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FAMOUS SPEECHES

SELECTED AND EDITED,
WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTES

BY

HERBERT PAUL

Author of "The Life of Froude," etc.



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PREFACE

A SELECTION of speeches ought to include specimens of every class, so that no kind of oratory should be altogether unrepresented. There have always been, perhaps in the nature of the case there must always be, at least two forms of rhetoric, often typified by the examples of Demosthenes and Cicero. There is the keen, terse, argumentative style, to be found in the great Athenian. There is the elaborate, or ornamental, decorative kind, of which Cicero was the most consummate master, which aims less at the achievement of an immediate object than at the production of a general result. Neither kind can be excluded from any really representative series. Yet it must not be supposed that the two sorts of speaking can always be separated, or that they are never found in the same speech. There must be some general proposition at the back of every practical scheme. There must be some particular inference to be drawn from every general rule. Much as the characters of speeches may vary, they have the common element of being all made for persuasion. A speech which does not persuade is useless. There are, however, examples of the eloquence which results from intense personal conviction, and has no ulterior motive, the eloquence of feeling.

We must bear in mind that between means and ends the relation varies within the compass of human ingenuity. There is nothing to restrict the range of oratorical fancy or caprice except the necessity of aiming to produce an influence upon opinion, or to justify the speaker's own belief. All other objects must be subservient to those then. We have to consider how best to represent the various and competing forms of a delicate and complicated art. The resources of the English language have been developed in all sorts of ways

for the purpose of proving a point, or spreading an idea. Equal degrees of excellence may be reached by different methods, and it cannot be said that one is always good, or that another is always bad. We must, therefore, before estimating a speech, consider the circumstances in which it was delivered, and the purpose to which it was directed. This obligation does not preclude the necessity of confining a selection to specimens of acknowledged merit and power. The best examples of each kind are required to illustrate its intrinsic excellences and characteristic dangers.

Here the best speaking has always tended in the direction of debate. Parliamentary Government is government by speaking, and therefore turns speeches towards the goal of practical administration. A British statesman must be prepared to criticise what his opponent may do, and to defend what he has done himself. Even great orations which take an enlarged view of general principles and ideas have usually been delivered in support of definite and particular measures. Political oratory, which makes up a very large proportion of the whole, is profoundly coloured by the fact that public men in office, and public men out of it, are constantly arguing questions of policy from the administrative point of view. It is obvious that a system of this kind trains the logical as well as the rhetorical faculties, and also gives a turn to political controversy which it would not otherwise possess. Both in Parliament and on the platform there is a constant appeal to public opinion, not so much upon abstract issues as upon the merits or defects of rival plans or schemes. Before the days of Pitt and Fox, the younger Fox and the younger Pitt, the constituent bodies, small as they were, knew very little of what passed in Parliament. In the eighteenth century Parliamentary speeches were addressed almost entirely to Parliament itself. But even when reporting became full and general, it was for a long time chiefly through Parliament that English politicians approached the public,

except during the actual progress of an election. Burke's most famous speeches at Bristol are the speeches of a candidate. Gladstone may perhaps be said to have created the modern use of the platform as a vehicle for conveying a body of political doctrine to the public mind.

But though the style of the platform may be different from the style of Parliament, the main purpose remains identical. The object of the speaker is to procure assent for a conclusion, or a series of conclusions, which will, if adopted, take the form of legislative enactment. Moreover, it is usually the aim of one speaker to answer another. Thus the whole trend and shape of rhetoric in this country are forced into debate. An explanatory statement of positive intentions may, no doubt, be found in the speech of a Minister opening a Budget, or introducing a Bill. But nine speeches in every ten, perhaps ninety-nine in every hundred, are directed towards answering or confuting some previous argument or criticism. This fact explains a great deal in the nature and appearance of the speeches themselves. They are not essays, intended to amuse or instruct. They are not declamations, designed to exhibit the skill and dexterity with which a theme may be adorned or varied. They are contributions to a discussion meant for practical results, parts of a controversy which aims at argumentative victory in a definite and practical field. That is why the motive and the method of English speeches are so closely connected as to be almost indistinguishable. They have no other aim than the attainment of the objects which they profess, the refutation of an opposite opinion, or the confirmation of a definite view. They cannot be compared or understood if they are treated merely as rhetorical exercises, or isolated attempts to present the whole of a case from the orator's own point of view.

Of all modern orators who have swayed large masses the greatest was Daniel O'Connell. In the House of Commons he was powerful and successful, if sometimes too violent, and also

too long, for the taste of that assembly. But on the hillsides of Ireland he was supreme. Although, to baffle the reporters of the Government, he once spoke in Erse, he was a master of sonorous English, and of the phrases which appeal to crowds. His legal training had improved his natural readiness, and he could pass with consummate dexterity from the most vehement vituperation to the most ingenious argument. Having fought his own way into the British Parliament by winning Catholic emancipation for his countrymen he enjoyed the doubtful advantage of ending where other people began. When he took up repeal, his luck deserted him, and he came to be regarded as a mere declaimer. He had not Gladstone's double power of adapting himself both to Parliament and to the platform without derogating from his force in either position. O'Connell is an instance of the effect which oratory may produce upon minds prepared for it. But, of course, a great part of the orator's work consists in the process of preparation. To remove prejudice may be quite as important as to answer reasoning, and requires qualities of a different kind. There are almost as many types of speeches as there are types of men. For the audience and the cause combine to demand variety of treatment, of method, and of tone. Persuasion being the object, the modes of invoking it are almost infinitely various. Confidence and plausibility may be quite as important as either logic or rhetoric in achieving the desired result. For, despite cynical paradox, it may be doubted whether any speaker has convinced a representative assembly, or a public meeting, of what he did not believe himself, and it is certain that a conclusion must be made palatable as well as probable before it will be adopted by a multitude.

Cicero says that the best teacher of oratory is the pen. Undoubtedly a ready writer has the great advantage of a large vocabulary, and a stock of phrases upon which he can always draw. But inasmuch as an essay is a very different thing from a speech, there must be qualities which speaking calls into

play and of which a writer has no need. While readiness, promptitude, and clearness are always valuable, they assume very different proportions in spoken and written material. No one expects in a speech the sort of allusiveness which is appropriate and agreeable in an essay. Indeed they would be out of place. A simple directness is needed in speaking, much as it may sometimes be concealed by rhetorical artifice. And yet an element of the unexpected is necessary to avoid fatiguing an audience. Gladstone was an adept in varying the monotony of exposition by sudden turns of thought which relieved the mind without distracting the attention. Even in his financial statements he remembered the value of form, and was constantly on the watch to find opportunities of departing from the level flatness of disquisition. He often gives the reason for mentioning a fact in the sentence after it, not in the sentence before it. Of course this is a feeble and inadequate example of a delicate art, which has many and various ramifications. The main point is that the hearers of a speech should be as little conscious as possible of the machinery by which they are guided from the premises to the conclusion.

The most eloquent speeches, however, have not always been the most successful, and there is an interest in observing the other qualities which convince either representative assemblies or public meetings. Walpole, for example, and Peel, though they could hardly be called eloquent, possessed the art of convincing the House of Commons in a far higher degree than most eloquent men.

Fox is said to have fused reason with passion, and thus reached the highest point of oratorical power. The same encomium might be passed upon Gladstone. But there are other forms in which the effect of great speaking may be displayed. Sometimes sheer argumentative power carries everything before it. Sometimes a speech succeeds because it exactly embodies the prevailing public sentiment of the

time. There have been instances where the intense conviction of the speaker produced a corresponding belief in his hearers. On the whole, however, it may be said with as near an approach to certainty as the subject admits, that the most successful speeches have been those which combined logic with rhetoric so as to convince the mind while delighting the ear. It is in accordance with that principle that these selections have been made.



FAMOUS SPEECHES

CROMWELL

THE fragments of Cromwell's speeches which remain have been industriously collected by Carlyle. Cromwell was no rhetorician. His meaning has to be gathered from the impressive utterances which every now and then illuminate the dark passages of his harangues. In this way Carlyle has interpreted sayings which had a clear significance at the time, and which have their place in the history of the period. In part Cromwell spoke the current language of Puritanism. In part he expressed his own deepest convictions as they came from his mind, feeling that those who heard him would understand him. He could not have convinced other men as he did unless he had been himself assured of the truth that he felt called to proclaim. The obvious sincerity which pervades his speeches explains why it was that they required no interpreter. They were adapted^d to their audience. They simply set forth the message he had to deliver in the terms which came naturally to his lips, the Puritan style of the day. When he said that he saw the hand of God, he meant that in his mind's eye he did see it. He felt himself to be under the constant direction of Providence, from which he always sought guidance in every difficulty and danger. He did not weigh objections against duties, and then take the easiest line of action. He followed what was to him the clear path of conduct in the light which came to him from the religion of his heart. He thought of Englishmen and Scotsmen as the chosen people, selected to uphold the cause of simple and scriptural faith. Whether, or how far, he deceived himself is not the question. We cannot understand his speeches, or even

his career, unless we realise that his Biblical phraseology was not cant, but the form which his thoughts naturally assumed. If he found it impossible to govern with the Parliament after having fought and conquered for it, we must remember that he had to deal with an absolutely irresponsible House of Commons, which could not be legally dissolved without its own consent. When the Long Parliament had been forcibly dispersed, he had to try constitutional experiments without adequate time or means. The foresight he showed was, in the circumstances, marvellous. In giving representation to the great towns he anticipated the Reform Act of 1832. But though his army was a citizen force, as exemplary in its behaviour at home as it had been splendid in its achievements abroad, he had no popular support behind him. The tyranny of the Stuarts was forgotten under the severe rule of the Saints, and the real principles of freedom were understood by neither side. Interference with national customs and personal habits was equally disagreeable whether it were exercised in the name of a Protector, a Parliament, or a King. Cromwell made England a great power, and raised her military reputation higher than it had ever stood before. He did not claim, like Charles the First, the right to tax without a Parliament, nor did he ever break his word. But he was as little of a Constitutionalist as Charles himself, and he believed in the divine right of a Puritan Council as firmly as any cavalier believed in the divine right of kings. His idea of a Parliament was a consultative rather than a legislative body, to give advice, and to assist the executive government, not to control the force that was guiding the people for their good. The original opposition to Charles, of which Pym may be taken as the embodiment, had been constitutional and parliamentary. The Civil War turned it into a military despotism, mitigated and subdued by the personal influence of Cromwell, but always in the background as the ultimate sanction of the Commonwealth. Cromwell did not wish for despotic authority. He would have preferred a union of sober and pious men, agreeing

in public aims as in private character. But he was for dictatorship against anarchy.

Speech delivered Sept. 17th, 1656¹

GENTLEMEN, When I came hither I did think that a duty was incumbent upon me a little to pity myself; because, this being a very extraordinary occasion, I thought I had very many things to say unto you, "and was somewhat burdened and straitened thereby." But truly now, seeing you in such a condition as you are, I think I must turn off "my pity" in this, as I hope I shall in everything else—and consider *you* as certainly not being able long to bear that condition and heat that you are now in. "So far as possible, on this large subject, let us be brief; not studying the Art of Rhetoricians." Rhetoricians whom I do not pretend to "much concern with"; neither with them, nor with what they used to deal in: words!

Truly, *our* business is to speak Things! The Dispensation of God that are upon us do require it; and that subject upon which we shall make our discourse is somewhat of very great interest and concernment, both for the glory of God, and with reference to His Interest in the world. I mean this peculiar, His most peculiar Interest, "His Church, the Communion of the faithful Followers of Christ";—and that will not leave any of us to exclude His general Interest which is the concernment of the Living People, "not as Christians but as human creatures," within these three Nations, and all the Dependencies there upon. I have told you I should speak to *things*; things that concern these Interests: The Glory of God, and His Peculiar Interest in the world—which "latter" is more extensive, I say more extensive, than the People of all three Nations with the appurtenances, or the countries and places, belonging unto them.

The first thing, therefore, that I shall speak to is *That*, that is the first lesson of Nature; Being and Preservation. As to that of Being, I do think I do not ill style it the *first* consideration which Nature teacheth the Sons of Adam;—and then

¹ The occasion was the meeting of his second Parliament which he had just summoned. The words between inverted commas were put in by Carlyle to bring out the sense. This is the best and most thoroughly reported of Cromwell's speeches. It gives by far the fullest idea of his style.

I think we shall enter into a field large enough when we come to consider that of Well-being. But if Being itself be not first well laid, I think the other will hardly follow.

Now in order to this, to the Being and Subsistence of these Nations with all their Dependencies; The Conservation of that, "Namely of our National Being," is first to be viewed with respect to those who seek to undo it, and so make it *not to be*; and then very naturally we shall come to the consideration of what will make it *be*, of what will *keep* its being and substance.

"Now" that which plainly seeks the destruction of the Being of these Nations is, out of doubt: The endeavour and design of all the common Enemies of them. I think truly, it will not be hard to find out whose those Enemies are; nor what has made them so! I think, They are all the wicked men in the world, whether abroad or at home, that are the Enemies to the very Being of these Nations;—and this upon a common account, from the very enmity that is in them "to all such things." Whatsoever could serve the glory of God and the interest of His People,—which they see to be more eminently, yea more eminently patronized and professed in this Nation (we will not speak it with vanity) than in all the Nations in the world; *this* is the common ground of the common enmity entertained against the prosperity of our Nation, against the very Being of it.—But we will not, I think, take up our time, contemplating who these enemies are, and what they are, in the general notion; but we will labour to *specificate* our Enemies; to know what persons and bodies of persons they practically are that seek the very destruction and Being of these Three Nations.

And truly I would not have laid such a foundation but to the end I might very particularly communicate with you "about that same matter." For which, "above others," I think, you are called hither at this time:—That I might particularly communicate with you about the many dangers these Nations stand in, from Enemies abroad and at home; and advise with you about the remedies, and means to obviate these dangers. "Dangers" which,—say I, and I shall leave it to you whether you will join with me or no,—strike at the very Being and "vital" interest of these Nations. And, therefore, coming to particulars, I will shortly represent to you the estate of your affairs in that respect; in respect

“namely” of the Enemies you are engaged with; and how you come to be engaged with those Enemies, and how they come to be, *as heartily*, I believe, engaged against you.

Why, truly, your great enemy is the Spaniard. He is a natural enemy. He is naturally so; He is naturally so throughout,—by reason of that enmity that is in him against whatsoever is of God. Whatsoever “is of God” which is in *you* or which may be in you; contrary to that which *his* blindness and darkness, led on by superstition, and the implicitness of his faith in submitting to the See of Rome, actuate him unto!—with this King and State I say, you are at present in hostility. We put you into this hostility, you will give us leave to tell you how. For we are ready to excuse “this and” most of our actions,—and to justify them too, as well as to excuse them,—upon the ground of Necessity. “And” the ground of Necessity, for justifying of men’s actions, is, above all, considerations of instituted Law; and if this or any other State should go about,—as I know they never will,—to make Laws against Events, against what may happen, “then” I think it is obvious to any man, they will be making Laws against Providence; events, and issues of things, being from God alone, to whom all issues belong.

The Spaniard is your enemy; and your enemy, as I tell you, naturally, by that antipathy which is in him,—“and also” providentially, and this in divers respects. You could not get an honest or honourable Peace from him; it was sought by the Long Parliament; it was not attained. It could not be attained with honour and honesty. I say, it could not be attained with honour and honesty. And truly when I say that, “I do not say,” He is naturally throughout *an enemy*; an enmity is put into him by God. “I will put an enmity between thy seed and her seed;” which goes but for little among statesmen, but is more considerable than all things! And he that considers not such natural enmity, the *providential* enmity, as well as the *accidental*, I think he is not well acquainted with Scripture and the things of God. And the Spaniard is not only our enemy accidentally, but he is providentially so; God having in His wisdom disposed it to be, when we made a breach with the Spanish Nation “long ago.”

No sooner did this Nation form what is called (unworthily) the Reformed Religion after the death of Queen Mary, by the

Queen Elizabeth of famous memory,—we need not be ashamed to call her so!—but the Spaniards' design became, By all unworthy, unnatural means, to destroy that Person, and to seek the ruin and destruction of these Kingdoms. For me to instance in particulars upon that account, were to trouble you at a very unseasonable time; there is a Declaration extant which very fully hath in it the origin of the Spaniard venting himself upon this Nation; and a series of it from those very beginnings to this present day. But his enmity was partly upon that general account which all are agreed "about." The French, all the Protestants in Germany, all have agreed, That his design was the empire of the whole Christian World if not more;—and upon *that* ground he looks, "and hath looked," at this Nation as his greatest obstacle. And as to what his attempts have been for that end—I refer you to that Declaration, and to the observations of men who read History. It would not be difficult to call to mind the several Assassinations designed upon that Lady, that great Queen; the attempts upon Ireland, the Spaniards' invading of it; their designs of the same nature upon *this* Nation,—public designs, private designs, all manner of designs, to accomplish this great and general end. Truly King James made a Peace; but whether this Nation, and the interest of all Protestant Christians, suffered not more by that Peace, than ever by Spain's hostility, I refer to your consideration!

Thus a State that you can neither have peace with nor reason from,—that is the State with which you have enmity at this time, and against which you are engaged. And give me leave to say this unto you, because it is truth, and most men know it, That the Long Parliament did endeavour, but could not obtain satisfaction "from the Spaniard" all the time they sat; for their Messenger was murdered; and when they asked satisfaction for the blood of your poor people unjustly shed in the West Indies and for the wrongs done elsewhere; when they asked liberty of conscience for your people who traded thither,—satisfaction in none of these things would be given, but was denied. I say, they denied satisfaction either for your Messenger that was murdered, or for the blood that was shed, or for the damages that were done in the West Indies. No satisfaction at all; nor any reason offered *why* there should not be liberty "of conscience" given to your

people that traded thither,—satisfaction in none of these things would be given, but was denied. I say, they denied satisfaction either for your Messenger that was murdered, or for the blood that was shed, or the damages that were done in the West Indies. No satisfaction at all ; nor any reason offered *why* there should not be liberty “ of conscience ” given to your people that traded thither. Whose trade was very considerable there, and drew many of your people thither ; and begot an apprehension in *us* “ as to their treatment there, ”—whether in *you* or no, let God judge between you and Himself. I judge not ; but all of us know that the people who went thither to manage the trade there, were imprisoned. We desired “ but ” such a liberty as “ that ” they might keep their Bibles in their pockets, to exercise their liberty of religion for themselves, and not be under restraint. But there is not liberty of conscience to be had “ from the Spaniard ” ; neither is there any satisfaction for injuries, nor for blood. When these two things were desired, the Ambassador told us “ It was to ask his Master’s two eyes ” ; to ask both his eyes, asking these things of him !—

Now if this be so, why, truly then here is some little foundation laid to justify the War that has been entered upon with the Spaniard ! And not only so ; but the plain truth of it is—Make any peace with any State that is Popish and subjected to the determination of Rome and “ of ” the Pope himself,—you are bound and they are loose. It is the pleasure of the Pope at any time to tell you, that though the man is murdered yet his murderer has got into sanctuary ! And equally true is it, and has been found by common and constant experience. That Peace is but to be kept so long as the Pope saith Amen to it. We have not “ Now ” to do with any Popish State except France : and it is certain that *they* do not think themselves under such a tie to the Pope ; but think themselves at liberty to perform honesties with nations in agreement with them, and protest against the obligation of such a thing as that,—“ of breaking your word at the Pope’s bidding.” *They* are able to give us an explicit answer to anything reasonably demanded of them ; and there is no other Popish State we can speak of, save this only, but will break their promise or keep it as they please upon these grounds,—being under the lash of the Pope, to be by him determined, “ and made to decide.”

In the time when Philip Second was married to Queen Mary, and since that time, through Spanish power and instigation, Twenty thousand Protestants were murdered in Ireland. We thought, being denied just things,—we thought it our duty to get that by the sword which was not to be had otherwise! And this has been the spirit of Englishmen; and if so, certainly it is, and ought to be, the spirit of men that have *higher* spirits! With that State you are engaged. And it is a great and powerful State;—though I may say also, that with all other Christian States you are at peace. All these “your other” engagements were upon you before this Government’s was undertaken: War with France, Denmark,—nay, upon the matter, war, “or as good as war,” with Spain “itself.” I could instance how it was said “in the Long Parliament time,” “We will have a war in the Indies, though we fight them not at home.” I say, we are at peace with all other Nations, and have only a war with Spain. I shall say somewhat “farther,” to you, which will let you see our clearness “as” to that, by and by. .

Having thus “said, we are,” engaged with Spain,—that is the root of the matter; that is the party that brings *all* your enemies before you. It doth: for so it is now, that Spain has espoused that interest which you have all along hitherto been conflicting with,—Charles Stuart’s Interest. And I would but meet the gentleman upon a fair discourse who is willing that that Person should come back again!—but I dare not believe any in this room is. And I say it does not detract at all from your cause, nor from your ability to make defence of it, That God by His providence has so disposed that the King of Spain should espouse that Person. And I say “farther,” No man but might be very well satisfied that it is not for aversion to that Person!—And the “choosing out” (as was said to-day) “A Captain to lead us *back into Egypt*,” “what honest man has *not* an aversion to that?—if there be such a place? I mean metaphorically, and allegorically such a place; “if there be” that is to say, A *returning* “on the part of some” to all those things we have been fighting against, and a destroying of all that good (as we had some hints to-day) which we have attained unto—? and I am sure my Speech “and defence of the Spanish War” will signify very little, if such grounds go not for good! Nay, I will say this to you, Not a man in England, that is disposed to comply with Papists

and Cavaliers, but to him my speech here is the greatest parable, the absurdest discourse! And in a word, we could wish they were all where Charles Stuart is, all who declare that they are of that spirit. I do, with all my heart;—and I would help them with a boat to carry them over, who are of that mind! Yea, and if you shall think it a duty to drive them over by Arms, I will help in that also!— —

You are engaged with such an Enemy; a foreign enemy, who has such allies among ourselves;—this last said hath a little vehemence in it, but it is well worth your consideration.

Though I seem to be all this while upon the justice of the business, yet my design is to let you see the dangers “and grand crisis” this Nation stands in “thereby.” All the honest interests; yea all interests of the Protestants in Germany, Denmark, Helvetia, and the Cantons, and all the interests in Christendom, are the same as yours. If you succeed, if you succeed well and act well, and be convinced what is God’s Interest, and prosecute it, you will find that you act for a very great many who are God’s own. Therefore I say that your danger is from the Common Enemy abroad; who is the head of the Papal Interest, the head of the Antichristian Interest,—who is so described in Scripture, so forespoken of, and so fully, under that characteral name “of Antichrist” given him by the Apostle in the *Epistle to the Thessalonians*, and likewise so expressed in the *Revelation*; which are sure and plain things! Except you will deny the truth of the Scriptures, you must needs see that that State is so described in Scripture to be Papal and Antichristian. I say, with this Enemy, and upon this account, you have the quarrel,—with the Spaniard.

And truly he has an Interest in your bowels; he has so. The Papists in England,—they have been accounted, ever since I was born, Spaniolised. There is not a man among us can hold up his face against that. They never regarded France; they never regarded any other Papist State where a “hostile” Interest was, “but Spain only.” Spain was their patron. Their patron all along, in England, in Ireland and Scotland; no man can doubt of it. Therefore I must needs say, this “Spanish” Interest is also, in regard to your home affairs, a great source of your danger. It is, and it evidently is; and will be more so,—upon that account that I told you of; He hath espoused Charles Stuart! with whom he is fully in agreement;

for whom he has raised Seven or Eight Thousand men, and has them now quartered at Bruges ; to which number Don Juan of Austria has promised that as soon as the campaign is ended, which it is conceived will be in about five or six weeks, he shall have Four or Five thousand added. And the Duke of Neubuy, who is a Popish Prince, hath promised good assistance according to his power ; and other Popish States the like. In this condition you are with that State “ of Spain ” : and in this condition thought unavoidable necessity ; because your Enemy was *naturally* an enemy, and is providentially too become so.

And now farther,—as there is a complication of these Interests abroad, so there is a complication of them here. Can we think that Papists and Cavaliers shake not hands in England ? It is unworthy, Unchristian, Un-English-like, “ say you.” Yes ; but it doth serve to let you see, and for that end I tell it you that you may see, your danger, and the source thereof. Nay, it is not only thus, in this condition of hostility, that we stand towards Spain ; and towards all the Interest which would make void and frustrate everything that has been doing for you ; namely towards the Popish Interests, Papists and Cavaliers ; but it is also—— — That is to say, your danger is *so great*, if you will be sensible of it, by reason of Persons who pretend *other* things ! “ Pretend, I say ; ” yea who, though perhaps they *do* not all suit in their hearts with the said “ Popish ” Interest—yet every man knows, and must know, that discontented parties are among us somewhere ! They must expect backing and support somewhere. They must end in Interest of the Cavalier at the long run. That must be their support !—I could have reckoned this in another “ head.” But I give you an account of things as they arise to me. Because I want to declare them to you ! Not discursively, in the oratoric way ; but to let you see the matter of fact,—to let you see how the state of your affairs stand,

Certain it is, there was, not long since, an endeavour to make an Insurrection in England. It was going on some time before it broke out. It was so before the last Parliament sat. “ Nay,” it was so not only from the time of the undertaking of this Government ; but the spirit and principle of it did work in the Long Parliament “ time.” From that time to this hath there been nothing but enterprising and designing against

you. And this is no strange or new thing to tell you: Because it is true and certain that the Papists, the Priests and Jesuits have a great influence upon the Cavalier Party; they and the Cavaliers prevail upon the discontented spirits of the Nation,—who are not all so apt to see where the dangers lie, nor to what the management of affairs tends. Those “Papists and Cavaliers” do foment all things that tend to *disservice*; to propagate discontentments upon the minds of men, and if we would instance, in particular, those that have manifested this, we could tell you how Priests and Jesuits have insinuated themselves into men’s society; pretending the same things that *they* pretended; whose ends, “these Jesuit ends,” have, out of doubt been what I have told you.

We had that insurrection. It was intended first to the assassination of my person—which I would not remember as anything at all considerable to myself or to you; for they would have had to cut throats beyond human calculation before they could have been able to effect their design. But you know it very well, “this of the assassination”; it is no fable. Persons were arraigned for it before the Parliament sat; and tried, and upon proof condemned, for their designs to cut the throat of myself, and three or four more; whom they had singled out as being, a little beyond ordinary, industrious to preserve the peace of the Nation. And did think to make a very good issue “in that way,” to the accomplishment of their designs! I say, this was made good upon the Trial. Before the Parliament sat, all the time the Parliament sat, they were about it. We did hint these things to the Parliament people by several persons, who acquainted them therewith. But what fame we lay under I know not. It was conceived, it seems, we had things which rather intended to persuade agreement and consent, and bring money out of the people’s purses, or I know not what;—in short nothing was believed; though there was a series of things distinctly and plainly communicated to many members.

The Parliament rose about the middle of January. By the 12th of March after, the people were in arms. But “they were a company of mean fellows,”—alas!—“not a lord, nor a gentleman, nor a man of fortune, nor a this nor that, among them; but it was a poor headstrong person, a company of rash fellows who were at the undertaking of this”—and that

was all ! And by such things have men " once well-affected " lost their consciences and honours, complying, " coming to agreement with Malignants " upon such notions as these !— Give me leave to tell you, we know it ; we are able to prove it. And I refer you to that Declaration which was for guarding against Cavaliers (as I did before to that other " Declaration " which set down the grounds of our war with Spain), whether these things were true or not. If men will not believe,—we are satisfied, we do our duty. If we let you know things and the ground of them, it is satisfaction enough to *us*. But to see how men can reason themselves out of their honours and consciences in their compliance with those sort of people !—which truly, I must needs say, some men had compliance with who I thought never *would* for all the world ; I must tell you so.

These men rise in March. And that it was a general Design, I think all the world must know and acknowledge. For it is as evident as the day that the King sent Sir Joseph Wagstaff and another, the Earl of Rochester, to the North. And that it was general, we had not by suspicion or imagination ; but we know individuals ! We are able to make appear that persons who carried themselves the most demurely and fairly of any men in England were engaged in this business. And he that gave us our intelligence lost his life for it in Neuberger country. I think I may now speak of that, because he is dead :—but he did discover, from time to time, a full intelligence of these things. Therefore, How men of wicked spirits may traduce us in that matter ; or, notwithstanding all that has been done, may still continue their compliances " with the Malignants," I leave it. I think England cannot be safe unless Malignants be carried far away !—

There was never any design on foot but we could hear it out of the Tower. He who commanded there would give us account, That within a fortnight of such a thing there would be some stirrings ; for a great concourse of people were coming to them, and they had very great elevation of spirit. And not only these ; but in all the counties of England. We have had informations that they were upon designs all over England (besides some particular places which came to our particular assurance), by knowledge we had from persons in the several counties of England.

And if this *be* so, then, as long as commotions can be held on foot, you are in danger by your war with Spain ; with whom all the Papal Interest is joined. This Pope is a person all the world knows to be a person of zeal for his Religion, wherein perhaps he may shame *us*,—and a man of contrivance, and wisdom, and policy ; and his Designs are known to be, all over, nothing but an endeavour to unite all the Popish interests in all the Christian world, against this Nation above any, and against all the Protestant interest in the world. If this be so, and if you will take a measure of these things ; if we must still hold the esteem that we have had “ for Spaniards,” and be ready to shake hands with them and the Cavaliers—what does this differ from the Bishop of Canterbury “ striving ” to reconcile matters of religion ; if this temper be upon us to unite with these “ Popish ” men in civil things ? Give me leave to say, and speak what I know ! If this be men’s mind, I tell you plainly,—I hope I need not ; but I wish all the Cavaliers in England, and all the Papists, heard me declare it, and many besides yourselves have heard me : There are a company of poor men that are ready to spend their blood against such compliance, and I am persuaded of the same thing in you !

If this be our condition,—with respect had to this truly let us go a little farther. For I would lay open the danger, wherein I think in my conscience we stand ; and if God give not your hearts to see and discern what is obvious, we shall sink, and the house will fall about our ears,—upon even “ what are called ” “ such sordid attempts ” as these same ! Truly there are a great many people in this Nation, who “ would not reckon up every pitiful thing,”—perhaps like the nibbling of a mouse at one’s heel ; but only “ considerable dangers ! ” I will tell you plainly “ what to me seems dangerous.” It is not a time for compliments nor rhetorical speeches, I have none truly ;—but to tell you how we *find* things.

There is a generation of men in this Nation who cry up righteousness and justice and liberty ; and these are diversified into several sects, and sorts of men ; and though they may be contemptible, in respect they are many, and so not like to make a solid vow to do you mischief,—yet they are apt to agree *in aliquo tertio*. They are known (yea, well enough) to shake hands with,—I should be loath to say with Cavaliers—

but with all the scum and dirt of this Nation, to put you to trouble. And, when I come to speak of the *Remedies*, I shall tell you what are the most apt and proper remedies in these respects. I speak now of the very time when there was an Insurrection at Salisbury, "your Wagstaffs and Penruddocks openly in arms." I doubt whether it be believed there ever was any rising in North Wales "at the same time"; at Shrewsbury; at Rufford Abbey, where were about Five hundred horse; or at Marston Moor; or in Northumberland and the other places,—where all these Insurrections were at that very time!—There was a Party which was very proper to come between the Papists and Cavaliers; and that *Levelling* Party hath some accession lately, which goes under a *finer* name or notion! I think they would now be called "Commonwealth's men,"—who perhaps have right to it little enough. And it is strange that men of fortune and great estates should join with such a people. But if the *fact* be so, there will need no stretch of wit to make it evident, it being so by demonstration.

I say, this people at that very time, they were pretty numerous,—and do not despise them!—at the time when the Cavaliers were risen, this very Party had prepared a Declaration against all these things that had been transacted "by us"; and called them by I know not "what names," "tyranny," "oppression," things, "against" the liberty of the subject, and cried out for "justice," and "righteousness," and "liberty";—and what was all this business for, but to join the Cavaliers to carry on that Design? And these are things,—not words! That Declaration we got and the Penner of it we got: and we have got intelligence also how the business was laid and contrived;—which was hatched in the time of the Sitting of that Parliament. I do not accuse anybody: but that was the *time* of it;—an unhappy time! And a plausible Petition had been penned, which must come to me, forsooth, "To consider of these things, and to give redress and remedies." And this was so.

Now indeed I must tell you plainly, we suspected a great deal of violence then; and we did hunt it out. I will not tell you these are high things; but at that time when the Cavaliers were to rise, a Party was to seize upon General Monk in Scotland, and to commit him to Edinburgh Castle, upon this

pretence of "liberty" and when they had seized him, and clapped him by the heels, "him" and some other true and faithful officers, they had resolved a number at the same time should march away for London; leaving a party behind them,—to have their throats cut by the Scots! Though I would not say they would have "purposely" brought it to this pass; yet it cannot be thought but that a considerable "part of the" Army would have followed them "hither" at the heels.—And not only thus; but this same spirit and principle designed some little fiddling things upon some of your Officers, to an assassination; and an officer was engaged, who was upon the Guard, to seize me in my bed. This was true. And other foolish designs there were,—as, To get into a room, to get gunpowder laid in it, and to blow up the room where I lay. And this we can tell you, is *true*. These are Persons not worthy naming; but the things are *true*. And such is the state we have stood in, and had to conflict with, since the last Parliament. And upon this account, and in this combination, it is that I say to you, That the ringleaders to all this are none but your old enemies the Papists and Cavaliers. We have some "of them" in prison for these things.

Now we would be loath to tell you of notions mere seraphical! *These* are poor and low conceits. We have had very seraphical notions! We have had endeavours to deal between two Interests;—one some section of that Commonwealth Interest; and another which was a notion of a Fifth-Monarchy Interest! which "strange operation" I do not recite, nor what condition it is in, as thinking it not worthy our trouble. But *de facto* it has been so, That there have been endeavours;—as there were endeavours to make a reconciliation between Herod and Pilate that Christ might be put to death, so there have been endeavours of reconciliation between Fifth Monarchy men and the Commonwealth men that there might be union in order to an end,—no *end* can be so bad as *that* of Herod's was—but in order to end in blood and confusion! And, that you may know, "to tell you candidly" I profess I do not believe of these two last, of Commonwealth men and Fifth-Monarchy men, but that they have stood at a distance "aloof from Charles Stuart." I think they did not participate. I would be so charitable, I would be, That they did not. But this I will tell you, That as for the others, *they* did not only

set these things on work ; but they sent a fellow, a wretched creature, an apostate from religion and all honesty,—they sent him to Madrid to advise with the King of Spain to land forces to invade the Nation. Promising satisfaction that they would comply and concur with him to have both men and moneys ; undertaking both to engage the Fleet to mutiny, and also your Army to gain a garrison “ on the coast ” to raise a party “ so ” that if the Spaniard would say where he would land, they would be ready to assist him !—This person was sometimes a Colonel in the Army. He went with letters to the Archduke Leopoldus and Don John. That was an “ Ambassador ” ;—and gave promise of much moneys : and has been soliciting, and did obtain moneys ; which he sent hither by Bills of Exchange :—and God, by His Providence, we being exceedingly poor, directed that we lighted on some of them, and some of the moneys ! Now, if they be payable, let them be called for ! If the House shall think fit to order any inspection into these things, they may have it.

We think it our duty to tell you of these things ; and we can make them good. Here is your danger ; that is it ! Here is a poor Nation that has wallowed in its blood ;—though thanks be to God, we have had Peace these four or five years ; yet here is the condition we stand in. And I think I should be false to you, if I did not give you this true representation of it.

I am to tell you, by the way, a word to justify a Thing which I hear, is much spoken of. When we knew all these Designs before mentioned ; when we found that the Cavaliers would not be quiet— — No quiet ; “ There is no peace to the wicked,” saith the Scripture (*Isaiah*, Fifty-seventh) : “ They are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest ; whose waters throw up mire and dirt.” They cannot rest,—they have no Peace with God in Jesus Christ to the remission of sins ! They do not know what belongs to that ; therefore they know not how to be at rest ; therefore they can no more cease from their actions than they can cease to live,—nor so easily neither !—Truly when that Insurrection was, and we saw it in all the roots and grounds of it, we did find out a little poor Invention, which I hear has been much regretted. I say, there was a little thing invented ; which was, the erecting of your Major-Generals : To have a little inspection upon the People thus divided, thus discontented, thus dissatisfied, “ split ” into

divers interests,—and the workings of the Popish party! “Workings of the Lord Taaff and others”; the most consisting of Natural-Irish rebels, and all those men you have fought against in Ireland, and have expelled from thence, as having had a hand in that bloody massacre;—of him and of those that were under his power; who were now to have gained in this excellent business of Insurrection!

And upon such a Rising as that was,—truly I think if ever anything were justifiable as to Necessity, and honest in every respect, this was. And I could as soon venture my life with it as with anything I ever undertook! We did find—I mean—myself and the Council did—That, if there were need to have greater forces to carry on this work, it was a most righteous thing to put the charge upon that party which was the cause of it. And if there be any man that hath a face averse to this, I dare pronounce him to be a man against the Interest of England! Upon this account, upon this ground of necessity; when we saw what game they were upon; and knew individual persons, and of the greatest rank, not a few, engaged in this business (I knew one man that laid down his life for it); and had it *by intercepted Letters made as clear as the day*;—we did think it our duty to make that class of persons who, as evidently as anything in the world, were in the combination “of the insurrectionists,” bear their share of the charge. “Bear their share,” one with another, for the raising of the Forces which were so necessary to defend us against those Designs! And truly if any man be angry at it,—I am plain, and shall use an homely expression: *Let him turn the buckle of his girdle behind him*. If this were to be done again, I would do it.

How the Major-Generals have behaved themselves in that work? I hope they are men, as to their persons, of known integrity and fidelity; and men who have freely adventured their blood and lives for that good Cause,—if it “still” be thought such, and it was well stated, “this morning,” against all the “new” humours and fancies of men!— — And truly England does yet receive one day more of lengthening out its tranquillity, by that same service of theirs.

Well; your danger is as you have seen. And truly I am sorry it is so great. But I wish it to cause no despondency;—as truly, I think, it will not; for we are Englishmen; that is one good fact. And if God give a Nation the property of

valour and courage, it is honour and a mercy "from Him." And much more "than English!" Because you all, I hope, are Christian men, who know Jesus Christ, and know that Cause which hath been mentioned to you this day.

Having declared to you my sense and knowledge,—pardon me if I say so, my knowledge,—of the condition of these poor Nations, for it hath an influence upon them all, it concerned them all very palpably: I should be to blame if I did not a little offer to you the Remedies. I would comprehend them under two considerations. They are both somewhat general. The one is, The considering all things that may be done, and that ought to be done, in order [to] Security; that is one. And truly the other is a common head, "a general, nay a universal consideration,"—the other is. Doing all things that ought to be done in order to Reformation: and with that I will close my discourse. All that has hitherto been hinted at was but to give you a sense of the danger; which "truly" is most material and significant; for which principally you are called hither to advise of the remedies.—I do put them, "the remedies," into this twofold method, not but that I think they are scarcely distinct. I do believe, truly, upon serious and deliberate consideration, that a true Reformation, as it may, and will thro' God's acceptance, and by the endeavours of His poor servants, be,—that that, "I say," will be pleasing in His sight; and will prove not only what shall avert the present danger, but be a worthy return for all the blessings and mercies which you have received. So in my conscience, If I were put to show it, this hour, where the security of these Nations will lie?—forces, arms, watchings, posts, strength; your being and freedom; be as politic and diligent, and as vigilant as you can be,—I would say in my conscience, and as before Almighty God I speak it; I think your Reformation, if it be honest, and thorough, and just, *it* will be your best security!

First, "however," with regard to Security outwardly considered. We will speak a little distinctly to that. You see where your War is. It is with the Spaniard. You have Peace with all "other" Nations, or the most of them: Swede, Dane, Dutch. At present, I say, it is well; it is at present so. And so likewise with the Portugal, with France,—the Mediterranean Sea. Both these States; both Christian and Profane;

the Mahometan ;—you have Peace with them all. Only with Spain, you have a difference, you have a War. I pray consider it. Do I come to tell you that I would *tie* you to this war ? No. “According” as you shall find your spirits and reasons grounded in what hath been said, so let you and me join in the prosecution of that war,—“according” as we are satisfied, and as the cause shall appear to our consciences in the sight of the Lord. But if you *can* come to prosecute it, prosecute it vigorously, or don’t do it at all !

Truly I shall speak a very great word,—one may ask a very great question ; “*unde* ; whence shall the means of it come ? ” Our Nation is overwhelmed in debts ! Nevertheless I think it my duty to deal plainly ; I shall speak what even Nature teacheth us. If we engage in a business,—a recoiling man may *haply* recover of his enemy : but the wisdom of a man surely will be in the keeping of his ground ! Therefore that is what I advise you, That we join together to prosecute it *vigorously*. In the second place, I would advise you to deal effectually,—even *because* there is such a “complication of interests,” “as some keep objecting.” If you believe that there is such a complication of interests,—why, then, in the name of God, that excites you the more to do it ! Give me leave to tell you, I do not believe that in any war that ever was in former times, nor in any engagements that you have had with other “enemies,” this Nation had more obligation upon it to look to itself,—to forbear waste of time, precious time ! Needlessly to mind things that are not essential, to be quibbling about words, and comparatively about things of no moment ; and in the meantime,—being in such a case as I suppose you know we are,—to suffer ourselves to be wanting to a just defence against the common Enemies abroad, or not to be thoroughly sensible of the Distempers that are at home—!—I know, perhaps there are many considerations which may teach you, which may incline you, to keep your own hands tender from men of one Religion “with ourselves” and of an Interest that is so spread in the Nation. However, if they seek the eradication of the Nation ; if they be active as you have seen, and “as” it hath been made manifest so as not to be denied, to the carrying on of their Designs ; if England must be eradicated by persons complicated with the Spaniard ; if this must be brought upon us through distempers

and falseness of men among themselves,—then the question is no more than this ; whether any consideration whatsoever shall lead us, for fear of eradicating distempers, to suffer all the honest Interests of this Nation to be eradicated ? Therefore, speaking generally of any of their distempers, “ which ” are of all sorts,—where a member cannot be cured, the rule is plain, *Ense recidendum est immedicabile vulnus*. And I think it is of such an advantage that nothing ever could more properly be put in practice since this or any Nation “ first ” was.

As to those lesser distempers of people that pretend Religion, yet which from the whole consideration of Religion, would fall under one of the heads of Reformation,—I had rather put these under this head ; and I shall the less speak of it, because you have so well spoken to already to-day “ elsewhere.” I will tell you the truth : Our practice since the last Parliament hath been, To let all this Nation see that whatever pretensions to Religion would continue quiet, peaceable, they should enjoy conscience and liberty to themselves ;—and *not* to make Religion a pretence for arms and blood. Truly we have suffered them, and that cheerfully, so to enjoy their own liberties. Whatsoever is contrary, “ and not peaceable,” let the pretence be never so specious,—if it tend to combination, to interests and factions, we shall not care, by the grace of God, *whom* we meet withal though never so specious, “ if they be not quiet ! ” And truly I am against all “ liberty of conscience ” repugnant to *this*. If men will profess,—be they those under Baptism, be they those of the Independent Judgment simply, or of the Presbyterian Judgment,—in the name of God, encourage them, countenance them ; so long as they do plainly continue to be thankful to God, and to make use of the liberty given them to enjoy their own consciences ! For as it was said to-day, undoubtedly “ *this* is the peculiar Interest all this while contended for.”

Men who believe in Jesus Christ—that is the Form that gives being to true religion, “ namely,” Faith in Christ and walking in a profession—answerable to that Faith ;—men who believe the remission of sins through the blood of Christ, and free justification by the blood of Christ ; who live upon the grace of God ; those men who are certain they are so—“ they ” are members of Jesus Christ, and are to Him the

apple of His eye. Whoever hath this Faith, let his Form be what it will ; he walking peaceably, without prejudice to others under other Forms :—it is a debt due to God and Christ ; and He will require it, if that Christian may not enjoy his liberty.

If a man of one form will be trampling upon the heels of another form ; if an Independent, for example, will despise him “ who is ” under Baptism, and will revile him, and reproach and provoke him,—I will not suffer it in him. If, on the other side, those of the Anabaptist “ judgment ” shall be censuring the Godly Ministers of the Nation who profess under that of Independency ; or if those that profess under Presbytery shall be reproaching or speaking evil of them, traducing and censuring of them,—as I would not be willing to see the day when England shall be in the power of the Presbytery to impose upon the consciences of others that profess faith in Christ,—so I will not endure any reproach to them. But God give us hearts and spirits to keep things *equal*. Which, truly I must profess to you, hath been my temper. I have had some boxes “ on the ear ” and rebukes,—on the one hand and on the other ; some censuring me for Presbytery ; others as an inletter to all the Sects and Heresies of the Nation. I have borne my reproach : but I have, through God’s mercy, not been unhappy in hindering any one Religion to impose upon another. And truly I must needs say (I speak it experimentally) : I have found it, I have, that those of the Presbyterian judgment—I speak it knowingly, as having received from very many countries—I have had Petitions, and acknowledgments and professions, from whole counties ; as from Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, and other Counties—acknowledgments that they, “ the Presbyterians there,” do but desire they may have liberty and protection in the worshipping of God according to their own judgments ; for the purging of their congregations, and the labouring to attain more purity of faith and repentance ;—and that, in their outward profession, they will not strain themselves beyond their own line. I have had those petitions ; I have them to show. And I confess I look at that as the blesseddest thing which hath been since the adventuring upon this Government, “ or ” which these times produce. And I hope I gave them fair and honest answers. And if it shall be found to *be* the Civil Magistrate’s

real endeavour to keep all professing Christians in this relation to one another ; not suffering any to say or do what will justly provoke the others ;—I think that he that would have more liberty than this is not worthy of any.

This, therefore, I think verily, if it may be under consideration for Reformation, I say, if it please God to give you and me hearts to keep *this* straight, “ it may be a great means ” in giving countenance to just Ministers,—in countenancing a just *maintenance* to them, by Tithes or otherwise. For my part I should think I were very treacherous if I took away Tithes, till I see the Legislative Power settle maintenance to Ministers another way. But whoever they be that shall contend to destroy Tithes,—it does as surely cut their “ the Ministers’ ” throats as it is a drift to take Tithes away before another mode of maintenance, or way of preparation towards such, be had. Truly I think all such practices and proceedings should be discountenanced. I have heard it from as gracious a Minister as any is in England ; I have had it professed : That it would be a far greater satisfaction to them to have maintenance another way,—if the State will provide it. Therefore I think, for the keeping of the Church and people of God and professors in their several forms in this liberty,—I think as it, “ this of tithes, or some other maintenance,” has been a thing that is the root of visible Profession, the upholding of this—I think you will find a blessing in it ;—If God keep your hearts to keep things in this posture and balance, which is so honest and so necessary.

Truly, there might be some other things offered to you, in point of Reformation ; a Reformation of Manners, to wit— — But I had forgot one thing of which I must remember ! It is the Church work, you know, in some measure : yet give me leave to ask, and I appeal unto your consciences, whether or no there hath not been an honest care taken for the ejection of Scandalous Ministers, and for the bringing in of them that have passed on Approbation ? I dare say, such an Approbation as never passed in England before ! And give me leave to say, It hath been with this difference “ from the old practice ” ; that neither Mr. Parson nor Doctor in the University has been reckoned stamp enough by those that made these Approbations ;—though I can say, too, they have a great esteem for Learning ; and look at Grace as most useful when

it falls unto men *with* rather than without "that addition"; and wish, with all their hearts, the flourishing of all those Institutions of Learning, as much as any. I think there hath been a conscience exercised, both by myself and the Ministers, towards them that have been approved. I may say, such an one, as I truly believe was never known in England, "in regard to this matter." And I do verily believe that God hath for the Ministry a very great seed in the youth "now" in the Universities; who, instead of studying books, study their own hearts. I do believe, as God has made a very great and flourishing seed to that purpose: so this Ministry of England—I think in my very conscience that God will bless and favour it; and hath blessed it, to the gaining of very many souls. It was never so upon the thriving hand since England was, as at this day. Therefore I say, in these things, "in these arrangements made by us" which tend to the profession of the Gospel and Public Ministry, "I think" you will be so far from hindering, that you will further them. And I shall be willing to join with you.

I did hint to you my thoughts about the Reformation of Manners. And those abuses that are in this nation through disorder, are a thing which should be much in your hearts. It is that, which, I am confident, is a description and character of the Interest you have been engaged against, "the Cavalier Interest"; the badge and character of countenancing Profaneness, Disorder and Wickedness in all places,—and whatever is most of Kin to these, and most agrees with what is Popery, and with the profane Nobility and Gentry of this Nation. In my conscience, it was a shame to be a Christian, within these fifteen, sixteen or seventeen years, in this Nation! Whether "in Cæsar's house," or elsewhere! It was a shame, it was a reproach to a man; and the badge of "Puritan" was put upon it.—We would keep up Nobility and Gentry:—and the way to keep them up is, Not to suffer them to be patronisers or countenancers of debauchery and disorders! And you will hereby be as labourers in that work "of keeping them up." And a man may tell as plainly as can be what becomes of us, if we grow indifferent and lukewarm "in repressing evil," under I know not what weak pretensions. If it lives in us, therefore; I say, if it be in the general "heart of the Nation," it is a thing I am confident our liberty and

prosperity depend upon,—Reformation. Make it a shame to see men bold in sin and profaneness, and God will bless you. You will be a blessing to the Nation ; and by this, will be more repairers of breaches than by anything in the world. Truly these things do respect the souls of men, and the spirits,—which *are* the men. The mind is the man. If that be kept pure, a man signifies somewhat ; if not I would very fain see what difference there is betwixt him and a beast. He hath only some activity to do some more mischief.

There are some things which respect the Estates of men ; and there is one general Grievance in the Nation. It is the Law. Not that the Laws are a grievance ; but there are Laws that are ; and the great grievance lies in the execution and administration. I think I may say it, I have as eminent Judges in this land as have been had, as the Nation has had, for these many years.—Truly I could be particular, as to the executive part “ of it ” as to the administration “ of the Law ” ; but that would trouble you. The truth of it is, There are wicked and abominable Laws, which “ it ” will be in your power to alter. To hang a man for Six-and-eight-pence, and I know not what ; to hang for a trifle and acquit for murder, —is in the ministration of the Law, through the ill-framing of it. I have known in my experience abominable murders acquitted. And to see men lose their lives for petty matters ; this is a thing God will reckon for. And I wish it may not lie upon this Nation a day longer than you have an opportunity to give a remedy ; and I hope I shall cheerfully join with you in it. This hath been a great grief to many honest hearts and conscientious people ; and I hope it is in all your hearts to rectify it.

I have little more to say to you, being very weary ; and I know you are so “ too.” Truly I did begin with what I thought was “ the means ” to carry on this War (if you will carry it on). That we might join together in that vigourously. And I did promise an answer to an objection : “ But what will you prosecute it with ? ” The State is hugely in debt ; I believe it comes to—The Treasure of the State is run out. We shall not be an enemy to your inspection ; but desire it ;—that you should inspect the Treasury, and how moneys have been expended. And we are not afraid to look the Nation in the face upon this score. And therefore we will say negatively,

first No man can say we have misemployed the Treasures of this Nation, and embezzled it to particular and private uses.

It may be we have not been,—as the world terms it,—so fortunate in all our successes, “in the issues of all our attempts.” Truly if we are of mind that God may not decide for us in these things, I think we shall be quarrelling with what God “Himself” will answer “for.” And we hope we are able,—it may be weakly, I doubt not,—to give an answer to God, and to give an answer to every man’s conscience in the sight of God, of the reason of things. But we shall tell you, it was part of that Arch-Fire, which hath been in this your time; wherein there were flames good store, fire enough; and it will be your wisdom and skill, and God’s blessing upon you, to *quench* them both here and elsewhere: I say it again, our endeavours—by those that have been appointed, by those that have been Major-Generals; I can repeat it with comfort,—they have been effectual for the Preservation of your Peace! It has been more effectual towards the discountenancing of Vice and settling Religion, than anything done these fifty years; I will abide by it, notwithstanding the envy and slander of foolish men! But I say there was a design—I confess I speak that to you with a little vehemency—But you had not peace two months together, “nothing but plot after plot”; I profess I believe it as much as ever I did anything in the world; and how instrumental *they*, “these Major-Generals,” have been to your peace and for your preservation, by such means,—which, we say, was Necessity! More “instrumental” than all instituted things in the world!—If you would make laws against whatever things God may please to send, “laws” to meet everything that may *happen*,—you make a law in the face of God; you tell God you will meet all His dispensations, and will stay things whether He will or no! But if you make good laws of Government, that men may know how to obey and to act for Government, they may be laws that have frailty and weakness; ay, and “yet” good laws to be observed. But if nothing should “ever” be done but what is “according to Law” the throat of the Nation may be cut while we send for some to make a Law! Therefore certainly it is a pitiful, beastly notion to think, though it be for ordinary Government to live by law and rule, Yet—“if a Government in extraordinary circumstances go beyond the

law even for self-preservation, it is" to be clamoured at, and blotted at. When matters of Necessity come, then without guilt extraordinary remedies may not be applied. Who can be so pitiful a person !

I confess if Necessity be *pretended*, there is so much the more sin. A laying of the irregularity of men's actions upon God as if he had sent a Necessity ;—who doth indeed send Necessities ! But to *anticipate* these—For as to an appeal to God, I own it, " own this Necessity " conscientiously to God ; and the principles of Nature dictate the thing :—But if these be a *supposition*, I say, of a Necessity which is *not*, every *act* so done hath in it the more sin. This " whether in a given case, there is a Necessity or not," perhaps is rather to be disputed than otherwise : But I must say I do not know one action " of the Government," no, not one, but it has been in order to the peace and safety of the Nation. And the keeping of some in prison hath been upon such clear and just grounds that no man can except against it. I know there are some imprisoned in the Isle of Wight, in Cornwall, and elsewhere ; and the cause of their imprisonment was, They were all found acting things which tended to the disturbance of the Peace of the Nation. Now these principles made us say to them : " Pray live quietly in your own countries " : you shall not be urged with bonds " or engagements," or to subscribe to the " Government." But they would not so much as say, " We will promise to live peaceably." If others are imprisoned, it is because they have done such things. And if other particulars strike, we know not what to say,—as having endeavoured to walk as those that would not only give an account to God of their actings in Authority, but had " withal " to give an account of them to men.

I confess I have digressed much. I would not have you be discouraged if you think the State is exceeding poor. Give me leave to tell you, we have managed the Treasury not unthriftilly, nor for private uses ; but for the use of the Nation and the Government ; and shall give you this short account. When the Long Parliament sat, this Nation owed £700,000. We examined it ; it was brought unto that,—in that short Meeting " of the Little Parliament," within half a year after the Government came into our hands, I believe there was *more* rather than less. They, the " Long Parliament people," had £120,000 a month ; they had the King's, Queen's, Princes',

Bishops' Lands ; all Delinquents' Estates, and the Dean-and-Chapter Lands ;—which was a very rich Treasure. As soon as ever we came to the Government, we abated £30,000 the first half year, and £60,000 after. We had no benefits of those Estates, at all considerable ; I do not think, the fiftieth part of what they had :—and give me leave to tell you, we know it has been maliciously dispersed, as if we had set the Nation into £2,500,000 of debt ; but I tell you, you are not so much in debt, by some thousands,—I think I may say, by some hundreds of thousands ! This is true that I tell you. We have—honestly,—it may be not so wisely as some others would have done,—but with honest and plain hearts, laboured and endeavoured the disposal of Treasure to Public Users ; and laboured to pull off the common charge £60,000, a month, as you see. And if we had continued that charge that was left upon the Nation, perhaps we could have had as much money “ in hand,” as now we are in debt. These things being thus, I did think it my duty to give you this account,—though it be wearisome even to yourselves and to me.

Now if I had the tongue of an Angel ; if I was so certainly inspired as the holy men of God have been, I could rejoice, for your sakes, and for these Nations' sakes, and for the sake of God, and of His Cause which we have all been engaged in, If I could move affections in you to that which, if you do it, will save this Nation ! If *not*,—you plunge it, to all human appearance, “ it ” and all Interests, yea and all Protestants, in the world, into irrecoverable ruin !

Therefore I pray and beseech you, in the name of Christ, Show yourselves to be men ; “ quit yourselves like men ! ” It does not infer any reproach if you do show yourselves men ; *Christian* men,—*which* alone *will* make you “ quit yourselves.” I do not think that, to this work you have in hand, a neutral spirit will do. That is a Laodicean spirit ; and we know what God said of that Church ; it was “ lukewarm,” and therefore he would “ spew it out of His mouth ! ” It is not a neutral spirit, that is incumbent upon you. And if not a neutral spirit, it is much less a stupefied spirit, inclining you, in the least disposition, the *wrong* way ! Men are in their private consciences, every day making shipwreck ; and it's no wonder if these can shake hands with persons of reprobate Interests ;—such, give me leave to think, are the Popish Interests. For the

Apostle brands them so, "Having seared consciences." Though I do not judge every man;—but the ringleaders are such. The Scriptures foretold there should be such. It is not such a spirit that will carry this work on! It is men in a Christian state; who have *works* with *faith*; who know how to lay hold on Christ for remission "of sins," till a man be brought to "glory in hope." Such an hope kindled in men's spirits will actuate them to such ends as you are tending to; and so many as are partakers of that, and do own your standings wherein the Providence of God has set and called you to this work, "so many" will carry it on.

If men, through scruple, be opposite, you cannot take them by the hand to *carry* them "along with you,"—it were absurd; if a man be scrupling the plain truth before him, it is in vain to meddle with him. He hath placed another business in *his* mind; he is saying, "Oh, if we could but exercise wisdom to gain Civil Liberty,—Religion would follow!" Certainly there are such men, who are not *maliciously* blind, whom God, for some cause, exercises. It cannot be expected that they should do anything! These men,—they must demonstrate that they are in bonds—Could we have carried it thus far, if we had sat disputing in that manner? I must profess I reckon that difficulty more than all the wrestling with flesh and blood. Doubting, hesitating men, they are not fit for your work. You must not expect that men of hesitating spirits, under the bondage of scruples, will be able to carry on this work, much less such as are merely carnal, natural; such as having an "outward profession of Godliness," whom the Apostle speaks of so often, "are enemies to the cross of Christ; whose god is their belly; whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things." Do you think these men will rise to such a spiritual heat for the Nation as shall carry you a cause like this; as will meet "and defy" all the oppositions that the Devil and wicked men can make?

Give me leave to tell you,—those that are called to this work, it will not depend "for them" upon formalities, nor notions, nor speeches! I do not look the work should be done by these. "No"; but by men of honest hearts, engaged to God; strengthened by Providence; enlightened in his words, to know His word,—to which he has set His Seal, sealed with the blood of His Son, with the blood of His servants; *that* is

such a spirit as will carry on this work. Therefore I beseech you, do not dispute of unnecessary and unprofitable things which may divert you from carrying on so glorious a work as this is. I think *every* objection that ariseth is not to be answered; nor have I time for it. I say Look up to God; have peace among yourselves. Know assuredly that if I have interest; I am by the voice of the people the Supreme Magistrate; and, it may be, do know somewhat that might satisfy my conscience, if I stood in doubt! But it is a union, really it is a union, "this" between you and me: and both of us united in faith and love to Jesus Christ and to His peculiar Interest in the world,—*that* must ground this work. And in *that*, if I have any peculiar Interest which is personal to myself, which is not subservient to the Public end,—it were not an extravagant thing for me to *curse* myself: because I know God will curse me, if I have! I have learned too much of God, to dally with Him, and to be bold with Him, in these things. And I hope I never shall be bold with Him;—though I can be bold with men, if Christ be pleased to assist!

I say, if there be love between us, so that the Nations may say, "These are knit together in one bond, to promote "the glory of God against the Common Enemy; to suppress everything that is Evil, and encourage whatsoever is of Godliness"—yea, the Nation will bless you! And really that and nothing else will work off these Disaffections from the minds of men; which are great,—perhaps greater than all the "other" oppositions you can meet with. I do not know what I say, when I speak of these things I speak my heart before God; and as I said before, I dare not be bold with Him. I have a little faith: I have a little lived by faith, and therein I may be "bold." If I spoke other than the affections and secrets of my heart, I know He would not bear it at my hands! Therefore in the fear and name of God; Go on, with love and integrity, against whatever arises of contrary to those ends which you know and have been told of; and the blessing of God go with you,—and the blessing of God *will* go with you!

I have but one thing more to say. I know it is troublesome;—But I did read a Psalm yesterday; which truly may not ill become both me to tell you of, and you to observe. It is the Eighty-fifth Psalm; it is very instructive and significant;

and though I do but a little touch upon it, I desire your perusal at pleasure.

It begins : " Lord, Thou hast been very favourable to Thy Land ; Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of Thy People ; Thou hast covered all their sin. Thou hast taken away all the fierceness of Thy wrath ; Thou hast turned Thyself from the fierceness of Thine anger. Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause Thine anger towards us to cease. Wilt Thou be angry with us for ever ; wilt Thou draw out Thine anger to all generations ? Wilt Thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee ? " Then he calls upon God as " the God of his salvation," and then saith he : " I will hear what God the Lord will speak : for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His Saints ; but let them not turn again to folly. Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him." Oh—" that glory may dwell in our land ! Mercy and Truth are met together ; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the Earth, and Righeousness shall look down from Heaven. Yea the Lord shall give that which is good, and our Land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before Him, and shall set us in the way of His steps." Truly I wish that this Psalm, as it is written in the Book, might be better written in our hearts. That we might say as David, "*Thou hast done this,*" and "*Thou hast done that*" ; "*Thou hast pardoned our sins ; Thou hast taken away our iniquities !*" Whither can we go to a better God ? For "*He hath done it.*" It is to Him any Nation may come in their extremity, for the taking away of His wrath. How did He do it ? "*By pardoning their sins, by taking away their iniquities*" ! If we can but cry unto Him, He will "*turn and take away our sins.*"—Then let us listen to Him. Then let us consult and meet in Parliament ; and ask Him counsel, and hear what He saith, "*for He will speak peace unto His People.*" If you be the People of God, He will speak *peace* ;—and we will not turn again to folly.

" Folly " : a great deal of grudging in the Nation that we cannot have our horse-races, cock-fightings, and the like ! I do not think these are lawful, except to make them recreations that we will not endure " for necessary ends " to be abridged of them :—Till God has brought us to another spirit

than this, He will not bear with us. Ay "but He bears with them in France"; "They in France are so and so!"—Have they *the Gospel* as we have? They have seen the sun but a little; we have great lights.— If God give you a spirit of Reformation, you will preserve this Nation from "turning again" to those fooleries;—and what will the end be? Comfort and blessing. Then "Mercy and Truth shall meet together." Here is a great deal of "truth" among professors, but very little "mercy"! They are ready to cut the throats of one another. But when we are brought into the right way, we shall be *merciful* as well as orthodox; and we know who it is that saith, "If a man could speak with the tongues of men and angels, and yet want *that*, he is but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal"!—

Therefore I beseech you in the name of God, set your hearts to this "work." And if you set your hearts to it, then you will sing Luther's Psalm. That is a rare Psalm for a Christian!—and if he set his heart open, and can approve it to God, we *shall* hear him say, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble." If Pope and Spaniard, and Devil and all, set themselves against us,—though they should "compass us like bees," as it is in the Hundred and eighteenth Psalm,—yet in the name of the Lord we should destroy them! And, as it is in this Psalm of Luther's: "We will not fear," though the "Earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the middle of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the City of God. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved." Then he repeats two or three times, "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

I have done. All I have to say is, To pray God that He may bless you with His presence; that He who has your hearts and mine would show His presence in the midst of us.

I desire you will go together and choose your Speaker.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE

ALTOGETHER Sir Robert Walpole was virtually Prime Minister for more than twenty years, yet he has left very few memorable speeches behind him. The most famous is the speech by which he procured the defeat of the Peerage Bill in the House of Commons. This has always been regarded as a masterpiece of abstract reasoning. But it is also essentially practical. It is a conclusive demonstration that to limit the royal prerogative of making peers would destroy the only available method of restoring political balance between the two Houses of Parliament. The speech is characteristic of Walpole because it combines shrewd knowledge of the world with argumentative and debating power of the very highest order. Moreover it was a victory of Walpole in Opposition, when he had no official resources at his command for the influence of votes. It is, therefore, an excellent specimen of his Parliamentary style, pointed and argumentative, practical and shrewd. It was not Walpole's way to make eloquent and stirring appeals. He aimed rather at converting ordinary people to his own plain, prosaic views of what was required for the public service. He eschewed all ornament, except on very rare occasions. His object was always to achieve a definite result by adapting his methods to the tone and temper of his audience. In his methods there is no waste. He never beats about the bush. Between his premises and his conclusion there is merely the interval required for bringing them into logical contact. Nothing could be better adapted for its purpose than a style which leads so directly, and yet so inevitably, to the desired result. His great object was to bring the House of Lords into harmony with the House of Commons by any constitutional means. Walpole was hardly ever eloquent. He aimed at convincing his audience, not by raising their thoughts, but by appealing to their inclinations. Instead of clothing ordinary ideas in extraordinary language, he put into a plain and

homely style the wisdom of a great practical statesman. Although he talked in a very cynical fashion about disinterested motives and public virtue, he was less corrupt in his methods than some men who used the language of lofty and quixotic patriotism. Such of his speeches as have come down to us show that he argued in a very clear, and persuasive manner those points which he wished to bring out, and to drive home. He was a master of the style which appeals to men of the world. He is never sophistical, always candid and straightforward, in his treatment of the subject. He was the exact reverse of Bolingbroke, who sacrificed everything to rhetorical effect, and failed to impress his audience even when they admired his phrases. That Bolingbroke was dishonest in concealing and denying his intrigues with the Pretender is not the point. He might have been secretly a Jacobite and yet have succeeded in carrying the House of Commons, and the House of Lords, away with him. But Bolingbroke's phrases are phrases, and nothing more. They did not produce any effect except admiration for his rhetorical skill. Walpole's speeches convinced.

*The Peerage Bill, House of Commons, Dec. 8th, 1719*¹

AMONG the Romans, the temple of fame was placed behind the temple of virtue, to denote that there was no coming to the temple of fame, but through the temple of virtue. But if this bill is passed into law, one of the most powerful incentives to virtue would be taken away, since there would be no arriving at honour, but through the winding-sheet of an old decrepit lord, or the grave of an extinct noble family: a policy very different from that glorious and enlightened nation, who made it their pride to hold out to the world illustrious examples of merited elevation:

"Patere honoris scirent ut cuncti viam."

It is very far from my thoughts to depreciate the

¹ The object of this Bill was to limit the prerogative of the Crown in making Peers, by providing that the number should not be increased by more than six.

advantages, or detract from the respect due to illustrious birth ; for though the philosopher may say with the poet :

“ *Et genus et proavos, et quæ non fecimus ipsi,
Vix ea nostra voco* ” ;

yet the claim derived from that advantage, though fortuitous, is so generally and so justly conceded, that every endeavour to subvert the principle would merit contempt and abhorrence. But though illustrious birth forms one undisputed title to pre-eminence and superior consideration, yet surely it ought not to be the only one. The origin of high titles was derived from the will of the sovereign to reward signal services, or conspicuous merit, by a recompense which, surviving to posterity, should display the virtues of the receiver, and the gratitude of the donor. Is merit then so rarely discernible, or is gratitude so small a virtue in our days, that the one must be supposed to be its own reward and the other limited to a barren display of impotent goodwill ? Had this bill originated with some noble peer of distinguished ancestry, it would have excited less surprise ; a desire to exclude from a participation of honours is no novelty in persons of that class : *Quod ex aliorum meritis sibi arrogat, id mihi ex meis ascribi nolunt.*

But it is a matter of just surprise, that a bill of this nature should either have been projected, or at least promoted, by a gentleman who was, not long ago, seated among us, and who, having got into the house of Peers, is now desirous to shut the door after him.

When great alterations in the constitution are to be made, the experiment should be tried for a short time before the proposed change is finally carried into execution, lest it should produce evil instead of good ; but in this case, when the bill is once sanctioned by Parliament, there can be no future hopes of redress, because the Upper House will always oppose the repeal of an act which has so considerably increased their power. The great unanimity with which this bill has passed the Lords, ought to inspire some jealousy in the Commons ; for it must be obvious, that whatever the Lords gain must be acquired at the loss of the Commons, and the diminution of the royal prerogative ; and that in all disputes between the Lords and Commons, when the House of Lords is immutable, the Commons must, sooner or later, be obliged to recede.

The view of the ministry in framing this bill is plainly



nothing but to secure their power in the House of Lords. The principal argument on which the necessity of it is founded is drawn from the mischief occasioned by the creation of twelve new peers during the reign of Queen Anne, for the purpose of carrying an infamous peace through the House of Lords; that was only a temporary measure, whereas the mischief to be occasioned by this bill will be perpetual. It creates thirty-one peers by authority of Parliament; so extraordinary a step cannot be supposed to be taken without some sinister design in future. The ministry want no additional strength in the House of Lords for conducting the common affairs of government, as it is sufficiently proved by the unanimity with which they have carried through this bill. If, therefore, they think it necessary to acquire additional strength, it must be done with views and intentions more extravagant and hostile to the constitution, than any which have yet been attempted. The bill itself is of a most artful and insidious nature. The immediate creation of nine Scotch peers, and the reservation of six English peers for a necessary occasion, is of double use; to be ready for the House of Lords if wanted, and to engage three times the number in the House of Commons by hopes and promises.

To sanction this attempt, the King is induced to affect to wave some part of his prerogative; but this is merely an ostensible renunciation unfounded in fact or reason. I am desirous to treat of all points relating to the private affairs of his Majesty with the utmost tenderness and caution, but I should wish to ask the House, and I think I can anticipate the answer: Has any such question been upon the *tapis*, as no man would forgive the authors, that should put them under the necessity of voting against either side? Are there any misfortunes, which every honest man secretly laments and bewails, and would think the last of mischiefs, should they ever become the subject of public and parliamentary conversations? Cannot numbers that hear me testify, from the solicitations and whispers they have met with, that there are men ready and determined to attempt these things if they had a prospect of success? If they have thought, but I hope they are mistaken in their opinion of this House, that the chief obstacle would arise in the House of Lords, where they have always been tender upon personal points, especially to any of their own

body, does not this project enable them to carry any question through the House of Lords? Must not the twenty-five Scotch peers accept upon any terms, or be for ever excluded? Or will not twenty-five be found in all Scotland that will? How great will the temptation be likewise to fix English, to fill the present vacancies? And shall we then, with our eyes open, take this step, which I cannot but look upon as the beginning of woe and confusion; and shall we, under these apprehensions, break through the union, and shut up the door of honour? It certainly will have that effect; nay, the very argument advanced in its support, that it will add weight to the Commons by keeping the rich men there, admits that it will be an exclusion.

But we are told that his Majesty has voluntarily consented to this limitation of his prerogative. It may be true; but may not the King have been deceived? Which if it is ever to be supposed, must be admitted in this case. It is incontrovertible that kings have been over-ruled by the importunity of their ministers to remove, or to take into administration, persons who are disagreeable to them. The character of the King furnishes us also a strong proof that he has been deceived, for although it is a fact, that in Hanover, where he possesses absolute power, he never tyrannised over his subjects, or despotically exercised his authority, yet, can one instance be produced when he ever gave up a prerogative?

If the constitution is to be amended in the House of Lords, the greatest abuses ought to be first corrected. But what is the abuse against which this bill so vehemently inveighs, and which it is intended to correct? The abuse of the prerogative in creating an occasional number of peers, is a prejudice only to the Lords, it can rarely be a prejudice to the Commons, but must generally be exercised in their favour; and should it be argued, that in a case of a difference between the two Houses the King may exercise that branch of his prerogative, with a view to force the Commons to recede, we may reply, that upon a difference with the Commons, the King possesses his negative, and the exercise of that negative would be less culpable than making peers to screen himself.

But the strongest argument against the bill is, that it will not only be a discouragement to virtue and merit, but would endanger our excellent constitution; for as there is a

due balance between the three branches of the legislature, it will destroy that balance, and consequently subvert the whole constitution, by causing one of the three powers, which are now dependent on each other, to preponderate in the scale. The Crown is dependent upon the Commons by the power of granting money; the Commons are dependent on the Crown by the power of dissolution. The Lords will now be made independent of both.

The sixteen elective Scotch peers already admit themselves to be a dead court weight, yet the same sixteen are now to be made hereditary, and nine added to their number. These twenty-five, under the influence of corrupt ministers, may find their account in betraying their trust; the majority of the Lords may also find their account in supporting such ministers; but the Commons, and the Commons only, must suffer all, and be deprived of every advantage. If the proposed measure destroys two negatives in the Crown, it gives a negative to these twenty-five united, and confers a power, superior to that of the King himself, on the head of a clan, who will have the power of recommending many. The Scotch commoners can have no other view in supporting this measure but the expected aggrandizement of their own chiefs. It will dissolve the allegiance of the Scotch peers who are not amongst the twenty-five, and who can never hope for the benefit of an election to be peers of Parliament, and almost enact obedience from the Sovereign to the betrayers of the constitution.

The present view of the bill is dangerous; the view to posterity, personal and unpardonable; it will make the Lords masters of the King, according to their own confession, when they admit that a change of administration renders a new creation of peers necessary; for by precluding the King from making peers in future it at the same time precludes him from changing the present administration, who will naturally fill the vacancies with their own creatures; and the new peers will adhere to the first minister with the same zeal and unanimity as those created by Oxford adhered to him.

If, when the Parliament was made septennial, the power of dissolving it before the end of seven years had been wrested from the Crown, would not such an alteration have added immense authority to the Commons? and yet, the prerogative of the Crown in dissolving Parliaments may be,

and has been, oftener abused than the power of creating peers.

But it may be observed that the King, for his own sake, will rarely make a great number of peers, for they, being usually created by the influence of the first minister, soon become, on a change of administration, a weight against the Crown; and had Queen Anne lived, the truth of this observation would have been verified in the case of most of the twelve peers made by Oxford. Let me ask, however, is the abuse of any prerogative a sufficient reason for totally annihilating that prerogative? Under that consideration, the power of dissolving Parliaments ought to be taken away, because that power has been more exercised, and more abused than any of the other prerogatives; yet in 1641, when the King had assented to a law that disabled him from proroguing or dissolving Parliament, without the consent of both Houses, he was from that time under subjection to the Parliament, and from then followed all the subsequent mischiefs, and his own destruction. It may also be asked, whether the prerogative of making peace and war has never been abused? I might here call to your recollection the peace of Utrecht, and the present war with Spain. Yet who will presume to advise that the power of making peace and war should be taken from the Crown?

How can the Lords expect the Commons to give their concurrence to a bill by which they and their posterity are to be for ever excluded from the peerage? how would they themselves receive a bill which should prevent a baron from being made a viscount, a viscount an earl, an earl a marquis, and a marquis a duke? Would they consent to limit the number of any rank of peerage? Certainly none; unless, perhaps, the dukes. If the pretence for this measure is that it will tend to secure the freedom of Parliament, I say that there are many other steps more important and less equivocal, such as the discontinuance of bribes and pensions.

That this bill will secure the liberty of Parliament I totally deny; it will secure a great preponderance to the peers; it will form them into a compact impenetrable phalanx, by giving them the power to exclude in all cases of extinction and creation all such persons from their body, who may be obnoxious to them. In the instances we have seen of their judgment

in some late cases sufficient marks of partiality may be found to put us on our guard against committing to them the power they would derive from this bill, of judging the right of latent or dormant titles, when their verdict would be of such immense importance. If gentlemen will not be convinced by argument, at least let them not shut their ears to the dreadful example of former times; let them recollect that the overweening disposition of the great barons, to aggrandize their own dignity, occasioned them to exclude the lesser barons, and to that circumstance may be fairly attributable the sanguinary wars which so long desolated the country.

WILLIAM PITT, EARL OF CHATHAM

CHATHAM'S speeches were not of the debating sort. They made a profound and prodigious effect because they appealed to the hearts and consciences of his hearers. He was a statesman with a long-sighted policy, not aiming at immediate results, but taking a wide grasp of the present, and projecting his gaze far into the future. He had a serious and sober conviction that he, and he alone, could save the country. By saving it he did not merely mean protecting it against invasion. He regarded the extension of British power in America and India as essential to the permanence of England in her position among the leading nations of the world. He emancipated himself from the European tradition, the view that this country had simply to hold its own in the balance of continental forces. His doctrine that France could be successfully encountered both east and west of Europe was altogether beyond the range of contemporary ideas. How far he deliberately and consciously carried it out, how far he was drawn beyond his original designs by the progress of events, has often been disputed. He is entitled to be judged by results. Although Chatham's career is anything rather than consistent if tried by ordinary standards, it has a unity of spacious greatness if submitted to the test of what precedes and what followed it. He had the imagination which stands for knowledge of the future, which takes the place of prophecy, which enables its possessor to discern the tendency of movements too gradual to be measured by human instruments. If he did not talk about the expansion of England, that was the idea which always filled his mind. Among contemporary statesmen he seemed unfixed, incalculable, hard to classify or understand. He had not the knowledge or the method by which men commonly succeed in public business. But he had the gift of discerning

the direction which events would take. He felt that the greatness of this country would lie not in successful rivalry on the Continent, but in the creation of communities and the establishment of dominions beyond the scope of diplomatic intrigue. His is a character to be judged by history, and by achievement, not by the temporary failures or triumphs recorded against him or in his favour from year to year. Chatham will stand ordeals which other statesmen, in some respects his equals or superiors, cannot for a moment bear.

It must always be remembered that Chatham spoke through Parliament to the nation, and that his speeches were therefore framed with a very different art from that which makes an immediate impression in debate. He intended that what he said should be remembered, and he chose his words, as well as his topics accordingly. When he referred to Magna Charta, the Petition of Right, and the Bill of Rights, as the Bible of the English Constitution, he was appealing to the love of liberty, of the liberty which he thought would be crushed by the American War. His view of that struggle was peculiarly his own. Until France joined in it, he regarded it as purely a domestic quarrel in which American rebels and Whigs at home were alike engaged in contending against personal government. His famous declaration that the British Parliament had no right to tax the American colonies may not be theoretically sound. But it rested upon the practical doctrine that people are only to be taxed by their own representatives, and Chatham accompanied it by the argument that grants to the Crown were from the Commons alone. It was characteristic of Chatham that he laid down this proposition in the House of Lords, where it naturally met with little favour. When we consider what the representation of the people was in the eighteenth century, we must acknowledge that it required no small courage to insist upon a point which, though silently recognised, was kept in the background, even by the House of Commons, except at grave constitutional emergencies.

Neither it nor the right of taxing the colonies has ever been formally decided by Parliament. It remains within the competence of Parliament to override every Colonial Legislature, just as the House of Lords may refuse its assent to the imposition or the repeal of any tax.

Pitt's first speech against the subsidy of Hanoverian troops is interesting as a good specimen of his early manner. It is vigorous, spirited, and energetic, less oratorical and more like debating than his speeches afterwards became. The reputation which he acquired in the House of Commons, though slow in rising to its full height, was brilliant from the first. Pitt did not attempt to follow closely the arguments of previous speakers. He aimed rather at striking out sudden sparks, and at the adoption of memorable phrases, which impressed his hearers at once, and were not soon forgotten. Hanover of course was an obvious and tempting theme, because it raised the whole question of George the Second's German engagements, and the influence they exercised upon the policy of this country in Europe. Pitt was not always consistent, but at this time he inveighed against Hanoverian entanglements with a fine flow of patriotic fervour. He was undoubtedly sincere. He had joined, on coming into Parliament, the Whig Opposition to Walpole, which was founded on jealousy of prerogative, and a belief that the Hanoverians were no more to be trusted than the Stuarts. In the course of his long supremacy over the King and the Cabinet Walpole had aroused a spirit of resistance which, though it may have originated in personal motives, developed into a definite party, combining the profession of Whig principles with the practice of antagonism to the House of Hanover.

Few passages of Pitt's oratory are better known than his comparison of the coalition between Fox and Newcastle to the junction of Rhone and the Saone. But, famous as it is now, its success at the time was not so complete as that which some of his other phrases achieved. Fox afterwards asked Pitt whether

he himself were the Rhone or the Saone, and received the unexpected answer, "You are Granville." Lord Granville, better known as Lord Carteret, was a member of the Coalition Government. But he was not included in the simile, and Fox was, of course, the Rhone. Between him and Pitt there had been fierce and eager rivalry. Henry Fox, the first Lord Holland, father of Charles James, was devoid of political principle, but an able administrator, and a consummately dexterous debater, who possessed just the Parliamentary qualities that Pitt lacked. The Duke of Newcastle had chosen him to lead the House of Commons, believing that he was the only man who could stand up against the "terrible cornet of horse," as Walpole had called Pitt long before. Chatham's fame is so immeasurably greater than Lord Holland's that we find it difficult to realise the possibility of their having been regarded as competitors. But there can be no doubt of the fact. Fox, whatever else may be thought of him, had the faculties, at least the intellectual faculties, which enable a politician to hold his own in the House of Commons. If he had had Pitt's character, or Pitt's imagination, he might occupy a much more conspicuous place in history.

Reply to Horace Walpole
House of Commons. 1740

THE atrocious crime of being a young man, which the Honourable Gentleman has with such spirit and decency charged upon me, I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny, but content myself with wishing that I may be one of those whose follies may cease with their youth, and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience.

Whether youth can be imputed to any man as a reproach, I will not assume the province of determining: but surely age may become justly contemptible, if the opportunities, which it brings have passed away without improvement and vice appears to prevail when the passions have subsided. The wretch who, after having seen the consequences of a thousand

errors continues still to blunder, and whose age has only added obstinacy to stupidity, is surely the object of abhorrence or contempt, and deserves not that his grey head should preserve him from insults.

Much more is he to be abhorred, who, as he has advanced in age, has receded from virtue, and becomes more wicked with less temptation ; who prostitutes himself for money he cannot enjoy, and spends the remains of his life in the ruin of his country.

But youth is not my only crime ! I have been accused of acting a theatrical part. A theatrical part may either imply some peculiarities of gesture, or a dissimulation of my real sentiments, and the adoption of the opinions and language of another man.

In the first sense, the charge is too trifling to be confuted, and deserves only to be mentioned, that it may be despised ; I am at liberty, like every other man, to use my own language : and though I may, perhaps, have some ambition, yet, to please this gentleman, I shall not lay myself under any restraint, nor very solicitously copy his diction, or his mien, however matured by age, or modelled by experience. If any man shall, by charging me with theatrical behaviour, imply that I utter any sentiments but my own, I shall treat him as a calumniator and a villain ; nor shall any protection shelter him from the treatment which he deserves. I shall on such an occasion, without scruple, trample upon all those forms with which wealth and dignity entrench themselves, nor shall anything but age restrain my resentment ; age, which always brings one privilege, that of being insolent and supercilious without punishment.

But with regard to those whom I have offended, I am of opinion, that if I had acted a borrowed part, I should have avoided their censure ; the heat that offended them is the ardour of conviction and the zeal for the service of my country, which neither hope nor fear shall influence me to suppress. I will not sit unconcerned while my liberty is invaded, nor look in silence upon public robbery. I will exert my endeavours, at whatever hazard to repel the aggressor, and drag the thief to justice, whoever may protect them in their villainy, and whoever may partake of their plunder, their posterity will for ever continue in office. Sir, this doctrine has been so often contradicted by experience, that I am

surprised to hear it advanced by gentlemen now. This very session has afforded us a convincing proof that very little foundation exists for asserting that a parliamentary enquiry must necessarily reveal the secrets of the government. Surely, in a war with Spain which must necessarily be carried on principally by sea, if the government have secrets, the Lords of the Admiralty must be entrusted with the most important of them. Yet, sir, in this very session we have without any secret committees made enquiry into the conduct of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. We have not only enquired into their conduct, but we have censured it in such manner as to put an end to the trust which was before reposed in them. Has that enquiry discovered any of the secrets of our government? On the contrary, the committee found there was no occasion to probe into such secrets. They found cause enough for censure without it, and none of the commissioners pretended to justify their conduct by the assertion that papers contained secrets which ought not to be disclosed.

This, Sir, is so recent, so strong a proof that there is no necessary connection between a parliamentary enquiry and a discovery of secrets which it behoves the nation to conceal, that I trust gentlemen will no longer insist upon this danger as an argument against the enquiry. Sir, the First Commissioner of the Treasury has nothing to do with the application of secret-service money. He is only to take care that it be regularly issued from his office and that no more be issued than the conjuncture of affairs appears to demand. As to the particular application, it properly belongs to the Secretary of State, or to such other persons as his Majesty employs, so that we cannot suppose the proposed enquiry will discover any secrets relative to the application of that money unless the noble Lord has acted as Secretary of State, as well as First Commissioner of the Treasury; or unless a great part of the money drawn out for secret service has been delivered to himself or persons employed by him, and applied towards getting a corrupt influence in Parliament or at elections. Of both these practices he is most grievously suspected, and both are secrets which it very much behoves him to conceal. But, Sir, it equally behoves the nation to discover them. His country and he are, in this cause, equally, though oppositely, concerned; for the safety or ruin of one or the other depends upon the fate of the

question, and the violent opposition, which this question has experienced adds great strength to the suspicion.

I admit, Sir, that the noble Lord, whose conduct is now proposed to be enquired into, was one of His Majesty's most honourable Privy Council, and consequently he must have had a share at least in advising all the measures which have been pursued both abroad and at home. But I cannot from this admit, that an inquiry into his conduct must necessarily occasion a discovery of any secrets of vital importance to the nation, because we are not to enquire into the measures themselves.

But, Sir, suspicions have gone abroad relative to his conduct as a Privy Councillor which, if true, are of the utmost consequence to be enquired into. It has been strongly asserted that he was not only Privy Councillor, but that he usurped the whole and sole director of his Majesty's Privy Council. It has been asserted that he gave the Spanish Court the first hint of the unjust claim they afterwards advanced against our South Sea Company, which was one chief cause of the war between the two nations. And it has been asserted, that this very minister has advised the French in what manner to proceed in order to bring our Court into their measures; particularly that he advised them as to the numerous army they have this last summer sent into Westphalia. What truth there is in these assertions I pretend not to decide. The facts are of such a nature, and they must have been perpetrated with so much caution and secrecy, that it will be difficult to bring them to light even by a parliamentary enquiry; but the very suspicion is ground enough for establishing such enquiry, and for carrying it on with the utmost strictness and vigour.

Whatever my opinion of past measures may be, I shall never be so vain, or bigoted to that opinion, as to determine, without any enquiry, against the majority of my countrymen. If I found the public measures generally condemned, let my private opinions of them be ever so favourable, I should be for enquiry in order to convince the people of their error, or at least to furnish myself with the most authentic arguments in favour of the opinion I had embraced. The desire of bringing others into the same sentiments with ourselves is so natural, that I shall always suspect the candour of those who in politics and religion are opposed to free enquiry. Besides, Sir,

when the complaints of the people are general against an administration, or against any particular minister, an enquiry is a duty which we owe both to our Sovereign and the people. We meet here to communicate to our Sovereign the sentiments of his people. We meet here to redress the grievances of the people. By performing our duty in both respects, we shall always be enabled to establish the throne of our Sovereign in the hearts of his people, and to hinder the people from being led into insurrection and rebellion by misrepresentations or false surmises. When the people complain they must either be right or in error. If they be right, we are in duty bound to enquire into the conduct of the ministers, and to punish those who appear to have been most guilty. If they be in error, we ought still to enquire into the conduct of our Ministers in order to convince the people that they have been misled. We ought not, therefore, in any question relating to enquiry, to be governed by our own sentiments. We must be governed by the sentiments of our constituents, if we are resolved to perform our duty both as true representatives of the people or as faithful subjects of our King.

I perfectly agree with the honourable gentleman that if we are convinced that the public measures are wrong, or that if we suspect them to be so, we ought to make enquiry although there is not much complaint among the people; but I wholly differ from him in thinking that, notwithstanding the administration and the minister are the subjects of complaint among the people, we ought not to make enquiry into his conduct unless we are ourselves convinced that his measures have been wrong. Sir, we can no more determine this question without enquiry than a judge without a trial can declare any man innocent of a crime laid to his charge. Common fame is a sufficient ground for an inquisition at common law, and for the same reason, the general voice of the people of England ought always to be regarded as a sufficient ground for a parliamentary enquiry.

But, say gentlemen, of what is this minister accused? What crime is laid to his charge? For, unless some misfortune is said to have happened, or some crime to have been committed no enquiry ought to be set on foot. Sir, the ill posture of our affairs both abroad and at home; the melancholy situation we are in; the distresses to which we are now reduced, are

sufficient causes for an enquiry even supposing the minister accused of no particular crime or misconduct. The nation lies bleeding, perhaps expiring. The balance of power has been fatally disturbed. Shall we acknowledge this to be the case, and shall we not enquire whether it has happened by mischance, or by the misconduct, perhaps by the malice prepense, of the minister? Before the Treaty of Utrecht it was the general opinion that in a few years of peace we should be able to pay off most of our debts. We have now been very nearly thirty years in profound peace, at least we have never been engaged in any war but what we unnecessarily brought upon ourselves, and yet our debts are almost as great as they were when that Treaty was concluded. Is not this a misfortune, and shall not we make enquiry into its cause?

I am surprised to hear it said that no enquiry ought to be set on foot, unless it is known that some public crime has been committed. Sir, the suspicion that a crime has been committed has always been deemed a sufficient reason for instituting an enquiry. And is there not now a suspicion that the public money has been applied towards gaining a corrupt influence at elections? Is it not become a common expression: "The flood gates of the Treasury are opened against a general election"? I desire no more than that every gentleman who is conscious that such practices have been resorted to, either for or against him, should give his vote in favour of the motion. Will any gentleman say that this is no crime when every private corruption has such high penalties, inflicted by express statute against it? Sir, a minister who commits this crime—who thus abuses the public money, adds breach of trust to the crime of corruption; and as the crime, when committed by him, is of much more dangerous consequence than when committed by a private man, it becomes more properly the object of a parliamentary enquiry, and merits the severest punishment. The honourable gentleman may with much more reason tell us that Porteous was never murdered by the mob at Edinburgh, because, notwithstanding the high reward as well as pardon proffered, his murderers were never discovered, than tell us that we cannot suppose our minister, either personally or by others, has ever corrupted an election, because no information has been brought against him; Sir,

nothing but a pardon, upon the conviction of the offender, has ever yet been offered in this case: and how could any informer expect a pardon, and much less a reward, when he knew that the very man against whom he was to inform, had not only the distribution of all public rewards, but the packing of a jury or parliament against him? Whilst such a minister preserves the favour of the Crown, and thereby the exercise of its power, this information can never be expected.

This shows, Sir, the impotence of the act, mentioned by the honourable gentleman, respecting that sort of corruption which is called bribery. With regard to the other sort of corruption, which consists in giving or taking away those posts, pensions, or preferments, which depend upon the arbitrary will of the Crown, the act is still more inefficient. Although it would be considered most indecent in a minister to tell any man that he gave or withheld a post, pension, or preferment, on account of his voting for or against any ministerial measure in Parliament, or any ministerial candidate at an election; yet, if he makes it his constant rule never to give a post, pension, or preferment, but to those who vote for his measures and his candidates; if he makes a few examples of dismissing those who vote otherwise, it will have the same effect as when he openly declares it. Will any gentleman say that this has not been the practice of the minister? Has he not declared, in the face of this House, that he will continue the practice? And will not this have the same effect as if he went separately to every particular man, and told him in express terms, "Sir, if you vote for such a measure or such a candidate you shall have the first preferment in the gift of the Crown: if you vote otherwise, you must not expect to keep what you have? Gentlemen may deny that the sun shines at noon-day; but if they have eyes, and do not wilfully shut them, or turn their backs, no man will believe them to be ingenuous in what they say. I think, therefore, that the honourable gentleman was in the right who endeavoured to justify the practice. It was more candid than to deny it—but as his arguments have already been fully answered, I shall not farther discuss them.

Gentlemen exclaim, "What! will you take from the Crown the power of preferring or cashiering the officers of the army?" No, Sir, this is neither the design nor will it be the effect, of our agreeing to the motion. The King at present possesses

the absolute power to prefer or cashier the officers of our army. It is a prerogative which he may employ for the benefit or safety of the public ; but like other prerogatives, it may be abused, and when it is so abused, the minister is responsible to Parliament. When an officer is preferred or cashiered for voting in favour of, or against any Court measure, or candidate, it is an abuse of this prerogative, for which the minister is answerable. We may judge from circumstances or outward appearances—from these we may condemn, and I hope we have still a power to punish a minister who dares to advise the King to prefer or cashier from such motives ! Sir, whether this prerogative ought to remain as it is, without any limitation, is a question foreign to this debate ; but I must observe that the argument employed for it might, with equal justice, be employed for giving our King an absolute power over every man's property—because a large property will always give the possessor a command over a great body of men, whom he may arm and discipline if he pleases. I know of no law to restrain him. I hope none will ever exist—I wish our gentlemen of estates would make more use of this power than they do, because it would tend to keep our domestic as well as our foreign enemies in awe. For my part I think a gentleman who has earned his commission by his services (in his military capacity, I mean) or bought it with his money has as much a property in it as any man has in his estate and ought to have it well secured by the laws of his country. Whilst it remains at the absolute will of the Crown, he must, unless he has some other estate to depend on, be a slave to the minister ; and if the officers of our army long continue in that state of slavery in which they are at present, I am afraid it will make slaves of us all.

The only method to prevent this fatal consequence, as the law now stands, is to make the best and most constant use of the power we possess as Members of this House, to prevent any minister from daring to advise the King to make a bad use of his prerogative ; as there is such a strong suspicion that this minister has done so, we ought certainly to enquire into it, “not only for the sake of punishing him, if guilty, but as a terror to all future ministers.”

This, Sir, may therefore be justly reckoned among the many other sufficient causes for the enquiry proposed. The suspicion that the civil list is greatly in debt is another ; for if it is, it

must either have been misapplied or profusely thrown away, which abuse it is both our duty to prevent and to punish. It is inconsistent with the honour of this nation that the King should stand indebted to his servants or tradesmen, who may be ruined by delay of payment. The Parliament has provided sufficiently to prevent this dishonour from being brought upon the nation, and, if the provision we have made should be lavished or misapplied, we must supply the deficiency; we ought to do it whether the King makes any application for that purpose or not; and the reason is plain, because we ought first to enquire into the management of that revenue, and punish those who have occasioned the deficiency. They will certainly choose to leave the creditors of the Crown and the honour of the nation in a state of suffering rather than advise the King to make an application which may bring censure upon their conduct, and condign punishment upon themselves. Besides this, Sir, another and a stronger reason exists for promoting an enquiry. There is a strong suspicion that the public money has been applied towards corrupting voters at elections, and members when elected; and if the civil list be in debt, it affords reason to presume that some part of this revenue has, under the pretence of secret-service money, been applied to this infamous purpose.

I shall conclude, Sir, by making a few remarks upon the last argument used against the proposed enquiry. It has been said that the minister delivered in his accounts annually; that these accounts have been usually passed and approved by Parliament; and that therefore it would be unjust to call him now to a general account, because the vouchers may be lost, or many expensive transactions have escaped his memory. It is true, Sir, estimates and accounts have been annually delivered in. The forms of proceeding made that necessary, but were any of these estimates and accounts properly enquired into? Were not all questions of that description rejected by the minister's friends in Parliament? Have not Parliament always taken them upon trust, and passed them without examination? Can such a superficial passing, to call it no worse, be deemed a reason for not calling him to a new and general account? If the steward to an infant's estate should annually, for twenty years together, deliver in his accounts to the guardians; and the guardians through negligence or

for a share of the plunder, should annually pass his accounts without examination, or at least without objection; would that be a reason for saying that it would be unjust to the infant, when he came of age, to call his steward to account? Especially if that steward had built and furnished sumptuous palaces, living during the whole time, at a much greater expense than his visible income warranted and yet amassing great riches? The public, Sir, is always in a state of infancy; therefore no prescription can be pleaded against it—not even a general release, if there is the least cause for supposing that it was surreptitiously obtained. Public vouchers ought always to remain on record; nor ought any public expense to be incurred without a voucher. Therefore the case of the public is still stronger than that of an infant. Thus, Sir, the honourable gentleman who made use of this objection must see how little it avails in the case before us; and therefore I trust we shall have his concurrence in the question.

*Speech in Support of Lord Limerick's Second Motion. 1742*¹

As the honourable gentleman who spoke last against the motion has not been long in the House, it is but charitable to believe him sincere in professing that he is ready to agree to a Parliamentary enquiry when he thinks the occasion requires it. But if he knew how often such professions are made by those who, upon all occasions, oppose enquiry, he would now avoid them because they are generally believed to be insincere. He may, it is true, have nothing to dread on his own account from enquiry, but when a gentleman has contracted, or any of his near relations have contracted, a friendship with one who may be brought into danger, it is very natural to suppose that such a gentleman's opposition to an enquiry does not entirely proceed from public motives; and if that gentleman follows the advice of some of his friends I very much question whether he will ever think the occasion requires an enquiry into the conduct of our public affairs.

As a Parliamentary enquiry must always be founded on suspicions, as well as upon facts or manifest crimes, reasons may always be found for alleging those suspicions to be without

¹ This speech was made in favour of inquiring into the alleged corruption of Walpole's Government.

foundation ; and upon the principle a Parliamentary enquiry must necessarily lay open the secrets of government, no time can ever be proper or convenient for such enquiry, because it is impossible to suppose a time when the government has no secrets to disclose. This, Sir, would be a most convenient doctrine for ministers, because it would put an end to all Parliamentary enquiries into the conduct of our public affairs ; and therefore when I hear it urged, and so much insisted on by a certain set of gentlemen in this House, I must suppose their hopes to be very extensive. I must suppose them to expect that they are.

