

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

FALLACY OF THE SUPPOSED DEPRECIATION

OF THE

PAPER CURRENCY

OF THE KINGDOM;

WITH REASONS FOR DISSENTING FROM

The Report

OF

THE BULLION COMMITTEE.

BY FRANCIS PERCEVAL ELIOT, ESQ.

Esq. &c.

Many writers, of acknowledged abilities, have treated of the principles of Finance, and have castly thrown great light up on the subject. But they have founded their systems too much on principles merely speculative, and have not sufficiently adverted to many facts, with which the history of this, and many other nations, would have furnished them. By these, they would have learned to correct the errors they have sometimes committed, and they would have applied their principles with more certainty, and better success.

LORD LIVERPOOL'S LETTER TO THE KING.

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OBSERVATIONS

&c. &c.

ACCUSTOMED to devote to financial enquiry a considerable portion of the few leisure hours to be spared from a daily attendance on official duties, and the necessary occupations of a numerous family, I have turned my thoughts in those moments, with no slight degree of anxious attention, to the interesting question which has of late so generally occupied the public mind, on the state of the circulating medium; and especially the *supposed* depreciation of that part of it supplied by the paper issues of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England.

On a subject of such general interest, it was natural to expect that general concern should be excited, and that a discussion almost as general, should be the necessary consequence.

But it is greatly to be lamented, that, on points relating to the practical business of the world, it is too much the custom for those

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who offer the assistance of their opinions to the public, instead of bringing forward plain facts, capable of proof by mathematical demonstration, rather to show their ingenuity by involving simple effects in complicate and abstract theories; for the support of which, they are obliged to trust either to mis-stated premises, or strained deductions. And we are constantly referred to *principles* often doubtful, and frequently useless in practice, whilst we should be occupied in considering actual consequences; and applying, where necessary, wholesome remedies.

On the present occasion, a variety of opinions have been put in circulation; of which the first rank, amongst those in favour of the supposed depreciation, must certainly be assigned to the Report of a Committee of the House of Commons, and to a pamphlet subsequently published in support of that opinion, by an Honourable Member of the Committee, who, however modestly he may * estimate his own talents, is acknowledged to have filled the confidential and laborious office of Secretary to the Treasury, with an ability seldom equalled, and, I most sincerely believe, never yet surpassed.

* Preface to "The Question, &c. Stated and Examined"
p. 18.

Feeling, as I do, for my Honourable Friend all the admiration of public respect, supported and increased by the warmth of personal regard and private friendship, I cannot be so insensible of the great weight of his opinions, as not to dread the extent of their influence, when I think them deduced from unconceived conclusions, and likely to lead to dangerous consequences.'

It is certainly the undoubted duty of every true Englishman to support and vindicate the credit, of his native country at all times; it is rendered more especially so at the present moment, when, in all probability, the deliverance of an enslaved continent rests its last hope of success on the ability of Britain to support her invincible seamen, and her gallant and undaunted soldiers, in the cause of freedom, against the hordes of plunderers who have wasted the fairest regions of Europe, and manured the soil with the lavished blood of its peaceful inhabitants. But it is equally his duty not to deceive his countrymen, nor, by glossing over any real misfortune, to lead them, by the sanction of a name, from the true course of due and wholesome enquiry. I shall, therefore, endeavour to keep the middle path; nor will it be my aim, on the one hand, to make them forget that we are pressed by heavy

burthens, and that our resources require strict and oeconomic management, any more than to omit telling them, on the other, that those burthens, though weighty, are not intolerable; and that our resources, if wisely husbanded, are equal to every thing that can be required from them; and that, at any rate, in the alternative between the weight under which we already labour, and the heavy hand of an enraged and merciless adversary—he who never entertained a thought of pity for any human misery, and who never least harbours not a sentiment but such as he takes delight in—that in such an alternative there cannot be a moment's hesitation or delay, but that the choice is to be decided on.

I agree with my Honourable Friend most perfectly in the propriety of deprecating every thing like party-spirit, or political hostility, on a question, in the calm and deliberate discussion of which all are equally interested; and which may be so incontrovertibly demonstrated by the clear and correct view of a few plain and unsophisticated facts; but from which it has, nevertheless, been already evinced, that the ablest and most upright men may draw very different conclusions*.

* Conscious of my own inability, at all times, to fathom the intricacies of a science, on which men of the most eminent talents have

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The restriction of Bank payments is correctly stated, by the Honourable Secretary, to have been intended merely as an expedient, originating in necessity, and determinable whenever that necessity should cease: for his late illustrious, and ever-to-be-lamented friend, expressly asserted, in the House of Commons, on the 28th of February 1797, in answer to an observation of Sir William Pulteney's,—“*That nothing could be further from his intention, than the proposition of a permanent measure; and that, on the contrary, he had no objection to a limited time being fixed for its operations.*”

And, indeed, the first regulating principle of a wise government is, at all times, to interfere as little as possible with mercantile transactions. Commerce, generally speaking, should be left as free and as unfettered as the streamers of the bark on which she wafts her rich productions from one climate to another.

“*That abundance of circulation is the great source of opulence and strength,*” I allow, also, to be one of those propositions characterized by the professors of rhetoric as being neither true nor false; for though I am inclined to

disagreed, I offer, with the greatest deference, what I have thus written, to Your Majesty's consideration.”

Lord LIVERPOOL'S Letter to the KING.

concur with the general opinions of the Honourable Baronet *, in regard to the state of our currency, yet, in the present instance, I undoubtedly think he has mistaken the effect for the cause; an abundant circulation is rather the certain *consequence* of strength and opulence, than the *cause* of them; unless so far, indeed, as the operations of that consequence may be effective of an additional reproduction of the original cause.

Neither can I allow, any more than Mr. Huskisson, the correctness of “*a well-regulated paper currency, with a certain proportion of coin,*” as a general definition of money. We have certainly before our eyes a convincing proof that a well-regulated paper currency with a certain proportion of coin, will answer all the purposes of money; but if I were asked for a general and correct definition of that which constitutes money †, I should call it,

* Prefatory Advertisement to Sir John Sinclair's Observations on the Report of the Bullion Committee, p. 7.

† I am not aware that any author has, as yet, given a strictly correct, and universally applicable, definition of *money*. I cannot at this moment recollect any passage in Adam Smith, wherein he attempts it, though in many he talks of *the ambiguity of the common acceptance of the word*, of its being *constantly confounded with wealth, from which it differs essentially*—*that we sometimes mean nothing but the metal pieces of which it is composed, and sometimes we include in our meaning*

that circulating medium, of whatever sort or kind, whether paper or metallic, or partly both, which,

some obscure reference to the goods which can be had in exchange for it, or to the power of purchasing, which the possession of it conveys.—Sir William Petty observes, *that money is understood to be the uniform measure of the value of all commodities; and then he proceeds to speak of the proportion of value between pure gold and silver.*—Mr. Locke says, *that two metals, as gold and silver, cannot be the measure of commerce, both together, in any country; because the measure of commerce must be perpetually the same, invariable, and keeping the same proportion of value in all its parts.* AN OUNCE OF SILVER IS ALWAYS EQUAL TO AN OUNCE OF SILVER; AND AN OUNCE OF GOLD, TO AN OUNCE OF GOLD; *but gold and silver change their value one to another; one metal, therefore, alone can be the money of account and contract, and the measure of commerce in any country.* This by no means affords any thing like a general definition of money; exclusive of the grand practical error in not discovering the fluctuation of value to which each metal is constantly liable, with respect to itself, in the different states of coin and bullion.—Mr. Harris avoids this stumbling-block, but agrees with him on the other points, yet still is deficient as to any general definition of the term *money*. Neither can I assent to Mr. Huskisson's analysis of the word—because, amongst several other reasons, I find him asserting that, “*It is of the essence of money to possess intrinsic value;*” and that he will not allow any thing but the precious metals to be included under that title, contrary to the known *practice* of many, and, indeed, almost all nations on the globe.

Sir James Steuart comes nearer to my ideas of a correct view of the subject, in the following passages: “*The metals have so long performed the use of money, that money and coin have*

by the common consent and common confidence of any society, is generally and lawfully received as the

become almost synonymous, although in their principles they be quite different. The first thing, therefore, to be done in treating of money, is, to separate two ideas, which, by being blended together, have very greatly contributed to throw a cloud over the whole subject. Money, which I call of account, is no more than an arbitrary scale of equal parts, invented for measuring the respective value of things vendible.

“ Money of account, therefore, is quite a different thing from money-coin, and might exist, although there was no such thing in the world as any substance which could become an adequate and proportional equivalent for every commodity.

“ Could gold and silver coin perform exactly the office of money, it would be absurd to introduce any other measure of value; but there are moral and physical incapacities in the metals which prevent their performing the functions of a scale.

“ Money, strictly and philosophically speaking, is, as has been said, an ideal scale of equal parts.

