisfied at the thoughts of converting his benefices into a kind of lay estate. After suffering most sensibly in his health and spirits, he resigned his preferments, in September, 1775 ; and, in this conscientious proceeding, he was cheered with the hearty concurrence of Mrs. Jebb, who deemed no duty superior, in such delicate circumstances, to preserving the integrity of his own mind. He would still, however,

have continued at Cambridge, if his opponents, availing themselves of his honourable resignation, had not at once succeeded in defeating his great plan of academical improvement, and in cutting off the sources of his support in the University. Engaging, therefore, in the study of medicine, he removed to London, in September, 1776, and after two years probation, and a diploma from St. Andrews, commenced practice as a physician.

In the interim Mrs. Jebb had accompanied him in an excursion to Harrowgate, from whence they visited the justly celebrated Archdeacon Blackburne, at Richmond, on the Swale. From their first establishment in the metropolis, they had regularly frequented the congregation formed by Mr. Lindsey, in Essex-street, for the express worship of ONE ONLY GOD; associating also with this eminent Seceder, and with Dr. Priestley, his coadjutor in the cause of scriptural inquiry, on the most friendly terms. And as in the midst of his professional engagements, Dr. Jebb was still anxiously alive to all that might concern the public welfare, Mrs. Jebb with equal ardour seconded all his views.

With him, she reprobated the design of coercing the American colonies; with him, she rejoiced in the failure of the unprincipled attempt. She also joined in his exertions to procure a reform in the representation of the people in Parliament, as the only effectual safeguard of their sacred rights; and took a leading part with him in the discussion of all the great constitutional questions, which were agitated in the public prints. Amongst these, the liberties of the Irish nation were pre-eminent, from the formidable attitude which that nation had then assumed; and they were amongst the first to point

ut the propriety of admitting the Roman Catholics to the full enjoyment of the elective franchise, as a means of consolidating its recently acquired independence, and of interesting every portion of the inhabitants in pursuit of the much wished reform.

For a time, they concurred in applauding the principles and conduct of Mr. Fox; and again in condemning his apparent desertion of those principles, on the ill-fated coalition with Lord North, in 1783. And yet, when Dr. Jebb, in a desponding moment, was lamenting that great man as irretrievably lost to the cause of freedom, his wife encouraged him never to despair; "for Mr. Fox, she was convinced, on some happier occasion, would prove himself still worthy of his former fame."

But they were very far from being deluded by the specious pretences of Mr. Pitt, whose sincerity they doubted, and whose new connections they deemed on the whole as objectionable as those in which his rival was involved. As a reformer, indeed, Dr. Jebb had approved Mr. Pitt's early exertions, and, on his first appearance as a candidate to represent the University of Cambridge, had given him a decided support: but afterwards, on his elevation to the Premiership, he saw so much to disapprove in his proceedings, that he was actually hesitating to vote for him, when Mrs. Jebb observed, that "as he promised fairly, she thought a fair trial at least should be given him."

They were also sufficiently aware, that it was a contest for power, rather than for principle, in which the opposing parties were engaged, and saw much stronger grounds of alarm, than of satisfaction, in the conduct of either side. And they

were consequently very desirous, that the real friends of liberty should withhold their support from any administration which might be formed, until the members should decidedly declare their resolution to bring forward, and carry into effect, a substantial reform in the constitution of the House of Commons.

Mrs. Jebb's sentiments on the transactions of this important crisis, have fortunately been preserved, in her correspondence with Major Cartwright, the steady and consistent advocate of the people's rights.

"Never," she observed, "has there been such confusion or such conduct, since Charles's time: every body has been alarmed. Such folly, mismanagement, and Stuart-like behaviour, was very near bringing in the old ministry again, nor can I see how any ministry can stand, as things are at present, unless they will come to the people. "Cæsar has friends, and Pompey has friends, but few are friends to Rome:"* every hour of the day am I reminded of the above.† I hope the counties will awake out of their sound sleep some time; but at present I see not the least disposition, and what is worse, I do not see any set of men inclined to rouse them. One party wants to call the attention of the people to the unconstitutional interference of the King; which, by the bye, the people here are ready enough to notice; and the other would have the people join the King to deliver him from a faction. But I see every

day more and more the necessity of forming an association of the friends of the people, independent of any party whatever: an association which should make their own terms, before they joined either Cæsar or Pompey. From the conversation of many independent people, I think the time is approaching, which would be very favourable to this idea, for the cry is, 'Cæsar is wrong, and Pompey is wrong,' and surely, if the people would but know their own consequence, they might in time make their own choice, and dictate to either.* What have we been doing all this time, but endeavouring to effect what the Revolution did not do—to restore the constitution. The Revolution pulled down one Sovereign, and set up another. Both parties talk of supporting the constitution, and of their Revolution principles. But it is the business of the friends of liberty, at this important crisis, to do something for the people, and to make future revolutions unnecessary. We, therefore, who mind a reform more than any party disputes, and think nothing gained, unless we restore the constitution, must do what we can to keep the affair alive.† I am determined, if possible, never to despair of the commonwealth: and I always endeavour to persuade others to make the same resolution. If a particle of despair was in my nature, it would not fail to show itself at such a time as this. The whole attention of the public is taken up with the wranglings of the two parties, the doubts of a dissolution, and now also with the idea of a general coalition. But what can we expect from a grand coalition of all the abilities in the kingdom, meaning you know the abilities of the two

* In allusion to the indignant complaint of Cato, "Cæsar hath friends, and Pompey hath friends; but none are friends to Rome."—See "Give us our Rights," a tract by Major Cartwright, published in 1782, p. 1.; and also, "Six Letters to the Marquis of Tavistock," by the same, in 1812; p. 41.