Speech on Sir W. Yonge's Motion Respecting the Hanoverian Troops. 1742¹

IF the honourable gentleman determines to abandon his present sentiments as soon as any better measures are proposed, the ministry will quickly be deprived of one of their ablest defenders : for I consider the measures hitherto pursued so weak and so pernicious, that scarcely any alteration can be proposed that will not be for the advantage of the nation. The honourable gentleman has already been informed that no necessity existed for hiring auxiliary troops. It does not appear that either justice or policy required us to engage in the quarrel of the continent : that there was any need of forming an army in the low countries ; or that in order to form an army auxiliaries were necessary.

But, not to dwell upon disputable points, I think it may justly be concluded that the measures of our ministry have been ill concerted because it is undoubtedly wrong to squander the public money without effect : to pay armies, only to be a show to our friends and a scorn to our enemies.

The troops of Hanover, whom we are now expected to pay, marched into the low countries, Sir, where they still remain. They marched to the place most distant from the enemy, least in danger of an attack, and most strongly fortified, had an attack been designed. They have, therefore, no other claim to be paid, than that they left their own country for a place of greater security. It is always reasonable to judge of the

¹ This speech was directed against the employment of Hanoverian troops by Great Britain.

future by the past, and therefore it is probable that next year the services of these troops will not be of equal importance with those for which they are now to be paid. I shall not, therefore, be surprised, if, after such another glorious campaign, the opponents of the ministry be challenged to propose better men and be told that the money of this nation cannot be more properly employed than in hiring Hanoverians to eat and sleep.

But to prove yet more particularly that better measures may be taken ; that more useful troops may be retained ; and that, therefore, the honourable gentleman may be expected to quit those to whom he now adheres ; I shall show that in hiring the forces of Hanover, we have obstructed our own designs ; that instead of assisting the Queen of Hungary, we have withdrawn from her a part of the allies, and have burthened the nation with troops from which no service can reasonably be expected.

The advocates of the Ministry have, on this occasion, affected to speak of the balance of power, the Pragmatic Sanction, and the preservation of the Queen of Hungary, not only as if they were to be the chief care of Great Britain which (although easily controvertible) might, in compliance with long prejudices be possibly admitted ; but as if they were the care of Great Britain alone. These advocates, Sir, have spoken as if the power of France were formidable to no other people than ourselves ; as if no other part of the world would be injured by becoming a prey to an universal monarchy, and subject to the arbitrary government of a French, by being drained of its inhabitants only to extend the conquests of its masters, and to make other nations equally wretched ; and by being oppressed with exorbitant taxes, levied by military executions and employed only in supporting the state of its oppressors. They dwell upon the importance of public faith, and the necessity of an exact observation of treaties, as if the Pragmatic sanction had been signed by no other potentate than the King of Great Britain ; as if the Public Faith were to be obligatory upon ourselves alone.

That we should inviolably observe our Treaties—observe them although every other nation should disregard them ; that we should show an example of fidelity to mankind and stand firm in the practice of virtue, though we should stand

alone, I readily allow. I am, therefore, far from advising that we should recede from our stipulations whatever we may suffer in the fulfilment ; or that we should neglect the support of the Pragmatic Sanction, however we may be at present embarrassed, or however disadvantageous may be its assertion.

But surely, Sir, for the same reason that we observe our stipulations, we ought to excite other powers also to observe their own ; at the least, Sir, we ought not to assist in preventing them from doing so. But how is our present conduct agreeable to these principles ? The Pragmatic Sanction was guaranteed not only by the King of Great Britain, but by the Elector of Hanover also, who (if treaties constitute obligation) is thereby equally obliged to defend the House of Austria against the attacks of any foreign power, and to send his proportion of troops for the Queen of Hungary's support.

Whether these troops have been sent, those whose province obliges them to possess some knowledge of foreign affairs, are better able to inform the House than myself ; but since we have not heard them mentioned in this debate, and since we know by experience that none of the merits of that electorate are passed over in silence, it may, I think, be concluded that the distresses of the Queen of Hungary have yet received no alleviation from her alliance with Hanover ; that her complaints have excited no compassion at that court and that the justice of her cause has obtained no attention.

To what can be attributed this negligence of Treaties, this disregard of justice, this defect of compassion, but to the pernicious counsels of those who have advised Her Majesty to hire and to send elsewhere those troops which should have been employed for the Queen of Hungary's assistance ? It is not to be imagined, Sir, that his Majesty has more or less regard to justice as King of Great Britain than as Elector of Hanover, or that he would not have sent his proportion of troops to the Austrian Army, had not the temptation of greater profit been laid industriously before him. But this is not all that may be urged against such conduct. For, can we imagine that the power, that the designs of France, are less formidable to Hanover than Great Britain ? Is it less necessary for the security of Hanover than of ourselves that the House of Austria should be re-established in its former splendour and influence, and able to support the liberties of

Europe against the enormous attempts at universal monarchy by France ?

If, therefore, our assistance be an act of honesty, and granted in consequence of Treaties, why may it not equally be required of Hanover ? If it be an act of generosity, why should this nation alone be obliged to sacrifice her own interests for those of others ? or why should the Elector of Hanover exert his liberality at the expense of Great Britain alone ?

It is now too apparent, Sir, that this powerful, this great, this mighty nation, is considered only a province to a despicable Electorate, and, that in consequence of a plan formed long ago, and invariably pursued, these troops are here only to drain us of our money. That they have hitherto been of no use to Great Britain or to Austria, is evident beyond a doubt ; and therefore it is plain that they are retained only for the purposes of Hanover.

How much reason the transactions of almost every year have given for suspecting this absurd, ungrateful and perfidious partiality it is not necessary to declare. I doubt not that most of those who sit in this House can recollect a great number of instances in point, from the purchase of part of the Swedish dominions, to the contract which we are now called upon to ratify. Few, I think, can have forgotten the memorable stipulation for the Hessian troops : for the forces of the Duke of Wolfenbutch which were scarcely to march beyond the verge of their own country ; or the ever memorable treaty, the tendency of which is discovered in the name. A treaty by which we disunited ourselves from Austria, destroyed that building which we now endeavour, perhaps in vain, to raise again ; and weaken the only power to which it was our interest to give strength.

To dwell upon all the instances of partiality which have been shewn, and the yearly visits which have been paid to that *delightful* country ; to reckon up all the sums that have been spent to aggrandise and enrich it, would be an irksome and invidious task—invidious to those who are afraid to be told the truth, and irksome to those who are unwilling to hear of the dishonour and injuries of their country. I shall dwell no longer on this unpleasing subject than to express my hope that we shall no longer suffer ourselves to be deceived or oppressed ; that we

shall at length perform our duty as representatives of the people ; and by refusing to ratify this contract, show, that however the interests of Hanover have been preferred by the ministers, the Parliament pays no regard but to the interests of Great Britain.

On the Right to Tax America ¹

I CAME to town but to-day, I was a stranger to the tenor of his Majesty's speech and the proposed address, till I heard them read in this House. Unconnected and unconsulted, I have not the means of information ; I am fearful of offending through mistake, and therefore beg to be indulged with a second reading of the proposed address. The address being read, Mr. Pitt went on. He commended the King's speech, approved of the address in answer, as it decided nothing, every gentleman being left at perfect liberty to take such a part concerning America as he might afterwards see fit. One word only he could not approve of, an *early* is a word that does not belong to the notice the ministry have given to Parliament of the troubles in America. In a matter of such importance, the communication ought to have been immediate ; I speak not with respect of parties ; I stand up in this place single and unconnected. As to the late ministry (turning himself to Mr. Grenville, who sat within one of him), every capital measure they have taken has been entirely wrong !

As to the present gentlemen, to those at least whom I have in my eye (looking at the bench where Mr. Conway sat with the Lords of the Treasury), I have no objection ; I have never been made a sacrifice by any of them. Their characters are fair ; and I am always glad when men of fair character engage in his Majesty's service. Some of them have done me the honour to ask my opinion before they would engage. These will do me the justice to own, I advised them to engage, but notwithstanding—I love to be explicit—I cannot give them my confidence ; pardon me, gentlemen (bowing to the Ministry), confidence is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom, youth is the season of credulity ; by comparing events with each

¹ Pitt held that Parliament had not even a legal right to tax the American Colonies. In this respect he differed from Burke, as well as from Grenville.

other, reasoning from effects to causes, methinks I plainly discover the traces of an over-ruling influence.

There is a clause in the act of settlement to oblige every minister to sign his name to the advice which he gives his Sovereign. Would it were observed!—I have had the honour to serve the Crown, and if I could have submitted to influence I might have still continued to serve; but I would not have been responsible for others.—I have no local attachments; it is indifferent to me whether a man is rocked in his cradle on this side or that side of the Tweed, I sought for merit wherever it was to be found. It is my boast that I was the first minister who looked for it, and I found it in the mountains of the North. I called it forth, and drew it into your service, a hardy and intrepid race of men! Men, who, when left by your jealousy became a prey to the artifices of your enemies, and had gone nigh to have overturned the State in the war before the last. These men in the last war were brought to combat on your side; they served with fidelity, as they fought with valour, and conquered for you in every part of the world; detested be the national reflections against them! they are unjust, groundless, illiberal, unmanly.—When I ceased to serve his Majesty as a minister, it was not the *country* of the man by which I was moved—but the *man* of that country wanted wisdom and held principles incompatible with freedom.

It is a long time, Mr. Speaker, since I have attended in Parliament. When the resolution was taken in the House to tax America, I was ill in bed. If I could have endured to have been carried in my bed, so great was the agitation of my mind for the consequences, I would have solicited some kind hand to have laid me down on this floor, to have borne my testimony against it! It is now an Act that has passed—I would speak with decency of every Act of this House, but I must beg the indulgence of the House to speak of it with freedom.

I hope a day may be soon appointed to consider the state of the nation with respect to America. I hope gentlemen will come to this debate with all the temper and impartiality that his Majesty recommends, and the importance of the subject requires. A subject of greater importance than ever engaged the attention of this House! that subject only excepted, when, near a century ago, it was the question whether you yourselves were to be bound or free. In the meantime, as I cannot

depend upon health for any future day, such is the nature of my infirmities, I will beg to say a few words at present, leaving the justice, the equity, the policy, the expediency of the Act to another time. I will only speak to one point, a point which seems not to have been generally understood—I mean to the right. Some gentlemen (alluding to Mr. Nugent), seem to have considered it as a point of honour. If gentlemen consider it in that light, they leave all measures of right and wrong to follow a delusion that may lead to destruction. It is my opinion, that this Kingdom has no right to lay a tax upon the colonies. At the same time I assert the authority of this Kingdom over the colonies to be sovereign and supreme in every circumstance of government and legislation whatsoever.—They are the subjects of this Kingdom, equally entitled with yourselves to all the natural rights of mankind and the peculiar privileges of Englishmen: equally bound by its laws, and equally participating in the constitution of this free country. The Americans are the sons, not the bastards, of England. Taxation is no part of the governing or legislative power. The taxes are a voluntary gift and grant of the Commons alone. In legislation the three estates of the realm are alike concerned, but the concurrence of the Peers and the Crown to a tax is only necessary to close with the form of a law. The gift and grant is of the Commons alone. In ancient days, the Crown, the Barons, and the Clergy possessed the lands. In those days, the Barons and the Clergy gave and granted to the Crown. They gave and granted what was their own. At present since the discovery of America, and other circumstances permitting, the Commons are become the proprietors of the land. The Church (God bless it!) has but a pittance. The property of the Lords, compared with that of the Commons, is as a drop of water in the ocean; and this House represents those Commons, the proprietors of the lands, and those proprietors virtually represent the rest of the inhabitants. When, therefore, in the House we give and grant, we give and grant what is our own. But in an American tax what do we do? We, your Majesty's Commons for Great Britain, give and grant to your Majesty,—what? Our own property? No! We give and grant to your Majesty the property of your Majesty's Commons in America. It is an absurdity in terms.

The distinction between legislation and taxation is essentially necessary to liberty. The Crown, the Peers, are equally legislative powers with the Commons. If taxation be a part of simple legislation, the Crown, the Peers, have rights in taxation as well as yourselves; rights which they claim, which they will exercise, whenever the principle can be supported by *power*.

There is an idea in some, that the colonies are virtually represented in this House. I would fain know by whom an American is represented here? Is he represented by any knight of the shire, in any county in this Kingdom? *Would to God that respectable representation was augmented to a greater number!* or will you tell him that he is represented by any representative of a borough?—a borough which perhaps no man ever saw. This is what is called *the rotten part of the constitution*. It cannot continue a century—if it does not drop, it must be amputated. The idea of a virtual representation of America in this House is the most contemptible idea that ever entered into the head of man—it does not deserve a serious refutation.

The Commons of America, represented in their several assemblies, have ever been in possession of the exercise of this their constitutional right, of giving and granting their own money. They would have been slaves if they had not enjoyed it. At the same time this Kingdom, as the supreme governing and legislative power, has always bound the colonies by her laws, by her regulations and restrictions in trade, in navigation, in manufactures—in everything except that of taking their money out of their pockets without their consent.

Here I would draw the line, "*Ultra quam citraque nequit consistere rectum.*"

BURKE

No great orator has produced so much effect upon posterity as Burke in proportion to the influence of his speeches when they were delivered. Burke habitually looked beyond the audience he was addressing and the circumstances of the time. His business was the application of principles to the problems of the day. He was never satisfied with the second best. He believed that the British Constitution, rightly interpreted, would solve any political difficulty which presented itself, if the remedial measures were applied resolutely, and in time. That the Constitution itself required altering he did not admit. He held that by a process of natural expansion it would comprehend new situations, and provide for fresh developments. He did not, for instance, doubt that Parliament had a right to tax the colonies. He only maintained that, as they were not represented there, it was unjust and improper to tax them. Acknowledging that legislation included taxation, he argued that only the House of Commons could tax the people of Great Britain, and that it could only tax them because they elected it. Burke always maintained that he was practical and businesslike in his views. He held that those were the most practical who clung most firmly to the general principles which determined the functions of government. It would not be quite true to say that Burke's speeches were spoken essays. They are different in form from his political pamphlets, such as the *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*. But substantially they are similar. Burke's mind was so constituted that it took in with equal readiness the most abstract proposition and the most particular detail. If he called upon the House of Commons for an effort of mind, and a strain of attention, which few members were able or willing to make or undergo, he undoubtedly laid the groundwork upon which the

policy of the future was built. When Voltaire's friend wrote an Ode to Posterity, Voltaire feared that it would not reach its address. Burke avoided the danger of falling between two stools. Yet it is not difficult to see why his speeches often failed for the purposes of the moment. They appealed to higher motives and larger issues than those which usually dominate parties or politicians. That is why they can still be read with profit by students of political philosophy, as well as by masters of practical statesmanship. With such materials as England in the eighteenth century gave him, Burke constructed an edifice of durable statecraft which has served as a model for political architects in every country since his time. He had the instinct which discerns what is essential, and rejects what is accidental. He valued theories that were productive, and experience that could be idealised. He was the great designer of policy, because he reconciled ideas with knowledge, and combined knowledge with ideas. His contemporaries never called him unphilosophical. His successors have not called him unpractical. He is the one English statesman, perhaps the one statesman, who could refer to principle on all occasions without losing his hold upon practice, and keep a firm grip of general doctrines without forgetting the art of adapting them to concrete examples. His greatness can only be understood by thinking of him in his double capacity as a philosopher and a statesman.

Conciliation with America

House of Commons, March 22nd, 1775

MR. SPEAKER, I hope, Sir, that, notwithstanding the austerity of the chair, your good nature will incline you into some degree of indulgence towards human frailty. You will not think it unnatural that those who have an object depending, which strongly engages their hopes and fears, should be somewhat inclined to superstition. As I came into the House full of anxiety about the event of my motion, I found to my infinite surprise

that the grand penal bill, by which we had passed sentence on the trade and sustenance of America, is to be returned to us from the other House. I do confess, I could not help looking on this event as a fortunate omen. I look upon it as a sort of providential favour, by which we are put once more in possession of our deliberative capacity, upon a business so very questionable in its nature, so very uncertain in its issue. By the return of this bill, which seemed to have taken its flight forever, we are, at this very instant, nearly as free to choose a plan for our American Government as we were on the first day of the session. If, Sir, we incline to the side of conciliation, we are not at all embarrassed (unless we please to make ourselves so) by any incongruous mixture of coercion and restraint. We are therefore called upon, as it were, by a superior warning voice again to attend to America; to attend to the whole of it together; and to review the subject with an unusual degree of care and calmness.

Surely it is an awful subject, or there is none so on this side of the grave. When I first had the honour of a seat in this House, the affairs of that continent pressed themselves upon us as the most important and most delicate object of Parliamentary attention. My little share in this great deliberation oppressed me. I found myself a partaker in a very high trust: and having no sort of reason to rely on the strength of my natural abilities for the proper execution of that trust, I was obliged to take more than common pains to instruct myself in everything which relates to our colonies. I was not less under the necessity of forming some fixed ideas concerning the general policy of the British Empire. Something of this sort seemed to be indispensable, in order, amid so vast a fluctuation of passions and opinions, to concentrate my thoughts; to ballast my conduct; to preserve me from being blown about by every wind of fashionable doctrine. I really did not think it safe or manly to have fresh principles to seek upon every fresh mail which should arrive from America.

At that period I had the fortune to find myself in perfect concurrence with a large majority in this House. Bowing under that high authority, and penetrated with the sharpness and strength of that early impression, I have continued ever since in my original sentiments without the least deviation. Whether this be owing to an obstinate perseverance in error,

or to a religious adherence to what appears to me truth and reason, it is in your equity to judge.

Sir, Parliament having an enlarged view of objects, made, during this interval, more frequent changes in their sentiment and their conduct than could be justified in a particular person upon the contracted scale of private information. But though I do not hazard anything approaching to a censure on the motives of former Parliaments to all those alterations, one fact is undoubted—that under them the state of America has been kept in continual agitation. Everything administered as remedy to the public complaint if it did not produce, was at least followed by, a heightening of the distemper; until, by a variety of experiments, that important country has been brought into her present situation—a situation which I will not miscall, which I dare not name, which I scarcely know how to comprehend in the terms of any description.

In this posture, sir, things stood at the beginning of the session. About that time, a worthy member of great Parliamentary experience, who, in the year 1766, filled the chair of the American Committee with much ability, took me aside, and, lamenting the present aspect of our politics, told me things were come to such a pass that our former methods of proceeding in the House would be no longer tolerated. That the public tribunal (never too indulgent to a long and unsuccessful opposition) would now scrutinize our conduct with unusual severity. That the very vicissitudes and shiftings of ministerial measures, instead of convicting their authors of inconstancy and want of system, would be taken as an occasion of charging us with a predetermined discontent, which nothing could satisfy; while we accused every measure of vigour as cruel, and every proposal of lenity as weak and irresolute. The public, he said, would not have patience to see us play the game out with our adversaries; we must produce our hand. It would be expected that those who, for many years, had been active in such affairs, should show that they had formed some clear and decided principles of colony government and were capable of drawing out something like a platform of the ground which might be laid for future and permanent tranquillity.

I felt the truth of what my honourable friend represented, but I felt my situation, too. His application might have been

made with far greater propriety to many other gentlemen. No man was, indeed, ever better disposed or worse qualified for such an undertaking than myself. Though I gave so far into his opinion that I immediately threw my thoughts into a sort of Parliamentary form, I was by no means equally ready to produce them. It generally argues some degree of natural impotence of mind, or some want of knowledge of the world, to hazard plans of government, except from a seat of authority. Propositions are made, not only ineffectually, but somewhat disreputably, when the minds of men are not properly disposed for their reception; and, for my part, I am not ambitious of ridicule—not absolutely a candidate for disgrace.

Besides, Sir, to speak the plain truth, I have in general no very exalted opinion of the virtue of paper government, nor of any politics in which the plan is to be wholly separated from the execution. But when I saw that anger and violence prevailed every day more and more, and that things were hastening towards an incurable alienation of our colonies, I confess my caution gave way. I felt this as one of those few moments in which decorum yields to a higher duty. Public calamity is a mighty leveller, and there are occasions when any, even the slightest, chance of doing good, must be laid hold on, even by the most inconsiderable person.

To restore order and repose to an empire so great and so distracted as ours, is, merely in the attempt, an undertaking that would ennoble the flights of the highest genius, and obtain pardon for the efforts of the meanest understanding. Struggling a good while with these thoughts, by degrees I felt myself more firm. I derived, at length, some confidence from what in other circumstances usually produces timidity. I grew less anxious, even from the idea of my own insignificance. For, judging of what you are by what you ought to be, I persuaded myself that you would not reject a reasonable proposition because it had nothing but its reason to recommend it. On the other hand, being totally destitute of all shadow of influence, natural or adventitious, I was very sure that if my proposition were futile or dangerous—if it were weakly conceived or improperly timed, there was nothing exterior to it of power to awe, dazzle, or delude you. You will see it just as it is, and you will treat it just as it deserves.

The PROPOSITION is peace. Not peace through the medium

of war ; not peace to be hunted through the labyrinth of intricate and endless negotiations ; not peace to arise out of universal discord, fomented from principle, in all parts of the empire ; not peace to depend on the juridical determination of perplexing questions, or the precise marking the shadowy boundaries of a complex government. It is simple peace, sought in its natural course, and its ordinary haunts. It is peace sought in the spirit of peace, and laid in principles purely pacific. I propose, by removing the ground of the difference, and by restoring *the former unsuspecting confidence of the colonies in mother country* to give permanent satisfaction to your people ; and, far from a scheme of ruling by discord, to reconcile them to each other in the same act, and by the bond of the very same interest, which reconciles them to British government.

My idea is nothing more. Refined policy ever has been the parent of confusion, and ever will be so as long as the world endures. Plain good intention, which is as easily discovered at the first view as fraud is surely detected at last, is (let me say) of no mean force in the government of mankind. Genuine simplicity of heart is a healing and cementing principle. My plan, therefore, being formed on the most simple grounds imaginable, may disappoint some people when they hear it. It has nothing to recommend it to the pruriency of curious ears. There is nothing at all new and captivating in it. It has nothing of the splendour of the project which has been lately laid upon your table by the noble Lord in the blue ribbon. It does not propose to fill your lobby with squabbling colony agents, who will require the interposition of your mace at every instant to keep the peace among them. It does not institute a magnificent auction of finance, where captivated provinces come to general ransom by bidding against each other until you knock down the hammer and determine a proportion of payment beyond all the powers of algebra to equalize and settle.

The plan which I shall presume to suggest derives, however, one great advantage from the proposition and registry of that noble Lord's project. The idea of conciliation is admissible. First the House, in accepting the resolution moved by the noble Lord, has admitted, notwithstanding the menacing front of our address, notwithstanding our heavy bill of pains

and penalties, that we do not think ourselves precluded from all ideas of free grace and bounty.

The House has gone farther ; it has declared conciliation admissible, *previous* to any submission on the part of America. It has even shot a good deal beyond that mark, and has admitted that the complaints of our former mode of exerting the right of taxation were not wholly unfounded. That right, thus exerted, is allowed to have had something reprehensible in it, something unwise, or something grievous ; since in the midst of our heat and resentment, we, of ourselves, have proposed a capital alteration, and, in order to get rid of what seemed so very exceptionable, have instituted a mode that is altogether new ; one that is, indeed, wholly alien from all the ancient methods and forms of Parliament.

The *principle* of this proceeding is large enough for my purpose. The means proposed by the noble Lord for carrying his ideas into execution, I think, indeed, are very indifferently suited to the end ; and this I shall endeavour to show you before I sit down. But for the present, I take my ground on the admitted principle. I mean to give peace. Peace implies reconciliation ; and, where there has been a material dispute, reconciliation does in a manner always imply concession on the one part or on the other. In this state of things I make no difficulty in affirming that the proposal ought to originate from us. Great and acknowledged force is not impaired, either in effect or in opinion, by an unwillingness to exert itself. The superior power may offer peace with honour and with safety. Such an offer from such a power will be attributed to magnanimity. But the concessions of the weak are the concessions of fear. When such a one is disarmed, he is wholly at the mercy of his superior, and he loses forever that time and those chances which, as they happen to all men, are the strength and resources of all inferior power.

The capital leading questions on which you must this day decide are these two : *First, whether you ought to concede ; and, secondly, what your concession ought to be.*

On the first of these questions we have gained, as I have just taken the liberty of observing to you, some ground. But I am sensible that a good deal more is still to be done. Indeed, sir, to enable us to determine both on the one and the other of these great questions with a firm and precise judgment,

I think it may be necessary to consider distinctly the true *nature* and the peculiar *circumstances* of the object which we have before us; because, after all our struggle, whether we will or not, we must govern America according to that nature and to those circumstances, and not according to our imaginations; not according to abstract ideas of right; by no means according to mere general theories of government, the resort to which appears to me, in our present situation, no better than arrant trifling. I shall therefore endeavour, with your leave, to lay before you some of the most material of these circumstances in as full and as clear a manner as I am able to state them.

(1) The first thing that we have to consider with regard to the nature of the object, is the number of people in the Colonies. I have taken for some years a good deal of pains on that point. I can by no calculation justify myself in placing the number below two millions of inhabitants of our own European blood and colour, besides at least five hundred thousand others, who form no inconsiderable part of the strength and opulence of the whole. This, Sir, is, I believe, about the true number. There is no occasion to exaggerate where plain truth is of so much weight and importance. But whether I put the present numbers too high or too low, is a matter of little moment. Such is the strength with which population shoots in that part of the world, that, state the numbers as high as we will, while the dispute continues, the exaggeration ends. While we are discussing any given magnitude, they are grown to it. While we spend our time in deliberating on the mode of governing two millions, we shall find we have two millions more to manage. Your children do not grow faster from infancy to manhood, than they spread from families to communities, and from villages to nations.

I put this consideration of the present and the growing numbers in the front of our deliberation, because, Sir, this consideration will make it evident to a blunter discernment than yours, that no partial, narrow, contracted, pinched, occasional system will be at all suitable to such an object. It will show you that it is not to be considered as one of those *minima* which are out of the eye and consideration of the law; not a paltry excrescence of the state; not a mean dependent, who may be neglected with little damage, and provoked with

little danger. It will prove that some degree of care and caution is required in the handling such an object; it will show that you ought not in reason to trifle with so large a mass of the interests and feelings of the human race. You could at no time do so without guilt; and, be assured, you will not be able to do it long with impunity.

(2) But the population of this country, the great and growing population, though a very important consideration, will lose much of its weight if not combined with other circumstances. The commerce of your colonies is out of all proportion beyond the numbers of the people. This ground of their commerce, indeed, has been trod some days ago, and with great ability, by a distinguished person at your bar. This gentleman after thirty-five years—it is so long since he appeared at the same place to plead for the commerce of Great Britain—has come again before you to plead the same cause, without any other effect of time, than that, to the fire of imagination and extent of erudition which even then marked him as one of the first literary characters of his age, he has added a consummate knowledge in the commercial interest of his country, formed by a long course of enlightened and discriminating experience.

Sir, I should be inexcusable in coming after such a person with any detail if a great part of the members who now fill the House had not the misfortune to be absent when he appeared at your bar. Besides, Sir, I propose to take the matter at periods of time somewhat different from his. There is, if I mistake not, a point of view, from whence, if you will look at this subject, it is impossible that it should not make an impression upon you.

I have in my hand two accounts: one a comparative state of the export trade of England to its colonies as it stood in the year 1704 and as it stood in the year 1772; the other a state of the exports trade of this country to its colonies alone, as it stood in 1772, compared with the whole trade of England to all parts of the world, the colonies included, in the year 1704. They are from good vouchers; the latter period from the accounts on your table, the earlier from an original manuscript of Davenport, who first established the Inspector-General's office, which has been ever since his time so abundant a source of parliamentary information.

The export trade to the colonies consists of three great

branches: the African, which terminating almost wholly in the colonies, must be put to the account of their commerce; the West Indian, and the North American. All these are so interwoven that the attempt to separate them would tear to pieces the contexture of the whole, and, if not entirely destroy, would very much depreciate the value of all the parts. I therefore consider these three denominations to be, what in effect they are, one trade.

The trade to the colonies, taken on the export side, at the beginning of this century, that is, in the year 1704, stood thus:

Exports to North America and the West Indies	£483,265
„ „ Africa	86,665
	<hr/>
	£569,930

In the year 1772, which I take as a middle year between the highest and the lowest of those lately laid on your table, the account was as follows:

To North America and the West Indies	£4,791,734
„ Africa	866,398
To which, if you add the export trade from Scotland, which had in 1704 no existence	364,000
	<hr/>
	£6,022,132

From five hundred and odd thousand, it has grown to six millions. It has increased no less than twelve-fold. This is the state of the colony trade, as compared with itself at these two periods, within this century; and this is the matter for meditation. But this is not all. Examine my second account. See how the export trade to the colonies alone in 1772 stood in the other point of view, that is as compared to the whole trade of England in 1704.

The whole export trade of England including that to the colonies in 1704	£6,509,000
Exported to the colonies alone, in 1772	6,024,000
	<hr/>
Difference	£485,000

The trade with America alone is now within less than £500,000 of being equal to what this great commercial nation, England, carried on at the beginning of this century with the

whole world ! If I had taken the largest year of those on your table, it would rather have exceeded. But it will be said, is not this American trade an unnatural protuberance, that has drawn the juices from the rest of the body ? The reverse. It is the very food that has nourished every other part into its present magnitude. Our general trade has been greatly augmented, and augmented more or less in almost every part to which it ever extended, but with this material difference, that of the six millions which in the beginning of the century constituted the whole mass of our export commerce, the colony trade was but one-twelfth part ; it is now (as a part of sixteen millions) considerably more than a third of the whole. This is the relative proportion of the importance of the colonies of these two periods ; and all reasoning concerning our mode of treating them must have this proportion as its basis, or it is a reasoning weak, rotten, and sophistical.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot prevail on myself to hurry over this great consideration. It is good for us to be here. We stand where we have an immense view of what is, and what is past. Clouds, indeed, and darkness rest upon the future. Let us, however, before we descend from this noble eminence, reflect that this growth of our national prosperity has happened within the short period of the life of man. It has happened within sixty-eight years. There are those alive whose memory might touch the two extremities. For instance, my Lord Bathurst might remember all the stages of the progress. He was in 1704 of an age at least to be made to comprehend such things. He was then old enough "*Acta parentum jam legere, et qua sit poterit cognoscere virtus.*" Suppose, Sir, that the angel of this auspicious youth, foreseeing the many virtues which made him one of the most amiable, as he is one of the most fortunate, men of his age, had opened to him a vision, that when in the fourth generation, the third prince of the House of Brunswick had sat twelve years on the throne of that nation which by the happy issue of moderate and healing councils was to be made Great Britain, he should see his son Lord Chancellor of England, turn back the current of hereditary dignity to its fountain, and raise him to a higher rank of peerage while he enriched the family with a new one. If, amid these bright and happy scenes of domestic honour and prosperity, that angel should have drawn up the curtain and unfolded the

rising glories of his country, and while he was gazing with admiration on the then commercial grandeur of England, the genius should point out to him a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the national interest, a small seminal principle rather than a formed body, and should tell him: "Young man, there is America—which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men and uncouth manners; yet shall, before you taste death, show itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to by a progressive increase of improvement, brought in by varieties of people, by succession of civilizing conquests and civilizing settlements in a series of seventeen hundred years, you shall see as much added to her by America in the course of a single life!" If this state of his country had been foretold to him, would it not require all the sanguine credulity of youth, and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm, to make him believe it? Fortunate, indeed, if he lived to see nothing to vary the prospect and cloud the setting of his day!

Excuse me, sir, if turning from such thoughts, I resume this comparative view once more. You have seen it on a large scale; look at it on a small one. I will point out to your attention a particular instance of it in the single province of Pennsylvania. In the year 1704 that province called for £11,459 in value of your commodities, native and foreign. This was the whole. What did it demand in 1772? Why, nearly fifty times as much; for in that year the export to Pennsylvania was £507,909, nearly equal to the export to all the colonies together in the first period.

I choose, sir, to enter into these minute and particular details, because generalities, which, in all other cases are apt to heighten and raise the subject, have here the tendency to sink it. When we speak of the commerce with our colonies, fiction lags after truth; invention is unfruitful, and imagination cold and barren.

So far, sir, as to the importance of the object in the view of its commerce, as concerned in the exports from England. If I were to detail the imports, I could show how many enjoyments they procure, which deceive the burden of life; how many materials which invigorate the springs of national industry, and extend and animate every part of our foreign and

domestic commerce. This would be a curious subject indeed ; but I must prescribe bounds to myself in a matter so vast and various.

(3) I pass, therefore, to the colonies in another point of view—their agriculture. This they have prosecuted with such a spirit that, besides feeding plentifully their own growing multitude, their annual export of grain, comprehending rice, has some years ago exceeded a million in value. Of their last harvest I am persuaded they will export much more. At the beginning of the century some of these colonies imported corn from the mother country. For some time past the old world has been fed from the new. The scarcity you have felt would have been a desolating famine if this child of your old age, with a true filial piety, with a Roman charity, had not put the full breast of its youthful exuberance to the mouth of its exhausted parent.

As to the wealth which the colonies have drawn from the sea by their fisheries, you had all that matter fully opened at your bar. You surely thought those acquisitions of value, for they seemed even to excite your envy ; and yet, the spirit by which that enterprising employment has been exercised ought rather, in my opinion, to have raised your esteem and admiration. And pray, sir, what in the world is equal to it ? Pass by the other parts, and look at the manner in which the people of New England have of late carried on the whale fishery. While we follow them among the tumbling mountains of ice, and behold them penetrating into the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson's Bay and Davis' Straits—while we are looking for them beneath the Arctic circle, we hear that they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold—that they are at the antipodes, and engaged under the frozen Serpent of the South. Falkland Island, which seemed too remote and romantic an object for the grasp of national ambition, is but a stage and resting-place in the progress of their victorious industry. Nor is equinoctial heat more discouraging to them than the accumulated winter of both the poles. We know that while some of them draw the line, and strike the harpoon on the coast of Africa, others run the longitude, and pursue their gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed by their fisheries. No climate that is not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland,



nor the activity of France, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise, ever carried this most perilous mode of hardy industry to the extent to which it has been pushed by this recent people—a people who are still, as it were, but in the gristle, and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood. When I contemplate these things—when I know that the colonies in general owe little or nothing to any care of ours, and that they are not squeezed into this happy form by the constraints of watchful and suspicious government, but that, through a wise and salutary neglect, a generous nature has been suffered to take her own way to perfection—when I reflect upon these effects—when I see how profitable they have been to us, I feel all the pride of power sink, and all presumption in the wisdom of human contrivances melt and die away within me. My rigour relents. I pardon something to the spirit of liberty.

I am sensible, sir, that all of which I have asserted in my detail is admitted in the gross, but that quite a different conclusion is drawn from it. America, gentlemen say, is a noble object. It is an object well worth fighting for. Certainly it is, if fighting a people be a best way of gaining them. Gentlemen in this respect will be led to their choice of means, by their complexions and their habits. Those who understand the military art will, of course, have some predilection for it. Those who wield the thunder of the State may have more confidence in the efficacy of arms. But I confess, possibly for want of this knowledge, my opinion is much more in favour of prudent management than of force ; considering force not as an odious but a feeble instrument for preserving a people so numerous, so active, so growing, so spirited as this, in a profitable and subordinate connection with us.

First, sir, permit me to observe, that the use of force alone is but *temporary*. It may subdue for a moment, but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again ; and a nation is not governed which is perpetually to be conquered.

My next objection is its *uncertainty*. Terror is not always the effect of force ; and an armament is not a victory. If you do not succeed, you are without resource ; for, conciliation failing, force remains ; but force failing, no farther hope of reconciliation is left. Power and authority are sometimes bought by kindness, but they can never be begged as alms by an impoverished and defeated violence.

A farther objection to force is, that you *impair the object* by your very endeavours to prèserve it. The thing you fought for is not the thing which you recover ; but depreciated, sunk, wasted, and consumed in the contest. Nothing less will content me than *whole* America. I do not choose to consume its strength along with our own, because in all parts it is the British strength that I consume. I do not choose to be caught by a foreign enemy at the end of this exhausting conflict, and still less in the midst of it. I may escape ; but I can make no insurance against such an event. Let me add, that I do not choose wholly to break the American spirit, because it is the spirit that has made the country.

Lastly, we have no sort of *experience* in favour of force as an instrument in the rule of our colonies. Their growth and their utility have been owing to methods altogether different. Our ancient indulgence has been said to be pursued to a fault. It may be so ; but we know, if feeling is evidence, that our fault was more tolerable than our attempt to mend it ; and our sin far more salutary than our penitence.

These, sir, are my reasons for not entertaining that high opinion of untried force, by which many gentlemen, for whose sentiments in other particulars I have great respect, seem to be so greatly captivated.

But there is still behind a third consideration concerning this object, which serves to determine my opinion on the sort of policy which ought to be pursued in the management of America, even more than its population and its commerce—I mean its temper and character. In this character of the Americans *a love of freedom* is the predominating feature, which marks and distinguishes the whole ; and, as an ardent is always a jealous affection, your colonies become suspicious, restive, and untractable, whenever they see the least attempt to wrest from them by force, or shuffle from them by chicane, what they think the only advantage worth living for. This fierce spirit of liberty is stronger in the English colonies probably than in any other people of the earth, and this from a variety of powerful causes, which, to understand the true temper of their minds, and the direction which this spirit takes, it will not be amiss to lay open somewhat more largely.

First, the people of the colonies are descendants of Englishmen. England, sir, is a nation which still, I hope, respects,

and formerly adored, her freedom. The colonists emigrated from you when this part of your character was most predominant ; and they took this bias and direction the moment they parted from your hands. They are, therefore, not only devoted to liberty, but to liberty according to English ideas and on English principles. Abstract liberty, like other mere abstractions, is not to be found. Liberty inheres in some sensible object ; and every nation has formed to itself some favourite point which, by way of eminence, becomes the criterion of their happiness. It happened, you know, sir, that the great contests for freedom in this country were, from the earliest times, chiefly upon the question of taxing. Most of the contests in the ancient Commonwealths turned primarily on the right of election of magistrates, or on the balance among the several orders of the State. The question of money was not with them so immediate. But in England it was otherwise. On this point of taxes the ablest pens and most eloquent tongues have been exercised ; the greatest spirits have acted and suffered. In order to give the fullest satisfaction concerning the importance of this point, it was not only necessary for those who in argument defended the excellence of the English Constitution, to insist on this privilege of granting money as a dry point of fact, and to prove that the right had been acknowledged in ancient parchments and blind usages to reside in a certain body called the House of Commons. They went much farther ; they attempted to prove (and they succeeded) that in theory it ought to be so, from the particular nature of a House of Commons, as an immediate representative of the people, whether the old records had delivered this oracle or not. They took infinite pains to inculcate, as a fundamental principle, that, in all monarchies, the people must, in effect, themselves, mediately or immediately, possess the power of granting their own money, or no shadow of liberty could subsist. The colonies draw from you, as with their life blood, those ideas and principles. Their love of liberty, as with you, fixed and attached on this specific point of taxing. Liberty might be safe or might be endangered in twenty other particulars without their being much pleased or alarmed. Here they felt its pulse ; and as they found that beat they thought themselves sick or sound. I do not say whether they were right or wrong in applying your general arguments to their own case. It is

not easy, indeed, to make a monopoly of theorems and corollaries. The fact is, that they did thus apply those general arguments; and your mode of governing them, whether through lenity or indolence, through wisdom or mistake, confirmed them in the imagination that they, as well as you, had an interest in these common principles.

They were further confirmed in these pleasing errors by the form of their provincial legislative assemblies. Their governments are popular in a high degree; some are merely popular; in all, the popular representative is the most weighty; and this share of the people in their ordinary governments never fails to inspire them with lofty sentiments, and with a strong aversion from whatever tends to deprive them of their chief importance.

If anything were wanting to this necessary operation of the form of government, religion would have given it a complete effect. Religion, always a principle of energy, in this new people is no way worn out or impaired; and their mode of professing it is also one main cause of this free spirit. The people are Protestants; and of that kind which is the most averse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion. This is a persuasion not only favourable to liberty, but built upon it. I do not think, sir, that the reason of this averseness in the dissenting churches from all that looks like absolute government, is so much to be sought in their religious tenets as in their history. Everyone knows that the Roman Catholic religion is at least coeval with most of the governments where it prevails, that it has generally gone hand in hand with them, and received great favour and every kind of support from authority. The Church of England, too, was formed from her cradle under the nursing care of regular governments. But the dissenting interests have sprung up in direct opposition to all the ordinary powers of the world, and could justify that opposition only on a strong claim to natural liberty. Their very existence depended on the powerful and unremitted assertion of that claim. All Protestantism, even the most cold and passive, is a kind of dissent. But the religion most prevalent in our northern colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance; it is the dissidence of dissent; and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion. This religion, under a variety of denominations, agreeing nothing but in the

communion of the spirit of liberty, is predominant in most of the northern provinces ; where the Church of England, notwithstanding its legal rights, is in reality no more than a sort of private sect, not composing, most probably, the tenth of the people. The colonists left England when this spirit was high, and in the emigrants was the highest of all ; and even that stream of foreigners, which has been constantly flowing into these colonies, has, for the greatest part, been composed of dissenters from the establishments of their several countries, and have brought with them a temper and character far from alien to that of the people with whom they mixed.

Sir, I can perceive by their manner that some gentlemen object to the latitude of this description, because in the southern colonies the Church of England forms a large body, and has a regular establishment. It is certainly true. There is, however, a circumstance attending these colonies which, in my opinion, fully counterbalances this difference, and makes the spirit of liberty still more high and haughty than in those to the northward. It is that in Virginia and the Carolinas they have a vast multitude of *slaves*. Where this is the case in any part of the world, those who are free are by far the most proud and jealous of their freedom. Freedom is to them not only an enjoyment, but a kind of rank and privilege. Not seeing there that freedom as in countries where it is a common blessing, and as broad and general as the air, may be united with much abject toil, with great misery, with all the exterior of servitude, liberty looks among them like something that is more noble and liberal. I do not mean, sir, to commend the superior morality of this sentiment, which has at least as much pride as virtue in it ; but I cannot alter the nature of man. The fact is so ; and these people of the southern colonies are much more strongly, and with a higher and more stubborn spirit, attached to liberty than those to the northward. Such were all the ancient commonwealths ; such were our Gothic ancestors ; such, in our days, were the Poles, and such will be all masters of slaves who are not slaves themselves. In such a people the haughtiness of domination combines with the spirit of freedom, fortifies it, and renders it invincible.

Permit me, Sir, to add another circumstance in our colonies, which contributes no mean part towards the growth and effect of this untractable spirit. I mean their *education*. In no

country, perhaps, in the world is the law so general a study. The profession itself is numerous and powerful ; and in most provinces it takes the lead. The greater number of the deputies sent to Congress were lawyers. But all who read, and most do read, endeavour to obtain some smattering in that science. I have been told by an eminent bookseller, that in no branch of his business, after tracts of popular devotion, were so many books as those on the law exported to the Plantations. The colonists have now fallen into the way of printing them for their own use. I hear that they have sold nearly as many of *Blackstone's Commentaries* in America as in England. General Gages marks out this disposition very particularly in a letter on your table. He states that all the people in his government are lawyers, or smatterers in law ; and that in Boston they have been enabled, by successful chicane, wholly to evade many parts of one of your capital penal constitutions. The smartness of debate will say that this knowledge ought to teach them more clearly the rights of legislature, their obligations to obedience, and the penalties of rebellion. All this is mighty well. But my honourable and learned friend [the Attorney-General, afterwards Lord Thurlow] on the floor, who condescends to mark what I say for animadversion, will disdain that ground. He has heard, as well as I, that when great honours and great emoluments do not win over this knowledge to the service of the State it is a formidable adversary to government. If the spirit be not tamed and broken by these happy methods, it is stubborn and litigious. *Abeunt studia in mores*. This study renders men acute, inquisitive, dexterous, prompt in attack, ready in defence, full of resources. In other countries, the people, more simple and of a less mercurial cast, judge of an ill principle in government only by an actual grievance. Here they anticipate the evil, and judge of the pressure of the grievance by the badness of the principle. They augur misgovernment at a distance ; and snuff the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze.

The last cause of this disobedient spirit in the colonies is hardly less powerful than the rest, as it is not merely moral, but laid deep in the natural constitution of things. Three thousand miles of ocean lie between you and them. No contrivance can prevent the effect of this distance in weakening government. Seas roll and months pass between the order

and the execution ; and the want of a speedy explanation of a single point is enough to defeat the whole system. You have, indeed, "winged ministers" of vengeance, who carry your bolts in their pouches to the remotest verge of the sea. But there a power steps in that limits the arrogance of raging passion and furious elements, and says : "So far shalt thou go, and no further." Who are you, that should fret and rage, and bite the chains of nature ? Nothing worse happens to you than does to all nations who have extensive empires ; and it happens in all the forms into which empire can be thrown. In large bodies the circulation of power must be less vigorous at the extremities. Nature has said it. The Turk cannot govern Egypt and Arabia and Koordistan as he governs Thrace : nor has he the same dominion in Crimea and Algiers which he has at Broosa and Smyrna. Despotism itself is obliged to truck and huckster. The Sultan gets such obedience as he can. He governs with a loose rein, that he may govern at all ; and the whole of the force and vigour of his authority in his centre is derived from a prudent relaxation in all his borders. Spain, in her provinces, is, perhaps, not so well obeyed as you are in yours. She complies, too ; she submits ; she watches times. This is the immutable condition, the eternal law of extensive and detached Empire.

Then, sir, from these six capital sources of descent, of forms of government, of religion in the northern provinces, of manners in the southern, of education, of the remoteness of situation from the first mover of government—from all these causes a fierce spirit of liberty has grown up. It has grown with the growth of the people in your colonies, and increased with the increase of their wealth ; a spirit that, unhappily meeting with an exercise of power in England, which, however lawful, is not reconcilable to any ideas of liberty, much less with theirs, has kindled this flame that is ready to consume us.

I do not mean to commend either the spirit in this excess or the moral causes which produce it. Perhaps a more smooth and accommodating spirit of freedom in them would be more acceptable to us. Perhaps ideas of liberty might be desired more reconcilable with an arbitrary and boundless authority. Perhaps we might wish the colonists to be persuaded that their liberty is more secure when held in trust for them by us, as guardians during a perpetual minority, than with any part of

it in their own hands. But the question is not whether their spirit deserves praise or blame. What, in the name of God, shall we do with it? You have before you the object, such as it is, with all its glories, with all its imperfections on its head. You see the magnitude, the importance, the temper, the habits, the disorders. By all these considerations we are strongly urged to determine something concerning it. We are called upon to fix some rule and line for our future conduct, which may give a little stability to our politics, and prevent the return of such unhappy deliberations as the present. Every such return will bring the matter before us in a still more untractable form. For, what astonishing and incredible things have we not seen already? What monsters have not been generated from this unnatural contention? While every principle of authority and resistance has been pushed upon both sides, so far as it would go, there is nothing so solid and certain, either in reasoning or in practice, that it has not been shaken. Until very lately, all authority in America seemed to be nothing but an emanation from yours. Even the popular part of the colony constitution derived all its activity, and its first vital movement, from the pleasure of the Crown. We thought, sir, that the utmost which the discontented colonists could do was to disturb authority. We never dreamed they could of themselves supply it, knowing in general what an operose business it is to establish a government absolutely new. But having, for our purposes in this contention, resolved that none but an obedient assembly should sit, the humours of the people there, finding all passage through the legal channel stopped, with great violence broke out another way. Some provinces have tried their experiment, as we have tried ours; and theirs has succeeded. They have formed a government sufficient for its purposes, without the bustle of a revolution, or the troublesome formality of an election. Evident necessity and tacit consent have done the business in an instant. So well they have done it, that Lord Dunmore (the account is among the fragments on your table) tells you, that the new institution is infinitely better obeyed than the ancient government ever was in its most fortunate periods. Obedience is what makes government, and not the names by which it is called; not the name of governor, as formerly, or committee, as at present. This new government has originated directly

from the people, and was not transmitted through any of the ordinary artificial media of a positive constitution. It was not a manufacture ready formed, and transmitted to them in that condition from England. The evil arising from hence is this : that the colonists having once found the possibility of enjoying the advantages of order in the midst of a struggle for liberty, such struggles will not henceforward seem so terrible to the settled and sober part of mankind as they had appeared before the trial.

Pursuing the same plan of punishing by the denial of the exercise of government to still greater lengths, we wholly abrogated the ancient government of Massachusetts. We were confident that the first feeling, if not the very prospect of anarchy, would instantly enforce a complete submission. The experiment was tried. A new, strange, unexpected face of things appeared. Anarchy is found tolerable. A vast province has now subsisted, and subsisted in a considerable degree of health and vigour, for near a twelvemonth, without governor, without public council, without judges, without executive magistrates. How long it will continue in this state, or what may arise out of this unheard-of situation, how can the wisest of us conjecture? Our late experience has taught us that many of these fundamental principles, formerly believed infallible, are either not of the importance they were imagined to be, or that we have not at all adverted to some other far more important and far more powerful principles, which entirely overrule those we had considered as omnipotent. I am much against any farther experiments which tend to put to the proof any more of these allowed opinions, which contribute so much to the public tranquillity. In effect, we suffer as much at home by this loosening of all ties, and this concussion of all established opinions, as we do abroad. For, in order to prove that the Americans have no right to their liberties, we are every day endeavouring to subvert the maxims which preserve the whole spirit of our own. To prove that the Americans ought not to be free, we are obliged to depreciate the value of freedom itself; and we never seem to gain a paltry advantage over them in debate without attacking some of those principles or deriding some of those feelings for which our ancestors have shed their blood.

But, sir, in wishing to put an end to pernicious experiments,

I do not mean to preclude the fullest inquiry. Far from it. Far from deciding on a sudden or partial view, I would patiently go round and round the subject, and survey it minutely in every possible aspect. Sir, if I were capable of engaging you to an equal attention, I would state that, as far as I am capable of discerning, there are but three ways of proceeding relative to this stubborn spirit which prevails in your colonies and disturbs your government. These are, to change that spirit, as inconvenient, by removing the causes; to prosecute it as criminal; or to comply with it as necessary. I would not be guilty of an imperfect enumeration. I can think of but these three. Another has, indeed, been started—that of giving up the colonies; but it met so slight a reception that I do not think myself obliged to dwell a great while upon it. It is nothing but a little sally of anger, like the frowardness of peevish children, who, when they cannot get all they would have, are resolved to take nothing.

The *first* of these plans, to change the spirit, as inconvenient, by removing the causes, I think is the most like a systematic proceeding. It is radical in its principle, but it is attended with great difficulties, some of them little short, as I conceive, of impossibilities. This will appear by examining into the plans which have been proposed.

As the growing population of the colonies is evidently one cause of their resistance, it was last session mentioned in both Houses by men of weight, and received not without applause, that, in order to check this evil, it would be proper for the Crown to make no farther grants of land. But to this scheme there are two objections. The first, that there is already so much unsettled land in private hands as to afford room for an immense future population, although the Crown not only withheld its grants, but annihilated its soil. If this be the case, then the only effect of this avarice of desolation, this hoarding of a royal wilderness, would be to raise the value of the possessions in the hands of the great private monopolists without any adequate check to the growing and alarming mischief of population.

But if you stopped your grants, what would be the consequence? The people would occupy without grants. They have already so occupied in many places. You cannot station garrisons in every part of these deserts. If you drive the

people from one place, they will carry on their annual tillage and remove with their flocks and herds to another. Many of the people in the back settlements are already little attached to particular situations. Already they have topped the Appalachian Mountains. From thence they behold before them an immense plain, one vast, rich, level meadow—a square of five hundred miles. Over this they wander without a possibility of restraint. They would change their manners with the habits of their life; would soon forget a government by which they were disowned; would become hordes of English Tartars; and, pouring down upon your unfortified frontiers a fierce and irresistible cavalry, become masters of your governors and your counsellors, your collectors and controllers, and of all the slaves that adhered to them. Such would, and in no long time must be, the effect of attempting to forbid as a crime, and to suppress as an evil, the command and blessing of Providence, “Increase and multiply.” Such would be the happy result of an endeavour to keep as a lair of wild beasts that earth which God, by an express charter, has given to the children of men. Far different, and surely much wiser, has been our policy hitherto. Hitherto we have invited our people, by every kind of bounty, to fixed establishments. We have invited the husbandman to look to authority for his title. We have taught him piously to believe in the mysterious virtue of wax and parchment. We have thrown each tract of land, as it was peopled, into districts, that the ruling power should never be wholly out of sight. We have settled all we could, and we have carefully attended every settlement with government.

Adhering, sir, as I do, to this policy, as well as for the reasons I have just given, I think this new project of hedging in population to be neither prudent nor practicable.

To impoverish the colonies in general, and in particular to arrest the noble course of their marine enterprises, would be a more easy task. I freely confess it. We have shown a disposition to a system of this kind; a disposition even to continue the restraint after the offence, looking on ourselves as rivals to our colonies, and persuaded that of course we must gain all that they shall lose. Much mischief we may certainly do. The power inadequate to all other things is often more than sufficient for this. I do not look on the direct and immediate power of the colonies to resist our violence as very

formidable. In this, however, I may be mistaken. But when I consider that we have colonies for no purpose but to be serviceable to us, it seems to my poor understanding a little preposterous to make them unserviceable in order to keep them obedient. It is, in truth, nothing more than the old, and, as I thought, exploded problem of tyranny, which proposes to beggar its subject into submission. But, remember, when you have completed your system of impoverishment, that nature still proceeds in her ordinary course; that discontent will increase with misery; and that there are critical moments in the fortunes of all states when they who are too weak to contribute to your prosperity may be strong enough to complete your ruin. "*Spoliatis arma supersunt.*"

The temper and character which prevail in our colonies are, I am afraid, unalterable by any human art. We cannot, I fear, falsify the pedigree of this fierce people, and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates. The language in which they would hear you tell them this tale would detect the imposition. Your speech would betray you. An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery.

I think it is nearly as little in our power to change their republican religion as their free descent; or to substitute the Roman Catholic as a penalty, or the Church of England as an improvement. The mode of inquisition and dragooning is going out of fashion in the old world, and I should not confide much to their efficacy in the new. The education of the Americans is also on the same unalterable bottom with their religion. You cannot persuade them to burn their books of curious science; to banish their lawyers from their courts of law; or to quench the lights of their assemblies, by refusing to choose those persons who are best read in their privileges. It would be no less impracticable to think of wholly annihilating the popular assemblies in which these lawyers sit. The army, by which we must govern in their place, would be far more chargeable to us; not quite so effectual; and perhaps, in the end, full as difficult to be kept in obedience.

With regard to the high aristocratic spirit of Virginia and the southern colonies, it has been proposed, I know, to reduce it, by declaring a general enfranchisement of their slaves.

This project has had its advocates and panegyrists, yet I never could argue myself into an opinion of it. Slaves are often much attached to their masters. A general wild offer of liberty would not always be accepted. History furnishes few instances of it. It is sometimes as hard to persuade slaves to be free as it is to compel freemen to be slaves ; and in this auspicious scheme we should have both these pleasing tasks on our hands at once. But when we talk of enfranchisement, do we not perceive that the American master may enfranchise too, and arm servile hands in defence of freedom ? A measure to which other people have had recourse more than once, and not without success, in a desperate situation of their affairs.

Slaves as these unfortunate black people are, and dull as all men are from slavery, must they not a little suspect the offer of freedom from that very nation which has sold them to their present masters ? From that nation, one of whose causes of quarrel with those masters is their refusal to deal any more in that inhuman traffic ? An offer of freedom from England would come rather oddly, shipped to them in an African vessel, which is refused an entry into the ports of Virginia or Carolina, with a cargo of three hundred Angola negroes. It would be curious to see the Guinea captain attempt at the same instant to publish his proclamation of liberty and to advertise the sale of slaves.

But let us suppose all these moral difficulties got over. The ocean remains. You cannot pump this dry ; and as long as it continues in its present bed, so long all the causes which weaken authority by distance will continue.

“Ye gods ! annihilate but space and time,
And make two lovers happy !”

was a pious and passionate prayer, but just as reasonable as many of these serious wishes of very grave and solemn politicians.

If then, sir, it seems almost desperate to think of any alternative course for changing the moral causes (and not quite easy to remove the natural) which produce the prejudices irreconcilable to the late exercise of our authority, but that the spirit infallibly will continue, and, continuing, will produce such effects as now embarrass us, the *second* mode under consideration is to prosecute that spirit in its overt acts as *criminal*.

At this proposition I must pause a moment, The thing seems a great deal too big for my ideas of jurisprudence. It should seem, to my way of conceiving such matters, that there is a very wide difference in reason and policy between the mode of proceeding on the irregular conduct of scattered individuals, or even of bands of men, who disturb order within the State, and the civil dissensions which may, from time to time, on great questions, agitate the several communities which compose a great empire. It looks to me to be narrow and pedantic to apply the ordinary ideas of criminal justice to this great public contest. I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people. I cannot insult and ridicule the feelings of millions of my fellow-creatures, as Sir Edward Coke insulted one excellent individual at the bar. I am not ripe to pass sentence on the gravest public bodies, intrusted with magistracies of great authority and dignity, and charged with the safety of their fellow-citizens upon the very same title that I am. I really think that, for wise men, this is not judicious ; for sober men, not decent ; for minds tinctured with humanity, not mild and merciful.

Perhaps, sir, I am mistaken in my idea of an empire, as distinguished from a single state or kingdom. But my idea of it is this : that an empire is the aggregate of many states, under one common head, whether this head be a monarch or a presiding republic. It does, in such constitutions, frequently happen (and nothing but the dismal, cold, dead uniformity of servitude can prevent its happening) that the subordinate parts have many local privileges and immunities. Between these privileges and the supreme common authority, the line may be extremely nice. Of course, disputes—often, too, very bitter disputes, and much ill blood, will arise. But, though every privilege is an exemption in the case, from the ordinary exercise of the supreme authority, it is no denial of it. The claim of a privilege seems rather, *ex vi termini*, to imply a superior power ; for to talk of the privileges of a state or of a person who has no superior, is hardly any better than speaking nonsense. Now, in such unfortunate quarrels among the component parts of a great political union of communities, I can scarcely conceive anything more completely imprudent than for the head of the empire to insist that, if any privilege is pleaded against his will or his acts, that his *whole* authority

is denied ; instantly to proclaim rebellion, to beat to arms, and to put the offending provinces under the ban. Will not this, sir, very soon teach the provinces to make no distinctions on their part ? Will it not teach them that the government against which a claim of liberty is tantamount to high treason, is a government to which submission is equivalent to slavery ? It may not always be quite convenient to impress dependent communities with such an idea.

We are, indeed, in all disputes with the colonies, by the necessity of things, the judge. It is true, sir ; but I confess that the character of judge in my own cause is a thing that frightens me. Instead of filling me with pride, I am exceedingly humbled by it. I cannot proceed with a stern, assured, judicial confidence until I find myself in something more like a judicial character. I must have these hesitations as long as I am compelled to recollect that, in my little reading upon such contests as these, the sense of mankind has at least as often decided against the superior as the subordinate power. Sir, let me add, too, that the opinion of my having some abstract right in my favour would not put me much at my ease in passing sentence, unless I could be sure that there were no rights which, in their exercise under certain circumstances, were not the most odious of all wrongs, and the most vexatious of all injustice. Sir, these considerations have great weight with me when I find things so circumstanced that I see the same party at once a civil litigant against me in point of right and a culprit before me ; while I sit as criminal judge on acts of his whose moral quality is to be decided on upon the merits of that very litigation. Men are every now and then put, by the complexity of human affairs, into strange situations ; but justice is the same, let the judge be in what situation he will.

There is, sir, also a circumstance which convinces me that this mode of criminal proceeding is not, at least in the present stage of our contest, altogether expedient, which is nothing less than the conduct of those very persons who have seemed to adopt that mode by lately declaring a rebellion in Massachusetts Bay, as they had formerly addressed to have traitors brought hither, under an Act of Henry the Eighth, for trial. For, though rebellion is declared, it is not proceeded against as such ; nor have any steps been taken toward the apprehension or conviction of any individual offender, either

on our late or our former address ; but modes of *public* coercion have been adopted, and such as have much more resemblance to a sort of qualified hostility toward an independent power than the punishment of rebellious subjects. All this seems rather inconsistent ; but it shows how difficult it is to apply these judicial ideas to our present case.

In this situation, let us seriously and coolly ponder. What is it we have got by all our menaces, which have been many and ferocious ? What advantage have we derived from the penal laws we have passed, and which, for the time, have been severe and numerous ? What advances have we made toward our object by the sending of a force which, by land and sea, is no contemptible strength ? Has the disorder abated ? Nothing less. When I see things in this situation, after such confident hopes, bold promises, and active exertions, I cannot for my life avoid a suspicion that the plan itself is not correctly right.

If, then, the removal of the causes of this spirit of American liberty be for the greater part, or rather entirely, impracticable ; if the ideas of criminal process be inapplicable, or, if applicable, are in the highest degree inexpedient, what way yet remains ? No way is open but the third and last—to comply with the American spirit as necessary, or, if you please, to submit to it as a necessary evil.

If we adopt this mode, if we mean to conciliate and concede, let us see, of what nature the concessions ought to be. To ascertain the nature of our concession we must look at their complaint. The colonies complain that they have not the characteristic mark and seal of British freedom. They complain that they are taxed in Parliament in which they are not represented. If you mean to satisfy them at all, you must satisfy them with regard to this complaint. If you mean to please any people, you must give them the boon which they ask ; not what you may think better for them, but of a kind totally different. Such an act may be a wise regulation, but it is no concession, whereas our present theme is the mode of giving satisfaction.

Sir, I think you must perceive that I am resolved this day to have nothing at all to do with the question of the right of taxation. Some gentlemen startle, but it is true. I put it totally out of the question. It is less than nothing in my

consideration. I do not, indeed, wonder, nor will you, sir, that gentlemen of profound learning are fond of displaying it on this profound subject. But my consideration is narrow, confined, and wholly limited to the policy of the question. I do not examine whether the giving away a man's money be a power excepted and reserved out of the general trust of government, and how far all mankind, in all forms of polity, are entitled to an exercise of that right by the charter of nature ; or whether, on the contrary, a right of taxation is necessarily involved in the general principle of legislation, and inseparable from the ordinary supreme power. These are deep questions, where great names militate against each other ; where reason is perplexed ; and an appeal to authorities only thickens the confusion ; for high and reverend authorities lift up their heads on both sides, and there is no sure footing in the middle. The point is

“ That Sorbornian bog
Betwixt Pamietta and Mount Cassius old,
Where armies whole have sunk.”

I do not intend to be overwhelmed in this bog, though in such respectable company. The question with me is, not whether you have a right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not your interest to make them happy. It is not what a lawyer tells me I *may* do, but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I *ought* to do. Is a politic act the worse for being a generous one ? Is no concession proper but that which is made from your want of right to keep what you grant ? Or does it lessen the grace or dignity of relaxing in the exercise of an odious claim, because you have your evidence-room full of titles, and your magazines stuffed with arms to enforce them ? What signify all those titles and all those arms ? Of what avail are they when the reason of the thing tells me that the assertion of my title is the loss of my suit, and that I could do nothing but wound myself by the use of my own weapons ?

Such is steadfastly my opinion of the absolute necessity of keeping up the concord of this empire by a unity of spirit, though in a diversity of operations, that, if I were sure the colonists had, at their leaving this country, sealed a regular compact of servitude ; they had solemnly abjured all the rights of citizens ; that they had made a vow to renounce all ideas of liberty for them and their posterity to all generations,

yet I should hold myself obliged to conform to the temper I found universally prevalent in my own day, and to govern two millions of men, impatient of servitude, on the principles of freedom. I am not determining a point of law. I am restoring tranquillity, and the general character and situation of a people must determine what sort of government is fitted for them. That point nothing else can or ought to determine.

My idea, therefore, without considering whether we yield as matter of right, or grant as matter of favour, is *to admit the people of our colonies into an interest in the Constitution*, and, by recording that admission in the journals of Parliament, to give them as strong an assurance as the nature of the thing will admit, that we mean for ever to adhere to that solemn declaration of systematic indulgence.

Some years ago, the repeal of a revenue Act, upon its understood principle, might have served to show that we intended an unconditional abatement of the exercise of a taxing power. Such a measure was then sufficient to remove all suspicion, and to give perfect content. But unfortunate events, since that time, may make something farther necessary, and not more necessary for the satisfaction of the colonies, than for the dignity and consistency of our own future proceedings.

I have taken a very incorrect measure of the disposition of the House, if this proposal in itself would be received with dislike. I think, sir, we have few American financiers. But our misfortune is, we are too acute; we are too exquisite in our conjectures of the future, for men oppressed with such great and present evils. The more moderate among the opposers of parliamentary concessions freely confess that they hope no good from taxation, but they apprehend the colonists have farther views, and, if this point were conceded, they would instantly attack the Trade Laws. These gentlemen are convinced that this was the intention from the beginning, and the quarrel of the Americans with taxation was no more than a cloak and cover to this design. Such has been the language even of a gentleman [Mr. Rice] of real moderation, and of a natural temper well adjusted to fair and equal government. I am, however, sir, not a little surprised at this kind of discourse, whenever I hear it; and I am the more surprised, on account of the arguments which I constantly find in company

with it, and which are often urged from the same mouths and on the same day.

For instance, when we allege that it is against reason to tax a people under so many restraints in trade as the Americans, the noble lord in the blue ribbon shall tell you that the restraints on trade are futile and useless ; of no advantage to us, and of no burden to those on whom they are imposed ; that the trade of America is not secured by the acts of navigation, but by the natural and irresistible advantage of a commercial preference.

Such is the merit of the trade laws in this posture of the debate. But when strong internal circumstances are urged against the taxes ; when the scheme is dissected ; when experience and the nature of things are brought to prove, and do prove, the utter impossibility of obtaining an effective revenue from the colonies ; when these things are pressed, or rather press themselves, so as to drive the advocates of colony taxes to a clear admission of the futility of the scheme ; then, sir, the sleeping trade laws revive from their trance and this useless taxation is to be kept sacred, not for its own sake, but as a counterguard and security of the laws of trade.

Then, sir, you keep up revenue laws, which are mischievous, in order to preserve trade laws that are useless. Such is the wisdom of our plan in both its members. They are separately given up as of no value, and yet one is always to be defended for the sake of the other. But I cannot agree with the noble lord, nor with the pamphlet from whence he seems to have borrowed these ideas, concerning the inutility of the trade laws ; for, without idolizing them, I am sure they are still, in many ways, of great use to us ; and in former times, they have been of the greatest. They do confine, and they do greatly narrow the market for the Americans ; but my perfect conviction of this does not help me in the least to discern how the revenue laws form any security whatsoever to the commercial regulations, or that these commercial regulations are the true ground of the quarrel, or that the giving way in any one instance of authority is to lose all that may remain unconceded.

One fact is clear and indisputable. The public and avowed origin of this quarrel was on taxation. This quarrel has, indeed, brought on new disputes on new questions, but certainly the least bitter, and the fewest of all, on the trade laws. To

judge which of the two be the real radical cause of quarrel, we have to see whether the commercial dispute did, in order of time, precede the dispute on taxation. There is not a shadow of evidence for it. Next, to enable us to judge whether at this moment a dislike to the trade laws be the real cause of quarrel, it is absolutely necessary to put the taxes out of the question by a repeal. See how the Americans act in this position, and then you will be able to discern correctly what is the true object of the controversy, or whether any controversy at all will remain. Unless you consent to remove this cause of difference, it is impossible, with decency, to assert that the dispute is not upon what it is avowed to be. And I would, sir, recommend to your serious consideration, whether it be prudent to form a rule punishing people, not on their own acts, but on your conjectures. Surely it is preposterous at the very best. It is not justifying your anger by their misconduct, but it is converting your ill-will into their delinquency.

But the colonies will go farther. Alas! alas! when will this speculating against fact and reason end? What will quiet these panic fears which we entertain of the hostile effect of a conciliatory conduct? Is it true that no case can exist in which it is proper for the Sovereign to accede to the desires of his discontented subjects? Is there anything peculiar in this case to make a rule for itself? Is all authority of course lost, when it is not pushed to the extreme? Is it a certain maxim, that the fewer causes of dissatisfaction are left by government the more the subject will be inclined to resist and rebel?

All these objections being, in fact, no more than suspicions, conjectures, divinations, formed in defiance of fact and experience, they did not, sir, discourage me from entertaining the idea of a conciliatory concession, founded on the principles which I have first stated.

In forming a plan for this purpose, I endeavour to put myself in that frame of mind which was the most natural and the most reasonable, and which was certainly the most probable means of securing me from all error. I set out with a perfect distrust of my own abilities; a total renunciation of every speculation of my own; and with a profound reverence for the wisdom of our ancestors, who have left us the inheritance

of so happy a constitution and so flourishing an empire, and, what is a thousand times more valuable, the treasury of the maxims and principles which formed the one and obtained the other.

During the reigns of the Kings of Spain of the Austrian family, whenever they were at a loss in the Spanish councils, it was common for their statesmen to say, that they ought to consult the genius of Philip the Second. The genius of Philip the Second might mislead them ; and the issue of their affairs showed that they had not chosen the most perfect standard. But, sir, I am sure that I shall not be misled, when, in a case of constitutional difficulty, I consult the genius of the English Constitution. Consulting at that oracle (it was with all due humility and piety), I found four capable examples in a similar case before me : those of Ireland, Wales, Chester, and Durham.

Ireland, before the English conquest, though never governed by a despotic power, had no Parliament. How far the English Parliament itself was at that time modelled according to the present form, is disputed among antiquarians. But we have all the reason in the world to be assured, that a form of Parliament, such as England then enjoyed, she instantly communicated to Ireland ; and we are equally sure that almost every successive improvement in constitutional liberty, as fast as it was made here, was transmitted thither. The feudal baronage and the feudal knighthood, the rights of our primitive constitution, were early transplanted into that soil, and grew and flourished there. Magna Charta, if it did not give us originally the House of Commons, gave us, at least, a House of Commons of weight and consequence. But your ancestors did not churlishly sit down alone to the feast of Magna Charta. Ireland was made immediately a partaker. This benefit of English laws and liberties, I confess, was not at first extended to *all* Ireland. Mark the consequence. English authority and English liberty had exactly the same boundaries. Your standard could never be advanced an inch before your privileges. Sir John Davis shows beyond a doubt, that the refusal of a general communication of these rights was the true cause why Ireland was five hundred years in subduing ; and after the vain projects of a military government, attempted in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it was soon discovered that nothing could make that country English, in civility and allegiance,

but your laws and your forms of legislature. It was not English arms, but the English Constitution, that conquered Ireland. From that time, Ireland has ever had a general Parliament, as she had before a partial Parliament. You changed the people; you altered the religion; but you never touched the form or the vital substance of free government in that kingdom. You deposed kings; you restored them; you altered the succession to theirs, as well as to your own crown; but you never altered their Constitution; the principle of which was respected by usurpation; restored with the restoration of monarchy, and established, I trust, forever, by the glorious revolution. This has made Ireland the great and flourishing Kingdom that it is; and from a disgrace and a burden intolerable to this nation, has rendered her a principal part of our strength and ornament. This country cannot be said to have ever formally taxed her. The irregular things done in the confusion of mighty troubles, and on the hinge of great revolutions, even if all were done that is said to have been done, form no example. If they have any effect in argument, they make an exception to prove the rule. None of your own liberties could stand a moment if the casual deviations from them, at such times, were suffered to be used as proofs of their nullity. By the lucrative amount of such casual breaches in the Constitution, judge what the state and fixed rule of supply has been in that Kingdom. Your Irish pensioners would starve, if they had no other fund to live on than taxes granted by English authority. Turn your eyes to those popular grants from whence all your great supplies are come, and learn to respect that only source of public wealth in the British Empire.

My next example is Wales. This country was said to be reduced by Henry the Third. It was said more truly to be so by Edward the First. But though then conquered, it was not looked upon as any part of the realm of England. Its old Constitution, whatever that might have been, was destroyed, and no good one was substituted in its place. The care of that tract was put into the hands of Lords Marchers—a form of government of a very singular kind; a strange heterogeneous monster, something between hostility and government; perhaps it has a sort of resemblance, according to the modes of those times, to that of Commander-in-Chief at present, to whom all civil power is granted as secondary. The manners

of the Welsh nation followed the genius of the government. The people were ferocious, restive, savage, and uncultivated ; sometimes composed, never pacified. Wales, within itself, was in perpetual disorder ; and it kept the frontier of England in perpetual alarm. Benefits from it to the State there were none. Wales was only known to England by incursion and invasion.

Sir, during that state of things, Parliament was not idle. They attempted to subdue the fierce spirit of the Welsh by all sorts of rigorous laws. They prohibited by statute the sending all sorts of arms into Wales, as you prohibit by proclamation (with something more of doubt on the legality) the sending arms to America. They disarmed the Welsh by statute, as you attempted (but still with more questions on the legality) to disarm New England by an instruction. They made an act to drag offenders from Wales into England for trial, as you have done (but with more hardship) with regard to America. By another act, where one of the parties was an Englishman, they ordained that his trial should be always by English. They made acts to restrain trade, as you do ; and they prevented the Welsh from the use of fairs and markets, as you do the Americans from fisheries and foreign ports. In short, when the statute-book was not quite so much swelled as it is now, you find no less than fifteen acts of penal regulation on the subject of Wales.

Here we rub our hands—a fine body of precedents for the authority of Parliament and the use of it—I admit it fully ; and pray add likewise to these precedents, that all the while Wales rid this Kingdom like an *incubus* ; that it was an unprofitable and oppressive burden ; and that an Englishman travelling in that country could not go six yards from the high road without being murdered.

The march of the human mind is slow. Sir, it was not until after two hundred years discovered that, by an eternal law, Providence had decreed vexation to violence, and poverty to rapine. Your ancestors did, however, at length open their eyes to the ill husbandry of injustice. They found that the tyranny of a free people could of all tyrannies the least be endured, and that laws made against a whole nation were not the most effectual methods for securing its obedience. Accordingly, in the twenty-seventh year of Henry the Eighth, the

course was entirely altered. With a preamble stating the entire and perfect rights of the Crown of England, it gave to the Welsh all the rights and privileges of English subjects. A political order was established; the military power gave way to the civil; the marches were turned into counties. But that a nation should have a right to English liberties, and yet no share at all in the fundamental security of these liberties, the grant of their own property, seemed a thing so incongruous, that, eight years after, that is, in the thirty-fifth of that reign, a complete and not ill-proportioned representation by counties and boroughs was bestowed upon Wales by Act of Parliament. From that moment, as by a charm, the tumults subsided; obedience was restored; peace, order, and civilization followed in the train of liberty. When the day-star of the English Constitution had arisen in their hearts, all was harmony within and without.

" Simul alba nautis
 Stella refulsit,
 Defluit saxis agitatus humor;
 Concidunt venti, fugiuntque nubes;
 Et minax (quod sic voluere) ponto
 Unda recumbit."

The very same year the county palatine of Chester received the same relief from its oppressions and the same remedy to its disorders. Before this time Chester was little less dis-tempered than Wales. The inhabitants, without rights themselves, were the fittest to destroy the rights of others; and from thence Richard the Second drew the standing army of archers with which for a time he oppressed England. The people of Chester applied to Parliament in a petition penned as I shall read to you:

"To the King, our sovereign lord, in most humble wise shown unto your excellent Majesty, the inhabitants of your Grace's county palatine of Chester; that where the said county palatine of Chester is and hath been always hitherto exempt, excluded and separated out and from your high court of Parliament, to have any knights and burgesses within the said court; by reason whereof the said inhabitants have hitherto sustained manifold disherisons, losses, and damages, as well in their lands, goods, and bodies, as in the good, civil, and politic governance and maintenance of the Commonwealth of the said country. (2) And, forasmuch as the said inhabitants have always hitherto been bound by the acts and statutes made and ordained by your said highness and your most noble progenitors, by authority of the said court, as

far forth as other counties, cities, and boroughs have been, that have had their Knights and burgesses within your said court of Parliament, and yet have had neither Knight nor burgess there for the said county palatine; the said inhabitants, for lack thereof, have been oftentimes touched and grieved with acts and statutes made within the said court, as well derogatory unto the most ancient jurisdictions, liberties, and privileges of your said county palatine, as prejudicial unto the Commonwealth, quietness, rest, and peace of your Grace's most bounden subjects inhabiting within the same."

What did Parliament with this audacious address? Reject it as a libel? Treat it as an affront to government? Spurn it as a derogation from the rights of legislature? Did they toss it over the table? Did they burn it by the hands of the common hangman? They took the petition of grievance, all rugged as it was, without softening or temperment, unpurged of the original bitterness and indignation of complaint; they made it the very preamble to their act of redress, and consecrated its principle to all ages in the sanctuary of legislation.

Here is my third example: It was attended with the successes of the two former. Chester, civilized as well as Wales, has demonstrated that freedom, and not servitude, is the cure of anarchy, as religion, and not atheism, is the true remedy for superstition. Sir, this pattern of Chester was followed in the reign of Charles the Second with regard to the county palatine of Durham, which is my fourth example. This county had long lain out of the pale of free legislation. So scrupulously was the example of Chester followed, that the style of the preamble is nearly the same with that of the Chester Act; and without affecting the abstract extent of the authority of Parliament, it recognizes the equity of not suffering any considerable district in which the British subjects may act as a body to be taxed without their own voice in the grant.

Now, if the doctrines of policy contained in these preambles, and the force of these examples in the Acts of Parliament, avail anything, what can be said against applying them with regard to America? Are not the people of America as much Englishmen as the Welsh? The preamble of the Act of Henry the Eighth says, the Welsh speak a language no way resembling that of his Majesty's English subjects. Are the Americans not as numerous? If we may trust the learned and accurate Judge Barington's account of North Wales, and take that as a standard

to measure the rest, there is no comparison. The people cannot amount to above 200,000; not a tenth part of the number in the colonies. Is America in rebellion? Wales was hardly ever free from it. Have you attempted to govern America by penal statutes? You made fifteen for Wales. But your legislative authority is perfect with regard to America. Was it less perfect in Wales, Chester, and Durham? But America is virtually represented. What! does the electric force of virtual representation more easily pass over the Atlantic than pervade Wales, which lies in your neighbourhood; or than Chester and Durham, surrounded by abundance of representation that is actual and palpable? But, sir, your ancestors thought this sort of virtual representation, however ample, to be totally insufficient for the freedom of the inhabitants of territories that are so near, and comparatively so inconsiderable. How, then, can I think it sufficient for those which are infinitely greater and infinitely more remote?

You will now, sir, perhaps imagine that I am on the point of proposing to you a scheme for representation of the colonies in Parliament. Perhaps I might be inclined to entertain some such thought, but a great flood stops me in my course. *Opposuit natura*. I cannot remove the eternal barriers of the creation. The thing in that mode I do not know to be possible. As I meddle with no theory, I do not absolutely assert the impracticability of such a representation; but I do not see my way to it; and those who have been more confident have not been more successful. However, the arm of public benevolence is not shortened, and there are often several means to the same end. What nature has disjoined in one way wisdom may unite in another. When we cannot give the benefit as we would wish, let us not refuse it altogether. If we cannot give the principal, let us find a substitute. But how? Where? What substitute?

Fortunately I am not obliged for the ways and means of this substitute to tax my own unproductive invention. I am not even obliged to go to the rich treasury of the fertile framers of imaginary Commonwealths; not to the Republic of Plato, not to the Utopia of More, not to the Oceana of Harrington. It is before me. It is at my feet.

“ And the dull swain
Treads daily on it with his clouted shoon.”

I only wish you to recognise, for the theory, the ancient constitutional policy of this Kingdom with regard to representation, as that policy has been declared in Acts of Parliament ; and, as to the practice, to return to that mode which a uniform experience has marked out to you as best, and in which you walked with security, advantage, and honour, until the year 1763.

My resolutions, therefore, mean to establish the equity and justice of a taxation of America, by *grant* and not by *imposition*. To mark the *legal competency* of the colony assemblies for the support of their government in peace, and for public aids in time of war. To acknowledge that this legal competency has had a *dutiful and beneficial exercise* ; and that experience has shown the *benefit of their grants*, and the *futility of Parliamentary taxation as a method of supply*.

These solid truths compose six fundamental propositions. There are three more resolutions corollary to these. If you admit the first set, you can hardly reject the others. But if you admit the first, I shall be far from solicitous whether you accept or refuse the last. I think these six massive pillars will be of strength sufficient to support the temple of British concord. I have no more doubt than I entertain of my existence, that, if you admitted these, you would command an immediate peace ; and, with but tolerable future management, a lasting obedience in America. I am not arrogant in this confident assurance. The propositions are all mere matters of fact ; and if they are such facts as draw irresistible conclusions even in the stating, this is the power of truth, and not any management of mine.

Sir, I shall open the whole plan to you together with such observations on the motions as may tend to illustrate them where they may want explanation. The first is a resolution :

“ That the colonies and plantations of Great Britain in North America consisting of fourteen separate governments, and containing two millions and upwards of free inhabitants, have not had the liberty and privilege of electing and sending any Knights and burgesses or others to represent them in the high court of Parliament.”

That is a plain matter of fact, necessary to be laid down, and (excepting the description) it is laid down in the language of the Constitution : it is taken nearly *verbatim* from Acts of Parliament.

The second is like unto the first :

“That the said colonies and plantations have been liable to and bounden by several subsidies, payments, rates, and taxes, given and granted by Parliament, though the said colonies and plantations have not their Knights and burgesses in the said high court of Parliament, of their own election, to represent the condition of their country; by lack whereof they have been oftentimes touched and grieved by subsidies given, granted, and assented to, in said court, in a manner prejudicial to the Commonwealth, quietness, rest, and peace of the subjects inhabiting within the same.”

Is this description too hot or too cold, too strong or too weak? Does it arrogate too much to the Supreme Legislature? Does it lean too much to the claims of the people? If it runs into any of these errors, the fault is not mine. It is the language of your own ancient Acts of Parliament.

“Nec meus hic sermo est sed quæ præcipit Ofellus Rusticus, abnormis sapiens.”

It is the genuine produce of the ancient, rustic, manly, home-bred sense of this country. I did not dare to rub off a particle of the venerable rust that rather adorns and preserves, than destroys the metal. It would be a profanation to touch with a tool the stones which construct the sacred altar of peace. I would not violate with modern polish the ingenious and noble roughness of these truly constitutional materials. Above all things, I was resolved not to be guilty of tampering, the odious vice of restless and unstable minds. I put my foot in the tracks of our forefathers, where I can neither wander nor stumble. Determining to fix articles of peace, I was resolved not to be wise beyond what was written; I was resolved to use nothing else than the form of sound words, to let others abound in their own sense, and carefully to abstain from all expressions of my own. What the law has said, I say. In all things else I am silent. I have no organ but for her words. This, if it be not ingenious, I am sure, is safe.

There are, indeed, words expressive of grievance in this second resolution, which those who are resolved always to be in the right will deny to contain matter of fact, as applied to the present case, although Parliament thought them true with regard to the counties of Chester and Durham. They will deny that the Americans were ever “touched and grieved” with the taxes. If they considered nothing in taxes but their

weight as pecuniary impositions, there might be some pretence for this denial. But men may be sorely touched and deeply grieved in their privileges as well as in their purses. They may lose little in property by the Act which takes away all their freedom. When a man is robbed of a trifle on the highway, it is not the twopence lost that constitutes the capital outrage. This is not confined to privileges. Even ancient indulgences withdrawn, without offence on the part of those who enjoy such favours, operate as grievances. But were the Americans then not touched and grieved by the taxes, in some measure merely as taxes? If so, why were they almost all either wholly repealed or exceedingly reduced? Were they not touched and grieved, even by the regulating duties of the sixth of George the Second? Else why were the duties first reduced to one-third in 1764, and afterwards to a third of that third in the year 1766? Were they not touched and grieved by the Stamp Act? I shall say they were, until that tax is revived. Were they not touched and grieved by the duties of 1767, which were likewise repealed, and which Lord Hillsborough tells you, for the ministry, were laid contrary to the true principles of commerce? Is not the assurance given by that noble person to the colonies of a resolution to lay no more taxes on them, an admission that taxes would touch and grieve them? Is not the resolution of the noble lord in the blue ribbon, now standing on your journals, the strongest of all proofs that Parliamentary subsidies really touched and grieved them? Else why all these changes, modifications, repeals, assurances, and resolutions?

The next proposition is :

“That, from the distance of the said colonies, and from other circumstances, no method hath hitherto been devised for procuring a representation in Parliament for the said colonies.”

This is an assertion of a fact. I go no farther on the paper ; though in my private judgment, a useful representation is impossible ; I am sure it is not desired by them, nor ought it, perhaps, by us, but I abstain from opinions.

The fourth resolution is :

“That each of the said colonies hath within itself a body chosen in part or in the whole, by the freemen, freeholders, or other free inhabitants thereof, commonly called the General Assembly, with powers

legally to raise, levy, and assess, according to the several usages of such colonies, duties and taxes toward the defraying all sorts of public services."

This competence in the colony assemblies is certain. It is proved by the whole tenor of their acts of supply in all the assemblies, in which the constant style of granting is, "an aid to his Majesty"; and acts granting to the Crown have regularly for near a century passed the public offices without dispute. Those who have been pleased paradoxically to deny this right, holding that none but the British Parliament can grant to the Crown, are wished to look to what is done, not only in the colonies, but in Ireland, in one uniform, unbroken tenor every session.

Sir, I am surprised that this doctrine should come from some of the law servants of the Crown. I say that if the Crown could be responsible, his Majesty—but certainly the ministers, and even these law officers themselves, through whose hands the Acts pass biennially in Ireland, or annually in the colonies, are in a habitual course of committing impeachable offences. What habitual offenders have been all presidents of the council, all secretaries of State, all first lords of trade, all attorneys, and all solicitors-general! However, they are safe, as no one impeaches them; and there is no ground of charge against them, except in their own unfounded theories.

The fifth resolution is also a resolution of fact:

"That the said General Assemblies, General Courts, or other bodies legally qualified as aforesaid, have at sundry times freely granted several large subsidies and public aids for his Majesty's service, according to their abilities, when required thereto by letter from one of his Majesty's principal secretaries of State. And that their right to grant the same, and their cheerfulness and sufficiency in the said grants, have been at sundry times acknowledged by Parliament."

To say nothing of their great expenses in the Indian wars; and not to take their exertion in foreign ones, so high as the supplies in the year 1695, not to go back to their public contributions in the year 1710, I shall begin to travel only where the journals give me light; resolving to deal in nothing but fact authenticated by Parliamentary record, and to build myself wholly on that solid basis.

On the 4th of April, 1748, a committee of this House came to the following resolution:

“ *Resolved*, That it is the opinion of this committee, *that it is just and reasonable* that the several provinces and colonies of Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island be reimbursed the expenses they have been at in taking and securing to the Crown of Great Britain, the Island of Cape Breton, and its dependencies.”

These expenses were immense for such colonies. They were above £200,000 sterling ; money first raised and advanced on their public credit.

On the 28th of January, 1756, a message from the King came to us to this effect :

“ His Majesty being sensible of the zeal and vigour with which his faithful subjects of certain colonies in North America have exerted themselves in defence of his Majesty’s just rights and possessions, recommends it to this House to take the same into their consideration, and to enable his Majesty to give them such assistance as may be a *proper reward and encouragement*.”

On the 3rd of February, 1756, the House came to a suitable resolution, expressed in words nearly the same as those of the message ; but with the farther addition, that the money then voted was an *encouragement* to the colonies to exert themselves with vigour. It will not be necessary to go through all the testimonies which your own records have given to the truth of my resolutions. I will only refer you to the places in the journals : Vol. xxvii, 16th and 19th May, 1757 ; Vol. xxviii, June 1st, 1758 ; April 26th and 30th, 1759 ; March 26th and 31st, and April 28th, 1760 ; January 9th and 20th, 1761 ; Vol. xxix, January 9th and 20th, 1761 ; Vol. xxx, January 22nd and 26th, 1762 ; March 14th and 17th, 1763.

Sir, here is the repeated acknowledgment of Parliament, that the colonies not only gave, but gave to satiety. This nation has formally acknowledged two things : first, that the colonies had gone beyond their abilities, Parliament having thought it necessary to reimburse them ; secondly, that they had acted legally and laudably in their grants of money, and their maintenance of troops, since the compensation is expressly given as reward and encouragement. Reward is not bestowed for acts that are unlawful ; and encouragement is not held out to things that deserve reprehension. My resolution, therefore, does nothing more than collect into one proposition what is scattered through your journals. I give you nothing but your own, and you cannot refuse in the gross what you have so often acknowledged in detail. The admission of this, which will be

so honourable to them and to you, will, indeed, be mortal to all the miserable stories by which the passions of the misguided people have been engaged in an unhappy system. The people heard, indeed, from the beginning of these disputes, one thing continually dinned in their ears, that reason and justice demanded that the Americans, who paid no taxes, should be compelled to contribute. How did that fact of their paying nothing stand when the taxing system began? When Mr. Grenville began to form his system of American revenue, he stated in this House that the colonies were then in debt two million six hundred thousand pounds sterling money, and was of opinion they would discharge that debt in four years. On this state, those untaxed people were actually subject to the payment of taxes to the amount of six hundred and fifty thousand a year. In fact, however, Mr. Grenville was mistaken. The funds given for sinking the debt did not prove quite so ample as both the colonies and he expected. The calculation was too sanguine: the reduction was not completed till some years after, and at different times in different colonies. However, the taxes after the war continued too great to bear any addition, with prudence or propriety; and when the burdens imposed in consequence of former requisitions were discharged, our tone became too high to resort again to requisition. No colony, since that time, ever has had any requisition whatsoever made to it.

We see the sense of the Crown, and the sense of Parliament on the productive nature of a *revenue by grant*. Now search the same journals for the produce of the *revenue by imposition*. Where is it? Let us know the volume and the page. What is the gross, what is the net produce? To what service is it applied? How have you appropriated its surplus? What, can none of the many skilful index-makers that we are now employing, find any trace of it? Well, let them and that rest together. But, are the journals, which say nothing of the revenue, as silent on the discontent? Oh, no! a child may find it. It is the melancholy burden and blot of every page.

I think, then, I am, from those journals, justified in the sixth and last resolution, which is:

“ That it hath been found by experience that the manner of granting the said supplies and aids, by the said general assemblies, hath been more agreeable to the said colonies, and more beneficial and conducive

to the public service, than the mode of giving and granting aids in Parliament, to be raised and paid in the said colonies."

This makes the whole of the fundamental part of the plan. The conclusion is irresistible. You cannot say that you were driven by any necessity to an exercise of the utmost rights of legislature. You cannot assert that you took on yourselves the task of imposing colony taxes, from the want of another legal body, that is competent to the purpose of supplying the exigencies of the State without wounding the prejudices of the people. Neither is it true that the body so qualified, and having that competence, had neglected the duty.

The question now on all this accumulated matter, is whether you will choose to abide by a profitable experience, or a mischievous theory; whether you choose to build on imagination or fact; whether you prefer enjoyment or hope; satisfaction in your subjects or discontent?

If these propositions are accepted, everything which has been made to enforce a contrary system must, I take it for granted, fall along with it. On that ground I have drawn the following resolution, which, when it comes to be moved, will naturally be divided in a proper manner:

"That it may be proper to repeal an act, made in the seventh year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled An Act for granting certain duties in the British colonies and plantations in America; for allowing a drawback of the duties of customs upon the exportation from this Kingdom of coffee and cocoa-nuts of the produce of the said colonies or plantations; for discontinuing the drawbacks payable on China earthenware exported to America, and for more effectually preventing the clandestine running of goods in the said colonies and plantations; and that it may be proper to repeal an act, made in the fourteenth year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled, An Act to discontinue, in such manner, and for such time as are therein mentioned, the landing and discharging, lading, or shipping, of goods, wares, and merchandise, at the town and within the harbour of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts Bay, in North America; and that it may be proper to repeal an act, made in the fourteenth year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled, An Act for the impartial administration of justice in the cases of persons questioned for any acts done by them in the execution of the law, or for the suppression of riots and tumults in the province of Massachusetts Bay, in New England; and that it may be proper to repeal an act, made in the fourteenth year of the reign of his present Majesty, entitled, An Act for the better regulating the government of the province of Massachusetts Bay, in New England; and also, that it may be proper to explain and amend an act, made in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of King Henry the Eighth, entitled, An Act for the trial of treasons committed out of the King's dominions."

I wish, sir, to repeal the Boston Port Bill, because (independently of the dangers precedent of suspending the rights of the subject during the King's pleasure) it was passed, as I apprehend, with less regularity, and on more partial principles, than it ought. The corporation of Boston was not heard before it was condemned. Other towns, full as guilty as she was, have not had their ports blocked up. Even the restraining bill by the present session does not go to the length of the Boston Port Act. The same ideas of prudence which induced you not to extend equal punishment to equal guilt, even when you were punishing, induce me, who mean not to chastise, but to reconcile, to be satisfied with the punishment already partially inflicted.

Ideas of prudence, and accommodation to circumstances, prevent you from taking away the charters of Connecticut and Rhode Island, as you have taken away that of Massachusetts Colony, though the Crown has far less power in the two former provinces than it enjoyed in the latter; and though the abuses have been full as great and as flagrant in the exempted as in the punished. The same reasons of prudence and accommodation have weight with me in restoring the charter of Massachusetts Bay. Besides, sir, the Act which changes the charter of Massachusetts is in many particulars so exceptionable, that if I did not absolutely wish to repeal, I would by all means desire to alter it, as several of its provisions tend to the subversion of all public and private justice. Such, among others, is the power in the Governor to change the Sheriff at his pleasure, and to make a new returning officer for every special cause. It is shameful to behold such a regulation standing among English laws.

The Act for bringing persons accused of committing murder under the orders of government to England for trial, is but temporary. The Act has calculated the probable duration of our quarrel with the colonies, and is accommodated to that supposed duration. I would hasten the happy moment of reconciliation, and therefore must, on my principle, get rid of that most justly obnoxious Act.

The Act of Henry the Eighth, for the trial of treasons, I do not mean to take away, but to confine it to its proper bounds and original intention; to make it expressly for trials of treason (and the greatest treasons may be committed) in places where the jurisdiction of the Crown does not extend.

Having guarded the privileges of local legislation, I would next secure to the colonies a fair and unbiased judicature; for which purpose, sir, I propose the following resolution :

“ That, from the time when the General Assembly or General Court of any colony or plantation in North America, shall have appointed by act of assembly, duly confirmed, a settled salary to the offices of the Chief Justice and other judges of the Superior Court, it may be proper that the said Chief Justice and other judges of the Superior Courts of such colony, shall hold his and their office and offices during their good behaviour, and shall not be removed therefrom, but when the said removal shall be adjudged by his Majesty in council, upon a hearing or complaint from the Governor, or Council, or the House of Representatives severally, of the colony in which the said Chief Justice and other judges have exercised the said offices.”

The next resolution relates to the Courts of Admiralty. It is this :

“ That it may be proper to regulate the Courts of Admiralty, or Vice-Admiralty, authorized by the fifteenth chapter of the fourth of George the Third, in such a manner as to make the same more commodious to those who sue, or are sued, in the said courts, and to provide for the more decent maintenance of the judges in the same.”

These courts I do not wish to take away. They are in themselves proper establishments. This court is one of the capital securities of the Act of Navigation. The extent of its jurisdiction, indeed, has been increased; but this is altogether as proper, and is, indeed, on many accounts, more eligible, where new powers were wanted, than a court absolutely new. But courts incommodiously situated, in effect, deny justice; and a court, partaking in the fruits of its own condemnation, is a robber. The Congress complain, and complain justly, of this grievance.

These are the three consequential propositions. I have thought of two or three more, but they come rather too near detail, and to the promise of executive government, which I wish Parliament always to superintend, never to assume. If the first six are granted, congruity will carry the latter three. If not, the things that remain unrepealed will be, I hope, rather unseemly encumbrances on the building, than very materially detrimental to its strength and stability. And that the colonies, grounding themselves upon that doctrine, will apply it to all parts of legislative authority.

Here, sir, I should close, but that I plainly perceive some

objections remain, which I ought, if possible, to remove. The first will be, that, in resorting to the doctrine of our ancestors, as contained in the preamble to the Chester Act, I prove too much ; that the grievance from a want of representation stated in that preamble, goes to the whole of legislation as well as to taxation.

To this objection, with all possible deference and humility, and wishing as little as any man living to impair the smallest particle of our supreme authority, I answer, that *the words are the words of Parliament, and not mine* ; and that all false and inconclusive inferences drawn from them are not mine, for I heartily disclaim any such inference. I have chosen the words of an Act of Parliament, which Mr. Grenville, surely a tolerably zealous and very judicious advocate for the sovereignty of Parliament, formerly moved to have read at your table, in confirmation of his tenets. It is true that Lord Chatham considered these preambles as declaring strongly in favour of his opinions. He was no less a powerful advocate for the privileges of the Americans. Ought I not from hence to presume that these preambles are as favourable as possible to both, when properly understood ; favourable both to the rights of Parliament, and to the privilege of the dependencies of this Crown ? But, sir, the object of grievance in my resolution I have not taken from the Chester, but from the Durham Act, which confines the hardship of want of representation to the case of subsidies, and which, therefore, falls in exactly with the case of the colonies. But whether the unrepresented counties were *de jure* or *de facto* bound, the preambles do not accurately distinguish ; nor indeed was it necessary ; for, whether *de jure* or *de facto*, the Legislature thought the exercise of the power of taxing, as of right, or as of fact without right, equally a grievance, and equally oppressive.