“ That money, therefore, which constantly preserves an equal value, which poises itself, as it were, in a just equilibrium between the fluctuating proportion of the value of things, is the only permanent and equal scale by which value can be measured.

“ Of this kind of money, and of the possibility of establishing it, we have two examples; the first among one of the most knowing—the second among the most ignorant, nations of the world. The Bank of Amsterdam presents us with the one, the Coast of Angola with the other.

“ A florin banco has a more determinate value than a pound of fine gold, or silver; it is an unit which the invention of men, instructed in the arts of commerce, has found out.

“ This Bank money stands invariable, like a rock in the sea. According to this ideal standard are the prices of all things re-

common measure and equivalent of all interchangeable articles.

gulated; and very few people can tell exactly what it depends upon. THE PRECIOUS METALS, WITH THEIR INTRINSIC VALUE, VARY WITH REGARD TO THIS COMMON MEASURE, LIKE EVERY OTHER THING. A pound of gold, a pound of silver, a thousand guineas, a thousand crowns, a thousand piastres, or a thousand ducats, are sometimes worth more, sometimes worth less, of this invariable standard; according as the proportion of the metals of which they are made vary between themselves.

“All is merchandise with respect to this standard; consequently, it stands unrivalled in the exercise of its function of a common measure.

“The second example is found among the savages upon the Coast of Angola, where there is no real money known. The inhabitants there reckon by macoutes; and, in some places, this is subdivided into decimals, called pieces. One macoute is equal to ten pieces. This is just a scale of equal parts for estimating the trucks they make. If a sheep, for example, be worth ten macoutes, an ox may be worth forty, and a handful of gold-dust, a thousand.

“MONEY OF ACCOUNT, THEREFORE, CANNOT BE FIXED TO ANY MATERIAL SUBSTANCE, THE VALUE OF WHICH MAY VARY WITH RESPECT TO OTHER THINGS. The operations of trade, and the effects of an universal circulation of value, over the commercial world, can alone adjust the fluctuating value of all kinds of merchandise, to this invariable standard. This is a representation of the Bank money of Amsterdam, which may at all times be most accurately specified in a determinate weight of silver and gold; but which can never be tied down to that precise weight, for twenty-four hours, any more than to a barrel of herrings!”

That this medium † should in itself possess such a portion of intrinsic value as may justly entitle it to claim the required confidence of

I have been induced to quote almost the whole of the passages constituting this chapter (Chap. i. Book 2.) from Sir James Steuart's Principles of Political Economy, because, although there is not, in any one of them, that comprehensive yet concise general definition of the term *money*, to which I alluded in my text, yet the whole of them, taken together, contain so much information, on the real nature and properties of the circulating medium, and so much useful correction of the popular misconceptions on the subject, that I could not but think the time well employed that was occupied in transcribing them; and the more so, as they corroborate so strongly the opinions I have expressed, and the distinctions I have taken between money of account and money-coin, throughout this little publication; the whole of which opinions had, however, been established on the clearest conviction in my own mind, and the greater part of the pamphlet written (as I can, with the most scrupulous veracity, affirm), before I had either seen or heard a word of Sir James Steuart's sentiments on the same subject. And it was only just as these sheets were going to the press, that, in consequence of being referred to and reading the chapter just quoted, this note was added. But if the last paragraph taken from Sir James Steuart be correct, what becomes of my Honourable Friend's criticism (in page 22) on Mr. Chambers's assertion, "*that gold is not a fairer standard for Bank of England notes, than broad cloth, or indigo?*"—And what will he think of the Baronet's barrel of herrings?

† It is to be recollected, that I am here speaking of the circulating medium, as distinct from the money of account.

the society in which it circulates, is certainly most desirable, but by no means indispensable; and that the metallic, or what Mr. Huskisson would call the actual, part of any currency, possesses this advantage over the paper, or what he regards as the representative portion, is equally certain.

It is greatly to be desired, because the precious metals, possessing an ascertainable value in fineness and weight, instantaneously recognised under the stamp of legal coinage, leave no room for doubt or hesitation, even in the most common and uninformed comprehensions, of the actual measure of the remuneration they are receiving for the transfer of the commodities they give in exchange for them: and, moreover, because, in addition to these purposes of internal traffic, they also possess an equal, or nearly equal value (at the present moment *superior*), as articles of external and foreign exchange; or by conversion to the uses of luxurious manufacture.

. But, for all the ends of domestic circulation, this intrinsic claim to public confidence is not absolutely and indispensably requisite; but may be supplied by a cheaper and more convenient substitute, in the shape of paper, issued by solvent persons; that is to say, persons in possession, either *de jure* or *de facto*,

of lawful assets for the discharge of all the obligations they have so contracted. I say *de jure*, because some uninformed persons have supposed it necessary—I refer more especially to the case of the Bank of England—that the parties issuing should, at all times, keep in their coffers an actual deposit of coin, equal to the whole of their paper issues. The absurdity of this must be sufficiently evident to any one possessing the slightest acquaintance with the principles of banking; which require only, that the persons who bank should be lawful owners of such solid securities, whether in land, mortgages, public funds, advances on the public income, for which the national faith is pledged, exchequer, navy, or ordnance bills, discounted drafts of substantial merchants, or other undoubted securities, as being convertible, in a reasonable time, into the currency of the country, shall be at least equal, in clear and ascertained amount, to the whole of their paper deliveries. It is this which constitutes *solvency*. The *profit* arises from the discretion exercised of actually keeping in the banking-house only such a portion of this aggregate in the currency of the country, as may, in all reasonable judgment, be fairly computed to exceed the quantum of paper returnable on them within the day; and so on,

de die in diem; the remainder of their capital (whether originally their own, or arising from the deposits of other persons; the first case probably applying more immediately to the Bank of England, the latter rather referring to private banking-houses), being put out to profitable uses; for, on any other principle, it is at once apparent that the banker, instead of obtaining any return for his risk and labour, his expensive establishment and outgoings of all sorts, would be gaining less than the idle individual, who sits at his ease, and lives on the legal interest of his private fortune.

Whether the portion to be so retained for immediate payment, should be in the metallic or paper part of the national currency, and in what cases the general rule will admit of especial and temporary suspensions, is another question, and will probably come under consideration in a subsequent part of this publication. On that, also, I have a very decided opinion, as will appear in its proper place.

• It must be sufficiently evident, indeed, to the simplest capacity, how completely impossible it must be for a great-commercial country to find a sufficient quantity of the precious metals to fill all the channels of mercantile circulation; and, even if possible, how extremely inconvenient, burthensome, and even

dangerous, such a mode of balancing accounts must prove to the persons engaged in it, when every merchant would be obliged to keep armed men to guard his treasure from place to place; and every tradesman must either pay an insurance to those who transport his cash for him, or arm himself for the purpose of carrying it in person.

And here I must pause for a moment, to answer, by anticipation, a charge of inconsistency, which I am well aware may be made against me, by those who will say, that I am committing the very fault I found with others, of involving simple facts in complicated theories: but to this I reply, that, in answering others, I must necessarily state how far I concur in, and how far I dissent from, the principles and theories advanced by them. Had I merely my own opinion to state, I could at once confine myself to the simple and unqualified assertion that no such thing exists as a depreciation of the paper part of our currency, as relatively compared with the metallic portion; because the fact is ascertained, that a pound note and a shilling will purchase exactly the same in the market, as a guinea containing 5 dwts. $9\frac{3}{4}$ grains *, or not less than 5 dwts.

* Of which eleven parts are of pure gold, and the twelfth of alloy. This alloy is formed of pure copper alone at pre-

3 grs.; and it is evident, that notes issued by the Bank of England for one hundred and five pounds, must represent, and be represented by, exactly one hundred guineas; which are, equally with themselves, the representatives of one hundred and five pounds sterling in money of account, neither more nor less; for these notes must represent precisely that sum, or they represent nothing: it is impossible to fix any intermediate value for them; they are valuable to that extent, or they are not valuable at all. It is admitted, that they have no *intrinsic* value beyond that of waste-paper; and their representative value must be exactly that of the thing which they represent. And it would be the height of absurdity to advance, that, because one hundred new-coined guineas contain a quantity of bullion, which at the market-price of 4*l.* 10*s.* per ounce, would cost 121*l.* 6*s.* 11¼*d.* that, *therefore*, one hundred and five pounds in Bank-notes must be depreciated to the value of only 90*l.* 17*s.* 1*d.*; because, at the market-price of bullion, they

sent; but the late Mr. Henry Cavendish, and Mr. Hatchett, have reported, as the result of many experiments, that an alloy of silver and copper mixed would be rather more preventive of abrasion and friction. For which, see the Philosophical Transactions of 1803.

would only purchase a quantity of that commodity sufficient to coin into guineas * of that value; that is to say, into 86 guineas and a half; for the same argument would apply, with equal force, to prove a depreciation in the guineas themselves, or that GOLD IS NOT EQUAL TO GOLD †; which the theorists, with my Honourable Friend at their head, have asserted it must always be; and to this dilemma have they reduced themselves, by not distinguishing between coin and bullion—a want of dis-

* As 12*l.* 6*s.* 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ *d.* : 10*5l.* : : 10*5l.* : 90*l.* 17*s.* 1*d.*

Again, as 4*l.* 10*s.* : 1 oz. : : 10*5l.* : 23 oz. 6*d*wts. 16 grs.