† 21st December, 1783.

* 14th January, 1784.

† 17th January, 1784.

Houses, but that, when they feel their own strength, they will plunder the East, and enslave this nation at their leisure? For as to the two bills, Mr. Fox's was a subversion of the constitution, and Mr. Pitt's will certainly put it into the power of the King to subvert it. If we have no more coalitions, I think we shall be able to persuade one party that it is their interest to reform: and, indeed, I do not see how Pitt can attempt to stand upon any other idea; for the majority being against him, his only excuse is that such majority does not speak the voice of the people.* The Doctor took some steps this morning about a meeting here; but our party are a rope of sand, and we do not know where to find them, nor whether any one would support us: and if it failed many would throw all the blame on the Doctor, for their conduct gives us no reason to expect favour.† We are endeavouring to revive the cause of the people, by getting a meeting of the Delegates called for Monday morning, and after that to call a *Quintuple*; but if the people do not come to their senses before that time, I shall tremble for the consequence. As yet, I am not without hope, that if the *Union* should take place, for so it is to be called, because the word *Coalition* has become odious, there are many who will see that the two parties having joined for their own interest, are not very likely to pay any regard to that of the people, and therefore that it will be highly necessary for them also to form a *union* in support of their own rights.—‡ And as at the best we may expect that the upper regions will be very cloudy,

and that the sun will shine very little upon us, without a storm of some sort or other, our only hope is that it may be of such a nature as to purify St. Stephen's before there is too great a calm.* If Parliament should be dissolved, and the people, for fear of disturbing the elections, or hurting a favourite candidate, or some such nonsense, do not call out for a reform, we are ruined and undone. We think that if the Parliament be dissolved, the king should say, it is because it does not speak the sense of the people.† General Cunningham, it appears, has assured the Irish House of Commons that the present ministers would be found as unfriendly to a Parliamentary reform as their predecessors had been, at which the house seemed well pleased. The Doctor transcribed the whole passage from an Irish paper and sent it to Mr. Pitt, with his own sentiments upon it, and gave him to understand that many persons would be very indifferent who was minister, if the septennial bill was not repealed, and a substantial reform in the representation procured.‡ The Irish House of Commons have given leave to bring in a Bill for a reform; but it is thought it will be thrown out: for they say the crown as well as the parliament has shown its disapprobation of the measure. The idea of letting the Roman Catholics have some share in the choice of representatives is gaining ground; and if they take them in, no administration can stand long against such united force. But with us the king's name becomes too common, and the majesty of the people is often forgotten. I tell you then once more, we must punish this *association* with all our

* 22d January, 1784.

† 26th January, 1784.

‡ 29th Jan. 1784.

* 23d Feb. 1784.

† 3d March, 1784.

‡ 6th March, 1784.

might; it is the grand specific for the disorder of the times; it must be taken or we die.*

These passages selected from a very interesting series of Mrs. Jebb's letters, sufficiently display the accuracy and justice of her views, and their strict accordance with those plans of constitutional improvement, which her husband was labouring to advance.

On their return from an excursion to Buxton in the autumn of 1784, their attention was again directed to the great cause of parliamentary reform, whilst from the alarming proceedings of the government in Ireland, they were induced to form no very favourable presage of the intentions of the ministry at home. They were led into a discussion of the RIGHTS OF JURIES, and the LAW OF LIBELS, from the memorable case of the Dean of St. Asaph; and the important questions which that case involved. They took, if possible, a still more lively interest in the benevolent design of improving the construction and management of prisons, and of mitigating the severities of the penal code. And as the decided enemies of oppression and intolerance, they deprecated the continuance of the slave-trade, and the imposition of any restraints or penalties for a difference of religious faith. No disappointments, no illiberal aspersions could narrow the philanthropy of their hearts: looking forward in the firm persuasion that under the care of a presiding providence, all things would ultimately and infallibly terminate in good.

Mrs. Jebb's affection for her husband, thus identified with her love of freedom and of virtue, was unimpaired by the lapse of years. But a union of this deep and intimate nature was too soon unfortunately clos-

ed. Dr. Jebb, whose professional and public exertions had brought on a premature decay in his constitution, was sinking fast in a decline, and his afflicted wife, after attending him in a fruitless excursion to Cheltenham for relief, watched over his pillow with most anxious solicitude, and received his last sigh on the evening of March 2, 1786.