I do not know that the colonies have, in any general way, or in any cool hour, gone much beyond the demand of immunity in relation to taxes. It is not fair to judge of the temper or dispositions of any man, or any set of men, when they are composed and at rest, from their conduct or their expressions in a state of disturbance and irritation. It is, besides, a very great mistake to imagine that mankind follow up practically any speculative principle, either of government or freedom, as far as it will go in argument and logical illation. We Englishmen

stop very short of the principles upon which we support any given part of our Constitution, or even the whole of it together. I could easily, if I had not altogether tired you, give you very striking and convincing instances of it. This is nothing but what is natural and proper. All government, indeed every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue and every prudent act, is founded on compromise and barter. We balance inconveniences ; we give and take ; we remit some rights that we may enjoy others ; and we choose rather to be happy citizens than subtle disputants. As we must give away some natural liberty to enjoy civil advantages, so we must sacrifice some civil liberties for the advantages to be derived from the communion and fellowship of a great Empire. But, in all fair dealings, the thing bought must bear some proportion to the purchase paid. None will barter away " the immediate jewel of his soul." Though a great house is apt to make slaves haughty, yet it is purchasing a part of the artificial importance of a great Empire too dear to pay for it all essential rights and all the intrinsic dignity of human nature. None of us who would not risk his life rather than fall under a government purely arbitrary. But, although there are some among us who think our Constitution wants many improvements to make it a complete system of liberty, perhaps none who are of that opinion would think it right to aim at such improvement by disturbing his country, and risking everything that is dear to him. In every arduous enterprise, we consider what we are to lose as well as what we are to gain ; and the more and better stake of liberty every people possess, the less they will hazard in a vain attempt to make it more. These are *the cords of man*. Man acts from adequate motive relative to his interest, and not on metaphysical speculations. Aristotle, the great master of reasoning, cautions us, and with great weight and propriety, against this species of delusive geometrical accuracy in moral arguments as the most fallacious of all sophistry.

The American will have no interest contrary to the grandeur and glory of England, when they are not oppressed by the weight of it ; and they will rather be inclined to respect the acts of a superintending Legislature, when they see them the acts of that power which is itself the security, not the rival, of their secondary importance. In this assurance my mind most

perfectly acquiesces, and I confess I feel not the least alarm from the discontents which are to arise from putting people at their ease; nor do I apprehend the destruction of this Empire from giving by an act of free grace and indulgence, to two millions of my fellow-citizens, some share of those rights upon which I have always been taught to value myself.

It is said, indeed, that this power of granting, vested in American assemblies, would dissolve the unity of the empire, which was preserved entire, although Wales, and Chester, and Durham were added to it. Truly, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what this unity means, nor has it ever been heard of, that I know, in the constitutional policy of this country. The very idea of subordination of parts excludes this notion of simple and undivided unity. England is the head, but she is not the head and the members, too. Ireland has ever had from the beginning a separate, but not an independent Legislature, which, far from distracting, promoted the union of the whole. Everything was sweetly and harmoniously disposed through both islands for the conservation of English dominion and the communication of English liberties. I do not see that the same principles might not be carried into twenty islands, and with the same good effect. This is my model with regard to America, as far as the internal circumstances of the two countries are the same. I know no other unity of this Empire than I can draw from its example during these periods, when it seemed to my poor understanding more united than it is now, or than it is likely to be by the present methods.

But since I speak of these methods, I recollect, Mr. Speaker, almost too late, that I promised, before I finished, to say something of the proposition of the noble Lord [Lord North] on the floor, which has been so lately received, and stands on your journals. I must be deeply concerned whenever it is my misfortune to continue a difference with the majority of this House. But as the reasons for that difference are my apology for thus troubling you, suffer me to state them in a very few words. I shall compress them into as small a body as I possibly can, having already debated that matter at large when the question was before the committee.

First, then, I cannot admit that proposition of a ransom by auction, because it is a mere project. It is a thing new; unheard of; supported by no experience; justified by no

analogy ; without example of our ancestors, or root in the Constitution. It is neither regular parliamentary taxation nor colony grant. "*Experimentum in corpore vili*" is a good rule, which will ever make me adverse to any trial of experiments on what is most certainly the most valuable of all subjects, the peace of this Empire.

Secondly, it is an experiment which must be fatal, in the end, to our Constitution. For what is it but a scheme for taxing the colonies in the ante-chamber of the noble Lord and his successors? To settle the quotas and proportions in this House is clearly impossible. You, Sir, may flatter yourself you shall sit a state auctioneer with your hammer in your hand, and knock down to each colony as it bids. But to settle (on the plan laid down by the noble Lord) the true proportional payments for four or five-and-twenty governments according to the absolute and the relative wealth of each, and according to the British proportion of wealth and burden, is a wild and chimerical notion. This new taxation must therefore come in by the back door of the Constitution. Each quota must be brought to this House ready formed ; you can neither add nor alter. You must register it. You can do nothing farther. For on what grounds can you deliberate, either before or after the proposition? You cannot hear the counsel for all these provinces, quarrelling each on its own quantity of payment, and its proportion to others. If you should attempt it, the committee of provincial ways and means, or by whatever other name it will delight to be called, must swallow up all the time of Parliament.

Thirdly, it does not give satisfaction to the complaint of the colonies. They complain that they are taxed without their consent ; you answer, that you will fix the sum at which they shall be taxed. That is, you give them the very grievance for the remedy. You tell them, indeed, that you will leave the mode to themselves. I really beg pardon. It gives me pain to mention it ; but you must be sensible that you will *not perform* this part of the contract. For, suppose the colonies were to lay the duties which furnished their contingents upon the importation of your manufactures? You know you would never suffer such a tax to be laid. You know, too, that you would not suffer many other modes of taxation ; so that when you come to explain yourself, it will be found that you will

neither leave to themselves the quantum nor the mode, nor, indeed, anything. The whole is delusion from one end to the other.

Fourthly, this method of ransom by auction, unless it be *universally* accepted, will plunge you into great and inextricable difficulties. In what year of our Lord are the proportions of payments to be settled, to say nothing of the impossibility, that colony agents should have general powers of taxing the colonies at their discretion? Consider, I implore you, that the communication by special messages, and orders between these agents and their constituents on each variation of the case, when the parties come to contend together, and to dispute on their relative proportions, will be a matter of delay, perplexity, and confusion, that never can have an end.

If all the colonies do not appear at the outcry, what is the condition of those assemblies, who offer, by themselves or their agents, to tax themselves up to your ideas of their proportion? The refractory colonies who refuse all composition will remain taxed only to your old impositions, which, however grievous in principle, or trifling as to production. The obedient colonies in this scheme are heavily taxed; the refractory remain unburdened. What will you do? Will you lay new and heavier taxes by Parliament on the disobedient? Pray consider in what way you can do it. You are perfectly convinced that in the way of taxing you can do nothing but at the ports. Now suppose it is Virginia that refuses to appear at your auction, while Maryland and North Carolina bid handsomely for their ransom, and are taxed to your quota. How will you put these colonies on a par? Will you tax the tobacco of Virginia? If you do, you give its death wound to your English revenue at home, and to one of the very greatest articles of your own foreign trade. If you tax the import of that rebellious colony, what do you tax but your own manufactures, or the goods of some other obedient and already well-taxed colony? Who has said one word on this labyrinth of detail, which bewilders you more and more as you enter into it? Who has presented, who can present you with a clew to lead you out of it? I think, Sir, it is impossible that you should not recollect that the colony bounds are so implicated in one another (you know it by your own experiments in the bill for prohibiting the New England fishery) that you can lay no possible restraints on almost any

of them which may not be presently eluded, if you do not confound the innocent with the guilty, and burden those whom upon every principle, you ought to exonerate. He must be grossly ignorant of America who thinks that, without falling into this confusion of all rules of equity and policy, you can restrain any single colony, especially Virginia and Maryland, the central and most important of them all.

Let it also be considered, that either in the present confusion you settle a permanent contingent which will and must be trifling, and then you have no effectual revenue; or, you change the quota at every exigency, and then on every new repartition you will have a new quarrel.

Reflect, besides, that when you have fixed a quota for every colony, you have not provided for prompt and punctual payment. Suppose one, two, five, ten years' arrears. You cannot issue a Treasury Extent against the failing colony. You must make new Boston Port Bills, new restraining laws, new acts for dragging men to England for trial. You must send out new fleets, new armies. All is to begin again. From this day forward the Empire is never to know an hour's tranquillity. An intestine fire will be kept alive in the bowels of the colonies, which one time or another must consume this whole Empire. I allow, indeed, that the Empire of Germany raises her revenue and her troops by quotas and contingents; but the revenue of the Empire, and the army of the Empire, is the worst revenue and the worst army in the world.

Instead of a standing revenue, you will therefore have a perpetual quarrel. Indeed, the noble Lord who proposed this project of a ransom by auction, seemed himself to be of that opinion. His project was rather designed for breaking the union of the colonies than for establishing a revenue. He confessed that he apprehended that his proposal would not be to *their taste*. I say this scheme of disunion seems to be at the bottom of the project; for I will not suspect that the noble Lord meant nothing but merely to delude the nation by an airy phantom which he never intended to realise. But, whatever his views may be, as I propose the peace and union of the colonies as the very foundation of my plan, it cannot accord with one whose foundation is perpetual discord.

Compare the two. This I offer to give you is plain and simple. The other, full of perplexed and intricate mazes. This is

mild ; that, harsh. This is formed by experience effectual for its purposes ; the other is a new project. This is universal ; the other, calculated for certain colonies only. This is immediate in its conciliatory operation ; the other, remote, contingent, full of hazard. Mine is what becomes the dignity of a ruling people ; gratuitous, unconditional, and not held out as matter of bargain and sale. I have done my duty in proposing it to you. I have indeed tired you by a long discourse ; but this is the misfortune of those to whose influence nothing will be conceded, and who must win every inch of their ground by argument. You have heard me with goodness. May you decide with wisdom ! For my part, I feel my mind greatly disburdened by what I have done to-day. I have been the less fearful of trying your patience, because on this subject I mean to spare it altogether in future. I have this comfort, that in every stage of the American affairs, I have steadily opposed the measures that have produced the confusion, and may bring on the destruction of this Empire. I now go so far as to risk a proposal of my own. If I cannot give peace to my country, I give it to my conscience.

But what, says the financier, is peace to us without money ? Your plan gives us no revenue. No ! But it does—for it secures to the subject the power of REFUSAL—the first of all revenues. Experience is a cheat, and fact a liar, if this power in the subject of proportioning his grant, or of not granting at all, has not been found the richest mine of revenue ever discovered by the skill or by the fortune of man. It does not, indeed, vote you £152,750 11s. 2½d., nor any other paltry limited sum, but it gives the strong box itself, the fund, the bank, from whence only revenues can arise among a people sensible of freedom : *Posita luditur arca.*

Cannot you in England ; cannot you at this time of day ; cannot you—a House of Commons—trust to the principle which has raised so mighty a revenue, and accumulated a debt of near one hundred and forty millions in this country ? Is this principle to be true in England and false everywhere else ? Is it not true in Ireland ? Has it not hitherto been true in the colonies ? Why should you presume, that in any country, a body duly constituted for any functions will neglect to perform its duty, and abdicate its trust ? Such a presumption would go against all government in all modes. But, in

truth, this dread of penury of supply, from a free assembly, has no foundation in nature. For first observe, that, besides the desire, which all men have naturally, of supporting the honour of their own government, that sense of dignity, and that security of property, which ever attends freedom, has a tendency to increase the stock of the free community. Most may be taken where most is accumulated. And what is the soil or climate where experience has not uniformly proved that the voluntary flow of heaped-up plenty, bursting from the weight of its own rich luxuriance, has ever run with a more copious stream of revenue, than could be squeezed from the dry husks of oppressed indigence, by the straining of all the political machinery in the world.

Next, we know that parties must ever exist in a free country. We know, too, that the emulations of such parties, their contradictions, their reciprocal necessities, their hopes, and their fears, must send them all in their turns to him that holds the balance of the State. The parties are the gamesters, but government keeps the table, and is sure to be the winner in the end. When this game is played, I really think it is more to be feared that the people will be exhausted, than that government will not be supplied; whereas, whatever is got by acts of absolute power, ill obeyed, because odious, or by contracts ill kept, because constrained, will be narrow, feeble, uncertain, and precarious.

“Ease would retract
Vows made in pain, as violent and void.”

I, for one, protest against compounding our demands. I declare against compounding, for a poor limited sum, the immense, ever-growing, eternal debt which is due to generous government for protected freedom. And so may I speed in the great object I propose to you, as I think it would not only be an act of injustice, but would be the worst economy in the world, to compel the colonies to a sum certain, either in the way of ransom or in the way of compulsory compact.

But to clear up my ideas on this subject; a revenue from America transmitted hither—do not delude yourselves—you never can receive it—no, not a shilling. We have experienced that from remote countries: it is not to be expected. If, when you attempted to extract revenue from Bengal, you were obliged to return in loan what you had taken in imposition,

what can you expect from North America? for certainly, if ever there was a country qualified to produce wealth, it is India; or an institution fit for the transmission, it is the East India Company. America has none of these aptitudes. If America gives you taxable objects on which you lay your duties *here*, and gives you, at the same time, a surplus by a foreign sale of her commodities to pay the duties on these objects which you tax at home, she has performed her part to the British revenue. But with regard to her own internal establishments, she may, I doubt not she will, contribute in moderation; I say in moderation, for she ought not to be permitted to exhaust herself. She ought to be reserved to a war, the weight of which, with the enemies that we are most likely to have, must be considerable in her quarter of the globe. There she may serve you, and serve you essentially.

For that service, for all service, whether of revenue, trade or empire, my trust is in her interest in the British Constitution. My hold of the colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron. Let the colonies always keep the idea of their civil rights associated with your government; they will cling and grapple to you, and no force under heaven will be of power to tear them from their allegiance. But let it be once understood that your government may be one thing, and their privileges another; that these two things may exist without any mutual relation; the cement is gone; the cohesion is loosened; and everything hastens to decay and dissolution. As long as you have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority in this country as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to our common faith, wherever the chosen race and sons of England worship Freedom, they will turn their faces toward you. The more they multiply, the more friends you will have. The more ardently they love liberty, the more perfect will be their obedience. Slavery they can have anywhere. It is a weed that grows in every soil. They may have it from Spain; they may have it from Prussia; but, until you become lost to all feeling of your true interest and your natural dignity, freedom they can have from none but you. This is the commodity of price, of which you have the monopoly. This is the true Act of Navigation, which binds

to you the commerce of the colonies, and through them secures to you the wealth of the world. Deny them this participation of freedom, and you break that sole bond which originally made, must still preserve, the unity of the Empire. Do not entertain so weak an imagination as that your registers and your bonds, your affidavits and your sufferances, your cockets and your clearances, are what form the great securities of your commerce. Do not dream that your letters of office, and your instructions, and your suspending clauses, are the things that hold together the great contexture of this mysterious whole. These things do not make your government. Dead instruments, passive tools as they are, it is the spirit of the English communion that gives all their life and efficacy to them. It is the spirit of the English Constitution, which, infused through the mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies every part of the Empire, even down to the minutest member.

Is it not the same virtue which does everything for us here in England ?

Do you imagine, then, that it is the Land Tax which raises your revenue ? that it is the annual vote in the Committee of Supply, which gives you your army ? or that it is the Mutiny Bill, which inspires it with bravery and discipline ? No ! surely no ! It is the love of the people ; it is their attachment to their government, from the sense of the deep stake they have in such a glorious institution, which gives you your army and your navy, and infuses into both that liberal obedience, without which your army would be a base rabble, and your navy but rotten timber.

All this, I know well enough, will sound wild and chimerical to the profane herd of those vulgar and mechanical politicians, who have no place among us ; a sort of people who think that nothing exists but what is gross and material, and who, therefore, far from being qualified to be directors of the great movement of Empire, are not fit to turn a wheel in the machine. But to men truly initiated and rightly taught, these ruling and master principles, which, in the opinion of such men as I have mentioned, have no substantial existence, are in truth everything and all in all. Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom ; and a great Empire and little minds go ill together. If we are conscious of our situation, and glow with zeal to fill our places as becomes our station and ourselves,

we ought to auspicate all our public proceedings on America with the old warning of the Church, *sursum corda!* We ought to elevate our minds to the greatness of that trust to which the order of Providence has called us. By adverting to the dignity of this high calling, our ancestors have turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire, and have made the most extensive and the only honourable conquests, not by destroying but by promoting, the wealth, the number, the happiness of the human race. Let us get an American revenue as we have got an American empire. English privileges have made it all that it is; English privileges alone will make it all it can be.

In full confidence of this unalterable truth, I now, *quod felix faustumque sit*, lay the first stone in the temple of peace; and I move you:

THAT THE COLONIES AND PLANTATIONS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTH AMERICA, CONSISTING OF FOURTEEN SEPARATE GOVERNMENTS, AND CONTAINING TWO MILLION AND UPWARDS OF FREE INHABITANTS, HAVE NOT HAD THE LIBERTY AND PRIVILEGE OF ELECTING AND SENDING ANY KNIGHTS AND BURGESSES, OR OTHERS, TO REPRESENT THEM IN THE HIGH COURT OF PARLIAMENT.

WILLIAM PITT

PITT's qualifications as an orator were moral as well as intellectual. He had a lofty command of sonorous rhetoric. But he had also the high courage and unquenchable spirit before which all difficulties disappear. He spoke for the purpose of removing obstacles, and also of inspiring the ardour by which alone they could be removed. Although he seldom spoke outside the House of Commons, the effect of his speeches was felt far beyond the walls of Parliament. It was not merely because they were his that they succeeded. The influence of his energy and character was both powerful and extensive. But besides that he possessed the art of making the House of Commons believe that the country was safe under his guidance, and that against every danger he would provide a safeguard. Pitt's astonishing command of language was no merely verbal endowment. He would have been a singularly capable debater if he had not been otherwise qualified as a statesman. No point in an argument escaped him. Yet, all the time that he was dealing with objections, and replying to critics, he did not for a moment forget that he must, if he was to carry out his purposes, inspire his hearers with the confidence he felt himself. Even at the height of his power he was not always successful, and he was unable to carry Parliamentary Reform, of which, till the French Revolution, he continued a zealous advocate, though he never made it a question involving the fate of his government. Not once was he driven to resign by an adverse majority. In 1785, a few months after he became Prime Minister, he appealed to the country, which sustained him. In 1801 he retired for a time from office because the King would not allow him to propose a Catholic Emancipation Bill. He would have established free trade with Ireland at the beginning of his first administration if he

had not been frustrated by the Irish Parliament, where he could not speak. His ascendancy at St. Stephen's, due to many qualities, cannot be separated from the style of his speeches, which was carefully adapted to the process of moral, as well as intellectual, persuasion.

To make members feel as he felt might be described as Pitt's great object. He wished not simply to convince them by argument, but also to inspire them with his own perfect confidence in the wisdom and justice of his cause. It might, perhaps, be said that in some respects Pitt was stronger in theory than in practice. His financial statement of 1798, made at the height of the great French war, is a philosophical disquisition upon public economy which, though mainly designed to justify the income-tax, has permanent interest and value to students as well as to statesmen. Pitt's administrative efficiency was confined to the days of peace, and consisted rather in the choice of subordinates than in the provision of means. But to the day of his death he never lost his hold upon the House of Commons. There he could always rouse the hopes and the confidence of his hearers by exhibiting his own dauntless resolution in appropriate speech. It was not that he always carried his point. Fox prevented him from undertaking hostilities against Russia on behalf of Turkey, when Catherine threatened the Crimea. Fox had no majority. Public opinion was for once too strong for Pitt, even in the arena of his triumphs, and the citadel of his power.

But it is not by a single instance here or there that the position of a great statesman in the House of Commons can be tested or weighed. The effect of Pitt's oratory must be judged by the results which it enabled him to accomplish throughout his Parliamentary career. Of these the greatest is that through times of peace and times of war he could retain the confidence of the House, whatever happened out of doors. He sometimes had to explain what was almost incapable of explanation. He had to confront adroit and

skilful debaters, always ready to take advantage of any error he might commit. Yet he never lost his hold upon his favourite audience, the audience which best understood him and which he best understood. His unshaken confidence in the ultimate success of his policy communicated itself to his hearers, and they sustained him in circumstances which would certainly have made them distrust anybody else. His speeches were designed and constructed not so much to procure the triumph of a particular scheme or project as to quiet all scruples about the effect of temporary failure or disaster in averting the final result of a carefully premeditated design. He never allowed himself to appear discouraged, and therefore he succeeded in producing upon the House of Commons an impression that he had provided for whatever might ensue. A superb actor, like his father, he knew how to make the best use of all his gifts in presence of the keenest criticism, and to produce just the feeling of exultant trust which he endeavoured to inspire. Pitt was emphatically a man of peace. He sincerely desired, for the sake of the people, the material progress of the country, and to introduce a satisfactory Budget gave him more gratification than winning a pitched battle. Though idolised by Protectionists and Tories, he was a Free Trader and a Whig. It is all the more wonderful that, when he was driven, against his own will, into a war with France and when he found himself confronted with difficulties he was powerless to surmount, he could still maintain in Parliament the same undaunted haughtiness of demeanour, and display a courageous superiority to unfavourable conditions, which even those least inclined towards his policy or methods were compelled despite themselves, to admire. He was by no means exempt from despondency. But, whatever he felt, he always showed in Parliament an appearance of audacity and vigour which animated all his followers, and many of his opponents, with a belief that he must in the long run succeed.

The career of Pitt in the House of Commons was the more

remarkable because he had very little experience of Opposition. He was almost always on the defensive. Yet he not only held his own; he acquired such an ascendancy in debate that his supremacy almost ceased to be challenged. He did not take advantage of his position by refusing to join in discussion. However arduous his labours might be outside the House, he was always on the Treasury Bench if the Government were criticised or attacked. His speeches illustrate the way in which an imperious statesman dominated the House by mingled argument and rhetoric. Pitt was by no means a Minister to the taste of George the Third. He was very unlike Lord North. He imposed himself upon the King because he was the one man whom the House of Commons would follow. What then was the secret of his strength? It was that he knew exactly how to deal with a miscellaneous assembly, which liked to be treated with deference, and at the same time to be led. In the requisite combination of qualities no man ever equalled Pitt. When he failed, it was because the circumstances were such that no man could have succeeded. He is, however, to be tested as a debater chiefly by the first part of his Ministerial life. Then he was able to carry out his deliberate policy without the distraction of foreign war. During that part of the European campaign which preceded the Peace of Amiens he displayed extraordinary vigour. But he did not appreciate the nature of the struggle in which he was engaged. When he rose to power on the ruins of the Coalition in 1784, he made his way by sheer force of energy and ability to the foremost rank in the State. He could only retain the position he had won by the constant use of those gifts through which he had risen in the Parliamentary arena. He cultivated the art of debate until it became an instinct; and he was never at a loss, because his full powers were always kept ready to be employed. No man has ever governed by speaking as Pitt did. His oratory is, therefore, essentially practical. The magnificent displays of Fox were

essentially critical. His force was directed against measures of which he disapproved, and it was wielded with superb mastery. But Pitt had to work with available material, and to make the best of his opportunities. He spoke to get his Bill carried, or his vote passed. The fine and pointed sayings which adorn his speeches were thrown out by the way. His main object and purport were invariably practical. His speeches must be considered with reference to the end which the orator had in view. That is, perhaps, what Fox meant when he said that he could always find a word, but that Pitt could always find the word.

Of all English orators Pitt was the most self-contained. He said neither more nor less than he meant to say. Regarding speech as an instrument of government, he used it for practical purposes as a method of carrying his point. He is a perfect example of the debater who made debate a form of action, who used the House of Commons as a lever for moving the world outside. The peculiarity of his speeches is that they are Parliamentary and yet a great deal more. They cannot be appreciated without reference to the particular circumstances in which they were made, although their style is adapted to the tone and temper of an assembly which Pitt made it his business to study and to understand. They must, therefore, always be considered and criticised from two separate points of view. There is their general merit as rhetorical literature, and their especial value as conducive to the end which Pitt had set before himself at the time. To inspire confidence was no doubt always his object. But it was not his way to leave arguments unanswered, so that he was doubly occupied with confuting objections and expounding policy. Leaving the business of administration to his colleagues, he undertook for his part to obtain the concurrence of the House of Commons in the plans of the Cabinet. No other man ever occupied quite the same position. He had to deal with all sorts of problems, and at the same time to satisfy a critical

audience that they were being adequately solved. His ascendancy in Parliament resulted in some degree from early training. But it was brought to perfection by the assiduous practice of an art so delicate as to be scarcely definable, the art of commanding under the guise of persuasion. Of that art Pitt was a consummate master. He knew exactly how far to go, and when to stop. He made his hearers feel as he felt, and believe what he wished them to believe. It was an influence entirely legitimate in its source and scope, for the authority which it implied had been acquired by no ignoble means. Pitt carried his hearers with him because he appealed at once to their sentiments and their intellects, because he employed simultaneously the resources of eloquence and reason. Neither would have sufficed without the other. It was because Pitt brought both to bear upon the attainment of his purposes that he still deserves to be regarded as a model for that statesmanlike oratory which combines rhetorical splendour with practical effect.

Abolition of Slave Trade,

House of Commons, April 2nd, 1792

At this hour in the morning I am afraid, Sir, I am too much exhausted to enter so fully into the subject before the committee as I could wish; but if my bodily strength is in any degree equal to the task, I feel so strongly the magnitude of this question, that I am extremely earnest to deliver my sentiments which I rise to do with the more satisfaction, because I now look forward to the issue of this business with considerable hopes of success.

The debate has this day taken a turn, which, though it has produced a variety of new suggestions, has, upon the whole, contracted this question into a much narrower point than it was ever brought into before.

I cannot say that I quite agree with the right honourable gentleman over the way; I am far from deploring all that has been said by my two honourable friends. I rather rejoice that they have now brought this subject to a fair issue—that

something, at least, is already gained, and that the question has taken altogether a new course this night. It is true a difference of opinion has been stated, and has been urged with all the force of argument that could be given to it. But give me leave to say that this difference has been urged upon principles very far removed from those which were maintained by the opponents of my honourable friend when he first brought forward his motion. There are very few of those who have spoken this night who have not thought it their duty to declare their full and entire concurrence with my honourable friend in promoting the abolition of the slave trade, as their ultimate object. However we may differ as to the time and manner of it, we are all agreed in the abolition itself ; and my honourable friends have expressed their agreement in this sentiment with that sensibility upon the subject which humanity does most undoubtedly require. I do not, however, think they yet perceive what are the necessary consequences of their own concession, or follow up their own principles to their just conclusion.

The point now in dispute between us is a difference merely as to the period of time at which the abolition of the slave-trade ought to take place. I therefore congratulate this House, the country, and the world, that this great point is gained ; that one may now consider this trade as having received its condemnation ; that its sentence is sealed ; that this curse of mankind is seen by the House in its true light ; and that the greatest stigma on our national character which ever yet existed is about to be removed ! And, Sir (which is still more important) that mankind, I trust, in general, are now likely to be delivered from the greatest practical evil that ever has afflicted the human race, from the severest and most extensive calamity recorded in the history of the world !

In proceeding to give my reasons for concurring with my honourable friend in his motion, I shall necessarily advert to those topics which my honourable friends near me have touched upon ; and which they stated to be their motives for preferring a gradual, and, in some degree, a distant abolition of the slave-trade, to the more immediate and direct measure now proposed to you. Beginning as I do with declaring that in this respect I differ completely from my right honourable friends near me, I do not, however, mean to say that I differ as to one observation

which has been pressed rather strongly by them. If they can show that their proposition of a gradual abolition is more likely than ours to secure the object which we have in view—that by proceeding gradually we shall arrive more speedily at our end, and attain it with more certainty, than by direct vote immediately to abolish:—If they can show to the satisfaction of both myself and the committee that our proposition has more the appearance of a speedy abolition than the reality of it, undoubtedly they will in this case make a convert of me, and my honourable friend who moved the question; they will make a convert of every man among us who looks to this—which I trust we all do—as a question not to be determined by theoretical principles or enthusiastic feelings, but considers the practicability of the measure, aiming simply to effect his object in the shortest time, and in the surest possible manner.

If, however, I shall be able to shew that our measure proceeds more directly to its object, and secures it with more certainty, and within a less distant period, and that the slave trade will on our plan be abolished sooner than on his, may I not then hope that my right honourable friends will be as ready to adopt our proposition as we should in the other case be willing to accede to theirs?

~ One of my right honourable friends has stated that an act passed here for the abolition of the slave-trade, would not secure its abolition. Now, Sir, I should be glad to know, why an act of the British legislature, enforced by all those sanctions which we have undoubtedly the power and the right to apply, is not to be effectual; at least as to every material purpose? Will not the executive power have the same appointment of the officers and the courts of judicature, by which all the causes relating to this subject must be tried, that it has in other cases? Will there not be the same system of law by which we now maintain a monopoly of commerce? If the same law, Sir, be applied to the prohibition of the slave-trade which is applied in the case of other contraband commerce, with all the same means of the country to back it, I am at a loss to know why the actual and total abolition is not as likely to be effected in this way as by any plan or project of my honourable friends for bringing about a gradual termination of it. But my observation is extremely fortified by what fell from

my honourable friend who spoke last ; he has told you, Sir, that if you will have patience with it for a few years, the slave-trade must drop of itself, from the increasing dearness of the commodity imported, and the increasing progress, on the other hand, of internal population. It is true, then, that the importations are so expensive and disadvantageous already, that the internal population is ever now becoming a cheaper resource. I ask, then, if you leave to the importer no means of importation but smuggling, and if, besides all the present disadvantages, you load him with all the charges and hazards of the smuggler, by taking care that the laws against smuggling are in this case watchfully and vigorously enforced, is there any danger of any considerable supply of fresh slaves being poured into the islands through this channel ? And is there any real ground of fear, because a few slaves may have been smuggled in or out of these islands, that a bill will be useless and ineffectual on any such ground ? The question under these circumstances will not bear a dispute.

Perhaps, however, my honourable friends may take up another ground, and say, " It is true your measure would shut out further importations more immediately ; but we do not mean to shut them out immediately. We think it right, on grounds of general expediency, that they should not be immediately shut out." Let us therefore now come to this question of the expediency of making the abolition distant and gradual, rather than immediate.

- 2 The argument of expediency, in my opinion, like every other argument in this disquisition, will not justify the continuance of the slave-trade for one unnecessary hour. Supposing it to be in our power (which I have shown it is) to enforce the prohibition from the present time. The expediency of doing it is to me so clear, that if I went on this principle alone, I should not feel a moment's hesitation. What is the argument of expediency stated on the other side ? It is doubted whether the deaths and births in the islands are as yet so nearly equal as to ensure the keeping up of a sufficient stock of labourers ; in answer to this, I took the liberty of mentioning, in a former year, what appeared to me to be the state of the population at that time. My observations were taken from documents which we have reason to judge authentic and which carried on the face of them the conclusions I then stated ; they were

the clear, simple, and obvious result of a careful examination which I made into this subject, and any gentleman who will take the same pains may arrive at the same degree of satisfaction.

These calculations, however, applied to a period of time that is now four or five years past. The births were then, in the general view of them, nearly equal to the deaths; and as the state of population was shown, by a considerable retrospect, to be regularly increasing, an excess of births must before this time have taken place.

Another observation has been made as to the disproportion of the sexes; this, however, is a disparity which existed in any material degree only in former years; it is a disparity of which the slave-trade has been itself the cause; which will gradually diminish as the slave-trade diminishes, and must entirely cease, if the trade shall be abolished; but which, nevertheless, is made the very plea for its continuance. I believe this disproportion of the sexes, taking the whole number in the islands, Creole as well as imported Africans, the latter of whom occasion all the disproportion, is not now by any means considerable. 3

But, Sir, I also showed that the general mortality which turned the balance so as to make the deaths appear more numerous than the births, arose too from the imported Afghans, who die in extraordinary numbers in the seasoning. If, therefore, the importation of negroes should cease, every one of the causes of mortality, which I have now stated, would cease also. Nor can I conceive any reason why the present number of labourers should not maintain itself in the West Indies, except it be from some artificial cause, some fault in the islands; such as the impolicy of their governors, or the cruelty of the managers and officers, whom they employ.

I will not reiterate all that I said at the time, or go through island by island. It is true, there is a difference in the ceded islands; and I state them possibly to be, in some respects, an excepted case. But if we are to enter into the subject of the mortality in clearing new lands, this, Sir, is undoubtedly another question; the mortality here is tenfold; and this is to be considered, not as the carrying on as a trade, but as the setting on foot of a slave-trade for the purpose of peopling the colony; a measure which I think will not now be maintained. I therefore desire gentlemen to tell me fairly, whether the

period they look to is not now arrived ? whether, at this hour, the West Indies may not be declared to have actually attained a state in which they can maintain their population ? and upon the answer I must necessarily receive I think I could safely rest the whole of the question.

One honourable gentleman has rather ingeniously observed that one or other of these two assertions of ours must necessarily be false ; that either the population must be decreasing, which we deny ; or, if the population is increasing, that the slaves must be perfectly well treated (this being the cause of such population), which we deny also. That the population is rather increasing than otherwise, and also that the general treatment is by no means so good as it ought to be, are both points which have been separately proved by different evidences ; nor are these two points so entirely incompatible. The ill-treatment must be very great indeed, in order to diminish materially the population of any race of people. That it is not so extremely great as to do this, I will admit. I will even admit, if you please, that this charge may possibly have been sometimes exaggerated ; and I certainly think that it applies less and less as we come nearer to the present time.

But let us see how this contradiction of ours, as it is thought, really stands, and how this explanation of it will completely settle our minds on the point in question. Do the slaves diminish in numbers ? It can be nothing but ill-treatment that causes the diminution. This ill-treatment the abolition must and will restrain. In this case, therefore, we ought to vote for the abolition. On the other hand, Do you choose to say that the slaves clearly increase in numbers ? Then you want no importations, and, in this case, also, you may safely vote for the abolition. Or, if you choose to say, as the third and only case which can be put and which, perhaps, is nearest to the truth, that the population is nearly stationary, and the treatment neither so bad nor so good as it might be ; then surely, Sir, it will not be denied that this of all others is, on each of the two grounds, the proper period for stopping further supplies ; for your population, which you own is already stationary, will thus be made undoubtedly to increase from the births, and the good treatment of your present slaves, which I am now supposing is but very moderate, will be necessarily improved also by the same measure of abolition. I say,

therefore, that these propositions, contradictory as they may be represented, are in truth not at all inconsistent, but even come in aid of each other, and lead to a conclusion that is decisive. And let it be always remembered that in this branch of my argument I have only in view the well-being of the West Indies, and do not now ground anything on the African part of the question.

But, Sir, I may carry these observations respecting the islands much further. It is within the power of the colonists (and is it not then their indispensable duty ?) to apply themselves to the correction of those various abuses, by which the population is restrained. The most important consequences may be expected to attend colonial regulations for this purpose. With the improvement of internal population, the condition of every negro will improve also ; his liberty will advance, or at least he will be approaching to a state of liberty. Nor can you increase the happiness, or extend the freedom of the negro, without adding in an equal degree to the safety of the islands, and of all their inhabitants. Thus, Sir, in the place of *slaves*, who naturally have an interest directly opposite to that of their masters, and are therefore viewed by them with an eye of constant suspicion, you will create a body of valuable citizens and subjects, forming a part of the same community, having a common interest with their superiors, in the security and prosperity of the whole.

And, here let me add, that in the proportion as you increase the happiness of these unfortunate beings, you will undoubtedly increase in effect the quantity of their labour also. Gentlemen talk of the diminution of the labour of the islands ! I will venture to assert that, even if in consequence of the abolition there were to be some decrease in the number of hands, the quantity of work done, supposing the condition of the slaves to improve, would by no means diminish in the same proportion ; perhaps would be far from diminishing at all. For if you restore to this degraded race the true feelings of men, if you take them out from among the order of brutes, and place them on a level with the rest of the human species, they will then work with that energy which is natural to men, and their labour will be productive, in a thousand ways, above what it has yet been ; as the labour of a man is always more productive than that of a mere brute.

It generally happens that in every bad cause some information arises out of the evidence of its defenders themselves which serves to expose in one part or other the weakness of their defence. It is the characteristic of such a cause that if it be at all gone into, even by its own supporters, it is liable to be ruined by the contradictions in which those who maintain it are for ever involved.

The committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain sent over certain queries to the West India islands, with a view of elucidating the present subject ; and they particularly enquired whether the negroes had any days or hours allotted to them in which they might work for themselves. The assemblies in their answers, with an air of great satisfaction, state the labour of the slaves to be moderate, and the West India system to be well calculated to promote the domestic happiness of the slaves. They add, "that proprietors are not compelled by law to allow their slaves any part of the six working days of the week for them—but it is the general practice to allow them one afternoon in every week out of croptime, which, with such hours as they chose to work on Sundays, is time amply sufficient for their own purposes." Now, therefore, will the negroes, or, I may rather say, do the negroes work for their own emolument? I beg the committee's attention to this point. The assembly of Grenada proceeds to state—I have their own words for it—"That though the negroes are allowed the afternoons of only one day in every week, they will do as much work in that afternoon, when employed for their own benefit, as in the whole day when employed in their master's service."

Now, Sir, I will desire you to burn all my calculations ; to disbelieve if you please, every word I have said on the present state of the population ; nay, I will admit, for the sake of argument, that the numbers are decreasing, and the productive labour at present insufficient for the cultivation of those countries ; and I will then ask whether the increase in the quantity of labour which is reasonably to be expected from the improved condition of the slaves is not, by the admission of the islands themselves, by their admission not merely of an argument but a fact, far more than sufficient to counterbalance any decrease which can be rationally apprehended from a defective state of their population? Why, Sir, a negro, if

he works for himself, and not for a master, will do double work! This is their own account. If you will believe the planters, if you will believe the legislature of the islands, the productive labour of the colonies would, in case the negroes worked as free labourers instead of slaves, be literally doubled. Half the present labourers, on this supposition, would suffice for the whole cultivation of our islands on the present scale. I therefore confidently ask the House whether, in considering the whole of this question, we may not fairly look forward to an improvement in the condition of these unhappy and degraded beings, not only as an event desirable on the ground of humanity and political prudence, but also as a means of increasing, very considerably indeed (even without any increasing population), the productive industry of the islands? When gentlemen are so nicely balancing the past and future means of cultivating the plantations, let me request them to put this argument into the scale; and the more they consider it, the more will they be satisfied, that both the solidity of the principle which I have stated, and the facts which I have just quoted in the very words of the colonial legislature, will bear me out in every inference I have drawn. I think they will perceive also that it is the undeniable duty of this House, on the grounds of true policy, immediately to sanction and carry into effect that system which ensures these important advantages; in addition to all those other inestimable blessings which follow in their train.

If, therefore, the argument of expediency as applying to the West India islands is the test by which this question is to be tried, I trust I have now established this proposition, namely, that whatever tends most speedily and effectually to meliorate the condition of the slaves is, undoubtedly on the ground of expediency, leaving justice out of the question, the main object to be pursued.

That the immediate abolition of the slave-trade will most eminently have this effect, and that it is the only measure from which this effect can in any considerable degree be expected, are points to which I shall presently come; but before I enter upon them let me notice one or two further circumstances.

We are told (and by respectable and well-informed persons) that the purchase of new negroes has been injurious instead of profitable to the planters themselves; so large a proportion

of these unhappy wretches being found to perish in the seasoning. Writers well versed in this subject have even advised that, in order to remove the temptation which the slave-trade offers, to expend large sums in this injudicious way, the door of importation should be shut. This very plan which we now propose, the mischief of which is represented to be so great as to outweigh so many other momentous considerations, has actually been recommended by some of the best authorities as a plan highly requisite to be adopted on the very principle of advantage to the islands; nay, not merely on that principle of general and political advantage on which I have already touched, but for the advantage of the very individuals who would otherwise be most forward in purchasing slaves. On the part of West India, it is urged, "The planters are in debt; they are already distressed; if you stop the slave-trade, they will be ruined." Mr. Long, the celebrated historian of Jamaica, recommends the stopping of importations, as a recipe for enabling the plantations which are embarrassed to get out of debt. I will quote his words. Speaking of the usurious terms on which money is often borrowed for the purchase of fresh slaves, he advises "the laying of a duty equal to a prohibition on all negroes imported for the space of four or five years, except for re-exportation." "Such a law," he proceeds to say, "would be attended with the following good consequences. It would put an immediate stop to these extortions; it would enable the planter to retrieve his affairs by preventing him from running in debt, either by renting or purchasing negroes; it would render such recruits less necessary, by the redoubled care he would be obliged to take of his present stock, the preservation of their lives and health; and, lastly, it would raise the value of the negroes in the island. A North-American province, by this prohibition alone for a few years, from being deeply plunged in debt, has become independent, rich, and flourishing."

On the authority of Mr. Long I rest the question, whether the prohibition of further importations is that rash, impolitic, and completely ruinous measure, which it is so confidently declared to be with respect to our West Indian plantations.

I do not, however, mean, in thus treating this branch of the subject, absolutely to exclude the question of indemnification on the supposition of possible disadvantages affecting the

West Indies through the abolition of the slave-trade. But when gentlemen set up a claim of compensation merely on those general allegations, which are all that I have yet heard from them, I can only answer, let them produce their case in a distinct and specific form; and if upon any practicable or reasonable grounds it shall claim consideration, it will then be time enough for Parliament to decide upon it.

I now come to another circumstance of great weight, connected with this part of the question. I mean the danger to which the Islands are exposed from the negroes who are newly imported. This, Sir, like the observation which I lately made, is no mere speculation of ours, for here again I refer you to Mr. Long, the historian of Jamaica. He treats particularly of the dangers to be dreaded from the introduction of Coromantine negroes; an appellation under which are comprised several descriptions of negroes obtained on the Gold Coast, whose native country is not exactly known, and who are purchased in a variety of markets, having been brought from some distance inland. With a view of preventing insurrections, he advises that "by laying a duty equal to a prohibition, no more of these Coromantines should be bought;" and after noticing one insurrection which happened through their means, he tells you of another in the following year, in which thirty-three Coromantines, "most of whom had been newly imported, suddenly rose, and in the space of an hour murdered and wounded no less than nineteen white persons."

To the authority of Mr. Long, both in this and other parts of his work, I may add the recorded opinion of the committee of the House of Assembly of Jamaica itself; who, in consequence of a rebellion among the slaves, were appointed to enquire into the best means of preventing future insurrections. The committee reported, "That the rebellion had originated (like most or all others) with the Coromantines; and they proposed that a bill should be brought in for laying a higher duty on the importation of these particular negroes," which was intended to operate as a prohibition.

But the danger is not confined to the importation of Coromantines. Mr. Long, carefully investigating as he does the causes of such frequent insurrections, particularly at Jamaica, accounts for them from the greatness of its general importations.

"In two and a half years," says he, "27,000 negroes have

been imported." "No wonder we have rebellions! Twenty-seven thousand in two years and a half!" Why, Sir, I believe that in some late years there have been as many imported into the same island within the same period; surely, Sir, when gentlemen talk so vehemently of the safety of the islands and charge us with being so indifferent to it; when they speak of the calamities of St. Domingo, and of similar dangers impending over their own heads at the present hour, it ill becomes *them* to be the persons who are crying out for further importations. It ill becomes *them* to charge upon us the crime of stirring up insurrection—upon us who are only adopting the very principles which Mr. Long—which in no part even the legislature of Jamaica itself, laid down in the time of danger, with an avowed view to the prevention of any such calamity.

The House, I am sure, will easily believe it is no small satisfaction to me, that among the many arguments for prohibiting the slave-trade which crowd upon my mind, the security of our West India possessions against internal commotions, as well as foreign enemies, is among the most prominent and most forcible. And here let me apply to my two right honourable friends, and ask them, whether in this part of the argument they do not see reason for *immediate* abolition! Why should you any longer import into those countries that which is the very seed of insurrection and rebellion? Why should you persist in introducing those latent principles of conflagration, which, if they should once burst forth, may annihilate in a single day the industry of a hundred years? Why will you subject yourselves, with open eyes, to the evident and imminent risk of a calamity which may throw you back a whole century in your profits, in your cultivation, in your progress to the emancipation of your slaves? and disappointing at once every one of these golden expectations, may retard not only the accomplishment of that happy system which I have attempted to describe, but may cut off even your opportunity of taking any one introductory step? Let us begin from this time! Let us not commit these important interests to any further hazard! Let us prosecute this great object from this very hour; Let us vote that the abolition of the slave-trade shall be immediate, and not left to I know not what future time or contingency! Will my right honourable friends answer for the safety of the islands during any imaginable

intervening period? or do they think that any little advantages of the kind which they state can have any weight in that scale of expediency in which this great question ought undoubtedly to be tried?

Thus stated, and thus alone, Sir, can it be truly stated, to what does the whole of my right honourable friend's arguments, on the head of expediency, amount? It amounts but to this:—The colonies on the one hand would have to struggle with some few difficulties and disadvantages at the first, for the sake of obtaining on the other hand immediate security to their leading interests; of ensuring, Sir, even their own political existence, and for the sake also of immediately commencing that system of progressive improvement in the condition of the slaves which is necessary to raise them from the state of brutes to that of rational beings, but which never can begin until the introduction of these new disaffected and dangerous Africans into the same gangs, shall have been stopped.

If any argument can in the slightest degree justify the severity that is now so generally practised in the treatment of the slaves, it must be the introduction of these Africans. It is the introduction of these Africans that renders all ideas of emancipation for the present so chimerical; and the very mention of it so dreadful. It is the introduction of these Africans that keeps down the condition of all plantation negroes. Whatever system of treatment is deemed necessary by the planters to be adopted towards these new Africans, extends itself to the other slaves also; instead, therefore, of deferring the hour when you finally put an end to importation, vainly purposing that the condition of your present slaves should previously be mended, you must, in the very first instance, stop your importations, if you hope to introduce any rational or practicable plan, either of gradual emancipation, or present general improvement. Having now done with this question of expediency as affecting the islands, I come next to a proposition advanced by my right honourable friend which appeared to intimate that on account of some patrimonial rights of the West Indians, the prohibition of the slave-trade might be considered as an invasion on their legal inheritance.

Now, in answer to this proposition, I must make two or three

remarks, which I think my right honourable friend will find some considerable difficulty in answering. First, I observe that his argument, if it be worth anything, applies just as much to gradual as immediate abolition. I have no doubt that, at whatever period he should be disposed to say the abolition should actually take place, this defence will equally be set up ; for it certainly is just as good an argument against an abolition seven or seventy years hence as against an abolition at this moment. It supposes we have no right whatever to stop the importations ; and even though the disadvantages to our plantations, which some gentlemen suppose to attend the measure of immediate abolition, should be admitted gradually to lessen by the lapse of a few years, yet in point of principle, the absence of all right of interference would remain the same. My right honourable friend, therefore, I am sure will not press an argument not less hostile to his proposition than to ours. But let us investigate the foundation of this objection, and I will commence what I have to say by putting a question to my right honourable friend. It is chiefly on the presumed ground of our being bound by a Parliamentary sanction heretofore given to the African slave-trade that this argument against the abolition is vested. Does then my right honourable friend, or does any man in this House, think that the slave-trade has received any such Parliamentary sanction as must place it more out of the jurisdiction of the legislature for ever after than the other branches of our national commerce ? I ask, is there any one regulation of any part of our commerce which, if this argument be valid, may not equally be objected to on the ground of its affecting some man's patrimony, some man's property, or some man's expectation ? Let it never be forgotten that the argument I am canvassing would be just as strong if the possession affected were small and the possessors humble ; for on every principle of justice the property of any single individual, or small numbers of individuals, is as sacred as that of the great body of West Indians. Justice ought to extend her protection with rigid impartiality to the rich and to the poor, to the powerful and to the humble. If this be the case, in what a situation does my right honourable friend's argument place the legislature of Britain ? What room is left for their interference in the regulation of any part of our commerce ? It is scarcely possible to lay a duty on any

one article, which may not, when first imposed, be said in some way to affect the property of individuals, and even of some entire classes of the community. If the laws respecting the slave-trade imply a contract for its perpetual continuance, I will venture to say there does not pass a year without some Act equally pledging the faith of Parliament to the perpetuating of some other branch of commerce. In short, I repeat my observation, that no new tax can be imposed, much less can any prohibitory duty be ever laid on any branch of trade, that has before been regulated by Parliament, if this principle be once admitted.

Before I refer to the Acts of Parliament by which the public faith is said to be pledged, let me remark also that a contract for the continuance of the slave-trade must, on the principles which I shall presently insist on, have been void, even from the beginning; for if this trade is an outrage upon justice, and only another name for fraud, robbery and murder, will any man urge that the legislature could possibly by any pledge whatever incur the obligation of being an accessory, or I may even say a principal, in the commission of such enormities, by sanctioning their continuance? As well might an individual think himself bound by a promise to commit an assassination. I am confident gentlemen must see that our proceedings on such grounds would infringe all the principles of law, and subvert the very foundation of morality.

Let us now see how far the Acts themselves show that there is this sort of Parliamentary pledge to continue the African slave-trade. The Act of 23 Geo. II. c. 31, is that by which we are supposed to be bound up by contract to sanction all those horrors now so incontrovertibly proved. How surprised then, Sir, must the House be to find that by a clause of their very Act some of these outrages are expressly forbidden! It says, "No commander, or master of a ship trading to Africa, shall by fraud, force, violence, or by any indirect practice whatsoever, take on board, or carry away from the coast of Africa, any negro, or native of the said country, or commit any violence on the natives, to the prejudice of the said trade, and that every person so offending shall for every such offence forfeit." When it comes to the penalty, sorry am I to say, that we see too close a resemblance to the West India law, which inflicts the payment of £30 as

the punishment for murdering a negro. The price of blood in Africa is £100; but even this penalty is enough to prove that the Act at least does not sanction, much less does it engage to perpetuate enormities; and the whole trade has now been demonstrated to be a mass, a system of enormities; of enormities which incontrovertibly bid defiance not only to this clause, but to every regulation which our ingenuity can devise, and our power carry into effect. Nothing can accomplish the object of this clause but an extinction of the trade itself.

But, Sir, let us see what was the motive for carrying on the trade at all? The preamble of the Act states it, "Whereas the trade to and from Africa is very advantageous to Great Britain, and necessary for the supplying the plantations and colonies thereunto belonging with a sufficient number of negroes at reasonable rates, and for that purpose the said trade should be carried on," etc. Here then we see what the Parliament had in view when it passed this Act; and I have clearly shown that not one of the occasions on which is grounded its proceedings now exists. I may then plead, I think, the very Act itself as an argument for the abolition. If it is shown that, instead of being "very advantageous" to Great Britain, this trade is the most destructive that can well be imagined to her interests; that it is the ruin of our seamen; that it stops the extension of our manufactures; if it is proved in the second place that it is not now necessary for the "supplying our plantations with negroes;" if it is further established that this traffic was from the very beginning contrary to the first principles of justice and consequently that a pledge for its continuance, had one been attempted to have been given, must have been completely and absolutely void;—where then in this Act of Parliament is the contract to be found, by which Britain is bound, as she is said to be, never to listen to her own true interests, and the cries of the natives of Africa? Is it not clear that all argument, founded on the supposed pledged faith of Parliament, makes against those who employ it? I refer you to the principles which obtain in other cases. Every trade-act shows undoubtedly that the legislature is used to pay a tender regard to all classes of the community. But if for the sake of moral duty, of national honour, or even of great political advantage, it is thought right, by authority of

Parliament, to alter any long-established system, Parliament is competent to do it. The legislature will undoubtedly be careful to subject individuals to as little inconvenience as possible; and if any peculiar hardship should arise that can be distinctly stated and fairly pleaded, there will ever, I am sure, be a liberal feeling towards them in the legislature of this country, which is the guardian of all who live under its protection. On the present occasion, the most powerful considerations call upon us to abolish the slave-trade; and if we refuse to attend to them on the alleged ground of pledged faith and contract, we shall depart as widely from the practice of Parliament, as from the path of moral duty. If, indeed, there is any case of hardship, which comes within the proper cognisance of Parliament, and calls for the exercise of its liberality,—well! But such a case must be reserved for calm consideration, as a matter distinct from the present question.

I beg pardon for dwelling so long on the question of expediency, and on the manner in which it affects the West Indies. I have been carried away by my own feelings on some of these points into a greater length than I intended, especially considering how fully the subject has been already argued. The result of all I have said, is, that there exists no impediment, no obstacle, no shadow of reasonable objection on the ground of pledged faith, or even on that of national expediency, to the abolition of this trade. On the contrary, all the arguments drawn from those sources plead for it, and they plead much more loudly, and much more strongly in every part of the question, for an immediate, than for a gradual abolition. But, now Sir, I come to Africa. That is the ground on which I rest, and here it is that I say my right honourable friends do not carry their principles to their full extent. Why ought the slave-trade to be abolished? Because it is incurable injustice. How much stronger then is the argument for immediate than gradual abolition! By allowing it to continue even for one hour, do not my right honourable friends weaken—do not they desert, their own argument of its injustice? If on the ground of injustice it ought to be abolished at last, why ought it not now? Why is injustice to be suffered to remain for a single hour? From what I hear without doors, it is evident that there is a general conviction entertained of its being far from just; and from that very conviction of its

injustice, some men have been led, I fear, to the supposition that the slave-trade never could have been permitted to begin but from some strong and irresistible necessity—a necessity however which, if it was fancied to exist at first, I have shown cannot be thought by any man whatever to exist now. This plea of necessity, thus presumed, and presumed, as I suspect, from the circumstance of injustice itself, has caused a sort of acquiescence in the continuance of this evil. Men have been led to place it among the rank of those necessary evils which are supposed to be the lot of human creatures, and to be permitted to fall upon some countries or individuals, rather than upon others, by that Being, whose ways are inscrutable to us, and whose dispensations, it is conceived, we ought not to look into. The origin of evil is indeed a subject beyond the reach of human understandings: and the permission of it by the Superior Being is a subject into which it belongs not to us to enquire. But where the evil in question is a moral evil which a man can scrutinize, and where that moral evil has its origin with ourselves, let us not imagine that we can clear our consciences by this general, not to say irreligious and impious way of laying aside the question. If we reflect at all on this subject, we must see that every necessary evil supposes that some other and greater evil would be incurred were it removed. I therefore desire to ask what can be that greater evil which can be stated to overbalance the one in question?—I know of no evil that ever has existed, nor can imagine any evil to exist, worse than the tearing of seventy or eighty thousand persons annually from their native land by a combination of the most civilized nations, inhabiting the most enlightened quarter of the globe, but more especially under the sanction of the laws of that nation which calls herself the most free and the most happy of them all. Even if these miserable beings were proved guilty of every crime before you take them off (of which, however, not a single proof is adduced), ought we to take upon ourselves the office of executioners? And even if we condescend so far, still can we be justified in taking them, unless we have clear proof that they are criminals? But if we go much further—if we ourselves tempt them to sell their fellow-creatures to us—we may rest assured that they will take care to provide by every method, by kidnapping, by village-breaking, by unjust wars, by iniquitous condemnations,

by rendering Africa a scene of bloodshed and misery, a supply of victims increasing in proportion to our demand. Can we then hesitate in deciding whether the wars in Africa are their wars or ours? It was our arms in the river Cameroon put into the hands of the trader, that furnished him with the means of pushing his trade; and I have no more doubt that they are British arms put into the hands of Africans, which promote universal war and desolation, than I can doubt their having done so in that individual instance.

I have shown how great is the enormity of this evil, even on the supposition that we take only convicts and prisoners of war. But take the subject in the other way; take it on the grounds stated by the right honourable gentleman over the way; and how does it stand? Think of *eighty thousand* persons carried away out of their country by we know not what means! for crimes imputed! for light or inconsiderable faults; for debt perhaps! for the crime of witchcraft! or a thousand other weak and scandalous pretexts! besides all the fraud and kidnapping, the villainies and perfidy, by which the slave-trade is supplied. Reflect on these eighty thousand persons thus annually taken off! There is something in the horror of it that surpasses all the bounds of imagination. Admitting that there exists in Africa something like to courts of justice; yet what an office of humiliation and meanness is it in us, to take upon ourselves to carry into execution the partial, the cruel, iniquitous sentences of such courts, as if we also were strangers to all religion, and to the first principles of justice! But that country, it is said, has been in some degree civilized, and civilized by us. It is said they have gained some knowledge of the principles of justice. What, Sir, have they gained principles of justice from us? Their civilization brought about by us!! Yes, we give enough of our intercourse to convey to them the means, and to initiate them in the study of mutual destruction. We give them just enough of the forms of justice to enable them to add the pretext of legal trials to their other modes of perpetrating the most atrocious iniquity. We give them just enough of European improvements to enable them the more effectually to turn Africa into a savage wilderness. Some evidences say that the Africans are addicted to the practice of gambling; that they even sell their wives and children, and ultimately themselves. Are these then the

legitimate sources of slavery? Shall we pretend that we can thus acquire an honest right to exact the labour of these people? Can we pretend that we have a right to carry away to distant regions men of whom we know nothing by authentic enquiry, and of whom there is every reasonable presumption to think that those who sell them to us have no right to do so? But the evil does not stop here. I feel that there is no time for me to make all the remarks which the subject deserves, and I refrain from attempting to enumerate half the dreadful consequences of this system. Do you think nothing of the ruin and the miseries in which so many other individuals, still remaining in Africa, are involved in consequence of carrying off so many myriads of people? Do you think nothing of their families which are left behind? of the connections which are broken? of the friendships, attachments, and relationships that are burst asunder? Do you think nothing of the miseries in consequence, that all felt from generation to generation? Of the privation of that happiness which might be communicated to them by the introduction of civilization, and of mental and moral improvement? A happiness which you withhold from them so long as you permit the slave-trade to continue. What do you yet know of the internal state of Africa? You have carried on a trade to that quarter of the globe from this civilized and enlightened country; but such a trade that, instead of diffusing either knowledge or wealth, it has been the check to every laudable pursuit. Instead of any fair interchange of commodities; instead of conveying to them from this highly favoured land, any means of improvement, you carry with you that noxious plant by which everything is withered and blasted; under whose shade nothing that is useful or profitable to Africa will ever flourish or take root. Long as that continent has been known to navigators, the extreme line and boundaries of its coasts is all with which Europe is yet become acquainted; while other countries in the same parallel of latitude, through a happier system of intercourse, have reaped the blessings of a mutually beneficial commerce. But as to the whole interior of that continent you are by your own principles of commerce as yet entirely shut out; Africa is known to you only in its skirts. Yet even there you are able to infuse a poison that spreads its contagious effects from one

end of it to the other, which penetrates to its very centre, corrupting every part to which it reaches. You there subvert the whole order of nature; you aggravate every natural barbarity, and furnish to every man living on that continent motives for committing, under the name and pretext of commerce, acts of perpetual violence and perfidy against his neighbour.

Thus, Sir, has the perversion of British commerce carried misery, instead of happiness to one whole quarter of the globe. False to the very principles of trade, misguided in our policy, and unmindful of our duty, what astonishing—I had almost said, what irreparable mischief, have we brought upon that continent! I would apply this thought to the present question. How shall we ever repair this mischief? How shall we hope to obtain, if it be possible, forgiveness from Heaven for those enormous evils that we have committed, if we refuse to make use of those means which the mercy of Providence has still reserved to us for wiping away the guilt and shame with which we are now covered? If we refuse even this degree of compensation, if, knowing the miseries we have caused, we refuse even now to put a stop to them, how greatly aggravated will be the guilt of Great Britain! and what a blot will the history of these transactions for ever be in the history of this country! Shall we then DELAY to repair these injuries, and to begin rendering this justice to Africa? Shall we not count the days and hours that are suffered to intervene and to delay the accomplishment of such work? Reflect what an immense object is before you—what an object for a nation to have in view, and to have a prospect, under the favour of Providence, of being now permitted to obtain! I think the House will agree with me in cherishing the ardent wish to enter without delay upon the measures necessary for these great ends; and I am sure that the immediate abolition of the slave-trade is the first, the principal, the most indispensable act of policy, of duty, and of justice, that the legislature of this country has to take, if it is indeed their wish to secure those important objects to which I have alluded, and which we are bound to pursue by the most solemn obligations.

There is, however, one argument set up as an universal answer to everything that can be urged on one side; whether we address ourselves to gentlemen's understandings or to their

hearts and consciences. It is necessary that I should remove this formidable objection; for though not often stated in distinct terms, I fear it is one which has a very wide influence. The slave-trade system, it is supposed, has taken so deep root in Africa, that it is absurd to think of its being eradicated; and the abolition of that share of trade carried on by Great Britain (and especially if her example is not followed by other powers) is likely to be of very little service. Give me leave to say, in answer to so dangerous an argument, that we ought to be extremely sure indeed of the assumption on which it rests before we venture to rely on its validity; before we decide that an evil which we ourselves contribute to inflict is incurable, and on that very plea, refuse to desist in bearing our part in the system which produces it. You are not sure, it is said, that other nations will give up the trade, if you should renounce it. I answer, if this trade is as criminal as it is asserted to be, or if it has a thousandth part of the criminality, which I and others, after thorough investigation of the subject, charge upon it, God forbid that we should hesitate in determining to relinquish so iniquitous a traffic; even though it should be retained by other countries! God forbid, however, that we should fail to do our utmost toward inducing other countries to abandon a bloody commerce which they have probably been in good measure led by our example to pursue! God forbid that we should be capable of wishing to arrogate to ourselves the glory of being singular in renouncing it!

I tremble at the thought of gentlemen's indulging themselves in this argument (an argument as pernicious as it is futile) which I am combating. "We are friends," say they, "to humanity. We are second to none of you in our zeal for the good of Africa,—but the French will not abolish,—the Dutch will not abolish,—we wait, therefore, on prudential principles, till they join us, or set us an example."

How, Sir, is this enormous evil ever to be eradicated if every nation is thus prudentially to wait till the concurrence of all the world shall have been obtained? Let me remark, too, that there is no nation in Europe that has, on the one hand, plunged so deeply into this guilt as Britain; or that is so likely, on the other, to be looked up to as an example, if she should have the manliness to be the first in decidedly renouncing it. But, Sir, does not this argument apply a thousand times more

strongly in a contrary way? How much more justly may *other* nations point to us and say, "Why should we abolish the slave-trade, when Great Britain has not abolished it? Britain, free as she is, just and honourable as she is, and deeply also involved as she is in this commerce above all nations, not only has not abolished, but has refused to abolish. She has investigated it well; she has gained the completest insight into its nature and effects; she has collected volumes of evidence on every branch of the subject. Her Senate has deliberated—has deliberated again and again—and what is the result? she has gravely and solemnly determined to sanction the slave-trade. She sanctions it at least for a while—her legislature, therefore, it is plain, sees no guilt in it, and has thus furnished us with the strongest evidence that she can furnish,—of the justice unquestionably—and of the policy also, in a certain measure and in certain cases at least, of permitting the traffic to continue."

This, Sir, is the argument with which we furnish the other nations of Europe, if we again refuse to put an end to the slave-trade. Instead therefore of imagining that, by choosing to presume on their continuing it, we shall have exempted ourselves from guilt, and have transferred the whole criminality to them, let us rather reflect that, on the very principle urged against us, we shall henceforth have to answer for their crimes, as well as our own; we have strong reasons to believe that it depends upon us whether other countries will persist in this bloody trade or not. Already we have suffered one year to pass away, and note that the question is renewed, a proposition is made for gradual, with the view of preventing immediate abolition. I know the difficulty that exists in attempting to reform long established abuses; and I know the danger arising from the argument in favour of delay, in the case of evils which nevertheless are thought too enormous to be borne, when considered as perpetual. But by proposing some other period than the present, by prescribing some condition, by waiting for some contingency, or by refusing to proceed till a thousand favourable circumstances unite together; perhaps until we obtain the general concurrence of Europe (a concurrence which I believe never yet took place at the commencement of any improvement in policy or in morals) year after year escapes, and the most enormous evils go unredressed.

We see this abundantly exemplified, not only in public, but in private life. Similar observations have been often applied to the case of personal reformation. If you go into the street, it is a chance but the first person who crosses you is one, "*vivendi rectè qui prorogat horam.*" We may wait ; we may delay to cross the stream before us, till it has run down ; but we shall wait for ever, for the river will still flow on, without being exhausted. We shall be no nearer the object which we profess to have in view, so long as the step, which alone can bring us to it, is not taken, Until the actual, the only remedy is applied, we ought neither to flatter ourselves that we have as yet thoroughly laid to heart the evil we affect to deplore, nor that there is as yet any reasonable assurance of its being brought to an actual termination.

It has also been occasionally urged that there is something in the disposition and nature of the Africans themselves which renders all prospect of civilization on that continent extremely unpromising. "It has been known," says Mr. Fraser, in his evidence, "that a boy has been put to death, who was refused to be purchased as a slave." This single story was deemed by that gentleman a sufficient proof of the barbarity of the Africans, and of the inutility of abolishing the slave-trade. My honourable friend, however, has told you, that this boy had previously run away from his master three several times ; that the master had to pay his value according to the custom of his country, every time he was brought back ; and that partly from anger at the boy for running away so frequently, and partly to prevent a still further repetition of the same expense, he determined to put him to death. Such was the explanation of the story given in the cross-examination. This, Sir, is the signal instance that has been dwelt upon of African barbarity. This *African*, we admit, was unenlightened, and altogether barbarous ; but let us now ask what would a *civilized* and enlightened West Indian, or a body of West Indians have done in any case of a parallel nature ? I will quote you, Sir, a law passed in the West Indies in the year 1722, which in turning over the book I happened just now to cast my eye upon ; by which law this very same crime of running away is, by the legislature of the land,—by the grave and deliberate sentence of that enlightened legislature, punished with death ; and this, not in the case only of the third

offence, but even in the very first instance. It is enacted "that if any negro or any other slave shall withdraw himself from his master for the term of six months, or any slave that was absent shall not return within that time, it shall be adjudged felony, and every such person shall suffer death." There is also another West Indian law, by which every negro's hand is armed against his fellow-negroes, by his being authorized to kill a run-away slave, and even having a reward held out to him for so doing. Let the House now contrast the two cases. Let them ask themselves which of the two exhibits the greater barbarity? Let them reflect, with a little candour and liberality, whether on the ground of any of those facts and loose insinuations as to the sacrifices to be met with in the evidence they can possibly reconcile to themselves the excluding of Africa from all means of civilization? Whether they can possibly vote for the continuance of the slave-trade upon the principle that the Africans have shown themselves to be a race of incorrigible barbarians?

I hope, therefore, we shall hear no more of the moral impossibility of civilizing the Africans, nor have our understandings and consciences again insulted, by being called upon to sanction the slave-trade, until other nations shall have set the example of abolishing it. While we have been deliberating upon the subject, one nation, not ordinarily taking the lead in politics, nor by any means remarkable for the boldness of its councils, has determined on a gradual abolition; a determination, indeed, which, since it permits for a time the existence of the slave-trade, would be an unfortunate pattern for our imitation. France, it is said, will take up the trade, if we relinquish it. What? Is it supposed that in the present situation of St. Domingo, an island which used to take three-fourths of all the slaves required by the colonies of France, she, of all countries, will think of taking it up? What countries remain? The Portuguese, the Dutch, and the Spaniards. Of those countries let me declare it is my opinion that if they see us renounce the trade, after full deliberation, they will not be disposed, even on principles of policy, to rush further into it. But I say more: How are they to furnish the capital necessary for carrying it on? If there is any aggravation of our guilt, in this wretched business, greater than another, it is that we have stooped to be the carriers of these miserable beings from

Africa to the West Indies for all the other powers of Europe. And now, Sir, if we retire from the trade altogether, I ask, where is that fund which is to be raised at once by other nations,—equal to the purchase of 30 or 40,000 slaves? A fund, which if we rate them at £40 or £50 each, cannot make a capital of less than a million and a half, or two millions of money. From what branch of their commerce is it that these European nations will draw together a fund to feed this monster?—to keep alive this detestable commerce? And even if they should make the attempt, will not that immense chasm, which must instantly be created in the other parts of their trade, from which this vast capital must be withdrawn in order to supply the slave-trade, be filled up by yourselves?—Will not these branches of commerce which they must leave, and from which they must withdraw their industry and their capitals, in order to supply them to the slave-trade, be then taken up by British merchants?—Will you not even in this case find your capital flow into these deserted channels?—Will not your capital be turned from the slave-trade to that natural and innocent commerce from which they must withdraw their capitals in proportion as they take up the traffic in the flesh and blood of their fellow-creatures?

The committee sees, I trust, how little ground of objection to our proposition there is in this part of our adversaries' argument.

Having now detained the House so long, all that I will further add shall be on that important subject, the civilization of Africa, which I have already shown that I consider as the leading feature in this question. Grieved am I to think that there should be a single person in this country, much more that there should be a single member in the British Parliament, who can look on the present dark, uncultivated, and uncivilized state of that continent as a ground for continuing the slave-trade,—as a ground for not only refusing to attempt the improvement of Africa, but even for hindering and intercepting every ray of light which might otherwise break in upon her,—as a ground for refusing to her the common chance and the common means, with which other nations have been blessed, of emerging from their native barbarism.

Here, as in every other branch of this extensive question, the argument of our adversaries pleads against them; for,

surely, Sir, the deplorable state of Africa, especially when we reflect that her chief calamities are to be ascribed to us, calls for our generous aid, rather than justifies any despair on our part of her recovery, and still less any further repetition of our injuries.

I will not much longer fatigue the attention of the House ; but this point has impressed itself so deeply on my mind, that I must trouble the committee with a few additional observations. Are we justified, I ask, on any one ground of theory, or by any one instance to be found in the history of the world, from its very beginning to this day, in forming the supposition which I am now combating ? Are we justified in supposing that the particular practice which we encourage in Africa, of men's selling each other for slaves, is any symptom of a barbarism that is incurable ? Are we justified in supposing that even the practice of offering up human sacrifices proves a total incapacity for civilization ? I believe it will be found, and perhaps much more generally than is supposed, that both the trade in slaves, and the still more savage custom of offering human sacrifices, obtained in former periods, throughout many of those nations which now, by the blessings of Providence, and by a long progression of improvements, are advanced the farthest in civilization. I believe, Sir, that if we reflect an instant, we shall find that this observation comes directly home to our own selves ; and that, on the same ground on which we are now disposed to proscribe Africa for ever from all possibility of improvement, we ourselves might, in like manner, have been proscribed and for ever shut out from all the blessings which we now enjoy.

There was a time, Sir, which it may be fit sometimes to revive in the remembrance of our countrymen, when even human sacrifices are said to have been offered in this island. But I would peculiarly observe on this day, for it is a case precisely in point, that the very practice of the slave-trade once prevailed among us. Slaves, as we may read in *Henry's History of Great Britain*, were formerly an established article of our exports. Great numbers," he says, "were exported like cattle, from the British coast, and were to be seen exposed for sale in the Roman market." It does not distinctly appear by what means they were procured ; but there was unquestionably no small

resemblance, in this particular point, between the case of our ancestors and that of the present wretched natives of Africa—for the historian tells us that “adultery, witchcraft, and debt were probably some of the chief sources of supplying the Roman market with British slaves—that prisoners taken in war were added to the number—and that there might be among them some unfortunate gamesters who, after having lost all their goods, at length stake themselves, their wives and their children.” Every one of these sources of slavery has been stated, and almost precisely in the same terms, to be at this hour a source of slavery in Africa. And these circumstances, Sir, with a solitary instance or two of human sacrifices, furnish the alleged proofs that Africa labours under a natural incapacity for civilization : that it is enthusiasm and fanaticism to think that she can ever enjoy the knowledge and the morals of Europe ; that Providence never intended her to rise above a state of barbarism ; that Providence has irrevocably doomed her to be only a nursery for slaves for us free and civilized Europeans. Allow of this principle, as applied to Africa, and I should be glad to know why it might not also have been applied to ancient and uncivilized Britain. Why might not some Roman Senator, reasoning on the principles of some honourable gentlemen and pointing to *British barbarisms*, have predicted with equal boldness, “*There is a people that will never rise to civilization—there is a people destined never to be free—a people without the understanding necessary for the attainment of useful arts ; depressed by the hand of nature below the level of the human species ; and created to form a supply of slaves for the rest of the world.*” Might not this have been said, according to the principles which we now hear stated, in all respects as fairly and as truly of Britain herself, at that period of her history, as it now can be said by us of the inhabitants of Africa ?

We, Sir, have long since emerged from barbarism—we have almost forgotten that we were once barbarians—we are now raised to a situation which exhibits a striking contrast to every circumstance by which a Roman might have characterized us, and by which we now characterize Africa. There is, indeed, one thing wanting to complete the contract, and to clear us altogether from the imputation of acting even to this hour as barbarians ; for we continue to this hour a barbarous traffic

in slaves ; we continue it even yet in spite of our great and undeniable pretensions to civilization. We were once as obscure amongst the nations of the earth, as savage in our manners, as debased in our morals, as degraded in our understandings, as these unhappy Africans are at the present. But in the lapse of a long series of years, by a progression slow, and for a time, almost imperceptible, we have become rich in a variety of acquirements, favoured above measure in the gifts of Providence, unrivalled in commerce, pre-eminent in arts, foremost in the pursuits of philosophy and science, and established in all the blessings of civil society ; we are in the possession of peace, of happiness, and of liberty ; we are under the guidance of a mild and beneficent religion ; and we are protected by impartial laws, and the purest administration of justice ; we are living under a system of government which our own happy experience leads us to pronounce the best and wisest which has ever yet been framed ; a system which has become the admiration of the world. From all these blessings we must for ever have been shut out, had there been any truth in those principles which some gentlemen have not hesitated to lay down as applicable to the case of Africa. Had those principles been true, we ourselves had languished to this hour in that miserable state of ignorance, brutality, and degradation, in which history proves our ancestors to have been immersed. Had other nations adopted these principles in their conduct towards us, had other nations applied to Great Britain the reasons which some of the senators of this véry island now apply to Africa, ages might have passed without our emerging from barbarism ; and we, who are enjoying the blessings of British civilization, of British laws, and British liberty, might at this hour have been little superior, either in morals, in knowledge, or refinement, to the rude inhabitants of the Coast of Guinea.

If then we feel that this perpetual confinement in the fetters of brutal ignorance would have been the greatest calamity which could have befallen us ; if we view with gratitude and exultation the contrast between the peculiar blessings we enjoy and the wretchedness of the ancient inhabitants of Britain ; if we shudder to think of the misery which would still have overwhelmed us had Great Britain continued to the present times to be the mart for slaves to the more civilized

nations of the world, through some cruel policy of theirs, God forbid that we should any longer subject Africa to the same dreadful scourge, and preclude the light of knowledge, which has reached every other quarter of the globe, from having access to her coasts!

I trust we shall no longer continue this commerce, to the destruction of every improvement on that wide continent, and shall not consider ourselves as conferring too great a boon in restoring its inhabitants to the rank of human beings. I trust we shall not think ourselves too liberal, if, by abolishing the slave-trade, we give them the same common chance of civilization with other parts of the world, and that we shall now allow to Africa the opportunity—the hope—the prospect of attaining to the same blessings which we ourselves, through the favourable dispensations of Divine Providence, have been permitted, at a much more early period, to enjoy. If we listen to the voice of reason and duty, and pursue this night the line of conduct which they prescribe, some of us may live to see a reverse of that picture, from which we now turn our eyes with shame and regret. We may live to behold the natives of Africa engaged in the calm occupations of industry, in the pursuits of a just and legitimate commerce. We may behold the beams of science and philosophy breaking in upon their land, which, at some happy period in still later times, may blaze with full lustre; and joining their influence to that of pure religion, may illuminate and invigorate the most distant extremities of that immense continent. Then may we hope that even Africa, though last of all the quarters of the globe, shall enjoy at length, in the evening of her days, those blessings which have descended so plentifully upon us in a much earlier period of the world. Then also will Europe, participating in her improvement and prosperity, receive an ample recompense for the tardy kindness (if kindness it can be called) of no longer hindering that continent from extricating herself out of the darkness which, in other more fortunate regions, has been so much more speedily dispelled.

“— *Nos primus equis oriens afflavit anhelis ;
Illic sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper.*”

Then, Sir, may be applied to Africa, those words, originally used indeed with a different view :

*“ His demum exactis ———
 Devenère locos lætos, et amœna vireta
 Fortunatorum nemorum, sedesque beatas :
 Largior hic campos æther, et lumine vestit
 Purpurea.”*

It is in this view, Sir,—it is an atonement for our long and cruel injustice towards Africa, that the measure proposed by my honourable friend most forcibly recommends itself to my mind. The great and happy change to be expected in the state of her inhabitants is, of all the various and important benefits of the abolition, in my estimation incomparably the most extensive and important.

I shall vote, Sir, against the adjournment ; and I shall also oppose to the utmost every proposition which in any way may tend either to prevent, or even to postpone for an hour, the total abolition of the slave-trade ; a measure which, on all the various grounds which I have stated, we are bound, by the most pressing and indispensable duty, to adopt.

Roman Catholic Emancipation
House of Commons, May 13th, 1805

DIFFERING, Sir, as I do, from the honourable gentleman who proposed this motion, and differing also in many respects from several of those who have opposed it, I feel it necessary to state shortly, but distinctly, the views, the motives, and the grounds upon which that difference of opinion is founded. But in doing this, I cannot refrain from expressing, in the first instance, the very great satisfaction I feel at the temper and the moderation with which the motion was introduced, and with which for so many reasons, I am particularly desirous that the discussion should be conducted. Happy am I also that the manner in which the subject has been introduced has relieved me from the necessity of entering at large into those general principles and grounds which, when the question was discussed before, I felt myself compelled to do.

I observe with pleasure that the application made by the petitioners has not been advanced as a claim of right, but of expediency. I observe also, with equal pleasure, that the honourable gentleman has argued it upon that ground ; not that I mean to infer that the honourable gentleman has abandoned the opinion he held upon that subject, but that in the

application of the principles which have governed his conduct he has thought proper to discuss the question upon the ground of expediency. That is the ground upon which I feel the measure ought alone to be discussed ; for I cannot allow that, at any time, under any circumstances, or under any possible situation of affairs, it ought to be discussed or entertained as a claim or question of right. I, Sir, have never been one of those who have held that the term emancipation is, in the smallest degree, applicable to the repeal of the few remaining penal statutes to which the Catholics are still liable. But, possibly, in my view of the grounds of expediency, I may think it to be much more contradistinguished from the question of right than the honourable gentleman does. He seems to consider that there is only a shade of difference between the expediency and the right ; whereas my view of the difference is broad, evident, and fundamental. I consider right as independent of circumstances, and paramount to them, while expediency is connected with circumstances, and, in a great measure, dependent upon them.

With regard to the admission of the Catholics to franchises, to the elective franchise, or to any of those posts and offices which have been alluded to, I view all these points as distinctions to be given, not for the sake of the person and the individual who is to possess them, but for the sake of the public, for whose benefit they were created, and for whose advantage they are to be exercised. In all times, therefore, and upon every occasion, whether relating to the Roman Catholic or the Protestant dissenter, to the people of Ireland, or to the people of England, I have always, from a due regard to the constitution, been of opinion that we are bound to consider, not merely what is desired by a part, but what is best and most advantageous for the whole. And therefore it is, that I think it not sufficient to show that what is demanded is not likely to be prejudicial, but that it is proper to take a comprehensive view of all the circumstances connected with it, whether they relate to the time at which the measure is proposed, the manner in which it is discussed, or the effect that is likely to follow from the discussion. That, Sir, is my view of contemplating the propriety of acceding to the wishes of the Catholics, or of refusing them. It was upon that principle that I felt satisfaction in the repeal of those laws against the Catholics which

have been abolished ; and from the abolition of which I certainly am not one who infers that danger to the country, with which some gentlemen seem to be so deeply impressed. But, deeply as I felt that satisfaction, I also felt that in no possible case previous to the union could the privileges now demanded be given, consistently with a due regard to the Protestant interest in Ireland, to the internal tranquillity of that Kingdom, the frame and structure of our constitution, or the probability of the permanent connection of Ireland with this country. It is true, that after the union, I saw the subject in a different light ; but whilst that event was in contemplation I did state, as the honourable gentleman says, that the measure would make a material difference in my opinion ; but he has also stated, what is very true, that I did not make a distinct pledge. On the contrary, I believe the line of argument I took was, that if it should be thought right to give what the Catholics required, it might be given after the union with more safety to the Empire ; or if it were thought proper to refuse giving it, that it might then be refused without producing those disastrous consequences which might have been apprehended before the union. I come, then, to the present discussion, perfectly free and unfettered. I certainly was of opinion that under an united Parliament those privileges might be granted under proper guards and conditions, so as not to produce any danger to the established Church, or the Protestant constitution. And I remain this day of that opinion and I still think, if, from other circumstances, there was no objection to complying with the demands of the Catholics, and if by a wish they could be carried into effect, I own I see none of those dangers which have been urged by some gentlemen, nor do I think that the introduction of a certain proportion of Catholics into the Imperial Parliament would be likely to be productive of any influence or effect detrimental or injurious to the welfare of the estate, or the safety or security of the constitution.

But, Sir, in delivering this frank opinion, I do not mean wilfully to shut my eyes to this conviction, that a Catholic, however honourable his intentions may be, must feel anxious to advance the interests of his religion ; it is in the very nature of man ; he may disclaim and renounce this wish for a time, but there is no man, who is at all acquainted with the operations

of the human heart, who does not know that the Catholic must feel that anxiety whenever the power and the opportunity may be favourable to him. But, if these guards and conditions to which I have alluded had been applied, and which, could my wishes have been accomplished, it would have been my endeavour to have supplied, I firmly believe no danger would have existed, and no injury could have been apprehended. I thought so on grounds different from those which have been stated by others, not because as Catholics they had been engaged in any of the scenes preceding the rebellion. I do not mean, however, to say, that the Catholics were not engaged in it in greater numbers for the reasons that have been stated. I go further; though Jacobin principles were the foundation of the rebellion, yet I do not mean to deny that the influence of the priests themselves, tainted with Jacobin principles, might not have aggravated the evil, though they were not the cause of it. My idea was not to apply tests to the religious tenets of the Catholics, but tests applicable to what was the source and foundation of the evil, to render the priests, instead of making them the instruments of poisoning the minds of the people, dependent in some sort upon the government, and thus links, as it were, between the government and the people. That would have been a wise and comprehensive system; that would have been the system which I should have felt it to be my wish, and thought it to have been my duty, to have proposed. I never thought that it would have been wise or prudent to have thrown down rudely or abruptly the guards and fences of the constitution; but I did think that if the system I have alluded to had been deemed proper to be adopted, it ought to have been accompanied with those checks and guards, and with every regulation that could have given additional respect and influence to the established Church, to the support and protection of the Protestant interests, and to the encouragement of every measure that could tend to propagate and spread the example of the Protestant religion. These were the general views and intentions I entertained. And if, Sir, it had been possible to have found out that general concurrence which I so anxiously desired; if I could have carried them into effect in the manner I have stated; if persons of more ability and experience than myself would have defeated them, I am still inclined to think, that, instead of

being attended with those dangerous consequences which some gentlemen apprehend, they would have afforded increased security to the Church, and have been favourable to the welfare of the State, to the stability of the constitution and to the general strength and interest of the empire.

But when I state this, I must also remind the House that I considered the period of the union as the period favourable for the adoption of such a measure, not because any pledge had been given, but because there was a greater likelihood that the measure might be adopted after the union than before it. The period was favourable also on another account, favourable from the recent impressions that might be expected to be made on men's minds, of the probability of increased security from the union; from being amalgamated and incorporated with the imperial legislature, remote from the dangerous influence that might at times have been supposed to operate upon it, and overawe the local legislature of Ireland. Sir, I repeat, that if under the recent impression of these circumstances, I could have brought forward the measure as the first fruits of the union, I should have hoped there might have been a disposition to have received it without rekindling those religious animosities, or reviving those contending interests, between Catholic and Protestant, which, whenever they do exist, are most adverse to the welfare, the prosperity, and the happiness of the State.

This was the view in which I considered this most important subject; these were the objects which I wished to attain; but circumstances, unfortunate circumstances, in my opinion rendered it at that period impossible to bring forward the measure in the way in which I then hoped it might be practicable to bring it forward—in the only way in which I think it ought at any time to be brought forward—in the only way in which it could be brought forward with advantage to the claims of those whose petition is now under consideration, or with any hope of reconciling all differences, of burying all animosities, and of producing that perfect union, in the advantages of which gentlemen on all sides so entirely concur. What the circumstances were to which I allude, as having at that time prevented me from calling the attention of Parliament to this subject, in the manner and with the prospects which I wished, it is not now necessary for me to state. All the explanations

which I thought it my duty to give I gave at that time—more I do not feel myself now called upon to give, and nothing shall induce me to enter into further details upon this subject. I shall, therefore, now content myself with stating that the circumstances which made me feel that it was then improper to bring forward this question, and which led to the resignation of the then administration, have made so deep, so lasting an impression upon my mind, that, so long as those circumstances continue to operate, I shall feel it a duty imposed upon me not only not to bring forward, but not in any manner to be a party in bringing forward or in agitating this question.

Having said this much, Sir, upon the opinions I then entertained, and upon the principles which then, and I trust always will, govern my conduct, I think it right to add that the whole of the plan which I had formed, the whole essence of the system which I meant to have proposed, was a measure of peace, of union, of conciliation—a measure which I did hope would have had the effect of softening down all religious differences, of extinguishing all animosities, and in uniting all men of both religions in one common zeal for the preservation of the constitution and for the general happiness and prosperity of the empire. But, desirous as I then was of proposing this measure, and sanguine as I was in my hopes of its success, nothing could be further from my intention than to bring it forward if there did not appear a rational prospect of it being carried (not with unanimity, for upon such an important subject that I knew was impossible), but with general concurrence, because I knew that, if it were brought forward under other circumstances, instead of producing the effect I had wished, it would only tend to revive those animosities which I wished to extinguish, to aggravate those difficulties which I wished finally to remove. Not being able, from the circumstances to which I have alluded, to propose the measure which I thought likely to be productive of such beneficial effects, I did then form the determination not to press it at any period unless I thought it could be done with that prospect of success, and with that general concurrence, without which it can never be beneficial. When I use the term general concurrence, I am sure I shall not be supposed ever to have been so visionary as to imagine that a question of such immense importance, and upon which men's feelings and passions are so strongly excited,

could ever be carried with perfect unanimity ; but I mean with that general concurrence which would have enabled us to gratify the wishes of one party, without awakening the fears or exciting the jealousy of the other. Whatever gentlemen may think of the abstract rights of the petitioners, or of the expediency of complying with the prayer of their petition, I am sure they will agree with me in thinking that the chance of extinguishing all those animosities which have unfortunately prevailed, and of producing that perfect union which we all wish, must depend upon the combination of circumstances under which the measure was brought forward. Not having in any degree changed my opinion upon this subject, regarding it in the same point of view I did then, and retaining the same feelings, I must say that at the present moment I think I see a little chance, I should rather say I see no chance, of its being carried at all, certainly not in that way which I meant, and in which way only I think it can be productive of real advantage to the petitioners or of benefit to the State ; I mean as a measure of peace and conciliation.

If then, Sir, the question is not now to be carried, I think that to agitate it, under such circumstances, will only tend to revive those dissensions which we wish to extinguish, to awaken all that warmth and acrimony of discussion which has heretofore prevailed, and to excite those hopes, which, if they are to be disappointed, may be productive of the greatest mischief. As to the chance of carrying the question at present with general concurrence, of gratifying the Catholics without offending the Protestants, of confirming the affections of the one without raising the suspicions and exciting the fears of the other, not only in Ireland but in England, I confess there appears to me to be none. I lament it as much as any man can do. I lament that the impression which now prevails has taken place ; many circumstances have combined to produce that impression, all of which are to be deplored. I ask any gentleman whether he does not believe, looking to the members of the established Church, of the nobility, of the men of property, of the middling and respectable classes of society—I ask him, whether he does not believe, looking at the sentiments of the mass of the Protestants of this country and of Ireland, that there is the greatest repugnance to this measure, and that even if it could now be carried, so far from producing

conciliation and union, it would tend, on the contrary, to disappoint all the prospects of advantage which under other circumstances would be derived from it? Even those gentlemen who have argued the most strongly in favour of this measure have candidly confessed that, in the present state of men's minds it is not likely to be carried. I am sure I shall not be contradicted when I say that ever since the union this subject has in a very considerable degree attracted public attention, and that of late, notwithstanding the other events which have occupied the public mind, it has been the subject of much conversation both in public and private, particularly since the Catholic petition has been presented, and since the honourable gentleman has given notice of his present motion; and I should disguise my real sentiments if I did not say that at present the prevailing sentiment is strongly against this measure: What circumstances may occur to overcome that sentiment it is not for me to predict or conjecture.

In speaking of the probability of carrying this question at this time, I cannot but advert to what fell from the honourable gentleman who opened the debate this day respecting the decision which took place last night in another place. I know perfectly well that no man can mention the decision of another branch of the legislature for the purpose of influencing, much less of controlling, the decision of this House. I know there are many instances where differences of opinion have prevailed between this and the other House of Parliament, in which the sentiments of this House, in concurrence with the public opinion properly expressed, have ultimately prevailed. I am as far as any man, Sir, from wishing not to hold high the undoubted privileges of this House; but if I am right in my general view of this subject, I think the determination to which I am alluding ought not to be laid out of our consideration, because it goes to the very essence of the measure itself, I mean as far as relates to the practical advantages that are to be derived from it. Supposing, then, that we were all agreed as to the propriety of granting the prayer of this petition, is it not our duty to consider what bad effects might be produced by the marked difference which would then subsist between this House and the other branch of the legislature upon this subject? If carried at all it ought, as I have already stated, to be carried with general concurrence; and when an endeavour

is made to carry a measure, the object of which is to conciliate one part of his Majesty's subjects, care must be taken not to shock the feelings of a much larger class of the community. Under such circumstances, when such an opinion has been given by another branch of the legislature, we are bound to take it into our consideration in deciding upon the line of conduct we ought to adopt, because this is a subject in which no man can act wisely or prudently who acts entirely from his own views, or his own feelings. It is his duty to his country, to the Catholics, and to the community, to look at it in a combined point of view, to consider all the probable effects which the carrying of it (if it were practicable) with such a strong sentiment prevailing against it, or which the failing to carry it may produce. Upon this part of the subject there is one point on which I wish to say a few words.

It has been urged by some gentlemen that we ought to go into a committee, whatever we may resolve to do at last ; and some of the minor grievances under which the Catholics are said to labour have been pointed out, upon which it is said there can be no difference of opinion on the propriety of granting them relief—such as the circumstance of Catholics engaged in a military life coming over to this country, and who are thereby exposed to the operations of the Test Act, to which they are not at home. Another circumstance which has been mentioned is that the Catholics in the Army are not only not to be allowed to have mass performed, but they are compelled to attend Protestant worship. Sir, I contend that these points are much too important to induce us to go into a committee upon a petition which embraces the whole of this important subject, and which excites the hopes and fears of all the subjects of the United Kingdom. I again repeat that I do lament that this subject has now been brought forward ; I lament for the sake of the Catholics themselves ; I lament for the general interests of the country, that gentlemen have thought proper to agitate this subject at this moment. That gentlemen have a perfect right to exercise their judgment upon this subject I do not deny ; I do not complain of their conduct ; I only lament that they have felt it their duty to bring it forward at this period, and under the present circumstances ; when, if they were to succeed, the consequences would not be such as we all desire, and, if they fail, they may be such as we must all regret.

And now, Sir, let me ask the honourable gentleman, who has brought forward the present motion, and who fairly avows that his object is that everything should be conceded to the Catholics ; let me ask the honourable gentlemen who supported the motion last night with such a splendour of eloquence, what effect this is likely to produce upon the Catholics themselves ? When the honourable member, or the honourable mover of the question, talks of the effect of disappointing hopes that have been raised, I trust they have over-rated and exaggerated it. But one of these gentlemen did state that, amongst the possible causes of a religious feeling having mixed and operated in the late rebellion, might be enumerated the hope held out by Lord Fitzwilliam, that the claims of the Catholics would be taken into consideration. They allege the disappointment of that hope as one of the causes that might have tended to produce the rebellion. If that be their conviction, what must they think who wish to go into a committee upon the petition, and yet are of opinion that they still reserve to themselves the freedom of rejecting it altogether, or of rejecting it in its most important parts ? I submit this to the consideration of the House shortly, but distinctly ; it rests upon grounds so obvious and so strong, that it will be taking up your time unnecessarily to debate upon them. I submit this with a wish that the measure when brought forward will be carried with a general concurrence. But the circumstances which have hitherto rendered it impossible for me to urge and press it, make it impossible for me to urge and press it now ; feeling as I do, that to press it and to fail, or to press it and even carry it with such strong opposition are alternatives, both of them so mischievous, that it will be difficult to decide between them. Seeing, Sir, what are the opinions of the times, what is the situation of men's minds, and the sentiments of all descriptions and classes of the other branch of the legislature, and even the prevailing opinion of this House, I feel that I should act contrary to a sense of my duty, and even inconsistently with the original ground upon which I thought the measure ought to be brought forward, if I countenanced it under the present circumstances, or if I hesitated in giving my decided negative to the House going into a committee.

CHARLES JAMES FOX

Fox has been called, not without reason, the greatest leader of Opposition that this country ever saw. So brief a period of his public career was spent in office that he must be considered rather as a Parliamentary critic than as an active statesman. But, of course, brilliant debater as he was, he was also much more. He surveyed the whole European and Colonial situation. He treated all questions from the widest point of view. Nor did he, like Pitt, confine himself to the purpose of persuading the House of Commons. Accustomed to be in a minority there, he addressed himself also to the public out of doors, seeking to mould opinion, and to exercise an influence upon the tendencies of the age. He always appealed to principles, to human sentiment, to propositions of more general scope and purport than were required for the particular business in hand. By his eloquence and his arguments he wielded a double power. It was the fusion of reason and imagination that procured for him his greatest triumphs. If he was never at a loss for a word, it is equally true that he never indulged in idle declamation. He was a master of debate in its highest sense, of the reasons and illustrations which have most effect upon educated and intelligent men. Elected to the House of Commons before he was of age, he plunged into politics on the Tory side, and surpassed all competitors in the vehemence of his denunciatory rhetoric. But he very soon developed an independence of judgment which led to his dismissal from the Treasury, where he had been a junior colleague of Lord North, and he became an independent member with a fiery spirit which no ties of political allegiance could control. No one could say that he always acted in accordance with his own interests. Variable as his

course was, he betrayed no one who trusted him, and conciliated enemies without losing friends. His belief in liberty was never shaken, and he opposed to the menaces of power a dauntless resolution which nothing could disturb. He had no fear of being misunderstood. Believing that the interests of his country were bound up with the freedom of the Colonies, and the maintenance of peace, he did not hesitate to resist the coercion of America and the war with France. His theory of the French Revolution rests upon some solid evidence as well as upon some plausible conjecture. It is at least a tenable hypothesis that if Austria and Russia had not interfered with France, a limited monarchy might have been established in that country, there might have been no reign of terror, and no declaration of hostility to the other Governments of Europe. The experiment was not tried. But Fox did not cease from his efforts to promote peace until he found that they produced the opposite effect to what he intended. He held that despotism was the cause of revolutionary excess, and that the only preservative against revolution was reform.

Although it is hard to distinguish between specimens of such great and varied excellence, the best examples of his eloquence are probably his speech on peace with France in 1800, his speech on the removal of Catholic disabilities in 1805, and his speech on the erection of a monument to Pitt in the same year.

Peace with France

House of Commons. Feb. 3rd, 1800

PREFATORY NOTE.—This was the last effort which Fox made for peace before the Treaty of Amiens.

MR. SPEAKER, at so late an hour of the night, I am sure you will do me the justice to believe that I do not mean to go at length into the discussion of this great question. Exhausted as the attention of the House must be, and unaccustomed as I have been of late to attend in my place, nothing but the deep sense of my duty could have induced me to trouble you at all, and particularly to request your indulgence at such an hour.

Sir, my honourable and learned friend (Mr. Erskine) has truly said that the present is a new era in the war. The right honble. the Chancellor of the Exchequer feels the justice of the remark ; for by travelling back to the commencement of the war, and referring to all the topics and arguments which he has so often and so successfully urged to the House, and by which he has drawn them on to the support of his measures, he is forced to acknowledge that, at the end of seven years' conflict, we are come but to a new era in the war, at which he thinks it necessary only to press all his former arguments to induce us to persevere. All the topics which have so often misled us—all the reasoning which has so invariably failed—all the lofty predictions which have so constantly been falsified by events—all the hopes which have amused the sanguine, and all the assurances of the distress and weakness of the enemy which have satisfied the unthinking, are again enumerated and advanced as arguments for our continuing the war. What ! at the end of seven years of the most burdensome and the most calamitous struggle that this country was ever engaged in, are we again to be amused with notions of finance and calculations of the exhausted resources of the enemy, as a ground of confidence and of hope ? Gracious God ! were we not told, five years ago, that France was not only on the brink, but that she was actually in the gulf of bankruptcy ? Were we not told, as an unanswerable argument against treating, that she could not hold out another campaign—that nothing but peace could save her—that she wanted only time to recruit her exhausted finances—that to grant her repose, was to grant her the means of again molesting this country, and that we had nothing to do but persevere for a short time, in order to save ourselves for ever from the consequences of her ambition and her Jacobinism ? What ! after having gone on from year to year upon assurances like these, and after having seen the repeated refutations of every prediction, are we again to be seriously told that we have the same prospect of success on the same identical grounds ? And without any other argument or security, are we invited, at this new era of the war, to carry it on upon principles which, if adopted, may make it eternal ? If the right honourable gentleman shall succeed in prevailing on Parliament and the country to adopt the principles which he has advanced this night, I see

no possible termination to the contest. No man can see an end to it; and upon the assurances and predictions which have so uniformly failed, are we called upon, not merely to refuse all negotiations but to countenance principles and views as distant from wisdom and justice, as they are in their nature wild and impracticable.