And as 5*d*wts. 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ grs. : 1 guin. : : 23 oz. 6*d*wts. : 4grs. : 86 $\frac{1}{2}$ guineas and 3.6 grs. over; worth, at the same rate, 7*l.*; making, together, 90*l.* 17*s.* 1*d.*

† It was my intention to have pointed out the same error in Mr. Locke (with respect to *silver*), as proceeding from too great a predilection for abstract reasoning, and too little attention to plain matter of fact, and practical consequence, when Mr. Bosanquet's very able OBSERVATIONS, &c. were put into my hand; in which he has treated that point in a manner so masterly, as to leave me no excuse for repetition: I shall, therefore, only generally observe, in Lord Liverpool's words, that "*The errors in this respect, of all the late writers on coins, have proceeded from a perusal of the works of Mr. Locke, without observing, that the state of the coins of the kingdom is wholly changed from what it was when he considered this subject. It is probable, that if this great man had lived to the present times, he would have been sensible of the change: he would have applied his principles to the facts as they now exist, and would have drawn his conclusions in conformity to them.*"

crimination which must completely disqualify them as judges in the present cause. Indeed, reasoning according to Mr. Huskisson's own arguments, if any part of our currency were depreciated, it would be the metallic portion, as compared with itself, and not the paper part as regulated by the coin; for 21 Bank-notes of one pound each, are still equal to the 20 guineas, which every one allows them to have been originally exchangeable against; but the 20 guineas will not, at the present price, purchase 5 oz. 7 dwts. 21 grs. or their own weight in gold, but only 4 oz. 11 dwts. 7.3 grs. And this would be the curious result of admitting his own premises; which are, however, inadmissible *in toto*; the plain and simple fact being, that at 4*l.* 12*s.* per oz. the exact weight of bullion to be purchased by twenty-one pounds sterling, either in Bank-notes, or cash equally, is neither more nor less than the last stated quantity.

It is impossible for any man to entertain a higher respect than myself for every thing which emanates from such a source as a Committee of the House of Commons; and in all matters relating to action, my conduct would be regulated by the most scrupulous and rigid adherence to the decrees of the Legislature. It is only by supporting their lawful

authority to the very utmost, that we can expect to preserve, in this happy island, the fortunate exception we present to the universal slavery and wretched despotism of the rest of Europe. But whatever may be the rule of *action*, so long as the powers of thought remain unimpaired, I cannot suffer my judgment to be influenced in matters of *opinion*, in direct contradiction to the evidence before me; nor can I hesitate, for a moment, to declare, that, had the framing of the Report of the Bullion Committee rested with me, I must, from the clear, undeviating tenor of that evidence, have delivered an opinion (entirely corroborated by my own previous conviction), completely the reverse of that which is now before the public.

I confess, that, when the motion for the appointment of a Committee was first brought forward, I deprecated the measure most earnestly, because I was not sensible of any good that could follow; and was well aware of the evil that might ensue, and which, I am clear, has actually arisen from the mistaken mode in which, I think, the subject has been treated. Much of the alarm that has spread itself so widely through the mercantile world, and a great portion of the destruction which has so generally preyed on the sources of commer-

cial confidence throughout the nation, must, in my opinion, be attributed to the deference which has been erroneously paid to a doctrine promulgated under the sanction of such grave and potent authority.

The public opinion has been too often misled, of late years, by useless inquiries after imaginary grievances; and the due course of wholesome investigation has been as much diverted from its proper channel, by the more upright, but equally ill-judging, enquirers into the state of the national currency, as by the libellous and swindling conspirators against the calumniated Son of their Sovereign.

Mr. Huskisson's assertion, that "*whoever buys, gives—whoever sells, receives—such a quantity of pure gold or silver as is equivalent to the article bought or sold; or if he gives or receives paper instead of money, he gives or receives that which is valuable only as it stipulates the payment of a given quantity of gold or silver*"—is, like those propositions which he has criticised, in fact, neither true nor false: it is not false; because there cannot, according to the present state of the law, be any legal tender of a debt made otherwise than in the gold or silver coin of the country; but it is also not true, in so far as it is not so much for a certain quantity of gold or silver for which the seller stipu-

lates, or has in contemplation of stipulating, as for the means, whatever they may be, whether in gold, silver, or well-accredited paper, by which he may be enabled to acquire an equivalent portion of other articles, at the time, and in the manner, which may be most convenient to him, in exchange for the commodities he wishes to part with at the time of making the contract. Nor is it *pure* gold or silver for which he would stipulate, at any rate, but the standard metal of the country, according to the legal rate of alloy; and this criticism on the word *pure*, trifling as it may at first seem, is of no inconsiderable consequence, because it constitutes a material part of the difference between coin and bullion, which have been so strangely mistaken for each other, both in the Report and pamphlet.

There is a kind of side-blow, which I can hardly think my Honourable Friend meant to aim at the measure carried into effect when he was himself in office, where (after defining that to be *paper money* which rests upon authority, whilst that which rests upon general confidence is termed *circulating credit*) he says, "*Paper, such as alone used to be current in Great Britain before the restriction on the Bank, was, strictly, circulating credit.*" Why say *used to be current*? Is not the very same

sort of paper current in the very same manner* and degree since, as it was before, the restriction? Any one unacquainted with the Statute-books of the kingdom would suppose, from the natural inference of the expression, that Bank-notes had been made a legal tender for a lawful debt, and that the paper of the Bank of England had been forced upon us by the authority of the Legislature, like what the author calls, the *paper money* of the continental governments.

After premising several truisms, in his 4th and 5th pages, on the shape, size, standard-weight and fineness, denomination, and value of national coins, Mr. Huskisson attempts to establish, what appears to me to be a complete *non sequitur*, by asserting that, “*There is not, therefore, nor can there be, any difference whatever, between any given coin and an uncoined piece of the same metal, of equal weight and fineness, except that the quantity of the former is*

* The very necessary measure for securing against vexatious and frivolous arrest the person of the solvent debtor, in order to give him time to exchange his paper for coin—a necessity naturally arising from the very extensive increase of money transactions—and the impossibility of every man’s being at all times provided with sufficient coin to pay all demands on him at once, by no means breaks in upon the principle I am asserting.

accurately ascertained, and publicly proclaimed, to all the world, by the stamp which it bears." Had this been correct, the Honourable Gentleman's pamphlet would not have been written; for the excess of market-price of bullion above the Mint-price of the same commodity, and the legal value of the coin, could never have existed; and the cause, in support of which the argument is adduced, refutes the argument itself, *ex absurdo*.

A mistake, nearly similar, and equally obvious, follows close on the heels of the former; for, after stating two well-known facts—First, "*That a pound of gold, of our standard, is coined into 44 guineas and a half; and that any person may, at the King's mint, procure any quantity of gold to be so coined, free of any expense whatever:—*

Secondly, "*That, by law, those guineas which, when fresh from the Mint, weigh 5 dwts. 9½ grs. each, cease to be a legal tender, if by wear, or otherwise, they are reduced below 5 dwts. 8 grs. which is a diminution in their value of a small fraction more than one per cent.*"—

He broadly asserts, that, "*consequently, the law of England, before the year 1797, distinctly secured to every man, that he should not be compelled to take in satisfaction of a legal debt, for every guinea of that debt, less than 5 dwts. 8 grs.*

of gold of standard fineness; and, as distinctly, that he should not be obliged to receive as the representative of a guinea, or a guinea's worth, any article or thing which would not purchase or procure that quantity of gold."

To the first branch of this deduction, I agree completely, and only remark, in addition, that neither has the statute of 1797, nor any of the subsequent acts for continuing the restriction, altered the law in regard to the power of claiming a piece of *coined* gold, of the standard weight and fineness, for every guinea of a lawful debt, with the provision already stated, against personal arrest; but with respect to the second part, I deny, as completely, that the Legislature ever could have it in contemplation, to hold out to the subject an immunity against an event entirely out of its power of control; namely, that the market-price of gold should never rise above 4*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* per lb. troy; for, at this moment, the guinea itself will not purchase 5 dwts. 8 grs. of uncoined gold, but only 4 dwts. 16 grs. at 4*l.* 12*s.* per oz.: nor could this have been guarded against by any legislative provision*, unless the inter-

* "In exchanges with foreign countries, and in payments made to them, the intrinsic value of the metal of which the coin is made, is the only measure of property and commerce; because the

nal laws of this country could assume the power of controlling the external contingencies of foreign markets.