As Mrs. Jebb's strength of mind was only equalled by the tenderness of her sensibility, few can justly estimate her grief. She had lost 'not merely a husband, a partner in a common interest; but her guardian and protector, her guide, philosopher and friend.' Yet she had the remembrance of his talents and his virtues to console her, which few but those, who like her possessed a congenial spirit, could enjoy. And with this consolation she rose superior to her loss, whilst through life she invariably spoke of him, though still without repining, in language of the deepest regret.

She continued, however, on terms of the strictest intimacy with his surviving friends; with Mr. Brand Hollis, whom he highly esteemed; Dr. Disney his like-minded and faithful biographer; Mr. Lofft, his much devoted pupil; Mr. Lambert, his strenuous adherent in the affairs of the University; Mr. Jennings, one of his earliest associates in the Unitarian congregation; Major Cartwright, his supporter in the scheme of equal representation; and Mr. Wyvill, his coadjutor in the cause of parliamentary reform. By degrees, as she formed new acquaintance, she also gained new friends; for few persons were at any time introduced to her society, without wishing to cultivate her esteem. She was ever easy of access, and the friends of freedom and humanity, when duly recommended to

* 24th March, 1784.

her notice, were always welcome guests.

Her zeal in the cause of civil and religious liberty was unabated by her husband's death, and as by degrees she recovered her wonted serenity, her attention was once more directed to the progress of public affairs. On every new appearance of hope, she was still apt to anticipate a result favourable to the general welfare: the remembrance of what had passed at Cambridge could not now appal her: she had no conception of those sordid motives by which too many are actuated; and she doubted the very existence of a principle, of which she found no traces in herself. Hence arose, at times, an overweening confidence in the virtue of individuals, or the wisdom of collective bodies, the only material error of which she could be reasonably accused.

Her confidence, however, in the rival statesmen of her own country, had been too rudely shaken, for her good opinion to be easily regained: and the discussions of the Regency, in 1789, were calculated rather to increase than to diminish her distrust. She saw, indeed, in the conduct of both parties, much more to censure than to approve, and she considered them as still engaged in a mere contest for place. She deprecated the doctrine of hereditary right, as advanced by Mr. Fox; though she considered it expedient to invest the Heir Apparent with the royal powers. She had no objection to the restrictions proposed by Mr. Pitt, which she thought strictly constitutional; but she was very far indeed from approving the whole of his proceedings. In a letter to Major Cartwright, therefore, about the close of February, she thus forcibly avows her dissatisfaction.

“With respect to the King, each party speak as they wish, and both,

I think, mean to deceive. That he has recovered more rapidly than could have been expected, is certain, but it contrary to reason to suppose, that the mind, any more than the body, can suddenly return to a state of health and vigour. Even those that are of no party, will naturally be as unwilling to place implicit confidence in persons, who either were themselves deceived, or intentionally deceived others. And therefore when the king is perfectly recovered, every thing should be done to take away any doubt which may be entertained by the people: I speak as a friend to what is right, without having any other reason whatever.

“It is God's world, as the Doctor used to say, and I trust he will order every thing for the best: and I think the prospect bad enough. As you used to say, so say I now, ‘*CÆSAR has friends, and POMPEY has friends; but who are friends to Rome?*’* unless, I will add, when it serves their own interest. When a minister can get in, and keep in, by doing what is right; by pleasing the King, and serving himself at the same time that he is supporting the people's cause, it is very well; but their cause is always the last thing thought of. I have been very poorly, and almost worn out by reading long speeches, without finding a single argument to make me alter my sentiments; but a great deal of foreign matter, illiberal language, and a want of honesty in the majority of both sides of the house. With respect to the state coachman, I could have gone with him the first stage with great spirit, the next with some pleasure, and perhaps one or two more with tolerable composure; but I must have stopt short of the place at which he is now arrived, even if I had

* See “Give us our Rights” &c.; by Major Cartwright.

been left destitute and alone. But there would have been no danger of being left to pine in solitude, as there are still some, and I trust many, independent houses on the road, inhabited by spirits, who, not being blinded by party, passion, or private interest, are ready to take in an honest weary traveller, who is unwilling to be driven farther, merely for the sake of making perpetual *dictator*, a coachman, who has never listened to the travellers, but when it has been evidently for his own advantage."

Mrs. Jebb conviction of the selfish policy of the Premier, was confirmed by his detertion of his early friends the Dissenters; and his decided hostility to every motion for the repeal of the Test Act, or of those *intolerant laws* against Unitarians in particular, which still disgrace the penal code. On the abolition of the slave-trade, which had then become an object of general attention, he had, indeed, assumed a loftier and more manly tone: but his eloquence was fruitlessly exerted in opposition to the prejudices of some in higher stations, and the influence of a few individuals interested in the nefarious concern. But amidst such repeated disappointments, Mrs. Jebb rejoiced to see the right of juries to judge of the law, as well as the fact, in cases of libel, at length triumphantly established by the British Parliament; and the Roman Catholics of Ireland admitted to the full enjoyment of the elective franchise in that country, on the express recommendation of the crown.