I must lament, Sir, in common with every friend of peace, the harsh and unconciliating language which ministers have held towards the French, and which they have even made use of in their answer to a respectful offer of negotiation. Such language has ever been considered as extremely unwise, and has ever been reprobated by diplomatic men. I remember with pleasure the terms in which Lord Malmesbury at Paris, in the year 1796, replied to expressions of this sort, used by M. de la Croix. He justly said, "that offensive and injurious insinuations were only calculated to throw new obstacles in the way of accommodation, and that it was not by revolting reproaches, nor by reciprocal invective, that a sincere wish to accomplish the great work of pacification could be evinced." Nothing could be more proper nor more wise than this language; and such ought ever to be the tone and conduct of men entrusted with the very important task of treating with a hostile nation. Being a sincere friend to peace, I must say with Lord Malmesbury, that it is not by reproaches and by invective that we can hope for a reconciliation; and I am convinced in my own mind that I speak the sense of this House, and of a majority of the people of this country, when I lament that any unnecessary recriminations should be flung out, by which obstacles are put in the way of pacification. I believe it is the prevailing sentiment of the people, that we ought to abstain from harsh and insulting language; and in common with them I must lament, that both in the papers of Lord Grenville, and in the speeches of this night, such licence has been given to invective and reproach. For the same reason I must lament that the right honourable gentleman has thought proper to go at such length, and with such severity of minute investigation into all the early circumstances of the war, which, whatever they were, are nothing to the present purpose, and ought not to influence the present feelings of the House.

I certainly shall not follow him into all the minute detail, though I do not agree with him in many of his assertions. I

do not know what impression his narrative may make on other gentlemen ; but I will tell him, fairly and candidly, he has not convinced me. I continue to think, and until I see better grounds for changing my opinion than any that the right honourable gentleman has this night produced, I shall continue to think and to say, plainly and explicitly, that this country was the aggressor in the war. But with regard to Austria and Prussia—is there a man who, for one moment can dispute that they were the aggressors? It will be vain for the right honourable gentleman to enter into long and plausible reasoning against the evidence of documents so clear, so decisive,—so frequently, so thoroughly investigated. The unfortunate Louis XVI himself, as well as those who were in his confidence, have borne decisive testimony to the fact that between him and the Emperor there was an intimate correspondence, and a perfect understanding. Do I mean by this that a positive treaty was entered into for the dismemberment of France? Certainly not, but no man can read the declarations which were made at Mantua, as well as at Pilnitz, as they are given by M. Bertrand de Moleville, without acknowledging that there was not merely an intention, but a declaration of an intention, on the part of the great powers of Germany, to interfere in the internal affairs of France, for the purpose of regulating the government against the opinion of the people. This, though not a plan for the partition of France, was, in the eye of reason and common sense, an aggression against France. The right honourable gentleman denies that there was such a thing as the treaty of Pilnitz. Granted. But was there not a declaration which amounted to an act of hostile aggression? The two powers, the Emperor of Germany and the King of Prussia, made a public declaration, that they were determined to employ their forces in conjunction with those of the other sovereigns of Europe, “to put the King of France in a situation to establish, in perfect liberty, the foundations of a monarchical government, equally agreeable to the rights of sovereigns and the welfare of the French, whenever the other princes should agree to co-operate with them; then, and in that case, their Majesties were determined to act promptly, and by mutual consent, with the forces necessary to obtain the end proposed by all of them. In the meantime they declared that they would give orders for their troops to be ready for actual service.”

Now, I would ask gentlemen to lay their hands upon their hearts, and say, what the fair construction of this declaration was—whether it was not a menace and an insult to France, since, in direct terms, it declared, that whenever the other powers should concur, they would attack France, then at peace with them, and then employed only in domestic and internal regulations? Let us suppose the case to be that of Great Britain. Will any gentleman say, if two of the great powers should make a public declaration, that they were determined to make an attack upon this Kingdom as soon as circumstances should favour their intention; that they only waited for this occasion; and that in the meantime they would keep their forces ready for the purpose; that it would not be considered by the Parliament and the people of this country as an hostile aggression? And is there an Englishman in existence, who is such a friend to peace as to say, that the nation could retain its honour and dignity if it should sit down under such a menace? I know too well what is due to the national character of England, to believe that there would be two opinions on the case, if thus put home to our own feelings and understanding. We must, then, respect in others the indignation which such an act would excite in ourselves; and when we see it established on the most indisputable testimony, that both at Pilnitz and at Mantua declarations were made to this effect, it is idle to say, that as far as the Emperor and the King of Prussia were concerned, they were not the aggressors in the war.

“Oh! but the decree of the 19th of November, 1792! that at least,” the right honourable gentleman says, “you must allow to be an act of aggression, not only against England, but against all the sovereigns of Europe.” I am not one of those, Sir, who attach most interest to the general and indiscriminate provocations thrown out at random, like this resolution of the 19th of November, 1792. I do not think it necessary to the dignity of any people to notice and to apply to themselves menaces flung out without particular allusion, which are always unwise in the power which uses them, and which it is still more unwise to treat with seriousness. But, if any such idle and general provocation to nations is given, either in insolence or in folly, by any government, it is a clear first principle, that an explanation is the thing which a magnanimous nation, feeling itself aggrieved, ought to demand; and if an explanation

be given which is not satisfactory, it ought clearly and distinctly to say so. There ought to be no ambiguity, no reserve, on the occasion. Now we all know, from documents on our table, that M. Chauvelin did give an explanation of this silly decree. He declared in the name of his government, "that it was never meant that the French Government should favour insurrections; that the decree was applicable only to those people who, after having acquired their liberty by conquest, should demand the assistance of the republic; but that France would respect, not only the independence of England, but also that of her allies with whom she was not at war." This was the explanation given of the offensive decree. But this explanation was not satisfactory! Did you say so to M. Chauvelin? Did you tell him that you were not content with this explanation? And when you dismissed him afterwards, on the death of the King, did you say that this explanation was unsatisfactory? No; you did no such thing; and I contend, that unless you demanded farther explanations, and they were refused, you have no right to urge the decree of the 19th of November as an act of aggression. In all your conferences and correspondence with M. Chauvelin, did you hold out to him what terms would satisfy you? Did you give the French the power or the means of settling the misunderstanding which that decree, or any other of the points at issue had created? I contend, that when a nation refuses to state to another the thing which would satisfy her, she shows that she is not actuated by a desire to preserve peace between them; and I aver, that this was the case here. The Schelt, for instance, you now say that the navigation of the Schelt was one of your causes of complaint. Did you explain yourself on that subject? Did you make it one of the grounds for the dismissal of M. Chauvelin? Sir, I repeat it, a nation, to justify itself in appealing to the last solemn resort, ought to prove that it had taken every possible means, consistent with dignity, to demand the reparation which would be satisfactory, and if she refused to explain what would be satisfactory, she did not do her duty, nor exonerate herself from the charge of being the aggressor.

The right honourable gentleman has this night, for the first time, produced an important paper—the instructions which were given to his Majesty's minister at the Court of St.

Petersburg, about the end of the year 1792, to interest her Imperial Majesty to join her efforts with those of his Britannic Majesty, to prevent, by their joint mediation, the evils of a general war. Of this paper, and of the existence of any such document, I for one was entirely ignorant; but I have no hesitation in saying, that I completely approve of the instructions which appear to have been given; and I am sorry to see the right honourable gentleman disposed rather to take blame to himself than credit for having written it. He thinks that he shall be subject to the imputation of having been rather too slow to apprehend the dangers with which the French Revolution was fraught than that he was forward and hasty—*“Quod solum excusat, hoc solum miror in illo.”* I do not agree with him on the idea of censure. I by no means think that he was blamable for too much confidence in the good intentions of the French. I think the tenor and composition of this paper was excellent—the instructions conveyed in it wise; and that it wanted but one essential thing to have entitled it to general approbation—namely, to be acted upon. The clear nature and intent of that paper, I take to be, that our ministers were to solicit the court of Petersburg to join with them in a declaration to the French Government, stating explicitly what course of conduct, with respect to their foreign relations, they thought necessary to the general peace and security of Europe, and what, if complied with, would have induced them to mediate for that purpose—a proper, wise and legitimate course of proceeding. Now, I ask, Sir, whether, if this paper had been communicated to Paris at the end of the year 1792, instead of Petersburg, it would not have been productive of most seasonable benefits to mankind; and, by informing the French in time of the means by which they might have secured the mediation of Great Britain, have not only avoided the rupture of this country, but have also restored general peace to the continent? The paper, Sir, was excellent in its intentions; but its merit was all in the composition. It was a fine theory, which ministers did not think proper to carry into practice. Nay, on the contrary, at the very time they were drawing up this paper, they were insulting M. Chauvelin, in every way, until about the 23rd or 24th of January, 1793, when they finally dismissed him, without stating any one ground upon which they were willing to preserve terms with the French.

“ But France ” it seems, “ then declared war against us ; and she was the aggressor, because the declaration came from her.” Let us look at the circumstances of this transaction on both sides. Undoubtedly, the declaration was made by her ; but is a declaration the only thing that constitutes the commencement of a war ? Do gentlemen recollect that, in consequence of a dispute about the commencement of war, respecting the capture of a number of ships, an article was inserted in our treaty with France, by which it was positively stipulated, that in future, to prevent all disputes, the act of the dismissal of a minister from either of the two courts should be held and considered as tantamount to a declaration of war ? I mention this, Sir, because, when we are idly employed in this retrospect of the origin of a war, which has lasted so many years, instead of fixing our eyes only to the contemplation of the means of putting an end to it, we seem disposed to overlook everything on our parts, and to search only for grounds of imputation on the enemy. I almost think it an insult on the House to detain them with this sort of examination. If, Sir, France was the aggressor, as the right honourable gentleman says she was throughout, why did not Prussia call upon us for the stipulated number of troops, according to the article of the defensive treaty of alliance subsisting between us, by which, in case either of the contracting parties was attacked, they had a right to demand the stipulated aid ? And the same thing, again, may be asked when we were attacked. The right honourable gentleman might here accuse himself, indeed, of reserve ; but it unfortunately happened, that at the time, the point was too clear on which side the aggression lay. Prussia was too sensible that the war could not entitle her to make the demand, and that it was not a case within the scope of the defensive treaty. This is evidence worth a volume of subsequent reasoning ; for if, at the time when all the facts were present to their minds, they could not take advantage of existing treaties, and that, too, when the courts were on the most friendly terms with one another, it will be manifest to every thinking man that they were sensible they were not authorized to make the demand.

I really, Sir, cannot think it necessary to follow the right honourable gentleman into all the minute details which he has thought proper to give us respecting the first aggression ;

but, that Austria and Prussia were the aggressors, not a man in any country, who has ever given himself the trouble to think at all on the subject, can doubt. Nothing could be more hostile than their whole proceedings. Did they not declare to France, that it was their internal concerns, not their external proceedings, which provoked them to confederate against her? Look back to the proclamations with which they set out. Read the declarations which they made themselves, to justify their appeal to arms. They did not pretend to fear their ambition, their conquests, their troubling their neighbours; but they accused them of new-modelling their own government. They said nothing of their aggressions abroad; they spoke only of their clubs and societies at Paris.

Sir, in all this, I am not justifying the French—I am not striving to absolve them from blame, either in their internal or external policy. I think, on the contrary, that their successive rulers have been as bad and as execrable, in various instances, as any of the most despotic and unprincipled governments that the world ever saw. I think it impossible, Sir, that it should have been otherwise. It was not to be expected that the French, when once engaged in Foreign wars, should not endeavour to spread destruction around them, and to form plans of aggrandisement and plunder on every side. Men bred in the school of the House of Bourbon could not be expected to act otherwise. They could not have lived so long under their ancient masters, without imbibing the restless ambition, the perfidy, and the insatiable spirit of the race. They have imitated the practice of their great prototype, and, through their whole career of mischief and of crimes, have done no more than servilely trace the steps of their own Louis XIV. If they have overrun countries and ravaged them, they have done it upon Bourbon principles. If they have ruined and dethroned sovereigns, it is entirely after the Bourbon manner. If they have even fraternized with the people of foreign countries and pretended to make their cause their own, they have only faithfully followed the Bourbon example. They have constantly had Louis, the Grand Monarque, in the eye. But it may be said, that this example was long ago, and that we ought not to refer to a period so distant. True, it is a distant period as applied to a man, but not so to the principle. The principle was never extinct; nor has its operation been suspended in

France, except, perhaps, for a short interval, during the administration of Cardinal Fleury; and my complaint against the republic of France is, not that she has generated new crimes, not that she has promulgated new mischief, but that she has adopted and acted upon the principles which have been so fatal to Europe, under the practice of the House of Bourbon. It is said, that wherever the French have gone, they have introduced revolution; that they have sought for the means of disturbing neighbouring states, and have not been content with mere conquest. What is this but adopting the ingenious scheme of Louis XIV? He was not content with merely overrunning a state; whenever he came into a new territory, he established what he called his chamber of claims; a most convenient device, by which he inquired, whether the conquered country or province had any dormant or disputed claims, any cause of complaint, any unsettled demand upon any other state or province—upon which he might wage war upon such a state, thereby discover again ground for new devastation, and gratify his ambition by new acquisitions. What have the republicans done more atrocious, more Jacobinical, than this? Louis went to war with Holland. His pretext was, that Holland had not treated him with sufficient respect—a very just and proper cause for war indeed! This, Sir, leads me to an example which I think seasonable, and worthy the attention of his Majesty's ministers. When our Charles II, as a short exception to the policy of his reign, made the triple alliance for the protection of Europe, and particularly of Holland, against the ambition of Louis XIV, what was the conduct of that great, virtuous and most able statesman, M. de Witt, when the confederates came to deliberate on the terms on which they should treat with the French monarch? When it was said that he had made unprincipled conquests, and that he ought to be forced to surrender them all, what was the language of that great wise man? "No," said he; "I think we ought not to look back to the origin of the war, so much as the means of putting an end of it. If you had united in time to prevent these conquests, well; but, now that he has made them, he stands upon the ground of conquest, and we must agree to treat with him, not with reference to the origin of the conquest, but with regard to his present posture. He had those places, and some of them we

must be content to give up as the means of peace ; for conquest will always successfully set up its claims to indemnification." Such was the language of this minister, who was the ornament of his time ; and such, in my mind, ought to be the language of statesmen, with regard to the French, at this day. The same ought to have been said at the formation of the confederacy. It was true that the French had overrun Savoy ; but they had overrun it on Bourbon principles ; and having gained this and other conquests before the confederacy was formed, they ought to have treated with her rather for future security, than for past correction. States in possession, whether monarchical or republican, will claim indemnity in proportion to their success ; and it will never be so much inquired, by what right they gained possession, as by what means they can be prevented from enlarging their depredations. Such is the safe practice of the world ; and such ought to have been the conduct of the powers when the reduction of Savoy made them coalesce.

The right honourable gentleman may know more of the secret particulars of their overrunning Savoy than I do ; but certainly, as they have come to my knowledge, it was a most Bourbonlike act. A great and justly celebrated historian, whom I will not call a foreigner—I mean Mr. Hume (a writer certainly estimable in many particulars, but who was a childish lover of princes)—talks of Louis XIV in very magnificent terms ; but he says of him, that, though he managed his enterprises with skill and bravery, he was unfortunate in this, that he never got a good and fair pretence for war. This he reckons among his misfortunes ! Can we say more of the republican French ? In seizing on Savoy I think they made use of the words, "*convenances morales et physiques.*" These were their reasons. A most Bourbonlike phrase ! And I therefore contend, that as we never scrupled to treat with the princes of the House of Bourbon on account of their rapacity, their thirst of conquest, their violation of treaties, their perfidy, and their restless spirit, so we ought not to refuse to treat with their republican imitators. Ministers could not pretend ignorance of the unprincipled manner in which the French had seized on Savoy. The Sardinian minister complained of the aggression, and yet no stir was made about it. The Courts of Europe stood by and saw the outrage ; and our ministers

saw it. The right honourable gentleman will in vain, therefore, exert his powers to persuade me of the interest he takes in the preservation of the rights of nations, since, at the moment when an interference might have been made in effect, no step was taken, no remonstrance made, no mediation negotiated to stop the career of conquest. All the pretended and hypocritical sensibility for the "rights of nations, and for social order," with which we have since been stunned, cannot impose upon those who will take the trouble to look back to the period when this sensibility ought to have roused us into seasonable exertion. At that time, however, the right honourable gentleman makes it his boast, that he was prevented, by a sense of neutrality, from taking any measures of precaution on the subject. I do not give the right honourable gentleman much credit for his spirit of neutrality on the occasion. It flowed from the sense of the country at the time, the great majority of which was clearly and decidedly against all interruptions being given to the French in their desire of regulating their own internal government.

But this neutrality, which respected only the internal rights of the French, and from which the people of England would never have departed but for the impolitic and hypocritical cant which was set up to rouse their jealousy and alarm their fears, was very different from the great principle of political prudence which ought to have actuated the councils of the nation, on seeing the first steps of France towards a career of external conquest. My opinion is, that when the unfortunate King of France offered to us, in the letter delivered by M. Chauvelin and M. Talleyrand; and even entreated us to mediate between him and the allied powers of Austria and Prussia, they ought to have accepted the offer, and exerted their influence to save Europe from the consequence of a system which was then beginning to manifest itself. It was, at least, a question of prudence; and as we had never refused to treat and to mediate with the old princes on account of their ambition or their perfidy, we ought to have been equally ready now, when the same principles were acted upon by other men. I must doubt the sensibility which could be so cold and so indifferent at the proper moment of its activity. I fear that there were at that moment the germs of ambition rising in the mind of the right honourable gentleman, and that he was

beginning, like others, to entertain hopes that something might be obtained out of the coming confusion.

What but such a sentiment could have prevented him from overlooking the fair occasion that was offered for preventing the calamities with which Europe was threatened? What but some such interested principle could have made him forego the truly honourable task, by which his administration would have displayed its magnanimity and its power? But for some such feeling, would not this country, both in wisdom and in dignity, have interfered, and in conjunction with the other powers, have said to France, "You ask for a mediation; we will mediate with candour and sincerity, but we will at the same time declare to you our apprehensions. We do not trust to your assertion of a determination to avoid all foreign conquest, and that you are desirous only of settling your own constitution, because your language is contradicted by experience and the evidence of facts. You are Frenchmen, and you cannot so soon have thrown off the Bourbon principles in which you were educated. You have already imitated the bad practice of your princes; you have seized on Savoy, without a colour of right. But here we take our stand. Thus far you have gone, and we cannot help it; but you must go no farther. We will tell you distinctly what we shall consider as an attack on the balance and the security of Europe; and, as the conditions of our interference. We will tell you also the securities that we think essential to the general repose." This ought to have been the language of his Majesty's ministers when their mediation was solicited; and something of this kind they evidently thought of when they sent the instructions to Petersburg which they have mentioned this night, but upon which they never acted. Having not done so, I say they have no claim to talk now about the violated right of Europe, about the aggression of the French and about the origin of the war, in which this country was so suddenly afterwards plunged. Instead of this, what did they do? They hung back; they avoided explanation; they gave the French no means of satisfying them; and I repeat my proposition—when there is a question of peace and war between two nations, that government feels itself in the wrong which refuses to state with clearness and precision what she would consider as a satisfaction and a pledge of peace.

Sir, if I understand the true precepts of the Christian religion, as set forth in the New Testament, I must be permitted to say, that there is no such thing as a rule or doctrine by which we are directed, or can be justified, in waging a war for religion. The idea is subversive of the very foundations upon which it stands, which are those of peace and goodwill among men. Religion never was and never could be, a justifiable cause of war ; but it has been too often grossly used as the pretext and the apology for the most unprincipled wars.

I have already said, and I repeat it, that the conduct of the French to foreign nations cannot be justified. They have given great cause of offence, but certainly not to all countries alike. The right honourable gentlemen opposite to me have made an indiscriminate catalogue of all the countries which the French have offended, and, in their eagerness to throw odium on the nation, have taken no pains to investigate the sources of their several quarrels. I will not detain the House by entering into the long detail which has been given of their aggressions and their violences ; but let me mention Sardinia as one instance which has been strongly insisted upon. Did the French attack Sardinia when at peace with them ? No such thing. The King of Sardinia had accepted of a subsidy from Great Britain ; and Sardinia was, to all intents and purposes, a belligerent power. Several other instances might be mentioned ; but though, perhaps, in the majority of instances, the French may be unjustifiable, is this the moment for us to dwell upon these enormities—to waste our time, and inflame our passions, by recriminating upon each other ? There is no end to such a war. I have somewhere read, I think in Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World*, of a most bloody and fatal battle which was fought by two opposite armies, in which almost all the combatants on both sides were killed, "because," says the historian, "though they had offensive weapons on both sides, they had none for defence." So, in this war of words, if we are to use only offensive weapons, if we are to indulge only in invective and abuse, the contest must be eternal. If this war of reproach and invective is to be countenanced, may not the French with equal reason complain of the outrages and the horrors committed by the powers opposed to them ? If we must not treat with the French on account of the iniquity of their former transactions, ought we not

to be as scrupulous of connecting ourselves with other powers equally criminal? Surely, Sir, if we must be thus rigid in scrutinizing the conduct of an enemy, we ought to be equally careful in not committing our honour and our safety with an ally who has manifested the same want of respect for the rights of other nations. Surely, if it is material to know the character of a power with whom you are only about to treat for peace, it is more material to know the character of allies, with whom you are about to enter into the closest connection of friendship, and for whose exertions you are about to pay.

Now, Sir, what was the conduct of your own allies to Poland? Is there a single atrocity of the French, in Italy, in Switzerland, in Egypt, if you please, more unprincipled and inhuman than that of Russia, Austria and Prussia, in Poland? What has there been in the conduct of the French to foreign powers; what in the violation of solemn treaties; what in the plunder, devastation, and dismemberment of unoffending countries; what in the horrors and murders perpetuated upon the subdued victims of their rage in any district which they have overrun, worse than the conduct of those three great powers, in the miserable, devoted, and trampled-on kingdom of Poland, and who have been, or are, our allies in this war for religion, social order and the rights of nations? "Oh! but we regretted the partition of Poland!" Yes, regretted! you regretted the violence, and that is all you did. You united yourselves with the actors; you, in fact, by your acquiescence, confirmed the atrocity. But they are your allies; and although they overran and divided Poland, there was nothing, perhaps, in the manner of doing it, which stamped it with peculiar infamy and disgrace. The hero of Poland, perhaps, was merciful and mild! He was as much superior to Bonaparte in bravery, and in the discipline which he maintained, as he was superior in virtue and humanity! He was animated by the purest principles of Christianity, and was restrained in his career by the benevolent precepts which it inculcates! Was he? Let unfortunate Warsaw, and the miserable inhabitants of the suburb of Praga in particular, tell! What do we understand to have been the conduct of this magnanimous hero, with whom, it seems, Bonaparte is not to be compared? He entered the suburb of Praga, the most popular suburb of Warsaw; and there let his soldiery loose on the miserable,

unarmed and unresisting people ! Men, women, and children, nay, infants at the breast, were doomed to one indiscriminate massacre ! Thousands of them were inhumanly, wantonly, butchered ! And for what ? Because they had dared to join in a wish to meliorate their own condition as a people, and to improve their constitution, which had been confessed by their own Sovereign to be in want of amendment. And such is the hero upon whom the cause of " religion and social order " is to repose ! and such is the man whom we praise for his discipline and his virtue, and whom we hold out as our boast and our dependence, while the conduct of Bonaparte unfits him to be even treated with as an enemy !

But the behaviour of the French towards Switzerland raises all the indignation of the right honourable gentleman and inflames his eloquence. I admire the indignation which he expresses (and I think he felt it) in speaking of this country, so dear and so congenial to every man who loves the sacred name of liberty. He who loves liberty, says the right honourable gentleman, thought himself at home on the favoured and happy mountains of Switzerland, where she seemed to have taken up her abode under a sort of implied compact, among all other states, that she should not be disturbed in this her chosen asylum. I admire the eloquence of the right honourable gentleman in speaking of this country of liberty and peace, to which every man would desire, once in his life at least, to make a pilgrimage. But who, let me ask him, first proposed to the Swiss people to depart from the neutrality which was their chief protection, and to join the confederacy against the French ? I aver, that a noble relation of mine (Lord Robert Fitzgerald), then the Minister of England to the Swiss Cantons was instructed, in direct terms, to propose to the Swiss, by an official note, to break from the line they had laid down for themselves, and to tell them, " in such a contest neutrality was criminal." I know that noble lord too well, though I have not been in habits of intercourse with him of late, from the employments in which he has been engaged, to suspect that he would have presented such a paper without the express instructions of his Court, or that he would have gone beyond those instructions.

But, was it only to Switzerland that this sort of language was held ? What was our language also to Tuscany and to

Genoa? An honourable gentleman (Mr. Canning) has denied the authenticity of a pretended letter which has been circulated, and ascribed to Lord Harvey. He says, it is all a fable and a forgery. Be it so; but is it also a fable that Lord Harvey did speak in terms to the Grand Duke, which he considered as offensive and insulting? I cannot tell for I was not present. But was it not, and is it not believed? Is it a fable that Lord Harvey went into the closet of the Grand Duke, laid his watch upon the table, and demanded in a peremptory manner, that he should, within a certain number of minutes, I think I have heard within a quarter of an hour, determine aye or no, to dismiss the French Minister and order him out of his dominion; with the menace, that if he did not, the English fleet should bombard Leghorn? Will the honourable gentleman deny this also? I certainly do not know it from my own knowledge; but I know, that persons of the first credit, then at Florence, have stated these facts, and that they have never been contradicted. It is true that upon the Grand Duke's complaint of this indignity, Lord Harvey was recalled; but was the principle recalled? Was the mission recalled? Do not ministers persist in the demand which Lord Harvey had made, perhaps ungraciously? Was not the Grand Duke forced, in consequence, to dismiss the French minister? and did they not drive him to enter into an unwilling war with the republic? It is true that he afterwards made his peace; and that, having done so, he was treated severely and unjustly by the French. But what do I conclude from all this, but that we have no right to be scrupulous, we who have violated the respect due to peaceable powers ourselves, in this war, which, more than any other that ever afflicted human nature, has been distinguished by the greatest number of disgusting and outrageous insults to the smaller powers by the great. And I infer from this also, that the instances not being confined to the French, but having been perpetrated by every one of the allies, and by England as much as by the others, we have no right to refuse to treat with the French on this ground. Need I speak of your conduct to Genoa also? Perhaps the note delivered by Mr. Drake was also a forgery. Perhaps the blockade of the port never took place. It is impossible to deny the facts, which are so glaring at the time. It is a painful thing to me, Sir, to be obliged to go back to these unfortunate periods of the history

of this war, and of the conduct of this country ; but I am forced to the talk by the use which has been made of the atrocities of the French as an argument against negotiation. I think I have said enough to prove, that if the French have been guilty, we have not been innocent. Nothing but determined incredulity can make us deaf and blind to our own acts, when we are so ready to yield an assent to all the reproaches which are thrown out on the enemy and upon which reproaches we are gravely told to continue the war.

“ But the French,” it seems, “ have behaved ill everywhere. They seized on Venice, which had preserved the most exact neutrality, or rather,” as it is hinted, “ had manifested symptoms of friendship to them.” I agree with the right honourable gentleman, it was an abominable act. I am not the apologist of, much less the advocate for, their iniquities ; neither will I countenance them in their pretences for the injustice. I do not think that much regard is to be paid to the charges which a triumphant soldiery bring on the conduct of a people whom they have overrun. Pretences for outrage will never be wanting to the strong, when they wish to trample on the weak ; but when we accuse the French of having seized on Venice, after stipulating for its neutrality and guaranteeing its independence, we should also remember the excuse that they made for the violence ; namely, that their troops had been attacked and murdered. I say I am always incredulous about such excuses ; but I think it fair to hear whatever can be alleged on the other side. We cannot take one side of a story only. Candour demands that we should examine the whole before we make up our minds on the guilt. I cannot think it quite fair to state the view of the subject of one party as indisputable fact, without even mentioning what the other party has to say for itself. But, Sir, is this all ? Though the perfidy of the French to the Venetians be clear and palpable, was it worse in morals, in principle, and in example, than the conduct of Austria ? My honourable friend (Mr. Whitbread) properly asked, “ Is not the receiver as bad as the thief ? ” If the French seized on the territory of Venice, did not the Austrians agree to receive it ? “ But this,” it seems, “ is not the same thing.” It is quite in the nature, and within the rule of diplomatic morality, for Austria to receive the country which was thus seized upon unjustly. “ The Emperor took it as a kind of

compensation ; it was his by barter ; he was not answerable for the guilt by which it was obtained ! ” What is this, Sir, but the false and abominable reasoning with which we have been so often disgusted on the subject of the slave trade ? Just in the same manner have I heard a notorious wholesale dealer in this inhuman traffic justify his abominable trade. “ I am not guilty of the horrible crime of tearing that mother from her infants ; that husband from his wife ; of depopulating that village ; of depriving that family of their sons, the support of their aged parents ! No : thank Heaven, I am not guilty of this horror ; I only bought them in the fair way of trade. They were brought to the market ; they had been guilty of crimes, or they had been made prisoners of war ; they were accused of witchcraft, of obi, or of some other sorts of sorcery ; and they were brought to me for sale ; I gave a valuable consideration for them ; but God forbid that I should taint my soul with the guilt of dragging them from their friends and families ! ” Such has been the precious defence of the slave trade ; and such is the argument set up for Austria, in this instance of Venice. “ I did not commit the crime of trampling on the independence of Venice. I did not seize on the City ; I gave a *quid pro quo*. It was a matter of barter and indemnity ; I gave half a million of human beings to be put under the yoke of France in another district, and I had these people turned over to me in return ! ” This, Sir, is the defence of Austria ; and under such detestable sophistry as this, is the infernal traffic in human flesh, whether in white or black, to be continued and even justified ! At no time has that diabolical traffic been carried to a greater length than during the present war ; and that by England herself, as well as Austria and Russia.

“ But France,” it seems, “ has roused all the nations of Europe against her ” ; and the long catalogue has been read to you, to prove she must have been atrocious to provoke them all. Is it true, Sir, that she has roused them all ? It does not say much for the address of his Majesty’s ministers, if this be the case. What, Sir, have all your negotiations, all your declamation, all your money, been squandered in vain ? Have you not succeeded in stirring the indignation, and engaging the assistance of a single power ? But you do yourselves injustice. I dare say that the truth lies between you. Between

their crimes and your money the rage has been excited ; and full as much is due to your seductions as to her atrocities. My honourable friend (Mr. Erskine) was correct, therefore, in his argument ; for you cannot take both sides of the case ; you cannot accuse them of having provoked all Europe, and at the same time claim the merit of having roused them to join you.

You talk of your allies. Sir, I wish to know who your allies are ? Russia is one of them, I suppose. Did France attack Russia ? Has the magnanimous Paul taken the field for social order and religion on account of personal aggression ? The Emperor of Russia has declared himself Grand Master of Malta, though his religion is as opposite to that of the knights as ours is ; and he is as much considered a heretic by the Church of Rome as we are. The King of Great Britain might, with as much propriety, declare himself the head of the order of the Chartreuse monks. Not content with taking to himself the commandery of this institution of Malta, Paul has even created a married man a knight, contrary to all the most sacred rules and regulations of the order. And yet this ally of ours is fighting for religion. So much for his religion : Let us show his regard for social order ! How does he show his abhorrence of the principles of the French, in their violation of the rights of other nations ? What has been his conduct to Denmark ? He says to Denmark—" You have seditious clubs at Copenhagen—No Danish vessel shall enter the ports of Russia ! " He holds a still more despotic language to Hamburg. He threatens to lay an embargo on their trade ; and he forces them to surrender up men who are claimed by the French as their citizens—whether truly or not, I do not enquire. He threatens them with his own vengeance if they refuse and subjects them to that of the French if they comply. And what has been his conduct to Spain ? He first sends away the Spanish minister from Petersburg, and then complains, as a great insult, that his minister was dismissed from Madrid ! This is one of our allies ; and he declared that the object for which he has taken up arms, is to replace the ancient race of the House of Bourbon on the throne of France, and that he does this for the cause of religion and social order ! Such is the respect for religion and social order which he himself displays ; and such are the examples of it with which we coalesce !

No man regrets, Sir, more than I do, the enormities that

France has committed ; but how do they bear upon the question as it now stands ? Are we for ever to deprive ourselves of the benefits of peace, because France has perpetrated acts of injustice ? Sir, we cannot acquit ourselves upon such ground. We have negotiated. With the knowledge of these acts of injustice and disorder, we have treated with them twice ; yet, the right honourable gentleman cannot enter into negotiations with them now ; and it is worth while to attend to the reasons that he gives for the refusing their offer. The Revolution itself is no more an objection now than it was in 1796, when he did negotiate ; for the government of France at that time was surely as unstable as it is now. The crimes of the French, the instability of their government, did not then prevent him ; and why are they to prevent him now ? He negotiated with a government as unstable, and, baffled in that negotiation, he did not scruple to open another at Lisle in 1797. We have heard a very curious account of these negotiations this day, and, as the right honourable gentleman has emphatically told us, an " honest " account of them. He says he has no scruple in avowing that he apprehended danger from the success of his own efforts to procure a pacification, and that he was not displeased at its failure. He was sincere in his endeavours to treat, but he was not disappointed when they failed. I wish to understand the right honourable gentleman correctly. His declaration on the subject, then, I take to be this—that though sincere in his endeavours to procure peace in 1797, yet he apprehended greater danger from accomplishing his object than from the continuance of war ; and that he felt this apprehension from the comparative views of the probable state of peace and war at that time. I have no hesitation in allowing the fact, that a state of peace, immediately after a war of such violence, must, in some respects, be a state of insecurity, but does this not belong, in a certain degree, to all wars ? And are we never to have peace, because that peace may be insecure ? But there was something, it seems, so peculiar in this war, and in the character and principles of the enemy, that the right honourable gentleman thought a peace in 1797 would be comparatively more dangerous than war. Why, then, did he treat ? I beg the attention of the House to this—He treated, " because the unequivocal sense of the people of England was declared to be in favour of negotiation."

The right honourable gentleman confesses the truth, then, that in 1797 the people were for peace. I thought so at the time ; but you all recollect, that when I stated it in my place, it was denied. " True," they said, " you have procured petitions ; but we have petitions, too ; we all know in what strange ways petitions may be procured, and how little they deserve to be considered as the sense of the people." This was their language at the time ; but now we find these petitions did speak the sense of the people, and that it was on this side of the House only, that the sense of the people was spoken. The majority spoke a contrary language. It is acknowledged, then, that the unequivocal sense of the people of England may be spoken by the minority of this House, and that it is not always by the test of numbers that an honest decision is to be ascertained. This House decided against what the right honourable gentleman knew to be the sense of the country ; but he himself acted upon that sense against the vote of Parliament.

The negotiation in 1796 went off, as my honourable and learned friend (Mr. Erskine) has said, upon the question of Belgium ; or, as the right honourable gentleman asserts, upon a question of principle. He negotiated to please the people, but it went off " on account of a monstrous principle advanced by France, incompatible with all negotiation." This is now said. Did the right honourable gentleman say so at the time ? Did he fairly and candidly inform the people of England, that they broke off the negotiation because the French had urged a basis that it was totally impossible for England at any time to grant ? No such thing. On the contrary, when the negotiation broke off, they published a manifesto, " renewing, in the face of Europe, the solemn declaration, that whenever the enemy should be disposed to enter on the work of a general pacification, in a spirit of conciliation and equity, nothing should be wanting on their part to contribute to the accomplishment of that great object," and accordingly, in 1797, notwithstanding this incompatible principle, and with all the enormities of the French on their heads, they opened a new negotiation at Lisle. They do not wait for any retraction of this incompatible principle ; they do not wait even till overtures shall be made to them ; but they solicit and renew a negotiation themselves. I do not blame them for this, Sir,

I say only that it is an argument against the assertion of an incompatible principle. It is a proof, that they did not then think as the right honourable gentleman now says they thought ; but that they yielded to the sentiments of the nation, who were generally inclined to peace, against their own judgment ; and, from a motive which I shall come to by and by, they had no hesitation, on account of the first rupture, to renew the negotiation—it was renewed at Lisle ; and this the French broke off, after the revolution at Paris on the 4th of September. What was the conduct of ministers on this occasion ? One would have thought that, with the fresh insult at Lisle in their minds, with the recollection of their failure the year before at Paris, if it had been true that they found an incompatible principle, they would have talked a warlike language, and would have announced to their country and to all Europe, that peace was not to be obtained ; that they must throw away the scabbard, and think only of the means of continuing the contest. No such thing. They put forth a declaration in which they said, that they should look with anxious expectation for the moment when the government of France should show a disposition and spirit corresponding with their own ; and renewing before all Europe the solemn declaration, that at the very moment when the brilliant victory of Lord Duncan might have justified them in demanding more extravagant terms, they were willing, if the calamities of war could be closed, to conclude peace on the same moderate and equitable principles and terms which they had before proposed. Such was their declaration upon that occasion ; and in the discussions which we had upon it in this House, ministers were explicit. They said, that by that negotiation, there had been given to the world what might be regarded as an unequivocal test of the sincerity and disposition of government towards peace, or against it ; for those who refuse discussion show that they are disinclined to pacification ; and it is therefore, they said, always to be considered as a test, that the party who refuses to negotiate, is the party who is disinclined to peace. This they themselves set up as the test. Try them now, Sir, by that test. An offer is made them. They rashly, and I think rudely, refuse it. Have they or have they not, broken their own test ? But, they say, “ We have not refused all discussion.” They have put a case. They have expressed a

wish for the restoration of the House of Bourbon, and have declared that to be an event which would immediately remove every obstacle to negotiation. Sir, as to the restoration of the House of Bourbon, if it shall be the wish of the people of France, I for one shall be perfectly content to acquiesce. I think the people of France, as well as every other people, ought to have the government they like best themselves; and the form of that government, or the persons who hold it in their hands, should never be an obstacle with me to treat with the nation for peace, or to live with them in amity; but as an Englishman, and actuated by English feelings, I surely cannot wish for the restoration of the House of Bourbon to the throne of France. I hope I am not the man to bear heavily upon any unfortunate family. I feel for their situation—I respect their distresses—but as a friend of England, I cannot wish for their restoration to the power which they abused. I cannot forget that the whole history of the century is little more than an account of the wars and the calamities arising from the restless ambition, the intrigues, and the perfidy of the House of Bourbon.

I cannot discover, in any part of the laboured defence which has been set up for not accepting the offer now made by France, any argument to satisfy my mind that ministers have not forfeited the test which they held out as infallible in 1797. An honourable gentleman (Mr. Canning) thinks, that Parliament should be eager only to approach the throne with declarations of their readiness to support his Majesty in the farther prosecution of the war without inquiry; and he is quite delighted with an address, which he has found upon the journals, to King William, in which they pledged themselves to support him in his efforts to resist the ambition of Louis XIV. He thinks it quite astonishing how much it is in point, and how perfectly it applies to the present occasion. One would have thought, Sir, that in order to prove the application, he would have shown that an offer had been respectfully made by the Grand Monarque to King William, to treat, which he had peremptorily, and in very irritating terms, refused; and that upon this, the House of Commons had come forward, and, with one voice, declared their determination to stand by him, with their lives and fortunes, in prosecuting the just and necessary war. Not a word of all this; and yet the honourable gentleman

finds it quite a parallel case, and an exact model for the House, on this day, to pursue. I really think, Sir, he might as well have taken any other address upon the journals, upon any other topic, as this address to King William. It would have been equally in point, and would have equally served to show the honourable gentleman's talents of reasoning.

Sir, I cannot here overlook another instance of this honourable gentleman's candid style of debating, and of his respect for Parliament. He has found out, it seems, that in former periods of our history, and even in periods which have been denominated good times, intercepted letters have been published; and he reads, from the *Gazette*, instances of such publication. Really, Sir, if the honourable gentleman had pursued the profession to which he turned his thoughts when younger, he would have learned that it was necessary to find cases a little more in point. And yet full of his triumph on this notable discovery, he has chosen to indulge himself in speaking of a most respectable and a most honourable person as any that this country knows, and who is possessed of as sound an understanding as any man that I have the good fortune to be acquainted with, in terms the most offensive and disgusting, on account of words which he may be supposed to have said in another place [alluding to the Duke of Bedford's speech in the House of Lords]. He has spoken of that noble person and his intellect, in terms which, were I disposed to retort, I might say, show the honourable gentleman to be possessed of an intellect which would justify me in passing over in silence anything that comes from such a man. Sir, that noble person did not speak of the mere act of publishing the intercepted correspondence; and the honourable gentleman's reference to the *Gazettes* of former periods is, therefore, not to the point. The noble duke complained of the manner in which these intercepted letters had been published, not of the fact itself of their publication; for, in the introduction and notes to those letters, the ribaldry is such, that they are not screened from the execration of every honourable mind even by their extreme stupidity. The honourable gentleman says, that he must treat with indifference the intellect of a man who can ascribe the present scarcity of corn to the war. Sir, I think there is nothing either absurd or unjust in such an opinion. Does not the war, necessarily, by its magazines, and still more

by its expeditions, increase consumption? But when we learn that corn is, at this very moment, sold in France for less than half the price which it bears here, is it not a fair thing to suppose that, but for the war and its prohibitions, a part of that grain would be brought to this country, on account of the high price which it would sell for, and that consequently, our scarcity would be relieved from their abundance? I speak only upon report, of course; but I see that the price quoted in the French markets is less, by one half, than the prices in England. There was nothing, therefore, very absurd in what fell from my noble friend; and I would really advise the honourable gentleman, when he speaks of persons distinguished for every virtue, to be a little more guarded in his language. I see no reason why he and his friends should not leave to persons in another place, holding the same opinions as themselves, the task of answering what may be thrown out there. Is not the phalanx sufficient? It is no great compliment to their talents, considering their number, that they cannot be left to the task of answering the few to whom they are opposed; but, perhaps, the honourable gentleman has too little to do in this House, and is to be sent there himself. In truth I see no reason why even he might not be sent, as well as some others who have been sent there.

To return to the subject of the negotiation in 1797. It is, in my mind, extremely material to attend to the account which the right honourable gentleman gives of his memorable negotiation of 1797, and of his motives for entering into it. In all questions of peace and war, he says, many circumstances must necessarily enter into the consideration; and that they are not to be decided on the extremes; the determination must be made upon a balance and comparison of the evils or the advantages upon the one side and the other, and that one of the greatest considerations is that of finance. In 1797, the right honourable gentleman confesses he found himself peculiarly embarrassed as to the resources for the war, if they were to be found in the old and usual way of the funding system. Now though he thought, upon his balance and comparison of considerations, that the evils of war would be fewer than those of peace, yet they would only be so provided that he could establish a "new and solid system of finance" in the place of the old and exhausted funding system; and to accomplish

this, it was necessary to have the unanimous approbation of the people. To procure this unanimity, he pretended to be a friend to negotiation, though he did not wish for the success of that negotiation, but hoped, only, that through that means he should bring the people to agree to his new and solid system of finance. With these views, then, what does he do? Knowing that, contrary to his declarations in this House, the opinion of the people of England was generally for peace, he enters into a negotiation, in which, as the world believed at the time, and even until this day he completely failed—No such thing, Sir,—he completely succeeded—for his object was not to gain peace; it was to gain over the people of this country to a “new and a solid system of finance”—that is, to the raising a great part of the supplies within the year, to the triple assessment, and to the tax upon income. And how did he gain them over? By pretending to be a friend of peace, which he was not; and by opening a negotiation which he secretly wished might not succeed. The right honourable gentleman says, that in all this he was honest and sincere; he negotiated fairly, and would have obtained the peace, if the French had shown a disposition correspondent to his own; but he rejoiced that their conduct was such as to convince the people of England of the necessity of concurring with him in the views which he had, and in granting him the supplies which he thought essential to their posture at the time. Sir, I will not say, that in all this he was not honest to his own purpose, and that he has not been honest in his declarations and confessions this night; but I cannot agree that he was honest to this House, or honest to the people of this country. To this House it was not honest to make them counteract the sense of the people, as he knew it to be expressed in the petitions upon the table; nor was it honest to the country to act in a disguise, and to pursue a secret purpose, unknown to them, while affecting to take the road which they pointed out. I know not whether this may not be honesty in the political ethics of the right honourable gentleman, but I know that it would be called by a very different name in the common transactions of society, and in the rules of morality established in private life. I know of nothing, in the history of this country that it resembles, except, perhaps, one of the most profligate periods—the reign of Charles II, when the sale of Dunkirk

might probably have been justified by the same pretence. Charles also declared war against France, and did it to cover a negotiation by which, in his difficulties, he was to gain a "solid system of finance."

But, Sir, I meet the right honourable gentleman on his own ground. I say that you ought to treat on the same principle as you treated in 1797, in order to gain the cordial co-operation of the people. "We want experience, and the evidence of facts." Can there be any evidence of facts equal to that of a frank, open, and candid negotiation? Let us see whether Bonaparte will display the same temper as his predecessors. If he shall do so, then you will confirm the people of England in their opinion of the necessity of continuing the war, and you will revive all the vigour which you roused in 1797. Or will you not do this until you have a reverse of fortune? Will you never treat, but when you are in a situation of distress, and when you have occasion to impose on the people?

"But," you say, "we have not refused to treat." You have stated a case in which you will be ready immediately to enter into a negotiation, viz., the restoration of the House of Bourbon; but you deny that this is a *sine quâ non*; and in your nonsensical language, which I do not understand, you talk of "limited possibilities" which may induce you to treat without the restoration of the House of Bourbon. But do you state what they are? Now, Sir, I say, that if you put one case upon which you declare that you are willing to treat immediately, and say that there are other possible cases which may induce you to treat hereafter, without mentioning what these possible cases are, you do state a *sine quâ non* of immediate treaty. Suppose I have an estate to sell, and I say my demand is £1,000 for it. I will sell the estate immediately for that sum. To be sure, there may be other terms upon which I may be willing to part with it; but I say nothing of them. The £1,000 is the only condition that I state now. Will any gentleman say, that I do not make the £1,000 the *sine quâ non* of the immediate sale? Thus you say, the restoration of the princes is not the only possible ground; but you give no other. This is your *projet*. Do you demand a *contre projet*? Do you follow your own rule? Do you not do the thing of which you complained in the enemy? You seemed to be afraid of receiving another proposition; and by confining yourselves

to this one point, you make it in fact, though not in terms, your *sine quâ non*.

But the right honourable gentleman, in his speech, does what the official note avoids—He finds there the convenient words, “experience and the evidence of facts”;—upon these he goes into detail; and, in order to convince the House that new evidence is required, he goes back to all the earliest acts and crimes of the Revolution—to all the atrocities of all the governments that have passed away, and he contends that he must have experience that these foul crimes are repented of, and that a purer and a better system is adopted in France, by which he may be sure that they shall be capable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity. Sir, these are not conciliatory words; nor is this a practicable ground to gain experience. Does he think it possible, that evidence of a peaceable demeanour can be obtained in war? What does he mean to say to the French Consul? “Until you shall in war behave yourself in a peaceable manner, I will not treat with you.” Is there not something extremely ridiculous in this? In duels, indeed, we have often heard of this kind of language. Two gentlemen go out, and fight; when, after discharging their pistols at one another, it is not an unusual thing for one of them to say to the other—“Now I am satisfied—I see that you are a man of honour, and we are friends again.” There is something, by the bye, ridiculous even in this; but between nations, it is more than ridiculous—it is criminal. It is a ground which no principle can justify, and which is as impracticable as it is impious. That two nations should be set on to beat one another into friendship, is too abominable even for the fiction of romance; but for a statesman, seriously and gravely to lay it down as a system on which he means to act, is monstrous. What can we say of such a test as he means to put the French government to, but that it is hopeless? It is the nature of war to inflame animosity—to exasperate, not to soothe—to widen, not to approximate. And so long as this is to be acted upon, it is vain to hope that we can have the evidence which we require.

The right honourable gentleman, however, thinks otherwise; and he points out four distinct possible cases, besides the re-establishment of the Bourbon family, in which he would agree to treat with the French.

I. "If Bonaparte shall conduct himself so as to convince him that he has abandoned the principles which were objectionable in his predecessors, and that he shall be actuated by a more moderate system." I ask you, Sir, if this is likely to be ascertained in war? It is the nature of war not to allay but to inflame the passions; and it is not by the invective and abuse which have been thrown upon him and his government, nor by the continued irritations which war is sure to give, that the virtues of moderation and forbearance are to be nourished.

II. "If, contrary to the expectations of ministers, the people of France shall show a disposition to acquiesce in the government of Bonaparte." Does the right honourable gentleman mean to say, that because it is an usurpation on the part of the present chief, therefore the people are not likely to acquiesce in it? I have not time, Sir, to discuss the question of this usurpation, or whether it is likely to be permanent; but I certainly have not so good an opinion of the French, or of any people, as to believe that it will be short-lived, merely because it was an usurpation, and because it is a system of military despotism. Cromwell was a usurper; and in many points there may be found a resemblance between him and the present Chief Consul of France. There is no doubt but that, on several occasions of his life, Cromwell's sincerity may be questioned, particularly in his self-denying ordinance—in his affected piety, and other things; but would it not have been insanity in France and Spain to refuse to treat with him, because he was a usurper? No, Sir, these are not the maxims by which governments are actuated. They do not inquire so much into the means by which power may have been acquired, as into the fact of where the power resides. The people did acquiesce in the government of Cromwell; but it may be said, that the splendour of his talents, the vigour of his administration, the high tone with which he spoke to foreign nations, the success of his arms, and the character which he gave to the English name, induced the nation to acquiesce in his usurpation; and that we must not try Bonaparte by this example. Will it be said that Bonaparte is not a man of great abilities? Will it be said that he has not, by his victories, thrown a splendour over even the violence of the Revolution, and that he does not conciliate the French people by the high

and lofty tone in which he speaks to foreign nations? Are not the French, then, as likely as the English in the case of Cromwell, to acquiesce in his government? If they should do so, the right honourable gentleman may find that this possible predicament may fail him. He may find that though one power may make war, it requires two to make peace. He may find that Bonaparte was as insincere as himself, in the proposition which he made; and in his turn he may come forward and say—"I have no occasion now for concealment. It is true, that in the beginning of the year 1800, I offered to treat, not because I wished for peace, but because the people of France wished for it; and besides, my old resources being exhausted, and there being no means of carrying on the war without a 'new and solid system of finance,' I pretended to treat, because I wished to procure the unanimous assent of the French people to this 'new and solid system.' Did you think I was in earnest? You were deceived. I now throw off the mask; I have gained my point; and I reject your offers with scorn." Is it not a very possible case that he may use this language? Is it not within the right honourable gentleman's "knowledge of human nature"? But even if this should not be the case, will not the very test which you require—the acquiescence of the people of France in his government—give him an advantage-ground in the negotiation which he does not possess now? Is it quite sure, that when he finds himself safe in his seat, he will treat on the same terms as now, and that you will get a better peace some time hence, than you might reasonably hope to obtain at this moment? Will he not have one interest less than at present? And do you not overlook a favourable occasion, for a chance which is extremely doubtful? These are the considerations which I would urge to his Majesty's ministers, against the dangerous experiment of waiting for the acquiescence of the people of France.

III. "If the allies of this country shall be less successful than they have every reason to expect they will be, in stirring up the people of France against Bonaparte, and in the further prosecution of the war"; and,

IV. "If the pressure of the war should be heavier upon us, than it would be convenient for us to continue to bear." These are the two possible emergencies in which the right honourable gentlemen would treat even with Bonaparte. Sir,

I have often blamed the right honourable gentleman for being disingenuous and insincere. On the present occasion I certainly cannot charge him with any such thing. He has made to-night a most honest confession. He is open and candid. He tells Bonaparte fairly what he has to expect. "I mean," says he, "to do everything in my power to raise up the people of France against you. I have engaged a number of allies, and our combined efforts shall be used to excite insurrection and civil war in France. I will strive to murder you, or to get you sent away. If I succeed, well; but if I fail, then I will treat with you. My resources being exhausted; even my solid system of finance having failed to supply me with the means of keeping together my allies, and of feeding the discontents I have excited in France, then you may expect to see me renounce my high tone, my attachment to the House of Bourbon, my abhorrence of your crimes, my alarm at your principles; for then I shall be ready to own, that, on the balance and comparison of circumstances, there will be less danger in concluding a peace, than in the continuance of war!" Is this a language for one state to hold to another? And what sort of peace does the right honourable gentleman expect to receive in that case? Does he think that Bonaparte would grant to baffled insolence, to humiliated pride, to disappointment and to imbecility, the same terms which he would be willing to give now? The right honourable gentleman cannot have forgotten what he said on another occasion.

*"Potuit quæ plurima virtus
Esse, fuit; toto certatum est corpore regni."*

He would then have to repeat his words, but with a different application. He would have to say—all our efforts are vain—we have exhausted our strength—our designs are impracticable—and we must sue to you for peace.

Sir, what is the question this night? We are called upon to support ministers in refusing a frank, candid, and respectful offer of negotiation, and to countenance them in continuing the war. Now I would put the question in another way. Suppose ministers had been inclined to adopt the line of conduct which they pursued in 1796 and 1797, and that to-night, instead of a question on a war-address, it had been an address to his Majesty, to thank him for accepting the overture, and

for opening a negotiation to treat for peace ; I ask the gentlemen opposite—I appeal to the whole 558 representatives of the people—to lay their hands upon their hearts, and to say whether they would not have cordially voted for such an address ? Would they, or would they not ? Yes, Sir, if the address had breathed a spirit of peace, your benches would have resounded with rejoicings, and with praises of a measure that was likely to bring back the blessings of tranquillity. On the present occasion, then, I ask for the vote of none, but of those who, in the secret confession of their conscience, admit, at this instant, while they hear me, that they would have cheerfully and heartily voted with the minister for an address directly the reverse of this. If every such gentleman were to vote with me, I should be this night in the greatest majority that ever I had the honour to vote with in this House.

Sir, we have heard to-night a great many most acrimonious invectives against Bonaparte, against the whole course of his conduct, and against the unprincipled manner in which he seized upon the reins of government. I will not make his defence. I think all this sort of invective, which is used only to inflame the passions of this House and of the country, exceedingly ill-timed, and very impolitic—but I say I will not make his defence. I am not sufficiently in possession of materials upon which to form an opinion on the character and conduct of this extraordinary man. Upon his arrival in France, he found the government in a very unsettled state, and the whole affairs of the republic deranged, crippled and involved. He thought it necessary to reform the government, and he did reform it, just in the way in which a military man may be expected to carry on a reform—he seized on the whole authority to himself. It will not be expected from me, that I should either approve or apologise for such an act. I am certainly not for reforming governments by such expedients ; but how this House can be so violently indignant at the idea of military despotism, is, I own, a little singular, when I see the composure with which they can observe it nearer home ; nay, when I see them regard it as a frame of government most peculiarly suited to the exercise of free opinion, on a subject the most important of any that can engage the attention of people. Was it not the system that was so happily and so advantageously established, of late, all over Ireland ; and

which, even now, the government may at its pleasure, proclaim over the whole of that Kingdom? Are not the persons and property of the people left, in many districts, at this moment, to the entire will of military commanders? And is not this held out as peculiarly proper and advantageous, at a time when the people of Ireland are freely, and with unbiassed judgments, to discuss the most interesting question of a legislative union? Notwithstanding the existence of martial law, so far do we think Ireland from being enslaved, and we think it precisely the period and the circumstances under which she may best declare her free opinion! Now, really, Sir, I cannot think that gentlemen who talk in this way about Ireland can, with a good grace, rail at military despotism in France.

But, it seems, "Bonaparte has broken his oaths. He has violated his oath of fidelity to the constitution of the year 3." Sir, I am not one of those who think that any such oaths ought ever to be exacted. They are seldom or ever of any effect; and I am not for sporting with a thing so sacred as an oath. I think it would be good to lay aside all such oaths. Who ever heard that, in revolutions, the oath of fidelity to the former government was ever regarded; or even when violated, that it was imputed to the persons as a crime? In times of revolution, men who take up arms are called rebels. If they fail, they are adjudged to be traitors. But who ever heard before of their being perjured? On the restoration of Charles II, those who had taken up arms for the Commonwealth were stigmatized as rebels and traitors, but not as men foresworn. Was the Earl of Devonshire charged with being perjured, on account of the allegiance he had sworn to the House of Stuart, and the part he took in those struggles which preceded and brought about the Revolution? The violation of oaths of allegiance was never imputed to the people of England, and will never be imputed to any people. But who brings up the question of oaths? He who strives to make twenty-four million of persons violate the oaths they have taken to their present constitution, and who desires to re-establish the House of Bourbon by such violation of their vows. I put it so, Sir, because, if the question of oaths be of the least consequence, it is equal on both sides. He who desires the whole people of France to perjure themselves, and who hopes for success in his project only upon their doing so,

surely cannot make it a charge against Bonaparte that he has done the same.

“ Ah ! but Bonaparte has declared it as his opinion, that the two governments of Great Britain and of France cannot exist together. After the treaty of Campo Formio, he sent two confidential persons, Berthier and Monge, to the directory to say so in his name.” Well, and what is there in this absurd and puerile assertion, if it was ever made ? Has not the right honourable gentleman, in this House, said the same thing ? In this, at least, they resemble one another. They have both made use of this assertion ; and I believe that these two illustrious persons are the only two on earth who think it. But let us turn the tables. We ought to put ourselves at times in the place of the enemy, if we are desirous of really examining with candour and fairness the dispute between us. How may they not interpret the speeches of ministers and their friends, in both Houses of the British Parliament ? If we are to be told of the idle speech of Berthier and Monge, may they not also bring up speeches, in which it has not been merely hinted, but broadly asserted that “ the two constitutions of England and France could not exist together ” ? May not these offences and charges be reciprocated without end ? Are we ever to go on in this miserable squabble about words ? Are we still, as we happen to be successful on the one side or other, to bring up these important accusations, insults, and provocations against each other ; and only when we are beaten and unfortunate to think of treating ? Oh ! pity the condition of man, gracious God ! and save us from such a system of malevolence, in which all our old and venerated prejudices are to be done away, and by which we are to be taught to consider war as the natural state of man, and peace but as a dangerous and difficult extremity !

Sir, this temper must be corrected. It is a diabolical spirit, and would lead to interminable war. Our history is full of instances, that where we have overlooked a proffered occasion to treat, we have uniformly suffered by delay. At what time did we ever profit by obstinately persevering in war ? We accepted at Ryswick the terms we had refused five years before, and the same peace which was concluded at Utrecht might have been obtained at Gertruydenberg. And as to security from the future machinations or ambition of the French, I

ask you, what security you ever had, or could have? Did the different treaties made with Louis XIV serve to tie his hands, to restrain his ambition, or to stifle his restless spirit? At what period could you safely repose in the honour, forbearance, and moderation of the French Government? Was there ever an idea of refusing to treat, because the peace might be afterwards insecure? The peace of 1763 was not accompanied with securities; and it was no sooner made than the French Court began, as usual, its intrigues. And what security did the right honourable gentleman exact at the peace of 1783, in which he was engaged? Were we rendered secure by that peace? The right honourable gentleman knows well, that soon after that peace, the French formed a plan, in conjunction with the Dutch, of attacking our Indian possessions, of raising up the native powers against us, and of driving us out of India; as the French are desirous of doing so now—only with this difference, that the cabinet of France entered into this project in a moment of profound peace, and when they conceived us to be lulled into perfect security. After making the peace of 1783, the right honourable gentleman and his friends went out, and I among others, came into office. Suppose, Sir, we had taken up the jealousy upon which the right honourable gentleman now acts, and had refused to ratify the peace that he had made. Suppose that we had said—No; France is acting a perfidious part—we see no security for England in this treaty—they want only a respite, in order to attack us again in an important part of our dominions; and we ought not to confirm this treaty. I ask, would the right honourable gentleman have supported us in this refusal? I say that upon his present reasoning he ought; but I put it fairly to him, would he have supported us in refusing to ratify the treaty upon such a pretence? He certainly ought not, and I am sure he would not; but the course of reasoning which he now assumes would have justified his taking such a ground. On the contrary, I am persuaded that he would have said—“This is a refinement upon jealousy. Security! You have security, the only security that you can ever expect to get. It is the present interest to France to make peace. She will keep it if it be her interest: she will break it if it be her interest; such is the state of nations; and you have nothing but your own vigilance for your security.”

“ It is not the interest of Bonaparte,” it seems, “ sincerely to enter into a negotiation, or, if he should even make peace, sincerely to keep it.” But how are we to decide upon his sincerity? By refusing to treat with him? Surely if we mean to discover his sincerity, we ought to hear the propositions which he desires to make. “ But peace would be unfriendly to his system of military despotism.” Sir, I hear a great deal about the short-lived nature of military despotism. I wish the history of the world would bear gentlemen out in this description of military despotism. Was not the government erected by Augustus Cæsar a military despotism? and yet it endured for six or seven hundred years. Military despotism, unfortunately, is too likely in its nature to be permanent, and it is not true that it depends on the life of the first usurper. Though half the Roman Emperors were murdered, yet the military despotism went on; and so it would be, I fear, in France. If Bonaparte should disappear from the scene, to make room, perhaps, for a Berthier, or any other general, what difference would that make in the quality of French despotism, or in our relation to the country? We may as safely treat with a Bonaparte, or with any of his successors, be they who they may, as we could with a Louis XVI, a Louis XVII, or a Louis XVIII. There is no difference but in the name. Where the power essentially resides, thither we ought to go for peace.

But, Sir, if we are to reason on the fact, I should think it is the interest of Bonaparte to make peace. A lover of military glory, as that general must necessarily be, may he not think that his measure of glory is full—that it may be tarnished by a reverse of fortune, and can hardly be increased by any new laurels? He must feel, that in the situation to which he is now raised, he can no longer depend on his own fortune, his own genius, and his own talents, for a continuance of his success; he must be under the necessity of employing other generals, whose misconduct or incapacity might endanger his power, or whose triumphs even might affect the interest which he holds in the opinion of the French. Peace, then, would secure to him what he has achieved, and fix the inconstancy of fortune. But this will not be his only motive. He must see that France also requires a respite—a breathing interval, to recruit her wasted strength. To procure her this respite, would be, perhaps, the attainment of more solid glory, as well

as the means of acquiring more solid power, than anything which he can hope to gain from arms, and from the proudest triumphs. May he not then be jealous to gain this fame, the only species of fame, perhaps, that is worth acquiring? Nay, granting that his soul may still burn with the thirst of military exploits, is it not likely that he is disposed to yield to the feelings of the French people, and to consolidate his power by consulting their interests? I have a right to argue in this way, when suppositions of his insincerity are reasoned upon on the other side. Sir, these aspersions are in truth always idle, and even mischievous. I have been too long accustomed to hear imputations and calumnies thrown out upon great and honourable characters, to be much influenced by them. My honourable and learned friend (Mr. Erskine) has paid this night a most just, deserved, and honourable tribute of applause to the memory of that great and unparalleled character, who has been so recently lost to the world. I must, like him, beg leave to dwell a moment on the venerable George Washington, though I know that it is impossible for me to bestow anything like adequate praise on a character which gave us, more than any other human being, the example of a perfect man; yet, good, great, and unexampled as General Washington was, I can remember the time when he was not better spoken of in this House than Bonaparte is now. The right honourable gentleman who opened this debate (Mr. Dundas) may remember in what terms of disdain, of virulence, and even of contempt, General Washington was spoken of by gentlemen on that side of the House. Does he not recollect with what marks of indignity any member was stigmatised as an enemy to his country, who mentioned with common respect the name of George Washington? If a negotiation had then been proposed to be opened with great men, what would have been said? "Would you treat with a rebel, a traitor! What an example would you not give by such an act!" I do not know whether the right honourable gentleman may not yet possess some of his old prejudices on the subject. I hope not. I hope by this time we are all convinced that a republican government, like that of America, may exist without danger or injury to social order, or to established monarchies. They have happily shown that they can maintain the relations of peace and amity with other states; they have shown, too, that they are alive to the

feelings of honour ; but they do not lose sight of plain good sense and discretion. They have not refused to negotiate with the French, and they have accordingly the hopes of a speedy termination of every difference,—we cry up their conduct, but we do not imitate it. At the beginning of the struggle we were told that the French were setting up a set of wild and impracticable theories, and we ought not to be misled by them—we could not grapple with theories. Now we are told that we must not treat, because, out of the lottery, Bonaparte has drawn such a prize as military despotism. Is military despotism a theory ? One would think that that is one of the practical things which ministers might understand, and to which they would have no particular objection. But what is our present conduct founded on but a theory, and that a most wild and ridiculous theory ? What are we fighting for ? Not for a principle ; not for security ; not for conquest even ; but merely for an experiment and a speculation, to discover whether a gentleman at Paris may not turn out a better man than we now take him to be.

My honourable friend (Mr. Whitbread) has been censured for an opinion which he gave, and I think justly, that the change of property in France since the Revolution must form an insuperable barrier to the return of the ancient proprietors. “No such thing,” says the right honourable gentleman ; “nothing can be more easy. Property is depreciated to such a degree, that the purchasers would easily be brought to restore the estates.” I very much differ with him in this idea. It is the character of every such convulsion as that which has ravaged France, that an infinite and indescribable load of misery is inflicted upon private families. The heart sickens at the recital of the sorrows which it engenders. No revolution implied, though it may have occasioned a total change of property. The restoration of the Bourbons does imply it and there is the difference. There is no doubt but that if the noble families had foreseen the duration and the extent of the evils which were to fall upon their heads, they would have taken a very different line of conduct. But they unfortunately flew from their country. The King and his advisers sought foreign aid. A confederacy was formed to restore them by military force ; and as a means of resisting this combination, the estates of the fugitives were confiscated and sold. However

compassion may deplore the case, it cannot be said that the thing is unprecedented. The people have always resorted to such means of defence. Now the question is, how this property is to be got out of their hands? If it be true, as I have heard, that the purchasers of national and forfeited estates amount to 1,500,000 persons, I see no hopes of their being forced to deliver up their property; nor do I even know that they ought. I question the policy, even if the thing were practicable; but I assert that such a body of new proprietors forms an insurmountable barrier to the restoration of the ancient order of things. Never was a revolution consolidated by a pledge so strong.

But, as if this were not itself sufficient, Louis XVIII, from his retirement at Mittau, puts forth a manifesto, in which he assures the friends of his House, that he is about to come back with all the powers which formerly belonged to his family. He does not promise to the people a constitution which may tend to conciliate; but, stating that he is to come with all the *ancien régime*, they would naturally attach to it its proper appendages of bastilles—*lettres de cachet*, *gabelle*, etc. And the noblesse, for whom this proclamation was peculiarly conceived, would also naturally feel, that if the monarch was to be restored to all his privileges, they surely were to be reinstated in their estates without a compensation to the purchasers. Is this likely to make the people wish for the restoration of royalty? I have no doubt but there may be a number of Chouans in France, though I am persuaded that little dependence is to be placed on their efforts. There may be a number of people dispersed over France, and particularly in certain provinces, who may retain a degree of attachment to royalty; and how the government will contrive to compromise with that spirit, I know not. I suspect, however, that Bonaparte will try; his efforts have been turned to that object; and, if we may believe report, he has succeeded to a considerable degree. He will naturally call to his recollection the precedent which the history of France itself will furnish. The once formidable insurrection of the Huguenots was completely stifled and the party conciliated, by the policy of Henry IV, who gave them such privileges and raised them so high in the Government, as to make some persons apprehend danger therefrom to the unity of the Empire, nor will the French be likely to forget the

revocation of the edict—one of the memorable acts of the House of Bourbon—an act which was never surpassed in atrocity, injustice and impolicy, by anything that has disgraced Jacobinism. If Bonaparte shall attempt some similar arrangement to that of Henry IV, with the Chouans, who will say that he is likely to fail? He will meet with no great obstacle to success from the influence which our ministers have established with the chiefs, or in the attachment and dependence which they have on our protection; for what has the right honourable gentleman told him, in stating the contingencies in which he will treat with Bonaparte? He will excite a rebellion in France—he will give support to the Chouans, if they can stand their ground; but he will not make common cause with them: for unless they can depose Bonaparte, send him into banishment, or execute him, he will abandon the Chouans, and treat with this very man, whom, at the same time, he describes as holding the reins and wielding the powers of France for purposes of unexampled barbarity.

Sir, I wish the atrocities of which we hear so much, and which I abhor as much as any man, were, indeed, unexampled. I fear that they do not belong exclusively to the French. When the right honourable gentleman speaks of the extraordinary successes of the last campaign, he does not mention the horrors by which some of those successes were accompanied. Naples, for instance, has been, among others, what is called “delivered,” and yet if I am rightly informed, it has been stained and polluted with murders so ferocious, and by cruelties of every kind so abhorrent, that the heart shudders at the recital. It has been said not only that the miserable victims of the rage and brutality of the fanatics were savagely murdered, but that, in many instances, their flesh was eaten and devoured by cannibals who are the advocates and the instruments of social order! Nay, England is not totally exempt from reproach, if the rumours which are circulated be true. I will mention a fact, to give ministers the opportunity, if it be false, of wiping away the stain that it must otherwise fix on the British name. It is said that a party of the republican inhabitants of Naples took shelter in the fortress of the Castel de Uova. They were besieged by a detachment from the royal army, to whom they refused to surrender; but demanded that a British officer should be brought forward, and to him they

capitulated. They made terms with him under the sanction of the British name. It was agreed that their persons and their property should be safe and that they should be conveyed to Toulon. They were accordingly put on board a vessel; but before they sailed, their property was confiscated, numbers of them taken out, thrown into dungeons, and some of them I understand, notwithstanding the British guarantee, actually executed.

Where then, Sir, is this war, which on every side is pregnant with such horrors, to be carried? Where is it to stop? Not till you establish the House of Bourbon! And this you cherish the hope of doing, because you have had a successful campaign. Why, Sir, before you have had a successful campaign. The situation of the allies, with all they have gained, is surely not to be compared now to what it was when you had taken Valenciennes, Quesnoy, Condé, etc., which induced some gentlemen in this House to prepare themselves for a march to Paris; with all that you have gained, you surely will not say that the prospect is brighter now than it was then. What have you gained but the recovery of a part of what you before lost? One campaign is successful to you—another to them; and in this way, animated by the vindictive passions of revenge, hatred, and rancour, which are infinitely more flagitious, even, than those of ambition and the thirst for power, you may go on for ever; as, with such black incentives, I see no end to human misery. And all this without an intelligible motive—all this because you may gain a better peace a year or two hence! So that we are called upon to go on merely as a speculation. We must keep Bonaparte for some time longer at war, as a state of probation. Gracious God, Sir, is it a state of probation? Is peace a rash system? Is it dangerous for nations to live in amity with each other? Is your vigilance, your policy, your common powers of observation to be extinguished by putting an end to the horrors of war? Cannot this state of probation be as well undergone without adding to the catalogue of human sufferings? “But we must *pause!*” What! must the bowels of Great Britain be torn out—her best blood be spilt—her treasure wasted—that you may make an experiment? Put yourselves—Oh! that you would put yourselves—in the field of battle, and learn to judge of the sort of horrors that you excite. In former wars a man might, at

least, have some feeling, some interest, that served to balance in his mind the impressions which a scene of carnage and of death must inflict. If a man had been present at the battle of Blenheim, for instance, and had enquired the motive of the battle, there was not a soldier engaged who could not have satisfied his curiosity, and even, perhaps, allayed his feelings—they were fighting to repress the uncontrolled ambition of the Grand Monarque. But, if a man were present now at a field of slaughter, and were to inquire for what they were fighting—"Fighting"! would he answer; "they are not fighting, they are *pausing*." "Why is that man expiring? Why is that other writhing in agony? What means this implacable fury?" The answer must be, "You are quite wrong, Sir, you deceive yourself. They are not fighting—Do not disturb them—they are merely *pausing*!—this man is not expiring with agony—that man is not dead—he is only pausing! Lord help you, Sir! They are not angry with one another; they have no cause of quarrel—but their country thinks there should be a pause. All that you see, Sir, is nothing like fighting—there is no harm, nor cruelty, nor bloodshed in it whatever—It is nothing more than a *political pause*! it is merely to try an experiment—to see whether Bonaparte will not behave himself better than heretofore; and in the meantime we have agreed to pause, in pure friendship!" And is this the way, Sir, that you are to show yourselves the advocates of order? You take up a system calculated to uncivilize the world, to destroy order, to trample on religion, to stifle in the heart, not merely the generosity of noble sentiment, but the affections of social nature; and in the prosecution of this system, you spread terror and devastation around you.

Sir, I have done. I have told you my opinion. I think you ought to have given a civil, clear, and explicit answer to the overture which was fairly and handsomely made to you. If you were desirous that the negotiation should have included all your allies, as the means of bringing about a general peace, you should have told Bonaparte so; But I believe you were afraid of his agreeing to the proposal. You took that method before. "Aye, but," you say, "the people were anxious for peace in 1797." I say they are friends to peace now; and I am confident that you will one day own it. Believe me, they are friends to peace; although, by the laws which you

have made, restraining the expression of the sense of the people, public opinion cannot now be heard as loudly and unequivocally as heretofore. But I will not go into the internal state of this country. It is too afflicting to the heart to see the strides which have been made, by means of, and under the miserable pretext of this war; against liberty of every kind, both of speech and of writing; and to observe in another Kingdom the rapid approaches to that military despotism which we affect to make an argument against peace. I know, Sir, that public opinion, if it could be collected, would be for peace, as much now as in 1797 and I know that it is only by public opinion—not by a sense of their duty—not by the inclination of their own minds—that ministers will be brought, if ever, to give us peace. I conclude, Sir, with repeating what I said before; I ask for no gentleman's vote who would have reprobated the compliance of ministers with the proposition of the French government; I ask for no gentleman's support to-night who would have voted against ministers, if they had come down and proposed to enter into a negotiation with the French; but I have a right to ask—I know, that in honour, in consistency, in conscience, I have a right to expect the vote of every gentleman who would have voted with ministers in an address to his Majesty, diametrically opposite to the motion of this night.

SHERIDAN

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN was, perhaps, the most brilliant orator of the eighteenth century. His great speech on the impeachment of Warren Hastings was considered by many good judges to be the best delivered at the trial. If his fame as a dramatist has somewhat obscured his reputation as a speaker, that does not alter the fact that he achieved high fame as a rhetorician in a peculiarly rhetorical age. The wittiest debater of his time, he was also in some respects the most ornate. For if his periods were less laboured than Burke's, they were also more polished from a literary point of view. Of course Sheridan is not to be estimated by purely Parliamentary standards. He was a conscious artist, playing upon the political as he played upon the dramatic, stage, with a trained eye for scenic effect. But though he was a great actor at Westminster, he was also much more. He was a master of the English language, whose periods and cadences rose and fell with a calculated and effective splendour. Even when he simply amused the House of Commons, he spoke with the fluency and ease of an expert composer. It was not his object to convince or to persuade, so much as to instruct and to delight. A staunch and loyal Whig, he did not greatly occupy himself with the foundation of the Whig creed. He went with his party, and illustrated their principles with his imagination, eloquence, and humour. He belongs to the class of speakers who aim rather at illuminating fact by fancy than at pushing an argument to a conclusion. The success of such an orator as Sheridan implies leisure as well as taste in the House of Commons. He did not consider the demands of business. He rose to deliver speeches carefully prepared, and adorned with all the art which literary skill could bestow. They must be regarded as brilliant contributions to a political tournament rather than parts of a practical discussion upon

matters of pressing moment. Sheridan did not think of votes. He treated Parliament to the best form of entertainment he could provide, the highest kind of literary rhetoric that his accomplishments enabled him to produce. But at the same time he held strong political convictions, and he has not always received credit for the tenacity with which he adhered to them. He was always a firm and consistent Whig, who never shrank from the expression of his opinions because they were unpopular. His hold upon the House of Commons was extraordinary, and the brilliancy of his gifts was always employed upon the side which he had conscientiously taken up. His speeches deserve to be studied because they put the Whig creed in a literary form, not the creed of the old Whigs as expounded by Burke, but the doctrines usually associated with the name of Fox. The House of Commons which Sheridan addressed was a critical and fastidious audience, but susceptible to the effect of oratory such as his, which appealed at once to the reason and to the feelings. If Sheridan had belonged to the class which then ruled England he would have held high office in the State. As it was, he belonged to the class of speakers who are always heard with willingness, because they give of their best, and do not forget in the use of rhetoric that it has serious ends to serve. It would be a great mistake to confound him with men who speak for speaking's sake, or with adventurers who treat politics as an instrument of political ambition. He was quite as sincere as Pitt, and had no dread of unpopularity. But it was not in debate that he shone. He wanted room. He had to develop his own ideas independently of others when he wished to produce conviction upon the public mind. No statesman of his time adhered more closely to his principles, or confronted obloquy with more cheerfulness. His wit and his eloquence were never bestowed upon any cause in which he did not himself believe. What really distinguishes his oratory from the general run of public speaking is that it bears upon it the mark of high

literary excellence. Even of Burke that is not true in the same sense. For Burke never hesitated to sacrifice elegance of style when it was necessary to clinch an argument by facts or statistics. Sheridan was too thorough an artist to separate matter from form.

In that way he became the prince of those speakers who could amuse without irritating, and persuade without fatiguing, the House of Commons. His speeches are remarkable not so much for arrangement as for fluency, lucidity, polish, and ease. It was said of Pitt that he never paused for a word, that he never repeated a word, and that he never misplaced a word. Sheridan had not the same regular greatness. But he proceeded with exquisite ease and grace from one point to another while at the same time he never forgot the main point of his case, or allowed it to be supposed that he was merely displaying his talents in the best available arena.

The Trial of Warren Hastings

*Passages from the Speech in Summing up the Evidence on the
Second Article of Charge, relating to the Begums
of Oude*

June 3rd, 6th, 10th, 13th, 1788

PREFATORY NOTE.—This speech is generally considered to have been the most powerful statement of the case against Hastings.

IF your Lordships look over the evidence, you will see a country that, even in the time of Suja-ud-Dowla, is represented as populous—desolated. A person looking at this shocking picture of calamity would have been inclined to ask, if he had been a stranger to what had passed in India—if we could suppose a person to have come suddenly into the country, unacquainted with any circumstances that had passed since the days of Suja-ud-Dowla—he would naturally ask, “What cruel hand has wrought this wide desolation? What barbarian foe has invaded the country, has desolated its fields, depopulated its villages?” He would ask, “What disputed succession, what civil rage, what mad frenzy of the inhabitants, has induced them to act in hostility to the beneficent works of God and the beauteous works of man?” He would ask, “What

religious zeal or frenzy has added to the mad despair and horrors of war? The ruin is unlike anything that appears recorded in any age. It looks like neither the barbarities of men nor the judgment of vindictive Heaven. There is a waste of desolation, as if caused by fell destroyers never meaning to return, and who make but a short period of their rapacity. It looks as if some fabled monster had made its passage through the country, whose pestiferous breath had blasted more than its voracious appetite could devour."

If there had been any men in the country who had not their heart and soul so subdued by fear as to refuse to speak the truth at all upon such a subject, they would have told him there had been no war since the time of Suja-ud-Dowla—tyrant indeed as he was, but then deeply regretted by his subjects; that no hostile blow of any enemy had been struck in that land; that there had been no disputed succession, no civil war, no religious frenzy; but that these were the tokens of British friendship, the marks of the embraces of British alliance—more dreadful than the blows of the bitterest enemy. That they had made a Prince a slave, to make himself the principal in the extortion upon his subjects. They would tell him that their rapacity increased in proportion as the means of supplying their avarice diminished. They made the Sovereign pay as if they had a right to an increased price, because the labour of extortion and plunder increased. They would tell him it was to these causes these calamities were owing. Need I refer your Lordships to this strong testimony of Major Naylor, when he rescued Colonel Hannay from their hands, when you see that this people, born to submission, bred to most abject subjection, yet that they, in whose meek hearts injury had never yet begot resentment nor even despair bred courage—that their hatred, their abhorrence of Colonel Hannay was such that they clung round him by thousands and thousands; that when Major Naylor rescued him they refused life from the hand that could rescue Hannay; that they nourished this desperate consolation that by their death they should at least thin the number of wretches that should suffer by his devastation and extortion? He says, when he crossed the river he found the poor wretches quivering on the parched banks of the polluted river, encouraging their blood to flow—encouraging the thought that their blood would not sink into the earth, but rise to the

common God of humanity, and cry aloud for vengeance on their cursed destroyers.

This warm description, which is no declamation of mine, but founded in actual fact, is a fair, clear proof before your Lordships. I say it speaks powerfully what the cause of these oppressions was and the justness of those feelings that were occasioned by them. And then I am asked to prove why these people arose in such concert! "There must have been machinations, and the Begums' machinations, to produce this; there was concert. Why did they rise?" Because they were people in human shape: the poor souls had human feelings. Because patience under the detested tyranny of man is rebellion to the sovereignty of God. Because allegiance to that power that gives us the forms of men commands us to maintain the rights of men. And never yet was this truth dismissed from the human heart—never, in any time, in any age—never in any clime where nude man ever had any social feeling, or when corrupt refinement had subdued all feeling—never was this one unextinguishable truth destroyed from the heart of man, placed in the core and centre of it by its Maker, that man was not made the property of man; that human power is a trust for human benefit, and that, when it is abused, revenge is justice if not the duty of the injured. These, my Lords, were the reasons why these people rose.

But, believe Mr. Hastings' account, and no one of these causes produced this effect; no one cause could produce its natural inevitable consequence. Breach of faith did not create distrust; want of pay did not create mutiny. Famine did not pinch. Drought did not parch. No; it was the machinations of these wonderful women, who sat as it were dealing in incantations within the sacred wall of their zenana, and disturbing the country which would otherwise remain in peace and gratitude to its protectors. No; it was an audacious falsity.

I call upon Mr. Hastings himself to sum up my evidence upon this subject. I appeal again to his testimony. When he states that the rapacity, the peculation, the fraud, of those British persons in India had excited the rage of the whole country, he sums up, he clinches, my evidence; and then, with bold, frontless mockery, attempts to turn to your Lordships, and to account for this by fictitious causes—by causes

too inadequate ever since corruption composed a part of the wickedness, or credulity a part of the weakness, of human nature.

My Lords, wishing to put everything I say to the test of the evidence before your Lordships, I feel no presumption in saying that I think I have proved the innocence of the Begums respecting these three accusations : and now your Lordships will judge whether I pursue the argument fairly, when I say that I am ready to admit to the Counsel that, because I have cleared them, I do not mean to say that I have condemned Mr. Hastings. I do not mean to say that a proof of their innocence is necessarily a proof of his guilt. I will admit that, because it is possible that, being rash and involved in various difficulties at the time, a person might have been imposed upon with respect to the grounds upon which he acted, and, though no real guilt did then exist in the Begums' conduct, yet that he might in his conscience have been persuaded that there did. But, in order to prove this, it must first appear that, from the moment he cherished and had that persuasion in his mind, it continued in force in his breast till the moment when he carried his vindictive measures against them into execution. If he took up a hasty prejudice, which he afterwards had the means to see the error of and to dismiss from his mind—if after that he persevered with criminal obstinacy in the persecution of these women, then I say he is guilty.

But I will show your Lordships that he never could have been deceived for a single moment upon the subject ; that no man knew better than he—indeed, no man had better reason to know—the true source and origin of these rumours and accusations ; because he himself was the source and origin of them. In order to see whether Mr. Hastings believed these accusations, we must look a little into his conduct at the time that this belief must have come into his mind. What were the communications that he made upon it ? And what were his accounts of the whole transaction afterwards ? If we here find one uniform, consistent, story, although we know it to have been taken up and founded upon a false base, yet still there is a presumption—a possibility at least—of his being innocent. But if we find nothing but suppression of letters, nothing but equivocation, prevarication, direct falsehoods, concealments and false reasons for that concealment,

and at last false and contradictory accounts to every person to whom he relates the transactions of the whole, in such a case there cannot be innocence—it is impossible.

* * *

An honourable friend of mine, who is now, I believe, near me, in opening this business—a gentleman to whom I never can on any occasion refer without feelings of respect, and on this subject without feelings of the most grateful homage—a gentleman whose abilities upon this occasion, as upon some former ones, happily for the glory of the age in which we live, are not entrusted merely to the perishable eloquence of the day, but will live to be the admiration of that hour when all of us are mute and most of us are forgotten—that honourable gentleman has told you that prudence, the first of virtues, never can be used in the cause of vice. If, reluctant and diffident, I might take the liberty, I should express a doubt whether experience, observation or history, will warrant us in fully assenting to that. It is a noble and lovely sentiment, my Lords—worthy the mind of him that uttered it—worthy that proud disdain—that generous scorn of the means and instruments of vice—which virtue and genius must feel. But I should doubt whether we can read the history of a Philip of Macedon, of Cæsar or of Cromwell, if we apprehend prudence to be discreetly and successfully conducting some purpose to its end, without confessing that there have been evil purposes, baneful to the peace and to the rights of men, conducted, if I may not say with prudence or with wisdom, yet with awful craft and most successful and commanding subtlety. But, if I might make a distinction, I should say that it is the proud attempt to mix a variety of lordly crimes that unsettles the prudence of the mind and breeds the distraction of the brain ; that one master passion domineering in the breast may win the faculties of the understanding to advance its purpose, and to direct to that object everything that thought or human knowledge can effect. But, to succeed, it must maintain a solitary despotism in the mind : each rival profligacy must stand aloof or wait in abject vassalage upon its throne. For the power that has not forbade the entrance of evil passions into man's mind has at least forbade their union : if they meet they defeat their object—their conquest or their attempt—and it is tumult. Turn to the virtues. How different the decree ! Formed

to connect—to blend—to associate and to co-operate ; bearing the same course of kindred energies and harmonious sympathy ; each perfect in its own lovely sphere ; each moving in its wider or more contracted orbit with different but concentrating powers, guided by the same influence of reason, endeavouring at the same blessed end—the happiness of the individual, the harmony of the species and the glory of the Creator. But in the vices it is the discord that ensures defeat ; each clamours to be heard in its own barbarous language ; each claims the exclusive cunning of the brain ; each thwarts and reproaches the other, and even while their fell rage assails with common hate the peace and virtue of the world, the civil war among their own tumultuous legions defeats the purpose of the foul conspiracy. These are the furies of the mind, my Lords, that unsettle the understanding ; these are the furies of the mind that destroy the virtue of prudence ; while the distracted brain and shivered intellect proclaim the tumult that is within, and bear their testimonies from the mouth of God Himself to the foul condition of the heart.

* * *

I beg your Lordships to review for a moment shortly—and I really must apologise to your Lordships for wishing you to dwell longer upon subjects which must be so exasperating to the human heart to contemplate—but I wish your Lordships to review for a moment the whole progress of this business, from that period of time which I first stated to be the period when he [Hastings] first determined upon this measure [the spoliation of the Oudh dowagers]. Your lordships remember that, after his disappointment at Bidjey Ghur, that instant he seems to have turned an eye of death upon the palace at Fyzabad. At that glance—at that fell glance—peace, faith, joy, careless innocence and feeble confidence, that lay reposing under the superstitious shade of those protected walls, receive their inexorable doom. You see him instantly despatching Mr. Middleton to Lucknow to bear his orders, and then to gather justification. After that, you see the correspondence carried on between Sir Elijah Impey and Mr. Middleton ; you see Sir Elijah Impey conveying to Mr. Middleton the alternate hopes and fears that agitated his mind in this business ; you see Hyder Beg applying to Mr. Hastings and encouraging him to proceed ; you see him

confessing that he has got the curses and execration of his country for joining in this act of perfidity and oppression against the Nawab and his parents ; you see the miserable state of the Nawab—wretched, dejected, in a settled melancholy ; you see him submitting at last to his miserable doom. In the meanwhile, the great figure of the piece, not mixing in the battle, but afar off aloof and listening to the war, but not idle and inactive as he calls it, marking the whole of the business, collected, firm, determined. Then, when things the most tried begin to wince in the proof—when the patience of the Nawab and the conscience of Middleton began to fail—when things the toughest bend—then you see him, determined and firm, casting a general's eye over the scene, despatching his tough tool, Sir Elijah Impey, to reinforce the failing conscience of Middleton ; desiring Ali Ibrahim Khan to whet and inflame the stouter villany of Hyder Beg. You see him present in mind everywhere, with cold, deliberate, sober wrath, with tranquil veteran malignity, guiding the fell array and pointing to his object.

* * *

This concludes the circumstances as far as relates to the progress of this business towards seizing the treasures. With regard to the private letters which I have dwelt so much upon, I do trust that your Lordships will not countenance a sort of distinction which was endeavoured to be taken by the learned Counsel, when first these letters were produced, when they requested your Lordships to remark that they were letters of a most private and familiar nature, inferring from that that they were not to be considered as testimony of equal authority with the deliberate public letters which stand upon record. I trust your Lordships will not countenance such a distinction. I trust you will not suffer them to insinuate, as Sir Elijah Impey does in his oral evidence, that it is not fair to take advantage of an answer which he made without adverting to the consequences. It is because these letters were written without adverting to the consequences—because these letters were written in an unguarded moment—because they were not meant for public view—it is therefore that I do state them as the best authority, the weightiest evidence, in the whole of these proceedings. If the learned Counsel had another object in making that distinction—because I believe your Lordships

will recollect something of a remarkable circumstance in their compelling us to read certain private and domestic parts of these letters which we wish undoubtedly to avoid—if their object was to bring out an anecdote which is now under my eye, respecting the paternal tenderness and affection of the accomplice, Mr. Middleton, to his son, who was then ill—if they conceive that that would be a kind of reconciling and palliating circumstance to your Lordships—I must say, though it may perhaps be thought something harsh, that the effect upon my mind was directly the contrary. I must speak what I feel on this occasion. I must then ask your Lordships, seeing this family anecdote in the light which I do, what must be the nature of these crimes, into which the loveliest energies of the human mind cannot intrude without exciting sensations rather of disgust and contempt than of respect?

I know that I am speaking before those who understand what the feelings of fathers are. I trust I am not to learn them: but, my Lords, I say this aggravates what I consider as Mr. Middleton's guilt in this business; because it convinces me that his mind was not without circumstances to show him the sacredness of those ties which he was violating; because it shows me that he did not want opportunities of those duties which he was tearing from the bosom of another—that he could look in his child's face and read nothing there to warn him from the guilt he was engaged in. Good God! my Lords, what a cause is this we are maintaining! What! when I feel it a part of my duty, as it were, when I feel it an instruction in my brief to support the claim of age to reverence, of maternal feebleness to filial protection and support, can I recollect where I stand? can I recollect before whom I am pleading? I look round on this various assembly that surrounds me, seeing in every countenance a breathing testimony to this general principle, and yet for a moment think it necessary to enforce the bitter aggravation which attends the crimes of those who violate this universal duty. Yet, my Lords, such is the nature of the charge which we maintain—such the monstrous nature of the guilt which we arraign—and such the more monstrous nature of the defence opposed to that guilt—that when I see in many of these letters the infirmities of age made a subject of mockery and ridicule—when I see the feelings of a son treated by Mr. Middleton as puerile (as he calls them)

and contemptible—when I see an order given from Mr. Hastings to harden that son's heart, to choke the struggling nature in his bosom—when I see them pointing to the son's name and to his standard, when they march to oppress the mother, as to a banner that gives dignity, that gives an holy sanction and a reverence, to their enterprise—when I see and hear these things done—when I hear them brought into three deliberate Defences offered to the charges of the Commons—my Lords, I own I grow puzzled and confounded, and almost doubt whether where such a defence can be offered it may not be tolerated.

And yet, my Lords, how can I support the claim of filial love by argument, much less the affection of a son to a mother, where love loses its awe, and veneration is mixed with tenderness? What can I say upon such a subject? What can I do but repeat the ready truths which with the quick impulse of the mind must spring to the lips of every man on such a theme? Filial love—the morality, the instinct, the sacrament, of nature—a duty, or rather let me say that it is miscalled a duty, for it flows from the heart without effort—its delight—its indulgence—its enjoyment. It is guided not by the slow dictates of reason; it awaits not encouragement from reflection or from thought; it asks no aid of memory; it is an innate but active consciousness of having been the object of a thousand tender solitudes, a thousand waking, watchful cares, of meek anxiety and patient sacrifices, unremarked and unrequited by the object. It is a gratitude founded upon a conviction of obligations not remembered, but the more binding because not remembered, because conferred before the tender reason could acknowledge or the infant memory record them — a gratitude and affection which no circumstances should subdue and which few can strengthen—a gratitude [in] which even injury from the object, though it may blend regret, should never breed resentment—an affection which can be increased only by the decay of those to whom we owe it—then most fervent when the tremulous voice of age, resistless in its febleness, inquires for the natural protectors of its cold decline.

If these are the general sentiments of man, what must be their depravity, what must be their degeneracy, who can blot out and erase from the bosom the virtue that is deepest rooted

in the human heart, and twined within the cords of life itself—alien from nature—apostates from humanity! And yet, if there is a crime more fell—more foul—if there is anything worse than a wilful persecutor of his mother—it is to see a deliberate, reasoning, instigator and abettor to the deed. This is a thing that shocks, disgusts and appals the mind more than the other. To view—not a wilful parricide—to see a parricide by compulsion—a miserable wretch, not actuated by the stubborn evils of his own worthless heart—not driven by the fury of his own distracted brain—but lending his sacrilegious hand, without malice of his own, to answer the abandoned purposes of the human fiends that have subdued his will. To condemn crimes like these we need not talk of laws or of human rules. Their foulness—their deformity—does not depend upon local constitutions, upon human institutes or religious creeds. They are crimes; and the persons who perpetrate them are monsters who violate the primitive condition upon which the earth was given to man. They are guilty by the general verdict of human kind.

* * *

Now your Lordships will mark what Mr. Hastings does. Mr. Bristow determines to adopt lenient measures. He accordingly orders the eunuchs to be released. He writes word of this to Mr. Hastings. Mr. Hastings receives his letter and withholds it from the [council]. That is the letter we had such a battle about, your Lordships recollect, with the Counsel, when they wanted us to read another letter that was nothing to the purpose. He withholds that letter, and then gets the Board to write to know what had been done with respect to the Begums. After he had heard a detail of all the severities—of all the cruelties; after he had not only had this communicated to him, but had heard from the best authority that nothing but lenient proceedings would do, he suppresses the information that the Begums' ministers were released, and gets the Board to give a new order to recommence severities, which he had already been apprised were not equal to the object. This is the man that had never any information upon the subject until after his arrival in England!

If anything more was wanted upon the subject—the Directors here order an inquiry. By suppressing that inquiry while Mr. Middleton and Mr. Johnson were upon the spot, he

avoided an opportunity of gaining fuller information, if he wanted fuller information, upon that subject. To crown the whole, he hears them narrated, in our charges; he hears Mr. Middleton's explanation upon them, he hears them [and says] deliberately:—

“ I won't say they are mine, but they are just, honourable, humane, and politic.”

This crowns the whole; this shows the monstrous falsity upon which the whole of his Defence is founded. I have proved the falsity of the assertion; that he knew, not only the outline, but the detail; that, knowing it, he approved it; that he defended it as just, politic and honourable. And am I now to be told, when I have brought such proof before your Lordships, that when he gives an agent authority to awe, to force, to compel, to kill—when he inflames and pronounces dreadful responsibility—when he has communications of it, he says,—

“ I am happy to hear of it, and shall return with delighted mind to Calcutta ” :—

when he afterwards makes a charge against his agent that he was not cruel enough—when he finally calls all the measures just, humane and politic—am I then to be told that he is not responsible, because I cannot prove that he ordered the number of lashes or the weights of the irons? Shall I be told he was not the cause this noble tree was felled, because he ordered them to lay an axe to the root but did not bid them tear the bark—because he ordered them to tear out the heart but did not order a drop of blood to be shed? My Lords, he is as much responsible as if he had himself exercised these orders; as much as if he had executed that threat; as much as if he had stooped to the gaoler's office and fastened the irons on the swollen feet of the ministers; as much as if he had torn the bread from the children's mouths; as much as if he had searched the zenana and examined the doolahs. I say I have brought home these crimes and laid them full upon Warren Hastings at your bar—that he is answerable for them to law, to equity, to his country and to his God.

* * *

I think so far I shall have vindicated the Council, for they were wholly imposed upon; and it is this circumstance of deliberation and consciousness of his guilt—it is this that inflames the minds of those who watch his transactions. They

root out all pity almost for persons who can act under such an influence. We have an impression of such tyrants as Caligula and Nero, that, having been bred up to tyranny and oppression, having had no equals to control them, no moment for reflection, we conceive that if it could have been possible to seize the guilty profligates for a moment you might bring conviction to their hearts and repentance to their mind. But when you see a cool, reasoning, deliberate tyrant—one who was not born and bred to an arrogant, fell despotism ; who has been nursed in a mercantile line ; who has been used to look round among his fellow-subjects, to transact with his equals, to account for his conduct to his masters, and, by that wise system of the Company, to detail all his transactions ; who never could fly one moment from himself, but must be obliged every night to sit down and hold up a glass to his own soul—could never be blind to his deformity, and who must have brought his conscience not only to connive but to approve of it—this distinguishes it from the worst cruelties, the worst enormities, we read of—of those who, born to tyranny, who, finding no superior, no adviser, have gone to the rash presumption that there were none above to control them hereafter. This is a circumstance that aggravates the whole of the guilt of the unfortunate gentleman we are now arraigning at your bar.