The same fallacious reasoning, founded on the most mistaken abstractions of theory, and framed in direct contradiction to the practical information afforded by the evidence before the Committee, is pursued, in a subsequent part (page 11) of the same pamphlet, when it says, “*If in the year 1797 it had been foreseen that this temporary expedient would be attempted to be converted into a system for an indefinite number of years; and that, under this system, in the year 1810, every creditor, public or private, subject or alien, to whom the law, as it then stood*, and as it now stands, had secured the*

authority of sovereigns cannot extend to regulate payments made in foreign countries, where they have no power or jurisdiction.”

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* There was a time when my Honourable Friend used to associate with such men as Mr. Pitt and Lord Melville; in whose society, and in whose principles, the natural clearness of his excellent understanding had fair play: he would not then, I think, have advanced any thing which might be converted into such a syllogism as the following:—

The law did secure to A the payment of a certain weight of gold:—

The law still remains the same.

Therefore, by the same law, A is now obliged to receive a smaller quantity.

payment of a pound weight of standard gold for every 46*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* of his just demand, would be obliged to accept, in full satisfaction, about 10½*oz.* or not more than seventeen shillings in the pound, with a prospect of a still further reduction in every subsequent year. It is impossible to conceive that the attention and feelings of Parliament would not have been alive to all the individual injustice, and ultimate public calamities, incident to such a state of things; and that they would not have provided for the termination of the restriction, before it should have wrought so much mischief, and laid the foundation of so much confusion, in all the dealings and transactions of the community."

Much as I must regret the necessity of expressing a difference of opinion from my Honourable Friend on any subject, and cordial as has hitherto been my concurrence with him upon almost every topic, and fully also as I acquit him of any thing like an evil intention in the act, I yet feel it incompatible with any

No one who knows my Honourable Friend, can doubt his abilities—*sed aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus*. But who can enter the *Serbian bog* of abstraction, without stumbling, sometimes, in the mire of metaphysics?

sense of duty to my country, to avoid the censuring of such a passage, as well because the assumption is not borne out by the actual state of the law; as also because it would, at any rate, be an unwise * and dangerous promulgation to those who are not sufficient judges of the necessity, even if any thing like the statement made were in existence; but I have no hesitation in declaring that the real state of the case is completely different. I positively affirm, and challenge the proof of possible contradiction,

First, That the law of this land never did promise, by any statute whatever, either before or after the year 1797, to any creditor, either public or private, subject or alien, more than that he should be secured in his claim of 44 guineas and a half, of the lawful current coin of the kingdom, for every 46*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* of legally-established debt; without any reference whatever to a pound of gold. Indeed, prior to that period (1797), that number of guineas

* How could my Honourable Friend shut his eyes to the mischievous use that would be made of his authority by the daily chronicles of misrepresentation, and in the *Saturday columns of the State Prison lucubrator* :—

“ Who aim at it,

“ And botch the words up fit for their own thoughts.”

could not be refused, if they did not weigh more than 11 oz. 17 dwts. 8 grs.

And, secondly, That instead of being obliged now to accept, in full satisfaction, about 10¼ oz. or not more than seventeen shillings in the pound, with the prospect of a still further reduction in every subsequent year, the law, standing exactly as it did, binds the creditor to nothing of the sort: he is still entitled to demand his 44 ½ guineas, at a standard weight varying from 1 lb. to 11 oz. 17 dwts. 8 grs.; and so also was he precisely before the restriction acts were passed. And that those guineas of such a weight should now happen to command only 11 oz. 3 dwts. 3.6 grs. of *uncoined* bullion, because that commodity has chanced to rise in the market from 3*l.* 17*s.* 10¼*d.* to 4*l.* 12*s.* per oz. is a contingency not within the purview of the Legislature in fixing the standard weight of the guinea; nor within its power to control, if held in contemplation; and as to any loss arising therefrom, it is the individual's own risk, if he chooses to speculate in bullion, instead of broad-cloth, or linen, or any other commodity. But do not let Government be so unfoundedly accused of fraud or injustice, by such a fallacious mode of reasoning as my Honourable Friend has, I fear, been led into, by worse-intentioned minds.

than his own, and so contrary to the general tenour of his manly understanding: and I will ask the Honourable Gentleman, if any tenant of his, who has never heard of this mischievous doctrine, of the imputed injustice, the ideal iniquity of Government; and who, not participating in his worthy landlord's dread of public calamity, but having, from practical experience, a tolerably accurate judgment in the weight and value of live cattle, wishes to part with a couple of Sussex bullocks, or a score of South Down wethers, which he estimates, by the seldom-failing test of his finger, to weigh about ninety-three score and a half, at 6*d.* per lb. live-weight, and which he will, therefore, value at about 4*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.*, I beg leave to ask my Honourable Friend, whether he thinks the honest grazier will ever trouble himself about the value of a pound of gold; or even if his landlord himself, in order to prevent his being involved in the national calamity, were to offer it to him, whether he would not tell him that was not what he wanted; and that he should not know what to do with it, if he had it; that he intended to sell his cattle for forty-six pounds fourteen shillings and sixpence, or forty-four guineas and a half; for which purpose, he will produce his canvas bag. And

with this answer would my Honourable Friend rest contented, unless he means to improve his estate by converting his tenants into dealers in bullion.

But there is a fundamental mistake which runs through the whole of Mr. Huskisson's argument—he considers the guinea as the measure and standard of value, and the Bank-note as the proportional representative of that guinea, or something worse. Now, I affirm, that the only original national measure of value is the pound sterling, in money of account, and was so long before a guinea* was coined; for all monied value must be in account only, or it never could be ascertainably fixed to any valuation whatever; coin of whatever sort or kind; whether gold, silver, or copper; whether the guinea of England, the Louis d'or of France, the ducat of Holland, the sequin of Venice, or even the iron money † of Lycurgus—

* Guineas were first coined after the Restoration, in the 15th of Charles II. Before which, the gold was coined into laurels—and before them, into nobles—all, successively, representing certain proportions of the pound sterling; which I take to be derived (according to Somner) rather from the Saxon word *Steore*, a rule or standard, than, according to the vulgar acceptance, from *Easterling*, or eastern, in contradistinction to the *libra occidua*, or western pound of the Romans.

† The regulation of the Spartan lawgiver to destroy the

whatever in itself possesses an embodied form, and an intrinsic value, must, as a material commodity, be subject to variation under the universal principle of the relative proportions of product and demand. And paradoxical as it may seem in theory, it is, nevertheless, most incontrovertibly true in practice, that it is this very attribute of intrinsic value which necessarily imposes the quality of variation. It is the ideal money of account only which admits of invariable value; because it is not formed of *substantial*, and, therefore, *variable*, materials.

That the money of account is invariable, and the metallic part of the currency subject to fluctuation, may be illustrated in the following manner; forming, in my opinion, an incontrovertible demonstration of their difference with respect to the quality of invariability, so absolutely necessary to the constitution of a fixed and regular standard and measure of value. The intrinsic value of the precious metals, from which coins are formed, may rise or

value of his iron bars, for purposes of commerce or manufacture, by quenching them in vinegar: though it may appear to take them out of the catalogue of examples, tends more strongly to corroborate the correctness of my general principle.

fall, whilst the interchangeable commodities remain stationary; for twenty yards of broad-cloth may continue to be worth twenty-one pounds, neither more nor less, whilst 5 oz. 7 dwts. 20.76 grs. of gold may vary, in the marketable or intrinsic value, at the same time, from 21*l.* to 24*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.* or more; and this may take place equally, whether broad-cloth remain stationary, and Irish linens are fluctuating—or whether the whole of the interchangeable articles continue at the same nominal price; but with respect to the money of account, so long as the Irish linen is at 5*s.* per yard, or broad-cloth at 21*s.* for the same quantity, it is clear, that twenty-one pounds sterling, whether represented by paper or stamped bullion, must continue to be equivalent to neither more nor less than 84 yards of the former commodity, and 20 of the latter. And thus the money of account remains in itself fixed and undepreciated, whilst the precious metals may either be suffering an intrinsic depreciation, or receiving an addition of intrinsic value; and cannot, therefore, be in themselves those fixed, invariable standards of value, and universal unvarying equivalents, which Mr. Huskisson seems to think them; but can only, at best, be regarded as good and useful representatives of that measure at home; and more.

generally received by way of approximating equivalent between different nations, whose monies of account have different denominations and divisions; the value of which not being, what I may call, substantially intrinsecal, does not extend beyond the limits of its own territory: the metals being, however, in this latter capacity, at all times subject, like every other article of commerce, to the constant fluctuations of market-price, arising from the different proportions of product and demand, and especially from the amount of balances of payments to be made between those countries.