Mrs. Jebb had already hailed the auspicious dawn of the French Revolution, and sympathised in the emancipation of a great people from despotic power. She had augured every thing good from that event, and she feared no impending evil; as appears in the following-extracts from her cor-

respondence with Mr. Brand Hollis, already inserted in the Memoirs of his life. In a letter, dated July 24, 1790, she observes:

"Till yesterday, I had not seen an account how the great and important day concluded in France. If the King of France did not feel himself on that day superior to all the Kings and Emperors that ever tyrannized over mankind, he does not deserve the honour that will attend on his name to the end of time. Yet Tories think if he had *any spirit*, he would not have *lowered* himself, and *submitted to have been directed by the National Assembly*; that if a King is not absolute, he is no King; if he is governed by his ministers, they reign, not he; they think he could not take the oath willingly, but that all was owing to folly and cowardice. In the mean time, I shall wish prosperity and happiness to the French and their King; and be thankful, that I was born in an age in which civil and religious liberty is beginning to triumph over bigotry and arbitrary power; thankful, that I was not born in that inhuman age, in which new kingdoms were no sooner explored than ruined, and the people destroyed and enslaved; thankful, that I am living to see a disposition to reform the sanguinary laws, and to let the oppressed go free."

And again, on the 31st August, she remarks,

"I am not very fond of defining the rights of the people, because every definition is apt to limit. We were expected to confine ourselves, in a late affair, to the example set us at the Revolution, which certainly was not a similar case; and if it had been so, our ancestors had no right to fetter their posterity. Surely we had as much right to chuse and restrain a Regent, as they had to chuse and

restrain a King. In vain do we boast of the Revolution, if the authors of it forged chains to shackle their posterity for ever; this idea would only make us bondmen to the dead; whereas, we have enough to do to struggle against the fetters we are daily threatened with by the living. There seem to be some men in the National Assembly who are too aristocratic; yet, I trust, the majority will be able to complete the glorious work in the manner we could wish. You see the fire is spreading every where. I tell you the world is a good world, as the Doctor used to say, and the people who find fault with it, should mend themselves."

Mrs. Jebb, having deprecated the attempt of the allied Sovereigns to restore the degrading yoke of the Bourbons, with every friend to freedom and humanity, rejoiced in their defeat. She lamented still more, the rash determination of her own country to take a part in their iniquitous design; and saw no glory or advantage in the most successful warfare, which could in any respect compensate for the misery and desolation to which it must inevitably lead. And, therefore, during the alarm which in 1792 was so artfully excited, to cover the aspostacy of Mr. Pitt from the cause of reform, and to involve England in the intrigues of the continent, she endeavoured to dispel the public infatuation, and to induce a more calm and dispassionate consideration of the real dangers to be apprehended from the delusions of the day. In two spirited and judicious Letters, addressed, under popular titles, to *John Bull*, from one of his brethren, she exposed the absurd reasoning of the *alarmists*, with equal vivacity and shrewdness: and, vindicating the great cause of public freedom, she deprecated the idea of interfering in the concerns of the

French Republic, and pointed out the calamities which must result from a war so unnecessary and unjust.

"I suppose," she observes, "they talk of a war; and, what is more surprising, a war without fresh taxes; but you and I are too old to be so caught: we should as soon expect a war without men. Now, my dear brother, although you know I love peace, quiet, and good order, and would do much to prevent bloodshed, yet I honestly confess, that whenever there is a contest, I always wish the oppressed may triumph, and rejoice to see liberty lay despotism at her feet. However, I assure you, I grieve for Louis: you know Kings seldom hear the truth, have bad advisers, and may be deceived as easily as you or I can be. He was at first of some service to the cause: so I would preserve his life, though I would take care to put it out of his power to destroy others. The swinish multitude are not destitute of humanity: do not make them mad, and they can feel, as sensibly, at least, as Mr. Burke himself does, who seems so much concerned for the *few in high stations*, that he has not a sigh to spare for the *multitude*. I mourn sincerely for all the blood that has been shed on either side; but I must be just. I must lay the most blame where most is due. If there were no violent party to oppose *necessary changes or reforms*, we should never have cause to lament such dreadful effusions of human blood. You scarcely ever heard of a nation rising against their chief magistrate, till resistance was become almost a virtue. Ah, John, common sense and common honesty would make excellent statesmen, and soon put a stop to all revolutions.* From the very beginning of the dis-

* December 13, 1792.

turbances in France, to the present time, the King's friends have been working his ruin. Burke was one of the first of them; alas! he raised that spirit, and called for that crusade, which by encouraging false hopes and improper actions on one side, caused those jealousies and discontents on the other, which at length hurled him from a throne to a prison. Oh! how much blood might have been saved, and how many crimes prevented, had not foreign powers provoked the friends of freedom, and made wicked men believe they should escape in the general confusion, even if they committed that most horrible of all crimes, the crime of assassination. Just recovered from the war with America, let us at least pause; and before we enter into another, as unnecessary, unjust, and imprudent, let us reflect, that as a relapse is generally more dangerous than the first fever, so a return of war may, in the event, bring on that destruction which the last had so nearly effected. There has been much talk of a plot here, John; but the only plot which has been discovered, was the plot against the liberty of the press, and against the good sense of the people; the plot to frighten them into associations, which might strengthen the hands of the minister for a war against France, and increase his majority in the House of Commons against reform. Yet the death of Louis undoubtedly will be urged to us as a reason for our approving of the intended war; and in order to raise in us a spirit of revenge, it will be represented in the strongest colours as cruel and unjust. But surely, brother, the shedding rivers of blood, in revenge for the blood of one man, will be no proof of our superior justice, nor will the making of thousands of weeping widows, and helpless or-

phans, give us reason to boast of our superior humanity.*

But her efforts, like every other exertion of a sound and generous policy, were unavailing; they were repugnant to the madness and folly of the times.