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Here the Counsel choose we should read a minute of Sir John Macpherson. Why they should I am at a loss to determine ; only that I see something I regret in this minute, and something that I should not have expected from the good sense of Sir John Macpherson, because he seems to have been convinced by this bold, bombastical, quibble, which I should have thought he would have laughed at to Mr. Hastings' face. He answers, "The majesty of justice ought certainly to be met with solicitation, and should not descend to provoke or invite it." That is very true, he is convinced, when he hears this character of justice. Was it in tenderness to Sir John Macpherson they wished us to read this ? What does it prove ? It proves nothing but that he had something of an oriental style ; that he had not learned his ideas of the sublime and beautiful in writing from the immortal leader of the present prosecution. Upon the strength of this the inquiry is stifled and crushed : and this Mr. Hastings denies to be stifling the

inquiry. This he says was not checking an inquiry—not dreading the result of an investigation. What Sir John Macpherson's opinion of this majesty of justice was is little to me. I will ask your Lordships—do your Lordships approve this representation? Do you feel that this is the true image of justice? Is this the character of British justice? Are these her features? Is this her countenance? Is this her gait or her mien? No: I think even now I hear you calling upon me to turn from this vile libel—this base caricature—this Indian pagod [?]
—this vile [idol?] hewn from some rock—blasted in some unhallowed grove—formed by the hand of guilty and knavish tyranny to dupe the heart of ignorance—to turn from this deformed idol to the true majesty of justice here. Here, indeed, I see a different form, enthroned by the sovereign hand of Freedom, and adorned by the hand of [Mercy?]
—awful without severity—commanding without pride—vigilant and active without restlessness and suspicion—searching and inquisitive without meanness and debasement—not arrogantly scorning to stoop when listening to the voice of afflicted innocence—and in its loveliest attitude when bending to uplift its suppliant at its feet.

My Lords, I have closed the evidence. I have no further comments. When I have done with the evidence I have done with everything that is near my heart. It is by the majesty—by the form—of that justice that I do conjure and implore your Lordships to give your minds to this great business. That is the only exhortation I have to make. It is not to exhort you to decide with perfect clear conscience—with confident proof in your bosom—without suffering the influence of any power upon earth to weigh with you—without suffering any party or political feeling. It would be presumption to warn you against that—I know it cannot be the case. But what I exhort you to is, that when you lay your hands upon your breasts, you not only cover that pure, sublime and clear, conscience, but that you do cover a mind convinced by a diligent application to the evidence brought before you. It is to that I quote the example of the Commons, to exhort your Lordships to weigh and look into facts—not so much to words, which may be denied or quibbled away—but to look to the plain facts—to weigh and consider the testimony in your own minds. We know the result must be inevitable. Let the truth

appear, and our cause is gained. It is to this I conjure your Lordships, for your own honour—for the honour of the nation—for the honour of human nature now entrusted to your care—that I, for the Commons of England speaking through us, claim this duty at your hands. They exhort you to it by everything that calls sublimely upon the heart of man—by the majesty of that justice which this bold man has libelled—by the wide fame of your own renowned tribunal—by the sacred pledge by which you swear in the solemn hour of decision ; knowing that that decision will bring you the greatest reward that ever blessed the heart of man—the consciousness of having done the greatest act of mercy for the world that the earth has ever yet received from any hand but Heaven.

My Lords, I have done.

Reply to Lord Mornington, 1794

PREFATORY NOTE.—This speech, in which Sheridan attacked the Whigs who had joined Pitt, is the only one, says his biographer, that he is known to have revised.

IN referring to the details which Lord Mornington had entered into of the various atrocities committed in France, Sheridan says :

But what was the sum of all that he had told the House ? that great and enormous enormities had been committed, at which the heart shuddered, and which not merely wounded every feeling of humanity, but disgusted and sickened the soul. All this was most true ; but what did all this prove ? What but that eternal and unalterable truth which had always presented itself to his mind, in whatever way he had viewed the subject, namely that a long-established despotism so far degraded and debased human nature, as to render its subjects, on the first recovery of their rights, unfit for the exercise of them. But never had he, or would he, meet but with reprobation that mode of argument which went, in fact, to establish, as an inference from this truth, that those who had been long slaves ought therefore to remain so for ever ! No ; the lesson ought to be, he would again repeat, a tenfold horror of that despotic form of government, which had so profaned and changed the nation of civilized men, and a still more jealous apprehension of any system tending to withhold the rights and

liberties of our fellow-creatures. Such a form of government might be considered as twice cursed ; while it existed it was solely responsible for the miseries and calamities of its subjects ; and should a day of retribution come, and the tyranny be destroyed, it was equally to be charged with all the enormities which the folly or frenzy of those who overturned it should commit.

But the madness of the French people was not confined to their proceedings within their own country ; we, and all the Powers of Europe, had to dread it. True ; but was not this also to be accounted for ? Wild and unsettled as their state of mind was, necessarily, upon the events which had thrown such power so suddenly into their hands, the surrounding States had goaded them into a still more savage state of madness, fury, and desperation. We had unsettled their reason, and then reviled their insanity ; we drove them to the extremities that produced the evils we arraigned ; we baited them like wild beasts, until at length we made them so. The conspiracy of Pilnitz, and the brutal threats of the Royal abettors of that plot against the rights of nations and of men, had in truth, to answer for all the additional misery, horrors, and iniquity, which had since disgraced and incensed humanity. Such has been your conduct towards France, that you have created the passions which you persecute ; you mark a nation to be cut off from the world ; you covenant for their extermination ; you swear to hunt them in their inmost recesses ; you load them with every species of execration ; and you now come forth with whining declamations on the horror of their turning upon you with the fury which you inspired.

* * *

The noble Lord need not remind us that there is no great danger of our Chancellor of the Exchequer making any such experiment. I can more easily fancy another sort of speech for our prudent Minister. I can more easily conceive him modestly comparing himself and his own measures with the character and conduct of his rival, and saying—" Do I demand of you, wealthy citizens, to lend your hoards to government without interest ? On the contrary, when I shall come to propose a loan, there is not a man of you to whom I shall not hold out at least a job in every part of the subscription, and an usurious profit upon every pound you devote to the

necessities of your country. Do I demand of you, my fellow-placemen and brother-pensioners, that you should sacrifice any part of your stipends to the public exigency? On the contrary, am I not daily increasing your emoluments and your numbers in proportion as the country becomes unable to provide for you? Do I require of you, my latest and most zealous proselytes, of you who have come over to me for the special purpose of supporting the war—a war, on the success of which you solemnly protest the salvation of Britain, and of civil society itself, depend—do I require of you, that you should make a temporary sacrifice in the cause of human nature, of the greater part of your private incomes? No, Gentlemen, I scorn to take advantage of the eagerness of your zeal; and to prove that I think the sincerity of your attachment to me needs no such test, I will make your interest co-operate with your principle; I will quarter many of you on the public supply, instead of calling on you to contribute to it; and, while their whole thoughts are absorbed in patriotic apprehensions for their country, I will dexterously force upon others the favourite objects of the vanity or ambition of their lives.”

* * *

Good God, sir, that he should have thought it prudent to have forced this contrast upon our attention; that he should triumphantly remind us of everything that shame should have withheld, and caution should have buried in oblivion! Will those who stood forth with a parade of disinterested patriotism, and vaunted of the sacrifices they had made, and the *exposed situation* they had chosen, in order the better to oppose the friends of Brissot in England—will they thank the noble Lord for reminding us how soon these lofty professions dwindled into little jobbing pursuits for followers and dependants, as unfit to fill the offices procured for them, as the offices themselves were unfit to be created?—Will the train of newly-titled alarmists, of supernumerary negotiators, of pensioned paymasters, agents and commissaries, thank him for remarking to us how profitable their panic has been to themselves, and how expensive to their country? What a contrast, indeed, do we exhibit!—What in such an hour as this, at a moment pregnant with the national fate, when, pressing as the exigency may be, the hard task of squeezing the money from the pockets of an impoverished

people, from the toil, the drudgery of the shivering poor, must make the most practised collector's heart ache while he tears it from them—can it be, that people of high rank, and professing high principles, that *they* or *their families* should seek to thrive on the spoils of misery, and fatten on the meals wrested from industrious poverty? Can it be, that this should be the case with the very persons, who state *the unprecedented peril of the country* as the *sole* cause of their being found in the ministerial ranks? The Constitution is in danger, religion is in danger, the very existence of the nation itself is endangered; all personal and party considerations ought to vanish; the war must be supported by every possible exertion and by every possible sacrifice; the people must not murmur at their burden, it is for their salvation, their all is at stake. The time is come, when all honest and all disinterested men should rally round the Throne as round a standard; for what? Ye honest and disinterested men, to receive, for your own private emolument, a portion of those very taxes wrung from the people, on the pretence of saving them from the poverty and distress which you say the enemy would inflict, but which you take care no enemy shall be able to aggravate. Oh! shame! shame! is this a time for selfish intrigues, and the little dirty traffic for lucre and emolument? Does it suit the honour of a gentleman to ask at such a moment? Does it become the honesty of a Minister to grant? Is it intended to confirm the pernicious doctrine, so industriously propagated by many, that all public men are imposters, and that every politician has his price? Or even where there is no principle in the bosom why does not prudence hint to the mercenary and the vain to abstain a while at least, and wait the fitting of the times? Improvident impatience! Nay, even from those who seem to have no direct object of office or profit, what is the language which their actions speak? The Throne is in danger—"We will support the Throne; but let us share the smiles of Royalty";—the order of nobility is in danger—"I will fight for nobility," says the Viscount, "but my zeal would be much greater if I were made an Earl." "Rouse all the Marquis within me," exclaims the Earl, "and the peerage never turned forth a more undaunted champion in its cause than I shall prove." "Stain my green riband blue," cries out the illustrious Knight, "and the fountain of honour will have a fast and

faithful servant." What are the people to think of our sincerity? What credit are they to give to our professions?—Is this system to be persevered in? Is there nothing that whispers to the right honourable gentleman that the crisis is too big, that the times are too gigantic to be valued by the little hackneyed and every-day means of ordinary corruption?

HENRY GRATTAN

It is Grattan's distinction to have been the only orator who was equally, or almost equally, successful in both the Irish and the Imperial Parliaments. His most celebrated speech was delivered on the 13th of May, 1805, in support of Fox's motion for going into committee on Catholic Disabilities. It was in that speech that, referring to the Irish Legislature of 1782, usually known as Grattan's Parliament, he said "I sat by her cradle, I followed her hearse." It is a very powerful harangue, argumentative as well as rhetorical, in the course of which he said of Dr. Duigenan, "I rise to rescue the Catholics from his attack, and the Protestants from his defence." Pitt is well known to have been a great admirer of Grattan's speeches, and it is certainly remarkable that he should have succeeded so well at Westminster, when the first half of his Parliamentary life had been spent in so different an atmosphere. But his eloquence was genuine, and there was statesmanship as well as eloquence in the expression of his political ideas. He did his best to curb the Protestant bigotry of the Irish Parliament, though himself a Protestant, and procured the elective franchise for the Catholics in 1793. He did not live to see their admission to Parliament in 1829, when Peel acknowledged that their emancipation was largely due to his efforts. Grattan always recognised facts, and there can be no doubt that he loyally accepted the Union against which he had fought, believing that it must lead to the equal treatment of the two religions.

Roman Catholic Emancipation

House of Commons, May 13th, 1805

THE past troubles of Ireland, the rebellion of 1641, and the wars which followed I do not wholly forget, but I only remember them to deprecate the example and renounce the animosity.

The penal code which went before, and followed those times, I remember also, but only enough to know, that the causes and reasons for that code have totally expired ; and as on one side the Protestant should relinquish his animosity on account of the rebellions, so should the Catholics relinquish their animosity on account of the laws. The question is not stated by the member ; it is not whether you will keep in a state of disqualification a few Irish Catholics, but whether you will keep in a state of languor and neutrality a fifth of the empire ; before you impose such a sentence on yourself you will require better arguments than those which the member has advanced ; he has substantially told you that the Irish Catholic Church, which is, in fact, more independent than the Catholic Church here, is the worst in Europe ; that the Irish Catholics, our own kindred, are the worst of papists ; that the distinction, a distinction made by the law, propounded by ourselves, and essential to the State, between temporal and spiritual power, is a vain discrimination, and that the people of Ireland, to be good Catholics, must be bad subjects : and finally, he has emphatically said, “ that an Irish Catholic never is, never was, never will be, a faithful subject to a British Protestant King ” : his words are, “ they hate all Protestants and all Englishmen.” Thus has he pronounced against his country three curses : eternal war with one another, eternal war with England, and eternal peace with France ; so strongly does he inculcate this, that if a Catholic printer were, in the time of invasion, to publish his speech, that printer might be indicted for treason, as the publisher of a composition administering to the Catholics a stimulative to rise, and advancing the authority of their religion for rebellion. His speech consists of four parts :—First, an invective uttered against the religion of the Catholics ; Second, an invective uttered against the present generation ; Third, an invective against the past ; and the Fourth, an invective against the future : here the limits of creation interposed, and stopped the member. It is to defend those different generations, and their religion, I rise ; to rescue the Catholic from his attack, and the Protestant from his defence.

The civil interference of the Pope, his assumed power of deposition, together with the supposed doctrine, that no faith was to be kept with heretics, were the great objections to the claims of the Catholics ; to convict them, the learned doctor has

gone forth with a sinister zeal to collect his offensive materials, and behold he returns laden with much disputed comment, much doubtful text, much of executive decrees, and of such things as are become obsolete, because useless, and are little attended to, because very dull and very uninteresting, and wherein the learned gentleman may, for that reason, take many little liberties in the way of misquotation, or in the way of suppression ; all these, the fruits of his unprofitable industry, he lays before you : very kindly and liberally he does it, but of this huge and tremendous collection, you must reject a principal part, as having nothing to say to the question, namely, all that matter which belongs to the Court of Rome as distinct from the Church ; Secondly, of the remnant after that rejection, you must remove everything that belongs to the Church of Rome which is not confined to doctrine regarding faith and morals, exclusive of, and unmixed with, any temporal matter whatever ; after this correction, you will have reduced this gentleman of the fifteenth century to two miserable canons, the only rewards of his labour, and result of his toil, both passing centuries before the Reformation, and therefore not bearing on the Protestant or the Reformers ; the first is a canon excommunicating persons who do not abide by a profession of faith contained in a preceding canon, which notably concludes with the following observation, that virgins and married women may make themselves agreeable to God ; now I cannot think such a canon can excite any grave impression or alarm in this House, passed six hundred years ago, three hundred years before the birth of the Reformation, made by lay princes, as well as ecclesiastics, and never acknowledged or noticed in these islands, even in times of their popery. The other canon, that of Constance, goes to deny the force of a free passport, or safe conduct to heretics, given by temporal princes in bar of the proceedings of the Church. Without going farther into that canon, it is sufficient to say, that it is positively affirmed by the Catholics, that this does not go farther than to assert the power of the Church to inquire into heresy, notwithstanding any impediments by lay princes ; and farther, there is an authority for that interpretation, and in contradiction to the member's interpretation, not only above his authority, but any that it is in his studies to produce : I mean, that of Grotius, who mentions that the imputation cast on the Catholics

on account of this canon is unfounded. Here I stop, and submit, that the member is in the state of a plaintiff, who cannot make out his case, notwithstanding his two canons; that he has failed most egregiously, and has no right to throw the other party on their defence; however, the Catholics have gone as far as relates to him gratuitously into their case, and have not availed themselves of the imbecility of their opponents, and they have been enabled to produce on the subject of the above charges, the opinion of six universities, to whom those charges, in the shape of queries, have been submitted: Paris, Louvaine, Salamanca, Douey, Valladolid, Alcala. These universities have all answered, and have, in their answers, not only disclaimed the imputed doctrines, but disclaimed them with abhorrence. The Catholics have not stopped here; they have drawn up a declaration of nine articles, renouncing the imputed doctrines, together with other doctrines, or views objected to by them; they have gone farther, they have desired the Protestants to name their own terms of abjuration: the Protestants have done so, and here is the instrument of their compact—it is an oath framed by a Protestant Parliament, principally manufactured by the honourable member himself, in which the Irish Catholics not only abjure the imputed doctrine, but are sworn to the State, and to the present establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland, and to the present state of Protestant property; this oath has been universally taken, and by this oath, both parties are concluded, the Catholics from resorting to the abjured doctrines, and the Protestant from resorting to the abjured charge; therefore when the member imputes, as he has done, to the Catholic, the principles hereby abjured, it is not the Catholic who breaks faith with him, but it is he who breaks faith with the Catholic. He acts in violation of the instrument he himself formed, and is put down by his own authority; but the Catholics have not only thus obtained a special acquittal from the charges made against them in this debate, they have obtained a general acquittal also.

The most powerful of their opponents, the late Earl of Clare, writes as follows: “They who adhere to the Church of Rome are good Catholics, they who adhere to the Court of Rome are traitors”; and he quotes Lord Somers as his authority, in which he entirely acquiesces, and acknowledges their

innocence in their adherence to the Church of Rome as distinct from the Court ; a test, such as I have already mentioned, is formed in Ireland, abjuring the doctrine of the Court of Rome, and reducing their religion to the Church of Rome. This test, together with a number of other articles, is reduced to an oath, and this oath is introduced into an Act of Parliament, and this oath, thus legalised, is taken universally ; here again are the opponents to the Catholic, concluded by their own concessions ; by tendering an oath to Catholics, they allow an oath to be a test of sincerity ; by framing that oath under these circumstances, they make it a test of pure Catholicism ; and by their own argument, they pronounce pure Catholicism to be innocuous ; but the honourable member has gone a little farther than pronounce the innocence of the Catholics ; he has pronounced the mischievous consequences of the laws that proscribe them ; he has said, in so many words, that an Irish Catholic never is, and never will be, faithful to a British Protestant King ; he does not say every Catholic, for then he would include the English Catholics and those of Canada ; nor does he say every Irishman must hate the King, for then he would include every Protestant in Ireland ; the cause of the hatred is not then in the religion nor in the soil ; it must be then in the laws, in something which the Protestant does not experience in Ireland, nor the Catholics in any country but in Ireland, that is to say, in the penal code ; that code then, according to him, has made the Catholics enemies to the King ; thus has he acquitted the Catholics and convicted the laws. This is not extraordinary, it is the natural progress of a blind and a great polemic ; such characters, they begin with a fatal candour, and then precipitate to a fatal extravagance : and are at once undermined by their candour and exposed by their extravagance : so with the member, he hurries on, he knows not where, utters, he cares not what, equally negligent of the grounds of his assertions and their necessary inferences ; thus, when he thinks he is establishing his errors, unconsciously and unintentionally he promulgates truth, or rather, in the very tempest of his speech, Providence seems to govern his lips, so that they shall prove false to his purposes, and bear witness to his refutations ; interpret the gentleman literally, what blasphemy has he uttered ? He has said, that the Catholic religion, abstracted as it is at present in Ireland from Popery,

and reduced as it is to mere Catholicism, is so inconsistent with the duties of morality and allegiance, as to be a very great evil. Now, that religion is the Christianity of two-thirds of all Christendom; it follows, then, according to the learned doctor, that the Christian religion is in general a curse: he has added, that his own countrymen are not only depraved by religion, but rendered perverse by nativity; that is to say, according to him, blasted by their Creator, and damned by their Redeemer. In order, therefore, to restore the member to the character of a Christian, we must renounce him as an advocate, and acknowledge that he has acquitted the Catholics whom he meant to condemn, and convicted the laws which he meant to defend. But though the truth may be eviscerated from the whole of the member's statement, it is not to be discerned in the particular parts, and therefore it is not sufficient to refute his arguments; 'tis necessary to controvert his positions—the Catholics of Ireland, he says, hate the Protestants, hate the English, and hate the King. I must protest against the truth of this position; the laws, violent as they were, mitigated as for the last seventeen years they have been, the people, better than the laws, never could have produced that mischief: against such a position I appeal to the conscious persuasion of every Irishman. We will put it to an issue: the present chief Governor of Ireland is both an Englishman and the representative of English Government. I will ask the honourable gentleman whether the Irish hate him? If I could believe this position, what could I think of the Protestant ascendancy, and what must I think of the British connection and Government, who have been for six hundred years in possession of the country, with no other effect, according to this logic, than to make its inhabitants abhor you and your generation; but this position contains something more than a departure from fact: it says, strike France, strike Spain, the great body of the Irish are with you; it does much more, it attempts to give the Irish a provocation, it teaches you to hate them, and them to think so, and thus falsehood takes its chance of generating into a fatal and treasonable truth. The honourable gentleman, having misrepresented the present generation, mis-states the conduct of their ancestors, and sets forth the past rebellions as proceeding entirely from religion. I will follow him to those rebellions, and show, beyond his

power of contradiction, that religion was not, and that proscription was, the leading cause of those rebellions. The rebellion of 1741, or let me be controverted by any historian of authority, did not proceed from religion ; it did proceed from the extermination of the inhabitants of eight countries in Ulster, and from the foreign and bigoted education of the Catholic clergy, and not from religion. The rebellion of the Pale, for it was totally distinct in period or cause from the other, did not proceed from religion : loss of the graces (they resembled your petition of right, except that they embraced articles for the security of property,) disarmament of the Catholics, expulsion of them in that disarmed state from Dublin, many other causes, order for the execution of certain priests ; you will not forget there was an order to banish their priests in James the First's time, and to shut up their chapels in Charles the First's ; these were the causes : there was another cause—you were in rebellion, Scotland was in rebellion ; there was another cause, the Irish Government was in rebellion ; they had taken their part with the Republicans, and wished to draw into treason the Irish freeholders, that, with the forfeiture of another's rebellion, they might supply their own. I go back with concern to these times, I see much blood, no glory ; but I have the consolation to find, that the causes were not lodged in the religion or the soil, and that all of them, but the proscriptive cause, have vanished. I follow the member to another rebellion, which should properly be called a civil war, not a rebellion ; it proceeded from a combination of causes which exist no longer, and one of those causes was the abdicating King at the head of the Catholics ; and another cause was the violent proscription carried on against the Catholics by the opposite and then prevailing party : these causes are now no more, or will the member say there is now an abdicating prince, or now a Popish plot, or now a pretender ? These are causes most certainly sufficient to alarm you, but very different, and such as can only be combated by a conviction, that as your destinies are now disposed of, it is not the power of the Catholics which can destroy, or the exclusion of the Catholics that can save you. The conclusion I draw from the history above alluded to, is very different from that drawn by the member, and far more healing ; conclusion to show the evils arising from foreign connections on one side, and from domestic

proscription on the other. If all the blood shed on those occasions, if the many fights in the first, and the signal battles in the second period, and the consequences of those battles to the defeated and the triumphant—to the slave that fled, and to the slave that followed—shall teach our country the wisdom of conciliation, I congratulate her on those deluges of blood; if not, I submit, and lament her fate, and deplore her understanding, which would render not only the blessings of Providence, but its visitations fruitless, and transmit what was the curse of our fathers as the inheritance of our children.

The learned gentleman proceeds to mis-state a period of one hundred years; namely, the century that followed the revolutions; and this he makes a period of open or concealed rebellions; the sources of his darkness and misinformation are to be found in history and revelation: of his charges against that period he brings no proof; none of those on the same side with him can bring any: they heard from such a one who heard from such a one: I neither believe them nor such a one, and I desire so many generations may not be convicted on evidence that would not be admitted against the vilest caitiff, and that in opposition to evidence by which that vilest caitiff would be acquitted, in opposition to the authority of four Acts of Parliament; the Act of 1778, which declares their loyalty for a long series of years, that of 1782, that of 1793, and further, against the declared sense of government, who, in the year 1762, proposed to raise four Catholic regiments, because the Catholics had proved their allegiance against the authority of the then Irish Primate who supported that measure; and in his speech on that subject assigns, as his reason, that after his perusal of Mr. Murray's papers, nothing appeared against the Irish Catholics of any connection whatsoever with the rebellion of that period. The member, he proceeds to the rebellion of 1798, and this he charges to the Catholics; and against his charge I appeal to the report of the committee of the Irish House of Commons in 1797, in which is set forth the rebel muster, containing 99,000 northerns enrolled in rebellion, and all the northern counties organized: at the time in which the committee of the House of Commons states the rebellion of the north, the despatches of government acknowledged the allegiance of the south; to those despatches I appeal, written at the time of Hoche's projected invasion, and applauding the

attachment and loyalty of the southern counties, and their exertions to assist the army on its march to Cork, to oppose the landing of the French. If you ask how the rebellion spread and involved the Catholics, I will answer, and tell you, that as long as the proscriptive system continues, there will be in our country a staminal weakness, rendering the distempers to which society is obnoxious, not only dangerous, but deadly ; every epidemic disease will bring the chronic distemper into action ; it is the grape-stone in the hand of death which strikes with the force of a thunderbolt. If you have any apprehension on this account, the error is to be found in yourselves, in human policy, not in religion ; in the fallibility of man, not of God. If you wish to strip rebellion of its hopes, France of her expectations, reform that policy ; you will gain a victory over the enemy, when you gain a conquest over yourselves. But I will for a moment accede to the member's statement against facts and history : what is his inference ? During one hundred years of the proscriptive system, the State has been in imminent danger ; therefore, adds he, continue the system, here is the regimen under which you have declined—persevere : but the member proceeds to observe, that you cannot hope to reconcile whom you cannot hope to satisfy, and he instances the repeal of the penal code. I deny the instances : the repeal in 1778 and 1782 did reconcile and did satisfy ; accordingly you will find, that the Irish Catholics in 1779 and 1780, 1781 and 1782, were active and unanimous to repel the invasion threatened at that time, when the French rode in the Channel, and Ireland was left to the care of 6,000 regulars, and was only defended from invasion by the spirit and loyalty of the Catholics, in harmony and in arms with their Protestant brethren. The repeal of a principal part of the penal code in 1793 did not reconcile, and did not satisfy ; it was, because the Irish government of that time was an enemy to the repeal and to the Catholics, and prevented the good effects of that measure. That government, in the summer of 1792, had sent instructions (I know the fact to be so) to the grand juries to enter into resolutions against the claims of the Catholics. Their leading minister appeared himself at one of the county meetings, and took a memorable part of hostility and publicity. When the petition of the Catholics was recommended in the King's speech in 1793, the Irish minister answers the King, and with

unmeasured severity attacked the petitioners. When the bill, introduced in consequence of his Majesty's recommendation, was in progress, the same minister, with an unmeasured severity, attacked the bill and repeated his severity against the persons of the Catholics. When the same bill of reconciliation, in consequence of the recommendation and reference of the petition, was in its passage, the Irish government attempted to hang the leading men among the petitioners, and accordingly Mr. Bird and Mr. Hamilton were, by their orders, indicted for a capital offence, I think it was Defenderism ; and so little ground was there for the charge, that those men were triumphantly acquitted, and the witnesses of the Crown so flagrantly perjured, that the judge, I have heard, recommended a prosecution. These were the causes why the repeal of 1793 did not satisfy ; and in addition to these, because the Irish administration took care that the Catholics should receive no benefit therefrom, opposing them with their known partizans and dependants, seldom giving them any office (there are very few instances in which they got any), and manifesting in the government a more active enemy than before the Catholic had experienced in the law. I refer to the speeches delivered and published at the time by the ministers and servants of the Irish government, and persisted in, and delivered since ; read them, and there you will see an attack on all the proceedings of the Irish people ; from the time of their address for free trade, all their proceedings, such as were glorious, as well as those that were intemperate, without discrimination, moderation, or principle ; there you will see the Irish ministry engaged in a wretched squabble with the Catholic committee, and that Catholic committee replying on that ministry, and degrading that ministry more than it had degraded itself ; and you will further perceive the members of that ministry urging their charges against the members of that committee, to disqualify other Catholics who were not of the committee, but opposed to it ; so that by their measures against the one part of the Catholics, and their invective against the other, they take care to alienate, as far as in them lay, the whole body. The fact is, the project of conciliation in 1793, recommended in the speech from the throne, was defeated by the Irish cabinet, who were at that time on that subject in opposition ; and being incensed at the British cabinet for the

countenance afforded to the Catholics, punished the latter, and sowed those seeds which afterwards, in conjunction with other causes, produced the rebellion.

I leave the member, and proceed to discuss the differences now remaining that discriminate his Majesty's subjects of the Protestant and Catholic persuasion. Before we consider how far we differ, it is necessary to examine how far we agree; we acknowledge the same God, the same Redeemer, the same consequences of redemption, the same Bible, and the same Testament. Agreeing in this, we cannot, as far as respects religion, quarrel about the remainder; because their merits as Christians must, in our opinion, outweigh their demerits as Catholics, and reduce our religious distinctions to a difference about the Eucharist, the mass, and the Virgin Mary; matters which may form a difference of opinion, but not a division of interest. The infidel, under these circumstances, would consider us as the same religionists, just as the French would consider us, and cut us down as the same community. See whether we are not agreed a little farther, and united by statute as well as religion; the preamble of three Acts declare the Catholics to be loyal subjects; the Act of 1778 declares that they have been so for a series of years; the same Act declares that they should be admitted into the blessings of the constitution: the Act of 1793 goes farther, and admits them into a participation of those blessings; thus is the principle of identification established by the law of the land, and thus are the Catholics, by that law, proclaimed to be innocent, and the calumniators of the Catholics guilty. Let us consider their situation under these laws, professedly and in principle admitted to everything except seats in Parliament, and certain offices of State; they are, in fact, excluded from everything, under the circumstances of paying for everything: (the few places they enjoy make no exception :) they pay their proportion of money to the Navy, and contribute one-third to its members, and have not a commission; they contribute to the expenses of the Army, and to one-third of its numbers, and have not a commission; and shall I now be asked, how are the Catholics affected by this? or be told that the Catholic body would not be served by the removal of this; how would the Protestant body be affected, if only removed from the State, the Parliament, the Navy, and the Army? In addition

to this, I am to add the many minor injuries done to the Catholics, in ways that must be felt, and cannot be calculated ; the incalculable injury done to the Catholic mind, by precluding it from objects of ambition, and to the Catholic spirit, by exposing it to taunts and insults—you cannot be at a loss for an instance, such as is uttered by the vilest of the Protestants against the first of the Catholics. I am to add the mischief done to the morals of this country, by setting up a false standard of merit, by which men, without religion, morals, or integrity, shall obtain, by an abhorrence of their fellow-subjects, credit and consequence, and acquire an impunity for selling the whole community, because they detest a part of it. You see it is impossible for any one part of the society to afflict the other without paying the penalty, and feeling the consequences of its own bad policy in the reaction of its own bad passions. I am to add that mischief done to the peace of the country among the lower orders, when the spirit of religious discord descends, and the holiday becomes a riot, and the petty magistrate turns chapman and dealer in politics, theologian and robber, makes for himself a situation in the country, by monstrous lies, fabricates false panics of insurrection and invasion, then walks forth the man of blood ; his creditors tremble ; the French do not ; and atrocities, which he dare not commit in his own name, perpetrates for the honour of his King, and in the name of his Maker. I have heard of the incivilization of Ireland ; too much has been said on that subject : I deny the fact : a country exporting above five millions, even at your official value, above half a million of corn, three millions of linen, paying nine millions to the State, cannot be barbarous ; a nation connected with you for six hundred years (what do you say ?) cannot be barbarous. If France should say so, you should contradict her, because it is not on Ireland, but on you the reflection must fall ; but if anything, however, delays the perfect and extensive civilization of Ireland, it is principally her religious animosity ; examine all the causes of human misery, the tragic machinery of the globe, and the instruments of civil rage and domestic murder, and you will find no demon is like it, because it privileges every other vice, and amalgamates with infidelity, as well as with murder ; and conscience, which restrains other vices, becomes a prompter here. To restrain this waste, and this conquest, exercised over your

understanding, your morals, and your fortune, my honourable friend makes his motion. Come, let us hear the objections: the Catholics, they say, should not have political power: why, they have it already; they got it when you gave them landed property, and they got it when you gave them the elective franchise. "Be it enacted, that the Catholics shall be capable of holding all offices (civil and military, except)" and then the Act excludes a certain numeration.

This is the Act of 1793; and is not this political power allowed by Act of Parliament? So that the objection goes not so much against the petition as against the law, and the law is the answer to it. The reasons they give for objecting to the law are, first, That the Catholics do not acknowledge the King to be the head of their Church. To require a person of the Catholic faith to acknowledge a person of another religion, who makes no very encouraging declarations towards them, to be the head of the Catholic Church, is going very far; but to make the withholding such acknowledgment, the test of disaffection, is going much farther; farther than reason, and farther than the law, which does not require such test, but is satisfied with a negative oath, and therefore the Presbyterian who makes no such acknowledgment may sit in Parliament; so that here the objector is answered again by the law, and the reason he gives in opposition to the law shows that the legislature is wiser than the objector. The reason alleged is, that he allows his Majesty to be the head of his Church and has more allegiance, because he acknowledges the King in more capacities; according to this the Turk has more allegiance than either; for he acknowledges the Grand Seignior in all capacities; and the Englishman has less allegiance than any other subject in Europe, because, whereas other European subjects acknowledge their King in a legislative as well as an executive capacity, the English acknowledge their King in the latter capacity only; but such men know not how to estimate allegiance which is not measured by the powers which you give, but by the privileges which you keep: thus your allegiance is of an higher order, because it is rendered for the proud circumstances belonging to an Englishman, to the peer who has his rank, the commoner who has his privileges, and the peasant who has his magna charta. The Catholic, too,—he has an interest in his allegiance; increase that interest, that is, increase this

privilege, you increase the force of his obligation, and with it your own security ; but here again the objector interposes, and alleges, that the Catholic does not only not acknowledge the King to be the head of their Church, but acknowledges a foreign power :—Whom ? I cannot find him. There was, indeed, a power which you set up in the last war and guarded with your troops ; is that the memory at which gentlemen tremble ? A sort of president, or chair, in whose name the business of the Catholic Church is conducted, for whom no Catholic would fight, and against whom the Irish Catholic would fight, if he came into their country at the head of an invading army ; they have said so. You will recollect how little you yourselves feared that name, when you encompassed and preserved it, at the very time of the Irish rebellion ; and now do gentlemen set it up and bring it back again into the world, as a principle likely to influence the action of the Irish ? But then I here received an answer to this, viz., that Bonaparte has gotten possession of the power and person of the Pope. What power ? He had no power before his captivity, and therefore he became a captive ; he has not found his power in his captivity, or will you say, that he could now disband an Austrian army or an Irish army, or that if he were to issue out his excommunications, your seamen and soldiers would desert. Such the power of the Pope, such your fear of it, and such is the force of their argument. What is the policy of it ? Bonaparte has gotten the Pope ; give him the Catholics : but here the objector interposes again, and tells us, it is in vain to look for harmony with the Catholics, inasmuch as they deliver us, the Protestants, to damnation : gravely they say this, soberly they say this, in the morning, and according to this you must not only repeal your laws of toleration, but you must disband part of your army and your navy, and disqualify your electors. The Catholic who hears this produces a Protestant creed, which does the same thing, and damns his sect likewise ; the Infidel who listens, agrees with both, and triumphs and suggests that it were better not to cast off your people, but to shake off your religion. So Volney makes all sects contend, and all conquer, and religion the common victim ; the truth is, exclusive salvation was the common phrenzy of all sects, and is the religion of none, and is now not rejected by all, but laughed at ; so burning one another as well as damning one another, you can

produce instances—they can produce instances : it was the habit of the early Christians to anathematize all sects but their own. No religion can stand, if men, without regard to their God, and with regard only to controversy, shall rake out of the rubbish of antiquity the obsolete and quaint follies of the Sectarians, and affront the majesty of the Almighty, with the impudent catalogue of their devices ; and it is a strong argument against the proscriptive system, that it helps to continue this shocking contest ; theologian against theologian, polemic against polemic, until the two madmen defame their common parent, and expose their common religion. With arguments such as these it is urged that the laws were in error which gave the Catholic political power ; and it is further added that he will use that political power to destroy the Church. I do not think they have now said, He will destroy the present state of property : bigotry has retired from that post, and has found out, at last, that the Catholics cannot repeal the Act of Settlement in Ireland, by which the property of the country was ascertained, until they become the Parliament ; nor become the Parliament, till they get the landed property of the country ; and, that when they get the property, they will not pass an act to set aside their titles to it. Further, it is now understood that the Protestant title is by time ; that there are few old Catholic proprietors, a multitude of new ones ; that the Catholic tenantry hold under Protestant titles ; and therefore, that there is, in support of the present state of property in Ireland, not only the strength of the Protestant interest, but the physical force of the Catholics ; therefore the objectors have judiciously retired from that ground, and now object to Catholic power, as certain to destroy the Protestant Church. How ? They must do it by act of legislation, or by act of force ; by act of legislation they cannot, and by force they would not : they would not by act of force, because the measures proposed, which do not go to increase the force, do go decisively to remove the animosity ; or will you say, when you give them every temporal motive to allegiance they will become rebels ; that when, indeed, they had rights of religion, rights of property, rights of election, they were loyal ; but when you gratified their ambition likewise, then they became disaffected, and ready to sacrifice all their temporal rights and political gratifications ? In order to do what ? To get a larger income for

their clergy ; that is, that their bishops should drink more claret, and wear finer clothes ; and with whose assistance should they do this ? With the aid of the French, who starve their clergy ; the ordinary principles of action : the human motives that direct other men, according to these reasoners, are not to be found in the Catholic ; nature is in him reversed ; he is not influenced by the love of family, of property, of privilege, of power, or any human passions, according to his antagonists, no more than his antagonists appear in their logic influenced by human reason ; and therefore it is, these reasoners deal most in the prophetic strain—a prophet's fury, and his blindness, much zeal, and no religion. I would ask them, what authority have they for thus introducing the Church as an obstacle to the advantages of the State ? Is it political, or is it moral, to deprive the Catholics of the franchises of the constitution, because they contribute to the Church, lest on obtaining those franchises they should pass laws withholding that contribution, as if you had any right to make that supposition, or any right to insist on that perilous monopoly, which should exclude them at once from Church and State, that they might pay for both without compensation ? The great preachers of our capital have not said so ; Mr. Dunn, that meek spirit of the gospel, he has not said so ; Mr. Douglass, in his strain of piety, morals, and eloquence, he has not said so ; nor the great luminary himself ; he who has wrung from his own breast, as it were, near £60,000, by preaching for public charities, and has stopped the mouth of hunger with its own bread, HE has not said so. I ask not what politicians may instil and may whisper, but what have the laborious clergymen preached and practised ?

But the Revolution, it seems, is an eternal bar : they find the principles of slavery in the Revolution, as they have found those of darkness in the Revolution. If they mean to measure the privileges of the empire by the model existing at the Revolution, they must impose on Ireland eternal proscription ; for at that time she was deprived of the rights of trade and constitution, and the Catholics of all rights whatsoever ; and they must impose on the empire two opposite principles of action, the free system for England, and the proscriptive principle for the rest ; they are then to make Ireland fight for British liberty and Irish exclusion ; their argument is therefore

not only a wicked wish, but a vain one ; nor is this the practice of other countries—those countries do not require the religion of the public officer to be the religion of the State ; their practice has been notoriously otherwise : they who said the contrary labour under a glaring error ; nor will you be able to encounter France, and the other nations of Europe, if they shall avail themselves of the talents of all their people, and you will oppose them by only a part of yours. It follows, then, whether you look to the principles of liberty or empire, that you cannot make the proscriptive system of the Revolution the measure of empire ; you must then make the principles of the Revolution that measure : what are those principles ? Civil and religious liberty : they existed at that time in full force for you ; they existed as seminal principles for us ; they were extended to the Protestant part of Ireland a century after ; they remain now to be extended to the Catholics ; then will your Revolution be completed, not overthrown ; then will you extend the principles of your empire on those of your constitution, and have secured an uniformity of action, by creating an identity of interest ; thus will you have simplified the imperial and constitutional motions to one and the same principle of action, moving you in your home and in your imperial orbit, informing the body of your laws, and vivifying the mass of your empire. The petition of the county of Oxford states, the Catholics have ever been enemies to freedom, just as the controversialists have said the Catholics must be enemies to the King ; yet the Revolution, from whose benefits you are to exclude the Catholics, was founded on a model formed and moulded by Catholics ; the declaration of right being almost entirely declaratory of rights and privileges secured by your Catholic ancestors : one of your great merits at the Revolution was not to have exceeded that model ; but, on the contrary, you restrained popular victory, and restored establishments, and kindled a modest spirit, which has outlasted the French conflagration ; a vital heat which then cheered you, which now should cheer the Catholic, and giving light and life to both, I hope will be eternal. The great objects, Church, State, and property, I adopt with the controversialist, and beg to rescue them from his wisdom, to give them, for their support, the physical force of the Catholic body, inasmuch as our danger does not arise from the possible abuse of his

constitutional power, but from the possible abuse of his physical force to obtain that constitutional power : in all this debate, you will observe, we argue as if we had but one enemy, the Catholic, and we forget the French ; and here, what I said to the Irish Parliament, on the Catholic question, I will repeat to you : I said to them, " The post you take is injudicious— independency of the British Parliament, exclusion of the Irish Catholics, a post to be kept against the power of one country and the freedom of the other."

I now say to you, the post you would take is injudicious ; a position that would keep France in check, and Ireland in thralldom ; to be held against the power of one country, and the freedom of the other. There are three systems for Ireland ; one, such as Primate Boulter has disclosed, a system to set the people at variance, on account of religion, that the government might be strong, and the country weak ; a system (such a one as prevailed when I broke her chain) which made the minister too strong for the constitution, and the country too weak for the enemy ; a system which one of its advocates had described when he said the Protestants of Ireland were a garrison in an enemy's country ; and which another gentleman has described, when he considered Ireland as a *caput mortuum* : this system has failed : it ought to have failed ; it was a party government, and a party god.

There is another extermination that will not do ; the extermination of three millions of men would be no easy task in execution, no very charitable measure in conception ; the justices of 1641 had dreamed of it, Cromwell had attempted, Harrington had talked of it. I hold the extermination of the people, and even of their hierarchy, to be such an experiment as will not be proposed by any gentleman who is perfectly in his senses ; extermination then will not do ; what is left ? The partial adoption of the Catholics has failed ; the eradication of the Catholics cannot be attempted ; the absolute incorporation remains alone ; there is no other ; or did you think it necessary to unite with the Irish Parliament, and do you hesitate to identify with the people : see whether you can conduct your empire on any other principle ; the better to illustrate this, and in order to ascertain the principles of your empire, survey its comprehension ; computing your West Indies and your eastern dominions, England has now, with all deference

to her moderation, a very great proportion of the globe. On what principle will she govern that portion? On the principles on which Providence governs the remainder: when you make your dominions commensurate with a great portion of her works, you should make your laws analogous to her dispensations; and as there is no such thing as an exclusive Providence, so neither, considering the extent of your empire, should there be such a thing as an exclusive empire, but such a one as accommodates to peculiar habits, religious prejudices, prepossessions, etc., etc. You do not, in your despatches to your generals, send the Thirty-Nine Articles; you know the bigot and conqueror are incompatible: Louis XIV found it so. You know that no nation is long indulged in the exercise of the two qualities, bigotry to proscribe at home, ambition to disturb abroad: such was your opinion when you established popery in Canada—I do not speak of Corsica: such your opinion when you recruited for the foot in Ireland. It was in the American War this practice began; then you found that the principle of exclusive empire would not answer, and that her test was not who should say her prayers, but who should fight her battles: on the same principle, the Irish militia, which must be, in a great proportion, Catholic, stands, and on the same principle the Irish yeomanry, who must be in a far more considerable proportion Catholic, stand; and, on the same principle, you have recruited for the Navy in Ireland, and have committed your sea thunderbolt to Catholic hands. Suppose, in Egypt, the General had ordered the Catholics to go out of the ranks; or if in one of your sea-fights, the admiral had ordered all the Catholics on shore, what had been the consequence? It is an argument against the proscriptive system, that if adopted practically in navy or army, the navy and army, and empire would evaporate; and shall we now proclaim these men, or hold such language as the member; language, which if he held on the day of battle, he must be shot; language for which, if a Catholic, he must be hanged; such as you despised in the case of Corsica and of Canada, in the choice of your allies, in the recruiting your army and your navy, whenever your convenience, whenever your ambition, whenever your interest required: or let us turn from the magnitude of your empire to the magnitude of its danger, and you will observe, that whereas Europe was heretofore divided

in many small nations of various religions, making part of their civil policy, and with alliances, influenced in some degree, and directed by those religious distinctions, where civil and religious freedom were supposed to be drawn upon one side, and on the other, popery and arbitrary power ; so now the globe has been divided anew—England and France. You have taken a first situation among mankind, you are, of course, precluded from a second. Austria may have a second situation, Prussia may have a second, but England seems to have linked her post and being to her glory, and when she ceases to be the first, she is nothing. According to this supposition, and it is a supposition which I do not frame, but find in your country, the day may not be very remote, when you will have to fight for being, and what you value more than being, the ancient renown of your island : you have said it yourselves, and you have added, that Ireland is your vulnerable part : why vulnerable ? Vulnerable, because you have misgoverned her ; it may then happen, that on Irish ground, and by an Irish hand, the destinies of that ancient monarchy, called Britain, may be decided. Accordingly you have voted your army, but you have forgot to vote your people ; you must vote their passions likewise. Horrors at the French proceedings will do much, but it is miserable to rely on the crimes of your enemies always, on your own wisdom never ; besides, those horrors did not prevent Prussia from leaving your alliance, nor Austria from making peace, nor the United Irishmen from making war. Loyalty will do much ; but you require more—patience under taxes and loans, such as are increased far beyond what we have been accustomed to, from one million and a half to nine millions, nor patience only, but ardour. The strong qualities, not such as the scolding dialect of certain gentlemen would excite ; a fire, that in the case of an invasion will not sit as a spy on the doubt of the day and calculate, but though the first battle should be unsuccessful, would, with a desperate fidelity, come on and embody with the destinies of England. It is a wretched thing to ask how would they act in such a case. What, after a connection of six hundred years, to thank your admiral for your safety, or the wind, or anything but your own wisdom ; and therefore the question is not whether the Catholics shall get so many seats, but whether you shall get so many millions ; in such a case, you would have all people. What is it that

constitutes the strength and health of England, but this sort of vitality, that her privileges, like her money, circulate everywhere, and centre nowhere; this it was which equality would have given, but did not give France; this it was which the plain sense of your ancestors, without equality, did give the English; a something, which limited her kings, drove her enemies, and made a handful of men fill the world with their name. Will you, in your union with Ireland, withhold the regimen which has made you strong, and continue the regimen which has made her feeble? You will further recollect, that you have invited her to your patrimony, and hitherto you have given her taxes, and an additional debt; I believe it is an addition of twenty-six millions: the other part of your patrimony, I should be glad to see it; talk plainly and honestly to the Irish; "It is true your taxes are increased, and your debts multiplied; but here are your privileges, great burthens, and great privileges; this is the patrimony of England, and with this does she assess, recruit, inspire, consolidate." But the Protestant ascendancy, it is said, alone can keep the country, namely, the gentry, clergy, and nobility, against the French, and without the people: it may be so; but in 1641, above ten thousand troops were sent from England to assist that party; in 1689, twenty-three regiments were raised in England to assist that party: what can be done by spirit will be done by them; but would the city of London, on such assurances, risk a guinea? The Parliament of Ireland did risk everything, and are now nothing; and in their extinction left this instruction, not to their posterity, for they have none; but to you, who come in the place of their posterity, not to depend on a sect of religion, nor trust the final issue of your fortunes to anything less than the whole of your people.

The Parliament of Ireland—of that assembly I have a parental recollection. I sat by her cradle, I followed her hearse. In fourteen years she acquired for Ireland what you did not acquire for England in a century—freedom of trade, independency of the legislature, independency of the judges, restoration of the final judicature, repeal of a perpetual mutiny bill, *habeas corpus* act, *nullum tempus* act—a great work! You will exceed it, and I shall rejoice. I call my countrymen to witness, if in that business I compromised the claims of my country, or temporised with the power of England; but there

was one thing which baffled the effort of the patriot, and defeated the wisdom of the Senate, it was the folly of the theologian. When the Parliament of Ireland rejected the Catholic petition, and assented to the calumnies then uttered against the Catholic body, on that day she voted the Union: if you should adopt a similar conduct, on that day you will vote the separation: many good and pious reasons you may give; many good and pious reasons she gave, and she lies THERE with her many good and her pious reasons. That the Parliament of Ireland should have entertained prejudices, I am not astonished; but that you, that you who have, as individuals and as conquerors, visited a great part of the globe, and have seen men in all their modifications, and Providence in all her ways; that you, now at this time of day, should throw up dykes against the Pope, and barriers against the Catholic, instead of uniting with that Catholic to throw up barriers against the French, this surprises; and, in addition to this, that you should have set up the Pope in Italy, to tremble at him in Ireland; and further, that you should have professed to have placed yourself at the head of a Christian, not a Protestant league, to defend the civil and religious liberty of Europe, and should deprive of their civil liberty one-fifth of yourselves, on account of their religion—this surprises me; and also that you should prefer to buy allies by subsidies, rather than fellow-subjects by privileges; and that you should now stand, drawn out as it were, in battalion, 16,000,000 against 36,000,000, and should at the same time paralyse a fifth of your own numbers, by excluding them from some of the principal benefits of your constitution, at the very time you say all your numbers are inadequate, unless inspired by those very privileges.

As I recommend to you to give the privileges, so I should recommend the Catholics to wait cheerfully and dutifully. The temper with which they bear the privation of power and privilege is evidence of their qualification: they will recollect the strength of their case, which sets them above impatience; they will recollect the growth of their case from the time it was first agitated, to the present moment; and, in that growth, perceive the perishable nature of the objections, and the immortal quality of the principle they contend for. They will further recollect what they have gotten already—rights of religion, rights of property, and above all, the elective franchise,

which is in itself the seminal principle of everything else : with a vessel so laden, they will be too wise to leave the harbour, and trust the fallacy of any wind : nothing can prevent the ultimate success of the Catholics but intemperance. For this they will be too wise ; the charges uttered against them they will answer by their allegiance : so should I speak of the Catholics. To the Protestant I would say, you have gotten the land and powers of the country, and it now remains to make those acquisitions eternal. Do not you see, according to the present state and temper of England and France, that your country must ultimately be the seat of war ? Do not you see, that your children must stand in the front of the battle, with uncertainty and treachery in the rear of it. If, then, by ten or twelve seats in Parliament given to Catholics, you could prevent such a day, would not the compromise be everything ? What is your wretched monopoly, the shadow of your present, the memory of your past power, compared to the safety of your families, the security of your estates, and the solid peace and repose of your island ? Besides, you have an account to settle with the empire ; might not the empire accost you thus ? “ For one hundred years you have been in possession of the country, and very loyally have you taken to yourselves the power and profit thereof. I am now to receive at your hands the fruits of all this, and the unanimous support of your people : where is it ? now, when I am beset with enemies and in my day of trial.” Let the Protestant ascendancy answer that question, for I cannot. Above twenty millions have been wasted on their shocking contest, and a great proportion of troops of the line locked up in the island, that they may enjoy the ascendancy of the country, and the empire not to receive the strength of it. Such a system cannot last : their destinies must be changed and exalted ; the Catholics no longer their inferior, nor they inferior to every one, save only the Catholic ; both must be free, and both must fight,—but it is the enemy, and not one another : thus the sects of religion renouncing, the one all foreign connection, and the other all domestic proscription, shall form a strong country ; and thus the two islands, renouncing all national prejudices, shall form a strong empire—a phalanx in the west to check, perhaps ultimately to confound the ambition of the enemy. I know the ground on which I stand, and the truths which I utter, and I appeal

to the objects you urge against me, which I constitute my judges, to the spirit of your own religion, and to the genius of your own revolution ; and I consent to have the principle which I maintain tried by any test, and equally sound, I contend, it will be found, whether you apply it to constitution where it is freedom, or to empire where it is strength, or to religion where it is light.

Turn to the opposite principle, proscription and discord—it has made in Ireland not only war, but even peace calamitous : witness the one that followed the victories of King William, to the Catholics, a sad servitude, to the Protestants a drunken triumph, and to both a peace without trade and without constitution. You have seen in 1798 rebellion break out again, the enemy masking her expeditions in consequence of the state of Ireland, twenty millions lost, one farthing of which did not tell in empire, and blood barbarously, boyishly, and most ingloriously expended. These things are in your recollection : one of the causes of these things, whether efficient, or instrumental, or aggravating, the proscriptive system, I mean, you may now remove ; it is a great work !—or has ambition not enlarged your mind, or only enlarged the sphere of its action ? What the best men in Ireland wished to do but could not do, the patriot courtier, and the patriot oppositionist, you may accomplish. What Mr. Gardiner, Mr. Langrishe, men who had no views of popularity or interest, or any but the public good ; what Mr. Daly, Mr. Burgh, men whom I shall not pronounce to be dead, if their genius live in this measure ; what Mr. Forbes, every man that loved Ireland ; what Lord Pery, the wisest man Ireland ever produced ; what Mr. Hutchinson, an able, enlightened, and accomplished servant of the Crown ; what Lord Charlemont, superior to his early prejudices, bending under years and experience, and public affection ; what that dying nobleman ; what our Burke ; what the most profound divines, Dr. Newcome, for instance, our late Primate (his mitre stood in the front of that measure), what these men supported, and against whom ? Against men who had no opinion at that time, or at any time, on the subject, except that which the minister ordered, or men, whose opinions were so extravagant, that even bigotry must blush for them ; and yet these men above mentioned had not before them considerations which should make you wise—that the Pope has

evaporated, and that France has covered the best part of Europe. That terrible sight is now before you ; it is a gulf that has swallowed up a great portion of your treasure, it yawns for your being—were it not wise, therefore, to come to a good understanding with the Irish now ; it will be miserable if anything untoward should happen hereafter, to say we did not foresee this danger ; against other dangers, against the Pope we were impregnable ; but if instead of guarding against dangers which are not, we should provide against dangers which are, the remedy is in your hands—the franchises of the constitution. Your ancestors were nursed in that cradle, the ancestors of the petitioners were less fortunate, the posterity of both born to new and strange dangers ; let them agree to renounce jealousies and proscriptions, in order to oppose what, without that agreement, will overpower both. Half Europe is in battalion against us, and we are damning one another on account of mysteries, when we should form against the enemy, and march.

CANNING

GEORGE CANNING began public life as a pupil of the younger Pitt, and died, like his master, Prime Minister of England. He made his way, if any man did, by speaking, especially by speaking in the House of Commons. While he was Member for Liverpool, from 1812 to 1822, he addressed his constituents upon public affairs with more freedom than was then usual. But Parliament was his chosen sphere, and there he delivered all the speeches that are now associated with his name. There it was that he referred to himself as having by his foreign policy, called the new world into existence to redress the balance of the old. There it was that he exercised by his eloquence a power which can only be understood by a careful study of the speeches themselves. After his quarrel with Castlereagh in 1809, he was long out of office, and his own little party did not count for much. But he could always reckon upon an attentive hearing, and his friends never shared the public distrust which some of his actions inspired. As Foreign Secretary he was bold and resolute. As Prime Minister he had no opportunity of developing his schemes. But in debate he shone with unrivalled lustre as a master of exposition, of comment, and of reply. He had the art of so putting his points that for the moment they seemed unanswerable, and that even when they were afterwards answered, they remained the best arguments for his side of the case. He always gave the House of Commons the clearest reasons for adopting the course he wished them to take. To compare Canning with other orators is not easy. He resembled Burke rather than Pitt because his mind always recurred to principles as affording the ground from which policy could be reached. But when once he had started on his logical course, he pursued it straight to the particular goal at which he was aiming.

He did not, like Burke, sometimes lose himself in the labyrinth of an attractive theory. He came to the point before he indulged in the luxury of a rhetorical digression. His official experience, though so frequently interrupted, was enough to imbue him with the necessity of directing his faculties to practical aims, and of cultivating lucidity as a fine art. If his hearers were to be perplexed, it must be his motive, and not his meaning, of which they were in doubt. Perhaps the very clearness of his language heightened the impression that he was capable of intrigue. It seemed impossible to believe that a man who spoke so clearly could be honestly puzzled by conflicting arguments in those parts of a subject which he did not endeavour to expound. Yet that might be the fact. For the conscience of government is complicated, and all the bearings of a question have to be comprehended before it can be determined as a whole. Burke passed his life in theorising. Pitt had no time for theories. Canning may not have had a complete scheme of political philosophy, although he always tried to put his thoughts in a philosophical form, and to represent his policy as the inevitable result of orderly reasoning. Such a process can hardly be achieved without ignoring many details, and thus suppression may be imputed where sequence alone is involved. Canning had the highest sense of truth and honour when he used those political arguments which he believed would be the most successful, and took into his consideration the temper, even the mood, of his audience, who were apt to think that the whole case had been presented to them when they had heard it as it quite clearly and simply appeared to Canning. He never, for instance, wavered in his support of Catholic emancipation, easy as it would be to show that his arguments for it varied in strength and cogency with the apparent likelihood of passing it into law. The mere fact that he once brought in a Bill which would have emancipated Catholic Peers only is enough to prove that he tried different modes

of attaining his object, and on the question of the securities to be required of the Catholics he was quite willing to be guided by circumstances. If he could have had his own way, he would have granted enfranchisement in the most complete and liberal form. He is not to be blamed for readiness to adopt such conditions or modifications as would be most likely to ensure success. Castlereagh, though quite as strongly convinced of the need for emancipation as Canning, made no scruple about joining a Cabinet pledged not to introduce it, and it was carried after they were both dead by two statesmen, Wellington and Peel, who had hitherto opposed it as strongly as Castlereagh and Canning had supported it.

On the Recognition of the South American Republics
House of Commons, June 15th, 1824

UNQUESTIONABLY, Sir, I am very far from having anything to complain of, either with respect to the tone or topics with which my honourable and learned friend has introduced his speech; and if the observations which I shall feel it my duty to make upon that speech, or the petition on which it is founded, shall bear but a small proportion to his address, I hope he will do me the justice to believe, that it is not in consequence of any offence at what he has said, or any disrespect for his opinions. But my honourable and learned friend must be fully aware, that though there are in what he believed might be called the late Spanish colonies great questions involved, anything which may fall from me, on the part of his Majesty's Government, would be likely to produce effects, which neither he nor I could wish to witness. I, therefore, must rather restrain every disposition which I feel to follow my honourable and learned friend through the various topics upon which he has touched, and confine myself, as much as possible, to a simple statement of facts, with no other qualification than a full and clear understanding of them.

My honourable and learned friend has gone over the papers, formally laid on the table, and given a just analysis of the course hitherto pursued by his Majesty's Government, with respect to the South American colonies. He has justly stated

that the first question, in point of order, for that consideration, was the question between the parent state and her colonies ; and that the course laid down by ministers, was one of strict neutrality. In doing this, it was also right to observe, that allowing the colonists to assume an equal belligerent rank with the parent country we did, *pro tanto*, raise them in the scale of nations.

My honourable and learned friend has justly said, and it was also stated by the petitioners, that, in the year 1822, the extent of the commerce then existing between this country and the colonies of Spain, led to another *de facto* recognition of their separate political existence : we recognized their commercial flag ; which was admitted to the same advantages as the flags of independent states in amity with England. He has also most correctly remarked, that the next step was taken before the breaking out of the war between France and Spain ; an intimation was at that period given to Spain, privately in the first instance, and afterwards publicly to the whole world, that to the British Government it appeared, that time and events had very substantially decided the question of separation ; but that the fact of recognition must be determined by various circumstances, and, among others, by the internal state of each of the colonies so claiming recognition.

My honourable and learned friend further stated, with the same accuracy, that after the declaration made to Spain—after the publication of that declaration, which left neither to Spain, nor to any other power, cause of complaint—if Great Britain should think fit to act practically upon it, the circumstances of the last year induced this country to suspend even the consideration of that question—to suspend the mission of commercial agents to South America—and to remain inactive and undecided, until the decision of the contest in which France and Spain were engaged.

Immediately after the decision of that contest, or rather, I should say, at the moment of its decision, and before any consequences could arise, and any step be taken by France, or by other powers of Europe, a warning was given by this country, in the clearest terms, as to the course she would pursue on any proposal for a joint conference or congress on the affairs of Spanish America. My honourable and learned

friend has faithfully recalled to the recollection of the House, the particular expressions of that warning.

The next stage in the course of these transactions, was the proposal, on the part of Spain, that this country should become a member of such a congress, and join in such a conference. That proposal was followed by our refusal. On the mode in which that proposal was made, first as it related to Spain, and next as it referred to the colonies, the House is already so perfectly advised, that it is not necessary for me to dwell upon it. Since that period (and this forms the last stage of these transactions) a public discussion has taken place in this House. The state in which things remained the last time the question was agitated within these walls, was this. It was stated that the King's Government, though reserving to themselves the right of acting as they should think fit, in reference to the interests of Great Britain involved in those colonies, yet thought it not merely politically expedient, but just and generous, to afford Spain the opportunity of precedency, and absolutely to suspend any decision, until they knew in what way she would avail herself of that opportunity.

What I have now to state is, that that condition is at an end, and that, with respect to any further steps to be taken by this country towards the Spanish American colonies, she must act for herself. What has passed upon this point between the two cabinets, it is not necessary for me to particularize; but the result is, that the British Government is left to act upon its own decision, without any further reference to Spain. Such is the result I have to state, and the only communication I have to make to the House ends. I trust honourable gentlemen will see, that in stating what is a fact, I avoid, rather than incur, the danger to which I referred, and which might arise from the agitation of this question. I apprehend that I should run the risk of that peril, if I were to state any ulterior, conjectural, or even hypothetical case; I shall, therefore, carefully shun it. Here I should conclude what I have to address to the House, were I not glad of the opportunity afforded me by the speech of my honourable and learned friend, and which opportunity I undoubtedly thanked him for, of putting on its true ground, and in its just light, the expression of "recognition" which has been so much mistaken.

It is perfectly true, as has been mentioned, that the term

“recognition” has been much abused; and, unfortunately, that abuse has perhaps been supported by some authority; it has clearly two senses, in which it is to be differently understood. If the colonies say to the mother country, “We assert our independence,” and the mother country answers, “I admit it,” that is recognition in one sense. If the colonies say to another state, “We are independent,” and that other state replies, “I allow that you are so,” that is recognition in another sense of the term. That other state simply acknowledges the fact, or rather its opinion of the fact; but she confers nothing, unless, under particular circumstances, she may be considered as conferring a favour. Therefore, it is one question, whether the recognition of the independence of the colonies shall take place, Spain being a party to such recognition; and another question, whether, Spain withholding what no power on earth can necessarily extort by fire, sword, or conquest, if she maintains silence without a positive refusal, other countries should acknowledge that independence. I am sure that my honourable and learned friend will agree with me in thinking, that his exposition of the different senses of the word “recognition” is the clearest argument in favour of the course we originally took: namely, that of wishing that the recognition in the minor sense should carry with it recognition by the mother country in the major sense. The recognition by a neutral power alone cannot, in the very nature of things, carry with it the same degree of authority, as if it were accompanied by the recognition by the mother country also. If, therefore, the Government of Great Britain had looked exclusively to the interests of the colonial states, she would reasonably pursue the course we have in fact taken; it must have been an object of higher importance to those states, that the recognition by Great Britain should be delayed, in the hope of bringing with it a similar concession from Spain, rather than that the recognition by Great Britain should have been so precipitate as to postpone, if not prevent, the recognition by the mother country. Whether all hope is over of any such step, on the part of Spain, is another question. Our obligation, then, as a matter of fact, is at an end—I am enabled to say that positively. The rest is matter of opinion, and must depend upon a balance of probabilities. But, as my honourable and learned friend has said, this simple sense of the term

“recognition” has been very much misunderstood, both here and in other places ; because though there is nothing more plain and easy than the acknowledging the fact (if fact it be), that such a government is independent, yet I am quite certain he will agree with me, that it may make a difference, if that acknowledgment be asked, which implies an expectation of consequences which do not necessarily belong to it. I am sure he will feel, that great as the boon of recognition, in its simplest sense, might be to any new government, it would be greater if, though given in one sense, if it were accepted in another. It might be given as a mere acknowledgment of a fact, and accepted as a sort of treaty of alliance and co-operation.

I am not ignorant of the many commercial interests that call for this proceeding ; but, if what is required were granted, some suppose that it would necessarily have the effect of tranquillizing the State, establishing and confirming its independence. The simple recognition by any neutral power, if it were not misunderstood, could have no such effect. I am, therefore, anxious that exaggerated expectations should not be indulged. As to what might be the immediate consequences of recognition, my honourable and learned friend has put two cases, the possibility of the existence of one of which I certainly do not feel. He says that South America must either be considered as one great mass, and then the contest in any part bears but a small proportion to the tranquillity of the whole ; or that each separate state must be considered by itself, and then only the state in which the contest exists can fairly be excluded from recognition. I have no sort of difficulty in saying, that to take South America as a mass presents a physical impossibility ; and my honourable and learned friend does not pretend that there is any government established which had authority over the whole. That position will, therefore, certainly be of no assistance to his argument.

The other point of view he has presented deserves more consideration ; namely, how far we are to consider each separated state entitled to recognition. Into this part of the argument I do not go at present ; this is a horn of his dilemma with which I am not, for various reasons, now prepared to contend. I will state only, that though I agree with him, that we have no pretence to be so difficult and scrupulous, as to insist that a new government shall have all the stability of an

old one before we acknowledge its independence, yet we must act with some degree of caution before we can give our fiat, even if it be understood to amount to no more than a declaration of opinion. We are not bound, indeed, to be so sure of our ground, as to be able to answer for it that our opinion shall turn out to be true ; but we are bound to take care to have the chances in its favour. The principal to guide us is this :— that as the whole of our conduct should be essentially neutral, we ought not to acknowledge the separate and independent existence of any government which is so doubtfully established, that the mere effect of that acknowledgment shall be, to mix parties again in internal squabbles, if not in open hostilities. My honourable and learned friend is aware that, before we can act, information as to matters of fact is necessary. We have taken the means to obtain that information ; but we are not yet in possession of that official intelligence, which will enable us to arrive at a decision. Even with regard to the particular state last alluded to, Columbia, I know what has passed there, only through the same channels of information my honourable and learned friend seems to have consulted— I mean the newspapers. I have seen much that I think must be rather exaggerated, but I have yet no authentic record by which I can correct the public statements.

This is all that I think it consistent with my duty to state to my honourable and learned friend. To every principle laid down in the papers he has read, and on which he has bestowed commendation, the King's Government steadfastly adheres. The progress made since we last had any communication on the subject, is a proof that we have proceeded in the execution of those principles ; and as my honourable and learned friend approves of all that is stated in those documents, he must, I apprehend, approve equally of what subsequently occurred.

The House will judge whether it is expedient, in the present state of affairs necessarily partaking of so much uncertainty, to press the discussion beyond the information I have been able to give ; or whether it would not complicate, and perhaps retard, rather than accelerate, the object in view. I have only to add, that the proposal originally made by Spain to this country, to become a party to a congress on the affairs of South America, had been repeated, and again refused by the Government of Great Britain.



DANIEL O'CONNELL

O'CONNELL'S success as an orator was greater in Ireland than in England, and greater on the platform than in Parliament. But it was everywhere great. He had extraordinary readiness of speech and immense volubility in argument. His fertility of resource never deserted him, and even in the House of Commons, where the sympathy of his audience was against him, he could almost always command a hearing. Abusive as he often was, his genuine eloquence so far refined the coarseness of his vocabulary that it became a picturesque ornament rather than an ugly excrescence. On the hill-sides of Ireland he was most thoroughly himself. But his forensic training qualified him for debate, and kept him more closely to the point than his rhetorical instincts would otherwise have led him. He was certainly the most eloquent Irishman of his time, and few Members of Parliament, English, Irish, or Scotch, could dispute the palm with him. Too intensely national to feel at home in this country, he had nevertheless the gift of arresting attention as soon as he rose, and retaining it throughout the longest of his harangues. He was not always lucid. But he was always earnest, and he had a definite, intelligible cause. Repeal of the Union might be good or bad. Nobody doubted what it meant, or questioned O'Connell's sincerity in demanding it. It is curious and significant that while he succeeded in obtaining Catholic Emancipation, for which he worked in Ireland, he failed to obtain Repeal, for which he worked in England. His settled policy was to procure it by constitutional agitation, and his monster meetings in Ireland were not intended to be more than passive displays of physical force. He was unable to control Young Ireland, nor could he always lay the spirits that he raised. But his extraordinary powers of eulogy, encouragement, and

invective gave him a preponderance which cannot be ignored in any estimate of oratorical achievement within the United Kingdom. He was a force. The range and compass of his voice were such that he could be heard with equal ease within the walls of Parliament and under the open canopy of Heaven. Notwithstanding the violence of his language he was by disposition genial, and quite prepared to associate on friendly terms with his political opponents. He often seemed to be astonished at the impression he produced, knowing that his malignity was histrionic, and forgetting that the English people are given to be as literal in construction as they are honest in design. When he called the Whigs "base, bloody, and brutal," he meant that they were proposing a policy of stringent coercion for Ireland. He lived in such an atmosphere of sentiment and exaggeration that he could not accurately measure the effect of his words upon a race so unlike his own as that which he addressed on this side of the Channel.

State of Ireland

House of Commons, Feb. 5th, 1833

MR. O'CONNELL said, that it was impossible in his opinion for the representatives of the people to agree to such an Address. He thought it was a bloody and brutal Address. [*Laughter.*] Yes, in spite of that laugh, he was sure that it was a bloody Address. It was exactly what he expected—a declaration of civil war, and that declaration would be echoed by many a wail and many a lament throughout Ireland. It was such an address as this that was put forth to America when England sent her secretaries there to write her history in blood; but that attempt terminated in the utter disgrace and discomfiture of this country. He repeated that the address proposed was bloody, brutal and unconstitutional; and when he heard the talk in that House as to the deep interest which it felt for the welfare of Ireland—when he heard the gallant officer and the newly returned member for Leeds speak of the attention which the situation of Ireland would receive in that House—he could not avoid telling them, with indignation, that this brutal

address showed but too plainly what sort of system was intended to be acted on towards that unfortunate country. He called it a brutal Address—for it was nothing else. He had told the right hon. Secretary¹ last session, that his measures would increase the evils of Ireland. He prophesied it at that time, and his prophecy had proved to be a true one. He should now beg that that part of his Majesty's speech at the conclusion of the last Session, which related to Ireland, might be read.

The clerk accordingly read the following passage :

“ I have still to lament the continuance of disturbances in Ireland notwithstanding the vigilance and energy displayed by my Government there in the measures which it has taken to repress them. The laws which have been passed, in conformity with my recommendation at the beginning of the Session, with respect to the collection of tithes, are well calculated to lay the foundation of a new system to the completion of which the attention of Parliament, when it again assembles, will of course be directed. To this necessary work my best assistance will be given, by enforcing the execution of the laws, and by promoting the prosperity of a country blessed by Divine Providence with so many natural advantages. As conducive to this object, I must express the satisfaction which I have felt at the measures adopted for extending generally to my people in that Kingdom the benefits of Education.”

Mr. *O'Connell* continued : Here Ireland was described as a country “ blessed by Divine Providence with so many natural advantages.” It was, indeed, so blessed. Had Scotland, he would ask, so many advantages ? Had even England so many advantages ? How, then, did it happen, when they talked of the natural advantages of Ireland, that that country was in such a wretched state ? He might be sneered at, but he would assert that there never was such a fruitful country presenting such misery ; there never was in the history of the world, so poor a people with so rich a Church. How was it that after seven centuries of oppression, there was still to be a call for blood in that country ? If Irishmen had had the conducting of Irish affairs, and the country was found in its present state, then the Parliament of England might have reproached them. But such was not the case. The work of evil was perpetrated by others. It was unnecessary to speak of what the noble Lord and the honourable gentleman said the Government meant to do for Ireland. If, after seven centuries, during which Ireland was subject to this country—if

¹ Mr. Stanley.

after that long lapse of time, a territory so blessed by Providence, and so cursed by man, was still in a state of wretchedness and misery, he threw the blame on those to whom the government had been intrusted. He would tell them that their schemes of domination and of oppression could not succeed ; and he would say that there was but one remedy for the woes of Ireland, and that was—to do justice. He had asked, on a former occasion, why it was that Ireland was plunged into such a wretched situation. But he received no answer. Oh—yes, he did. The noble Lord, the member for Devonshire, made a speech at him. The noble Lord emptied on him the phial of his wrath ; but how did that affect him ? He felt it not. He very well knew that there was not a scion of English nobility that did not think himself better than an Irishman ; and because he stated the wrongs of Ireland—because he argued that his country should not be left a spoil to the right hon. Secretary—he was sneered at, and even accused as the author of the evils by which his country was weighed down. Was Ireland, he demanded, more peaceable now, after the measures of the right hon. Secretary, than it was at the time to which he alluded ? Had not crime increased ? Why had it increased ? That was the only subject of inquiry. Originating where it did, and spreading as it had done, these points properly considered would show what sort of care was entertained for the welfare and happiness of Ireland. It was very well to talk of what was meant to be done for that country, but neither he nor those who thought with him would be content with the lip-service and mere professions of any set of men. He asserted that crime had increased. Then came the question, why had it increased ? There were two modes in which it had been accounted for. The noble Lord accounted for it by saying that it was produced by agitation ; and it appeared, from the manner in which the statement was cheered, that many gentlemen entertained the same opinion. But the gentlemen on the other side of the House forgot when they thus expressed their hostility to agitation, that it was only last year that they themselves were reproached with the crime of being agitators. Those gentlemen were told that the people of England wanted no such reform as these people contemplated ; that they wanted none of those changes and innovations which ministers proposed and carried ; and the charge

of agitation was then advanced against them infinitely more strongly than it had ever been directed against him and his friends. So far as he was himself concerned, he treated with contempt this charge of agitation. The question was whether the increase of crime was caused by agitation or by misgovernment? He would prove that the latter was the cause. Crime had not been increased by words, but by deeds. This was the question at issue between him and the noble Lord. The noble Lord, after having called him a "bird of prey," and after having made use of several similar metaphors, had, in the end, the singular modesty to request his co-operation in supporting certain measures. What co-operation could be expected from a bird of prey he certainly could not conceive. They had heard much of what was to be done for Ireland. The right hon. Secretary had been for two years in Ireland, and what had he done for that country? What measures had he given notice of to-night? Why, his rodomontade alteration in the Grand Jury Law, which he had introduced the Session before the last and another measure for increasing the constabulary force in Ireland. Those were the only subjects they had heard of. Now, really, whether he was a bird of prey or an agitator, he did not think it was worth while to call on him for his co-operation with reference to such measures. When the noble Lord had done as much for Scotland as he (Mr. O'Connell) had done for Ireland, then, perhaps, the noble lord would be justified in speaking so confidently. Did the noble Lord find his countrymen trampled under foot? Did he raise them, by his exertions, from that state of degradation? If he had done that, then he might have raised his voice as he had done. But, in the absence of any such claim, let him not, whatever his rank and station might be, assail men better than himself. What a curse it was for Ireland, that every popinjay you met in the streets, who was capable of uttering fifteen words, was sure to lard his speech by sarcasms against Ireland. The terms which the noble Lord applied to him he rejected with indignation and scorn. They proved the noble Lord's disposition to be injurious, but they proved nothing more. Looking back to his past career, he recollected the time when the reproaches directed against him that night were multiplied tenfold. The epithet "bird of prey," and other angry expressions, were light and idle compared with the

reproaches which were cast on him when he agitated the Catholic question. He agitated then efficiently; and the conduct of the King's Government that day would enable him to agitate still more effectively. The Government agitated for him. They were forcing Ireland into a situation from which it could only be relieved by due concession, or by a sanguinary convulsion. In his opinion, then, the Repeal of the Union was necessary for the preservation of the Throne of the King and his successors—it was essentially necessary for the peace and the prosperity of Ireland; and he thanked the repealers of Ireland for having, by their conduct, raised that question to the dignity and station which it at present held. It was the habit, last year, to sneer and laugh at that question—in short to talk of it as a subject that never would be agitated in that House. But now what was the case? All parties in Ireland were merely reconciled by the conduct of the right hon. Secretary, and all men agreed that the question was one that demanded, and must have, a public, a distinct, and solemn discussion; and, moreover, that it was a question which was not to be put down by the force of the bayonet, but, if possible, by the moral force of proof, and that he was certain could not be adduced; for those who supported repeal had right and justice on their side. He would now return to the original question. It was said that agitation had led to the present state of Ireland. He asserted that those who thus argued were totally wrong. He, on the contrary, would aver that agitation had reduced crime. The history of the country proved it, and it was a great pity that men could not read their own history correctly. If those who opposed his opinion were right, then agitation ought to be put down; but if wrong, then justice should be done to Ireland. He claimed justice, and nothing but justice, for Ireland: but the ministers proclaimed civil war for Ireland—theirs was the system of bayonets and bullets. They called for additional force. In this mode of government there was no ingenuity, no talent, no new discovery; for 700 years England had governed Ireland in the same way. In the time of Henry VIII, when only a portion of Ireland contained King's subjects, in the time of Elizabeth, when only part of the Irish were Queen's subjects—the government was carried on in the same way, and here he could not refrain from remarking that so very ignorant were Englishmen

in general of the history of the sister country, as it was sometimes styled, that he never yet met the Englishman who knew that it was not until the year 1614, in the reign of James I, that all the inhabitants of Ireland became King's subjects. Having thrown forth this observation, he would next remark that more blood had been shed in Ireland during the administration of the right hon. Secretary than during that of the Earl of Stafford. The peasantry were slain by day—assassinated by night—openly by soldiers and policemen in the day—at night murdered by the wretched outcast from society, the white boy—a man most commonly converted by misery and oppression into a monster. The wantonness with which life was every day sacrificed in Ireland was appalling. By a late post it appeared that a farmer in Wexford was shot by the police, in passing a river, because he refused to stop in obedience to their mandate. In Mayo, the other day, peasants were shot for looking hard at the police. In the Queen's County, a man was murdered for singing a song which sounded unpleasantly in the ears of the police. And there was the affair at Kanturk. Really, this was worth a moment's consideration from the House. Several parishes, it appeared, had assembled for the purpose of peaceably petitioning for relief from tithes. The right hon. gentleman had since put down all meetings consisting of more than one parish. Well, so be it; but, as usual, the police attended this meeting in coloured clothes, and mingled with the peasantry. The soldiers, too, were of course brought to the ground with guns loaded, bayonets fixed, and all things in a state of warlike preparation. Now mark—one of these disguised policemen threw a stone at the soldiers. Fortunately the people did not follow his example, and the military displayed that temper and forbearance, which, in the discharge of their arduous and afflicting duties in Ireland, had distinguished them so often. The man was seized—there were seven witnesses to prove that he had thrown the stone; but there was excessive difficulty in getting a magistrate to receive the depositions, and when the bill of indictment came before the Grand Jury of the country it was ignored. That was the way in which justice was administered in Ireland. Hear another story:—A party of police went out lately—one of them was drunk. Hearing the approach of his officer, he went into a cabin, and said to the man and his wife, "For

God's sake, hide me ; if my officer sees me in this state I shall be broken." The police were not in favour with the people ; still they could not find it in their hearts to refuse him ; so the woman hid him in the bed with the children. The party of police called several times, asking for their comrade. The woman said she knew nothing about him. At length she took him out of the house, and, as the country thereabouts was rendered dangerous by the frequent eyes of coal-pits, she walked upwards of a mile and a half with him, to put him on a secure road, and carried his gun for him all the time. When she came home, however, she found another party of police in her house. They insisted that she had concealed the policeman, and finally seized and handcuffed the man and woman—actually handcuffed her. There was no doubt here ; yet there was no indignation expressed. A Mrs. Deacle was handcuffed, or said to have been handcuffed—he did not mean to say she was not—and that House, and indeed all England, were thrown into uproar by it ; but the poor woman to whom he alluded was merely an Irishwoman. To proceed, there was some resistance offered by the people who witnessed these things, and there was, of course, another slaughter. He begged to tell the gentlemen of England this question was one of life and death. If they employed additional force—more military and police—they would only have more blood. In the case to which he had alluded, a Coroner's Jury brought in a verdict of wilful murder. Now he accused the right hon. Secretary of being a party to all the slaughter at the other side of the water ; to that of Newtownbarry, for example. Here he would take for granted that the yeomanry were right ; so be it ; still it was the right hon. gentleman and Government that put into the yeoman's hands those deadly weapons by which men, women, and children were slaughtered. The right hon. Secretary had turned Lord Anglesey into Tithe Proctor-General for Ireland. The gallant Governor and General had made a right glorious campaign ; he had conquered parish after parish, he had confiscated the petticoat of the old woman, and the porridge-pot of the young child ; he had converted all the barracks into receptacles for tithes, the soldiers into drivers for them ; he had scoured the country with cavalry and infantry, aye, and marines ; and there certainly was no question that wherever he had thought proper to apply force he had been

successful. Where, then, was the need of additional force in Ireland? Additional force, he contended, would only be productive of additional crime. He now came back to the question, was crime the offspring of agitation or misgovernment? It was proved by the parliamentary reports, and more especially by the last, that all those crimes were committed by the lowest class of the community, and that there was no connection between them and any feeling of a political nature—nay, more, he would defy any person to point out a time when there was political agitation in Ireland that was not comparatively free from crime. He would give them an instance of this fact. There was no period in which Whiteboyism was more rife in Ireland than in 1821 and 1822. The system had almost assumed the character of actual insurrection; the parties assembled on the hills, and committed murders in open day. There was no political agitation at the time. On the accession of George IV, and particularly after his visit to Ireland, relying on his supposed sentiment, the Catholics determined to wait until the Monarch expressed his own spontaneous sentiments on the subject of Catholic emancipation. They therefore abstained, at that time, from agitating the question. In what state was the country then? There were eleven counties proclaimed under the Insurrection Act, and seven more were about to be placed in the same situation. But when the Catholic Association was formed, and when the principle of agitation had been in full force for ten months, then disturbance ceased, and every county in Ireland was quieted. That was a positive fact, and he challenged the gentlemen opposite to contradict it. Let those who cheered so loudly, when agitation was mentioned as the cause of insubordination, bear this point in mind—that crime was widely extended when there was no agitation, but that it was repressed when agitation prevailed. When he made this statement, was he speaking to the deaf adder? was he addressing himself to men who would not listen; or who, if they did listen, would not take a lesson from the past with respect to the course which they ought to pursue for the future? They might outvote him against Ireland, but they could not shake those truths. He was speaking for Ireland, for unhappy Ireland. They might sneer at, or taunt him as the agitator; but, conscious that he was performing a sacred duty, he could laugh at all

that now. What became of this argument founded on agitation, when he proved, that when they did not agitate, multitudes of crimes were perpetrated; but that, when agitation prevailed, crime ceased? What was the reason of this? It was because the Irish were a shrewd, a calculating and observant people. Seven centuries of misgovernment and oppression had taught them to understand the signs of the times; and when they saw any prospect, however remote, of effecting a beneficial change for their country they seized on it with avidity, and it absorbed every other feeling and sentiment. But why did ministers call for additional force? Had they not already put down every tithe meeting? Had they not dispersed them at the point of the bayonet? Let every reasonable man examine the system which they wished to uphold, and say whether it was a just or fair one. In his parish, there were 12,300 and odd inhabitants, of whom seventy-five were Protestants. Now, was it not reasonable that the 12,225 Roman Catholics should resist a system which impoverished them, to benefit so miserable a minority? He again contended that increase of crime had followed and would follow increase of force. Yet such was the project of this liberal Government. He would say that there never was such a persecuting government; they had prosecuted the Press, the people, and even the priests. They had done nothing to restore the country to tranquillity. Had Ireland any real grievances, was the question which they had to decide. What cared he for their laugh, or their taunt, or their sneer? He boldly avowed, in spite of laugh, taunt and sneer, that while Ireland had grievances to complain of he would agitate to redress them. This was what Englishmen did to achieve reform; and he pursuing the same course, would agitate as long as he had the power, and found that there was a necessity for such a line of action. An unreformed Parliament had passed two Acts with respect to Ireland which an Algerine Government would not have sanctioned. A Reformed Parliament, it appeared, would be called on to pass another, to put an end to agitation. But he would tell them that it would be many and many a day before they could frame and carry an Act to effect that object. Almost all the measures adopted with reference to Ireland led, more or less, to the shedding of blood—the blood of an honest, a religious, a warm-hearted, a good

people. More murders were committed in that country than in any other place on the face of the earth. The people here knew little of Ireland. The Whiteboy, driven to wretchedness and desperation, thrown an unwilling outlaw on the commission of crime—even his crimes, the offspring of adverse circumstances, could not be advanced as an argument against the general good and virtuous feeling of the Irish people. When that people had so many grounds of complaint, had they not a right to agitate? In the first place, he complained of the magistracy of Ireland. He would suppose that, by conquest or otherwise, the French became masters of this country and established a religion different from that which accorded with the feelings of the people. The thing, he knew, was impossible, but he used the supposition in order to show more clearly the situation of Ireland. Suppose a magistracy was established here professing a religion different from that of the people at large—armed with arbitrary power—having authority to inflict fine and imprisonment, and against the members of which it was hopeless to seek redress—what feelings would such a state of things generate? In Ireland, since the union, so many forms had been introduced in the law (and they formed some of the blessings which flowed from that measure), that he defied any man, however injured, to maintain an action successfully against a magistrate. He need not weary himself and the House by showing that the magistracy of Ireland was on a bad footing. It was admitted by the noble Lord and his colleagues. They had all spoken of the necessity of a revision of the magistracy of Ireland. Even the right hon. Baronet, the member for Tamworth,¹ had expressed himself in favour of a revision of the magistracy. When application was made to Lord Manners to restore a dismissed magistrate, he observed: "I have made you the best retribution in my power by again placing you in the Commission; but the last thing the King said to me when I became Chancellor, was, 'My Lord Manners, look particularly to the magistracy.'" A sort of revision took place at that time, and a comical revision it was. A number of magistrates were struck off—all those who had died were struck off—some military officers, not in the country, were struck off—some Roman Catholics were struck off—and several improper persons were struck off.

¹ Sir Robert Peel.

But this did not last. Lord Manners knew nothing of the Irish magistracy, and there was a superior influence at the Castle, by which the old abuses were continued. There was no doubt, the fact could not be denied, that there were a great many improper persons in the Commission of the Peace in Ireland; the fact was recorded in the evidence of General Bourke before a committee of that House. At the time that the present Administration came into power he and others called for a revision of the magistracy in Ireland. The answer then given to them by the right hon. Secretary opposite was, that six months after the late King's death, the Commissions of all the magistrates in Ireland would have to be renewed, and that the Government would then take care that none but proper persons should be put into the Commission of the Peace in Ireland; that renewal of the Commissions of the magistracy had since taken place, and he should like to know what improper persons had been excluded from the Commission of the Peace there? He could, on the contrary, enumerate instances of several improper persons that had been left in it, and left in it, too, from party motives, and from partisan views and objects. The right hon. gentleman had taken especial care that to such persons the Commission of the Peace should be continued, while many most respectable, most worthy, and well-qualified individuals, were excluded from it in various parts of Ireland. Such was the mode in which the right hon. gentleman governed that unfortunate country. The right hon. gentleman, during his short career in Ireland, had achieved that which had never been accomplished before—he had contrived to make the whole people of Ireland unanimous, for all persons there concurred in considering him most unfit for the government of that country. When Ireland in former times revolted against oppression, Henry VIII swore lustily, that if Ireland would not be governed by the Earl of Kildare, the Earl of Kildare should ruin Ireland. Was that the principle now to be enforced? Was that the line of policy that was now to be pursued? Such, at all events, would be the effect of the Address that night submitted for their adoption. The power of the magistracy in Ireland, as regarded the lower classes there, was omnipotent, especially since the introduction of the Petty Sessions; and they exercised that power with the most complete impunity. In order to

attach responsibility to the exercise of power, you must isolate that power ; but the magistrates at the Petty Sessions in Ireland, by acting together and in a bulk, rendered the exercise of their power entirely irresponsible. The publicity of their proceedings at Petty Sessions was salutary, but their combination rendered it impossible for the poor man to obtain redress for the injustice which he might suffer at their hands, and, with the aid of the Trespass Act, it was in their power to inflict grievous injustice upon the lower orders of Ireland. They heard a great deal of the crimes that were committed in Ireland, but such crimes were, in most instances, to be traced to the injustice effected upon the poor there through the means of such Acts of Parliament as that he had just referred to—they were the wild justice of revenge to which the poor were driven when all other modes of obtaining redress failed them. By means of the Trespass Act the magistrates were enabled to determine every right of the poor man—every right of his connected with his land and his property. By means of that Act the magistrates at Sessions could even try questions of title. He had known an instance of a man who had a good equitable case—and in a civil bill ejection case an equitable was as good as a legal defence—and yet the magistrates fined him £5 as a trespasser. Though the Statute said that they should not try rights, yet the effect of their decisions in such cases was actually to try them. He might be told that the poor man, in the instance he had mentioned, had his remedy ; that he could get rid of the decision in question by bringing an action ; but the expense of such a proceeding rendered that remedy totally unattainable to him. The very cost of a *latitat* was probably more money than a poor man ever had in his possession at one and the same time in the whole course of his life. In the way he had just stated, the determination of all the rights of the peasantry of Ireland was put into the power of the magistracy of that country. He did not mean to say that all the magistrates in Ireland were open to the accusations which he had thought it his duty to prefer against them as a body ; he would not even accuse the majority of them of the malpractices of which he had spoken ; but this he would say, that a large class of the magistrates of Ireland, and the most influential among them, too, were swayed by party zeal (the zeal of a party opposed to the mass of the people) and

influenced by factious motives in the discharge of their duties. Since the commencement of Lord Anglesey's Administration in Ireland there had been thirty-four stipendiary magistrates acting in that country; of these thirty-four, Lord Anglesey had nominated twenty-six, and in such a country as Ireland, the large majority of its inhabitants Catholic, especial care was taken that not a single Catholic should be amongst those twenty-six stipendiary magistrates. There were thirty-two sub-inspectors of police in Ireland; he did not know how many of them had been appointed by the present Administration; but this he did know, that there was not a single Catholic amongst them. There were five Inspectors-general of Police, and there was not a Catholic amongst them. He would ask them, with such facts before them, could they be surprised at the present situation of Ireland? With such real grievances affecting the people of that country, where was the necessity of attributing its disturbed and discontented state to the efforts of agitators? Before the Parliament was reformed—before the corrupt and borough-mongering House of Commons had been got rid of—many rational and well-disposed men in Ireland, who were equally indignant as the rest of their countrymen at the wrongs and injustice inflicted on their country, refused to join in demanding a Repeal of the Union; saying that they ought to wait to see what the first Reformed Parliament would do for Ireland. Well, they waited to see what the first Reformed Parliament would do for Ireland, and what would be their feelings when the brutal and the bloody Speech which had been that day read, found its way to Ireland?

Lord *John Russell* rose to order. In consequence of the words which had been just used by the hon. and learned gentleman, he (Lord John Russell) rose to request that the hon. and learned gentleman's words should be taken down.

Mr. *O'Connell* said, that if he was out of order in the observations which he had been making, if he was irregular in the words which he had been employing, he would desist from using them. He was determined to give no one an opportunity of acting against him. He would take the noble Lord's hint. Strong language was, of course, not justifiable when such topics were under consideration. It ought to be

“ ——— in bondsman's key

With bated breath, and whispering humbleness,”

that he should speak when speaking of Ireland and her wrongs. It was not a "bloody speech"—oh, no! Did the noble Lord object to the word "brutal," too?

Lord *John Russell* said, that he did not object to any words which the hon. and learned gentleman might think fit to use respecting the Address which was proposed in that House; but he did object to the words "bloody speech" being applied to a speech which had been so lately pronounced by his Majesty in person in the other House of Parliament.

Mr. *O'Connell* said, that the noble Lord's objection raised a great constitutional question, from trying which he would not shrink; it was a question that concerned one of the most important privileges of Parliament. If he were wrong, he would not persevere in the course he was pursuing; but if he were right, he would not retract a word which he had applied to the Speech, considering it the speech of Ministers; for in doing so, he conceived that he only exercised the constitutional privileges of a member of the British House of Commons. He had spoken of the Speech as the speech of his Majesty's ministers, for as such all King's Speeches had been hitherto, and for obvious constitutional purposes, considered. If he was now to be told, that he must speak of it as the Speech of the King, no words regarding it should escape from his mouth but those of the most profound respect for his Majesty's Crown and person; but if he was justified in considering it, as such documents had been always hitherto considered, as the Speech of his Majesty's ministers, and for which they alone were responsible, words were not strong enough to express his abhorrence of it.

The *Speaker* said, that having been appealed to upon this point, he must say that the opinion expressed by the hon. and learned gentleman was perfectly correct—namely, that in a constitutional point of view, and for constitutional purposes, the Speech of his Majesty was usually considered the Speech of his Majesty's ministers, and, for that Speech, it was true that his Majesty's ministers were alone responsible; but it appeared to him that that was altogether beside the question which had now been raised for their consideration. He would put it to the hon. and learned gentleman, whether, if order and decency were to be preserved in the public debates of that House, they could possibly be preserved consistently with the

employment of such language, whether applied to the speech of the King's ministers, or to a speech just delivered by his Majesty himself in person?