My Honourable Friend has stated six propositions; some of which, he says, those who differ from him in opinion, must be prepared to deny, or the conclusion he has drawn must necessarily follow. Of these propositions, the first is certainly correct—the second I think inaccurate—the third, completely erroneous and unfounded—the fourth, thrown out of question by the error in the preceding assertion—the fifth, either true or false *, according to the construction of the terms—and the sixth, though correct as far it goes, yet embracing

* I beg to be clearly understood, that the application of these terms, wherever they occur in this publication, is intended to be strictly confined to their *logical* appropriation; without the slightest reference to the *moral* construction of the words.

only a part of what ought to have been included in a fair statement of the premises, by such omission, is rendered completely nugatory as to any conclusive bearing on the question of partial depreciation with regard to the paper portion of the currency, as compared with the metallic part.

The first, that "*a pound, or twelve ounces of gold, by the law of this country, is divided into 44 guineas and a half, or 46l. 14s. 6d.*" is perfectly accurate.

The second, that "*by this division, which is made at the public expense, and without charge for coinage, nothing is added to the value of the gold, and nothing taken from it*"—is neither fully, nor fairly, stated; for though no man can say whether the stamp of coinage shall increase or diminish the original value of the uncoined bullion, or rough material (which must entirely depend on the fluctuation of that commodity in the market, and, therefore, cannot be permanently and ascertainably either augmented or diminished, in intrinsic value, by such operation), yet I do affirm, in positive denial of Mr. Huskisson's proposition, that the process of the Mint has added to the gold, when transformed from bullion into coin, the quality of representing a certain fixed admeasurement of general value, which it did not.

possess in its original shape. Before it was coined, it might be worth 3*l.* 17*s.* 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ *d.* per oz. or it might be worth 4*l.* 12*s.*; a pound weight of it might be exchangeable against as much of the flesh of Sussex beeves, or South Down wethers, as should be valued at 46*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* or it might be equal to as much of the same articles as were worth 56*l.*; and no man could tell at what rate he was bartering his commodities; but when once the stamp of coinage has arrested its fluctuating value, it becomes the universally-acknowledged mark and symbol of a certain unvarying quantum of remuneration, and possesses a valuable quality, which was not attributable to it in its original state; nor is it even then merely as gold or as silver, that this quality is assigned to either of the precious metals, but solely as one of the substantial, or, as Sir James Steuart has very correctly called them, the *artificial* representatives of the original measure of value, the money of account.

I object to the third assertion, in both its branches. In the first place, I deny that a pound of gold, and 46*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* are equivalent*; because, 'if this were so, a pound of

* The general application of the term *equivalent*, which is here assumed, is not correct; a pound troy of uncoined bullion, and the quantity of gold coin which represents the sum

gold could never sell for either more or less than that sum in money of account; and of this, the fact of the present high price of bullion completely disposes. And, in the second, I affirm, most decidedly, that there is not a word to be found in any of the Statute-books of this kingdom, which states, even on the most strained construction, that any thing which represents 4*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* ought to be exchangeable, at will, for a pound of gold.

In regard to the fourth, that “*no alteration has been made in this state of law, except by the Act of 1797;*”—this is disposed of by the denial of the last.

“*Fifthly, the professed and intended operation of the Act of 1797, was not to diminish the quantity of gold, for which any specified amount of circulating credit ought to be exchangeable, but merely to suspend, for a time, the option of the exchange.*” This is either right or wrong, as the exchangeable quantity of gold is meant to apply to *coin* or *bullion*; correct in the first in-

of 4*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* in money of account, are certainly equivalent, or nearly so (with a trifling variation of 2 dwts. 16 grs. allowed for defalcation, by wear and tear), in *weight*; and *only* in *weight*; but are, by no means, confined to one unvarying equivalence of *general* value.

stance, and inapplicable in the second: to which, indeed, it was not intended to be applied in any way; and, therefore, as far as bullion is concerned, *cadit questio*.

In his sixth proposition, Mr. Huskisson states, that “*the sum of 46l. 14s. 6d. in our present paper, will procure in exchange for gold, only 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. of that metal. A pound of gold is now exchangeable for 56l. in paper currency; any commodity, therefore, which is exchangeable for a pound of gold, is also equivalent to 56l. in paper.*”—Granted, most willingly. But I must, also, insist on an equal concession of fact to me, when I assert, that if Mr. Huskisson wishes to purchase the same pound of gold bullion, or the same commodity of any other kind, equal in value to a pound of gold, by paying for it in the metallic currency of the country, he cannot make such purchase with 44 guineas and a half, at the present market-prices of those commodities, but must give not less than 53 guineas and a seven-shilling piece for them; unless, indeed, he chooses to exhibit the novel spectacle of a Secretary of the Treasury dealing with a Jew, for the express purpose of having the gold coin of the country thrown, illegally, into the melting-pot, and evading the law by swearing it off,

and exporting it as foreign bullion. And this I state as an incontrovertible fact.

And now, having thus disproved several of my Honourable Friend's statements of facts; and having, as I think, shown, notwithstanding, what he will pardon me if I call, something like a tone of proud defiance in his challenge—that he *has* mis-stated the tenor of the permanent laws of the realm which regulate our coinage, and determine our legal tender; that gold is *not* exclusively the basis of our money; that its value is *not* invariably measured by its quantity; and that the value of that quantity *is* altered by being fixed, after its conversion into coin, so long as it remains unmelted;—and having looked at the subject with quite as much attention and deliberate consideration, though, perhaps, not with the same degree of ability, as my Honourable Friend; but being at all times perfectly ready to maintain my propositions by sound and practical evidence, I find myself completely at liberty to dissent from his conclusion, and to deny, *in toto*, “*that the difference between 56l. and 46l. 14s. 6d. or between 12 and 10½ oz. of gold, arises from the depreciation of the paper, and is the measure of that depreciation, as well with respect to gold, the universal equivalent, as to every other commodity.*”

On the contrary, that difference arises from a multiplicity of causes, in which, however, the only one asserted by the theorists is not to be included; it arises from almost any thing, rather than a relative depreciation of the paper currency, as compared with the coin. I could rather be disposed to admit the incorrect idea of a general depreciation of the whole circulating medium of the country, as compared with the prices of the interchangeable commodities, than a partial one, of the paper portion of it; but the fact is, that no part of the symbolic representatives of value, whether metallic or paper, are in themselves intrinsically depreciated; it is only the interchangeable articles of necessity—bread, beer, meat, cloth, and bullion*, which, because the demand for them has increased with a rapidity beyond that which the increase of supply has been able to keep pace with, have risen in money-price; whilst the money itself has remained intrinsically stationary.

* It may be objected to the insertion of this article in the list, that it is not one of the *first* necessities, like the others; but if not one of the *first* rank, it comes close upon their heels, so long as foreign balances are to be settled, or foreign payments, of any sort, to be liquidated, and may, therefore, fairly be allowed to keep its place, at least at present.

The greater number * of mouths to be fed, and bodies to be clothed, aided by the more luxurious modes of modern life in all ranks of the state (especially in those most numerous classes, the middling and lower degrees, who have certainly of late years increased their expenditure more in proportion than the higher ranks), have, with a progression nearly regular, increased the relative disproportion between the circulating medium, of whatever denomination or kind, and the interchangeable articles to be purchased by means of it; and it was this progressive disproportion which Sir George Shuckburgh intended to exemplify, in the *Philosophical Transactions*, under the inaccurate term of *depreciation* of money, corrected in a subsequent column of results into the more appropriate title of *mean appreciation*, when he so ingeniously stated by deductions from the different prices of day labour, corn, meat, and twelve other miscellaneous articles selected from the necessaries of life, that the power of money in command of those articles was in the year 1700 in the proportion of 562 to that of 238 in the

* The inhabitants of England and Wales were reckoned at the time of the Union in 1706, at 7 millions; at present they are about 10 millions; and the whole population of the United Islands, about 16 millions.

year 1800 ; that is to say, that 238 *pounds sterling* (for the worthy Baronet never dreamt of departing from the national standard of value, in money of account, to talk of *guineas* or *pounds of gold*) were, in the former year, equal in ability of purchase to 562 in the latter.

So also has bullion risen in price, as a marketable commodity, though not with the same gentle and regularly progressive advance ; neither from the same causes ; nor yet from the reasons so unfoundedly assigned, of an excess, and consequently relative depreciation in the paper currency ; neither of which can possibly exist, so long as the Bank of England continues to regulate its issues, by the demand for discounts on substantial bills drawn on the basis of bona fide mercantile transactions ; and that those bills are convertible into currency by payment in a reasonable time ; which time seems, by common consent of the commercial world, to have been fixed, with some few occasional deviations, not to exceed, in general, two months after date for home bills, and sixty days sight for those drawn abroad.

Neither can it, according to my judgment, be attributed to the idle alarm of excessive advances to Government ; because, whilst the price of bullion has kept rising, the amount of these

advances has rather decreased than otherwise *; being at the highest in the years 1801 and 2, at the winding up of the war expenses after the treaty of Amiens, when they amounted to between 10 and 11 millions, but at present do not exceed eight millions.