Whilst the conduct of Mr. Pitt was thus forcibly convincing Mrs. Jebb of his indifference to the welfare, and his hostility to the rights of the people, Mr. Fox was gradually regaining the place which he once possessed in her esteem. She had not forgotten that in all his later intercourse with Dr. Jebb, after the close of their political connection, he had treated him with the same respect and attention, as when most decidedly his friend. She had marked his steady support of the great cause of Parliamentary reform; his manly vindication of the claims of conscience; his abhorrence of the slave-trade; and his strenuous endeavours, above all things, to avert the calamities of war. He had fully justified the confidence, which at a fatal crisis she had so pointedly expressed, and proved himself indeed deserving of his former fame; in standing forward the intrepid advocate of wiser counsels, unawed by the delusion of the multitude, and the too general defection of his friends. Hence, on every subsequent occasion, when his character was attacked in her presence, she warmly undertook his defence, resting his claims to public confidence on those decided facts, which so clearly evinced his sincerity and zeal.

But the influence of Mr. Pitt and his associates was unfortunately predominant, and the miseries of warfare extended to almost every quarter of the globe. For eight years he obsti-

* January 26, 1793.

nately persevered in his pernicious schemes, regardless of the dictates of reason and experience, till France was converted into a military nation, and her other opponents successively overthrown. Every attempt for the redress of grievances was, in the mean while, resisted; a system of coercion prevailed; and the friends of *peace* and *reform* were idly stigmatized as hostile to their country's welfare. At length a partial change in the administration in 1801, put a stop to the calamities of war; though hostilities were, alas! too soon resumed, on the pretence of checking the career of a man, whom such fatal policy had seated on the throne of France. Mr. Pitt was afterwards recalled to power; not indeed to the paramount authority which he had formerly exercised in Parliament; but, persevering in the same counsels, to encounter the same humiliating defeats.

On the death of this minister, in January, 1806, Mrs. Jebb had the satisfaction of seeing Mr. Fox invited to the counsels of his sovereign, although she was too well aware of the difficulties by which he was surrounded, to expect the immediate accomplishment of almost any of their common views. She looked forward, however, to much partial advantage from the event; and conceiving that whatever tended to restore the blessings of peace, must be of the most essential importance. On the first appearance, indeed, of any change of ministry, she had clearly expressed her conviction of the very delicate circumstances in which Mr. Fox and his adherents must now succeed to power. In a letter to Dr. Disney, Jan. 23d, 1806, she said:

“A friend called before I was up, to inform me that Mr Pitt died at four this morning; I own I am one of those who wished him to live. I did

not fear his doing more evil, and I flattered myself that he might be the cause of good being done by *others*. An opposition to the minister, and a pretender to the throne, often causes that kind of fear in a king and ministry, which makes them see the necessity of exerting themselves to gain popularity, in order to render their situation permanent. If the opposition therefore should come in, they must at least give us some proof that their opinion is not changed with their situation; that if they delay, it is merely to wait for the most favourable opportunity: they must give us some kind of bond, as it were, for our security. But, alas! they will come into power, if they do come in now, in perilous times, and will find it difficult to please any party. As a friend to the opposition, at least to some of them, I could have wished Mr. Pitt to have made the peace, bad as it must be, and to have had all the odium of it; and also to have raised the new taxes, which must be very heavy indeed. I keep praying for a peace, a good one if possible, but any peace rather than continue in the direct road to ruin.”

On the 20th of February, when the arrangements for a new ministry were completed, she again observed to the same correspondent:

“I believe that we think pretty nearly alike of the present crisis, and that our fears and hopes are of a similar magnitude: but my constant prayer continues to be for a speedy peace, with as little loss of honour as possible. As for what would be called a good peace, it is more than what we have any right to expect, and I fear the present ministry, *dare* not agree to such terms, as Bonaparte will think, *in his situation*, that he has a right to insist upon. My hopes, therefore, of a speedy peace, are not very great,

though I rather expect to hear of a negotiation for that purpose. I have only seen Mr. Wyvill once: he was then satisfied with Mr. Fox; but I see not what can be done at present, except making peace, and raising taxes to prepare for war if necessary. Mr. Pitt did not live long enough to convince the city, or the people sufficiently, that he was driving the nation to a precipice; and left it just in time to avoid the odium of the strong measures, which must be resorted to, in the effort made for its preservation. I am one of those who wish that he had lived till other people had known and thought of him as I did myself, I tremble for those in power:—I wish well to many of them. I often think on Noah's ark, clean and unclean, but it might now be as necessary as then: and yet, if the vessel will only keep us above water till the dove returns with the olive branch, I shall be very thankful."