Mr. *O'Connell* said, that the constitutional question having been decided as he expected, he should, in deference to the admonition of the Speaker in regard to preserving order in the debates, not proceed further in the course of observations which he had thought it his duty to make upon the ministerial document. He should now proceed to advert to the other grievances of which Ireland had to complain. He would ask the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Stanley), did he think that the Bench of Justice in Ireland was such as to deserve the confidence of the people of that country? Did the right hon. gentleman know the history of that country, even for the last twenty or thirty years, and the manner in which the judicial situations had been filled up there? Did he know that during that period the enemies of liberty and the enemies of Ireland were in power, and that it was with their own political supporters and partisans that they filled up the judicial situations in Ireland? Was he aware that persons had been made judges in Ireland for no other reason than because they had voted for the Legislative Union, and with no other qualification to fit them for the office? Did he know that during twenty years, promotion at the Irish Bar was withheld from any man that signed a petition in favour of Catholic Emancipation? But when the persons which such a system had promoted to the bench retired from it—when Lord Chief Justice Downes, Mr. Baron George, and others of that stamp left it, and when men of business and professional eminence were placed upon it, it was thought by him (Mr. *O'Connell*), and by others, that justice would at length be properly administered in Ireland. He was sorry to say that such anticipations had not been fulfilled. He was willing to make every allowance—he was not for going too far—but Europe and European civilization should be made aware of the fact, that there existed no confidence in the administration of justice in Ireland. Was it consistent with that unsullied purity which ought to belong to the judicial character, that judges should have their families quartered upon the public purse, and that, as regular as the quarter came round, their applications should be made to the Treasury for payment? His Majesty's present ministers had selected from

amongst their most inveterate enemies an individual to fill a judicial situation in Ireland (that of Chief Baron of the Exchequer), and should they be surprised that that learned judge left the bench, to go and vote against ministers at one of the late elections? The learned individual to whom he alluded was about as old as the learned judge (Chief Baron O'Grady) whom he succeeded on the bench. He was undoubtedly a man of talent, but of the strongest political feelings—so strong, indeed, that they induced him to go from the judicial bench to vote against the friends of his Majesty's ministers. They had also appointed Mr. Doherty Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas in Ireland. It might be said, perhaps, that he (Mr. O'Connell) entertained strong personal feelings against that learned individual. He was sure that no one who knew him would say so; but this he would say of Chief Justice Doherty, that he had a great deal of common sense, and that he managed himself upon the bench, with only one or two exceptions, much better than any of his brother judges. But then Mr. Doherty never had fifteen briefs in any one term during his life, and yet they made him a Chief Justice. He had already glanced at the mode in which judges, and the relations of judges, were paid and remunerated in Ireland. The subject was one that he thought was well worthy the consideration of the first Reformed Parliament. It was very well to talk about the independence of judges. It was true that they were independent of fear, but were they independent of hope? They could not take them off the bench, but they might still further reward them; they could not un-judge them, but they might enrich them and their families. Under such circumstances, that House would not be doing justice to the country, unless it passed a law (he would not say that such a law was wanted in England, as he did not know the state of things here; but he would assert that it was absolutely essential in Ireland to restore a confidence in the administration of justice, there) enacting that there should be no such mode as that which existed for paying judges. They should not see the Government giving briefs to judges' sons who had no other clients—they should not see the Government employing a judge's sons and relations when no other persons thought them worth employing in the most trivial causes—they should not see judicial independence thus bartered for at the public

expense. There was another branch of the administration of justice in Ireland that he thought the people of Ireland had much to complain of—he meant the jury system in that country. Did they think that the people of Ireland should be content with the jury system that existed there? The noble Lord (Lord Althorp) had promised him in the last Session, that the Government would support the Jury Bill in the House of Lords; but the Government broke their word on that occasion—the promise was not kept. And what was that Bill to give to Ireland? It merely went to extend to Ireland that which had been law in England for the last seven years. They talked of the Union, and of the benefit that it was to Ireland, but why, he would ask, did they refuse it the benefit of the Union in that instance. Why did they not make the same law in Ireland that they made law in England? Was he to be told that such a law was not necessary in Ireland—that it was not required there—that the administration of justice in that country was so absolutely pure—that party passions and political feelings interfered so little to corrupt its source or impede its progress, that such a fair mode of selecting a Special Jury as that of the ballot, which had now been in existence for seven years in England, had not been demanded on account of the excellent mode of selecting jurors at present practised in Ireland? But the law of last year, which was indeed a poor boon, for it was not to come into operation for another year, was rejected. Poor, however, as it was, and though the remedy which it would afford was at best but a prospective one, it would, had it been passed, have been productive of beneficial effects, for bad jurors would have ceased their malpractices, seeing that the time would be near at hand when they would be responsible to the public for their conduct. But, spite of the promise of the noble Lord, that law was thrown out in the House of Lords. He had another objection to urge against the jury system in Ireland, as it affected the administration of justice in that country—he alluded to the power which the Crown had of regulating the selection of juries there. He had been himself a living witness of the abuse. He knew of a case where, out of a panel of upwards of 800 names, not above twenty could be taken to find the simple fact that, in the instance of a man who had been ridden down by twenty lancers, and who then was taken prisoner and committed to

prison because he had been so ridden down—twenty could not be found, he repeated, to find that in such a case a common assault had been committed. The hon. and learned gentleman then complained of the great power enjoyed by the Crown in the selection of jurors. By the ancient Statute Law the Crown could not permanently challenge a juror; but the judges soon arranged this. The Crown could set a juror aside; and, in Ireland, at least, this was in practice equivalent to a permanent challenge, because it was the custom, supposing the panel to be exhausted, not to read over the names of those set aside, but to order the Sheriff to enlarge the panel. The practice of packing juries on this principle was carried to an amazing extent in Ireland. They all, he said, read with affright of the crimes committed by the peasantry in Ireland; but were they to be astonished at it when they knew of the mode in which justice was administered in that country? Who did they think was the foreman upon the jury in Dublin, who, the other day, there tried Messrs. Costello and Reynolds for an alleged offence in regard to the tithe system? The foreman was a gentleman who had not very long since figured before a committee of that House—a Mr. Long, a coach-maker in Dublin, a furious partisan of that faction of Ireland which hated the present Government, no doubt, but hated the people still more. He would quote as instances, in corroboration of his arguments of the Crown's challenging jurors, the practice at the late assizes at Mullingar, and at Cork. These were, he said, the complaints that he had to make on the part of Ireland. They had no confidence in the bench there. The juries were selected from the bitter enemies of the country, and the present Government had instituted the greatest number of prosecutions that any Government had ever instituted in that country. He might be accused of agitating Ireland, but the agitation and the discontent of Ireland were to be laid at the door of that Government which had instituted such countless prosecutions, and that had conducted them in a spirit worthy of the Star Chamber itself. Was it not enough to send the proprietor of the *Waterford Chronicle* to gaol for twelve months, together with the imposition of a pecuniary fine, without sending the printer of that paper, for the same offence, to prison; thus consigning to punishment the man who had only acted as a mechanical agent in disseminating the alleged libel, and who

would have been as ready to set up, in the way of his trade, an eulogium upon the Church in Ireland, as he had been to set up an attack upon it, or upon the Irish Government? Was it just that such a man should have been sent to rot in a prison? It was the Government that had commenced the agitation with regard to the tithe system, by endeavouring to put down the public meetings on that subject. They had endeavoured to do so by a construction of the law of conspiracy that would never have been endured in England. There was, as all good lawyers knew, nothing so doubtful as the law with regard to conspiracy. The words of one of our writers on the subject was, that there were few things so doubtful as that portion of the Common Law under which the combination of several persons together became illegal. In fact, the thing was so exceedingly doubtful that it was laid down by the late Lord Ellenborough that nothing but the evidence of something false—*falsi*, of some falsehood, would render a combination of the kind illegal. It was true that that decision had been since overturned, for, in this country, the judges made the law, but at all events the circumstance showed that there was nothing more doubtful than the law as it related to conspiracy, seeing that the first judges in the land differed as to what it was; and yet this was the law that the Government of Ireland strained to the most unwarrantable extent to achieve its purposes! Would it be believed that the Government of Ireland preferred under that law indictments against persons for exciting to conspiracy? Would it be credited that the printer of the *Tipperary Free Press* had been arrested three times in the same day, and held to bail for articles "tending to excite to conspiracy"? Conspiracy was itself a constructive crime—the exciting to conspiracy, the second construction of it, under which the Government indicted, was carrying it to an extent that had never been heard of before, and that assuredly would not have been borne in this country. It was, however, good law enough for Ireland, perhaps, and it was well worthy of the Whig Reforming Government of that country. Another of the evils of which Ireland had to complain, was the Grand Jury system. They were told that that system was to be revised, but it was not until it was loudly called for, that a remedy was about to be applied to that monstrous evil. They had yet to see whether the remedy to be proposed would be an

efficient one. The power possessed of imposing taxes by that self-appointed body was immense—a body, the majority of which generally consisted of the agents of absentees; and it was well known in Ireland that there were good roads in the neighbourhood of Grand Jurors' residences, while it was generally the reverse elsewhere. The taxation imposed by that body reached the enormous amount of £940,000 a year, the sixteenth part of the entire landed revenue of Ireland, and 1s. 5d. on the entire rental of the country. It was in the hands of such men—men connected with one party in Ireland, that such enormous power was vested; it was from amongst that body that Sheriffs were generally selected; and here he had to remark that there was but one Catholic sheriff appointed this year. The grievance of the Grand Jury system as it existed was acknowledged by the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Stanley) himself, he having already stated that he had a remedy to propose, it was, therefore, a grievance that could not be attributed to the agitators in that country. The right hon. gentleman, he believed, intended to bring in a Bill to remedy that system, but unless that bill was founded on the principle of representation, the proposed remedy would be inefficient. He was ready to maintain that no man ought to be taxed, unless through his representatives; and upon such grounds, he would contend that the office of Grand Juror should be made elective. No doubt they would vote this Address to-night by a large majority, and then, forsooth, they would tell the people of Ireland to look to the Reformed House of Commons for justice and protection. Corporations constituted another great grievance in Ireland. He was sure the right hon. member for Cambridge (Mr. Spring Rice) would not deny the fact—he was sure he would not deny that they possessed enormous and unjust monopolies. The Reform Bill had, no doubt, done much to remedy the abuses of corporations, but to reach the root of the evil they must go still deeper. The Corporation of Cork, for instance, one of those close corporations, possessed a revenue of upwards of £70,000 a year—a revenue greater than the cost of the general government of the United States of America. The bigotry and intolerance of those corporations were well known. Though Catholics had been for years admissible to them, few had been admitted in Cork, and none had ever been allowed to discharge the duties of any

of its officers. The Corporation of Dublin, too, continued a close monopoly, from which Catholics were systematically excluded. They might taunt Catholics with intolerance and bigotry, but he would defy them to produce any such instances of either intolerance or bigotry, in a Catholic assembly, under a Catholic constitutional government. True it was, that in Catholic States, where the Church was wedded to the State, the national offspring were intolerance and exclusion; but under Catholic Liberal governments, no such intolerance as that exhibited by the Corporation of Dublin was to be found—into which corporation, though Catholics had been admissible for forty years, not one had been admitted; bigotry thus proving itself superior to law and Parliament. It might be said, that it was wasting the public time to talk of corporations; but let it be remembered that corporations elected sheriffs, and in Dublin the sheriffs had the selection of jurors in the four courts there, for the trial of the most important causes, civil and criminal. Now, no man was appointed sheriff in Dublin, who did not give a pledge to the cause of bigotry, by publicly giving a toast that was considered the watchword and the party pledge of the factious supporters of that cause. He had himself drunk that toast, it was true, and he hoped that it would be universally drunk throughout Ireland. He had drunk it for Repeal, and he was ready to do so again; but the members of the Corporation of Dublin drank it as the shibboleth of a party. He drank it as a pledge for Repeal. He did not, in what he had said, mean to assert that the right hon. gentleman was entirely answerable for the present state of things in Ireland—of course he would not make him answerable for the sins of preceding governments—but this he would say, that all the crimes which were now being committed in that country must, in justice, be laid at the door of the Whigs. The Whigs had always proved the bitterest enemies of Ireland. It was the Whigs that violated the Treaty of Limerick. The Whigs of the present day were only treading in the steps of the same party which had gone before them. To the Whigs he would say, that, by the course they were now pursuing, they adopted, and rendered themselves answerable for, all the crimes which might take place in Ireland. Instead of doing justice to that unfortunate country, they were now calling for increased powers to enable them to still further sink it down

and oppress it. Let them but do justice to Ireland—let them put down the cry for a Repeal of the Union, by showing that it was unnecessary—let them show by deeds, and not by words, that they meant well to that wretched country. Why did they not do that? Why did they not propose such measures, instead of calling on the first Reform Parliament for more bayonets and more guns, for the cannon and the musket, in order to crush the people of Ireland to the earth? The next thing he had to complain of was the armed police of Ireland. It might be right that the police there, as in this country, should, for self-defence, possess some species of arms, but was it right that they should go armed with deadly weapons, even to fairs and markets? Were they to go about with arms in their hands, with which, when the least resistance was offered to them, they could spread deadly slaughter around them? Such a police force, so armed, would not be endured in this country. He protested against the principle of arming them with deadly weapons. The Government made them do so; but the result would be, that the slightest resistance—even an accidental opposition, would be punished with death, for the only weapons they had were deadly ones. Why did they not in England, instead of a staff, put into the constable's hands a musket and a bayonet? Why not arm him with a loaded carbine, so that, in the case of any resistance, or even accident, which might occur in a crowd, he might inflict death not only upon those who opposed him, but also upon those who happened to come within his reach? But he was talking to little purpose. He knew how little the Government cared for the blood of the Irish. He knew with what sovereign contempt they listened to those who taunted them on the subject. But he put it to every man of feeling and humanity, whether the constabulary ought to continue armed, so that every offence, instead of imprisonment or capture, should be punished on the spot with death? When the Government put the police thus armed in the way of resistance, they promoted crime. Another thing was, arming the yeomanry. He did not believe that anything had ever occurred more dangerous than arming the yeomanry. There had been an increase of crime in Ireland since that had taken place; but crime was not yet at its acme. The people still had confidence—they still placed reliance upon those caluminated agitators, who were more anxious than

the Government to put down crime. The Government had armed the yeomanry in Ireland, and had increased them from 22,000 to 31,000. He knew what had once happened, and he cautioned the Government that the people of the North of Ireland were to a man armed. The North was the quietest part of Ireland, yet it was but a sleeping volcano. There was a tremendous force there, ready to enter into a servile war. The moment that the Government distributed arms, the Catholic population thought it necessary to arm themselves for their own protection. The slaughter of the Catholics by the Orangemen had ceased two years ago ; but he knew, and said, that it would increase on arming the yeomanry. What was the consequence ? The people established penny clubs, and as soon as five-and-twenty shillings were collected, a musket was purchased. This process of arming was going on to a frightful extent, and a magistrate (he was ready to give his name, if necessary) had told him, that he had, within the last six weeks, seen 1,000 of the Catholic peasantry perfectly well armed. What could all the powers of the Government do to prevent this species of arming ? What Act of Parliament could they pass that would discover the secret of an Irish peasant ? Nothing was so much hated in Ireland as an informer, and no money would induce the people to become such. But the Government would take more power. They would prevent the agitators, who sincerely desired to put down crime. He did not ask them to believe him ; they might believe him if they pleased, but he scorned to ask them ; they might gag those agitators with Algerine Acts ; they might immure them in prisons by a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act—they might shed their blood upon the scaffold, but, under that very scaffold, they would see the peasantry of Ireland display those very arms which the Government had been the means of putting into their hands. He warned the Government by the instance which he gave them of the North of Ireland. They might depend upon it, that the spirit which prevailed there would pass elsewhere, and the combination of ignorance and crime would be better organized. There would be, not a moral revolution or a political revolution, but a revolution of the sword in Ireland. In the meantime, the Government was suppressing the legal channels of discussion. The tithe meetings were suppressed, and yet were any of those

meetings half or one-third so numerous as the meetings of the Birmingham Political Union? With one exception, he had never heard a word which could be construed as threatening language. But, at all events, whatever interpretation might be put upon words, he defied any man to show him an example of anything of the kind; and yet the Government suppressed all those meetings. He would ask the hon. gentleman who had seconded this Address, with a degree of modesty which he had always observed to accompany talent, what he thought of suppressing meetings which assembled, too numerous perhaps, for he was not an advocate of too large assemblages of the people—but at which no breach of the peace occurred, and which separated quietly, as soon as they had accomplished the object for which they had met? More power the hon. gentleman wanted, but if the hon. gentleman knew as much of Ireland as he did, the hon. gentleman would be a greater agitator than he was. Although he knew it was in many cases absurd to say, *post hoc, propter hoc*, yet it was an undoubted fact, that whenever agitation ceased in Ireland, crime had extended itself—and that whenever agitation was extended, crime had ceased. Some great and crying grievances in Ireland remained to be enumerated. Was the Vestry Case no grievance? Was it no grievance that seventy-five Protestants in a parish should have the power of punishing, by taxation, 12,000 Catholics? Was it no grievance that the Catholic inhabitants of a parish ten miles from Waterford, in which Lord Duncannon was the only Protestant resident, should be thus treated? Was it no grievance that the vestry might impose upon the Catholic parishioners whatever tax it pleased, for the Communion wine and other purposes? He would mention a flagrant instance of this imposition. In the parish of St. Andrew, in Dublin, the Protestant inhabitants voted £300 to the two curates in addition to their salary. This was in direct contradiction to the law, and as no person could appeal against the assessment without giving securities to the amount of £100, two gentlemen gave the necessary securities, and brought forward an appeal, which was tried in the King's Bench, and the assessment was quashed; of course it would be supposed there was an end of the matter. No such thing. The costs of resisting the appeal were charged upon the parish, and the £300 were re-voted again. As the

party who appealed was obliged to pay his own costs, and as the costs of resisting the appeal were charged upon the parish, the parish very wisely thought it best to submit quietly to the imposition, and not to contest the matter further. Was that no grievance? Was there any other country in the world where there would be no redress for it? Before the Government asked for more force let them remedy that evil. Why should the Catholics pay for the sacramental elements and other articles for the worship of the Protestants? Why should they pay for the building and repair of Protestant churches? There was a parish called Cappado, in the neighbourhood of Dublin, where there was but one Protestant; and a church was forced upon him in spite of himself, at the expense of the Catholics, although the Protestant presented two petitions to that House, stating that his Catholic neighbours and himself were on excellent terms, and that he had a pew at Maynooth church, which was near enough, and there was no necessity for a new church. Such were the acts which his Majesty's Government required additional powers to enforce. Let them first do justice. Why should the Catholics be compelled to pay Protestant clergy? Why should the Catholics be compelled to build Protestant churches? Before the ascendancy of the Protestants in Ireland, there was a superabundance of churches in that country, but the Protestants had sold them, or let them go to ruin; and now they called upon the Catholics to repair the consequences of their neglect and misconduct. Was there any agitation equal to this? Look at the temporalities of the Church, and say if anything could be more monstrous, if any effect of agitation could be so pernicious as this system? The living of the brother-in-law of Earl Grey had been estimated to bring in nearly £30,000 annually; there were 96,000 acres of ground belonging to it. Was this paid by members of the Church of England? No; the Presbyterian and the Catholic—worshippers in a different form—were compelled, by this most monstrous system, to pay this divine. They were 8,000,000 Catholics, and there were 1,000,000 of Protestants; at least it was said so. Well, there might be 1,000,000, but he did not believe it. Was it to be borne that they were thus to be treated? What he wanted to know was this—was the Church to be cut down? They were agitators, it was said, but their agitation was of a clear character—it was of a different

sort from that which was the real source of the distress and the insubordination, and the what-not. He did not know that it was distinguished by two epaulettes, or by troops to cut down the people. Force was the cry. This had ever been the Government conduct. For forty years, let it be remembered, force had been increasingly talked of to Scotland; but Scotch broadswords were unsheathed—Scotchmen knew their rights—they rallied—they united—they struggled—and they succeeded. He did not ask for supremacy; he wanted no supremacy then, and if talked of hereafter, he would resist it; but he did strongly contend against the present unfair and harassing system, and insisted on its abolition. The Irish wanted that tithes should be extinguished, as the Government had said they should be. He knew they afterwards added that they did not mean it, but he wanted them to do what they said. He wished to know whether tithes were to continue, or whether any mitigation was to take place? Was it to be a '74, or a *rasé*? Were the Catholics to continue to pay the bishops and clergy whom they never saw? There was no weapon for agitation like this grievance. The Government treated the Catholics worse than the Turks treated the Greeks. The Turks even, cruel and harsh as they were, despised such oppression towards the Greeks; they never insisted on their support of the Mahometan faith. The ministers, however, of England were worse than the Turks. He meant to detain the House a little longer on the subject of absenteeism. When speaking of crime, he wished they would look to absenteeism—to the rents that were constantly going out of the country. Would they litigate that? He would tell them they could not. Did ministers wish to push them on to a servile war; would they compel them, with the devotion of a Falkland, to join criminals because greater criminals were arrayed against them? They called out "force." Why not begin? Why not postpone the threat, and do justice to Ireland; and then, if agitation continued, if insubordination showed itself in midnight plunder and outrage, call out for "force." Wait for this—try it, and then, if it failed, take the excuse, and he would support the cry. He wanted nothing but justice for Ireland, and justice this country had never rendered to her. The Speech which had been delivered had a prototype in one in the

reign of Elizabeth, when Raleigh slaughtered the garrison of Merbick. The cry for power had ever been the cry of the Government of this country, and under it were committed those English crimes which were written in the blood of Ireland. Strafford, the prototype of the right hon. gentleman, acted no otherwise; he confiscated the property of two entire provinces in Ireland, and when Juries refused to convict, he sent them for two years into Dublin Castle. In the reign of James II, 8,000,000 acres of land were forfeited in defending the right of his father. In the present day the same part was acted—the scene was somewhat changed—the actors were different—but their conduct was substantially the same. There was no real amelioration—no change, nor any intended, as was proved in that Address which he had designated as bloody and brutal. What he wanted was, a General Committee, that that Address might be duly considered and discussed line by line. If that were really a Reformed House—if justice to Ireland was really their object, they would not refuse it. Justice had not been done to Ireland by the Reform Bill. He strongly doubted if he had acted rightly in supporting so strenuously the English Bill. He had received hints from several quarters upon the subject. But he had supported it, and that unflinchingly. Ireland, in her Bill, was not used anything like so well as England. The blunders were solely attributable to Government. The Duke of Wellington took away the franchise; the ministers found that injustice when they came into office, and they sanctioned it. It was no idle motive which made him anxious to introduce so many of his family into that House. He too well knew the incurable ignorance which there prevailed on the real state and wants of his country, and he was determined to tell them trumpet-tongued to all. The number of Repealers returned would at least give the Government some insight into the sentiments of the people on that subject. He wanted a Committee of that House—he declared that that declaration of war against the people of Ireland should be modified. Let the ministers give them a strong and emphatic declaration of intended justice to Ireland—and if then they applied for force, he would support them. But the Speech promised nothing. There were still several points untouched, there were the prosecutions, to which he would not then advert, and twenty other

topics on which he could say much, but he would abandon the intention. He knew he spoke in vain—he felt he made appeals which would fall unheeded on their ears. He should now know of what that Reformed House was composed—he should see the high and independent members for England voting for “more power.” It was of no use his pleading before a Reformed Parliament in behalf of Ireland—it was vain to lift up his voice in her cause—for he was sure his answer would be a laugh at himself and a laugh at his country. Were then the grievances of Ireland not real? It was well known they were real, heavy, and intolerable; and if so, was it not the duty of the Government to redress them? He would defy anyone who had heard his words—who had taken notice of his statements—to instance one case in which he had aggravated a grievance; and he would defy anyone to find a people, look where he might, who had agitated, or who had been guilty of midnight outrage, of insubordination, and reckless crime, without real grievances. He had done—he thanked the House for the patience with which they had listened to him—they were the last hope, the last refuge of his country. To them he could only look for relief from the autocracy of the right hon. gentleman; from that “*hoc volo, sic jubeo, stet pro ratione voluntas*” to which his country was subjected. Whether Government was to be administered by the right hon. gentleman alone—whether all was to continue to be concentrated in his self-sufficiency—they must decide. Seven years of misrule had been endured by Ireland—Government had been carried on on no other plan than that of Tamerlane; and the most outrageous cruelties had been inflicted on a prostrate people. For himself, he laboured under one calamity—that of a supposed personal hostility to the right hon. gentleman opposite. Had he—could he have any such feeling towards him? They had never come together, and no such feeling was in existence. Heaven knew that he had no personal motive. There was no pursuit of his in which the right hon. gentleman did or could, or, he presumed, would wish, to impede him. He spoke of him merely as the enemy of Ireland. He looked at the accumulation of crime—at the quantity of blood increasing as it flowed in his unhappy country, and he still found that right hon. gentleman, the Lord of the Ascendent, dictating to the ministry the measures to be pursued. These

things he wanted altered. He asked for the real grievances of Ireland to be redressed, and then he would go any lengths the ministers might require.

Mr. O'Connell concluded by moving, as an Amendment, for a Committee of the whole House to consider His Majesty's Speech.

SIR ROBERT PEEL

PEEL was, perhaps, more essentially and exclusively a Parliamentary speaker than any other British statesman. The four volumes of his published speeches contain no speech delivered elsewhere than in the House of Commons. Disraeli called him, not altogether as a compliment, the greatest member of Parliament that ever lived. His method may strike a critical reader as ponderous. But his two main objects were to explain and to persuade. Of rhetorical effect he was quite careless. He aimed at answering arguments, at marshalling evidence, at clearing up obscurities, and at making his points clear to ordinary minds. He differed from Cobden in addressing himself more particularly to the Parliamentary situation, and to the kind of reasoning which it demanded. He was in fact a versatile debater, and a singularly adroit tactician, while at the same time his motives were always sincere, and his intellectual honesty conspicuous. He was a Conservative in the sense that he started with a strong predisposition against change, and yet he never closed his intelligence against the admission of reasons or the reception of knowledge. It was so with the resumption of cash payments after the war. It was so with the emancipation of the Catholics. It was so with the removal of the Corn Laws. Peel never attempted to lead the way. He was no pioneer. His view of Conservatism was that it should study to ascertain the precise moment at which reforms might safely be adopted. He was not for making changes by instalments, but for waiting until thorough acquaintance with them, and with the safeguards they required, made it safe to adopt them entirely. Of all public men he was the least timid. Even the Duke of Wellington gave up resistance to proposals he distrusted and disliked when he thought that further opposition would produce serious disturbance.

The illustrious soldier could afford to say that he shrank from the alternative of anarchy or civil war. Peel, though a man of acute sensibility, braved any amount of obloquy, any risk of misunderstanding and detraction, when once he was convinced that a case had been made out for a new policy. He did not seek to justify himself upon the principle that the King's Government must be carried on. He knew very well that it always would be, whether he remained in office or not. He seemed rather to ask himself the question what could be the use of Parliament if debate was never to produce conviction. In 1831 Reform came suddenly, and he opposed it stoutly, though he recognised to the full all its consequences when it had been carried. Catholic Emancipation and Free Trade came very gradually. They were argued for years by men of the highest ability and competence before they were accepted by the Legislature. Peel exhausted the objections to them in controversy and debate before he slowly and reluctantly admitted that the reasons in their favour were still stronger than those against them. If he sacrificed his party to his country, he sacrificed also himself.

Peel was the creator of the Conservative party. His idea may be said to have been that the middle class, represented by the House of Commons after 1832, could be used as a barrier against revolution, quite independently of the House of Lords. The Whigs, he thought, would be at the mercy of British Radicals and Irish Repealers. If the old Tories were transformed by judicious management into moderate and reasonable Conservatives, they might establish a predominance in politics which would be stronger and less assailable than when they depended upon aristocratic support. Before the catastrophe of 1846 much progress was made towards the fulfilment of this scheme, though it was interrupted by William the Fourth's dismissal of Lord Melbourne in 1834. Peel showed on that occasion as the leader of a minority in office, remarkable energy, courage, and skill. Even after the General Election

he continued to struggle against a majority which had undergone considerable diminution. He had, however, been forced into a position which he would not voluntarily have taken up, and which was at variance with his theory of adaptation to a reformed House of Commons. Had Lord Melbourne's Government been left to fight their own battles in Parliament, Peel might have anticipated by some years the victory of 1841. There never was by nature a more constitutional Minister. If he was driven into courses which apparently tended to exalt the prerogative and depress the representative principle, the circumstances in which he found himself are more accountable than he.

Resignation of Ministers

House of Commons, June 29th, 1846

MR. SPEAKER, I feel it to be my duty to avail myself of the earliest opportunity of notifying to this House that in consequence of the position of her Majesty's Government, and especially in consequence of the vote to which the House came on the night of Thursday last, refusing to give to her Majesty's servants those powers which they deem necessary for the repression of outrage and the protection of life in Ireland, they have felt it to be their duty to tender their resignation to a gracious Sovereign. The resolution to tender that resignation was unanimously agreed to by her Majesty's servants, and adopted without hesitation. If I had any complaint to prefer with respect to the course pursued by the House, this is not the occasion on which I should make it. It is impossible not to feel that the occasion of a complete change in the councils of a vast empire, affecting, for weal or for woe, many millions of the Queen's subjects in nearly all parts of the habitable globe, is an important, I need almost say, a solemn occasion. It is not upon such an occasion that one word ought to be uttered by a minister of the Crown, acting in homage to constitutional principles, that can by possibility provoke party controversy. Such a controversy would be wholly unsuited to the magnitude of the occasion; and, I must add, that to provoke any such controversy would be entirely at variance

with the personal feelings which influence me in addressing the House. Those feelings would rather prompt me to acknowledge with gratitude the many occasions on which, speaking of the great body of the gentlemen who sit on this side of the House, they have given to my colleagues and myself, at a period antecedent to the present session, their generous and cordial support. They would prompt me also to acknowledge with gratitude the disinterested aid which we have not unfrequently received from gentlemen opposite, in oblivion of party differences. I trust, therefore, that nothing will escape from me in explaining the course her Majesty's Government have thought it their duty to pursue, that can run the risk of provoking the controversy which I deprecate.

Her Majesty, Sir, has been graciously pleased to accept our tender of resignation and her servants now only hold their offices until their successors shall have been appointed. I said, Sir, that if I had any complaints to prefer, this is not the occasion on which I would prefer them. But I have no complaints to make. I did not propose the measures connected with the commercial policy of the empire, which have been so severely contested, without foreseeing the great probability that, whether those measures should succeed or fail, they must cause the dissolution of the Government which introduced them. And, therefore, I rather rejoice that her Majesty's ministers have been relieved from all difficulty, by an early and unambiguous decision of the House of Commons; for I do not hesitate to say, that even if that decision had been in our favour on the particular vote, I would not have consented to hold office upon sufferance, or through the mere evasion of parliamentary difficulties. It is not for the public interest that a government should remain in office when it is unable to give practical effect to the measures it believes necessary for the national welfare; and I certainly do not think it probable in the position in which her Majesty's Government were placed by the withdrawal—perhaps the natural withdrawal—of the confidence of many of those who heretofore had given it support, that even if the late vote had been in our favour, ministers would have been able, with credit to themselves, and with advantage to the interests of the country, to conduct the administration of public affairs.

We have advised her Majesty to accept our resignation at

once, without adopting that alternative to which we might have resorted, namely, recommending to the Crown the exercise of its prerogative, and the dissolution of the present Parliament. I do not hesitate to avow, speaking with a frankness that I trust will offend no one, that if her Majesty's Government had failed in carrying, in all their integrity, the main measures of commercial policy which it was my duty to recommend, there is no exertion that I would not have made—no sacrifice that I would not have incurred—in order to ensure the ultimate success of those measures, or at any rate to give the country an opportunity of pronouncing its opinion on the subject. For such a purpose, I should have felt justified in advising dissolution; because I think the continuance of doubt and uncertainty on such important matters, would have been a greater evil than the resort to a constitutional mode of ascertaining the opinion of the nation. But there has been fortunately no necessity for a dissolution of Parliament upon that ground. Those who dissented most strongly from our commercial policy withdrew all factious and unseemly opposition, and protesting against our measures, they have finally allowed them to pass. Those measures having thus become the law, I do not feel that we should be justified, for any subordinate consideration, for the mere interests of government or party, in advising the exercise of the prerogative to which I have referred, and the dissolution of Parliament. I feel very strongly that no administration is justified in advising the exercise of that prerogative, unless there be a reasonable presumption, a strong moral conviction, indeed, that after dissolution they would be enabled to administer the affairs of the country through the support of a party sufficiently powerful to carry their measures. I do not think a dissolution justifiable for the purpose merely of strengthening a party. The power of dissolution is a great instrument in the hands of the Crown; and it would have a tendency to blunt the instrument if it were employed without grave necessity. If the purpose were to enable the country to decide whether ministers had been justified in proposing the measures of commercial policy brought forward at the beginning of the session, those measures having passed into law, I do not think such a purpose alone would be a sufficient ground for a dissolution. There ought also to be a strong presumption that, after a new election

there would be returned to this House a party with strength sufficient to enable the Government, by their support, to carry on that system of public policy of which it approved. I do not mean a support founded upon mere temporary sympathy, or a support founded upon concurrence in one great question of domestic policy, however important. We ought not, in my opinion, to dissolve without a full assurance that we should have the support of a powerful party united with us by accordance in general views and principles of government. In the present state and division of party, and after all that has occurred, I do not entertain a confident hope that a dissolution would give us that support. I think, too, that after the excitement that has taken place—after the stagnation of trade that has necessarily followed our protracted discussions on the Corn-laws and the tariff, it is not an advantageous period for dissolution, but that the country should be allowed an interval of tranquillity and repose. We have, therefore, on these several grounds, preferred instant resignation to the alternative of dissolution.

The question on which we were defeated, was one connected with Ireland. I should, indeed, deeply lament that defeat, if it could be thought that the measure we proposed for the repression of outrage in Ireland was an indication that her Majesty's servants held any opinion in regard to the policy to be pursued towards that country different from that which I declared towards the close of last session. To the opinions I then avowed—opinions which had practical effect given to them by the measures we proposed—by such measures, for example, as the charitable bequests acts, and for the vote for the enlarged endowment of the College of Maynooth—I now profess my entire and unqualified adherence. We brought forward the measure against which the House has recently decided, not under the belief that resistance to the contagious spread of crime, and a vigorous repression by law of offences disgracing some parts of the country, were in themselves calculated permanently to improve the social condition of Ireland; but we thought that the restoration and maintenance of order were necessary preliminaries to the success of ulterior legislation for the improvement of the condition of the people. The House, however, has decided otherwise, and I am not bound to arraign that decision. I only deprecate the

inference that, because we proposed that bill, which some called a measure of coercion, but which we considered a measure necessary for the protection of life, our views in regard to the policy to be pursued towards Ireland have undergone a change. Speaking for myself, I do not hesitate to avow the opinion, that there ought to be established a complete equality of municipal, civil, and political rights, as between Ireland and Great Britain. By complete equality I do not mean—because I know that is impossible—a technical and literal equality in every particular respect. In these matters, as in matters of more sacred import, it may be that “the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life,” and I speak of the spirit and not of the letter in which our legislation, in regard to franchise and privilege, ought to be conducted. My meaning is, that there should be real and substantial equality of political and civil rights, so that no person, viewing Ireland with an unbiassed eye, and comparing the civil franchise of Ireland with those of England or of Scotland, shall be able to say with truth, that a different rule has been adopted towards Ireland, and that on account of hostility, or suspicion, or distrust, civil freedom is there curtailed and mutilated. That is what I mean by equality in legislating for Ireland in respect to civil franchise and political rights.

With regard to the executive administration in Ireland, I think the favour of the Crown ought to be bestowed, and the confidence of the Crown reposed, without reference to religious distinctions. It may appear that we have not practically acted on that principle, but it is not because we repudiate it or deny its justice. When we have taken the opportunity of manifesting confidence in any member of the Roman Catholic body, I cannot say that justice has been done to our motives, nor has the position of the individual accepting a mark of favour from us been such as to encourage other Roman Catholics to receive similar proofs of confidence. Those who succeed us in the Government of Ireland may have better means of carrying that principle into execution; and if they act upon it and bestow the favour and confidence of the Crown without religious differences, they shall hear no complaint from me on that ground.

Then, Sir, with respect to the general spirit in which our legislation for Ireland should be conducted. Adhering to all

the opinions which I have heretofore expressed on the greater and more important points of Irish policy, I am at the same time prepared to co-operate with those who feel the present social conditions of the people in respect to the tenure of land, and to the relation between landlord and tenant, to be one that deserves our immediate though most cautious consideration. It may be impossible, by legislation, to apply any instant remedy to the state of affairs which unfortunately exists in that country; but even if the benefit be necessarily remote, that very circumstance ought to operate as an additional stimulus to us to apply our minds without delay to the consideration of a subject of equal difficulty and importance. On all those matters connected with the tenure of land and the relation of landlord and tenant—I would uphold the rights of property. There may be occasionally a seeming temporary advantage in disregarding these rights—but the ultimate and permanent benefit of strictly maintaining them greatly preponderates. The course we have taken during this session of extreme pressure of public business is a sufficient proof that there has been no disinclination on our part to consider the amendment of the law in respect to the tenure and improvement of landed property in Ireland, nor will there be any disinclination to co-operate in our private capacities with those on whom the public trust committed to us is about to be devolved.

Sir, I have reason to believe that the noble lord, the member for the City of London, has been commanded by the Queen to repair to her Majesty for the purpose of rendering his assistance to the formation of a government. I presume the general principle on which the government to be formed by the noble Lord will act, so far as its commercial policy is concerned, will be the continual application of those principles which tend to produce a freer intercourse with other countries. If that policy be pursued, as I confidently expect it will, I shall feel it to be my duty to give to the Government, in the furtherance of it, my cordial support. If other countries choose to buy in the dearest market, such an option on their part constitutes no reason why we should not be permitted to buy in the cheapest. I trust the Government of the noble Lord will not resume the policy which they and we have felt most inconvenient, namely the haggling with foreign countries about reciprocal

concessions, instead of taking that independent course which we believe to be conducive to our own interests. Let us trust to the influence of public opinion in other countries—let us trust that our example, with the proof of practical benefit we derive from it, will at no remote period insure their adoption of the principles on which we have acted, rather than defer indefinitely that which *per se* is advantageous to ourselves, in the hope of obtaining by delay equivalent concessions from other countries. Sir, when I express the confident hope that these general principles will influence the commercial policy of the new Government, I do not advise that the adoption of them should overrule every moral consideration or should at once subject every species of production in this country to competition with other nations. I speak generally as to the tendency of our commercial policy. I trust that every step that is taken will be towards the relaxation of restriction upon trade. I, for one, shall not urge upon the Government a hasty and precipitate adoption of principles sound in themselves, if through the abrupt and sudden application of them, we incur the risk of a great derangement of the social system, I shall bear in mind that vast experiments have been recently made under the present administration—I shall bear in mind, also, that the surplus amount of public revenue is smaller than it ought to be, consistently with the permanent interests of the country. While, therefore, I offer a cordial support in enforcing those general principles of commercial policy which have received the sanction of Parliament in the present session, I shall not urge the Government to any such simultaneous and precipitate extension of them as may be either injurious to interests entitled from special circumstances to some degree of continued protection, or may incur the risk of deranging the financial system of the country. In delivering these opinions I am bound to say that I am rather indicating my own intentions and the course I shall individually pursue, than that I have had opportunity of conferring with others, and am authorized to speak their sentiments. I cannot doubt, however, that those who gave their cordial concurrence to the commercial measures which I have proposed, will be ready to give their general acquiescence and support to measures of a similar character when proposed by others.

Sir, I do not know that it is necessary that I should make

any other declarations as to the future than those I have already made. I wish to draw no invidious contrasts with preceding administrations: I wish to make no allusions in a hostile spirit; but I cannot surrender power without expressing the confident belief that, during the five years for which power has been committed to our hands neither the interests nor the honour of this country have been compromised. I can say with truth that, during that period the burden of taxation has been rendered more equal, and that the pressure which was unjust and severe on many classes of her Majesty's subjects has been greatly mitigated. I can say with truth, that many restrictions upon commerce injuriously affecting the trade of this country, have been removed. Without interfering with legitimate speculation, without paralysing, or at all deranging the credit of the State, stability has been given to the monetary systems of this country; and let me here acknowledge with gratitude the cordial support which (without reference to party distinctions) the measures I proposed with regard to the Bank of England, the joint-stock banks, and the private banks of this country, received in the year 1843. Sir, I trust also that the stability of our Indian Empire has not been weakened by the policy we have pursued; and that the glory and honour of the British arms both by sea and land in every part of the world have been maintained, not through our exertions but through the devoted gallantry of the soldiers and sailors of this country. Although there have been considerable reductions in the public burdens, yet I have the satisfaction of stating to the House, that the national defences both by sea and land have been greatly improved, and that the army and navy are in a most efficient state. I trust, likewise, that I may congratulate the House, that, notwithstanding a great diminution of the fiscal burdens of the empire, our finances are in a prosperous and a buoyant state, and that on the 5th of July next the return to be laid upon the table will prove that there has been an increased consumption of almost every article subject to custom and excise duties, and that general prosperity and the demand which it occasions have supplied the void to our finances that would otherwise have been created. Lastly, I can say with truth, that without any harsh enforcement of the law, without any curtailment of the liberty of the subject, or the freedom of the press, there has been, speaking at least of

Great Britain, as much of submission and obedience to the law, as at any period of our history. Nay, I will say more—that in consequence of greater command over the necessities and minor luxuries of life—in consequence, too, of confidence in the just administration of the law, and in the benevolent intentions of Parliament, there has been more content, less sedition and public crime, less necessity for the exercise of power for the repression of political disaffection or outrage, than was ever known at any antecedent period. I said “lastly,” but I have reserved one topic, for which I think, without any unseemly boast, or invidious comparison, I may claim credit for her Majesty’s councils—at least for that distinguished man, less conspicuous, perhaps, in debate, than some others, but fully as deserving of public honour and respect—on account of the exertions he has made for the maintenance of peace—I mean my noble friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. My noble friend has dared to avow that there is a moral obligation upon the Christian minister of a Christian country to exhaust every effort in the maintenance of peace, before incurring the risk, not to say the guilt, of war. But while he has not shrunk from the manly avowal of that opinion, I will, in justice to him, add this—and it is perfectly consistent with that opinion, as to the moral obligation of maintaining peace while peace can be maintained with honour—that there never was a minister less inclined to sacrifice any essential interest, or to abate anything from the dignity and honour of this country, even for the purpose of securing that inestimable blessing. Sir, I do confidently trust that we leave the foreign relations of this country in a satisfactory state—that, speaking not only of France, but of the other great powers of Europe, there is entire confidence in the honourable intentions of this country, and a real desire on the part of the governments of other powers to co-operate with us in the maintenance of peace. Sir, it is the spirit of mutual confidence on the part of public men, the ministers of great countries, which most facilitates the maintenance of general peace. Let it be remembered that we necessarily and frequently come in contact with France in various, and sometimes very distant, quarters of the world—that there are on both sides employed in the public service warm partisans, naturally, perhaps justly, jealous of the honour of their respective countries—that grounds of quarrel, small

in themselves, inflamed by the spirit of rivalry and keen sense of national honour might easily be fomented into the causes of war, desolating nations, unless the counsels of the great powers were presided over by ministers of comprehensive views, who, feeling peace to be the true interest of the civilized world, are determined that trifling disputes, and the excited passions of angry partisans, shall not involve their respective countries in the calamities of war.

Sir, if anything could have induced me to regret that decision on the part of the House, which terminates the existence of the Government, it would have been the wish that we could survive the day when intelligence might be received from the United States as to the result of our last attempt to adjust the differences with that country—differences which, unless speedily terminated, must probably involve both countries in the necessity of an appeal to arms. The House will probably recollect that, after we had offered to leave the dispute respecting the territory of the Oregon to arbitration, and that offer had been rejected, the President of the United States sent a message to the Congress, which led to discussions with regard to the termination of the convention entered into several years since, which provided for a temporary adjustment of our differences—at least for a temporary avoidance of quarrel—and enabled the two countries jointly to occupy the territory of the Oregon. The two Houses of the American Congress, advised the President of the United States to exercise his unquestionable power, and to signify to this country the desire of the United States to terminate after the lapse of a year the existing convention. They, however, added to that advice, which might, perhaps, otherwise have been considered of an unsatisfactory or hostile character, the declaration that they desired the notice for the termination of the convention to be given, in order that an amicable adjustment of the dispute between the two countries might therefore be facilitated. It appeared to us, that the addition of that conciliatory declaration—the expression of a hope that the termination of the convention might the more strongly impress upon the two countries the necessity of amicable adjustment—removed any barrier which diplomatic punctilios might have raised to a renewal by this country of the attempt to settle our difficulties with the United States. We did not hesitate, therefore,

within two days after receipt of that intelligence—we did not hesitate, although the offer of arbitration made by us had been rejected, to do that which, in the present state of the protracted dispute, it became essential to do—namely, not to propose renewed and lengthened negotiations, but to specify frankly and without reserve what were the terms on which we could consent to a partition of the country of the Oregon. Sir, the President of the United States met us in a corresponding spirit. Whatever might have been the expressions heretofore used by him, however strongly he might have been personally committed to the adoption of a different course, he most wisely and patriotically determined at once to refer our proposals to the Senate—that authority of the United States, whose consent is requisite for the conclusion of any negotiation of this kind, and the Senate, acting also in the same pacific spirit, has, I have the heartfelt satisfaction to state, at once advised acquiescence in the terms we offered. From the importance of the subject, and considering that this is the last day I shall have to address the House as a minister of the Crown, I may, perhaps, be allowed to state what are the proposals we made to the United States for the final settlement of the Oregon question. In order to prevent the necessity for renewed diplomatic negotiations, we prepared and sent out a form of convention, which we trusted the United States would accept. The first article of that convention was to this effect, that—“From the point on the 49th parallel of north latitude, where the boundary laid down in existing treaties and conventions between Great Britain and the United States terminates, the line of boundary between the territories of her Britannic Majesty and those of the United States shall be continued westward along the said 49th parallel of north latitude, to the middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver’s Island, and thence southerly through the middle of the said channel, and of Fuca’s Straits to the Pacific Ocean; provided, however, that the navigation of the said channel and straits, south of the 49th parallel of north latitude, remain free and open to both parties.”

Those who remember the local conformation of that country will understand that that which we proposed is in continuation of the 49th parallel of latitude, till it strikes the straits of Fuca ;

that that parallel should not be continued as a boundary across Vancouver's Island, thus depriving us of a part of Vancouver's Island, but that the middle of the channel shall be the future boundary, thus leaving us in possession of the whole of Vancouver's Island with equal right to the navigation of the Straits. Sir, the second article of the convention we sent for the acceptance of the United States was to this effect, that "From the point at which the 49th parallel of north latitude shall be found to intersect the great northern branch of the Columbia river, the navigation of the said branch shall be free and open to the Hudson's Bay Company, and to all British subjects trading with the same, to the point where the said branch meets the main stream of the Columbia, and thence down the said main stream to the ocean, with free access into and through the said river or rivers, it being understood that all the usual postages along the line thus described, shall in like manner be free and open. In navigating the said river or rivers—British subjects, with their goods and produce, shall be treated on the same footing as citizens of the United States; it being, however, always understood, that nothing in this article shall be construed as preventing, or intended to prevent the government of the United States from making any regulations respecting the navigation of the said river or rivers not inconsistent with the present treaty."

Sir, I will not occupy the attention of the House with the mere details of this convention. I have read the important articles. On this very day, on my return from my mission to her Majesty, to offer the resignation of her Majesty's servants, I had the satisfaction of finding an official letter from Mr. Pakenham, intimating in the following terms the acceptance of our proposals, and giving an assurance of the immediate termination of our differences with the United States :

"WASHINGTON, *June 13th*, 1846.

"My Lord,—In conformity with what I had the honour to state in my despatch, No. 68, of the 7th instant, the President sent a message on Wednesday last to the Senate, submitting for the opinion of that body the draught of a convention for the settlement of the Oregon question, which I was instructed by your lordship's despatch, No. 19, of the 18th of May, to propose for the acceptance of the United States.

"After a few hours' deliberation on each of the three days, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, the Senate, by a majority of 38 votes to

12, adopted yesterday evening a resolution advising the President to accept the terms proposed by her Majesty's Government. The President did not hesitate to act on this advice, and Mr. Buchanan accordingly sent for me this morning, and informed me that the conditions offered by her Majesty's Government were accepted by the Government of the United States, without the addition of alteration of a single word.—I have the honour to be, etc.

“ R. PAKENHAM.

“ The Right Hon. the Earl of Aberdeen, K.T., etc.”

Thus, Sir, the governments of the two great nations, impelled, I believe, by the public opinion of each country in favour of peace—by that opinion which ought to guide and influence statesmen—have, by moderation, by mutual compromise, averted the dreadful calamity of a war between two nations of kindred origin and common language, the breaking out of which might have involved the civilized world in general conflict. A single year, perhaps a single month of such a war, would have been more costly than the value of the whole territory that was the object of dispute. But this evil has been averted consistently with perfect honour on the part of the American Government, and on the part of those who have at length closed, I trust, every cause of dissension between the two countries. Sir, I may add, to the credit of the Government of this country, that, so far from being influenced in our views in regard to the policy of termination of these disputes of the Oregon by the breaking out of the war between the United States and with Mexico, we distinctly intimated to Mr. Pakenham, that although that event had occurred, it did not effect, in the slightest degree, our desire for peace. Mr. Pakenham, knowing the real wishes and views of his government, having a discretionary power in certain cases to withhold the proposals we had instructed him to make, wisely thought the occurrence of Mexican hostilities with the United States, was not one of the cases which would justify the exercise of that discretionary power, and therefore most wisely did he tender the offer of peace to the United States on the impulse of his own conviction and in the full confidence in the pacific policy of his own Government. Let me add, also, and I am sure this House will think it to the credit of my noble friend, that on the occurrence of these hostilities between Mexico and the United States, before we were aware of the reception

which the offer on our part in respect to the Oregon would meet with, the first packet that sailed tendered to the United States the offer of our good offices, for the purpose of mediation between them and the Mexican Government. Sir, I do cordially rejoice, that in surrendering power at the feet of a majority of this House, I have the opportunity of giving them the official assurance that every cause of quarrel with that great country on the other side of the Atlantic is amicably terminated.

Sir, I have now executed the task which my public duty imposed upon me. I trust I have said nothing which can lead to the revival on the present occasion of those controversies which I have deprecated. Whatever opinions may be held with regard to the extent of the danger with which we were threatened from the failure in one great article of subsistence, I can say with truth that her Majesty's Government, in proposing those measures of commercial policy which have dis-entitled them to the confidence of many who heretofore gave them their support, were influenced by no other motive than the desire to consult the interests of this country. Our object was to avert dangers which we thought were imminent, and to terminate a conflict which, according to our belief, would soon place in hostile collision great and powerful classes in this country. The maintenance of power was not a motive for the proposal of these measures ; for, as I said before, I had not a doubt, that whether these measures were accompanied by failure or success, the certain issue must be the termination of the existence of this Government. It is, perhaps, advantageous for the public interests that such should be the issue. I admit that the withdrawal of confidence from us by many of our friends was the natural result. When proposals are made, apparently at variance with the course which ministers heretofore pursued, and subjecting them to the charge of inconsistency—it is perhaps advantageous for this country, and for the general character of public men, that the proposal of measures of that kind, under such circumstances should entail that which is supposed to be the fitting punishment, namely, expulsion from office. I, therefore, do not complain of that expulsion. I am sure that it is far preferable to the continuance in office without the full assurance of the confidence of this House. I said before, and I said truly, that in

proposing our measures of commercial policy, I had no wish to rob others of the credit justly due to them. I must say, with reference to hon. gentlemen opposite, as I say with reference to ourselves, that neither of us is the party which is justly entitled to the credit of them. There has been a combination of parties, generally opposed to each other, and that combination, and the influence of Government, have led to their ultimate success ; but the name which ought to be associated with the success of those measures is not the name of the noble Lord, the organ of the party of which he is the leader, nor is it mine. The name which ought to be, and will be, associated with the success of these measures, is the name of one who, acting, I believe, from pure and disinterested motives, has, with untiring energy, made appeals to our reason, and has enforced those appeals with an eloquence the more to be admired because it was unaffected and unadorned : the name which ought to be chiefly associated with the success of those measures, is the name of RICHARD COBDEN.

Sir, I now close the observations which it has been my duty to address to the House, thanking them sincerely for the favour with which they have listened to me in performing this last act of my official career. Within a few hours, probably, that power that I have held for a period of five years will be surrendered into the hands of another—without repining—without complaint on my part—with a more lively recollection of the support and confidence I have received during several years, than of the opposition which during a recent period I have encountered. In relinquishing power, I shall leave a name, severely censured, I fear, by many who, on public grounds, deeply regret the severance of party ties—deeply regret that severance, not from interested or personal motives, but from the firm conviction that fidelity to party engagements—the existence and maintenance of a great party—constitutes a powerful instrument of government : I shall surrender power severely censured also, by others who, from no interested motive, adhere to the principle of protection, considering the maintenance of it to be essential to the welfare and interests of the country : I shall leave a name execrated by every monopolist who, from less honourable motives, clamours for protection because it conduces to his own individual benefit ; but it may be that I shall leave a name sometimes remembered

with expressions of goodwill in the abode of those whose lot it is to labour, and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, when they shall recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it is no longer leavened by a sense of injustice.

RICHARD COBDEN

COBDEN was the only great English statesman who never held office of any kind. Palmerston pressed upon him the Presidency of the Board of Trade in 1859. But he declined on the ground that he had always been opposed to Palmerston's foreign policy. The two principal achievements of Cobden's public life were the repeal of the Corn-laws in 1846, and the arrangement of a Commercial Treaty with France in 1860. Many causes, no doubt, co-operated to procure the removal of the duty on foreign corn. But the principal cause was the Anti-Corn-Law League, and of that League Cobden was the soul. Although Bright was a more eloquent speaker, Cobden supplied the ammunition. He had a singular capacity for clothing the driest and hardest statistics with life and animation. His simple, homely style concealed the immense pains he had taken to collect and marshal every available fact in the most suitable and telling form. The famous speech which he addressed to the House of Commons in March, 1845, is a good instance of this. Ostensibly, it was only a plea for impartial inquiry by a Select Committee into the causes of the prevalent distress. But so masterly was the presentation of the case that, when Cobden sat down, and Peel's colleagues urged him to answer the speech himself, Peel tore up his notes, and said, "Those may answer it who can." The Government, in refusing a Committee, wished to suggest that there was no case to answer. They were really admitting that there was no answer to the case. The Commercial Treaty with France had an immediate and most beneficial result in largely augmenting trade between the two countries. It has, however, been described as inconsistent with the fundamental principle of free trade. If, it may be argued, free trade is a good thing in itself, if foreign goods are admitted without duty into this

country for our own benefit, and not for other people's, commercial treaties are useless. There is nothing to bargain about. Our tariff being adjusted in the manner best suited to our requirements, irrespective of what other nations may do, we should not alter it to obtain concessions from foreign governments more valuable to them than to us. For abstract reasoning of this kind, however sound in itself, Cobden never much cared. He held that if by taking more French wine and more French silk we could induce France to take more British iron and more British coal, we ought to enjoy the advantage of the opportunity. He also considered that, apart altogether from purely economic arguments, the more two countries traded together, the more likely they were to keep the peace. He was essentially practical, aiming always at tangible benefits rather than logical victories. He was dissatisfied with Peel's gradual reduction of the duties on corn, extending over four years. He would have abolished them at once. He afterwards gave statistics to show that a vast amount of foreign speculation injurious to British farmers was encouraged by the knowledge of what the duty would be till the end of 1849, when it came down to a shilling a quarter.

Free Trade

House of Commons, March 13th, 1845

I AM relieved on this occasion from any necessity to apologise to the other side of the House for this motion having emanated from myself ; for I expressed a hope, when I gave my notice, that the subject would be taken up by some one of the hon. members opposite. I hope, therefore, that in any reply which may be offered to the observations I am about to submit to the consideration of the House, I shall not hear, as I did in the last year, that this motion comes from a suspicious quarter. I will also add, that I have so arranged its terms as to include in it the objects embraced in both the amendments of which notice has been given (Mr. Woodhouse's and Mr. S. O'Brien's), and therefore I conclude that the hon. members who have given

those notices will not think it necessary to press them, but rather will concur in this motion. Its object is the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the condition of the agricultural interests, with a view to ascertain how far the law affecting the importation of agricultural produce has affected those interests.

Now, that there is distress among the farmers I presume cannot be established upon higher authority than that of those who profess to be "the farmers' friends." I learn from those hon. gentlemen who have been paying their respects to the Prime Minister, that the agriculturists are in a state of great embarrassment and distress. I find one gentleman from Norfolk, Mr. Hudson, stating that the farmers in Norfolk are paying rents out of capital; while Mr. Turner from Devonshire assured the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) that one half of the smaller farmers in that country are insolvent, that the other half is rapidly hastening to the same condition, and that, unless some remedial measures are adopted by the House, they will be plunged into irretrievable poverty. These accounts from those counties agree with what I hear from other sources, and I will put it to hon. members opposite whether the condition of the farmers in Suffolk, Wiltshire, and Hampshire is any better. I will put it to county members whether, looking to the whole of the south of England from the confines of Nottinghamshire to the Land's End, the farmers are not in a state of embarrassment—whether, as a rule, that is not their condition. Then, according to every precedent in the House, this is a fit and proper time to bring forward this motion; and I will venture to say, that if the Duke of Buckingham had a seat in this House he would do what he as Lord Chandos did—move such a resolution.

The distress of the farmer being admitted, the next question that arises is, what is the cause of this distress? Now, I feel the greater necessity for a committee of inquiry, because I find a great discrepancy of opinion as to the cause. One right hon. gentleman has said that the distress is local, and moreover, that it does not arise from legislation; while the hon. member for Dorsetshire (Mr. Bankes) declared that it is general, and that it does arise from legislation. I am at a loss, indeed, to understand what this protection to agriculture means, because I find such contradictory accounts given in the

House by the promoters of it. For instance, nine months ago the hon. member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers) brought forward his motion for the repeal of the Corn-laws; and the right hon. gentleman then at the head of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gladstone) stated in reply to him, that the last Corn-law had been most successful in its operation, and he took great credit to the Government for the steadiness of price obtained under it. As these things are so often disputed, it is as well to give the quotation. The right hon. gentleman said:

“ Was there any man who had supported the law in the year 1842, who could honestly say that he had been disappointed in its working? Could anyone point out a promise or a prediction hazarded in the course of the protracted debates upon the measure, which promise or prediction had been subsequently falsified? ”

Now, let the House recollect that the right hon. gentleman was speaking when wheat was 56s. 8d.; but wheat is at present 45s. The right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government said that his legislation on the subject had nothing to do with wheat being 45s.; but how is the difficulty to be got over, that the head of the Board of Trade, nine months ago, claimed merit to the Government for having kept up wheat to that price? These discrepancies in the Government itself, and between the Government and its supporters, render it more necessary that this “ protection ” should be inquired into.

I must ask, What does it mean? We have prices now at 45s. I have been speaking within the last week to the highest authority in England—one often quoted in this House—and I learned from him that, with another favourable harvest, it was quite likely that wheat would be at 35s. What does this legislation mean, if we are to have prices fluctuating from 56s. to 35s.? Can this be prevented by legislation? That is the question. There is a rank delusion spread abroad among the farmers; and it is the duty of the House to dispel that delusion, and to institute an inquiry into the matter.

But there is a difference of opinion on my own side of the House, and some members, representing great and powerful interests, think the farmers are suffering because they have this legislative protection. This difference of opinion makes the subject a fit and proper one for inquiry in a Committee; and I am prepared to bring evidence before it, to show that farmers are labouring under great evils—evils that I can

connect with the Corn-laws, though they appear to be altogether differently caused.

The first great evil they labour under is a want of capital. No one can deny it ; it is notorious. I do not say it disparagingly of the farmers. The farmers of this country are just of the same race as the rest of Englishmen, and, if placed in the same situation, would be as successful men of business and traders and manufacturers as their countrymen ; but it is notorious, as a rule, that they are deficient in capital. Hon. gentlemen acquainted with farming will probably admit that £10 an acre, on arable land, is a competent capital for carrying on the business of farming successfully ; but I have made many inquiries in all parts of the Kingdom, and I give it as my decided conviction, that at the present moment the farmers' capital does not average £5 an acre, taking the whole of England south of the Trent, and including all Wales. Though, of course, there are exceptions in every county—men of large capital—men farming their own land—I am convinced that this is true, as a rule, and I am prepared to back my opinion by witnesses before a Committee. Here, then, is a tract of country comprehending probably 20,000,000 of cultivable acres, and £100,000,000 more capital is wanted for its cultivation.

What is the meaning of "farming capital" ? It means more manuring, more labour, more cattle, larger crops. But let us fancy a country in which there is a deficiency of all those things which ought to be there, and then guess what must be the condition of the labourers wanting employment and food. It may be said that capital would be there, if it were a profitable investment. I admit it ; and thus the question comes to be,—How is it, that in a country overflowing with capital—where there is a plethora in every other business—where every other pursuit is abounding with money—when money is going to France for railroads, and to Pennsylvania for bonds—when it is connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific by canals, and diving to the bottom of Mexican mines for investment—it yet finds no employment in the most attractive of all spots, the soil of this country itself ?

Admitting the evil, with all its train of fearful consequences, what is the cause of it ? There can be no doubt whatever,—it is admitted by the highest authorities, that the cause is

this,—there is not security for capital on the land. Capital shrinks instinctively from insecurity of tenure, and we have not in England that security which will warrant men of capital investing their money in the soil. Is it not a matter worthy of consideration, how far this insecurity of tenure is bound up with the “protection” system of which hon. members opposite are so enamoured? Suppose it could be shown that they are in a vicious circle; that they have made politics of Corn-laws; that they wanted voters, to retain Corn-laws; that they think the Corn-laws a great mine of wealth, and therefore will have dependent tenants, that they may have votes at elections, and so retain these laws. If they will have dependent voters they cannot have men of spirit and of capital. Then their policy reacts upon them; if they have not men of skill and capital, they cannot have protection and employment for the labourer; and then comes round the vicious termination—pauperism, poor-rates, county-rates, and all the evils from which they are asking the Prime Minister to relieve them.

But here I have to quote authorities, and I shall quote some of the highest consideration with the opposite side of the House. I will just state the opinion of the hon. member for Berkshire (Mr. Pusey), delivered at the meeting of the Suffolk Agricultural Society. That hon. gentleman said:

“He knew this country well, and he knew there was not a place from Plymouth to Berwick in which the landlords might not make improvements; but when the tenant was short of money, the landlord generally would be short of money, too. But he would tell them how to find friends. There were many districts where there was a great superfluity not only of useless but of mischievous timber; and if they would cut that down which excluded the sun and air, and fed on the soil, and sell it, they would benefit the farmer by cutting it down, and they would benefit the farmer and labourer, too, by laying out the proceeds in underdraining the soil. There was another mode in which they might find money. He knew that on some properties a large sum was spent in the preservation of game. It was not at all unusual for the game to cost £500 or £600 a year; and if this were given up, the money would employ a hundred able-bodied labourers in improving the property. This was another fund for the landlords of England to benefit the labourers, and the farmers at the same time.”

Again, at the Colchester agricultural meeting:

“Mr. Fisher Hobbes was aware that a spirit of improvement was abroad. Much was said about the tenant-farmers doing more. He agreed they might do more: the soil of the country was capable of

greater production ; if he said one-fourth more, he should be within compass. But that could not be done by the tenant-farmer alone ; they must have confidence ; it must be done by leases—by draining—by extending the length of fields—by knocking down hedge-rows, and clearing away trees which now shielded the corn."

But there was still higher authority. At the late meeting at Liverpool, Lord Stanley declared :

" I say, and as one connected with the land I feel myself bound to say it, that a landlord has no right to expect any great and permanent improvement of his land by the tenant, unless that tenant be secured the repayment of his outlay, not by the personal character or honour of his landlord, but by a security which no casualties can interfere with—the security granted him by the terms of a lease for years."

Not only does the want of security prevent capital from flowing to the soil, but it actually hinders the improvement of the land by those who already occupy it. There are many tenants who could improve their land if they were made secure ; they either have capital themselves, or their friends can advance it ; but with the want of leases, with the want of security, they are deterred from laying out their money. Everything is kept " from year to year." It is impossible to farm properly unless money is invested in land for more than a year. A man ought to begin farming with a prospect of waiting eight years before he can see a return for what he must do in the first year or two. Tenants, therefore, are prevented by their landlords from carrying on cultivation properly. They are made servile and dependent, disinclined to improvement, afraid to let the landlord see that they could improve their farms, lest he should pounce on them for an increase of rent. The hon. member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Christopher) is offended at these expressions ; what said that hon. member on the motion of the hon. member for Manchester (Mr. Gibson) last year on agricultural statistics ?

" It was most desirable for the farmer to know the actual quantity of corn grown in this country, as such knowledge would insure steadiness of prices, which was infinitely more valuable to the agriculturist than fluctuating prices. But to ascertain this there was extreme difficulty. They could not leave it to the farmer to make a return of the quantity which he produced, for it was not for his interest to do so. If in any one or two years he produced four quarters per acre on land which had previously grown but three, he might fear lest his landlord would say, ' Your land is more productive than I imagined, and I must therefore raise your rent.' The interest of the farmers, therefore, would be to underrate, and to furnish low returns."

Here is a little evidence of the same kind that is to be gathered from the meeting of the South Devon Agricultural Association, where the Rev. C. Johnson said :

“ He knew it had been thought that landlords were ready to avail themselves of such associations, on account of the opportunity it afforded them of diving into their tenants' affairs and opening their eyes. An instance of this occurred to him at a recent ploughing match, where he met a respectable agriculturist whom he well knew, and asked him if he was going to it. He said, ‘ No. ’ ‘ Why ? ’ Because he did not approve of such things. This ‘ why ’ produced another ‘ why, ’ and the man gave a reason why : Suppose he sent a plough and man, with two superior horses ; the landlord at once would say, ‘ This man is doing too well on my estate, ’ and increase the rent.”

I will ask the landed gentry of England what state of things is this that the farmer dares not appear to have a good pair of horses, or to derive four quarters where the land had formerly produced only three. Hon. members cheer, but I ask, is it not so ? I must say, that the condition of things indicated by those two quotations brings the farmer very near down in point of servility to the ryot of the East. The one takes the utmost care to conceal the amount of his produce, the other suffers the bastinado, rather than tell how much corn is grown. The tenant, indeed, is not afraid of the bastinado, but he is kept in fear of a distress for rent.

This is the state of tenant-farming without a lease, and in England a lease is the exception and not the rule. But even sometimes, when there is a lease or agreement, the case is still worse, for the clauses and covenants are of such an obsolete and preposterous character, that I will defy any man to carry on the business of farming properly under them. I will just read a passage from a Cheshire lease—an actual lease—to show in what sort of way the tenant-farmer is bound down :

“ To pay the landlord £20 for every statute acre of ground, and so in proportion for a less quantity, that shall be converted into tillage, or used contrary to the appointment before made ; and £5 for every hundredweight of hay, thrave of straw, load of potatoes, or cartload of manure, that shall be sold or taken from the premises during the term ; and £10 for every tree fallen, cut down, destroyed, cropped, lopped or topped, or willingly suffered so to be ; and £20 for every servant or other person so hired or admitted as to gain a settlement in the township ; and £10 per statute acre and so in proportion for a less quantity of the said land, which the tenant shall lot off or underlet, such sums to be paid on demand after every breach, and in default of

payment to be considered as reserved rent, and levied by distress and sale, as rent in arrear may be levied and raised ; and to do six days' boon team work whenever called upon ; and to keep for the landlord one dog, and one cock or hen ; and to make no marlpit without the landlord's consent first obtained in writing, after which the same is to be properly filled in ; nor to allow any inmate to remain on the premises after six days' notice ; nor to keep nor feed any sheep, except such as are used for the consumption of the family."

What is such an instrument as this ? I will tell the House what it is. It is a trap for unwary men—a barrier against capital and intelligence, and a fetter to any free man. No one can farm under such a lease. The hon. member for Shoreham (Sir C. Burrell) cheered ; but if hon. members would look into their own leases, though there may not be the "cocks and hens, and dogs," and probably not the "team-work," they will find almost as great absurdities. These documents are generally taken from old, dusty, antediluvian remains, that some lawyer's clerk drew from a pigeon-hole, and copied out for every incoming tenant ; something that had been in existence perhaps for five hundred years. You give men no credit for being able to discover any improvements ; in fact, you tie them down from improving ; you go upon the assumption that there will be no improvement, and do your best to prevent it. I do not know why we should not have leases of land upon terms similar to those in leases of manufactories, and places of business ; nor do I think farming can be carried on as it ought to be until then. A man may take a manufactory, and pay £1,000 a year for it. An hon. member near me pays more than £4,000 a year rent for his manufactory and machinery. Does he covenant as to the manner in which that machinery is to be worked, and as to the revolutions of his spindles ? No ; his landlord lets to him the bricks and mortar, and machinery. The machinery was scheduled to him, and, when his lease is over, he must leave the machinery in the same state as when he found it, and be paid for the improvements. The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goulburn) cheers that. I want to ask his opinion on a similar lease for a farm.

I am rather disposed to think that the Anti-Corn-law League will very likely form a joint-stock association, having none but Free-traders in that body, to purchase a joint-stock estate, and have a model farm, taking care to have it in one of

the rural counties where they all think there is the greatest need of improvement—perhaps Buckinghamshire ; and there establish a model farm, and a model homestead, and model cottages (and I will tell the noble Lord, the member for Newark [Lord J. Manners] that we shall have model gardens, without any outcry about it) ; but the great object shall be to have a model lease. We shall have as a farmer a man of intelligence, and a man of capital. I am not so unreasonable as to say that you ought to let your land to a man without capital, and to one who is not intelligent ; but select such a man, with intelligence and capital, and you cannot give him too wide a scope. You will find such a man, and let him have a farm, and such a lease as my hon. friend took his factory with. He shall do what he likes with the old pasture ; if he can make more of it with ploughing it up, he shall do so. If he can grow white crops every year, he shall do so. I know persons who are doing that in more places than one in this country. If he can make any improvement, he shall make it. We will let him the land with a schedule of the state of tillage on the farm, and will bind him to leave the land as good as he found it. It shall be valued ; and if in an inferior state when he leaves it, he shall compensate us for it : if it be in a superior state, he shall be compensated accordingly by the association. You will think this something very difficult, but the association will give him possession of the farm, with everything on the soil, whether wild or tame. We will give him absolute control ; there shall be no gamekeeper prowling about, and no sporting over his farm. Where is the difficulty ? You may take as stringent means as you please to compel the punctual payment of rent ; you may take the right of re-entry if the rent be not paid ; but take the payment of rent as the sole test of the well-doing of the tenant, and so long as he pays that uniformly, it is the only test you need have ; and if he be an intelligent man and a man of capital, you will have the strongest security that he will not waste your property.

I have sometimes heard hon. gentlemen opposite say, “ It is all very well to propose such leases, but we know many farmers who will not take them.” An hon. member cheers that. What does that argue ? That by a process which the hon. member for Lincolnshire (Sir John Trollope) has described—that degrading process which renders these tenants servile,

hopeless, and dejected—they are satisfied to remain as they are, and do not want to be independent. Hear what Professor Low says on this subject :

“ The argument has again and again been used against the extension of leases, that the tenants themselves set no value on them ; but to how different a conclusion ought the existence of such a feeling amongst the tenantry of a country to conduct us ! The fact itself shows that the absence of leases may render a tenantry ignorant of the means of employing their own capital with advantage, indisposed to the exertions which improvements demand, and better contented with an easy rent and dependent condition, than with the prospect of an independence to be earned by increased exertion.”

But whilst you have a tenantry in the state described and pictured by the hon. member for Lincolnshire, what must be the state of our population ? The labourers can never be prosperous where the tenantry is degraded. You may go through the length and breadth of the land, and you will find that where capital is most abundant, and where there is the most intelligence, there you will find the labouring classes the most happy and comfortable. On the other hand, show me an impoverished tenantry, and there I will show you a peasantry in the most hopeless and degraded condition ; as in the north of Devonshire, for instance. I have proved that the want of capital is the greatest want among the farmers, and that the want of leases is the cause of want of capital. You may say, “ You have not connected this with the Corn-laws and the protective system.” I will read to you the opinion of an hon. gentleman who sits on that (the Opposition) side of the House ; it is in a published letter. He said :

“ The more I see of and practise agriculture, the more firmly am I convinced that the whole unemployed labour of the country could, under a better system of husbandry, be advantageously put into operation ; and, moreover, that the Corn-laws have been one of the principal causes of the present system of bad farming and consequent pauperism. Nothing short of their entire removal will ever induce the average farmer to rely upon anything else than the legislature for the payment of his rent, his belief being that all rent is paid by corn, and nothing else than corn ; and that the legislature can, by enacting Corn-laws, create a price which will make his rent easy. The day of their (the Corn-laws) entire abolition ought to be a day of jubilee and rejoicing to every man interested in land.”

I do not stay to collect the causes affecting this matter, and to inquire whether the Corn-law and our protective system

have caused the want of leases, or have caused the want of capital. I do not stop to prove this, for this reason :—We have adopted a system of legislation by which we propose to make farming prosperous. I have shown you, after thirty years' trial, what is the condition of the farmers and labourers, and you will not deny any of my statements. It is, then, enough for me, after thirty years' trial, to ask you to go into Committee, and to inquire if something better cannot be devised. I am going, independently of protection, and independently of the Corn-law, to contend that a free trade in corn will be more advantageous to the farmers, and with the farmers I include the labourers; and I beg the attention of the hon. member for Gloucestershire (Mr. Charteris) and the landowners. I am going to contend that free trade in corn will be more beneficial to these classes than to any other classes. I should have contended so before the tariff, but now I am prepared to do so with ten times more force.

The right hon. gentleman opposite (Sir R. Peel) has passed a law to enable fat cattle to be imported, and there have been some foreign fat cattle selling in Smithfield market at £15 or £16 and £1 duty; but he has not taken off the duty on the raw material. He did not do so with regard to manufactures. Mr. Huskisson had not done so; but, on the contrary, he began by taking off the duty on the raw material, without taking off the duty on foreign manufactures. You (the Ministers) have begun, on this question, at the opposite end. I would admit grain free, which should go to make the fat cattle.

I contend that by this protective system the farmers throughout the country are more injured than any other class of the community. I will begin with clover. The hon. member for North Northamptonshire (Mr. Stafford O'Brien) put a question to the right hon. Baronet the other night, and looked so alarmed whilst doing so that I wondered what was the matter. He asked the right hon. Baronet "if he was going to admit clover-seed free?" That is to be excluded; and for whose benefit? I ask that hon. member or his constituents, are they in the majority of cases sellers of clover-seed? I will undertake to say they are not. How many counties are protected by the sale of clover-seed being secured to them? I will take Scotland; that country imports it from England;

it does not grow it. I will undertake to say that not ten counties in the United Kingdom are interested in exporting clover-seed out of their own borders. There is none in Ireland.

Take the case of Egyptian beans. I see the hon. member for Essex (Sir J. Tyrrell) in his seat : in that county they can grow beans and wheat and wheat and beans alternately, and send them to Mark-lane ; but how is it with the poor lands of Surrey, and with the poor lands of Wiltshire ? Take the country through, and how many counties are exporters of beans to market ? You are taxing the whole of the farmers who cannot export beans for the benefit of those few counties that can grow them. And mark where you can grow beans. It is where the soils are better ; it is not in one case in ten that a farmer can grow more than for his own use, or be able to send any to market ; and when that is the case, the farmer can have no interest in keeping up the price to prevent importation.

Take oats. How many farmers have oats on the credit side of their books, as an item to rely on for paying their rent ? They grow oats for feeding their horses ; but it is an exception where they depend on their crop of oats for the payment of rent. Ireland has just been mulcted by the tax on clover-seed. Is it a benefit to the farmers who do not sell oats to place a tax on their import, they having no interest in keeping up the money price of oats ?

Take the article, hops. We have a protective duty on hops for the protection of particular districts, as Kent, Suffolk, and Surrey ; but they in return have to pay for the protection on other articles which they do not produce.

Take cheese. There is not a farmer but makes his own cheese for the consumption of his servants ; but how many send it to market ? The counties of Chester, Gloucester, Wilts, and parts of Derbyshire and Leicester, manufacture this article for sale. Here are four or five counties having an interest in protecting cheese. But you must recollect that those counties are heavily taxed in the articles of oats and beans and corn ; for these are the districts where they most want artificial food for their cattle.

Take the whole of the hilly districts. I hope the hon. member for Nottinghamshire (Mr. Knight) is present. He lives in Derbyshire, and employs himself in rearing good cattle on the hills ; but he is taxed by protection for his oats, or

Indian corn or beans. That hon. member told me the other day that he would like nothing better than to give up the protection on cattle, if he could only go into the market and purchase his thousand quarters of black oats free from protective duty. Take the hilly districts of Wales, or take the Cheviot hills, or the Grampian hills; they are not benefited by their protection on those articles; they want provender for their cattle in the cheapest way they can get it. The only way in which these parts of the country can improve the breed of their stock, and bring their farms into a decent state of fertility, is to have food cheap.

But I will go further, and say that the farmers on the thin soils—I mean the stock farmers in parts of Hertfordshire—farmers of large capital, arable farmers—are deeply interested in having a free importation of food for their cattle, because they have poor land which does not contain or produce the means for its own fertility; and it is only by bringing in artificial food that they can bring their land into a state to grow good crops. I have been favoured with an estimate made by a very experienced and clever farmer in Wiltshire; it is from Mr. Nathaniel Atherton, of Rington. I will read this to the House; and I think that the statements of such men—men of intelligence and experience—ought to be attended to. Mr. Nathaniel Atherton, Rington, Wilts, estimates:

“That upon 400 acres of land he could increase his profits to the amount of £280, paying the same rent as at present, provided there was a free importation of foreign grains of all kinds. He would buy 500 quarters of oats at 15s., or the same amount in beans or peas at 14s. or 15s. a sack, to be fed on the land or in the yard; by which he would grow additional 160 quarters of wheat and 230 quarters of barley, and gain an increased profit of £300 on his sheep and cattle. His plan embraces the employment of an additional capital of £1,000, and he would pay £150 a year more for labour.”

I had an opportunity, the other day, of speaking to an intelligent farmer in Hertfordshire—Mr. Lattimore, of Wheat-hampstead; he stands as high in the Hertfordshire markets as any farmer, as a man of skill, of abundant capital, and of unquestionable intelligence. He told me that he had paid during the last year £230 in enhanced price on the beans and other provender which he had bought for his cattle, in consequence of the restrictions on food of foreign growth, and that

this sum amounted to 14s. a quarter on all the wheat which he had sold off his farm. With regard to Mr. Atherton and Mr. Lattimore, they are as decided advocates of free trade in grain as I am.

I have before told hon. gentlemen that I have as wide and extensive an acquaintance with farmers as any member in this House. In almost every county I can give them the names of first-rate farmers who are as much Free-traders as I am. I told the secretary of the much-dreaded Anti-Corn-law League to make me out a list of the names of subscribers to the League amongst the farmers. There are upwards of a hundred in England and Scotland, and they comprise the most intelligent men that are to be found in the Kingdom. I have been into the Lothians myself—into Haddingtonshire. I went and spent two or three days amongst the farmers there, and I never met with a more intelligent or liberal-minded body of men in the Kingdom. They do not want restrictions on corn; they say, "Let us have a free importation of linseed-cake and corn, and we can bear competition with any corn-growers in the world. But to exclude provender for cattle, and to admit fat cattle duty free, was one of the greatest absurdities in legislation that ever was." We have heard of absurdities in commerce—of sending coffee from Cuba to the Cape of Good Hope, to bring it back to this country under the law; but in ten years' time people will look back with more amazement at our policy,—that whilst we are sending ships to Ichaboe for manure, we are excluding oats, and beans, and Indian corn for fattening our cattle, which would give us a thousand times more fertilising manure than this which we now send for.

On the last occasion on which I spoke on this subject in this House I was answered by the right hon. gentleman, the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Gladstone), and that gentleman talked of the Free-traders throwing poor land out of cultivation, and throwing other land out of tillage into pasture. I hope that the Anti-Corn-law League will not be reproached again with any such designs. My belief is, that the upholders of protection are pursuing the very course to throw land out of cultivation and to make poor land unproductive. Do not let the Free-traders be told again that they desire to draw the labourers from the land that they may reduce the labourers' wages in factories. If you had abundance of capital

employed on your farms, and cultivated the soil with the same skill that the manufacturers conduct their business, you would not have population enough to cultivate the land. I had yesterday a letter from Lord Ducie, and he has given the same opinion, that if the land were properly cultivated there would not be sufficient labourers to till it. And yet, whilst that is the fact, you are chasing your population from village to village and passing a law to compel the support of paupers. You are smuggling the people away and sending them to the antipodes, whereas if your lands were properly cultivated you would be trying to lure them back, as the most valuable part of your possessions. It is by this means only that you can avert very serious disasters in the agricultural districts.

On the last occasion of my addressing this House, a great deal was said about disturbing great interests. It was said that this inquiry could not be gone into, because it would disturb a great interest. I have no desire to undervalue the agricultural interest. I have heard it said that the agricultural classes are the greatest consumers of our goods, and that we had better look after our home trade. Now what sort of consumers of manufactures do you think the agricultural labourers could be with the wages they get? Understand me, I am arguing for a principle which I solemnly believe will raise the wages of the people. I believe there would be no men starving on 7s. a week if there were abundance of capital and skill employed in cultivating the soil. But, I ask, what is this home consumption of manufactures? I have taken some pains to ascertain the amount laid out by agricultural labourers and their families for clothing. It may probably startle hon. members when I tell them that we have exported more goods to Brazil in one year than has been consumed in a year by the agricultural peasantry and their families. You know, by the last census, that there are 960,000 agricultural labourers in England and Wales, and I can undertake to say, from inquiries I have made, that each of these men does not spend 30s. a year in manufactures for his whole family, if the article of shoes be excepted. I say that, with the exception only of shoes, the agricultural labourers of England and Wales do not spend £1,500,000 per annum in the purchase of manufactured goods, clothing, and bedding. Then, I would ask, what can they pay, on 8s. a week, to the revenue? I am

satisfied, and hon. members may satisfy themselves, from the statistical returns on the table, that agricultural labourers do not pay per head 15s. a year to the revenue ; the whole of their contributions to the revenue do not amount to £700,000 a year ; and, I ask, when hon. members opposite have by their present system brought agriculture to its present pass, can they have anything to fear from risking a change, or, at any rate, from risking an inquiry ?

On the last occasion that I addressed the House on this subject, I laboured to prove that we have no reason to fear foreign competition if restrictions were removed, and I stated facts to show that. On the present occasion I shall not dwell on that topic ; but still, as many people are possessed with the idea, that if the ports were opened corn will be to be had for nothing—and that is one of the favourite fallacies—I may be allowed to offer a few remarks upon the subject. People continue to hold this doctrine, and they argue, “ Now that prices are low, corn is coming in ; but if you had not a duty of 20s. a quarter, is it possible to say what would be the quantity that would come in ? ” This is said ; but I hope it is not dishonestly said ; I hope the argument is founded on a confusion between the nominal and the real prices of corn. The price of wheat at Dantzic is now a nominal price. In January, 1838, wheat at Dantzic was at a nominal price, there being no one to purchase from England ; but in July and August of that year, when a failure of the harvest here was apprehended, the price at Dantzic rose, and by the end of December in the same year the price at Dantzic was double what it had been in January, and wheat there averaged 40s. a quarter for three years, 1839, 1840, 1841. Now I mention this for the purpose of asking the attention of hon. members opposite to it, and I entreat them, with this fact before them, not to go down and alarm their tenantry about the danger of foreign competition. They ought to take an opposite course—the course which would enable them to compete with foreigners. Their present course is the worst they could take, if they wish to compete with foreigners.

I was about to allude to a case which referred to the hon. member for Shoreham (Sir C. Burrell), who has lately let in a new light upon agricultural gentlemen. The country is now told that its salvation is to arise from the cultivation of flax.

This was stated by the Flax Agricultural Improvement Association, Lord Rendlesham President, of which I have in my hand a report, wherein, after stating that her Majesty's Ministers were holding out no hopes of legislative assistance to the agricultural body, they then called upon the nation to support them, on the ground that they were going to remedy the grievances under which the agricultural interest laboured. I observe that Mr. Warner, the great founder of this Association, was visiting Sussex lately, and at a dinner at which the hon. Baronet (Sir C. Burrell) presided, after the usual loyal toasts, "Mr. Warner and the cultivation of flax" was proposed. Now, when the hon. Baronet did this, probably he was not aware that he was furnishing the most deadly weapon to the Lecturers of the Anti-Corn-law League. The country is told that unless they have a high protective duty the farmers cannot get a remunerative price for the wheat they grow. They have a protective duty of 20s. a quarter on wheat, and one quarter of wheat was just worth a hundredweight of flax; yet, although against Polish wheat they have a protection of 20s., the protective duty on a hundredweight of flax is just 1d. Now, I did not hear a murmur when the right hon. Baronet proposed to take off that tax of 1d. But we are told that the English agriculturist cannot compete with the foreigner on account of the abundance of labour he has the command of, especially in the case of the serf-labour which is employed somewhere up the Baltic. Now, flax comes from up the Baltic, and yet they have no protection upon it. Then it is insisted that we cannot contend against foreign wheat, because it takes so much labour to raise wheat in this country; yet it takes as much labour to raise flax. How, then, are we to contend against foreign flax? Nevertheless, the hon. Baronet undertook to restore prosperity to the country by means of his flax, which was in this helpless state for want of protection.

The hon. Baronet will forgive me—I am sure he will, because he looks as if he will—while I allude again to the subject of leases. The hon. Baronet, on the occasion I have alluded to, complained that it was a great pity the farmers did not grow more flax; but it is curious that I should have since seen it stated in a Brighton paper—the hon. Baronet's county paper—I do not know how truly—that the hon. Baronet's own

tenants have leases which forbid them to grow flax. However, it is quite probable the hon. Baronet does not know what covenants there are in his leases ; but, be that as it may, at any rate it is very common, I know, to insert in leases a prohibition to cultivate flax. This just shows the manner in which the landlords carry on the agriculture of the country. The original notion of the injury done by flax to the land was derived, I believe, from Virgil, who stated something to the effect that flax was very scourging to the land. I have no doubt it was from this source that some learned lawyer has derived the usual covenant on this subject in leases.

I have alluded to the condition of the agricultural labourers at the present time ; but I feel bound to say, that whilst the farmers are in a worse position than they have been for the last ten years, I believe the agricultural labourers have passed the winter, though it was a five months' winter, and severe, with less suffering from distress than the previous winters. I mention this because it is a remarkable proof of the degree in which a low price of food is beneficial to the labouring classes. I can demonstrate that in the manufacturing districts, whenever food is dear, wages are low ; and that whenever food is low, wages rise. That the manufacturers can prove. Then I stated it as my own opinion, that the agricultural labourers are in a better state than they were in previous winters. But does not that show that the agricultural labourers, having only just so much wages as will find them in subsistence, derive benefit from the plenty of the first necessaries of life ? Their wages do not rise in the same proportion as the price of food rises, but then neither do their wages fall in the same proportion as the price of food falls. Therefore in all cases the agricultural labourers are in a better state when food is low than when it is high.

Now, I am bound to state, that whatever is the condition of the agricultural labourer, I believe the farmer is not responsible for that condition while he is placed as at present. I have heard many exhortations to the farmer that he must employ more labour. I believe the farmer is very unjustly required to do this. The farmer stands between the landlord and the suffering peasantry. It is rather hard in the landlord to point the farmer out as the cause of the want of employment for labour—as the man to be marked. Lord Hardwicke has

lately made an address to the labourers of Haddenham, in which he said :

“ Conciliate your employers, and, if they do not perform their duty to you and themselves, address yourselves to the landlords ; and I assure you that you will find us ready to urge our own tenants to the proper cultivation of their farms, and, consequently, to the just employment of the labourer.”

That is the whole question. I think the duty rests with the landlords, and that it is the landlords, and not the employers, who are in fault. The landlords have absolute power in the country. There is no doubt about it—they can legislate for the benefit of the labourers or of themselves, as they please. If the results of their legislation have failed to secure due advantages to the labourer, they have no right to call on the farmers to do their duty, and furnish the labourers with the means of support. I lately saw a labourer's certificate at Stowupland, in Suffolk, placed over the chimneypiece in a labourer's cottage. It was this :

“ West Suffolk Agricultural Association, established 1833, for the advancement of agriculture, and the encouragement of industry and skill and good conduct among labourers and servants in husbandry. President, the Duke of Grafton, Lord Lieutenant of the county. This is to certify, that a prize of £2 was awarded to William Birch, aged 82, labourer, of the parish of Stowupland, in West Suffolk, September 25, 1840, for having brought up nine children without relief, except when flour was very dear, and for having worked on the same farm twenty-eight years. (Signed) Robert Rushbrooke, Chairman.”

After a severe winter, with little employment to be had, I congratulate the country that we have fewer agricultural labourers in the workhouses, and fewer pining in our streets from want, than in former years ; but a bad case at the best is the condition of the agricultural labourer, and you will have to look out, before it is too late, how you are to employ him. The last census shows that you cannot employ your own labourers in the agricultural districts. How, then, are you to employ them ? You say, there are too many of them. That is an evil which will press on you more and more every year : what, then, are you to do ? Are you, gentry of England, to sit with your arms folded, and propose nothing ? I am only here to-night because you have proposed nothing. We all know that the allotment system has been taken up ; it is a plying ; it is a failure, and it is well for some of you that

you have wiser heads to lead you than your own, or you would shortly be in precisely the same situation as they are in Ireland ; but with this increase to the difficulty of that situation, that they do contrive to maintain the rights of property there with the aid of the English Exchequer and 20,000 bayonets ; but bring your own country into the same condition, and where will be your rents ?

What, then, do you propose to do ? Nothing this year to benefit the great mass of the agricultural population ! You admit the farmer's capital is diminished—that he is in a worse state than he was. How to increase the confidence of capitalists in the farmers' power of retrieving themselves ? How this is to be done is the question. I cannot believe you are going to make this a political game. It was well said that the last election was an agricultural election ; and there are two hundred members sitting behind the right hon. Baronet ; that is the proof of it. Don't quarrel with me because I have imperfectly stated my case ; I have done my best ; I ask what have you done ? I tell you this " protection," as it is called, has been a failure. It failed when wheat was 80s. a quarter, and you know what was the condition of the farmer in 1817. It failed when wheat was 60s., and you know what was the condition of the farmer in 1835. And now it has failed again with the last amendments you have made in the law, for you have confessed to what is the condition of the agricultural tenantry. What, then, is the plan you propose ? I hope that this question was not made a pretence—a political game—at the last election ; that you have not all come up as mere politicians. There are politicians in this House who look with ambition—and probably in their case it is a justifiable ambition—to the high offices of the State ; there may be men here who by thirty years' devotion to politics have been pressed into a groove in which it is difficult for them to avoid going forward, and are, may be, maintaining the same course against their convictions. I make allowance for them ; but the great body of you came up not as politicians, but as friends of the agricultural interest ; and to you I now say, what are you going to do ? You lately heard the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government say, that if he could restore protection, it would not benefit the agricultural interest. Is that your belief ? or are you acting on your convictions,

or performing your duty in this House, by following the right hon. Baronet into the lobby when he refuses an inquiry and investigation into the condition of the very men who send you up here? With mere politicians, I have no right to hope to succeed; but give me a committee, and I will explode the delusion of agricultural protection; I will produce such a mass of evidence, and call authorities so convincing, that when the blue book shall be sent out, I am convinced that protection will not live two years.

Protection is a very convenient vehicle for politicians; the cry of "protection" won the last election; and politicians looked to secure honours, emoluments, places by it; but you, the gentry of England, are not sent up for such objects. Is, then, that old, tattered and torn flag to be kept up for the politicians, or will you come forward and declare that you are ready to inquire into the state of the agricultural interests? I cannot think that the gentlemen of England can be content to be made mere drum-heads, to be sounded by the Prime Minister of England—to be made to emit notes, but to have no articulate sounds of their own. You, gentlemen of England, the high aristocracy of England, your forefathers led my forefathers; you may lead us again if you choose; but though—longer than any other aristocracy—you have kept your power, while the battlefield and the hunting-field were the tests of manly vigour, you have not done as the noblesse of France or the hidalgos of Madrid have done; you have been Englishmen, not wanting in courage on any call. But this is a new age; the age of social advancement, not of feudal sports; you belong to a mercantile age; you cannot have the advantage of commercial rents and retain your feudal privileges, too. If you identify yourselves with the spirit of the age, you may yet do well; for I tell you that the people of this country look to their aristocracy with a deep-rooted prejudice—an hereditary prejudice, I may call it—in their favour; but your power was never got, and you will not keep it by obstructing the spirit of the age in which you live. If you are found obstructing that progressive spirit which is calculated to knit nations more closely together by commercial intercourse; if you give nothing but opposition to schemes which almost give life and breath to inanimate nature, and which it has been decreed shall go on, then you are no longer a national body.

There is a widely-spread suspicion that you have been tampering with the feelings of your tenantry—you may read it in the organ of your party—this is the time to show the people that such a suspicion is groundless. I ask you to go into this Committee—I will give you a majority of county members—you shall have a majority of members of the Central Agricultural Protection Association in the committee; and on these terms I ask you to inquire into the causes of the distress of our agricultural population. I trust that neither of those gentlemen who have given notice of amendments will attempt to interfere with me, for I have embraced the substance of their amendments in my motion. I am ready to give those hon. gentlemen the widest range they please for their inquiries. I only ask that this subject may be fairly investigated. Whether I establish my principle, or you establish yours, good must result from the inquiry; and I do beg and entreat of the honourable, independent country gentlemen in this House, that they will not refuse on this occasion, to sanction a fair, full, and impartial inquiry.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

LINCOLN was of all American orators at once the most homely and the most eloquent. His speech at Gettysburg, and the second of his two Inaugural Addresses, are models of classical rhetoric. But when he left his home in Illinois for Washington after his first election, he spoke to the friends and neighbours who came to see him off with a simple unaffected dignity and tenderness which no artificial elaboration could surpass. Into most of his speeches, terse and vigorous as they are, he wove racy and appropriate anecdotes which, however telling at the time, hardly bear reproduction now. His genuine humour was entirely his own, the fruit of a meditative, reflective temper, habitually dwelling upon the incongruities of life. He was quite incapable of being conventional. But he had a singular knack of saying the right thing in the right way, the result partly of human sympathy, and partly of shrewd observation. The duty he had to discharge might well have seemed insurmountable. It was not, he often said, his business as President to put down or to maintain slavery as an institution. He had to uphold the Union, and to treat those who attacked it, on whatever ground, as enemies. He did what he could to avoid civil war. He never attempted to interfere with slavery in the old States until the necessities of the war compelled him to issue his decree of emancipation. He was in truth a strict constitutionalist. By profession a lawyer, he was ready to argue the limits of State and Federal rights in the vain hope of avoiding hostilities. When he found that they could no longer be avoided, he protested with the utmost solemnity, and with undoubted sincerity, that they had been forced upon him against his will. He never ceased to regard the Southerners as his fellow-citizens, or to feel the horror of being engaged in domestic strife. His humour had a strain of melancholy, as of a man placed in circumstances

not of his choosing, and not to his taste. The principal characteristic of his speaking was a determination to inspire his friends without insulting his foes. He was always trying to soften asperity, to heal wounds, to prepare for the time when peace would return. Although during his life he was subject to much misconception, history has justified his methods, and shown that he did all he could to diminish the causes of dispute. He could do little by speaking. He succeeded, however, in impressing even those most strongly opposed to him with a sense of his perfect fairness, his wide comprehension, and his extreme reluctance to take any step which would be irrevocable, or leave bitterness behind it.

*Address delivered at the Dedication of the Cemetery
at Gettysburg, Nov. 19th, 1863*

FOUR score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fit and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a

new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Address at his Second Inauguration, March 4th, 1865

FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN: At this season, appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at first. Then, a statement somewhat in detail of a course to be pursued seemed very fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this, four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avoid it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city, seeking to destroy it with war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide the effects of negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish; and the war came. One eighth of the whole population were coloured slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localised in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. (To strengthen, perpetuate and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union by war, while the Government claimed no right to do more than restrict the territorial enlargement of it.)

Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding.

Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces. But let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayer of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offences; for it must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of these offences which in the providence of God must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern there any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword, then, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, that "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI

IT is well known that Disraeli's first speech in the House of Commons was a complete failure, and that he had to make his way against every sort of prejudice. His powers of wit and sarcasm always gave liveliness and point to his attacks. He studied the art of amusing the House until he became the most accomplished master of ironic satire within its walls. Perhaps no English statesman has so entirely succeeded in overcoming so formidable an array of hostile prepossessions. He regarded political subjects from a point of view peculiarly his own, and he was therefore able to discuss them with a mental detachment quite unlike the ordinary standard of Parliament. He infused into the topics of every day an agreeable flavour of cynicism and paradox which recommended his opinions to some who would not have been otherwise attracted by them. Many of his doctrines or conclusions were rather suggested than propounded. He had the faculty of bringing the subject round to his side by a devious path which conducted his hearers where he wished to take them without letting them see where they were being taken. In this way he often achieved his object by methods which could not have stood the test of strictly logical analysis. His own principles could hardly be expressed in terms of British politics. They had a different origin, and a different history, from those of his rivals and contemporaries. He had a profound belief in race, and not much belief in anything else. But he was able to put his case with such ingenuity and artifice that mere argument could not dispose of it. The eminent statesmen whom he confronted did not attempt to encounter him with his own weapons. They were in earnest. They allowed him to amuse himself and the House of Commons at their expense, forgetting that he was all the time building up a

reputation with the public for mysterious sources of insight and knowledge which could be used when the opportunity came. His style of speaking was peculiar to himself. He dexterously avoided commonplaces, and so arranged the distribution of his subject that each point introduced some fresh phrase or idea. No man revelled more in the unexpected. It was his policy to approach his position from an unusual quarter, and to argue his own conclusion from the premises of others.

Disraeli, as an orator, had the art of retaining the attention of his audience without ever fatiguing it. He contrived to have the air of one on his way to the disclosure of a secret, and he seldom wholly disappointed expectation. He would drop in an apparently careless way some epigram or paradox which set people thinking, and kept them on the watch for what he would say next. His artful simplicity, his apparently unconscious knack of coining memorable catchwords, made him a formidable antagonist in debate, because it found him always ready with a verbal retort which suggested more than it said. It was not mere skill in words that raised him to such a high rhetorical level. It was a combination of verbal dexterity with a power of analysing and employing the mental characteristics to which he appealed. He began by compelling attention, and it was not until he had carefully prepared the ground that he applied the instrument of his calculated irony. It was in this way that he cut himself adrift from the mere tactics of party, and at the same time made himself indispensable as the supreme master of Parliamentary manoeuvre. His speeches are a model of ingenuity rather than eloquence, of subtlety rather than power, of the persuasive rather than the didactic element, of the delicacy which never seems to obtrude a formula, and yet never fails to suggest an inference. There have been few such accomplished wielders of irony or sarcasm, and yet it would be difficult to find in all his speeches an instance of strictly logical demonstration.

*Berlin Treaty**House of Lords, July 18th, 1878*

My Lords, in laying on the table of your lordships' House, as I am about to do, the protocols of the Congress of Berlin, I have thought I should only be doing my duty to your lordships' House, to Parliament generally, and to the country, if I made some remarks on the policy which was supported by the representatives of Her Majesty at the Congress, and which is embodied in the treaty of Berlin and in the convention which was placed on your lordships' table during my absence.

My lords, you are aware that the treaty of San Stefano was looked on with much distrust and alarm by her Majesty's Government—that they believed it was calculated to bring about a state of affairs dangerous to European independence and injurious to the interests of the British Empire. Our impeachment of that policy is before your lordships and the country, and is contained in the circular of my noble friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in April last. Our present contention is, that we can show that, by the changes and modifications which have been made in the treaty of San Stefano by the Congress of Berlin and the Convention of Constantinople, the menace to European independence has been removed, and the threatened injury to the British Empire has been averted. Your lordships will recollect that by the treaty of San Stefano about one half of Turkey in Europe was formed into a State called Bulgaria—a State consisting of upwards of 50,000 geographical square miles, and containing a population of 4,000,000, with harbours on either sea—both on the shores of the Euxine and of the Archipelago. That disposition of territory severed Constantinople and the limited district which was still spared to the possessors of that city—severed it from the provinces of Macedonia and Thrace by Bulgaria descending to the very shores of Ægean; and, altogether, a State was formed, which, both from its natural resources and its peculiarly favourable geographical position, must necessarily have exercised a predominant influence over the political and commercial interests of that part of the world. The remaining portion of Turkey in Europe was reduced also to a considerable degree by affording what was called compensation to previous rebellious tributary principalities, which have now

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become independent States so that the general result of the treaty of San Stefano was, that while it spared the authority of the Sultan so far as his capital and its immediate vicinity, it reduced him to a state of subjection to the Great Power which had defeated his armies, and which was present at the gates of his capital. Accordingly, though it might be said that he still seemed to be invested with one of the highest functions of public duty—the protection and custody of the Straits—it was apparent that his authority in that respect could be exercised by him in deference only to the superior Power which had vanquished him, and to whom the proposed arrangements would have kept him in subjection.

My lords, in these matters the Congress of Berlin have made great changes. They have restored to the Sultan two-thirds of the territory which was to have formed the great Bulgarian State. They have restored to him upwards of 30,000 geographical square miles, and 2,500,000 of population—that territory being the richest in the Balkans, where most of the land is rich, and the population one of the wealthiest, most ingenious, and most loyal of his subjects. The frontiers of his State have been pushed forward from the mere environs of Salonica and Adrianople to the lines of the Balkans and Trajan's pass; the new principality, which was to exercise such an influence, and produce a revolution in the disposition of the territory and policy of that part of the globe, is now merely a State in the valley of the Danube, and both in its extent and its population is reduced to one-third of what was contemplated by the treaty of San Stefano. My lords, it has been said that while the Congress of Berlin decided upon a policy so bold as that of declaring the range of the Balkans as the frontier of what may now be called New Turkey, they have, in fact, furnished it with a frontier which, instead of being impregnable, is in some parts undefended, and is altogether one of an inadequate character.