The real cause of the price of bullion may, in my opinion, be traced to the convulsed situation of the continent, the languishing or almost expiring state of paper confidence all over the continent, which necessarily confines its commercial transactions, narrowed as they are, in a great measure to cash payments; the vast demand for specie to pay and feed the immense armies, kept on foot by the different powers, during a long and bloody war; and the natural proneness in the terrified inhabitants of Europe, to lock up the little they can hide from the rapacious eye of the all-grasping usurper, and his hordes of plunderers. And when all these combined and operative causes are taken into due consideration, there cannot be any necessity for arguing ourselves into an imaginary depreciation of our own unshaken paper credit, or to strain a forced and unnatural connexion between the value of a Bank of England

* Vide Appendix of Accounts, No. 45, to Report of Bullion Committee. Page 52, octavo edition.

note, and a rate of exchange produced solely by the excess of foreign payments over the annual value of our receipts from abroad.

I should have detailed the statement of receipts and payments whence this excess arises, had it not been already so accurately done by Mr. Bosanquet in his very masterly and unanswerable publication of "PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE REPORT OF THE BULLION COMMITTEE." But as I have heard of a criticism on one part of Mr. Bosanquet's excellent pamphlet, in which he has corrected a very erroneous statement in the Report, with respect to the real balance of our European trade for the year 1809, as affecting the rate of exchange and price of bullion; I shall so far trespass on the patience of my readers, as to point out to those who have not had time to examine and compare the different documents from whence the evidence must be taken, how clearly and judiciously Mr. Bosanquet has exercised his power of discrimination in correcting the oversight of the framers of the Report.— That Report, in pages 12 and 13 of the folio edition, and pages 28 and 30 of the octavo, gives in the first of these pages in each edition, a statement of the balance of trade in favour of this country *with the whole world*, which for the year 1809 is stated to be, from the *actual* values,

14,834,000*l.* And this statement it is there said was made up by Mr. Irving, the Inspector General of Customs, who "*has also endeavoured to forward the object of the Committee, by calculating how much should be deducted from the value of goods imported, on account of articles in return for which nothing is exported. These deductions consist of the produce of fisheries, and of imports from the East and West Indies, which are of the nature of rents, profits, and capital remitted to proprietors in this country.*" And "*The balance of trade in favour of this country, upon the face of the account thus made up, was,*" as before stated, "*14,834,000*l.**" And this statement is prefaced by saying that the "*Committee, observing how entirely the present depression of our exchange with EUROPE is referred by many persons to a great excess of our imports above our exports, have called for an account of the actual value of THOSE for the last five years.*" Now, to my simple apprehension, the relative THOSE would have pointed, as an antecedent, to the actual value of imports and exports between this country and *Europe*; instead of which we have a statement of the *actual* values of exports to *all the world*, amounting to 66,017,702*l.*; and of imports 59,851,352*l.* reduced, by deducting the produce of fisheries and remittances from the West and East Indies (8,718,289*l.*), to 51,133,063*l.* leav-

ing a favourable balance of 14,884,649*l.* This certainly shows a considerable *prima facie* balance in favour of our general trade with the *whole world*; but what has this to do with the balance affecting the European exchange, and arising from the trade with that continent only, and not with all the world; as corrected by Mr. Bosanquet from the erroneous statement in the Report *, in which the *real* values, by some *mistake* of the framers of that Report, are kept out of sight, and the *official* amounts are stated to be, exports 23,722,615*l.*; imports 9,551,857*l.*; leaving a favourable balance of 14,170,758*l.*— Whereas Mr. Bosanquet † very accurately takes the *real* values from the same documents ‡ as exports 27,190,337*l.* and imports 19,821,601*l.* making the *real* balance only 7,368,736*l.*; and then very properly, in his next pages, sets against this last-mentioned sum the amount of bills drawn on Government from the continent of Europe, and of specie and bullion exported by the Paymaster-general to the same part of the world, to which he adds the estimate of sums

* Page 30, octavo edition, and 13 of the folio.

† Practical Observations, &c. p. 39.

‡ Nos. 75 and 76, Appendix of Accounts, p. 111, octavo edition.

paid for neutral freight to the Baltic * only, which articles, amounting together to 10,699,732*l.* create a balance ultimately against us, of upwards of three millions on the whole of our European receipts and payments; and this, as the same gentleman very judiciously observes, even if the whole of our exports to the continent were actually sold, and paid for: but this, any one who ever reads the Morning Chronicle (as *some* of the gentlemen who support the theory of depreciation probably do), and sees the melancholy accounts so minutely detailed in that *impartial* vehicle of information, of warehouses at Heligoland crammed with spoiling goods, and ships returning home with unbroken bulk, must know cannot be the case; even after making all *proper* deduction for the editor's wish not to *flatter* his countrymen into a belief of their being either *richer, happier, or better governed* than they *really* are.

Now, whatever the actual proportion of the 27 millions of exports may be, which either remains unsold, or, being sold, is yet unpaid for; the real value of such proportion, whatever it

* After premising that he takes the amount paid by foreigners to British ships for other freight to be equal to what is paid by us to neutrals for corn, wine, and brandy, from France, and for the intercourse between Heligoland and the continent, and therefore omits both.

may arise to, must evidently be added to the unfavourable balance of three millions and upwards, already ascertained, by Mr. Bosanquet, to be established against us on the whole of the actual payments on our European transactions; and I think I should not overshoot my mark, even without placing implicit faith either in the Newgate Register, or the Morning Chronicle, if I were to say, that at least as much more, or upwards of three millions, might be placed under the head of unpaid merchandise, so as to create an unfavourable European balance of about seven millions, instead of a favourable one, of between fourteen and fifteen, as stated in the Report of the Committee.

Without the smallest intention to impute any improper motive to the Committee, in framing their Report, I am yet at a loss to conceive how they could suffer it to be presented with such a prominent error as that of estimating the bearing of the balance of our European trade, on 'the course of exchange with Europe, by the *official* values of goods imported and exported, instead' of the *real* values, and that at a moment when they had both documents before their eyes. The former might ascertain the benefits accruing to the revenue from the duties, actually paid at the Cus-

tom-house, but could afford no evidence whatever of the actual balance of payments between this country and the continent, by which the course of exchange, or the price of bullion, should be affected.

If the favourable balance upon our *general* trade had any bearing upon the question of *European* exchange, it would yet be, only what I have before stated, a *prima facie* balance, and liable to all the deductions just now included in my statement, of the balance with Europe. Neither am I yet prepared to admit, to its full extent, the propriety of the Inspector General's deductions for East and West Indian remittances—at least without more specific and circumstantial evidence than what either his Return, or the text of the Report, affords to me. And as to the amount of unpaid exports for the year 1808, it is impossible that such amount can go any great way in diminution of the same head of deduction for the ensuing year, as well because the total *real* value of goods exported to the continent was so much less, being only ~~8,905,000~~^{2,905,000} or not quite ~~nine~~ millions, in the former period, instead of upwards of 29 millions in the latter; as, also, because the execution of the prohibitory decrees has been so much more rigorously enforced during the last year, than in any preceding

one; and, therefore, must have occasioned a much larger proportion of the exports to remain on hand. And this will, in a considerable degree, account for the greater number of recent bankruptcies; for where there is most enterprise, there must, of course, be the largest proportion of failure. But these, however productive of individual distress for the moment, will, in the end, only lead to public benefit; resembling, in this, the healthful eruptions of the human frame, by which, stronger constitutions throw off the seeds of those mortal disorders, under which the weaker stamina would pine and languish into "*wasting atrophy.*"

I have not the smallest intention of attempting to "*show that the temporary luvv of 1797, was intended either to lower our standard, to alter our legal tender, or to leave us without any standard at all;*" and therefore am not reduced, as Mr. Huskisson points out, to establish the fact of depreciation by my own arguments, or to make it appear that such depreciation was either "*the unforeseen consequence,*" or "*the premeditated result of an Act of the Legislature.*" Though, probably, I shall electrify my Honourable Friend's feelings a little, when I assure him, that, although I think our late illustrious Minister was perfectly correct in consult-

ing the prejudices of the public, by not venturing so far as to make a Bank of England note a legal tender, when he restricted the Directors from issuing coin in liquidation of their payments; and which was *then* the less necessary, as the operations of the suspending Act were at first intended to last only for a few months, I should for myself, in complete confidence of the Bank solvency, have been perfectly contented so to receive them, without accusing the Legislature of either deception or fraud; because I am convinced that, for all the purposes of *domestic* circulation, every transaction might be as well and as safely carried on if there were not a guinea in the kingdom; for the *real* wealth of a country does not consist in gold or silver, which will neither clothe, feed*, nor warm—but in flocks, herds, and fisheries, in corn, wine, and oil, in woods, mines, and pastures; and in the list of articles of primary necessity, it is probable, that the precious metals, if included at all, should be ranked at the extreme verge of the scale; being in themselves no further valuable (for, as materials of luxurious manufacture, they cannot be classed as necessaries at all), than

* “*Copia nulla famem relevat; sitis arida guttur
Ut it, et invisio meritis torquetur ab auro.*”

as they may serve to liquidate the final surpluses of traffic between distant countries, whose interchangeable commodities are not exactly balanced in actual barter ; or, in time of war, to remit for the subsistence of fleets or armies abroad, where such payments cannot be effected by bills drawn on the spot, and liquidated by means of exported articles of commerce.