Mrs. Jebb's alarm for the public safety was once more excited by the rapidly declining health of Mr. Fox, in whom her confidence was chiefly placed. She observes in a subsequent letter, July 18th,

"Mr. Fox, as I am informed, is much better: I wish he may live to make a peace, which is the wish of his heart; and I am told he lately said, 'If I can only live to see a general peace, I shall think that I have lived long enough.' But if he should die, I should fear that even the abolition of the slave-trade would not pass."

Again, September 1st,

"I tremble lest the news from France should be unfavourable, for what but peace can save us: and yet, unless we make some concession with respect to the liberty of the seas, I think we have no reason to expect it."

And on the 4th of October, when

Mr. Fox was dead, and the return of the Earl of Lauderdale resolved on, she thus resumes the subject:

"With the horrors of war before me, I see nothing very agreeable to ruminate upon; but I will not yet entirely give up the hopes of peace, and should not be surprised to hear very soon that the affair is settled. But if it is not, and Austria should join in a new coalition, the carnage will be dreadful, and, in all probability, no party, all things considered, a gainer."

Mrs. Jebb lamented the increasing divisions amongst the friends of liberty, on matters of little importance, when compared with the great constitutional questions in which they had so long agreed. And she regretted still more the fatal delusion, which led so many of them to exult in the downfall of those ministers, who, however reprehensible in some parts of their conduct, had effected the abolition of the slave-trade; and were attempting to restore, though but in part, the rights of conscience to all dissenters from the established church. Addressing herself again to Dr. Disney, April 2d, 1807, she said:

"The king has made a precious change. The present ministry have been watching behind the scenes, and the king's conscience greatly assisted them, and pointed out the proper moment. Yet I do not think he would have ventured to exert his prerogative so soon, if certain friends of liberty all over the country, had not opposed their old friends, and made an outcry against them for not attempting impossibilities. And even now, when they have so very honourably resigned their post, they still continue to abuse them, to the great delight of all the new ministry and their friends. The *Times* of to-day begins to be afraid of peace; still I cry nothing but peace

can save us, and even that may come too late."

Again, on the 10th of June, she observed,

"As for the new ministry, it is so much for the king's interest to keep them, and their own interest to keep in, that I fear it will not be very easy to rout them. And then you know, we are taught by all the violent friends of liberty, that the last ministry did nothing but deceive the people, and that both parties are equally bad. Some people seem to wish for a new party: but where are we to get them? Who can point out to us where those wonder-working men are to be found, who can do the work of thirty years in a single session? Rome was not built in one day; nor can our state be repaired perhaps in less time than that was building. But I never despair: peace and patience, wisdom and honesty, and a reform will follow of course; and then—but they who live the longest will see the most."

On the 24th of August she remarked,

"It hurts me to see the friends of liberty abusing one another, to the great diversion of the worst party, and without the least hope of finding, in the whole kingdom, an administration that would be suffered to do us half the good we wish, even if they were ever so well disposed."

The atrocious attack on Copenhagen, the first fruits of these new ministerial arrangements, as a Christian she decidedly condemned, conceiving it equally repugnant to every principle of sound policy and justice. In the letter last quoted, she said,

"You do not imagine that I can be blind or indifferent to what is passing abroad or at home. Denmark has very long taken up my attention. I feared we should not let those friends to peace remain quiet, although Bu-

naparte has not once desired them to give up their neutrality, and they were entirely unprepared to defend themselves. Every exertion, I believe, will be made by prince and people to repel this invasion; and I would advise the authors to prepare their backs for a scourge so highly deserved."

Again, on the 12th of October, she observed,

"The prospect both at home and abroad appears more gloomy every day. I was much struck this morning with some verses in the beginning of the seventh psalm. I think they will put you in mind of the kings of England and Denmark, and that we shall agree in giving to each his due. Great pains are taken to commend our exploits at Copenhagen, and to shew not only their wisdom and necessity, but even their humanity and justice: the former of these, because we might have been more cruel, though I scarcely see how; and the latter, because they refused our demand, although they knew what would be the consequence."

So decided, indeed, was Mrs. Jebb's aversion to war, that even the most plausible pretences, adduced in support of the war in the peninsula, were insufficient to convince her of the propriety of any interference. She observed, August 17th, 1808, in writing again to Dr. Disney,

"As to Spain, I think the prospect of any good is far from being clear, and it is very shocking to think of the blood which they will have to wade through. In short, the whole business is such a jumble of contradictions, and is supported by men of such very different principles, and for such very different reasons, that I am sick of the subject."

September 28th, she resumed,

"As for peace, I fear I shall not live to see it; nor do I see any good

we are doing by sending troops to Spain at a great expence, where they seem unwilling to receive them; and doing every thing we can in Portugal, to disgust and make them jealous of us. Our expeditions, I fear, are time and labour thrown away, doing much mischief to others, without any chance of benefiting ourselves. We may gain a bloody victory in Spain one day, and the next may lose our whole army.* I wish we could be led to make a peace, but I fear nothing but driving will do. Whatever else is done, the door must be left open wide enough for peace to enter;†”

In these sentiments, Mrs. Jebb persevered to the last; July 20th, 1811, she declared,

“As for Portugal, I wish we had done with it. We are draining our best blood, parting with our treasure, and starving our own people, only to lengthen a war, which I fear will prove our ruin; because we will be tyrants of the ocean. In a time of peace there is no necessity for it, and in time of war, we are always successful; and may long continue to be so, if we do not ruin ourselves.”