My lords, it is very difficult to decide, so far as nature is concerned, whether any combination of circumstances can ever be brought about which would furnish what is called an impregnable frontier. Whether it be river, desert, or mountainous range, it will be found, in the long run, that the impregnability of a frontier must be supplied by the vital spirit of man; and that it is by the courage, discipline, patriotism and devotion of a population that impregnable frontiers can alone

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be formed. And, my lords, when I remember what race of men it was that created and defended Plevna, I must confess my confidence that, if the cause be a good one, they will not easily find that the frontier of the Balkans is indefensible. But it is said that although the Congress has furnished—and it pretended to furnish nothing more—a competent military frontier to Turkey, the disposition was so ill-managed, that, at the same time, it failed to secure an effective barrier—that in devising the frontier, it so arranged matters that this very line of the Balkans may be turned. The Congress has been charged with having committed one of the greatest blunders that could possibly have been accomplished by leaving Sofia in the possession of a Power really independent of Turkey, and one which, in the course of time, might become hostile to Turkey. My lords, this is, in my opinion, an error on the part of those who furnish information of an authentic character to the different populations of Europe, who naturally desire to have correct information on such matters.

It is said that the position of Sofia is of a commanding character, and that of its value the Congress were not aware, and that it was yielded to an imperious demand on the part of one of the Powers represented at the Congress. My lords, I can assure your lordships that there is not a shadow of truth in the statement. I shall show that when the Congress resolved to establish the line of the Balkans as the frontier of Turkey, they felt that there would have been no difficulty, as a matter of course, in Turkey retaining possession of Sofia. What happened was this. The highest military authority of the Turks—so I think I may describe him—was one of the plenipotentiaries at the Congress of the Porte—I allude to Mahomet Ali Pasha. Well, the moment the line of the Balkans was spoken of, he brought under the notice of his colleagues at the Conference—and especially, I may say, of the plenipotentiaries of England—his views on the subject, and, speaking as he did not only with military authority, but also with consummate acquaintance with all those localities, he said nothing could be more erroneous than the idea that Sofia was a strong strategic position, and that those who possessed it would immediately turn the Balkans and march on Constantinople. He said that as a strategical position it was worthless, but that there was a position in the Sandjak of Sofia which, if properly defended,

might be regarded as impregnable, and that was the pass of Ichtiman. He thought it of vital importance to the Sultan that that position should be secured to Turkey, as then his Majesty would have an efficient defence to his capital.

That position was secured. It is a pass which, if properly defended, will prevent any host, however powerful, from taking Constantinople by turning the Balkans. But, in consequence of that arrangement, it became the duty of the plenipotentiaries to see what would be the best arrangement in regard of Sofia and its immediate districts. The population of Sofia and its district are, I believe, without exception, Bulgarian, and it was thought wise, they being Bulgarians, that if possible it should be included in Bulgaria. That was accomplished by exchanging it for a district in which the population, if not exclusively, are numerically Mahometan, and which, so far as the fertility of the land is concerned, is an exchange highly to the advantage of the Porte. That, my lords, is a short account of an arrangement which I know has for a month past given rise in Europe, and especially in this country, to a belief that it was in deference to Russia that Sofia was not retained, and that by its not having been retained Turkey had lost the means of defending herself, in the event of her being again plunged into war.

My lords, it has also been said, with regard to the line of the Balkans, that it was not merely in respect of the possession of Sofia that an error was committed, but that the Congress made a great mistake in not retaining Varna. My lords, I know that there are in this assembly many members who have recollections—glorious recollections—of that locality. They will know at once that if the line of the Balkans were established as the frontier, it would be impossible to include Varna, which is to the north of the Balkans. Varna itself is not a place of importance, and only became so in connection with a system of fortifications, which are now to be rased. No doubt, in connection with a line of strongholds, Varna formed a part of a system of defence; but of itself Varna is not a place of importance. Of itself, it is only a roadstead, and those who dwell upon the importance of Varna, and consider that it was a great error on the part of the Congress not to have secured it for Turkey, quite forget that between the Bosphorus and Varna, upon the coast of the Black Sea, the Congress has

allotted to Turkey a much more important point on the Black Sea—the harbour of Burgos. My lords, I think I have shown that the charges made against the Congress on these three grounds—the frontiers of the Balkans, the non-retention of Sofia, and the giving up of Varna—have no foundation whatever.

Well, my lords, having established the Balkans as the frontier of Turkey in Europe, the Congress resolved that south of the Balkans, to a certain extent, the country should be formed into a province, to which should be given the name of Eastern Roumelia. At one time it was proposed by some to call it South Bulgaria ; but it was manifest that with such a name between it and North Bulgaria there would be constant intriguing to bring about a union between the two provinces. We therefore thought that the province of East Roumelia should be formed, and that there should be established in it a government somewhat different from that of contiguous provinces where the authority of the Sultan might be more unlimited. I am not myself of opinion that, as a general rule, it is wise to interfere with a military Power which you acknowledge ; but though it might have been erroneous as a political principle to limit the military authority of the Sultan, yet there are in this world other things besides political principles ; there are such things as historical facts ; and he would not be a prudent statesman who did not take into consideration historical facts as well as political principles. The province which we have formed into Eastern Roumelia had been the scene of many excesses, by parties on both sides, to which human nature looks with deep regret ; and it was thought advisable, in making these arrangements for the peace of Europe, that we should take steps to prevent the probable recurrence of such events. Yet to do this and not give the Sultan a direct military authority in the province would have been, in our opinion, a grievous error. We have therefore decided that the Sultan should have the power to defend the barrier of the Balkans with all his available force. He has power to defend his frontiers by land and by sea, both by the passes of the mountains and the ports and strongholds of the Black Sea. No limit has been placed on the amount of force he may bring to bear with that object. No one can dictate to him what the amount of that force shall be ; but, in respect to the interior and internal

government of the province, we thought the time had arrived when we should endeavour to carry into effect some of those important proposals intended for the better administration of the States of the Sultan, which were discussed and projected at the Conference of Constantinople.

My lords, I will not enter into any minute details on these questions ; they might weary you at this moment, and I have several other matters on which I must yet touch ; but, generally speaking, I imagine there are three great points which we shall have before us in any attempt to prove the administration of Turkish dominion. First of all—it is most important, and we have so established it in Eastern Roumelia—that the office of Governor shall be for a specific period, and that, as in India, it should not be for less than five years. If that system generally obtained in the dominions of the Sultan, I believe it would be of incalculable benefit. Secondly, we thought it desirable that there should be instituted public assemblies, in which the popular element should be adequately represented, and that the business of those assemblies should be to levy and administer the local finances of the province. And thirdly, we thought it equally important that order should be maintained in this province, either by a *gendarmérie* of adequate force or by a local militia, in both cases the officers holding their commission from the Sultan. But the whole subject of the administration of Eastern Roumelia has been referred to an Imperial Commission at Constantinople, and this commission after making its investigations, will submit recommendations to the Sultan, who will issue firmans to carry those recommendations into effect. I may mention here, as it may save time, that in all the arrangements which have been made to improve the condition of the subject-races of Turkey in Europe, inquiry by local commissions where investigation may be necessary is contemplated. Those commissions are to report their results to the chief commission ; and, after the firman of the Sultan has been issued, the changes will take place. It is supposed that in the course of three months from the time of the ratification of the treaty of Berlin the principal arrangements may be effected.

My lords, I may now state what has been effected by the Congress in respect of Bosnia—that being a point on which, I think, considerable error prevails. One of the most difficult

matters we had to encounter in attempting what was the object of the Congress of Berlin—namely, to re-establish the Sultan as a real and substantial authority—was the condition of some of his distant provinces, and especially of Bosnia. The state of Bosnia, and of those provinces and principalities contiguous to it, was one of chronic anarchy. There is no language which can describe adequately the condition of that large portion of the Balkan peninsula occupied by Roumania, Servia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and other provinces. Political intrigues, constant rivalries, a total absence of all public spirit, and of the pursuit of objects which patriotic minds would wish to accomplish, the hatred of races, the animosities of rival religions, and, above all, the absence of any controlling power that could keep these large districts in anything like order : such were the sad truths, which no one who has investigated the subject could resist for a moment. Hitherto, at least until within the last two years, Turkey had some semblance of authority which, though it was rarely adequate, and when adequate, was unwisely exercised, still was an authority to which the injured could appeal, and which sometimes might control violence. But the Turkey of the present time was in no condition to exercise that authority. I inquired into the matter of those most competent to give an opinion, and the result of my investigation was a conviction that nothing short of an army of 50,000 men of the best troops of Turkey would produce anything like order in those parts, and that, were the attempt to be made, it would be contested and resisted, and might finally be defeated.

But what was to be said at a time when all the statesmen of Europe were attempting to concentrate and condense the resources of the Porte with the view of strengthening them—what would have been the position of the Porte if it had to commence its new career—a career, it is to be hoped, of amelioration and tranquillity—by despatching a large army to Bosnia to deal with those elements of difficulty and danger ? It is quite clear, my lords, that such an effort at this moment by Turkey might bring about its absolute ruin. Then what was to be done ? There have been before, in the history of diplomacy, not unfrequent instances in which, even in civilized parts of the globe, States having fallen into decrepitude, have afforded no assistance to keep order and tranquillity, and have

become, as these districts have become, a source of danger to their neighbours. Under such circumstances, the Powers of Europe have generally looked to see whether there was any neighbouring Power of a character entirely different from those disturbed and desolated regions, but deeply interested in their welfare and prosperity; who would undertake the task of attempting to restore their tranquillity and prosperity.

In the present case you will see that the position of Austria is one that clearly indicates her as fitted to undertake such an office. It is not the first time that Austria has occupied provinces at the request of Europe to ensure that order and tranquillity, which are European interests, might prevail in them. Not once, twice, or thrice has Austria undertaken such an office. There may be differences of opinion as to the policy on which Austria has acted, or as to the principles of government which she has maintained; but that has nothing to do with the fact that, under circumstances similar to those I have described as existing in Bosnia and the provinces contiguous to it, Austria has been invited and has interfered in the manner I have described, and has brought about order and tranquillity. Austria in the present case was deeply interested that some arrangement should be made. Austria, for now nearly three years, has had upwards of 15,000 refugees from Bosnia, which have been supported by her resources, and whose demands notoriously have been of a vexatious and exhausting character. It was therefore thought expedient by the Congress that Austria should be invited to occupy Bosnia, and not to leave it until she had deeply laid the foundations of tranquillity and order. My lords, I am the last man who would wish, when objections are made to our proceedings, to veil them under the decision of the Congress; it was a decision which the plenipotentiaries of England highly approved. It was a proposal which, as your lordships will see when you refer to the protocols which I shall lay on the table, was made by my noble friend the Secretary of State, that Austria should accept this trust and fulfil this duty; and I earnestly supported him on that occasion.

My lords, in consequence of that arrangement cries have been raised against our "partition of Turkey." My lords, our object has been directly the reverse, our object has been to

prevent partition. The question of partition is one upon which, it appears to me, very erroneous ideas are in circulation. Some two years ago—before, I think, the war had commenced, but when the disquietude and dangers of the situation were very generally felt—there was a school of statesmen who were highly in favour of what they believed to be the only remedy, what they called the partition of Turkey. Those who did not agree with them were those who thought we should, on the whole, attempt the restoration of Turkey. Her Majesty's Government at all times have resisted the partition of Turkey. They have done so because, exclusive of the high moral considerations that are mixed up with the subject, they believed an attempt, on a great scale, to accomplish the partition of Turkey, would inevitably lead to a long, a sanguinary, and often recurring struggle, and that Europe and Asia would both be involved in a series of troubles and sources of disaster and danger of which no adequate idea could be formed.

These professors of partition—quite secure, no doubt, in their own views—have freely spoken to us on this subject. We have been taken up to a high mountain and shown all the Kingdoms of the earth, and they have said, "All these shall be yours if you will worship Partition." But we have declined to do so for the reasons I have shortly given. And it is a remarkable circumstance that after the great war, and after the prolonged diplomatic negotiations, which lasted during nearly a period of three years, on this matter, the whole Powers of Europe, including Russia, have strictly, and as completely as ever, come to the unanimous conclusion that the best chance for the tranquillity and order of the world is to retain the Sultan as part of the acknowledged political system of Europe. My lords, unquestionably after a great war—and I call the late war a great war, because the greatness of a war now must not be calculated by its duration, but by the amount of the forces brought into the field, and where a million of men have struggled for supremacy, as has been the case recently, I call that a great war—but, I say, after a great war like this, it is utterly impossible that you can have a settlement of any permanent character without a redistribution of territory and considerable changes. But that is not partition. My lords, a country may have lost provinces, but that is not partition. We know that not very long ago a great country—one of the

foremost countries of the world—lost provinces ; yet is not France one of the great Powers of the world, and with a future—a commanding future ?

Austria herself has lost provinces—more provinces than Turkey, perhaps ; even England has lost provinces—the most precious possessions—the loss of which every Englishman must deplore to this moment. We lost them from bad government. Had the principles which now obtain between the metropolis and her dependencies prevailed then, we should not, perhaps, have lost those provinces, and the power of this Empire would have been proportionally increased. It is perfectly true that the Sultan of Turkey has lost provinces ; it is true that his armies have been defeated ; it is true that his enemy is even now at his gates ; but all that has happened to other Powers. But a sovereign who has not yet forfeited his capital, whose capital has not yet been occupied by his enemy—and that capital one of the strongest in the world—who has armies and fleets at his disposal, and who still rules over 20,000,000 of inhabitants, cannot be described as a Power whose dominions have been partitioned. My lords, it has been said that no limit has been fixed to the occupation of Bosnia by Austria. Well, I think that was a very wise step. The moment you limit an occupation you deprive it of half its virtue. All those opposed to the principles which occupation was devised to foster and strengthen, feel that they have only to hold their breath and wait a certain time, and the opportunity for their interference would again present itself. Therefore, I cannot agree with the objection which is made to the arrangement with regard to the occupation of Bosnia by Austria on the question of its duration.

My lords, there is a point on which I feel it now my duty to trouble your lordships, and that is the question of Greece. A severe charge has been made against the Congress, and particularly against the English plenipotentiaries, for not having sufficiently attended to the interests and claims of Greece. My lords, I think you will find, on reflection, that that charge is utterly unfounded. The English Government were the first that expressed the desire that Greece should be heard at the Congress. But, while they expressed that desire, they communicated confidentially to Greece that it must on no account associate that desire on the part of the Government with any

engagement for the redistribution of territory. That was repeated, and not merely once repeated. The Greek inhabitants, apart from the Kingdom of Greece, are a considerable element in the Turkish Empire, and it is of the greatest importance that their interests should be sedulously attended to. One of the many evils of that large Slav State—the Bulgaria of the San Stefano treaty—was, that it would have absorbed, and made utterly to disappear from the earth, a considerable Greek population. At the Congress the Greeks were heard, and they were heard by representatives of considerable eloquence and ability; but it was quite clear, the moment they put their case before the Congress, that they had totally misapprehended the reason why the Congress had met together, and what were its objects and character. The Greek representatives, evidently, had not in any way relinquished what they call their great idea—and your lordships well know that it is one which has no limit which does not reach as far as Constantinople. But they did mention at the Congress, as a practical people, and feeling that they had no chance of obtaining at that moment all they desired—that they were willing to accept as an instalment the two large provinces of Epirus and Thessaly, and the island of Crete. It was quite evident to the Congress, that the representatives of Greece utterly misunderstood the objects of our labours; that we were not there to partition Turkey, and give them their share of Turkey, but for a very contrary purpose: as far as we could to re-establish the dominion of the Sultan on a rational basis, to condense and concentrate his authority, and to take the opportunity—of which we have largely availed ourselves—of improving the condition of his subjects.

I trust, therefore, when I have pointed out to your lordships this cardinal error in the views of Greece, that your lordships will feel that the charge made against the Congress has no substantial foundation. But the interests of Greece were not neglected, and least of all by Her Majesty's Government. Before the Congress of Berlin, believing that there was an opportunity of which considerable advantage might be made for Greece without deviating into partition, we applied to the Porte to consider the long-vexed question of the boundaries of the two States. The boundaries of Greece have always been inadequate and inconvenient; they are so formed as to offer

a premium to brigandage—which is the curse of both countries, and has led to misunderstanding and violent intercourse between the inhabitants of both. Now, when some redistribution—and a considerable redistribution—of territories was about to take place, now, we thought, was the opportunity for Greece to urge her claim ; and that claim we were ready to support ; and to reconcile the Porte to viewing it in a large and liberal manner. And I am bound to say that the manner in which our overtures were received by the Porte was encouraging, and more than encouraging. For a long period Her Majesty's Government have urged upon both countries, and especially upon Greece, the advantage of a good understanding between them. We urged that it was only by union between Turks and Greeks that any reaction could be obtained against that overpowering Slav interest which was then exercising such power in the Peninsula, and which had led to this fatal and disastrous war. More than this, on more than one occasion—I may say, on many occasions—we have been the means of preventing serious misunderstanding between Turkey and Greece, and on every occasion we have received from both States an acknowledgment of our good offices.

We were, therefore, in a position to assist Greece in this matter. But, of course, to give satisfaction to a State which coveted Constantinople for its capital, and which talked of accepting large provinces and a powerful island as only an instalment of its claims for the moment, was difficult. It was difficult to get the views of that Government accepted by Turkey, however inclined it might be to consider a reconstruction of frontiers on a large and liberal scale. My noble friend the Secretary of State did use all his influence, and the result was that, in my opinion, Greece has obtained a considerable accession of resources and strength. But we did not find on the part of the representatives of Greece that response or that sympathy which we should have desired. Their minds were in another quarter. But though the Congress could not meet such extravagant and inconsistent views as those urged by Greece—views which were not in any way within the scope of the Congress or the area of its duty—we have still, as will be found in the treaty, or certainly in the protocol, indicated what we believe to be a rectification of frontier, which would add considerably to the strength and resources of Greece.

Therefore, I think, under all the circumstances, it will be acknowledged that Greece has not been neglected. Greece is a country so interesting, that it enlists the sympathies of all educated men. Greece has a future, and I would say, if I might be permitted, to Greece, what I would say to an individual who has a future—"Learn to be patient."

Now, my lords, I have touched upon most of the points connected with Turkey in Europe. My summary is that at this moment—of course, no longer counting Servia or Roumania, once tributary principalities, as part of Turkey; not counting even the new Bulgaria, though it is a tributary principality, as part of Turkey; and that I may not be taunted with taking an element which I am hardly entitled to place in the calculation, omitting even Bosnia—European Turkey still remains a dominion of 60,000 geographical square miles, with a population of 6,000,000, and that population in a very great degree concentrated and condensed in the provinces contiguous to the capital. My lords, it was said, when the line of the Balkans was carried—and it was not carried until after long and agitating discussions—it was said by that illustrious statesman who presided over our labours, that "Turkey in Europe once more exists." My lords, I do not think that, so far as European Turkey is concerned, this country has any right to complain of the decisions of the Congress, or, I would hope, of the labours of the plenipotentiaries. You cannot look at the map of Turkey as it had been left by the treaty of San Stefano, and as it has been rearranged by the Treaty of Berlin, without seeing that great results have accrued. If these results had been the consequences of a long war—if they had been the results of a struggle like that we underwent in the Crimea—I do not think they would have been even then unsubstantial or unsatisfactory. My lords, I hope that you and the country will not forget that these results have been obtained without shedding the blood of a single Englishman; and if there has been some expenditure, it has been an expenditure which, at least, has shown the resources and determination of this country. Had you entered into that war—for which you were prepared—and well prepared—probably in a month you would have exceeded the whole expenditure you have now incurred.

My lords, I now ask you for a short time to quit Europe and

to visit Asia, and consider the labours of the Congress in another quarter of the world. My lords, you will know that the Russian arms met with great success in Asia, and that in the treaty of San Stefano considerable territories were yielded by Turkey to Russia. In point of population they may not appear to be of that importance that they are generally considered ; because it is a fact which should be borne in mind that the population which was yielded to Russia by Turkey amounted only to about 250,000 souls ; and, therefore, if you look to the question of population, and to the increase of strength in a State which depends on population, you would hardly believe that the acquisition of 250,000 new subjects is a sufficient return for the terrible military losses which inevitably must accrue from campaigns in that country. But although the amount of population was not considerable, the strength which the Russians acquired was of a very different character. They obtained Kars by conquest—they obtained Ardahan—another stronghold—they obtained Bayazid—and the valley of Alashkerd with the adjoining territory, which contain the great commercial routes in that part of the world. They also obtained the port of Batoum.

Now, my lords, the Congress of Berlin have so far sanctioned the treaty of San Stefano that, with the exception of Bayazid and the valley I have mentioned—no doubt very important exceptions, and which were yielded by Russia to the views of the Congress—they have consented to the yielding of the places I have named to Russia. The Congress have so far approved the treaty of San Stefano that they have sanctioned the retention by Russia of Kars and Batoum. Now the question arises—the Congress having come to that determination—Was it a wise step on the part of the plenipotentiaries of Her Majesty to agree to that decision ? That is a question which may legitimately be asked. We might have broken up the Congress and said, “ We will not consent to the retention of these places by Russia, and we will use our force to oblige her to yield them up.” Now, my lords, I wish fairly to consider what was our position in this state of affairs. It is often argued as if Russia and England had been at war, and peace was negotiating between the two Powers. That was not the case. The rest of Europe were critics over a treaty which was a real treaty that existed between Russia and Turkey. Turkey

had given up Batoum, she had given up Kars and Ardahan, she had given up Bayazid.

In an examination of the question, then, we must remember that Russia at this moment, so far as Europe is concerned, has acquired in Europe nothing but a very small portion of territory, occupied by 130,000 inhabitants. Well, she naturally expected to find some reward in her conquests in Armenia for the sacrifices which she had made. Well, my lords, consider what these conquests are. There was the strong fort of Kars. We might have gone to war with Russia in order to prevent her acquiring Kars and Batoum, and other places of less importance. The war would not have been, probably, a very short war. It would have been a very expensive war—and, like most wars, it would probably have ended in some compromise, and we should have got only half what we had struggled for. Let us look these two considerable points fairly in the face. Let us first of all take the great stronghold of Kars. Three times has Russia captured Kars. Three times, either by our influence or by other influences, it has been restored to Turkey. Were we to go to war for Kars and restore it to Turkey, and then to wait till the next misunderstanding between Russia and Turkey, when Kars should have been taken again? Was that an occasion of a *casus belli*? I do not think your lordships would ever sanction a war carried on for such an object and under such circumstances.

Then, my lords, look at the case of Batoum, of which your lordships have heard so much. I should have been very glad if Batoum had remained in the possession of the Turks, on the general principle that the less we had reduced its territory in that particular portion of the globe, the better it would be as regards the prestige on which the influence of the Ottoman Porte much depends there. But let us see what is this Batoum of which you have heard so much. It is generally spoken of in society and in the world as if it were a sort of Portsmouth—whereas, in reality, it should rather be compared with Cowes. It will hold three considerable ships, and if it were packed like the London docks, it might hold six; but in that case the danger, if the wind blew from the north, would be immense. You cannot increase the port seaward; for though the water touching the shore is not absolutely fathomless, it is extremely deep, and you cannot make any artificial harbour or

breakwater. Unquestionably, in the interior the port might be increased, but it can only be increased by first-rate engineers, and the expenditure of millions of capital ; and if we were to calculate the completion of the port by the precedents which exist in many countries, and certainly in the Black Sea, it would not be completed under half-a-century. Now is that a question for which England would be justified in going to war with Russia ? My lords, we have, therefore, thought it advisable not to grudge Russia those conquests which have been made—especially after obtaining the restoration of the town of Bayazid and its important district.

But it seemed to us the time had come when we ought to consider whether certain efforts should not be made to put an end to these perpetually recurring wars between the Porte and Russia, ending, it may be, sometimes apparently in comparatively insignificant results ; but always terminating with one fatal consequence—namely, shaking to the centre the influence and the prestige of the Porte in Asia, and diminishing its means of profitably and advantageously governing that country. My lords, it seemed to us that as we had now taken and as Europe generally had taken, so avowedly deep an interest in the welfare of the subjects of the Porte in Europe, the time had come when we ought to consider whether we could not do something which would improve the general condition of the dominions of the Sultan in Asia ; and, instead of these most favoured portions of the globe every year being in a more forlorn and disadvantageous position, whether it would not be possible to take some steps which would secure at least tranquillity and order ; and, when tranquillity and order were secured, whether some opportunity might not be given to Europe to develop the resources of a country which Nature has made so rich and teeming.

My lords, we occupy with respect to this part of the world a peculiar position, which is shared by no other Power. Our Indian Empire is on every occasion on which these discussions occur, or these troubles occur, or these settlements occur—our Indian Empire is to England a source of grave anxiety, and the time appeared to have arrived when, if possible, we should terminate that anxiety. In all the questions connected with European Turkey we had the assistance and sympathy sometimes of all, and often of many, of the European Powers

—because they were interested in the question who should possess Constantinople, and who should have the command of the Danube and the freedom of the Mediterranean. But when we came to considerations connected with our Oriental Empire itself, they naturally are not so generally interested as they are in those which relate to the European portion of the dominions of the Porte, and we have to look to our own resources alone. There has been no want, on our part, of invitations to neutral Powers to join with us in preventing or in arresting war. Besides the great Treaty of Paris, there was the tripartite treaty, which, if acted upon, would have prevented war. But that treaty could not be acted upon, from the unwillingness of the parties to it to act; and therefore we must clearly perceive that if anything could be effectually arranged, as far as our Oriental Empire is concerned, the arrangements must be made by ourselves. Now, this was the origin of that Convention at Constantinople which is on your lordships' table, and in that Convention our object was not merely a military or chiefly a military object. Our object was to place this country certainly in a position in which its advice and in which its conduct might at least have the advantage of being connected with a military power and with that force which it is necessary to possess often in great transactions, though you may not fortunately feel that it is necessary to have recourse to that force.

Our object in entering into that arrangement with Turkey was, as I said before, to produce tranquillity and order. When tranquillity and order were produced, we believed that the time would come when the energy and enterprise of Europe might be invited to what really is another continent, as far as the experience of man is concerned, and that its development will add greatly not merely to the wealth and the prosperity of the inhabitants, but to the wealth and prosperity of Europe. My lords, I am surprised to hear—for though I have not heard it myself from any authority, it is so generally in men's mouths that I am bound to notice it—that the step we have taken should be represented as one that is calculated to excite the suspicion or enmity of any of our allies, or of any State. My lords, I am convinced that when a little time has elapsed, and when people are better acquainted with this subject than they are at present, no one will accuse England of having

acted in this matter but with frankness and consideration for other Powers. And if there be a Power in existence to which we have endeavoured to show most consideration from particular circumstances in this matter it is France. There is no step of this kind that I would take without considering the effect it might have upon the feelings of France—a nation to whom we are bound by almost every tie that can unite a people, and with whom our intimacy is daily increasing. If there could be any step which of all others was least calculated to excite the suspicion of France, it would appear to be this—because we avoided Egypt, knowing how susceptible France is with regard to Egypt; we avoided Syria, knowing how susceptible France is on the subject of Syria; and we avoided availing ourselves of any part of the *terra firma*, because we would not hurt the feelings or excite the suspicions of France. France knows that for the last two or three years we have listened to no appeal which involved anything like an acquisition of territory, because the territory which might have come to us would have been territory which France would see in our hands with suspicion and dislike.

But I must make this observation to your lordships. We have a substantial interest in the East; it is a commanding interest, and its behest must be obeyed. But the interest of France in Egypt, and her interest in Syria are, as she acknowledges, sentimental and traditionary interests; and, although I respect them, and although I wish to see in the Lebanon and Egypt the influence of France fairly and justly maintained, and although her officers and ours in that part of the world—and especially in Egypt—are acting together with confidence and trust, we must remember that our connection with the East is not merely an affair of sentiment and tradition, but that we have urgent and substantial and enormous interests which we must guard and keep. Therefore, when we find that the progress of Russia is a progress which, whatever may be the intentions of Russia, necessarily in that part of the world produces such a state of disorganisation and want of confidence in the Porte, it comes to this—that if we do not interfere in vindication of our own interests, that part of Asia must become the victim of anarchy, and ultimately become part of the possessions of Russia.

Now, my lords, I have ventured to review the chief points

connected with the subject on which I wished to address you—namely, what was the policy pursued by us, both at the Congress of Berlin and in the Convention of Constantinople? I am told, indeed, that we have incurred an awful responsibility by the Convention into which we have entered. My lords, a prudent minister certainly would not recklessly enter into any responsibility; but a minister who is afraid to enter into any responsibility is, to my mind, not a prudent minister. We do not, my lords, wish to enter into any unnecessary responsibility; but there is one responsibility from which we certainly shrink; we shrink from the responsibility of handing to our successors a weakened or a diminished Empire. Our opinion is, that the course we have taken will arrest the great evils which are destroying Asia Minor and the equally rich countries beyond. We see in the present state of affairs the Porte losing its influence over its subjects; we see a certainty, in our opinion, of increasing anarchy, of the dissolution of all those ties which though feeble, yet still exist and which have kept society together in those countries. We see the inevitable result of such a state of things, and we cannot blame Russia for availing herself of it. But, yielding to Russia what she has obtained, we say to her—“Thus far, and no farther.” Asia is large enough for both of us. There is no reason for these constant wars, or fears of wars, between Russia and England. Before the circumstances which led to the recent disastrous war, when none of those events which we have seen agitating the world have occurred, and when we were speaking in “another place” of the conduct of Russia in Central Asia, I vindicated that conduct, which I thought was unjustly attacked, and I said then—what I repeat now,—there is room enough for Russia and England in Asia.

But the room that we require we must secure. We have, therefore, entered into an alliance—a defensive alliance—with Turkey, to guard her against any further attack from Russia. We believe that the result of this Convention will be order and tranquillity. And then it will be for Europe—for we ask no exclusive privileges or commercial advantages—it will then be for Europe to assist England in availing ourselves of the wealth which has been so long neglected and undeveloped in regions once so fertile and so favoured. We are told, as I have said before, that we are undertaking great responsibilities. From

those responsibilities we do not shrink. We think that, with prudence and discretion, we shall bring about a state of affairs as advantageous for Europe as for ourselves; and in that conviction we cannot bring ourselves to believe that the act which we have recommended is one that leads to trouble and to warfare. No, my lords, I am sure there will be no jealousy between England and France upon this subject. In taking Cyprus the movement is not Mediterranean, it is Indian. We have taken a step there which we think necessary for the maintenance of our Empire and for its preservation in peace.

If that be our first consideration, our next is the development of the country. And upon that subject I am told that it was expected to-night that I should in detail lay before the House the minute system by which all those results which years may bring about are instantly to be acquired. I, my lords, am prepared to do nothing of the kind. We must act with considerable caution. We are acting with a Power, let me remind the House, which is an independent power—the Sultan—and we can decide nothing but with his consent and sanction. We have been in communication with that Prince—who, I may be allowed to remind the House, has other things to think about, even than Asia Minor; for no man was ever tried, from his accession to the throne till this moment, so severely as the Sultan has been; but he has invariably during his reign expressed his desire to act with England and to act with Europe, and especially in the better administration and management of his affairs. The time will come—and I hope it is not distant—when my noble friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs may be able to communicate to the House details of these matters, which will be most interesting. But we must protest against being forced into statements on matters of importance, which are necessarily still immature. And we must remember that, formally speaking, even the Treaty of Berlin has not been ratified, and there are many things which cannot even be commenced until the ratification of that treaty has occurred.

My lords, I have now laid before you the general outline of the policy we have pursued, both in the Congress of Berlin and at Constantinople. They are intimately connected with each other, and they must be considered together. I only hope that the house will not misunderstand—and I think

the country will not misunderstand—our motives in occupying Cyprus, and in encouraging those intimate relations between ourselves and the Government and the population of Turkey. They are not movements of war; they are operations of peace and civilization. We have no reason to fear war. Her Majesty has fleets and armies which are second to none. England must have seen with pride the Mediterranean covered with her ships; she must have seen with pride the discipline and devotion which have been shown to her and her Government by all her troops, drawn from every part of her Empire. I leave it to the illustrious duke, in whose presence I speak, to bear witness to the spirit of imperial patriotism which has been exhibited by the troops from India, which he recently reviewed at Malta. But it is not on our fleets and armies, however necessary they may be for the maintenance of our imperial strength, that I alone or mainly depend in that enterprise on which this country is about to enter. It is on what I most highly value—the consciousness that in the Eastern nations there is confidence in this country, and that, while they know we can enforce our policy, at the same time they know that our Empire is an Empire of liberty, of truth, and of justice.

JOHN BRIGHT

IF Bright's speeches were in the ordinary sense more eloquent than Cobden's, they had, like his, the merit of perfect lucidity. Bright was not a deep thinker, nor did he trouble himself about the philosophy of legislation. He combined with a great command of language a rich vein of occasional humour, and a power of leading up to a height from which the whole subject he was discussing could be in a moment surveyed. His mind was not the mind of a debater. In the campaign against the Corn-laws he usually left to Cobden the duty of bringing facts to bear upon assumptions. What Bright could do better than any other man was to clothe in memorable phrases the conclusions he desired to enforce. He was a student of the English language from the oratorical point of view, an accomplished artist in the structure of sentences which embodied the feelings of his audience or his party. It would be unjust to say that he spoke above his abilities. He always had a plain and definite idea of what he meant to say. But it was not his habit to deal with the preliminary stages of a conflict. He took up the question where it emerged from the dialectical phase, and clothed it in a form which made it impressive to multitudes of hearers and readers. No great orator has known more accurately and completely how to be emphatic without becoming wearisome, or how to point without exaggerating a truth. When he remarked, in 1874, that if the Conservatives had been in the wilderness, they would have complained of the Ten Commandments as a piece of harassing legislation, he only put into a memorable and humorous shape the answer to a charge that

Liberal legislation had been harassing and meddlesome. He has been described as an opponent of all war. But if his speeches against the Crimean War are examined, they will be found to involve a thorough acquaintance with the negotiations and a hearty assurance that British interests were not concerned in them. Bright would have been a much less formidable antagonist if he had not taken the trouble of mastering the case of his opponents. When, however, he came to set forth his own, he did not always accompany it with the reasons which had induced him to adopt it himself. If he sometimes appeared to declaim rather than to argue, it was not so much because his arguments were bad as because his declamation was good. He never spoke upon a topic which he had not previously investigated. He was neither hasty nor careless. But he was not given to abstractions, nor to details. His plan was to think the matter out, and then present his conclusions to others as clearly as he saw them himself. He seemed not so much an advocate as a judicial expositor, bringing home salient aspects of a controversy in a light which illustrated them on every side. He did not try to become a debater in the House of Commons. The cut and thrust of mere verbal fencing were not in his line. But he could appeal to the judgment as well as the conscience of great assemblies with a vigour and directness which lost nothing of their force because they assumed that on broad and general grounds of ethics and politics he and his hearers were agreed.

When Bright first came into Parliament, the agitation against the Corn-laws was in full swing, and Charles Villiers was conducting the movement in the House of Commons. Although some of Bright's greatest speeches were made in the House, his fame as an orator rests chiefly upon addresses outside. He never acquired, nor perhaps sought to acquire, a Parliamentary manner. While he dealt in simple language with familiar themes, he could at times invest great truths and ideas with a splendour of diction peculiarly his own.

Unlike Cobden, he rather avoided detail, and preferred to bring generalities within the scope of his argument by a bold appeal to first principles for the confirmation of his case. He did not shrink, any more than Cobden, from setting himself against prevailing opinion. The Crimean War, and the Civil War in America, divided him sharply from the mass of his fellow-countrymen in the first instance, and from the middle as well as the upper class in the second. He could always command a hearing. But throughout his life, or at all events throughout the greater part of it, he was fighting against tremendous odds. The Corn-laws were repealed because the first Conservative statesman of the age was converted by the arguments of Cobden, and the spectacle of Ireland. The war with Russia proceeded to its worst without any apparent effect from Bright's unflinching opposition. Disraeli assisted Bright by absolutely refusing to take part in any agitation against the Northern states of the Union during the American conflict. Bright's influence was not immediate. Gradually both thinkers and practical men came round to see that he had been more prudent and far-sighted than the bulk of his fellow-countrymen. But he had not the power of impressing his views upon interested or indifferent opinion. No man could excite more enthusiasm, or provoke more hostility. If he had declaimed less, and argued more, he might have had a larger following, and come nearer to practical success. He saw very clearly straight ahead. He overlooked in his onward course the difficulties and perplexities which encumbered the path of those who had to deal with political problems from day to day. He was too apt to be impatient of diplomacy and statesmanship, which are no doubt often pretentious and unavailing, but are nevertheless essential to the conduct of public affairs. The blindness of the policy which maintained the Corn-laws imbued Bright from his youth with the notion that a plain manufacturer understood the business of government quite as well as a Minister of State.

*Russia : Negotiations at Vienna**House of Commons, February 23rd, 1855*

I AM one of those forming the majority of the House, I suspect, who are disposed to look upon our present position as one of more than ordinary gravity. I am one, also, of those, not probably constituting so great a majority of the House, who regret extremely the circumstances which have obliged the right hon. gentlemen who are now upon this bench to secede from the Government of the noble Lord, the member for Tiverton. I do not take upon me for a moment to condemn them ; because I think, if there be anything in which a man must judge for himself, it is whether he should take office if it be offered to him, whether he should secede from office, whether he should serve under a particular leader, or engage in the service of the Crown, or retain office in a particular emergency.

In such cases I think that the decision must be left to his own conscience and his own judgment ; and I should be the last person to condemn anyone for the decision to which he might come. I think, however, that the speech of the right hon. gentleman is one which the House cannot have listened to without being convinced that he and his retiring colleagues have been moved to the course which they have taken by a deliberate judgment upon this question, which, whether it be right or wrong, is fully explained, and is honest to the House and to the country.

Now, Sir, I said that I regretted their secession, because I am one of those who do not wish to see the Government of the noble Lord, the member for Tiverton, overthrown. The House knows well, and nobody knows better than the noble Lord, that I have never been one of his ardent and enthusiastic supporters. I have often disapproved of his policy both at home and abroad ; but I hope that I do not bear him, as I can honestly say that I do not bear to any man in this House—for from all I have received unnumbered courtesies—any feeling that takes even the tinge of a personal animosity : and even if I did, at a moment so grave as this, no feeling of a personal character whatever should prevent me from doing that which I think now, of all times, we are called upon to do—that which we honestly and conscientiously believe to be for

the permanent interests of the country. We are in this position, that for a month past, at least, there has been a chaos in the regions of the Administration. Nothing can be more embarrassing—I had almost said nothing can be more humiliating—than the position which we offer to the country; and I am afraid that the knowledge of our position is not confined to the limits of these islands.

It will be admitted that we want a Government, that if the country is to be saved from the breakers which now surround it, there must be a Government; and it devolves upon the House of Commons to rise to the gravity of the occasion, and to support any man who is conscious of his responsibility, and who is honestly offering and endeavouring to deliver the country from the embarrassment in which we now find it. We are at war, and I shall not say one single sentence with regard to the policy of the war or its origin, and I know not that I shall say a single sentence with regard to the conduct of it; but the fact is that we are at war with the greatest military power, probably, of the world, and that we are carrying on our operations at a distance of 3,000 miles from home, and in the neighbourhood of the strongest fortifications of that great military Empire. I will not stop to criticize—though it really invites me—the fact that some who have told us that we were in danger from the aggressions of that Empire, at the same time told us that that Empire was powerless for aggression, and also that it was impregnable to attack. By some means, however, the public have been alarmed, as if that aggressive power were unbounded, and they have been induced to undertake an expedition, as if the invasion of an impregnable country were a matter of holiday-making rather than of war.

But we are now in a peculiar position with regard to that war; for, if I am not mistaken—and I think I gathered as much from the language of the right hon. gentleman—at this very moment terms have been agreed upon—agreed upon by the Cabinet of Lord Aberdeen; consented to by the noble Lord, the member for Tiverton, when he was in that Cabinet; and ratified and confirmed by him upon the formation of his own Government—and that those terms are now specially known and understood; and that they have been offered to the Government with which this country is at war, and in conjunction with France and Austria—one, certainly, and the

other supposed to be, an ally of this country. Now, those terms consist of four propositions, which I shall neither describe nor discuss, because they are known to the House ; but three of them are not matters of dispute ; and with regard to the other I think that the noble Lord, the member for the City of London, stated, upon a recent occasion, that it was involved in this proposition—that the preponderant power of Russia in the Black Sea should cease, and that Russia had accepted it with that interpretation. Therefore, whatever difference arises is merely as to the mode in which that “ preponderant power ” shall be understood or made to cease. Now, there are some gentlemen not far from me—there are men who write in the public press—there are thousands of persons in the United Kingdom at this moment—and I learn with astonishment and dismay that there are persons even in that grave assembly which we are not allowed to specify by a name in this House—who have entertained dreams—impracticable theories—expectations of vast European and Asiatic changes, of severed nationalities, and of a new map of Europe, if not of the world, as a result or an object of this war. And it is from these gentlemen that we hear continually, addressed to the noble Lord, the member for Tiverton, language which I cannot well understand. They call upon him to act, to carry on the war with vigour, and to prosecute enterprises which neither his Government nor any other government has seriously entertained ; but I would appeal to those gentlemen whether it does not become us—regarding the true interests and the true honour of the country—if our Government have offered terms of peace to Russia, not to draw back from those terms, not to cause any unnecessary delay, not to adopt any subterfuge to prevent those terms being accepted, not to attempt shuffles of any kind, not to endeavour to insist upon harder terms, and thus make the approach of peace even still more distant than it is at present ?

Whatever may be said about the honour of the country in any other relation involved in this affair, this, at least, I expect every man who hears me to admit—that if terms of peace have been offered they have been offered in good faith, and shall be in honour and good faith adhered to ; so that if, unfortunately for Europe and humanity, there should be any failure at Vienna, no man should point to the English Government and to the authorities and rulers of this Christian country,

and say that we have prolonged the war and the infinite calamities of which it is the cause.

I have said that I was anxious that the Government of the noble Lord should not be overthrown. Will the House allow me to say why I am so? The noble Lord at the head of the Government has long been a great authority with many persons in this country upon foreign policy. His late colleague, and present envoy to Vienna, has long been a great authority with a large portion of the people of this country upon almost all political questions. With the exception of that unhappy selection of an Ambassador at Constantinople, I hold that there are no men in this country more truly responsible for our present position in this war than the noble Lord who now fills the highest office in the State and the noble Lord who is now, I trust, rapidly approaching the scene of his labours in Vienna. I do not say this now to throw blame upon these noble Lords, because their policy, which I hold to be wrong, they, without doubt, as firmly believe to be right; but I am only stating facts. It has been their policy that they have entered into war for certain objects, and I am sure that neither the noble Lord at the head of the Government nor his late colleague the noble Lord, the member for London, will shrink from the responsibility which attaches to them. Well, Sir, now we have these noble Lords in a position which is, in my humble opinion, favourable to the termination of the troubles which exist. I think that the noble Lord at the head of the Government himself would have more influence in stilling whatever may exist of clamour in this country than any other member of this House. I think, also, that the noble Lord, the Member for London, would not have undertaken the mission to Vienna if he had not entertained some strong belief that, by so doing, he might bring the war to an end. Nobody gains reputation by a failure in negotiation, and as that noble Lord is well acquainted with the whole question from the beginning to end, I entertain a hope—I will not say a sanguine hope—that the result of that mission to Vienna will be to bring about a peace, to extricate this country from some of those difficulties inseparable from a state of war.

There is one subject upon which I should like to put a question to the noble Lord at the head of the Government. I shall not say one word here about the state of the army in the

Crimea, or one word about its numbers or its condition. Every member of this House, every inhabitant of this country, has been sufficiently harrowed with details regarding it. To my solemn belief, thousands—nay, scores of thousands of persons—have retired to rest, night after night, whose slumbers have been disturbed or whose dreams have been based upon the sufferings and agonies of our soldiers in the Crimea. I should like to ask the noble Lord at the head of the Government—although I am not sure that he will feel that he can or ought to answer the question—whether the noble Lord, the member for London, has power, after discussions have commenced, and as soon as there shall be established good grounds for believing that the negotiations for peace will prove successful, to enter into any armistice? [No! no!]

I know not, Sir, who it is that says “No, no,” but I should like to see any man get up and say that the destruction of 200,000 human lives lost on all sides during the course of this unhappy conflict is not a sufficient sacrifice. You are not pretending to conquer territory—you are not pretending to hold fortified or unfortified towns; you have offered terms of peace which, as I understand them, I do not say are not moderate; and breathes there a man in this House or in this country whose appetite for blood is so insatiable that, even when terms of peace have been offered and accepted, he pines for that assault in which of Russian, Turk, French and English, as sure as one man dies, 20,000 corpses will strew the streets of Sebastopol? I say I should like to ask the noble Lord—and I am sure that he will feel, and that this House will feel, that I am speaking in no unfriendly manner towards the Government of which he is at the head—I should like to know, and I venture to hope that it is so, if the noble Lord, the member for London, has power, at the earliest stage of these proceedings at Vienna, at which it can properly be done—and I should think that it might properly be done at a very early stage—to adopt a course by which all further waste of human life may be put an end to, and further animosity between three great nations be, as far as possible, prevented?

I appeal to the noble Lord at the head of the Government and to this House; I am not now complaining of the war—I am not now complaining of the terms of peace, nor, indeed, of anything that has been done—but I wish to suggest to this

House what, I believe, thousands, and tens of thousands, of the most educated and of the most Christian portion of the people of this country are feeling upon this subject, although, indeed, in the midst of a certain clamour in the country, they do not give public expression to their feelings. Your country is not in an advantageous state at this moment ; from one end of the kingdom to the other there is a general collapse of industry. Those members of this House not intimately acquainted with the trade and commerce of this country do not fully comprehend our position as to the diminution of employment and the lessening of wages. An increase in the cost of living is finding its way to the homes and hearts of a vast number of the labouring population.

At the same time there is growing up—and, notwithstanding what some members of this House may think of me, no man regrets it more than I do—a bitter and angry feeling against that class which has for a long period conducted the public affairs of this country. I like political changes when such changes are made as the result, not of passion, but of deliberation and reason. Changes so made are safe, but changes made under the influence of violent exaggeration, or the violent passions of public meetings, are not changes usually approved by this House or advantageous to the country. I cannot but notice, in speaking to gentlemen who sit on either side of this House, or in speaking to anyone I meet between this House and any of those localities we frequent when this House is up—I cannot, I say, but notice that an uneasy feeling exists as to the news which may arrive by the very next mail from the East. I do not suppose that your troops are to be beaten in actual conflict with the foe, or that they will be driven into the sea ; but I am certain that many homes in England in which there now exists a fond hope that the distant one may return—many such homes may be rendered desolate when the next mail shall arrive. The angel of death has been abroad throughout the land ; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one, as when the first-born was slain of old, to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two side-posts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on ; he takes his victims from the castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and the lowly, and it is on behalf of all these classes that I make this solemn appeal.

I tell the noble Lord, that if he be ready honestly and frankly to endeavour, by the negotiations about to be opened at Vienna, to put an end to this war, no word of mine, no vote of mine, will be given to shake his power for one single moment, or to change his position in this House. I am sure that the noble Lord is not inaccessible to appeals made to him from honest motives and with no unfriendly feeling. The noble Lord has been for more than forty years a member of this House. Before I was born, he sat upon the Treasury bench, and he has spent his life in the service of his country. He is no longer young, and his life has extended almost to the term allotted to man. I would ask, I would entreat the noble Lord to take a course which, when he looks back upon his whole political career—whatever he may therein find to be pleased with, whatever to regret—cannot but be a source of gratification to him. By adopting that course he would have the satisfaction of reflecting that, having obtained the object of his laudable ambition—having become the foremost subject of the Crown, the director of, it may be, the destinies of his country, and the presiding genius in her Councils—he had achieved a still higher and nobler ambition; that he had returned the sword to the scabbard—that at his word torrents of blood had ceased to flow—that he had restored tranquillity to Europe, and saved this country from the indescribable calamities of war.

Tax Bills

Power of the House of Lords

House of Commons, July 6th, 1860

I CANNOT help being struck with an inconsistency in the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Horsman) who has just resumed his seat. I am surprised that he has not concluded by moving that certain words in the first Resolution should be omitted, and in point of fact that the declaration which the House is about to make should be reversed. That would be in accordance with the speech of the right hon. gentleman, and with the sentiments which many members opposite have most vociferously cheered. I confess I do not know what a number of hon. gentlemen opposite thought of the statements of the right hon. gentleman about the headlong, precipitate, and reckless

Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because I think there were some fifty of them who were more enthusiastic supporters of that Budget than a great number of the members on this side of the House.

I shall not follow the right hon. gentleman in his endeavours to support his theories with regard to the extreme value of the House of Lords, nor shall I attempt to controvert them, because, in reality, that is not the question which is before the House. But, if the House will permit me, I will endeavour to keep as close to the question as I can, and I will state the grounds on which I am not satisfied with the course which this House is invited to take. I will not attack the Resolutions of the noble Lord, and I will not defend them, for I am not responsible for them. They appear to me unworthy of the occasion which is before us. I think they bear marks of having been prepared by more than one hand, and if they pass, and constitute the sole expression of our mind on this occasion, posterity will hardly fail to pronounce them the Resolutions of a somewhat degenerate House of Commons. The first Resolution is a very good one, but it is very old. It is none the worse for that, and I am glad the noble Viscount did not think it necessary to endeavour to amend it. The other two Resolutions are, to my mind, somewhat ambiguous and feeble, and are not in their expression of what I believe is constitutional usage, any more than as examples of composition in the English language, to be compared to the first and oldest.

Last night we had two speeches from that side of the House after long silence—speeches which, I confess, I heard with some surprise and with some pain. They appeared to me marked—to use a favourite phrase of the right hon. gentlemen below me—by great recklessness, and, if I may so speak, with great levity. Whatever may be the opinion of hon. members on this question, it is not one to be treated in that manner. It is a serious question—whether the powers of this House have been infringed or not, and whether the other House of Parliament shall hereafter exercise powers which it has not heretofore exercised. I confess I was compelled to think of the truth we learn from history, that there is no greater sign of the decadence of a people than when we find the leaders of parties and eminent statesmen treating great questions as if they were not great, and solemn realities as if they were not real at all.

I think I could observe in those speeches the triumph of men who had found an advocate in the Prime Minister, whom they expected to meet as an opponent, and who were delighted that, acting with their confederates in the other House of Parliament, they were likely to obtain a signal party advantage.

Is there anybody who has denied in point blank terms, except the right hon. gentleman, that the House of Lords, in the course it has taken, has violated—I will not say the privileges of this House, for privilege is a word not easily defined—but has broken in upon the usages of many centuries old—usages which our predecessors in this House have acknowledged to be of the utmost importance to our own powers and to the liberties of those whom we represent? If there was nothing wrong, then why was there a committee? The right hon. gentleman, the member for Bucks, neglected to answer that question. He made no opposition at the time; but three weeks afterwards he thinks that it would have been better if the committee had not been appointed. I will, however, undertake to affirm that, when the noble Viscount proposed that committee, every member of this House thought the proposition a reasonable one. Why did we ransack the journals unless something had happened which jarred upon every man's sense of the rights and privileges of this House and the usages of the House of Lords? And why, having this committee, and instituting these researches, have we these Resolutions moved, not by a young, inexperienced, and unknown member—if any such there be in the House of Commons—but by one of the oldest members of this House, one of the ablest statesmen of the day, and at this moment the chief Minister of the Crown? Surely everyone will admit that the circumstances were such as to justify the course that was taken in appointing the committee.

Then I have another reason to give to hon. gentlemen opposite, notwithstanding their spasmodic cheering—I do not use the word offensively—why we should have these very Resolutions which you are about to agree to, which the right hon. gentleman, the member for Bucks, as far as I could understand, entirely approves, and which you all feel delighted should be proposed by the noble Viscount, because they relieve you from a considerable difficulty. I say that these Resolutions are a proof that the course which has been taken by the other

House has been unusual, if not wrong ; because the Resolutions by implication condemn what the Lords have done, and although they do not revoke the Act, or pledge this House to any particular course, yet, when those Resolutions come to be considered, it will never be denied that the House of Commons does by them express a unanimous opinion that the course which has been taken by the other House is contrary to usage, and is calculated to excite the jealousy and alarm of the members of this House.

I have been a member of that committee, and the right hon. gentleman, the member for the University of Cambridge, knows my opinion of the committee and its labours. I think that committee fell wonderfully below its duties—that the course which it pursued was poor and spiritless ; and at a future time when the course it has taken is contrasted with the course taken by the House of Commons on previous occasions, it will be justly said that there has been a real and melancholy declension in the spirit of this House. That which I complain of in the proceedings of the committee, I also complain of in respect to the manner in which some hon. members have discussed this question. Half of the committee appeared to me to go into that committee as much the advocates of the House of Lords as of the House of Commons, and I find that some members of this House are of the same character. Speeches have been delivered here that very few members of the House of Lords would make on this question, and I will undertake to say that not one member of that House, who is known to the public by his political influence, legal knowledge, high character, or extensive learning, would dare to make the speech that has been made to-night by the right hon. gentleman, the member for Stroud. I went into the committee with the utmost frankness in order that I might ascertain, not altogether in what manner the Lords had asserted their privileges, but what our predecessors had done with regard to theirs. We have no right to let go one single particle of the privileges and powers which the House of Commons have gained in past times ; and I took it for granted that if I examined for some centuries back the course which the House of Commons had pursued—if I read their Resolutions, if I read the reasons adduced at their conferences, if I observed the Acts which they passed, and the result of the

discussions between the two Houses—we should be justified in concluding that we have rights to maintain for which our predecessors have contended.

Now, several Members, following the example of the committee, have taken the House back for a long period of time. I will not go into those precedents with the view of contending whether they do or do not refer to this particular case ; but the House will permit me to mention two or three facts which I brought out of the Journals, and which convinced me that we should not take a sufficiently bold or decided course if we merely agree to the Resolutions of the noble Viscount. I will first refer to that very case which the right hon. gentleman, the member for the University of Cambridge, and myself fixed upon as the starting point of our precedents—the precedents of the year 1407 ; and I trust every hon. member has read it, either in the translation, or in the old Norman-French. It is worth reading, for it is a very curious case, and there is no other so like the recent action of the House of Lords as that which took place 453 years ago ; for the House of Lords then proposed to continue a tax to which the Commons had not assented, and the House of Commons were greatly disturbed at the House of Lords prolonging a tax to which the House of Commons had not given its assent. We then made a great leap, and from the year 1407 came down to the year 1628. We then found the House of Commons insisting upon the initiation of Bills of Supply. They would not permit the name of the Lords to be inserted in the preamble of a Bill of Supply, neither would they agree to the compromise that neither the Lords nor the Commons should be introduced, but that the High Court of Parliament should be mentioned. The House of Commons refused to pass the Bill in that shape, and submitted that the Commons should be named alone in the grant. This was done, and that has been the practice ever since in the preamble of Supply Bills.

Then we come to 1640, when the House of Lords were much more modest than they ought to have been, according to the right hon. gentleman, who maintains that they ought to check, alter, amend, improve, and if necessary overthrow, all the financial arrangements of the year that this House may agree to. The Declaration of 1640 sets forth that the Lords stated at the Conference that :

“ My Lords would not meddle with matters of subsidy, which belong naturally and properly to you—no, not to give you advice therein, but have utterly declined it.”

Then the House of Lords, in 1640, we are asked to suppose, knew nothing of their constitutional rights, and the House of Commons of that day were less able than they are at present to judge of what is necessary for the performance of their proper functions in the State, and for the liberties of those whom they represent. Mr. Pym told their Lordships that they had not only meddled with matters of Supply, but that they had

“ Both concluded the matter and order of proceeding, which the House of Commons takes to be a breach of their privilege, for which I was commanded to desire reparation from your Lordships.”

The Lords made reparation by declaring that they did not know they were breaking a right of the Commons in merely suggesting that Supply should have precedence over the consideration of grievances. I am not sure that even now, notwithstanding what has been said, the House of Lords have ever admitted by any resolution that they have not the power to originate Supplies. They have not the power, of course, to carry such a Bill, because if it came to this House it would fall down dead, unless that unhappy time should come when the theories of the right hon. gentleman, the member for Stroud, are carried out.

Then comes the question of Amendments. The Lords endeavoured to amend a Bill of Supply. I do not wonder that they did so, because the theories of the right hon. gentleman must have been palatable to a good many of them. In 1671 it was proposed not to continue a tax, but to reduce a tax—the duty on white sugar. The Lords proposed to reduce the duty from one penny per pound to five-eighths of a penny, and the House of Commons came to a Resolution that “ in all aids given to the King by the Commons the rate or tax ought not to be altered by the Lords.” A conference was held with the House of Lords, and the House of Commons then declared that the right which they claimed “ was a fundamental right, both as to the matter, the measure, and the time.” Then, what followed in the House of Lords? They replied by the very same Resolution, which had been passed in a contrary sense by this House. They said, with reason, “ for

if they cannot amend, or abate, or revise a Bill in Parliament"—they said this, mind, in answer to the Commons, who declared that they could not amend, but might negative the whole—they said, "if we cannot amend, or abate, or alter in part, by what consequence of reason can we enjoy the liberty to reject the whole?"

The right hon. gentleman, the member for the University of Dublin, last night showed himself a most unhappy critic. He called our attention to the condition of things in the United States. In fact, he proved himself—only he did not exactly understand what he was saying—he showed himself to be strongly in favour of Americanizing our institutions in one respect. He said the Senate of the United States has the power not only of rejecting, but of amending—which is quite true. When the founders of the American Republic were binding together the thirteen sovereign States in one great—and to be still greater—combination, they looked back naturally to the practice of the country from which they were separating, to determine, or at least to learn, something from our Parliamentary practice. They found that in England the Lords could not begin Money Bills, could not alter or amend them; but that theoretically—because the matter had never been decided—theoretically they had power to reject. But, then, what was the conclusion which they came to? They said the very same thing that the House of Lords had said in the year 1671—"It is perfectly childish to say that the House of Lords cannot alter, abate, or increase, but yet shall be able to reject." They knew well, that, although there was that theoretical right in England, yet, practically, it had never been enforced, and they came to the conclusion that if they should give to their own Senate power to reject, it would be necessary also to give them the power to amend; and at this very moment the Senate of the United States might, not with that sort of responsibility of which the right hon. gentleman is so fond, but with a real responsibility, every two members being the representatives of a particular Sovereign State—that elected Senate does amend, and does reject, and does deal with finance in a manner which has never been permitted, nor even proposed in this country, except in the extraordinary speech to which we have just listened.

Seven years after the last date to which I have referred

there arose another contest, in the course of which a Resolution was passed. It is the strongest and most comprehensive Resolution that the House of Commons has ever passed in relation to this subject. I will not go into any elaborate argument upon it, but I will just read it, because it makes the arguments I am about to bring before the House more continuous and clear. The House of Commons declared this; and it was not one of those sudden acts which the House of Commons is now alleged to continually commit; but it was a Resolution drawn up by a committee specially appointed for that purpose—a Resolution specially considered and solemnly entered in the Journals of the House. It was in these words:

“All Aids and Supplies, and Aids to His Majesty from Parliament, are the sole gifts of the Commons, and all Bills for granting such Aids and Supplies are to begin with the Commons; and it is the undoubted and sole right of the Commons to direct, limit, and appoint in such Bills the ends, purposes, considerations, limitations, and qualifications of such grants, which ought not to be changed or altered by the House of Lords.”

At this time, when the Lords had never pretended to reject a Bill, it is probable that such a proposition was a thing that never entered into the head of any member of the House of Peers. I will undertake to say it would be difficult for any member of this House to draw up a Resolution more comprehensive and conclusive as to the absolute control of the House of Commons than that of the year 1678, which I have just now read.

Shortly afterwards, in the year 1691, there is another Resolution which goes minutely into the case before the House, and I beg the right hon. gentleman's attention to it. In that year a bill was passed for appointing Commissioners to Examine the Public Accounts of the Kingdom. The House of Lords amended, the House of Commons dissented; and among the reasons which the House of Commons gave was this—“That in aids, supplies, and grants, the Commons only do judge of the necessities of the Crown.” What are we asked now? We are asked to take into partnership another judge of the necessities of the Crown. The House of Commons which for five hundred years, which since the Revolution at least, has never withheld adequate Supplies from the Crown, is now to be depreciated and defamed, as if it had been guilty of scantily

supplying the wants of the Crown, and the House of Lords is to be asked to do that which the House of Commons alone did in 1691, namely, to judge of the necessities of the Crown, and to make the Supply greater than that which the House of Commons have believed to be sufficient. And, referring to that famous record of Henry the Fourth, we find it stated that "all grants and aids are made by the Commons, and are only assented to by the Lords."

A few years afterwards, our forefathers were concerned in a question about the paper duties, just as we are at this time; only they managed it better than we are doing now. In the year 1699 they declared :

"It is an undoubted right and privilege of the Commons, that such aids are to be given by such methods, and with such provisions, as the Commons only shall think proper."

But now we are told that aids and provisions for the Crown are to be raised by methods, not which the Commons think proper, but which the Lords think proper in opposition to the Commons.

The House will perceive that I am very hoarse, and I am sorry to trouble them with other cases. In the year 1700 there was another question raised between the two Houses : and the Commons told the Lords that they could not agree with their Amendment, and they again affirmed that :

"All the Aids and Supplies granted to his Majesty in Parliament are the sole and entire gift of the Commons ; and that it is the sole and undoubted right of the Commons to direct, limit, and appoint the ends, purposes, considerations, limitations, and qualifications of such grants."

And in 1702 there was another statement that the "granting and disposing of all public moneys is the undoubted right of the Commons alone."

In the year 1719 they object to a clause which the Lords had introduced ; on the ground that it levied a new subsidy not granted by the Commons, "which is the undoubted and sole right of the Commons to grant, and from which they will never depart." I want to ask the House, or any reasonable man, if we were discussing this question between the American Senate and the House of Representatives, or between the two Chambers of any foreign country, to what conclusion would

each one of us necessarily come as to the purpose and object of all these declarations, to which I have referred, and which are only a portion of those which are to be found in the Journals of this House for the last five hundred years? Would you say that they add to the conclusion that the House of Lords could throw out a Bill repealing a tax of the value and magnitude of £1,300,000 a year? Would you say that if they could not abate a tax, or continue a tax, or limit a tax, or dispose of a tax, or control in any way a tax, or even give advice to the Commons in respect of a tax—could you say that notwithstanding all that, which is clear and undeniable, they could, in the face of this House, reject a Bill which repealed a tax of £1,300,000 a year, without violating Parliamentary usage, and running contrary to all the declarations of this House for many centuries? I think—and I put it before the Committee—and if any hon. gentleman has done me the honour to read the draft Report which I prepared, he will see that I put before the Committee this long string of Cases and Resolutions, and Declarations, couched in language not ambiguous, not feeble, but in language clear and forcible, which could not be mistaken; and I then wished to ask the Committee—as I now ask the House—what was the end and object which the House of Commons had in view in these repeated declarations of their rights and opinions touching the granting of Supplies, and the imposition of taxes upon the people? I should say that it was this—they confirm and consecrate a practice of five hundred years, the principle which, till within the last hour, I thought every man in England admitted—the fundamental and unchangeable principle of the Government and Constitution of the English people, that taxation and representation are inseparable in this Kingdom.

Let us look and see how these Declarations and Resolutions apply to this case. We are now in the year 1860, and for a long period we have had no question of importance of this nature; and we begin to fancy that, after all, there is no great importance in such a question. We have long had our personal liberties in this country; longer almost, in some classes of society, than history can tell; but people perhaps fancy that their personal liberty cannot be endangered by this matter. No; in this case we were so confident of our right and our power that we could not comprehend any infringement of our rights.

These paper-duties, I believe were granted in the reign of Queen Anne ; partly for revenue, and partly for other purposes ; which purposes, I presume, had some effect in procuring the rejection of this Bill by the Lords. It was a tax to prevent the publication and spread of political information. I see an hon. gentleman up there in the gallery who is very much astonished at this ; but he is not aware, probably, that all which I have stated is, if I am not misinformed, in the Preamble of the Bill. Public opinion in those days allowed of very bad reasons being given. They can be acted on now even when they are not given. From the time of Queen Anne, to the present time, this paper-duty has crippled a very important industry. It has taxed all the trades which required large quantities of paper—such as those of Manchester, of Sheffield, of Nottingham, of Birmingham, and elsewhere ; but more than that, it has very successfully done what Queen Anne's ministers wanted ; it has threatened, and, to a large extent, it has strangled the press of this country. Within the last thirty years—and hon. members on the opposite side of the House I presume by this time are becoming conscious of it—new principles have become established in this country with regard to taxation on industry. New and wiser principles have been adopted, and not only adopted but established ; and there are some very powerful defenders of these principles, whom I have the pleasure to see opposite me to-night.

The right hon. gentleman, the member for Stroud, has proceeded on the old mode of discussion when arguments are not plentiful and facts are entirely wanting. He has raised his old friend, the hobgoblin argument, and has tried to show us that some frightful calamity must come upon us if this paper-duty be repealed : it is but a million-and-a-quarter. Does any hon. gentleman believe that our prosperity or success—or that any vast interest of this country—can possibly depend on a million, more or less, in the general revenue of the empire ? A million is a million. [“ Hear.”] I am glad to have said something in which the hon. gentleman, the member for Leicestershire, can coincide. There is no member who has laid more stress on the importance of a million in the taxation of the people than I have done ; it is the tax of many villages, of many towns ; and it makes the difference sometimes between comfort and desolation ; and therefore I am the last person

in the world who would undervalue the amount of a million of the public revenue. But still I should be only making myself foolish, if I were to say that a million sterling—whether our taxation be £50,000,000 as it was twenty years ago, or £70,000,000 as it is now—was of the gigantic importance attributed to it by the right hon. gentleman; for on this million, which we had provided a substitute for, before we relieve the people of that million, he founds his argument as to our recklessness, precipitancy, and madness, and drunkenness—I think he added—at least it was to be inferred from what he said; for he made use of the converse, and spoke of sobriety.

The noble Lord, the member for the City of London, in his speech last night reviewed the course of events, and told us what we all knew, that within the recollection, I suppose, of almost the youngest member of the House, there have been Excise duties on many other articles; I think, at one time, on candles; certainly at a later period on leather; I believe, since I came into this House, on glass; and, still more recently, on soap. Well, all these Excise duties have been abolished. Can you find a man, from John o'Groat's to the Land's End, who will not tell you that these reckless principles, applied to the repeal of these Excise duties, were not of essential benefit, not only to the particular trades most interested, but to the great mass of the people, and to the industry by which your people live?

Well, then, having followed for many years a course so beneficial, we come at length, in the year 1860, to the repeal of the paper-duty, which was promised by the House; which was recommended by the Government officers; which was called for by innumerable petitions; which was hoped for, I believe, by every person in the country who took an intelligent view of what was essential to aid the efforts which Government are making, by liberal grants every year, to promote the instruction of the people. This tax was £1,300,000. It was a question whether sugar should be relieved to the extent of a million, tea of a million, or paper of a million: I am speaking in round numbers. The hon. gentleman, not caring in the least about this reckless deficit, would certainly have preferred sugar or tea; but surely, as regards the question of the Supplies for the year, it was equally a matter of indifference to

the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the duty were taken off tea, or sugar, or paper. But the conclusion to which he necessarily came was, that while in the cases of tea and sugar the relief was to the extent of a million of taxation, in the case of paper it was not only a relief to that amount in money, but it was a relief to a great industry, and to several other industries, whose prosperity must depend on an abundant and cheap supply of paper. I speak with some knowledge of the subject, and I have not the least doubt that the abolition of the paper-duty was a positive relief to the whole people of the country equal to double the relief which would have been afforded by a reduction equal in amount to the duty on the articles of tea and sugar.

But the question may be still more narrowed ; and I beg the right hon. gentleman's particular attention—for it appears now that his hostility to the Chancellor of the Exchequer renders him unable to understand the multiplication table, or anything else that is plain. If the paper duty expired on the 15th of August, the reduction of revenue between that time and the end of the financial year would probably not be more than £600,000, but certainly would not exceed £700,000. I am sorry the House did not take more economical advice in past years. But we are now come, according to the right hon. gentleman, to this extremity of our resources, that you cannot take £700,000 this year from an Excise which is strangling a great trade, and put an additional halfpenny or penny on the income-tax, without bringing about such a frightful state of things, that the Constitution itself and the usages of Parliament must be violated, and we must bring in a foreign power to check us in our precipitous, reckless, and headlong career.

It may be very far from the modesty which becomes a member of this House, but I confess I am of opinion that the House of Commons is the best judge in this country of what is necessary for the trade, and also what is required by the financial condition of the country. First of all, there are among us a good many sagacious men of all sorts. There are, as I know, some very sagacious landowners ; we found it very hard to beat them even when they had a very bad cause. We have a very sagacious gentleman down here who spoke to-night, and who, whatever be the question which comes before us, always finds some very fitting object for his merciless and unscrupulous

vituperation. We know, many of us intimately, all the details connected with these questions ; in fact, I suppose, there is not a trade in this country of any importance or note that cannot find its representatives in this House. For many years past we have had the absolute control of questions of finance, and I undertake to declare, notwithstanding what the right hon. gentleman has stated, that there is not a representative body in the world which during the last twenty years has done more in the way of financial and fiscal reforms with greater advantage to the people. And yet, at the end of that period, when the triumphs of this House are to be found not in granite and bronze monuments, but in the added comforts of the population, and in the increased and undoubted loyalty of the people, you are now, forsooth, asked by the right hon. gentleman to abdicate your functions, and to invite 400 gentlemen, who are not traders, who have never been financiers, who do not possess means in any degree equalling your own of understanding the question—you are to ask them to join your councils, and not only to advise, but to check, and even to control.

It is one of the points which gave me most grief in regard to this question, that I have seen the House of Lords taking, of all cases, perhaps the worst that could possibly come before them, and inflicting suddenly, unexpectedly, and, in my opinion, groundlessly, most harsh and cruel treatment on all the persons who were interested directly in this question of the paper-excite. We are asked now, in terms not ambiguous, to overthrow the fabric which has grown up in this country, which has existed, and existed without damage, for at least 500 years. By the report of the right hon. gentleman we find that as far back as the year 1640 the House of Commons made this declaration, to which I ask the particular attention of members of the present House. They said :

“ We have had uninterrupted possession of this privilege ” [the privilege of the undisputed control over the taxation and finances of the country] “ ever since the year 1407, confirmed by a multitude of precedents both before and after, not shaken by one precedent for these 300 years.”

If that be so, it carries us back for a period of 520 years ; and yet we are asked to-night in the most unblushing and audacious manner, to overthrow this magnificent and time-honoured

fabric, and admit to powers, to which they have hitherto been unaccustomed, the hereditary branch of the Legislature.

Now, I say that the House of Lords in the course they have taken have committed two offences, which I had much rather they had not committed, because I am not anxious they should depreciate themselves in the eyes of the people of this country. [A laugh.] If hon. gentlemen opposite were as anxious that they should continue limited to their proper functions, doing all the good that it is possible for them to do, and as little harm as possible, they would not laugh in an apparent unbelief in what I have just stated. I say the House of Lords have not behaved even with fair honour towards the House of Commons in this matter. Every man of them who knew anything about what he was voting for knew that the House of Commons repealed the paper-excise, not merely because it wished to remit a million of taxes, but because it thought that to strangle a great industry was an injurious mode of raising revenue, and, therefore, it transferred that amount of taxation from the paper-excise to the income-tax. Then, I say, if that were known in the House of Lords, although they might have disapproved the change, and might have thought it better if it had not been made, it was not an honourable treatment of this House; and further, if they had the power which the American Senate has, and which the right honourable and learned gentleman wishes them to have, still it would not have been fair to this House to enact the additional penny on income, and to refuse to repeal the tax on paper. That is a question which every man can understand; and I cannot believe that there is any member of this House who does not comprehend it when put in that shape.

But there is another thing which the House of Lords have done wrong. They have trampled on the confidence and taken advantage of the faith of the Commons. The right hon. gentleman last night made a very curious statement on this subject, which, if I were a member of the House of Lords, I should be disposed to find fault with. He said:—"Why, what can you expect? It was the *lâches* of the House of Commons that gave the House of Lords the opportunity of doing what they have done." But, surely, if for 500 years the House of Lords has never done this,—if since the Revolution, even with the search into precedents made by the Committee,

not a single case which approaches this can be discovered,—is the House of Commons blameable for thinking that it was at least dealing with a House which would abide by the usages of the Constitution, and would not take advantage of the change which the House of Commons made for the public interest in the mode of imposing taxation? Instead of certain taxes being imposed annually, or for short periods, by which the House held a constant control over them, they were made permanent. The West India interest said they did not want their trade to be troubled and disturbed every year; and the sugar duties were made perpetual. But then are we always to treat the Lords as political burglars, and invent bolts, bars, locks, everything which may keep them from a possible encroachment on our rights? Must we treat them as men who, if you give them the smallest opportunity, will come down upon you and do that which you wish them not to do? If that be so, you must assuredly take certain precautions to prevent them from continuing such a course.

It is said that the Paper Duty Abolition Bill was thrown out in the Upper House by a great majority. That is a fact with which we are all well acquainted. I was talking recently to a peer who gave an explanation of this, which I will venture to repeat. "If," he said, "the regular House of Lords, that is to say, the hundred members who during the session really do transact the business, if they only had been in the House, the Paper Duties Repeal Bill would certainly have passed." That, however, happened which we all understand, and I have no objection to repeat the exact words used to me. "About two hundred members, who hardly ever come there, were let loose for the occasion." Most of them are unknown to the country as politicians, and they voted out this Bill by a large majority, with a chuckle, thinking that by doing so they were making a violent attack on the ministry, and especially on the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That is a House, recollect, in which three members form a quorum. I sometimes hear complaints in this House that ministers pass measures very late at night, when, perhaps, only fifty members are present, of whom thirty are connected with the Government; but in the House of Lords three form a quorum. Proxies may be used, too; and these three peers forming a quorum, with proxies in their pockets, are to dispose of great questions

involving £70,000,000 of taxes raised from the industry of the people of this country. At all events, if the two hundred peers who voted that night choose to come down on other occasions, there is no single measure of finance, however liberal or however much for the advantage of the people, that they would not reject, and thus frustrate the beneficial intentions of this House.

But after all I have said I am going to make this admission, that the House of Lords of course can reject a Bill, and can also initiate a Bill if they like. If it were not so late (and the Lords like to get away about seven)—if it were not so late, the Lords might to-night bring in a Bill levying a tax or voting money for the service of the year, and they can also reject any Bill you may send up to them. They are omnipotent within the four walls of their House, just as we are within the four walls of this House. But if they take their course, one contrary to the general practice of that House and of Parliament, it becomes us to consider what course we will take. We cannot compel them to make any change; but we may ourselves take any course that we please, and we may at least offer them the opportunity of altering the course they have taken.

My opinion is that it would have been consonant with the dignity of this House, wholly apart from the question of £1,300,000 a year, or of £700,000, the sum for this year, to have passed another Bill to repeal the paper-duty. If that had been a duty which I considered not the best to repeal, I still should have laid aside all partiality for a particular tax. There can be nothing more perilous to the country, or more fatal to the future character of this House, than that we should do anything to impair and lessen the powers we have received from our predecessors. I understand there are other sums amounting to about £1,500,000 or £2,000,000 which have yet to go up to the House of Lords. Now, if the noble Lord at the head of the Government, acting up to his position, which I think he has failed to do in this matter, had asked us, not on the ground (for that is a low ground) that the paper-duty was the best duty to repeal, but on the ground that as the House of Commons have come to the decision they should abide by it; but if he had asked us to pass another Bill, with an altered date, perhaps, and sent it up again to the House of Lords, he would have given

them the opportunity of reconsidering their decision ; and my full belief is that a course like this, taken without passion and without collision, would have been met in a proper temper by that House ; this difficulty would have been got over, and in all probability both Houses for the future would have proceeded more regularly and easily than they are likely to do under the plan proposed by the noble Lord.

Having stated that I shall leave the question of these Resolutions, I say there is no reason whatever in the arguments which have always been used why this duty should have been maintained, or why it was perilous to remit it. Its repeal was consistent with the policy of the Whigs before Sir Robert Peel came into power, with the policy of Sir Robert Peel's Government, of Lord Aberdeen's Government, of Lord Palmerston's Government, of Lord Derby's last Government, and of the existing Government. The policy of the repeal of the paper-duty is the recognized policy of this House, and it is the admitted interest of this country. Then, why, unless it be for a party triumph, unless it be to attack a particular minister, why is this question of £700,000 this year, and less than double that sum in future years, raised to an importance which does not belong to it ? and why, for the sake of a party triumph, are the great interests connected with it to be damaged and tortured, as they are now, by the action of one House of Parliament ? I am told there are members of this House who would not support the Government in this course, and I should certainly hardly expect that all the gentlemen on the benches opposite would lend it their sanction. Yet I doubt whether if the noble Lord at the head of the Government were to act in the manner I have indicated, the great majority of them would be induced, upon reflection, to adopt the policy which they have pursued with respect to these Resolutions ; and whether the House of Commons would not have passed a second bill even by a larger majority than that by which we passed the last.

There is a rumour that some gentlemen on this side of the House object to such a course of proceeding, and hon. gentlemen opposite have, perhaps, on that account been led to take up a line of action upon this question in which they otherwise could not hope to succeed. An hon. gentleman behind me, from whom I should have expected something better, said

only last night, in speaking of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that he was a reckless and unsafe Finance Minister. That observation he no doubt confined to the question of the repeal of the paper-duty ; but I cannot forget that in 1853 we had the same Chancellor of the Exchequer as to-day, and that it was asserted then also that he had committed great errors. [Cheers from the Opposition.] Yes ; but your Chancellor of the Exchequer was not in office long enough to perpetrate any great mistakes. Not long after that right hon. gentleman acceded to office, he brought in a Budget which the House of Commons rejected ; and upon the next occasion on which he proposed one, he found it necessary to shift the burden of responsibility to the shoulders of his successor. But in 1853, when the right hon. gentleman, the member for the University of Oxford, was Chancellor of the Exchequer, I put it to those among us who were then Ministers of this House, whether it is not the fact that the strength of the Government of Lord Aberdeen, of which he was a member, was not mainly to be attributed to his dealing with the taxation of the country in a manner which met with universal approbation out of doors ?

We come now to the present year, and while I do not wish to depreciate the popularity, or the character, or the ability of the noble Lord at the head of the Government, or any of his colleagues, still I undertake to say that the power and authority which his Administration has acquired during the present session it has gained mainly as the consequence of the beneficial propositions which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has made. I heard somebody last night—I am not quite sure it was not the right hon. gentleman below me to-night—talk of the House of Commons having been partly charmed and partly coerced into the acceptance of these propositions. But if that be so, and if we have proved ourselves to be soft-headed children who could be so swayed, I must say it appears to me very strange that such should be the case ; for I think the House of Commons has, upon the contrary, shown wonderful independence, and has proved itself to be extremely free from all those ties, the acting in accordance with which usually enables a government to conduct the business of a session with success. Be that, however, as it may, I repeat that the Budget of the right hon. gentleman, the Chancellor of the

Exchequer, when it was laid before the country, was received throughout all the great seats of industry, and among the farmers, too—for it tended to benefit them as the inhabitants of towns—with universal approbation.

The right hon. gentleman below me has been indulging himself to-night, in accordance with his custom, in condemning the French Treaty, and I must say we have heard a great deal upon that subject since it was first mooted in this House. We have heard it commented on by a great journal in this country, whose motive I will not attempt to divine, but whose motto must, I think, be that which Pascal said ought to have been adopted by one of the ancients—“*Omnia pro tempore, sed nihil pro veritate*,”—which, being translated, may be rendered—“Everything for *The Times*, but nothing for the truth.” We have had, in short, every description of falsehood propounded with respect to this Treaty. The right hon. gentleman below me has not hesitated to give currency to representations with respect to it which are wholly inaccurate, and to which, if I were not here, I would apply a still stronger term. Did not the right hon. gentleman say our manufacturers were—I forget the word—plaintiffs—no, suppliants in the Ante-chamber of the Emperor of the French? The statement is one, I can tell him, which is wholly untrue; nay, more,—and I may say that, with the exception of some right hon. gentlemen sitting on the Treasury bench, there is no one more competent to give an opinion on the subject than myself, for reasons with which the House is of course acquainted,—I tell the right hon. gentleman that nothing can exceed the good faith and the liberality with which that whole question is being treated by the Commissioners of the French Government. I would have him know that they are as anxious as our Commissioners that a great trade between England and France should spring up; and I will add that in the case of nations and governments in amity one with the other, whose representatives are endeavouring in all fairness and frankness to extend the commerce between both, he is neither a statesman nor a patriot who seeks to depreciate in the eyes of his countrymen the instrument by which it is hoped these results will be accomplished, and who thus does his utmost to prevent its success.

I come now to ask the House what is this reform in the tariff

introduced by the right hon. gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by which you are so frightened? Is it something novel? The right hon. gentleman below me says it is a scheme both new and gigantic in its proportions, and fatal in its principle. I was speaking last week to an hon. member for a south-western county who sits on the benches opposite, and he spoke in terms of exultation to me of the success of late years of that branch of industry in which you are peculiarly interested. Is it honest, then, that you should make such acknowledgments and not consent to extend further the principles which the whole country has pronounced to be sound and beneficial? We boast of the freedom of our commerce. That commerce has more than doubled since I had first the honour of a seat in this House. When, therefore, you now attack, through the Chancellor of the Exchequer, principles the adoption of which has wrought this great good, you are not, in my opinion, pursuing a course which will enhance your reputation with the country which you profess to represent. There is not, I contend, a man who labours and sweats for his daily bread; there is not a woman living in a cottage, who strives to make her humble home happy and comfortable for her husband and her children, to whom the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer have not brought hope, to whom his measures, which have been defended with an eloquence few can equal, and with a logic none can contest, have not administered consolation. I appeal to the past and present condition of the country, and I ask you, solemnly, to oppose no obstacle to the realization of those great and good principles of legislation.

I will not enter further into this question. I am unable from physical causes to speak with clearness, and I am afraid I must have somewhat pained those who have heard me. I must, however, repeat my regret that the noble Viscount at the head of the Government has not shown more courage in this matter than he appears to me to have exhibited, and that the House of Commons has not evinced more self-respect. I fear this session may as a consequence become memorable as that in which, for the first time, the Commons of England has surrendered a right which for 500 years they had maintained unimpaired. I, at least, and those who act with me, will be clear from any participation in this; we shall be free from the shame which must indelibly attach to the chief actors in

these proceedings. I protested against the order of reference which the noble Lord proposed, though I sat and laboured on the Committee with earnest fidelity on behalf of the House of Commons. I have felt it an honour to sit in this House up to this time, and I hope that hereafter the character of this House will not be impaired by the course which is about to be taken. I have endeavoured to show to my countrymen what I consider to be almost the treason which is about to be committed against them. I have refused to dishonour the memory of such members as Coke and Selden, and Glanville and Pym ; and, if defeated in this struggle, I shall have this consolation, that I have done all I can to maintain the honour of this House, and that I have not sacrificed the interests which my constituents committed to my care.

ROBERT LOWE

LOWE'S oratorical reputation was acquired and retained only during the Parliamentary Sessions of 1866 and 1867. Before that period he had not been conspicuous in Parliament, though he had been an excellent Minister of Education. When he afterwards became Chancellor of the Exchequer, his power of speaking seemed to have almost entirely deserted him. It was his opposition to Parliamentary Reform as brought forward first by Gladstone, and afterwards by Disraeli, that inspired him with the fervid eloquence to which he owes his rhetorical fame. Fear of democracy was the guiding spirit of his indignant denunciations. He had studied it in Australia, where it greatly alarmed him, and his dread of it induced him to treat a moderate, almost timid, extension of the franchise as if it had been a measure for placing the State under the heels of a rabble. There can be no doubt that in expressing his apprehensions he electrified the House of Commons by the pungent vigour of his incisive sarcasm, and the bold flights of his polished vituperation. How far he meant it all the readers of his speeches may judge for themselves. It is certainly more artificial than most real eloquence. The art, however, is extremely good, and the effect produced is not the less triumphant because the material is unusually slender. The enfranchisement of the working classes is a question of the first magnitude. But Mr. Gladstone's, or Lord Russell's Bill would merely have reduced an annual qualification of ten pounds to one of seven, and to create alarm out of such a change required imaginative as well as oratorical power. Lowe was a classical scholar who had imbibed the style of Greek and Latin orators with as much zeal and thoroughness as Pitt. Yet his range was too narrow, his diction was too monotonous, to have been long admired, or even tolerated, in the House of Commons.

He was the man of a subject, and of an occasion. Attack and invective were necessary for the full development of his faculties. His speeches in 1866, and one of his speeches in 1867, remain by themselves, quite unlike and apart from anything he achieved before, or anything he accomplished afterwards. They represent the oratory of protest, the declamation of a man who feels that he is making a last stand against a perilous future. For, though Gladstone's Bill was defeated, Lowe was not among those who believed in the permanence of the defeat.

*Representation of the People Bill,¹
House of Commons, May 31st, 1866*

MR. SPEAKER, we are now called to go into committee on a Bill which has never been read a second time. The two halves of it have been read, each of them a second time, but the whole measure we have never until this moment had before us. The first half this House was induced—or shall I say coerced?—into reading a second time without knowledge of the other part. The second half was really hurried on so fast to a second reading—only an interval of a week being given to master all its complicated details—that I, for one, was quite unable to take part in the discussion on the second reading, for want of time to make up my mind as to an opinion by which I should be willing to stand. I hope, therefore, the House will allow me, even at this stage, to question the principle of the measure. What is that principle? I must apologise to the House for the monotonous nature of my complaints, which are, I think, justified by the uniform nature of the provocation I receive. That provocation is that the Government keeps continually bringing in measures, attacking, as it seems to me, the very vital and fundamental institutions of the country, and purposely abstains from telling us the principle of those measures. I made the same complaint, I am sorry to say, against the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Franchise Bill: I make it again now. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in introducing the Redistribution Bill, said that the Government was not

¹ This speech was made when Lord Russell's Government proposed to go into Committee on the Reform Bill and the Redistribution Bill of 1866.

desirous of innovation—that is to say, they went on no principle. Their principle, he said, was the same as the principle of every Redistribution Bill. Now, that appears to me to be impossible, because Redistribution Bills may be divided into two classes. There is one, the great Reform Bill—the only successful Redistribution Bill that anyone ever heard of, and then there are the four which succeeded it, and which all failed from one cause or another, and the principle of the four Bills which followed was another. The principle of the Reform Bill, was no doubt, disfranchisement. The feeling of the country at the time was, that the deliberations of this House were over-ruled, and the public opinion stifled, by an enormous number of small boroughs under the patronage of noblemen and persons of property. That state of things was considered a public nuisance, and one which it was desirable to abate, and hence the principle of the Reform Bill was disfranchisement, and 141 members were taken away from the small boroughs. The Government proposition was to reduce the number of the House of Commons by fifty, because they were very anxious to get rid of these members, and they had no means which appeared suitable of filling up the vacancies they had created. It was only on an amendment carried against the Government that it was determined not to diminish the number of members in this House. But has that been the principle of any subsequent Reform Bill? I think not; it has been quite the contrary, it has been the principle of enfranchisement; and of enfranchisement only so far as may be necessary in order to fill up the places which require enfranchisement. As I have shown the House, there are two different principles, and the right hon. gentleman does not tell me which is his, but says the principle is that of all other Redistribution Bills. This puts me in mind of the story of a lady who wrote to a friend to ask how she was to receive a particular lover, and the answer was, “As you receive all your other lovers.” Well, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer will not tell us what the principle of his measure is, I must, I am sorry to say, with the same monotony of treatment, try to puzzle it out for myself, for it seems to me preposterous to consider the Bill without the guiding thought of those who constructed it. There is one principle of redistribution upon which it clearly ought not to be founded, and that is the principle of abstract right to equality of

representation. The principle of equal electoral districts, or an approximation to such districts, is not the principle on which a Redistribution Bill ought to be based. To adopt such a principle would be to make us the slaves of numbers—very good servants but very bad masters. I do not suppose we are eager to see the time :

“ When each fair burgh, numerically free,
Returns its members by the Rule of Three.”

And yet, though few persons stand up for the principle of equality of representation, I cannot escape the conclusion that it has had a good deal to do with the matter, and that the Government will find it exceedingly difficult to point out what other principle than that of a sort of approximation towards numerical equality has guided them. For if it be not a principle of *à priori* rights, it must be some good to the State, some improvement of the House or the Government—some practical good in some way. Now, the House has had the advantage of hearing the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and I ask whether any of these right honourable gentlemen has pointed out any good of any practical nature whatever to be expected from the Bill. I set myself, therefore, according to my old method, to try and puzzle out what ought to be the principle of a Bill for the Redistribution of Seats. In the first place, I should like to be shown some practical evil to be remedied, but I give that up in despair, for I have so often asked for it and failed to obtain it, that I am quite sure I shall not have it on this occasion. But it seems to me a reasonable view of a Redistribution Bill, that it should make this House, more fully and perfectly than it is at present, a reflection of the opinion of the country. That, I think, is a fair ground to start from. We have suffered in many respects from the arbitrary division of these two measures, and in none more than this—that the arguments for the Redistribution of Seats have been transferred to this Bill for enlarging the franchise. For, although it is quite true that a Bill for the Redistribution of Seats should aim at making Parliament a mirror of the country, it is also true that there can be nothing more inappropriate than the argument when applied to the enlargement of the franchise. For to pass a Bill which puts the power in a majority of the boroughs into

the hands of the working classes, is not to make this House a faithful reflection of the opinion of the country, but is to make it an inversion of that opinion by giving political power into the hands of those who have very little social power of any kind. But that principle applies, to a certain extent, to a Redistribution Bill, and from that point I take my departure. Anyone who makes an examination as to the nature of the deficiency, will see whether this House fails in any considerable degree to reflect the opinion of the country. I confess I have found it exceedingly difficult to discover in what respect it fails to do so. I have, indeed, observed some tendency of a kind, which, if we are to have a Redistribution Bill, ought to be corrected, I think there is a visible tendency to too great a uniformity and monotony of representation. I think there is a danger that we may become too much like each other—that we may become merely the multiple of one number. That is a danger which has occurred to thinking men, and I think it very desirable that in a Redistribution Bill we should find a remedy, if possible, for the tendency to this level of monotony, and perhaps mediocrity. I think another great object we must have in view in a Redistribution Bill should be enfranchisement, and by that I mean not the aggregation of fresh members to large constituencies, but the enfranchisement of fresh constituencies, and by the enfranchisement of such constituencies the giving more variety and life to the representation of the country, and thus making the House what the country is—a collection of infinite variety of all sorts of pursuits and habits. I think the second advantage is, that by making fresh constituencies by fresh enfranchisements you do the most efficient thing you can do towards moderating the frightful, enormous, and increasing expenses of elections. This is one of the greatest evils of our present system. I am not speaking of the illegitimate expenses of elections, but of the legitimate expenses. We had a paper laid upon our tables this morning giving an account of the expenses from “S” downwards. I take the first few large boroughs, and I will read the expenses. The expense of the election for Stafford is £5,400; Stoke-upon-Trent, £6,200; Sunderland, £5,000; and Westminster, £12,000. These are the aggregate expenses of all the candidates. I take them as they come, without picking and choosing. I wish to call particular attention to the case of Westminster, not for the purpose of saying

anything disagreeable to my honourable friend (Mr. J. Stuart Mill), for we know he was elected in a burst—I will say a well-directed burst—of popular enthusiasm. That was honourable to him and honourable to them, and I have no doubt that in the course of the election all that could be done by industry and enthusiasm was accomplished—gratuitously; and I am sure that my honourable friend did not contribute in any way to swell any unreasonable election expenses. His election ought to have been gratuitous; but mark what it cost—£2,302. I believe it did not cost him 6d. He refused to contribute anything, and it was very much to the honour of his constituents that they brought him in gratuitously. But look to the state of our election practices, when such an outburst of popular feeling could not be given effect to without that enormous sacrifice of money. I will now call attention to two or three counties. This subject has not been sufficiently dwelt upon, but bears materially upon the question before us to-night. I will take the southern division of Derbyshire. The election cost £8,500, and this is the cheapest I shall read. The northern division of Durham cost £14,620, and the southern division £11,000. South Essex cost £10,000; West Kent cost £12,000; South Lancashire, £17,000; South Shropshire, £12,000; North Staffordshire, £14,000; North Warwickshire, £10,000; South Warwickshire, £13,000; North Wiltshire, £13,000; South Wiltshire, £12,000; and the North Riding of Yorkshire, £27,000;—all legitimate expenses, but by no means the whole expense. Now I ask the House how it is possible that the institutions of this country can endure, if this kind of thing is to go on and increase. Do not suppose for a moment that this is favourable to anything aristocratic. It is quite the contrary. It is favourable to a plutocracy working on a democracy. Think of the persons excluded by such a system! You want rank, wealth, good connections, and gentleman-like demeanour, but you also want sterling talent and ability for the business of the country, and how can you expect it when no man can stand who is not prepared to pay a considerable proportion of such frightful expenses? I think I am not wrong in saying that another object of the Redistribution Bill might very well be to diminish the expense of elections by diminishing the size of the electoral districts. These are the objects which I picture to myself ought to be aimed at by a Redistribution

Bill. It should aim at variety and economy, and should look upon disfranchisement as a means of enfranchisement. And now, having done with that, I will just approach the Bill, and having trespassed inordinately upon former occasions upon the time of the House, I will now only allude to two points. One is the grouping and the other is adding the third member to counties and boroughs. This word "group" is very pretty and picturesque. It reminds one of Watteau and Wouvermans—of a group of young ladies, of pretty children, of tulips or anything else of that kind. But it really is a word of most disagreeable significance when analysed, because it means disfranchising a borough and in a very uncomfortable manner refranchising it. It means disfranchising the integer, and refranchising and replacing it by exceedingly vulgar fractions. Well, now, I ask myself why do we disfranchise and why do we enfranchise? I do not speak now of the eight members got by taking the second members from boroughs, but of the forty-one got by grouping—by disfranchisement and enfranchisement. And I ask, in the first place, why disfranchise these small boroughs? I have heard no answer to this from the Government. All that was attempted was said by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—that he had in 1859 advocated the maintenance of the small boroughs on the ground they admitted young men of talent to that House, but he found on examination that they did not admit young men of talent; and, therefore, he ceased to advocate the retention of small boroughs. My right honourable friend is possibly satisfied with his own reasoning. He answered his own argument to his own satisfaction; but what I wanted to hear is, not only that the argument he used seven years ago had ceased to have any influence on his own mind, but what the argument is which has induced the Government to disfranchise the boroughs; of this he said not a single syllable. I know my own position too well to offer anything in favour of small boroughs. That would not come with a good grace from me; but I have a duty to perform to some of my constituents. They are not all ambitious of the honours of martyrdom. So I will give a very good argument in favour of small boroughs. What is the character of the House of Commons?

"It is a character of extreme diversity of representation. Elections by great bodies, agricultural, commercial, or manufacturing, in our

counties and great cities are balanced by the right of election in boroughs of small or moderate population, which are thus admitted to fill up the defects and complete the fullness of our representation."

I need not say that I am reading from the work of a Prime Minister. Not only that, but he republished it in the spring of last year, and in that edition this passage is not there. But he published a second and more popular edition in the autumn, and in the autumn of last year he inserted the passage I am now reading. The Prime Minister differs from the Chancellor of the Duchy, for he seems fonder of illustration than argument.

"For instance, Mr. Thomas Baring" (he goes on to say), "from his commercial eminence, from his high character, from his world-wide position, ought to be a member of the House of Commons. His political opinions, and nothing but his political opinions, prevent his being the fittest person to be a member for the City of London."

It would have been better to have said, "his political opinions prevented his being a member for the City of London," without saying they prevented his being "the fittest person," which is invidious.

"But the borough of Huntingdon, with 2,654 inhabitants and 393 registered voters, elects him willingly." Next he instances my right hon. friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department; but, as he happily stands aside and looks upon the troubles of the small boroughs as the gods of Lucretius did upon the troubles of mankind, I will not read all the pretty things which the Prime Minister says of him. Then we come next to the Attorney-General:

"Sir Roundell Palmer is, *omnium consensu*, well qualified to enlighten the House of Commons on any question of municipal or international law, and to expound the true theory and practice of law reform. He could not stand for Westminster or Middlesex, for Lancashire or Yorkshire, with much chance of success."

The House will observe that that was written last autumn. If it had been written this morning I think very possibly the Prime Minister might have cancelled these words, and said, "The honourable and learned gentleman would have stood for one of those large constituencies with every prospect of success." Now is it credible, is it possible to conceive, that the writer of these words should actually be the Premier of the Government which, not six months after these illustrations were given, has introduced this new Reform Bill to group and

disfranchise the very boroughs he thus instanced? Well, there is a little more:

“ Dr. Temple says, in a letter to the *Daily News*, ‘ I know that when Emerson was in England he regretted to me that all the more cultivated classes in America abstained *from politics, because they felt themselves hopelessly swamped.*’ ”

These last words are given in italics, the only construction I can put upon which is, that the noble Lord thought, if many of these small boroughs were disfranchised, the persons he desires to see in this House would not come here, else I do not see what is the application of the passage. He goes on to say:

“ It is very rare to find a man of literary taste and cultivated understanding expose himself to the rough reception of the election of a large city.”