In making this assertion, however, on the nature and properties of national wealth, I must not be mistaken for one of the tribe of visionaries, who reject foreign commerce, and rest all their hopes of public prosperity on agriculture and home manufactures solely : on the contrary, the one is absolutely necessary to encourage and protect the other : the merchant supports the farmer, whilst the agriculturist feeds the man of trade. It is in their close and impartial union, alone, that a nation can find any thing like an extensive and permanent prosperity. I would only guard the theorist from attributing to the precious metals more than they really merit. Spain, as has been well observed, has possessed them in greater abundance than any other nation ; and has been poorer since she acquired their possession, than she was before the acquisition ; whilst other countries, using them with more moderation

and better judgment, and applying them only as the stimulus to industry, have become opulent at her expense.

Reverting more immediately to the subject of making Bank of England notes a legal tender, I have little hesitation in declaring my own opinion, that such an enactment would, as a temporary measure, *now* be extremely proper, in order to give to the law on this subject a consistency, which at this time is wanting to the perfect confidence and security of internal pecuniary transactions—although I think Mr. Pitt was right in so far respecting the prejudices of those who had not considered the subject so deeply, as not to make it so in the first instance; more especially as the very limited duration of the original Act* did not present the probability of any such inconvenience as should call for such a remedy; but in the present day, the case is different; and since the extending Statute†, which continues the suspension of Bank payments in coin, it becomes absolutely necessary for the security of honest and solvent debtors, for so long only as the period of the Bank suspension shall be found proper to be continued. For although such is

* 37 Geo. III. Cap. 45.—3d May 1797.

† 44 Geo. III. Cap. 1.

the confidence of the public in the stability and solvency of the Bank, and the validity of its notes, that there is no instance on record * of a creditor pursuing his debtor for a payment in coin, where he can obtain the same in Bank of England notes, it must ever be recollected, that it is, nevertheless, always in his power so to do if he chooses; and that the wealthiest and most punctual subject in the kingdom might be puzzled to save himself from a gaol, by procuring forty or fifty thousand pounds in specie to pay for an estate, if taken in execution after judgment has been obtained against him in an action; the proceedings in which are not barred by the provision † which prevents him from being held to special bail in the first instance. And if the theoretic advo-

* At least I am not aware of any such—for the case so industriously and *mischievously* published by Cobbett, of the Suffolk Bank, does not appear to me to be a case completely in point—and if there be, I shall gladly receive the information, as an additional argument in proof of the necessity. But, at any rate, the law should always contemplate the extreme case; that which is *in posse*, as well as *in esse*.

† Ninth Section of 37 Geo. III. Cap. 45;—continued by the several Acts of 37 Geo. III. Cap. 91; 38 Geo. III. Cap. 1; 42 Geo. III. Cap. 40; 43 Geo. III. Cap. 18; and since extended to six months after a definitive treaty of peace, by the 44 Geo. III. Cap. 1; which is the latest enactment on the subject.

cates of depreciation tell me, that, by such a measure, I should take away the only value these notes now possess—that of representation—possessing none intrinsically—I answer, No. They would still possess the same representative value of the money unit, the pound sterling, in money of account—the only accurate and invariable measure of the actual wealth of the country. In proof of which, let us see to what this argument would tend, and what this so grossly calumniated *scrap of paper*—for I allow it to be merely such in point of intrinsic value—let us try, by tracing it to various hands, what it would therein be found to represent. In the possession of the landowner of four thousand per annum, we should find a Bank of England note for one thousand pounds, representing a quarter's rent of his estate; or, according to the old-fashioned estimate of a farm producing three rents, one of which goes to the landlord, it is estimated at one twelfth of the annual produce of the land, which he might lawfully seize, and verify the estimate by actual sale of the tenant's stock, before any other claimant, in case of non-payment of the said stipulated rent in these notes, the validity of which would be guaranteed to him by the known solvency of the Bank of England, vouched by the public Report of Par-

liamentary investigation; the accuracy of which is allowed by all parties; and has never been questioned, even in times of the greatest doubt and distrust on other subjects; and this investigation and report, I should think, ought to be continued, in as convenient and concise a form as possible, every session during the suspension; at least, if the tender of Bank paper* should be converted, *pro tempore*, into a full acquittance of a lawful debt.— And thus we find it efficiently and securely representing a certain measured portion of the landed wealth of the country, and with infinitely greater convenience than its corresponding value in the cumbrous articles of oxen, sheep, or corn, and even to a considerable degree more so than 952 guineas and 8 shillings

* Amongst the publications I have read on this subject, since the above was written, I have somewhere seen a proposal for engrafting the additional guaranty of Government on this measure, by pledging a certain proportionally superior quantity of redeemed 3 per Cents. as security for the notes issued by the Governor and Company of the Bank of England: I think, but am not certain, that it is in a very able little pamphlet written by Mr. Fonblanque. I have not very deliberately and thoroughly weighed all the possible bearings of this proposition; but as far as I can at present judge of their tendency, I am inclined to favour it, if thought necessary; at least, I do not see any immediate objection to its admission into an Act for the *temporary* legalizing of a tender in Bank-notes.

in the landlord's pocket. Let us now pursue it, in its next transition, to the trader, and find what it represents in his possession: with him it is the substitute of a correspondent proportion of his stock in trade: with the merchant, of a like part of his ships and merchandise; and in the hands of the annuitant, or stockholder, it is the representative of so much of his share of the public funds. To which, in every one of these cases, is to be added the security of the whole assets of the Bank of England; beyond which, if Mr. Fonblanque's proposition (which I think a very good one) should be adopted, the faith of the whole nation would be pledged in guaranty of the validity of the note so issued. And, indeed, without any such specific provision, it must be sufficiently evident, to every practical financier, that the solvency of the Bank of England, and the national credit and safety, are so much identified, the one with the other, that, although no positive statute provides for such emergency at present, it is absolutely incumbent on the Legislature to uphold that establishment, the dissolution of which would shake our boasted credit to its very foundation, and reduce us to the humiliating level of the bankrupt nations which surround us.

If, then, these efficient and useful purposes

are so completely and so cheaply answered by the representative value of our paper currency—and that they are so, I defy the whole host of depreciators to disprove—I ask my Honourable Friend, what it is, for which he seeks beyond them?—for all the ends of domestic circulation, they possess every necessary quality of representing the measure and actual value that the precious metals have to boast of, with infinitely more convenience, and at much less expense. And all the evidence before the Committee, of which he was so active a member, must have taught him, that, where bullion is wanted, for the purposes either of home-manufacture, or for the payment of foreign balances, that article, as a marketable commodity, would be just as easily acquirable, and at exactly the same price, with Bank-notes as with guineas; and no doubt the more so, as the smaller quantity is required for home circulation: for I cannot possibly agree either with the Committee, or with Mr. Huskisson, that the way to make gold of less value, is, to create a greater demand for it. This is contrary to every principle of political economy, or political arithmetic, to which I have been accustomed to assent.

Perfectly convinced, in my own mind, that whenever the present system of despotism on

the continent shall come to its termination, and the downfall of the Usurper, which, sooner or later, must happen at last, shall, by the restoration of the lawful governments, have brought also in its train a return of the blessings of peace, as a necessary consequence, that then, likewise, the reverting to the original freedom of commerce, will equalize the exchange, and bringing the present hoards of bullion into more general and equal circulation, will render the continuance of the Suspension Acts unnecessary,—I have no wish to make the proposition of legalizing the tender of Bank-notes any thing beyond a temporary convenience, to endure only as long as the evil it is to counteract may continue in existence. And this the more, because it would be more consonant with the general principle, that all restrictions are bad where they can be avoided; freedom being not only the main-spring, but even the very soul, the animating principle of commerce; which scarcely breathes in fetters.

. Mr. Huskisson asks *, “ *What would have been the consistency, what the integrity, of a Legislature, which, leaving unrepealed and unmodified the regulations which take away the character of a legal tender from every guinea weighing less*

than 5 dwts. 8 grs. would give it to a Bank-note, purporting to be a security for the same denomination, but the real value of which is, at this moment, 4 dwts. 14 grs. or, in other words, about three shillings less than the lightest guinea which is allowed to pass in payment."

And again, in the following page*, he proceeds to say, "*By law, a guinea of that weight (5 dwts. 8 grs. and upwards) cannot be exchanged for more than the sum of 21s. which sum, in paper currency, is worth at present 4 dwts. 14 grs. of gold. To sell, or to buy, guineas at a higher rate than 21s. each in Bank paper, is an offence highly punishable.*

"For this last offence, a man has recently been tried and convicted."