She concluded this very interesting correspondence, November 2d, 1811, in these words:

“At length people begin to open their eyes, and to see the desperate situation into which this detestable war has brought us: but how to get us out of it grows every day more difficult; and I fear England, this most thinking nation, is very deficient in the ways and means necessary for such an arduous undertaking. Certain ministers know how to extract money out of our pockets, and turn it to paper, or send it abroad to do

mischief: but further I fear they know not, and we know not where to find men that can teach them.”

But notwithstanding some occasional dissatisfaction, she still continued to think favourably of the Whigs, making far greater allowances for the difficulties with which they were surrounded, than some of her friends were disposed to admit. She discriminated very accurately, between those who were invariably true to principle, and those who at times appeared to be actuated chiefly by the lust of power. “Our friend Romilly,” she would say, “continues honest, and so does my favourite Whitbread. Romilly always pleases me, and that is some comfort: it hurts me to differ from my friends, or any one of whom I wish to think well. Whitbread is always in the right: Mr. Fox himself, or Dr. Jebb, could not have been more desirous of peace.”* In Sir Samuel Romilly, indeed, she recognized an old acquaintance, who, true to his early principles, was now attempting a revision of the penal code; a subject in the discussion of which he had first engaged during his intercourse with Dr. Jebb. And in Mr. Whitbread she beheld, not only the intrepid advocate of a pacific and constitutional policy, but the steady assertor of religious liberty, on the great principle maintained by Mr. Wyvill,† that every description of intolerance is disgraceful to the Christian name, and that all men are equally entitled to the full enjoyment of the rights of conscience, unrestrained by any sort of penalty or disqualification whatsoever.

But whilst so large a share of Mrs. Jebb's attention was directed to public affairs, no person could more readily

* 11th August, 1809.

† 13th March, 1810.

* Letters to the Rev. Dr. Disney.

† See his Papers on Toleration, 4th ed. 1812.

descend, on proper occasions, to the intercourse of common life. She was fond of children, and took pleasure in endeavouring to amuse young persons, especially those of a mild and tractable disposition. When devoting herself to a school-girl of a quick and lively turn, who was for some days her visitor, Mrs Jebb was much struck with the animation and intelligence with which, entering into the spirit of the writer, she recited some interesting passages of a popular play; and was thence led to disapprove the practice of encouraging such recitations before a large audience, lest the mind, which in youth so easily acquires a bias, should be induced to persevere in an inclination for the stage.

In the year 1808, the present writer being engaged in compiling the Memoirs of Dr. Paley, anxiously sought the assistance of Mrs Jebb, and shall not readily forget the alacrity with which she entered into the spirit of his inquiry, and endeavoured to recal her scattered thoughts upon the subject, though in a very feeble state of health. He was at once proud and happy in being able to record her testimony to the merit of so eminent a man, from whom no difference of character or sentiment could alienate her well founded esteem. Amongst the extracts then made from her correspondence, for the most part foreign to the present work, there is one passage so striking, and so characteristic, that no apology can be necessary for its insertion here; particularly as it contains the substance of what she had written for Dr. Paley's perusal, before his Moral and Political Philosophy was first submitted to the world. She observed,

"I remember that I could not quite agree with him in some cases where he allows a deviation from truth, particularly with respect to children: for I

am convinced that there is nothing which ought to be more strictly guarded against than the attempt to deceive children. Deceive them in the arms of their nurses, and with reason you may expect they will attempt to deceive you the remainder of their lives. Falsehood is, in my opinion, the chief origin of all evil: it is the grand tempter; for how few would dare to sin if they did not first flatter themselves they could keep it secret by denying it? I look upon SATAN, under all his titles, as falsehood personified."

Mrs Jebb, indeed, had the greatest abhorrence of every description of untruth. "*Lies*," she would say, "never do any real good; they are like the *Will with the Wisp*, to the benighted traveller, and may lead us into as dangerous errors; but *truth* will in time break forth, like the sun, and discover the deception *"

The mind of Mrs. Jebb was seated in a very slender frame; constitutionally of a nervous temperament, and subject to frequent indisposition, she seemed in the prime of life to be sinking under a deep decline. For many years she was confined to her house; and in winter, for the most part, to her bed: but, as her health improved with the advancing season, she was accustomed to rise and remove into her sitting room, during the latter part of the day. Reclining on her sofa, she then used to receive company at tea; her sufferings, her debility, were for the time forgotten, and, her countenance often brightening with an innocent playfulness, she entered with spirit and vivacity into the various topics of discourse. Her sentences were short and pithy, her language pointed and terse; whilst her manners were invariably frank and open, displaying a heart without disguise.

* See her "Letter to John Bull," 13th Dec. 1792.