There is a compliment here to many of the noble Lord’s most ardent supporters. But he continues:

“ The small boroughs, by returning men of knowledge acquired in the study, and of temper moderated in the intercourse of refined society,”—

Where the members for large boroughs never go, I suppose:

“ restore the balance which Marylebone and Manchester, if left even with the £10 franchise undisputed masters of the field, would radically disturb.”

Whether that means to disturb from the roots or to disturb from radicalism, I do not know.

“ But, besides this advantage, they act with the counties in giving that due influence to property without which our House of Commons would very inadequately represent the nation, and thus make it feasible to admit the householders of our large towns to an extent which would otherwise be inequitable, and possibly lead to injurious results.”

So that the proposal of the noble Lord’s Government, coupled as it is with the disfranchisement of these small boroughs, is in his opinion inequitable certainly, and possibly likely to lead to injurious results. He goes on:

“ These are the reasons why, in my opinion, after abolishing 141 seats by the Reform Act, it is not expedient that the smaller boroughs should be extinguished by any further large process of disfranchisement. The last Reform Bill of Lord Palmerston’s Government went quite far enough in this direction.”

Now, Sir, what did the last Reform Bill of Lord Palmerston

do? It took away the second member from twenty-five boroughs, and that was the whole of it. It did not break up a single electoral district. The present Bill takes away forty-nine members from these places, and, therefore, according to the words of the Prime Minister, written six months ago, it exactly doubles what the ministry ought to do in the matter. After that, I think the House will agree with me that it would not become the member for Calne to add anything in defence of his borough; for what could he say that the Prime Minister had not said a hundred times better, and with all the authority and weight of such a statesman, writing deliberately in his study no less than thirty-three years after the passing of the Reform Act? Well, I shall say no more of that, but, for some reason which we have yet to hear, I will assume that the small boroughs are to be disfranchised. The next question that we have to consider is, what is to be done with the seats to be acquired by that disfranchisement. It does seem to me quite absurd to halt between two opinions in this way. I must assume that there is some good and cogent reason for disfranchising the small boroughs, or else, I suppose, they would let us alone. But if there be a good and cogent reason for disfranchising them, what possible reason can there be for re-enfranchising them immediately afterwards? What reason can there be for giving them back as a fraction that which you have taken away as an integer? The first process condemns the second. It may be right and wise—I do not in my conscience think it is—to disfranchise these boroughs; but if you do take that course, your business surely should be to do the best you can for the interests of the country at large with the seats you thus obtain. If you are to be influenced by respect for traditions and by veneration for antiquity, perhaps Calne should have some claim, because it was there that the memorable encounter is said to have taken place between St. Dunstan and his enemies, which terminated in the combatants all tumbling through the floor, with the exception of the saint himself. And I may remind you that in our own times Calne was represented by Dunning, by Lord Henry Petty, by Mr. Abercromby, for some time Speaker of this House, and by Lord Macaulay. That might avail something; but if it is all to go for nothing, I ask on what principle, having first broken up the electoral system of these boroughs and taken

away their franchise, you begin to reconstruct them in these groups? If you are actuated by a veneration for antiquity, or by an indisposition to destroy a state of things which is, if not carried too far, in no slight degree advantageous, and eases very much the working of the Government of the country, besides introducing into this House a class of persons, some of whom you would do very badly without—if that be so, leave these boroughs alone. If it be not, deal with the question in a bold and manly spirit; but do not take a thing away from them because you say it is wrong they should have it and then give it them back again in part, because you say it is right they should have it. That involves a contradiction. Look at what you are doing. You take away the franchise from these places, and then you limit yourself by giving it to boroughs which have previously possessed it. You unite together boroughs that have been in the habit of engrossing for themselves all the care and attention of a single member, who is obliged to pay great regard to their wishes, to look after their little wants, to pet them, and coddle them, and make much of them. That which he has been used to do for one of these boroughs he will still be expected to do, and must do, after they are grouped; and what he does and pays for one of the groups he will have to do and pay for all the rest. Not one of these three or four will bate one jot or tittle of its claim upon the member or candidate, but everything will be multiplied by so many times as there are separate places in the group. You must have as many agents in each of them, you must give as many subscriptions to their charities, their schools and their volunteers. Everything of that kind, in fact, will be multiplied by this system three or fourfold. Now, these boroughs at present give you a great advantage. All must admit that there is an advantage, if it is not bought too dear, in having means by which persons who are not of large fortune can obtain seats in the House. But by this Bill you take away that one clear advantage of these boroughs, the one thing for which, I think, they very worthily exist—you make them very expensive constituencies, and you then retain them, out of veneration for antiquity and from a traditional feeling, when you have stripped them of the very merit which recommends them to the friends of the Constitution! Well, Sir, it is polygamy for a man to marry three or four wives; but that comparison does

not do justice to this particular case, because you force an aggravated form of political polygamy by asking a man to marry three or four widows. The House need not be afraid of my pursuing that branch of the subject. The best that can be said for the Ministerial Bill—at least what has been said of it—is, that it is intended to remove anomalies. I really know of no other defence that is offered for it than that. Well, Sir, mankind will tolerate many anomalies if they are old, and if, as they have grown up, they have got used to them. They will also tolerate anomalies if they have been necessarily occasioned by the desire to work out improvements. But when people set about correcting anomalies, and so do their work as to leave behind them and to create even worse anomalies than any they found existing, neither gods nor men can stand it. Is not that the case here? I would briefly call attention to two or three of the proposed groups. In Cornwall, you have Bodmin, Liskeard, and Launceston with 18,000 inhabitants between them thrown into a group; but the towns of Redruth, Penzance, and others, making up altogether 23,000 in the same county, are left without a means of representation. Then in the county of Devon, you are to have Totnes joined with Dartmouth and Ashburton, and, by putting the three places together, you only get 11,500 people; but there is Torquay, with 16,000, that you leave entirely unrepresented. I should not object to that, because, if a thing works well, you do not do wrong in leaving it alone, but if you do begin to meddle with it, it is monstrous to turn everything upside down, and then introduce a thousand times greater anomalies than those you have removed. People will bear with anomalies that are old, historical, and familiar, and that, after all, answer some useful end; but they revolt at them when you show them how flagrant an injustice and inequality the House of Commons or the Government will perpetrate in the name of equality and justice. Then there is the group of Maldon and Harwich, thirty miles apart. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster was much shocked at our objecting to these boroughs being joined in this extraordinary way; but, Sir, were we not told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that these things were done upon geographical considerations? The geographical considerations referred to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer appear to me to mean, as interpreted by his Bill, that the

members for the towns to be grouped should learn as much geography as possible by having as large distances as possible to travel over. Then we have Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, Cirencester, Tewkesbury, and Evesham, with 16,000 inhabitants; but in Worcestershire alone you have Oldbury and Stourbridge, with a population of 23,000, which remain utterly unrepresented. Again, there is the case of Wells and Westbury, which scrape together 11,000 inhabitants, while between the two we find Yeovil with 8,000, and for which nothing is done. In Wiltshire, Chippenham, Malmesbury, and Calne, have 19,000 inhabitants, but a few miles from Calne is Trowbridge, with 9,626 inhabitants, the second town in the county, which you leave unrepresented. In Yorkshire, Richmond and Northallerton scrape together 9,000 inhabitants, while for Barnsley, with 17,000, Doncaster, 16,000, and Keighley, 15,000 you do nothing at all. Such things may be tolerable when they have grown up with you, but they are utterly intolerable when a Government interferes, and introduces a measure which overlooks such cases while professing to take numbers as its guide. The Government have repudiated geographical considerations, but it is more absurd if taken numerically. Here is, however, something worse than an anomaly; it is gross injustice. The House is aware—with the two exceptions of Bewdley and Droitwich, which are probably to be accounted for by haste and carelessness, the matter being a small one—that all the boroughs having a less population than 8,000 inhabitants are dealt with in some way or other. There are two ways of treating these boroughs. There is a gentler and there is a severer form. There are eight boroughs which are picked out for what I will call the question ordinary—that is, losing one member, and the remainder, a very large number, are picked out and formed into sixteen groups, this being the extraordinary or exquisite torture, being pounded to pieces, brayed in a mortar, and then renovated. In judging of the treatment which these boroughs receive, I think some principle ought to be observed. The geographical principle has been ostentatiously set aside, and look at what has happened to the numerical principle. There is Newport, in the Isle of Wight, with 8,000 inhabitants, which loses only one of its members, and is not grouped; while Bridport, with 7,819 inhabitants loses both its members and is grouped.

There are seven boroughs having smaller populations than Bridport, from which only one member is taken ; and they are not grouped ; while Bridport, with a larger population, has both its members taken and is grouped. Is it on account of geographical considerations that it is coupled with Honiton, nineteen miles off ? [*An honourable member* : " Twenty-one ! "] That is not an anomaly ; it is simply a gross injustice. There is Chippenham, which, as everyone knows, is a rising railway town. Yet it is grouped, while there are five boroughs which contain fewer inhabitants than Chippenham, which will each continue to return one member. Going a little further, we find Dorchester with 6,779 inhabitants, and three boroughs smaller than itself. Dorchester loses both members, while three boroughs smaller than Dorchester retain one member ; they are Hertford, Great Marlow, and Huntingdon. I can simply attribute the cause of this to the great haste, carelessness, and inadvertency which have characterised this measure. I am far from attributing it to any improper motives. I have not the slightest notion of anything of the kind. It arises, I believe, from the mere wantonness or carelessness of the Government hurrying forward a Bill which they did not intend to bring in, and which they were at last compelled to bring in, contrary to all declarations. Between Huntingdon, the smallest borough that loses one member, and Newport, the largest, there are seventeen boroughs, nine of them returning one member each and eight returning two, all of which have larger populations than Huntingdon, which is allowed to retain one member, while they are grouped. The reason I cannot tell ; but there stands the anomaly. This grouping of boroughs cannot, therefore, I say, be satisfactory to any class of gentlemen. Of course, it is not satisfactory to the small boroughs. They are the material out of which other people are to be compensated, and of course no one likes to be included in such a process. But I cannot imagine that it can be satisfactory to gentlemen who call for these measures with a view to remove anomalies and promote equality, and make the Parliament a more accurate representative of the population of the country. It seems to me, that everybody must be dissatisfied with such a proceeding as this. The House need not take all these groups as they stand, because any one of them might be remedied in committee ; but the whole principle of the thing is so bad

that it is absolutely impossible to deal with it in Committee at all. I have been assuming, hitherto, that we have good grounds for getting these forty-nine members that are wanted, but that depends entirely upon the use the Government make of them when they have them. What do they do with them? They propose to give out of these forty-nine, twenty-five as third members to counties, and four as third members to large towns, and seven to Scotland. I deny that a case is made out for this arrangement. Honourable gentlemen opposite, with whom I sympathise so much on this question, may not, perhaps, agree with me on this point. I maintain that it is a mere illusion, as things now stand, and looking at these two measures as a whole, to talk of county representation; you must look at these two things together, franchise and redistribution, and you must remember that the counties you give these members to are to become really groups of towns. Everyone knows very well where the houses between £14 and £50 are to be found. They are to be found not in the rural districts, but in the towns. What you are preparing to do for the county members is to make a change in the nature of their constituency. But under the system proposed, the county member would no longer represent a constituency which from its present and peculiar character can easily be worked as a whole. When you lower the franchise as proposed, you have taken the power out of the rural districts and given it to the small towns. The member will therefore have to reckon with so many small towns, with probably an attorney in each. When you speak of giving a third member to counties, you must remember that you are talking of counties not as they are now, but as you propose to make them. It is an illusion, therefore, to say that a great deal is done for the rural districts in thus adding members to the counties, and this will be more easily understood if you have not forgotten the opinion of Lord Russell, who says how materially the small boroughs assist the counties in maintaining a balance of power. I altogether decline to be caught by that bait. But, putting that aside, on what principle are we to give three members to counties? It has been the practice to give two members to counties from time immemorial with a slight exception at the time of the Reform, which is by no means generally approved. I am willing to accept the fact without stopping to inquire too curiously whether this number

was fixed upon because they slept in the same bed or rode on the same horse on their journeys to London. But if you come to make it a general practice to give three members to counties, I think we are entitled to ask upon what principle this is to be done. For my own part, I can suggest no other principle than the mere worship of numbers. It is quite a new principle that numbers should not only be represented in this House because they are important but that that importance should entitle them to more votes. The House will recollect that every member has two separate and distinct duties to perform. He is the representative of the borough which sends him to Parliament, and he has to look after its local interests to the best of his power. That is a small and, in the mild and just times in which we live, generally a comparatively easy duty ; but his greater and more pre-eminent duty is to look after the affairs of the empire. The real use, therefore, of an electoral district, be it small or large, is one more important than the adequate representation of the numbers of any particular place, so long as they are represented. It is, that it should send to Parliament the persons best calculated to make laws and perform the other functions demanded of the members of this House. This seems to me to go directly against the principle that these great communities are not only entitled to send competent gentlemen to represent their affairs, but to send as many members as will correspond with their weight in the country. If once you grant this principle you are advancing far on the road to electoral districts and numerical equality. I say this is the mere principle of numbers. If the principle be once established, it is very easy to give it extension. Scarcely a meeting is assembled on this subject, without some man getting up and complaining that the member for a small borough, myself, for instance, should have a vote which will counterbalance the vote of the representative of a borough containing 200,000 or 300,000. If it was a fight for the good things of this world between Calne and Birmingham, I could understand how such a principle might be adopted ; but when it is a question of making the laws and influencing the destinies of this country, the question is not which is the larger body but which best discharges its duty in sending members to Parliament. I cannot find a trace of that principle in the whole of this Bill, for it is clear that there is no such idea in

giving these three members to counties. They are mere concessions to the importance of the constituencies to which they are given while the small boroughs are grouped in a manner likely to promote mediocrity, because gentlemen of shining qualities and useful attainments will scarcely be able to contest them, unless possessed of great wealth. I cannot bring my mind to the idea of giving three members to those large constituencies. We should, on the whole, be far better without those twenty-nine members. We had better leave matters alone, if we can find no better use for them. Now, I have gone through what I have to say upon the details of this Bill; and perhaps the House will allow me to sum up what I think of the whole effect of the ministerial measure. You say how frightful the expenses of elections are, and declare that they are a cankerworm in the very heart of the Constitution. Yet what is the effect of this Bill with regard to the legitimate expenses of elections? The Government are proposing to increase the size of the constituency of every borough in the Kingdom. Will that decrease expense? They propose to disfranchise small boroughs; and instead of sub-dividing districts with a view to make more manageable constituencies, except in the case of the Tower Hamlets and South Lancashire, a senseless homage is paid to mere numbers, adding to that which is already too much. Then there is another thing. It is the duty of every man who calls himself a statesman, to study the signs of the times, and make himself master, as far as he can, of the tendencies of society. What are those signs and tendencies? I suppose we shall none of us doubt that they are tending more or less in the direction, as I said before, of uniformity and democracy. What then, is the duty of a wise statesman under such circumstances? Is it to stimulate the tendencies which are already in full force and activity, or is it not rather, if he cannot leave matters alone, to see if he cannot find some palliative? If he cannot prevent the change which stronger powers are working, should he not make that change as smooth as possible and not by any means accelerate it? But the whole of this Bill is not in any way of moderating, but of stimulating, existing tendencies. It is not always wise (and the observation is as old as Aristotle) to make a law too accurately in correspondence with the times, or the genius of the Government under which you live. The best law that

could be made for the United States would not be one purely democratic. The best law for the French Government to enact is not one of an ultra-monarchical character. There is sound wisdom in this, and it should be kept well in mind ; but it seems to have been by no means considered by the framers of the crude measure before us.

“ But our new Jehu spurs the hot-mouth horse,
Instructs him well to know his native force,
To take the bit between his teeth, and fly
To the next headlong steep of anarchy.”

Passing to another point, I have to remind you that the Chancellor of the Exchequer frightened us the other day by giving us a prose version of Byron's poem on “ Darkness,” when we were told that our coal was all going to be consumed, and then we were to die like the last man and woman of our mutual hideousness. Upon that the right honourable gentleman founded a proposition, and never was so practical a proposition worked out upon so speculative a basis. You will have no coal in 100 years, he says, and therefore pay your debts ; and, addressing honourable gentlemen opposite, he says, “ Commerce may die, and manufactures may die—and die they will—but land will remain, and you will be saddled with the debt.” That was the language of the right honourable gentleman. Now, if we are to pay terminable annuities on the strength of the loss of our coal, do not you think we may well apply the same dogma to this proposed Reform of our constitution ? What is the right honourable gentleman seeking to do by this Bill ? He is seeking to take away power of control from the land—from that which is to remain when all those fine things I have mentioned have passed away in the future—from that which will be eventually saddled with the whole burden of the debt, and to place it in these fugitive and transitory elements which, according to the account he gave us, a breath has made and a breath can unmake. I ask, is that, upon the right honourable gentleman's own showing, sound prospective wisdom ? I do not deal myself with such remote contingencies ; I offer this simply as an *argumentum ad hominem*. I should like to hear the answer. I have a word to say with regard to the franchise. We have had a little light let in upon this subject. We are offered as you all know, a £7 franchise. It is defended by the Chancellor

of the Exchequer upon two grounds—flesh and blood, and fathers of families. The £7 franchise is defended by the honourable member for Birmingham upon another ground; he takes his stand on the ancient lines of the British Constitution. I will suggest to him one line of the British Constitution, and I should like to know whether he means to stand by it. In his campaign of 1858, in which he had taken some liberties with the Crown, and spoke with some disrespect of the temporal peers, he came to the spiritual peers, and this was the language he employed. He said "That creature of monstrous—nay, of adulterous birth." I suppose there is no part of the British Constitution much more ancient than the spiritual peers. Is that one of the lines the honourable gentleman takes his stand upon? Again, the Attorney-General, having recovered from the blow the grouping of Richmond must have been to him, has become a convert, and, like most converts, he is an enthusiast. He tells us that he is for the £7 franchise because he is in favour, like the honourable member for Birmingham, of household suffrage. These are the reasons which are given in order to induce us to adopt the £7 franchise. I ask the House, is there any encouragement in any of these arguments to adopt it? The Chancellor of the Exchequer says it is flesh and blood; it is a very small instalment of flesh and blood, and none can doubt that anyone asking for it upon that ground only asks for it as a means to get more flesh and blood. The honourable member for Birmingham stands upon the Constitution, and he puts me in mind of the American squib, which says:

"Here we stand on the Constitution, by thunder,
It is a fact on which there are bushels of proofs,
For how could we trample upon it, I wonder,
If it wasn't continually under our hoofs!"

Well, the honourable gentleman asks the £7 upon the ground that it is constitutional—that is, upon the ground of household suffrage. He wants it with a view of letting us down gently to household suffrage. The Attorney-General, of course, means the same. In fact, he said we ought to do it at once. But we see what a condemnation the Attorney-General passes upon the Government of which he forms a part. He says, "You have taken your stand upon the £7 franchise. The ground you have taken is so slippery and unsafe, so utterly untenable, that I would

rather go down to household suffrage at once—to the veriest cabin with a door and a chimney to it that can be called a house. There I may, perhaps, ‘touch ground.’” What encouragement do these gentlemen give us to take the £7 franchise? Yet the honourable member for Westminster says that £7 is no great extension, and out of all comparison with universal suffrage; so he excuses himself for having thrown overboard all the safeguards which he has recommended should be girt round universal suffrage. I do not object to his throwing them overboard. Checks and safeguards, in my opinion, generally require other safeguards to take care of them. The first use universal suffrage would make of its universality would be to throw the safeguards over altogether. He says the £7 franchise has nothing to do with safeguards. The Chancellor of the Exchequer goes to universal suffrage, and the other two to whom I have referred profess they go to household suffrage. Do you think you could stop there? You talk of touching ground—would it be solid ground or quicksand? You think that when you have got down to that, you can create a sort of household aristocracy. The thing is ridiculous. The working classes protest even now against what they call a brick and mortar suffrage. They say, “A man’s a man for a’ that.” The Bill appears to me to be the work of men who:

“At once all law, all settlement control,
And mend the parts by ruin of the whole.
The tampering world is subject to this curse,
To physic their disease into a worse.”

What shall we gain by it? I have not, I think, quibbled with the question; I have striven to do what the Government have evaded doing—to extract great principles out of this medley (for medley it is) composed partly out of a veneration for numbers and partly out of a sort of traditional veneration for old boroughs, which are to be preserved after what is beneficial in them has been taken from them. Then we have to consider the proposed county franchise, founded, as has been said, upon utter ignorance. It is quite evident that this Bill has been framed without information, because the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as is well known, has told us that the only copy he had—I may be right; at any rate, I cannot be wrong until I have stated it somehow. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us that the only copy he had of those statistics was the

one that he was obliged to lay on the table of the House. If I am wrong, let the right honourable gentleman correct me.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer : I spoke of the last absolutely finished copy. The substance of those statistics, as far as regarded the general bases of the measure, had been in our hands for weeks before that time, but was not in a state to be placed on the table of the House until all the columns had been filled in.

Mr. Lowe : Well, Sir, that finished document is what I call a copy. It may be that the Bill was originally drawn for £6 and £12, and that at the last moment £7 and £14 were substituted and that it was regarded as a matter of little consequence what the exact figures were. As to the element of time, I suppose, however, I must not say anything, or the right honourable gentleman will be angry with me. The twelve nights that he gave us for the Franchise Bill are pretty well gone, and we have now got what he never contemplated we should have, a Redistribution Bill as well. I suppose I had better say nothing about the support the Government will have, or I had better veil it in a dead language and say, *Idem trecente Juravimus*. I would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how he can expect to get the Bill through Committee under those circumstances, bearing in mind that most of the newspapers that lay claim to intelligence and write for educated persons, have begun with rather vague notions of liberality, have written themselves fairly out of them, and that educated opinion is generally adverse to this measure. These, Sir, are the prospects we have before us. We have a measure of the most ill-considered and inadequate nature, which cannot be taken as it is, and which, as I understand it, is based on principles so absolutely subversive and destructive—the grouping, for instance—that if we were ever so anxious to aid the Government, we could not accept it. Well, then, Sir, what objection can there be to the advice given to the Government by my honourable friend, the member for Dumfries—no hostile adviser—to put off the question for another year, and give the educated opinion of the country time to decide on this matter? What are the objections to such a course? There are only two, that I know of. One is, that honourable gentlemen are anxious and very naturally anxious for a settlement. But are there materials for a settlement in the Bill before us? How, for

instance, can you settle the grouping? If you retain the principle on which the Government act, that of grouping those boroughs that have already members, you may do a little better than they have done, because they seem to have gone gratuitously wrong; but you cannot make an effective measure of it, and one that would stand. I am convinced it would generate far more discontent than it allayed, and create far more inequality than it seeks to remove. Then, the giving constituencies three members, is a principle of the greatest gravity and weight, not only for its actual results, but because it really concedes the principle of electoral districts. That, surely, is a matter not to be lightly disposed of; nor do I see how it can be compromised; because if the Government gives it up, it must select some other appointment; which can only be done by creating other electoral districts. Then, as regards the franchise; no doubt that we could get through, because it would only be dealing with a figure, and I dare say there are many honourable gentlemen whose opinions are entitled to great weight, who would like a compromise on the franchise. But then you have to consider this, that a compromise on the franchise is a capitulation. Take what I said of the opinions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the honourable member for Birmingham, and the Attorney-General, and it's just as true of £8 as of £7, and of £9 as of £8. If you once give up the notion of standing on the existing settlement, so far as the mere money qualification for the franchise is concerned, whatever other qualifications you may add to it, you give up the whole principle. As the Attorney-General himself sees, you must go down to household suffrage at last—whether any further is a matter on which men may differ, though, for my part, I think you would have to go farther. I must say, therefore, that I can see no materials for a compromise in the borough franchise part of this Bill, and I come therefore to the conclusion that: desirable as it would be, weary as we all are of the subject, and anxious as we all are to get rid of it, there is no place for a compromise. The divergence is too wide, the principles are too weighty, and the time is too short, the information is too defective, the subject is too ill-considered. Well, then, the other objection to a postponement is that, as my right honourable friend, the Secretary of the Colonies, told us, the honour of the Government would not permit them

to take that course. Now I think we have heard too much about the honour of the Government. The honour of the Government obliged them to bring in a Reform Bill in 1860. It was withdrawn under circumstances which I need not allude to, and as soon as it was withdrawn, the honour of the Government went to sleep. It slept for five years. Session after Session, it never so much as winked. As long as Lord Palmerston lived, honour slept soundly, but when Lord Palmerston died, and Lord Russell succeeded by seniority to his place, the "sleeping beauty" woke up. As long as the Government was kept together by having no Reform Bill, honour did not ask for a Reform Bill; but when, owing to the predilections of Lord Russell, the Government was best kept together by having a Reform Bill, honour became querulous and anxious for a Reform Bill. But that, Sir, is a very peculiar kind of honour. It puts me in mind of Hotspur's description:

"By Heaven, methinks it were an easy leap,
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned honour by the locks;
So he that does redeem her thence might wear
Without corrival all her dignities."

That is, as long as honour gives nothing, she is allowed to sleep, and nobody cares about her; but when it is a question of wearing "without corrival all her dignities," honour becomes a most important and exacting personage, and all considerations of policy and expediency have to be sacrificed to her imperious demands. But then there is another difficulty. The Government have told us that they are bound in this matter. Now, "bound" means contracted, and I want to know with whom they contracted? Was it with the last House of Commons? But the plaintiff is dead, and has left no executor. Was it with the people at large? Well, wait till the people demand the fulfilment of the contract. But it was with neither the one nor the other, because the Under-Secretary for the Colonies let the cat out of the bag. He said that he himself called upon Earl Russell to redeem their pledge. I suppose he is Attorney-General for the people of England. He called upon the Government to redeem their pledge. Now, one often hears of people in insolvent circumstances, who want an excuse to

become bankrupt, getting a friendly creditor to sue them. And this demand of the honourable gentleman has something of the same appearance. But there has been a little more honour in the case. The Government raised the banner in this House, and said they were determined we should pass the Franchise Bill without having seen the Redistribution Bill. Well, they carried their point, but carried it by that sort of majority, that, though they gained the victory, they scarcely got the honour of the operation, and if there was any doubt about that, I think there was no great accession of honour gained last Monday in the division, when the House really by their vote took the management of the Committee out of the hands of the Executive. All these things do not matter much to ordinary mortals, but to people of a Castilian turn of mind they are very serious. Sir, I have come to the conclusion that there must be two kinds of honour, and the only consolation I can administer to the Government is in the words of Hudibras :

“ If he that’s in battle slain
 Be on the bed of honour lain,
 Then he that’s beaten may be said
 To lie on honour’s truckle bed.”

Well, Sir, as it seems to be the fashion to give the Government advice, I will offer them a piece of advice, and I will give them Falstaff’s opinion of honour :

“ What is honour ? a trim reckoning I’ll none of it. Honour is a mere ‘scutcheon, and so ends my catechism.’”

Sir, I am firmly convinced—and I wish, if possible, to attract the serious attention of the House for a few moments—that it is not the wish of this country to do that which this Bill seeks to do. There is no doubt that the main object of this Bill is to render it impossible for any other Government than a Liberal one to exist in this country for the future. I do not say that this object would appear an illegitimate one in the eyes of heated partisans, and in moments of conflict, for we are all of us naturally impatient of opposition and contradiction, and I dare say such an idea has occurred to many Governments before the present, and to many Parliaments before this ; but I do say that it is a short-sighted and foolish idea, because if we could succeed in utterly obliterating and annihilating the power of honourable gentlemen opposite, all we should reap

as the reward of our success would be the annihilation of ourselves. The history of this country—the glorious and happy history of this country—has been a conflict between two aristocratic parties, and if ever one should be destroyed, the other would be left face to face with a party not aristocratic, but purely democratic. The honourable member for Birmingham said with great truth the other day, that if the purely aristocratic and the purely democratic elements should come into conflict, the victory would, in all probability, be on the side of Democracy. The annihilation of one of the aristocratic parties—and I know it is in the minds of many, though, of course, it is not openly avowed—would be a folly like that of a bird which, feeling the resistance the air offers to its flight, imagines how well it would fly if there was no air at all, forgetting that the very air which resists it also supports it, and ministers to it the breath of life, and that if it got quit of that air it would immediately perish. So it is with political parties; they not only oppose, they support, strengthen and invigorate each other, and I shall never, therefore, be a party to any measure, come from whichever side of the House it may, which seeks as to impair and destroy the balance of parties existing in this country, that whichever party were in office should be free from the check of a vigorous opposition, directed by men of the same stamp and position as those to whom they were opposed. I do not believe that is an object of this Bill which the people of this country will approve, nor do I believe that they wish materially to diminish the influence of honourable gentlemen opposite. There are plenty of gentlemen who do wish it, but I do not believe it is the wish of the country, and therefore I believe they would have looked with much greater satisfaction on the principle of grouping, if it had not been so studiously confined to represented boroughs, and if, instead of first swamping the counties with a low franchise, and then offering the illusory boon of three members, it had relieved the county constituencies of considerable portions of the great towns by an efficient Boundaries Bill, and had erected some of the towns which now almost engross the county representation into distinct constituencies. And while passing by that point, let me say that the provisions with regard to boundaries appear to me to be one of the most delusive parts of the whole Bill, because the effect of them is that no suburbs not now

included in the municipal district can be included in the Parliamentary district, unless those who live in these suburbs are content to saddle themselves with municipal taxation. I do not believe the country wishes to see the door to talent shut more closely than it is, or this House become an assembly of millionaires. I do not believe the country would look with satisfaction on the difference of tone within the House which must be produced if the elements of which it is the result are altered; nor do I believe that it will look with satisfaction on that inevitable change of the Constitution which must occur if these projects are carried into execution—a change breaking the close connection between the executive Government and the House of Commons. I believe sincerely that this House is anxious to put down corruption, and I will say again, at any risk of obloquy, that it is not the way to put down corruption to thrust the franchise into poorer hands. If we are really desirous of achieving this result there is but one way that I know of, and that is by taking care that you trust the franchise only to those persons whose position in life gives security that they are above the grosser forms of corruption. And if you do prefer to have a lower constituency, you must look the thing in the face—you will be deliberately perpetuating corruption for the sake of what you consider the greater good of making the constituencies larger. These are things which I do not believe the people of this country wish to have. And, therefore, I believe you will be acting in accordance with sound wisdom and the enlightened public opinion of the country by deferring this measure for another year. I press most earnestly for delay. The matter is of inexpressible importance; any error is absolutely irretrievable; it is the last thing in the world which ought to be dealt with rashly or incautiously. We are dealing not merely with the administration, not merely with a party—no, not even with the Constitution of the Kingdom. To our hands at this moment is intrusted the noble and sacred future of free and self-determined government all over the world. We are about to surrender certain good for more than doubtful change; we are about to barter maxims and traditions that have never failed, for theories and doctrines that never have succeeded. Democracy you may have at any time. Night and day the gate is open that leads to that bare and level plain, where every ant's nest is a mountain and every thistle

a forest tree. But a Government such as England has, a Government the work of no human hand, but which has grown up the imperceptible aggregation of centuries—this is a thing which we only can enjoy, which we cannot impart to others, and which, once lost, we cannot recover for ourselves. Because you have contrived to be at once dilatory and hasty heretofore, that is no reason for pressing forward rashly and improvidently now. We are not agreed upon details, we have not come to any accord upon principles. To precipitate a decision in the case of a single human life would be cruel. It is more than cruel—it is parricide in the case of the Constitution, which is the life and soul of this great nation. If it is to perish, as all human things must perish, give it at any rate time to gather its robes about it, and to fall with decency and deliberation.

“To-morrow!

Oh, that's sudden! spare it! spare it!
It ought not so to die.”

GLADSTONE

GLADSTONE had all the qualities of an orator, except humour. Irony was his only form of deviation from perfect seriousness, and the ironical parts of his speeches are commonly the least impressive. He had in an extraordinary degree the powers of argument, illustration, persuasion, and analysis. A melodious and most flexible voice, into which he could put every tone of which that organ is capable, was always at his command. His style of speaking was always that best adapted to the occasion. Just as his most elaborate sentence always escaped confusion, so his subtlest train of reasoning brought his hearers, sometimes by an imperceptible process, to the goal at which he desired them to arrive. Few men's speeches are so difficult to describe. For one of his oratorical secrets was to vary argument by digression, and to avoid tedium by surprise. He never forgot his main purpose, and yet he took care to diversify the business of accomplishing it by variations of his theme which were auxiliary to the object he had in hand. His speeches were those of a great artist, and at the same time they were never made for their own sake. He could adorn the simplest topic without straying from the path which led from his premises to his conclusion. Nothing that he treated was dry while he treated it, for the relation between the parts of a subject and the whole was so adjusted as to have an almost dramatic unity. It was this wonderful power of combining workmanlike efficiency with literary effect that gave him such an extraordinary influence with educated society and with practical men. He never lost his hold either upon the intellect or upon the taste when his object was to attract the attention, and to convince the mind.

It has been said that Gladstone's greatest argumentative speech was made on the taxation of charities in 1863. This

speech is certainly a very remarkable effort, though it had no practical success at the time. Gladstone had the power of throwing over the dry details of finance a glamour which invested them with all the charm of intellectual fascination. He could deal with them in such a masterly way that they seemed to illuminate the reasoning of which they were a part. It was this gift of combining illustration and logic that made him such a master of debate. He knew exactly how far to employ with advantage each particular resource of his mind. His speeches never lose, but always gain, by the variation of treatment which they adopt. The difficulty of choosing between them is that they all, though of course in various degrees, exhibit the manifold accomplishments with which he was endowed. He was never merely eloquent. He was never merely logical. He always aimed at pleasing while he convinced, and at convincing while he pleased. He succeeded partly by virtue of his natural gifts, such as his musical voice, his command of language, and his classical style. But he also bestowed immense labour upon the task of arranging his material, and so distributing it as to make it most effective. He never left anything to the chance of a happy inspiration. His mind was instinct with the spirit of order, so that every fact was in its proper place, ready to be brought out when it was wanted, and not before. No Parliamentary statesman ever took more pains to provide for the arrangement of topics in their due succession, so that there should be no overlapping, no repetition, no belated return to a subject already dismissed.

Gladstone was a master of lucid statement, of perspicuous narrative, of cogent and conclusive reasoning. His eloquence was reserved for great occasions. The most prominent feature of his ordinary speeches is the entire command of the situation which they display in all its qualities and aspects. Though seldom, if ever, overloaded with detail, they contain all the relevant facts, and their power largely depends upon the

solidity of their foundation. This it is which gave Gladstone such strength in debate, such ease and force in controversial encounters. He was so thoroughly imbued with the whole atmosphere of the case that he had only to wield his natural resources in directing his knowledge towards the end at which he aimed. His apparent ease was really the result of labour so skilfully employed that he could, without fresh effort, make use of his acquisitions as if they had been part of his personal experience. He was not content when in office, to avail himself of the trained capacity which a Minister always has at his disposal. He mastered himself the minutest points of a case which he took up, and then delivered an argument as free and unembarrassed as if he were merely dealing with obvious generalities.

The Eastern Question

House of Commons, May 7th, 1877

I MUCH regret that I should introduce a subject of the greatest importance after discussions which must necessarily have had, I do not say an irritating, but a dissipating effect upon the mind and attention of the House. Before approaching it, I must deal with one or two preliminary matters.

My hon. friend the member for Stafford (Mr. Macdonald) has spoken of the character of the manifestations which have recently proceeded from the country. I have watched the proceedings and read the declarations and conclusions arrived at steadily and regularly; until to-day, when the number of meetings has entirely overpowered me, for irrespective of other correspondence the reports of nearly 100 meetings have reached me since this morning. As a matter of fact, having read all the resolutions passed at the previous meetings, and having even observed that from day to day their tone became warmer and warmer, I am bound to corroborate the statement of my hon. friend the member for Stafford. / In a very small number of these popular declarations, neutrality was either expressed or implied. But I must add, again speaking simply to a matter of fact, though I put no particular construction on it, the reception of the Resolutions now before the House has been singularly

different among the authorities that guide public opinion in the Metropolis, and those who address it in the country. Some of the greatest pundits of the Metropolis have been puzzled as to what my Resolutions mean; and I am not sure that there is not a similar doubt and obscurity in the minds of Her Majesty's Government. The people in the country, however, do not appear to have experienced any portion of this difficulty. I am able to say, of all the resolutions at meetings held throughout the country, that in more than nineteen cases out of twenty their general scope has been in correspondence not merely with the first two of my five Resolutions, but with the whole. It is only fair to admit that I received an account of an adverse meeting held in the great town of Bradford; but it was the adverse meeting, not of the town of Bradford, but of the Executive Committee of the Conservative Association. I wish to give it its due publicity in order that such weight as it can fairly claim may be given to it. Now, though many of the declarations of opinion have come from Liberal Associations, yet also a large number have come from towns' meetings regularly summoned, and from other public meetings openly convened, largely attended at the very shortest notice, and pervaded by a spirit of enthusiasm equal to that which marked the expression of opinion in September. At one of these towns' meetings—that which was held in Northampton, under the presidency of the Mayor—a gentleman moved a declaration to the effect that it would not be well to interfere with the action of Her Majesty's Government, and not a single person was found to second that motion. There is another town, and that is the town of Christchurch, represented by the hon. gentleman who is not now in his place (Sir H. Drummond Wolff); he has wisely retired for the refreshment so necessary to us all for renewing the zeal and vigour of the inner man. Well, I am glad to think that the hon. gentleman who is about to move the Previous Question if the Notice holds good, is or was entirely one with me on the substance of this matter. I hold in my hand the report in a Conservative journal of the speech made by him at Christchurch in September, in which he declares positively that the Provinces of Turkey must be liberated; and, as the promises of its Government are worthless, there must be other guarantees. I am glad to see that in the town he represents a public meeting has been recently

convened by the Mayor, and a requisition has been made to the hon. gentleman requesting him to support the Resolutions, the discussion of which he is about to stifle. The hon. member will tell me if I misrepresent the case.

Sir H. Drummond Wolff: The right hon. gentleman is misrepresenting the case. The persons who requested me to support the Resolutions were chiefly persons outside the borough, imported in wagons.

Mr. Gladstone: The authentic organ of opinion in a borough is a public meeting convened by the Mayor, and my statement is not weakened by the census the hon. gentleman has somewhat rapidly taken of the persons attending it, in a manner not, I think, the most complimentary to his constituents.

I now come, Sir, to the main question. These Resolutions would include, undoubtedly, a vital or material alteration of the declared policy of Her Majesty's Government. But my first object, and one of my main objects, is to clear that position of the Government in a most important respect. One of the points which I must endeavour, therefore, to establish is, that that position is at present ambiguous. Am I right in saying that, if this is so, it is desirable that their position should be cleared? I think I can show that I do not overstate the case. I do not propose to move a Vote of Censure on the Government, simply for this reason, that I do not see what public interest would be promoted by my doing it; but I wish to say in the calmest words—yet they cannot be weak words—that I know no chapter in the history of our foreign politics since the peace of Vienna so deplorable as that of the last eighteen months. I speak of that policy generally. Some steps have been taken, especially the mission of Lord Salisbury to Constantinople, which deserved the approval of this House. But that step was immediately met on the part of the promoters of the Autumn movement by their reposing at least provisionally, their confidence in the Ambassador, and by their abstaining from every step that could weaken his hands. They had to consider this mission in the light of the Guildhall speech. It was difficult to say how far it was modified by that extraordinary speech; but, notwithstanding, confidence in Lord Salisbury's purpose and views was the principle generally adopted, and upon that mission I have not now one word to say of censure, but only of commendation. But while he was

at Constantinople there was also another Representative of England there, whose views upon the most vital questions were in direct opposition to those of Lord Salisbury. This utter difference of opinion, as we now know, was known to the Turkish Government, and it counteracted all along Lord Salisbury's efforts. This, then, is one of the points upon which the position of the Government is ambiguous and requires to be cleared.

Then, again, with regard to the withdrawal of Sir Henry Elliot from Constantinople at the close of the Conference. The conduct of the Porte had at that time deserved some manifestation of that feeling which it was reasonable for Her Majesty's Government to entertain; and all the other powers had intelligibly shown their displeasure. But so far from displaying such a sentiment, Her Majesty's Government carefully made it known that the departure of Sir Henry Elliot was no sign of displeasure. Why was that done? It brings into question, if not the sincerity of the Government, yet at the very least their firmness and clearness of purpose.

Then, again, why was it that Her Majesty's Government, at the time of the Conference, made a communication to the Porte that the views of the Conference would be words, and words alone, and were not to be enforced either by Her Majesty's Government or with its approval? It is a mild description of that proceeding to say that that rendered the policy and the position of Her Majesty's Government an ambiguous policy and position. You might as well have dismissed the Conference altogether. You might as well have done that which you seem given to do, and, at the outset of the proceedings of that European Parliament, have moved the "Previous Question." The Conference was idle; the Conference became a farce from the moment when Turkey had been informed by England that in no circumstances would she either herself enforce, or recognize the enforcement by others of the decisions at which the Conference might arrive. Why, Sir, what was the position of the case? England was then the sole obstacle to a policy that would have given reality to the decisions that Lord Salisbury had laboured so gallantly to promote. But, like the power behind the Throne in other days, there was somewhere or other a power behind Lord Salisbury which determined that he should not succeed. And consequently, at a very early

date in the proceedings the Porte was informed on this vital matter. Why was the Porte informed of it? Why was the Porte informed of it then? When was Lord Salisbury made aware of it? Did he know it before he left England? [*The Chancellor of the Exchequer*: "Yes."] Ah! he did? He knew that he was to be allowed to use, words, and words alone? Did he know it before he accepted the mission? My question now is whether, when Lord Salisbury left England, and not only when he left England, but when he accepted the mission, and allowed himself to be proclaimed Ambassador, he had been made aware by his colleagues that the words which he might use, and the decisions at which the Conference might arrive were to be recommendations simply, and were in no circumstances to be imposed upon the Porte? To that I have no answer. I must answer it for myself. But, whether Lord Salisbury was aware of the intention or not, why was that communication made to the Porte before the proceedings of the Conference? Why was that communication made, which drew forth a lively expression of the gratitude of the Grand Vizier and of the Turkish Government, not to the British Government at large, but to Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby? Was the same thing done by other Governments? The Austrian Government, on the contrary, knowing perfectly well with whom they had to deal, had declared that when the decisions of the Conference were arrived at they ought to be imposed upon the Porte by a naval demonstration; and, unless I am much mistaken, it was well known to the Government of Her Majesty that in the opinion of the Government of France the conference was an idle form if the Porte was to be apprised that force was not to be used with respect to the recommendations of Europe. Therefore, we find Her Majesty's Government, by their unhappy act, playing the evil genius of Europe, and at the most critical moment taking the very step that was certain, in the opinion of the best and most experienced judges, to nullify and frustrate utterly the labours they were ostensibly undertaking. It is a mild description to say that this rendered the position of the Government an ambiguous position.

I am bound to say I think the mission of Mr. Layard has, in its outward aspect, the same effect. I carefully abstain from pronouncing a final judgment upon it. I do not desire

to make it a subject of censure. I have known Mr. Layard in two capacities. I have known Mr. Layard when I last held office under the Crown. I then knew him as the able Representative of this country at Madrid—discharging his duties in a manner that gave to the late ministry the most perfect satisfaction. But I cannot altogether set aside my recollection of Mr. Layard in this House, when he was by far the most effective, and by far the furthest-going advocate of the Government of Turkey whom I have ever known to sit on these benches. Consequently, as we find in the Blue Book which was presented to us on Saturday, the appointment of Mr. Layard was again selected as a special subject of thanks by the Turkish Government, and it was acknowledged in a peculiar and very appropriate phrase to be on the part of the Government of Her Majesty, inasmuch as they knew his friendly sentiments towards Turkey, a “delicate attention.” A “delicate attention” to that Government which has made itself responsible in full from first to last for the massacres of Bulgaria, and whose fixed attention it is that on the first similar occasion similar massacres should be again perpetrated. “Delicate attentions” to that Government from the Government of Her Majesty are matters which, if not wrong in themselves, at least require some elucidation to show that their position with regard to the crimes of that Government is not an ambiguous position.

Again, Sir, it will be remembered that a despatch was produced to us in the month of May last year in which it was stated that Her Majesty’s Government felt that Turkey was only to depend upon their moral support. Now my second Resolution, which is regarded by the Secretary for War as of so neutral and inoperative a character, carefully states that Turkey has lost all claim to either the material or the moral support of Great Britain. The lines between material and moral support are not always easily drawn. What kind of support did Her Majesty’s Government give to Turkey last year when, having sent a squadron to Besika Bay to protect Christian life, they afterwards converted that squadron into a powerful fleet for some other unacknowledged purpose? What kind of support, I say, was the support then given to Turkey? Her Majesty’s Government, as far as my knowledge goes, have never disclaimed this ill-omend phrase “moral support.” I do not want to pin them to it—God forbid! I

wish with all my soul that they may disclaim it ; but I wish also to point out that, as far as I know, it has not yet been disclaimed

What may not be done under the name of " moral support " ? Why, almost as much as may be done under the name of " British interests." We sent that fleet to Besika Bay, or, at least, we made that squadron into a fleet when it was in Besika Bay ; and what was the effect of the presence of that fleet ? I say, without the least hesitation, it was to overawe the Provinces bordering on the Archipelago and the Kingdom of free Greece, and to prevent any movement which might have been made in sympathy with the Slav Provinces. And therefore, although without lifting up a hand, it was material as well as moral support that was supplied to Turkey under the name of moral support, for it prevented from pouring into the field those who would have added to the force of Turkey's rebellious subjects.

I venture to say there is a greater ambiguity still, and a more prolific source of it, than those to which I have already referred ; it is to be found in the conflicting declarations of the members of Her Majesty's Government. Having recognized the mission of Lord Salisbury as a kind of point of junction at which we who had taken part in the popular movement, were able to bring ourselves into a sort of union with Her Majesty's Government, I will go back to nothing in the conduct of the Government which preceded that mission, and thereby I shall get rid of a good deal of awkward matter spoken at Aylesbury and elsewhere. I will not draw a comparison between those speeches, and other speeches which gave some public satisfaction, and tended greatly to arrest the movement which was in progress in the country. I take only what has happened in England since the dispatch of September 21 to the Conference at Constantinople. I am bound to say I cannot do otherwise than recognize the most distinct retrogression in the policy of Her Majesty's Government since the closing of the Conference. I also find contradictions which I at least am wholly unable to reconcile in the declarations of the Government. I take first one declaration which I think ought to be borne in mind, though I do not dwell upon it, because I do not wish to make it a matter of controversy. There was a declaration by Sir Henry Elliot, that it

did not signify, so far as the main question was concerned, what number of Bulgarians were massacred, because the thing essential for us to do was to maintain our vital interests in the Ottoman Empire. Lord Derby very properly rebuked and repudiated that declaration in his despatch of the 21st of September; where, after describing the outrages which had occurred, and the countenance given to them, he said that no interests whatever could possibly justify acquiescence in the continuance of such a system. That was a sharp antagonism between Minister and Ambassador. But I want to know which of these two conflicting authorities is to come uppermost in the long run. No doubt the authority of Lord Derby is the greater. I am certain that what he wrote, he wrote with sincerity. But if I am to look at the tone and tenor of the declarations of the Government for the last two or three months, I am sorry to say that they seem to me to be relapsing into a position in which the outrages inflicted by the Government of Turkey are to be contemplated as matters of sentimental regret, and for idle and verbal expostulations; but in which action is to be determined by whatever we may choose to think to be British interests. That is to say, that our opinion of what we think best for ourselves is, after all, to be, in substance, our measure of right and wrong all over the world. I want to know whether that contradiction subsists, or whether we still have to learn that there is to be no toleration for iniquity, and that no continuance of material or of moral support is to be given to a Government which is so deeply dyed with the guilt of these outrages.

Next I come to a declaration of Lord Carnarvon. There is not a single utterance which has proceeded from the mouth of any member of Her Majesty's Government that served the purposes of the Government better at the time than this manly speech of Lord Carnarvon. What did he say? I will not quote him at length, but he said:

“He did not disagree, if he rightly understood it, with the public feeling and opinion, because it had been somewhat loudly expressed, and because here and there might have been some exaggerations. He thought, on the contrary, it was a credit to the country. He rejoiced that there was neither delay nor hesitation in the expression of that feeling, and, so far from weakening the hands of the Government, he believed that, if rightly understood at home and abroad, nothing could more strengthen the hands of his noble friend the Foreign Secretary

than the burst of indignation which had just gone through the length and breadth of the land."

That was the declaration of Lord Carnarvon. No contradiction to it was given by any member of the Government at the time. But what has been done lately? The noble Lord, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in a place which I need not name—his words, wherever they may be spoken, are too important not to excite attention—described the sentiment of the British people, manifested last Autumn, as a "got up" sentiment—we know what is contained in these words—and expressed it to be his opinion that the effect of it had been mischievous. He thus spoke in direct contradiction of that declaration of Lord Carnarvon; for which, when I just now read it, I was sorry to observe there was not, from the other side of the House, a solitary cheer. On the first night of the Session, when this retrogression of which I complain had hardly begun to develop itself, my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer made a declaration on the subject of the Turkish Constitution, which I heard with the greatest pleasure, but for which he was, I think, severely rebuked by some of the organs of the Turkish Government in the London Press. He earned the rebuke by speaking, as he did speak, the language of good sense about the Turkish Constitution, which he described as a thing in which no sensible man could place the slightest reliance. In doing that he did not go beyond, but remained completely within, the shadow of that most masterly Paper in which Lord Salisbury—as may be seen from the Blue Book—had torn the Turkish Constitution into rags, and held it up to the contempt and derision of mankind. It is, indeed, a device—first and foremost, to delude Western Europe by a show of freedom, and, secondly, to organize, and thereby strengthen the oppressive force which bears down the subject-races. But is that the tone now? Read the Despatch of Lord Derby to Prince Gortchakoff, which we have received to-day. All is changed. You will find that there Her Majesty's Government says plainly that Turkey should be allowed time to reform herself, and that it is not reasonable to abandon the hope of complete and satisfactory relief to the subjects of the Porte, inasmuch as Turkey has promised that reform. But I will quote one more, as it appears to me, a clear and distinct contradiction. My right hon. friend

the Chancellor of the Exchequer told us on a former and not very late occasion that it was a very great hardship to Turkey that she should be complained of for not reforming herself when a war cloud was hanging over her. He said it was a time when it was almost impossible to apply moral pressure to her ; and he went on to explain that, in his view, the presence of a Russian Army on her frontier made her position one of great difficulty by appealing to those principles of honour which are supposed to be so highly refined and polished in the Turkish mind. My right hon. friend distinctly pointed to the Russian armaments as having been an obstacle in the way of the Conference at Constantinople, and as having cut off the hopes of its success ; but in saying that he is in direct and diametrical contradiction to Lord Salisbury. Lord Salisbury had publicly declared, and his words cannot be subjected to question, that the Russian armament on the contrary constituted the hope of the Conference. I will not trouble the House with lengthened quotations ; but Lord Salisbury in substance said that he knew very well that mere words were useless ; nay, worse than useless, because delusive, and that it was to the Russian armaments, and the consequent danger to Turkey, and the power of pointing out that danger before her eyes, that the Representatives of the other Powers at the Conference attached their whole hope of inducing Turkey to acquiesce in their conclusions. Even with that advantage, acquiesce she would not. Thus, again, we have important members of the Government making statements which entirely contradict one another on vital points of the case. And now, this very day, we have the despatch to Prince Gortchakoff, justly hailed with delight by the so-called friends of Turkey. I am not surprised at it, for there is no mistaking the tone of that despatch. In its tone and its tendency it is redolent all through of moral support, it is charged with moral support, and, unless the Government thinks fit to give us some explanation of it which will relieve our minds, we challenge them in this House to-night to have it declared authoritatively whether Turkey has, or has not, lost all claim to our moral as well as our material support.

The House will well recollect the whole line of argument which was pursued by the Government both for some time before and during the sittings of the Conference. It had

become as clear as possible that Turkey had at all times been a country fertile beyond any other in promises. No man knew that better than the right hon. gentleman, the Secretary for the Home Department, when he aptly compared her promises to inconvertible paper, and said we must have sterling metal. Necessary guarantees, something beyond mere promises, adequate securities, consisting in something beyond and above the engagements or ostensible proceedings of the Turkish Government constituted indeed the pith of the extracts which were read by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the first night of the Session from the Instructions to Lord Salisbury. Well, what has now become of those necessary guarantees? They are all gone to the winds. We are told in the despatch published this morning that we are to found our hopes on the fact that the Porte has promised certain things, and that as it has promised we cannot be sure that it will not perform. This is the vital point; it lies at the root of the whole matter. We are now told to rely on those promises. But, for my own part, I would repeat what I said on a former occasion, when we were trying remonstrance after remonstrance, and protestation after protestation. Those protestations, and those remonstrances, and those representations which have been lavished in such redundancy on the Porte by Her Majesty's Government, are all very well up to a certain point; up to the point at which there remains some semblance of a reasonable hope that they may possibly attain their end. But, it is not so, when we have found by long and wide experience that they produce no substantial result whatever. It was not thus always; for in the time of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, a man of masterly ability, of iron will and of a character which did not admit of his being trifled with, something was done in a few points by the Porte, and some improvements, on certain points, were effected in the condition of its people. But during all these later years, the case has not stood so well. With regard to remonstrances made in the time of the late Government, they were not very numerous, for no great crisis occurred in Turkey, and the matters reported were, I believe, comparatively rare. Recently the case has been different. With regard to those remonstrances, which, since the rebellion in her Provinces have become much more numerous, our experience has been so unbroken and unvarying that the man

who persists in a system of mere remonstrances and mere expostulations, really seems to convict himself, either of insincerity, which is not for a moment to be imputed here, or of a total incapacity to understand the affairs with which he has had to deal.

I have spoken, then, of contrariety in the declarations of members of the Government, and of the extremely ambiguous position in which it stands with respect to this question. I think we are entitled to ask that all this ambiguity may be cleared away, and that we may be permitted to know whether after all that has happened we are still to rely on Turkish propositions, and still to afford to the Sultan a moral support. Going outside the Government, I now come to the language of its adherents in the Press and in the country. There never has been a time when I have heard so much of direct communication between the Government and the Metropolitan Press, as within the last eighteen months; and my belief is that at no time has it been so constant and unflinching. What the tone of the prints is which are supposed to enjoy the privilege of these communications everyone who hears me is aware. I do not hesitate to say that the language which is held among the supporters of the Government in the society of London, and by that portion of the Press which has taken what I may call the Turkish side of this matter—I say which is called the Turkish side, because I believe those of whom I am speaking and who suppose that they are acting a friendly part towards Turkey, are all the time driving her on to utter ruin—is language, the purpose of which, distinct and un concealed, is to prepare the public mind for war. And for what war? Not for war under the name of war on the side of Turkey, but for a war to be undertaken under some shadowy pretext of a British interest. Now, what are British interests? and for what purpose is that phrase brought into incessant use? The phrase itself is the most elastic in the world. Consider the position of this Empire. Consider how from this little island we have stretched out our arms into every portion of the world. Consider how we have conquered, planted, annexed, and appropriated at all the points of the compass, so that at few points on the surface of the earth is there not some region or spot of British dominion near at hand. Nor even from these few points are we absent. Consider how our

commerce finds its way into every port which a ship can enter. And then I ask you what quarrel can ever arise between any two countries, or what war, in which you may not, if you be so minded, set up British interests as a ground of interference. That is the case of India in particular. We go to the other end of the world as a company of merchants ; we develop the arts and arms of conquerors ; we rule over a vast space of territory containing 200,000,000 people, and what do we say next ? We lay a virtual claim to a veto upon all the political arrangements of all the countries and seas which can possibly constitute any one of the routes between England and the East, between two extremities, or nearly such, of the World. We say to one State, You must do nothing in the Black Sea at Batoum, because Batoum and Erzeroum may one day become a route to the East. We say, You must do nothing in Syria or Bagdad, because we may finally discover the valley of the Euphrates to be the best route to the East. The Suez Canal was made for the benefit of the world ; but it is thought by some of these pretenders that we, who almost furiously opposed the digging of it, have rights there which are quite distinct in kind from those of the rest of the world, and that we are entitled to assert our mastery without regard to the interests of other portions of mankind. Then there is the route by the Cape of Good Hope. It happens, however, that at the Cape no one annexes but ourselves. Nay, it appears from news no older than to-day that we are so stinted in our possessions that it is expedient to make large additions to our territory there ; and to make them exactly by those menaces of force which ministers think so intolerable in the case of Turkey. And then you know, Mr. Speaker, that any additions to our territory are always perfectly innocent. Sometimes they may be made without bloodshed ; sometimes they are made not without a threat of bloodshed. But that is not our fault ; it is only due to the stupidity of those people who cannot perceive the wisdom of coming under our sceptre. We are endowed with a superiority of character, a noble unselfishness, an inflexible integrity which the other nations of the world are too slow to recognize ; and they are stupid enough to think that we—superior beings that we are—are to be bound by the same vulgar rules that might be justly applicable to the ordinary sons of Adam. Now I do not hesitate to say that, in the particular case of the

Eastern Question, nothing is wanted but right conduct on the part of the Government to give the greatest dignity, as well as the greatest security, to the position of this country. We have improperly allowed the vindication of the great cause in the East to pass into the hands of a single Power. It is true that, by the mouth of Lord Derby, the nation has been made to speak that which by its own mouth it does not, and would not, speak at all. He has rebuked a single Power for the responsibility of consequences, because it has made itself the organ of the collective will, the united judgment, and the solemn conclusions of Europe. That is the course which we have taken, and that is a dangerous course. We ought to view with regret and misgiving anything that puts a single Power in a position to take such a charge upon herself, and most of all in the case of a Power like Russia, which, as a neighbouring Power, has special temptations in matters of this kind. Such a power as Russia, and, I must add, such a power as Austria, has of necessity special temptations in this case; and it can never be satisfactory to me to see the subject settled either by Russia, or by Austria, or by Russia with Austria. But the question remains—how are these terrible evils, which afflict Turkey and disgrace Europe, to be met? Are they to be met by remonstrances and expostulations only? The answer echoed back from the ministerial benches is—"By remonstrances and expostulations only." Now that, I believe, human nature, the conscience of mankind and the civilization of the nineteenth century will no longer bear. If you are not prepared to carry further that united action of Europe in which you seem to engage but which you defeated by your ill-judged proceedings, you must expect to see it pass into the hands of others, and your remonstrances and your cavils at others will not be appreciated by the general sentiment of the world until you are able to show that you are yourselves ready to enter into some honourable combination for the purpose of applying an effectual remedy to the evil.

Now, Sir, I pass from this general argument to the first Resolution, and to Lord Derby's despatch. That despatch involved one of two things. It was either a declaration that ought to have been followed up, or else it was a gross and unwarrantable insult to Turkey. There is no escape from the dilemma. You have no right to go about flinging those violent

words in the face of any Power, unless that Power has made itself a criminal before Europe ; and if that Power is to have your moral support, you have certainly no right to use such language. You were bound either to tear that despatch into shreds, or to go further in your own vindication. The language of that despatch was as strong as the language used at any of the meetings held last Autumn. In substance it demanded reparation for the past and security for the future. I have read carefully to-day Mr. Baring's Report on the Bulgarian massacres. Remember it is now twelve months since those Bulgarian massacres occurred. What has been the position of the Turkish Government in relation to this question ? Those massacres occurred in May, but it was three months afterwards before the first intimation reached the other Governments. What had the Turkish Government done during those three months ? They had simply been engaged in wholesale imprisonment of Bulgarians in foul and loathsome dens, in bringing them to trial, and in directing scores of executions. That was the view of the Turkish Government with regard to the massacres ; and they have not, even at this date, attained to a right conception of the ideas of Europe upon these most guilty transactions, and upon their own complicity in them, Lord Derby demanded that the authors of the massacres should be punished ; and this and the demand for reparation, were the main points of the despatch. We are now in the month of May. Let us see what has been done. Mr. Baring tells us that very great progress has been made in rebuilding the villages—with the forced labour of the people themselves—that many of the women and girls have been returned, and that a few of the cattle have been recovered. These are the substantive results of the despatch. These things have, however, nothing to do with the policies of the massacres, nor do they touch in the slightest degree our principal demands. But what has happened as to the punishment of the offenders and reward of well-doers ? I must go, however briefly, over these particulars of the conduct of the Turkish Government, because it forms the ground for the first two resolutions which I ask the House to adopt. The despatch of Lord Derby has been, in the main points, treated with contempt. I do not discuss the prudence of that despatch—I hold it to be, in various points, far from prudent—but has the conduct of the guilty

persons been approved and rewarded by the Turkish Government, or have they been marked out for condign punishment, as Lord Derby, speaking for the Queen demanded? Shefket Pasha, Toussoon Pasha, and Achmet Aga have not been executed—one of them was not tried; one tried and acquitted; one tried and condemned, but his sentence was not executed. It is an absolute mockery to which we have submitted. I believe I may say that not one considerable man has had any sentence whatever executed against him. One or two nameless and insignificant individuals have been put to death, whether on account of these massacres does not very clearly appear; but the chief agents have escaped with perfect impunity, and decorations and rewards have been given to many of them. And, finally, of those good Mohammedans, who at the hazard of their lives interfered in the interests of humanity and justice, every one has been either punished by dismissal, or else remains to this hour unrewarded.

In the first place, there is everything short of absolute proof that these massacres were originally designed. If they were not, why were the Bashi-Bazouks employed for their suppression? Yet I do not mean to imply that the employment of the Regulars would have afforded a security against outrage. On the contrary, they committed on many occasions gross cruelty and outrage. Yet they were, on the whole, far behind the incredible fury and wickedness of the Bashi-Bazouks. Again, why were the Mussulman population armed? There is no sufficient answer. There was war. Yes, but the war did not occur for two months after. There was a rebellion in the small province of Herzegovina. But there were Turkish troops there to deal with the rebellion. It was a wanton and wilful act on the part of Turkey to arm those irregular troops. The extraordinary excuse you find in some passages of those Blue Books is, that there were Russian agents who suggested it to the Turks in order to cause the massacres that ensued. There is no proof, I know, of such a suggestion, still such is the allegation. But even if that were the case, does that diminish the guilt of the Turks? Not by a single hair's breadth. I admit that the question is wrapped in mystery, and that we can only judge of facts; but this we know—that after the massacres, and when the Turkish Government was well informed of them, they proceeded not to punish the perpetrators, but

to imprison and hang more Bulgarians; and that when a stir began to be made in Europe, illusory inquiries were set on foot, and that from these inquiries there proceeded reports which it is idle to describe except in plain words as lying reports. They are described as lying reports by the Consul of the United States; and in language exactly equivalent though rather more civil, by Mr. Baring and Sir Henry Elliot, as, I think utterly untrustworthy reports. When the stir was made in this country and elsewhere, which Lord Derby says was got up, and did so much mischief, he wrote the despatch to which I have referred, and he now deploras the agitation which led him to write it. Well, what was done? A Commission was appointed with much solemn form; but care was taken to pack that Commission, partly at the time and partly later on, with men considered safe. So that while one or two good men were members of it, they should be always in a minority. The result is that, instead of affording redress, it has added infinitely to the disgrace of Turkey: by its delays, by violence, by obstruction, by intimidation, by what it has done, and by what it has not done; finally, by those acquittals which caused at last Mr. Baring's indignant withdrawal from a scene where he did not wish or could not bear longer to witness a prostitution of justice. Well, we know what has been done as to Shefket Pasha and the rest. Why is it that the offenders named in the Papers laid before us remain unpunished? It is because the miscreants possessed instructions to act as they did from persons still higher in the Ottoman Government. These persons in high places, it is now too plain, directed these outrages, for which a show was made in some instances of trying the perpetrators, and in other instances apologies were made for failure to apprehend them. Every portion of the conduct of Turkey in regard to these massacres possessed a dramatic unity and integrity. I make bold, without asking the House to hear the repetition of the numerous details, to say that I have myself demonstrated it in a tract now before the world, and founded on the highest evidence. Follow it out. Examine it carefully. Everything comes home to the door of the Porte itself. Even if Shefket Pasha had been punished, why should the tool only be punished and not also the hand that used it? And yet not only is not that the case, but we find Abdul Kerim, the man who gave

him the instruction, appointed to the highest command of the Turkish Army now massed on the Danube. It seems almost idle to argue in the face of the evidence we have in reference to these cases ; and the Blue Book just placed in our hands has added new horrors to those with which we were before but too abundantly supplied. It will be remembered that, as a refinement of wickedness unknown anywhere else in the world, Consul Schuyler charged upon Selim Effendi, who was employed in these inquiries, that he tortured prisoners in prison to compel them to give evidence of such a kind as suited his purpose. Selim Effendi addressed a letter to me, as I had referred to the charge, and said that it was very hard upon him to be made the subject of such an accusation, that all the proceedings in the Court were perfectly open, and that nothing of the kind could have, or had occurred. But the charge was not as to what had occurred in the Court ; it related to what had occurred secretly in prison. He answered the charge which was not made and passed by the charge that was made. In reply to his letter, which was perfectly becoming and courteous, I addressed a letter to him and pointed out this fact ; adding that he would doubtless answer the charge, which rested on the authority of Mr. Schuyler. Well, that was four months ago, and not another word have I heard from or of him.

We have, Sir, other cases of a most loathsome and revolting kind in the Blue Book that has been recently placed before us, as to which an English Vice-Consul says, at page 46 of the Blue Book, circulated May 5th, that the evidence left him absolutely no room to doubt ; and of these he gives the most painful and horrible details. I will not dwell upon them, but, as the volume is in the hands of members, will spare them the pain. Suffice it to say that they were systematically carried on by Suleiman Aga. When the facts were made known, how was he punished ? He was deprived of his sword for three days ; and was then consoled by being retained in his office of Chief of Police, which he holds to this day. The Vice-Consul gives an account which shows that these tortures were inflicted on the people, and especially on the priests, to make them give particular evidence.

Suffice it, Sir, on the whole, to say that the evidence of which I have here given but a few points, when taken together, is conclusive. The outrages and massacres in Bulgaria were

not the acts of the Bashi-Bazouks, or the Regulars, or of the Mussulman population, except as mere instruments of the Porte. As instruments they are guilty, and as instruments alone. These massacres were not accident, they were not caprice, they were not passion. They were system, they were method, they were policy, they were principle. They were the things done in Damascus in 1860 ; and I may say that the Liberal Government of that day took up those massacres in a very different manner from that in which Her Majesty's Government has proceeded, so that, under the pressure then exerted by the European Powers, the Porte was compelled to hang a Pasha. Like deeds were done also during the Greek Revolution ; and again and again they will be done, until the Turkish Government finds that there is some adequate authority determined to say that they shall not be done again.

If these things cannot be denied—and I know they cannot be denied—are we to continue this miserable farce—for so I must call it, since this it appears to have become—of expostulation ? You do not expostulate with malefactors in your own country—you punish them. The Home Secretary would consider it a senseless proceeding to expostulate with a murderer, and ask him not to commit such a crime again ; or even to protest against his committing it. But with respect to Turkey, we know exactly the process, and how it is managed from beginning to end. When there occurs some crime or outrage, if there are not foreign Agents near, no notice is taken of it, provided a Mohammedan be the guilty party. If it be a Christian, it is a very different matter. For example, you will find in these Papers an account of a Turkish boy who seriously wounded a Christian woman. She was pregnant, and she was seemingly about to die ; but the report of the Consul is that unfortunately there was no law in the country by which the Turkish boy, being only a boy, could be punished. Would that apply to a Christian boy ? In Miss Mackenzie's and Miss Irby's most sensible and dispassionate work, you will find an account of a struggle between a Turkish boy and a Christian boy. They fought desperately. The Christian boy fought in self-defence. They were both so much injured that they kept their beds for several weeks. The Turkish boy died, and what happened ? There was plenty of law to be found then. The Christian boy was condemned to be hanged ; and the Grand

Vizier, who was travelling through the Province, delayed his departure in order to see him executed ; and thus he gives the Christians a solemn warning of the consequences that would follow their resisting injury. One and the same lesson runs through all these transactions. " You rayahs are allowed not to enjoy life, but to live. Your tribute is the condition of your life. You must take your life on the conditions we name ; and if you raise your hand—it may be to secure justice by force—you will be the subject of crimes and outrages which, whatever their nature may be, will become virtue and public service when committed for the sake of maintaining Ottoman dominion over the unbeliever whom he has a right to rule." What I have said may sound like exaggeration. It is no such thing. It is, I maintain, a plain matter-of-fact description of the way in which Turkish power has been maintained. Nay, more ; it is the way in which alone this unnatural domination can be maintained, with ever-increasing difficulty, and upon occasion with ever-increasing horror, until the day of its doom shall come.

I pointed out last year that in the Autumn of 1875 a body of Herzegovinian refugees had been invited to go back to their homes. In an evil hour they accepted the invitation, and returned, escorted, as they had taken unusual precautions, by a force of Turkish Regular troops ; but they were massacred by some of the Beys, their Mussulman landlords. It was done in the sight of the escort ; and the escort raised not a finger in their defence. This was at a time when the Turkish Government and Consul Holmes were inviting the refugees to return home. The facts were made known to Lord Derby ; he addressed to the proper authorities an indignant despatch, demanding that there should be an inquiry, followed by punishment of the offenders and redress to the injured persons. No further notice has, however, been taken of the matter. His despatch remains like water poured out upon the sand. There was probably a promise of inquiry ; this is one of the usual shifts ; and I may state on the authority of Mr. Baring's last Report, that this is the uniform course pursued by the Turkish authorities.

What I want to know, therefore is, whether we are to continue to make ourselves ridiculous, and at the same time utterly to delude the world by what the Government is pleased to

call remonstrating upon these subjects. This matter grows worse and worse. We have in the papers which were delivered to us two days back a new crop of horrors reported from Erzeroum, as having occurred no longer ago than on the 14th of March. A body of troops went into a village and demanded food and money. These demands were, of course, complied with. They then proceeded to maltreat the men, and to violate the women and girls, several of whom died in consequence of the treatment to which they were subjected. On this occasion again an energetic telegram was despatched in the first instance. Afterwards Lord Derby spoke with bated breath, and desired that the attention of the Porte "might be called" to the matter. It mattered not a straw whether his language were strong or weak. It is the old story. As on the previous occasion, nothing came of his demand. My contention is that this conduct is not compatible with the decency of the case or with the honour of England; and that if no result is to follow upon communications of the kind to which I allude they ought not to be made. It is bad enough to say that you will take no notice of crimes such as those; but it is worse to notice them in a way which you know full well can produce no result, yet which deludes this country and the world by seeming to promise one, and by making a vain show of interest in the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte.

Passing to the second of my Resolutions, let me refer to the daring assertion which has been made by the opponents of the subject-races, that the outrages have ceased. We have had no Papers given us for three months; and the Papers, which were circulated so lately as the day before yesterday, supply us with no recent intelligence upon the subject. I take, however, such rather stale intelligence as they do give. The only evidence which the Government has afforded to us on the point shows that up to the 20th of February last the same atrocious and horrible state of things, concerning which complaints had been previously made, continued in Bulgaria.

In those Papers, Mr. Baring states that the lives and property of Christians were scarcely safer at the end of February than they were in May last year. I ask the House, then, to support the resolution which alleges that the Porte has lost all claim to our moral as well as our material support.

Shall I be told that we have withdrawn from Turkey our moral as well as our material support? This is a point at present very doubtful, which ought to be made clear. It is true that we have denounced the perpetrators of these outrages. I say we have denounced the wrong people. These perpetrators were only tools. That they were tools only, is demonstrated by the fact that they remained unpunishable, free, rewarded, decorated. Why is this? Because they acted in obedience to orders—written orders in some cases—and from the highest authorities. I have spoken of Abdul Kerim; but unless other high personages are very much calumniated, they, too, are implicated in the guilt of these proceedings. Assuredly, no name is more odious than the name of Midhat Pasha to the Christians of Bulgaria. There is in Turkey an admittedly intolerable Government. Has it improved during the last quarter of a century? I am responsible, for one, for having then believed, on the great authority of Lord Palmerston, and on the even higher authority of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe with his large experience of the Porte, that its government might be improved. Some men, with deeper insight than that possessed at the time by any politician, knew that the case was hopeless. A quarter of a century ago, however, we thought that we ought not to despair of the improvement of Turkey, as long as a ray of hope remained. Since then a time surely sufficient for trial has elapsed, during which perfect peace has been secured for Turkey from without, and she has had no evils or mischiefs to deal with, except those provoked and promoted by her own gross and monstrous misgovernment. But have things improved in Turkey in that period? I believe that, upon the whole, instead of improving, they have become worse. I do not, of course, question the local improvements, which have been the result of an increase in the number of Consuls and Foreign Agents; because wherever a Consul or a Foreign Agent resides there is usually a little precinct formed, within which comparative security is enjoyed. Nor do I doubt that here and there some partial, indecisive measures have been adopted for the purpose of putting into execution a portion of the promises of the Porte. But since 1854 there has been in Turkey a great increase in the centralization of the Ottoman system, and in the taxation; and a multiplication of the agents of the Government in the

persons of those whom it is a mockery to call police. The result has been that there has been an aggravation of Mohamedan as well as Christian grievances ; and there is far more discontent among the Mussulman inhabitants of Turkey now, than existed a quarter of a century ago. Mr. Baring, in referring to the Turkish police, states that they are little or no better than organized bands of brigands. But this Force, which is one of the greatest curses of the country, is a Force which does not belong to the older Ottoman system. Again, of late, Turkey has acquired a passion for a National Debt, for large standing armies, for ironclad fleets, and for improved arms ; and the result has been that a great increase of revenue was necessary. It has been raised in a disproportionate degree from the Christian Slav Provinces, and it is this endeavour to obtain an enormous revenue which has been one of the greatest curses of the country. [*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* : "Hear, hear !"] The right hon. gentleman cheers that statement. But what remedy is he prepared to propose for this state of things ? Why, he is prepared to look on and to expostulate. I say that it is better, it is more honest, not to look on, and to withhold this expostulation, rather than to profess our interest and to pursue a method such as the one now in use. [And here I may, perhaps, be allowed to offer a suggestion to the right hon. gentleman. Why should he not prepare printed forms of expostulation ? There might be blanks for the number of villages burnt, for the number of men killed, and for the number of women violated ; and there ought to be another blank to be filled up as occasion required by the word "expostulate" or "represent" or "regret," or if necessary, "protest." This would save a considerable amount of labour at the Foreign Office, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as the sovereign guardian of the public purse, might really, by the simple means that I suggest, effect some reduction in the cost of that establishment. This is a sorry subject on which to jest. But it is the Government who have made a sorry jest of a matter in itself very solemn. It is a sorry jest constantly to reiterate expostulations of this character with the knowledge founded on long experience, that as a general rule they will work without being followed by any result. The Porte, which well understands the force of words, knows that our expostulations begin in words and that they end in words ;

and it is time that the people of England and the people of Turkish Christian Provinces should begin to understand as much.]

—It appears to me that if Her Majesty's Government desired really to pursue an effective policy, they should have gone further than I have yet indicated ; but they would have done a great deal if they had gone as far as I have hitherto suggested. They would have conveyed an amount of confidence to the minds of the people of this country which they are now very far from feeling.

But, Sir, in my opinion, a just denunciation of outrages which former events had placed within our cognizance and a real, not an equivocal withdrawal of support from Turkey, though they are more than we can yet be sure of having obtained, are very far from filling up the measure of our duties and our honourable obligations. I argue that we ought to use our influence in the great Council of Europe for the effectual deliverance of these Provinces from oppression, but not for their transfer to any foreign dominion. Now it is a foreign agency, not under our control, to which we have chosen to make over the fulfilment of engagements which are ours. I must, therefore, consider our relation to that foreign Power. We need entertain no fear at all that the action of Russia in the present effort will endanger British interests. Russia is not mad enough to touch British interests in the execution of the purpose she has in hand. We have, however, given Russia a magnificent opportunity, of which she can avail herself, to plead truly that what she asks is what Europe asks ; and the difference between her and other nations is that they are content to put up with, and she is not content to put up with, Turkey's infatuated refusal to give securities for the improvement of her Government. You may say that she is pursuing selfish objects ; but, if that be true, that is an additional condemnation of your policy, because if she was untrustworthy, why did you leave her to act alone and unrestrained in accomplishing this work ? I had hoped that Her Majesty's Government might even have been disposed to have accompanied me thus far, and that we might all look forward to the establishment in these Provinces of local self-government and local liberty, and so saving them from transfer to any other foreign dominion. In this, as in other hopes, I am baffled ; and instead

of a wise co-operation in the endeavour to effect a great good, I am called upon to consider the misdeeds of Russia. We are told that Russia has been guilty of the greatest cruelties in Poland. I hear hon. members opposite cheering that statement; but no cheers came from that quarter of the House when, at the time those cruelties were being committed in Poland, remonstrances against them were moved from this side of the House. I put aside, for the present, cases in which the tongue of calumny had been busy, or cases in which there may be a doubt about the facts. Apart from such cases, there have been at least two occasions on which, in my view, the conduct of that Power cannot be defended. The first occasion was when the Emperor Nicholas took up arms to put down by force Hungarian liberties—the liberties of those Hungarians who, at the time, were very anxious to interest the world in their own affairs, but who do not now appear desirous of extending those liberties to others; a fact which, had we known at the time it was to occur, might have somewhat modified our feelings in their favour. The claims of those Hungarians, however, were at the time just, and we thought that the proceedings of the Emperor of Russia, who lent to Austria the effectual aid of his armies in suppressing them, were unjust and unwarrantable; but I never heard any objection to his conduct proceed from hon. members opposite. Again, as to Poland, I remember that as late as during the second government of Lord Palmerston, a motion was made by Mr. Horseman on the subject of the proceedings of Russia in Poland, but Mr. Horseman was not one of the Party who sit opposite; on the contrary, he was a gentleman who on all questions of foreign policy expressed the strongest Liberal opinions, and the support which his Motion received proceeded almost wholly from this side of the House. One word with regard to the Papers which have just been laid upon the table of the House with reference to the misdeeds of the Russians in Poland. That paper purports to be presented by command of Her Majesty, which means that it has been presented at the instance of Her Majesty's Government. [*Sir H. Drummond Wolff*: "By command of Her Majesty, in pursuance of an Address."] [*Lord John Manners*: "It was moved for from the opposite side of the House."] I have no doubt it was moved for from the "opposite" side of the House;

my hon. friends on this side of the House have always been desirous of exhibiting the cruelty in Poland ; but the disposition of the Government and their friends to hold up to reprobation the cruelty in Poland appears to me to be of much more recent origin. Now, Sir, for my own part, I rejoice in the fact that the misdeeds of a Government should come to light, come how they may ; but I think this mode of proceeding was eminently a shabby mode. You produce the misdeeds of other Governments, do you produce your own ? Will you lay on the Table a detail of the proceedings by which the Mutiny was suppressed in India ? I cannot recollect a more distinctly culpable proceeding on the part of any country, than the slaughter of the Dyaks by Her Majesty's naval forces and by Sir James Brooke. But that evil act was discussed, vindicated, and approved in this House. I will give you another case. There is an official Report of my own in the Colonial Office, rendered in 1858-9, when Lord Carnarvon was Under-Secretary, which sets forth the proceedings of the British Government in Cephalonia, at a time when a predial rising had taken place. It was a serious predial rising, which official panic or the selfish alarms of a class magnified into a rebellion. As such it was insignificant, almost ludicrous. But martial law was maintained in the island for six weeks. I believe one of our soldiers was wounded. A score of the people were shot, and many scores were flogged, and the punishment of flogging is one viewed by the Greek population, as I have often been assured, with a horror even greater than capital punishment. Will you lay that Report on the Table ? What is the meaning of producing charges against other countries when you are not prepared to produce your own ? [*An hon. Member* : "The Cephalonian Report, I think, has been laid on the Table."] I think not or I must have known of it. And I proceed with my general argument.

One of my greatest objections to the policy of Her Majesty's Government has always been since we began to attend to it at the end of last July, that it tends so extravagantly to facilitate the execution of the most selfish aims that Russia could possibly entertain, and to enhance her influence and her power. It is a tremendous thing to infuse into the mind of the Christian subjects of the Porte the conviction that they have no other hope, no other ally but Russia. It is hardly possible to dispute

that that has been the effect of the policy of Her Majesty's Government. That the misgovernment of the Slav Provinces should cease is my first and great object, but I confess it would be with qualified satisfaction, although with a real satisfaction, that I should hear of the cessation of that misgovernment, unless I felt that a healthy growth of local liberty would come into the place of the abominations now afflicting these Provinces. I had hoped that something might be obtained from the Government with reference to the first and second—and even perhaps the third—Resolutions, which would have enabled me to avoid trespassing at so much length on the indulgence of the House. With regard, however, to the fourth Resolution, I was absolutely hopeless. I admit that it challenges the course of the Government, and suggests another course. If you wish for the sake of humanity, for the sake of the peace of Europe, for the sake of the obligations this country has incurred, to close the Eastern Question, it cannot be satisfactorily done except by action which shall be both united and real. And my complaint against Her Majesty's Government is that whenever they have seemed to concur in promoting united action it has always been done under conditions which have made that united action useless and even visionary. Do not let me conceal my own belief. I have in my fourth Resolution expressed the strong opinion I entertain—namely, that the policy of 1826 and 1827 was a wise and just policy. But that was a policy that had no more the approval of what I may call the West-end of London, than the Christian cause has now. That portion of England does not express the true sentiments of England. Looking over all the great achievements that have made the last half-century illustrious, not one of them would have been effected if the opinions of the West-end of London had prevailed. The Test Act would not have been repealed. Parliament would not have been reformed. Slavery would not have been abolished, Municipal Corporations would not have been opened. The Corn Laws would not have been repealed; nor Free Trade established; nor the Tariff reduced to a few lines; nor the Navigation Laws done away; nor the universities opened; nor the Church of Ireland disestablished; nor the Land Tenures of that country re-enacted. I might extend this long list. I regard it with sorrow and misgiving that the nation has ever been in advance

of those who ought to have been its leaders. But the fact being so, I cannot relax my efforts in this cause out of deference to the opinion of what I have called the West-end of London.

But then I am told that there has been, in relation to this question, inaction on the part of Liberal Governments. Now, Sir, this is a subject much too wide to be disposed of by a taunt, or by any incidental remark. It is a question of history ; and if a motion were made for a complete inquiry into the conduct of all Governments since the Crimean War with regard to this great question, I, for one, would not object to it. In my opinion, it is totally impossible for any man or for any Government in Western Europe to raise the Turkish Question, simply of his or their own motion. How was it possible for us during the Franco-German struggle, or during the protracted controversy that resulted in the Geneva Arbitration to raise the Turkish Question ? Nay, even if we had been more free, there were no events in Turkey on which we could take our stand. There was, so to speak, no point of departure. There was no revolt of which we could examine the cause ; there were no massacres of which we could expose the guilt. In 1860 massacres did occur in Syria, which may be partially compared with the massacres in Bulgaria in 1876. A Liberal Government was then in office ; and observe the very different course pursued by that Government. Whether we had been wise and right in all things I know not. I am by no means prepared to claim for us off-hand a sentence of universal acquittal ; but this I know, that at a very early date, in the affair of the Lebanon, Lord Russell wrote a letter in which he positively announced that a British squadron would be sent to the coast of Syria, and that, if necessary, marines would be landed. At the same time France declared her intention of sending troops to Syria. We heard nothing then about fears of provoking Turkish valour to desperation by these rather decided methods. On the 28th of July, Lord Russell said that the remaining points, which were of essential importance appeared to be to obtain the assent of the Porte to the intervention of foreign troops, and the fixing of a time for the intervention of those troops to cease. On that the consent of Turkey was given, and the foreign intervention did take place. And how was the consent of Turkey given ? It was given in a Conference

by Safvet Pasha, on the 27th of August, and in terms which were very remarkable. You might have had just the same terms now if you had chosen to seek them in the same manner, They are these :

“ It is owing to the counsels of the Representatives of the Powers and the vision held out to us of foreign troops landing on our territories, notwithstanding the refusal which we should have given to the conclusion of the Convention, that we have been reduced to choose the lesser of two evils.”

The consent of the Turkish Government was obtained ; but it was given in view of this—that they had before them the vision of foreign troops landed in Syria, notwithstanding their refusal, and they were reduced to the choice of the lesser of two evils. I ask for a comparison between our course throughout in the matter of the Lebanon and the course of the existing Government since the Autumn of 1875. I might refer to other matters ; but I will not now pursue the subject.

I will next say a few words only on the nature of our obligations in this particular case. It is much too late, in my opinion, to argue whether we are bound to take up the case of the Christians in Turkey or not. We might have argued that question before the Crimean War. But in the Crimean War we did two things ; and I must repeat the challenge I have made to the Government with regard to those two things, for they are of vital importance in this great controversy. The first was that we abolished the power of interference which previously existed, and which was lodged in the hands of Russia. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for War have told me that they do not admit that such a power of interference existed. I think it is possible that they may have misunderstood my statement ; because I am quite certain that if they hold that proposition in the terms I have just stated, they are holding it in the face of history and of law as recognized in Europe for a hundred years. They may have understood me to say that Russia had, by the Treaty of Kainardji, a Protectorate over the Christians. Now, I admit that she had no Protectorate over the Christians. A Protectorate is a scheme involving direct and positive powers. She had no such powers in regard to the Christians in Turkey generally. What she had was this—a stipulation from the Porte that the Porte should firmly protect the Christian religion and its

churches. Of that stipulation she had a right to require the fulfilment, as well as of every other stipulation in her Treaties. There is not the least doubt that it is a distinct stipulation. To set up the doctrine that this distinct and substantive stipulation is a mere Preamble, that it is absorbed in the latter part of the Article, is really little less than ridiculous. The latter part of the article is separated from the earlier part by the Italian word which can only be translated by "furthermore," or "moreover," or some equivalent. Russia had a covenant with the Porte for the protection of those churches, and she had the same right to require its fulfilment as she had with respect to every other covenant in the Treaty. That, I say, cannot be doubted. Now, let us look at the opinions upon this point. I quoted the other day the opinion of the standard historian of the Turkish Empire—Von Hammer. He expressed the general historical judgment of the world on this point. But if you want a legal opinion, I will quote that of Bluntschli, who is, I observe, considered as the highest authority as a jurist at present living on the Continent of Europe. He says :

"In the consciousness of this duty and of this right, Europe has repeatedly intervened in Turkey as well before as after 1856. First of all, Russia made a claim to a sole protection of the Greek Christians, and obtained the establishment of it from Turkey by Treaty in 1772 and 1812."

There is the opinion of Bluntschli. It is not a controversial opinion ; he states it as a notorious fact, in a matter which has never been contested. I am responsible for the translation ; but the words "obtained the establishment of it" I believe, fairly represent the words of the original. Since I spoke on the matter, I have referred to the authority of Sir Robert Phillimore, and I find in him what I expected. I have had the honour of his friendship for half-a-century, and I did not open this question without having consulted him. He has entered into an argument to show that Russia did not possess by the treaty of Kainardji the claim which was made at the time of the Crimean War. In that we are all agreed. But Sir Robert Phillimore has never denied that this stipulation for protection in the Treaty of Kainardji was a binding stipulation ; that Russia had a right to require it to be carried into execution, and a right to interfere with Turkey on a breach of it, just as

she had in regard to any other part of the Treaty. As far as I know, opinions are not at variance on this point, unless, indeed, it is intended by the present Government to set up in 1877 a construction never heard of for over 100 years after the Treaty was concluded.

In such a matter, without doubt, we cannot omit to refer to the Blue Books of 1854. I must own that it has not been in my power to read through the whole of those Blue Books—or rather to re-read them, for I was pretty well familiar with them at a former period—and, therefore, it is possible some assertion may be found in some part of them which more or less expresses the opinion that appears now to be maintained by the Government. Yet I think not so, because I have looked over them as well as I could, and because I find what seems to me a most distinct declaration on the part of Lord Clarendon, that some right of that kind on the part of Russia was acknowledged by us. I recollect myself, taking my memory for what it is worth, that this was distinctly our position in the controversy. We held that Russia misconstrued the Treaty, and overstated her right; we never, I believe, denied that she had some right; and accordingly I find, also, in Book No. 1, that on May 26th, 1853, Baron Brunnow sends in a Memorandum, in which he speaks of the engagements of the Porte, dating from the Treaty of Kainardji, as granting to the Orthodox Church that freedom of worship, that tranquillity of conscience, and that peaceable possession of rights which Russia could never cease to watch over. In the same book, on the 21st of June, Lord Clarendon says in reply, on the part of the Government, that on the basis of Baron Brunnow's Memorandum, a complete and satisfactory arrangement might have been concluded without compromising the dignity of the Emperor. I think, then, I have made my demonstration complete; and, if so, the case stands thus—That there was a Treaty engagement, under which Russia was entitled to require from the Porte a protection of the Christians, and to resent it against the Porte as a national wrong if she did not protect them. That right was entirely destroyed and swept away by the Crimean War, through the expenditure of our blood and treasure, and of the blood and treasure of our Allies; and we could not thus sweep that right away, in my opinion, without becoming responsible for the consequences; without

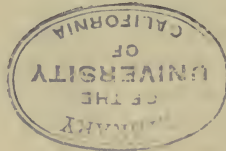
being as solemnly bound as men can be bound in faith and honour to take care that those, for whose protection it was intended should obtain either the same thing or something better in its place. But, besides all I have now said, and even independently of this, as I believe, perfectly irrefragable argument, what was the case of the Crimean War on the very face of it as a dry matter of fact? It was this—That Turkey was about to be engaged in a contest of which the probable result was her defeat. I apprehend there was no doubt of that. It was probable that she would be defeated. We intervened to prevent that defeat. We, together with our Allies, gave her a new lease of her existence; we gave her resources; we gave her the strength, of which she has been making such frightful use in Bulgaria. And now is it possible for us, on any principles I care not what, which will bear to be stated in the face of day, so to put out of view the obligations which our honour entails on us as to say—“We wash our hands of this business, and will have nothing to do with it”? Much more, how can we say—“We will consent to pay delicate attentions to the Government of Turkey, and to be affording her in a thousand indirect forms moral assistance”—which in many instances is apt to glide into material assistance—“against any nation which may attempt to carry into effect the judgment of united Europe”? I hope I have made pretty clear the state of the case, as it bears upon the third and fourth Resolutions. I have pursued not the best tactics, perhaps—for I am, perhaps, no great tactician—but the best tactics in my power. Very simple they have been. They have consisted in attempting to obtain the assertion, by as many as possible, of what was valuable in itself, even although it was not the whole of what seemed to me valuable or even essential. On that account I ranged my Resolutions in the order in which they stand; and when I found myself threatened with extinction by the somewhat rude machinery of the Previous Question, so that a free and unfettered discussion, even of the first Resolution was to be rendered impossible, I came readily to the conclusion that it would not be expedient and becoming of me to ask you, Sir, to go through the idle form of putting each of them in succession from the Chair, with the certainty of obtaining the decision that they should not be put. But I am bound to say that to the whole of these Resolutions I, as

an individual, steadfastly adhere. I ask no sanction from my noble friend near me (the Marquis of Hartington) for anything except that for which he votes. I think it would be the meanest and paltriest act on my part to endeavour to crib from him some indirect support for that which he is not prepared to support overtly. I really know not on what grounds he is not willing to accompany me in the whole of these Resolutions. I would thankfully accept his aid, as I would the aid of the Government, for I think the union of the English people in this great matter is an object of the highest importance. There is not one of you opposite who can more deeply deplore than I do the use of the rude irregular methods to which we have been driven in order to exercise an influence upon the foreign policy of the country. I look upon these methods as, at the best, unsatisfactory and imperfect; I look upon them, in every case, except of necessity, as vicious and bad. It has been that necessity alone which has driven us to the point at which we stand to-night. For my part, I think no day of peace likely to come from the East, no final or satisfactory settlement, unless it be by the authority of united Europe. I see the hon. and learned gentleman, the Attorney-General, has been complaining of violent language, and of the imputations of motives on my part. He is, I suppose, on the way to high judicial office, and from one in his position, as compared with other members of this House, I have a right to expect something more than the average share of judicial temper. But what said he to his constituents? I have never imputed motives to the Government. I have never said they were governed by love of power. I should have been ashamed of such a statement. I cannot, indeed, account for their conduct, except by the supposition of some singular delusion, or some sinister influence which they do not themselves understand, and are not conscious of, so strange does it appear to me. But never have I imputed to them motives inconsistent with their perfect honour. Yet what says the hon. and learned gentleman? He goes to his constituents, and to them he announces that I have entered into a warfare against the Government, animated by a vindictive malignity founded on my exclusion from office. ["Oh, Oh!"] These are the judicial words of the hon. and learned gentleman. I am glad that he has come into his place. It gives me the opportunity of expressing a hope that when he

resigns that place for one more permanent, more dignified, and more enjoyable, he will proceed in a different spirit to deal with the suitors and even with the culprits, who may be brought before him. No, Sir, I impute no motives. If a word I have said seems to convey them, I disclaim it, and in a moment I would wash it away; but I believe no such word has passed my lips. It is a great crisis, Sir, in which we stand. Legislative bodies are at all times occupied, more or less, in the making of history, and it is a very grave passage in history which we are now engaged in making. Sir, there is before us not one controversy, but two. There is the controversy between Russia and Turkey; there is the controversy between Turkey and her revolted subjects. I think the Government and their supporters out-of-doors in the Press are committing a great error in this: that it is the first of these two controversies—that between Russia and Turkey, which, after all, is only symptomatic—to which they address their minds. In my opinion, the other is the deeper and more important. The other is a controversy which can have no issue but one, and I do not hesitate to say that the cause of the revolted subjects of Turkey against their oppressors is as holy a cause as ever animated the breast, or as ever stirred the hand of man. Sir, what part are we to play in regard to it? Looking at this latter controversy—the controversy between her and her subjects—the horrible massacres of last year, the proofs which have been afforded that they are only parts and indications of a system; that their recurrence is to be expected, nay, that it is a moral certainty, if they are now allowed to pass with impunity; looking at the total want of result from Lord Derby's efforts, at that mockery which has been cast in our teeth in return for what I quite admit was upon ordinary rules and principles an insulting despatch, can we, Sir, say with regard to this great battle of freedom against oppression which is now going on, which has been renewed from time to time, and for which one-third of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina are at this moment not only suffering exile; but, terrible to say, are upon the very verge of absolute starvation; upon which depends the fate of millions of the subject-races that inhabit the Turkish Empire—can we, with all this before us, be content with what I will call a vigorous array of remonstrances?—well intended, I grant, but without result, as

expressing the policy and satisfying the obligations of this great country? Can we, I say, looking upon this battle, lay our hands upon our hearts and, in the face of God and man, say with respect to it—"We have well and sufficiently performed our part"? Sir, there were other days, when England was the hope of freedom. Wherever in the world a high aspiration was entertained, or a noble blow struck, it was to England that the eyes of the oppressed were always turned—to this favourite, this darling home of so much privilege and so much happiness, where the people had built up a noble edifice for themselves and would, it was well known, be ready to do what in them lay to secure the benefit of the same inestimable boon for others. [You talk to me of the established tradition and policy in regard to Turkey. I appeal to an established tradition, older, wiser, nobler far—a tradition not which disregards British interests, but which teaches you to seek the promotion of those interests in obeying the dictates of honour and of justice. And, Sir, what is to be the end of this? Are we to dress up the fantastic ideas some people entertain about this policy, and that policy in the garb of British interests, and then, with a new and base idolatry, to fall down and worship them?] Or are we to look not at the sentiment, but at the hard facts of the case, which Lord Derby told us fifteen years ago—namely, that it is the populations of those countries that will ultimately possess them—that will ultimately determine their abiding condition? It is to this fact, this law, that we should look. [There is now before the world a glorious prize. A portion of those as yet unhappy people are still making an effort to retrieve what they have lost so long, but have not ceased to love and to desire. I speak of those in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another portion—a band of heroes such as the world has rarely seen—stand on the rocks of Montenegro, and are ready now, as they have ever been during the 400 years of their exile from their fertile plains, to sweep down from their fastnesses and meet the Turks at any odds for the re-establishment of justice and peace in those countries. Another portion still, the 5,000,000 of Bulgarians, cowed and beaten down to the ground, hardly venturing to look upwards, even to their Father in heaven, have extended their hands to you; they have sent you their petition, they have prayed for your help and protection. They have told

you that they do not seek alliance with Russia, or with any foreign Power, but that they seek to be delivered from an intolerable burden of woe and shame. That burden of woe and shame—the greatest that exists on God's earth—is one that we thought united Europe was about to remove ; that in the Protocol united Europe was pledged to remove ; but to removing which for the present, you seem to have no efficacious means of offering even the smallest practical contribution. But, Sir, the removal of that load of woe and shame is a great and noble prize. It is a prize well worth competing for. It is not too late to try to win it. I believe there are men in the Cabinet who would try to win it, if they were free to act on their own beliefs and aspirations. It is not too late, I say, to become competitors for that prize ; but be assured whether you mean to claim for yourselves even a single leaf in that immortal chaplet of renown, which will be the reward of true labour in that cause, or whether you turn your backs upon that cause and your own duty, I believe for one, that the knell of Turkish tyranny in those Provinces has sounded. So far as human eye can judge, it is about to be destroyed. The destruction may not come in the way, or by the means that we should choose ; but come this boon from what hands it may, it will be a noble boon, and as a noble boon will gladly be accepted by Christendom and the world.



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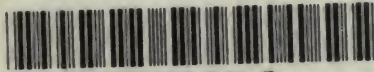
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