Entertaining a most lively sense of the critical state of Europe, and of her own country in particular, she felt the greatest anxiety on hearing any new event which involved important consequences, till she had an opportunity of communicating her opinions on the subject to some congenial mind. Although destined to see realized so very few of her benevolent prospects, she was still attentive to the public welfare, more especially where the cause of civil and religious liberty was concerned. Yet she was not in the habit of delivering political axioms by rote; she was accurately acquainted with the foundation of her principles, and regarded their consequences as tending to the happiness of mankind. But above all things, she seemed gratified in referring to the authority of Dr. Jebb, to whose bust, which stood beside her on a table, she often pointed with reverence and with awe.

Her sentiments were most truly liberal, free from acrimony, and unbiassed by any thing selfish or narrow. Candid in her judgment of others, to whom she attributed her own generous feelings, she never but with extreme reluctance gave up a favourable opinion. Hence it became difficult to convince her of the hypocrisy and ambition which too frequently actuate the most prominent characters; though when, as in the case of Mr. Pitt, she was completely undeceived, she attempted not to conceal her indignation. The determined enemy of vice, tyranny, and oppression, her benevolence was unconfined; and, amidst the corruptions and commotions of the times, she embraced in the expansion of her heart the people of every country and language, of every political distinction, and religious sect; triumphing in the hope and belief of

their eventual happiness, resulting from the conflicts of the day.

She was a firm believer in the wisdom and justice of God, in the truth and importance of the divine mission of Christ; a Christian according to the pure maxims of the gospel, equally free from bigotry and spiritual pride. Her religious principles were liberal in the best sense of the word; and yet she made no parade of those principles, and showed no anxiety to obtain converts to her creed. Allowing to others the full exercise of their reason and conscience, she regarded the virtuous of every denomination as equally acceptable in the sight of God. She drew consolation in her own sufferings from the prospect of a future life; and placing her trust in the goodness of Providence, she bore them with fortitude and resignation to the last.

The talents of Mrs. Jebb were so blended with an amiable softness, her ardour and firmness were so tempered with gentleness and urbanity, that whilst her friends were numerous, it was impossible she could have a single enemy amongst those who knew her. In her friendships she was ardent and sincere, entering warmly into the hopes and disappointments, and rejoicing in the good fortune of those to whom she was most intimately attached. Owing, indeed, in her latter years, so much to the attention of others, she repaid them with a grateful heart, and was apt to forget her own sufferings in anxiety for the welfare of her friends.

She had a nice and even scrupulous sense of honour and propriety, and a delicacy of mind, which admitted no compromise with that masculine boldness, in which some females, of a highly cultivated intellect, have at times indulged. Though so long in-

firm that her life had been a series of rarely intermitted suffering, she had none of that querulousness which seeks pleasure in tedious and unprofitable complaint to those around; and she was equally devoid of every wish to interfere in the concerns of others, unless very delicately, from unaffected benevolence, and with a reasonable hope of doing good.

After a confinement of many years, Mrs. Jebb died at her house, in Half-moon-Street, Piccadilly, January 20th, 1812. She was interred in the Dissenter's burying-ground, in Bunhill-Fields, immediately over the body of

her husband, as she had frequently desired.

A plain stone marks the place of their interment, on which is simply inscribed,

JOHN JEBB, M.D.

1786.

ANN JEBB, his Relict.

1812.

No monumental eulogy, so often prostituted to the undeserving, is wanting to record their worth. Their death will be long lamented, their virtues long remembered by surviving friends.

DETACHED ANECDOTES.

IRISH ARISTOCRATIC OUTRAGE.

THE following flagrant instance of national debasement of manners, alike degrading to the Squire who inflicted the wrong, to the man who suffered it, and to the people who remained quiet spectators of the outrage, is extracted from Wakefield's Account of Ireland, Statistical and Political: a book which is recommended to general perusal.

"In the month of June, 1809, at the races at Carlow, I saw a poor man's cheek laid open by a stroke of a whip. He was standing in the midst of a crowd, near the winning-post; the inhuman wretch who inflicted the wound was a gentleman of some rank in the county. The unhappy sufferer was standing in his way; and without requesting him to move, he struck him with less ceremony, than an English country Squire would strike a dog. But what astonished me more even than the deed, and what shows the difference between English and Irish feeling was, that not a murmur was heard, nor hand raised, in disap-

probation; but the surrounding spectators dispersed running different ways, like slaves terrified at the rod of their despot. I observed to a gentleman, with whom I was in company, how different a feeling would have actuated the populace in England. There, no man who lifts his hand unjustly, is sheltered by his rank. The bystanders are always ready to espouse the cause of the injured, and would themselves inflict summary punishment even on a nobleman, who should violate the laws of his country by such an aggression. 'What,' replied my friend, 'would a man there dare to strike his superior?'—'Yes,' said I, 'and on his own estate, and in the midst of his tenantry. But twenty magistrates of the County of Carlow are present; will they not interpose?' 'Oh, no,' said he, 'they will get into no quarrel with ———.' The conversation dropped; and I never felt so proud of being an Englishman."

On this subject, the Edinburgh Reviewers remarks, "The pride of