I have taken these sentences together, to prevent, as much as possible, any unnecessary repetition of arguments in the exposition of their fallacy; the whole forming one complete mis-statement of the law, in many places, of the very words, and in all, of the true intent and meaning of the legislative provisions:—a mis-statement the more to be lamented, as published, however unguardedly its publicity may have been given, under the sanction of such a name. My Honourable Friend was too

* Page 16.

long in the habits of daily close inspection into the single-mindedness, the unspotted integrity, of that pure and upright Statesman, under whose auspices his talents were first fostered into public notice, must have profited too much by his virtuous and truly patriotic example, to be voluntarily guilty of misleading the public opinion, and sowing groundless fears and unfounded jealousies, in the bosoms of the uninformed multitude; and that at a moment when every real patriot should exercise his fullest energies, in persuading his countrymen to bear with patience and resignation the heavy burthens of an expensive and protracted, though unavoidable, state of warfare. He cannot have been aware of the mischief he was creating, by treating such a subject in a manner so little suited to the usual depth of his understanding. Of such *intention*, I acquit him fully; but the *effect* is, nevertheless, the same; and others, worse affected, will use it as the engine of their purpose*.

How could Mr. Huskisson take so partial a view of the fact, as to say, that whilst the

* The whole tenor of the following pages, 19 and 20, appears to be, at least, so extremely *injudicious*, independently of their great inaccuracy, that I feel myself compelled to pass them over in mournful silence:—

character of a legal tender was taken away from a guinea weighing less than 5 dwts. 8 grs. it would have been given to a Bank-note purporting to be a security for that denomination, but the real value of which, at this moment, is 4 dwts. 14 grs. or, in other words, about three shillings less than the lightest guinea which is allowed to pass in payment? The whole of this passage is so inaccurate, and so confused, that it requires some pains to analyze and separate its points, and to distinguish those facts which are true, but misapplied, from those where the premises themselves are incorrectly stated. In the first place, there is no such thing as a Bank-note of the same denomination as a guinea, or purporting to be a security for 5 dwts. 8 grs. of gold coin; consequently, none whose real value, even according to Mr. Huskisson's own assumption, can be reduced to 4 dwts. 14 grs. : and as an equivalent for *uncoined* gold, either of that weight, or any other, Bank-notes never were established by any law whatever. But even if any of these controverted points were admitted, would not the Author of THE QUESTION, &c. &c. be guilty of a most serious *ex parte* statement of facts, by confining the reduction to Bank-paper, and omitting to say, that even a full-weight guinea, containing 5 dwts. 9½ grs.

would, in its *coined* state, command the purchase of only 4 dwts. 14 grs. of *uncoined* gold also, at its present price in the market ?

The same partial misrepresentation follows in the assertion that a heavy guinea is intrinsically worth 24*s.* 6*d.* in *Bank paper*. What does Mr. Huskisson intend to infer from this ? Does he mean to say, by this application of the term *intrinsecal*, that 5 dwts. $\frac{1}{3}$ grs. of bullion, at the present market-price, is worth 24*s.* 6*d.* ? There was no necessity for him to repeat this assertion so often, and in so many shapes ; for every one is ready to allow it. But if he means to say, that the same weight of *coined* gold stamped into, and remaining under, the denomination of a guinea, will legally purchase that quantity of bullion any more than 21*s.* in *Bank-paper*, I deny his assertion, and defy him to prove it.

I am sorry, exceedingly sorry, to be guilty of such evident repetition, in travelling the same ground over and over again ; but whatever may be my regard for the writer, and whatever my conviction of the innocence of his intentions, it is impossible, whilst convinced of the evil consequences, not to use my best endeavours to sift and counteract the mischievous errors of the doctrine.

I would willingly pass over, if possible, the next pages* ; for I think my Honourable Friend can hardly be serious in his choice of the alternative between the present state of things, with all its air-built, its imaginary grievances, and the really disgraceful, and not more ruinous than unnecessary proposition, of lowering the standard of our coin.

But he proceeds to ask, "*What would be the real difference between a state of law, which either leaving the guinea at its present weight and fineness, should raise its denomination to 24s. 6d. ; or leaving it at its present denomination, should lower its standard to 4 dwts. 14 grs. and a state of law which obliges every man (I suppose he meant to say, "would oblige," for it must certainly be intended to state the case hypothetically, and not to assume the fact), to receive the latter quantity of gold as 21s. or to give 24s. 6d. for the former ?*"

But, in order to meet this most inaccurate (I must say, this most unfair) statement, in both ways ; and taking it as intended either for matter of fact, or as the subject of hypothesis, I beg leave to ask my Honourable Friend two plain questions—to which, I request as plain and direct answers ;—but as he

may not think it worth the trouble of affording those responses, I will answer them myself, in the only way which seems to me to be consistent with law, sense, and truth.

First, Does the law, in its present state, oblige any man to receive 4 dwts. 14 grs. of gold, either coined, or uncoined, as 2 1s. ?

Secondly, Would the law lay any man under either of these specific obligations, by making a Bank-note a legal tender ?

To the first of these questions I return a most decided and unqualified negation, in both its branches. I defy any man breathing to show me a single section, in any statute of the kingdom, by which any thing like 4 dwts. 14 grs. is either specifically and actually, or virtually and by construction, offered as an equivalent for 2 1s.: on the contrary, the Legislature, in the most plain and unequivocal language, says, that no one shall be obliged to receive as a guinea, that which weighs less than 5 dwts. 8 grs. ; so neither is there any legal enactment which, by the most strained construction, can be tortured into an obligation of giving 24s. 6d. for a guinea of full or passable weight ; but, in direct contradiction to the assertion, it clearly and positively interdicts, on pain of heavy punishment, the offering or receiving of more than 2 1s. in ex-

change for such a coin ; and has been already contradicted, by the Honourable Gentleman himself, in his own pamphlet (page 16), where he instances the conviction of a man for this very infraction of the law.

Let us now see, in answer to the second question, which bears "on the hypothetical construction of Mr. Huskisson's argument, what would be the effect as to the same obligations, on the supposition that the Legislature had converted Bank notes into a legal tender. And to this question I also give the same unqualified negative as to the first ; and it must be remembered, that I am now confining myself to the simple fact, whether such enactment would have the effect of forcing any man to receive 4 dwts. 14 grs. of gold as 21s. or of giving 24s. 6d. for 5 dwts. 8 grs. ; reserving to myself, as completely distinct from the present question, any opinion I may hold of the propriety of making such enactment. But, surely, no man can go the length of asserting, that a Bank-note is in the smallest degree more the representative of 4 dwts. 14 grs. of gold, than the guinea, which, though it weighs 5 dwts. 8 grs. will, equally as the Bank note, go no further in the purchase of gold, that is to say, of uncoined bullion, than 4 dwts. 14 grs. at its present market-price. And as

for giving 2*s.* 6*d.* for 5 dwt. 8 grs. it would, in all cases, and under both states of law, be equally interdicted with respect to *coined gold*; and a mere matter of speculation with regard to *bullion*, at the perfect option of the individual, to whom it is, and would be, equally open to give, or to receive, either a guinea and 3*s.* 6*d.* or a Bank-note and 4*s.* 6*d.*; for the Bank-note and the guinea would still remain at the same proportional value, under either provision. THIS I AFFIRM TO BE SOUND LAW, PLAIN SENSE, AND INCONTROVERTIBLE TRUTH.

And here I could be well contented to close my case, as the strong ground from which I defy my Honourable Friend's ingenuity to force me. But there is an error imputed by Mr. Huskisson, to those who do not agree with him in this *imaginary* depreciation of the paper part of our currency, that they "*reason as if they had persuaded themselves, and endeavour to persuade others, that Bank-paper is the real and fixed measure of all commodities.*" Now I, as one of the dissentients, positively deny any such imputation; I never had the slightest intention of establishing Bank-paper as a real, fixed measure; but merely contend, that it is a very convenient, cheap, safe, and efficient *representative* of that measure. I have con-

versed, on the same subject, with many very sensible and well-informed men; most of whom were as unfortunate as myself in holding opinions different from those expressed in the Report of the Committee, and defended by my Honourable Friend with so much eloquence, but I must also, say; with so much more *sophistry* than that with which he is so ready to charge his opponents. I have also read several very able publications on the same side of the question; but neither verbally, nor in print, have I heard or seen a word to justify this charge: though we certainly do hold gold, that is to say *uncoined* gold, to be “*one of the articles, of which in common with others the value is to be ascertained by a reference to this invariable standard and universal equivalent;*” which standard, however, is, in this country, not “*Bank-paper,*” nor yet metallic currency, but the only true national measure of value, the pound sterling, in money of account, whether represented by guineas in gold, shillings in silver, or Bank-notes in paper.

And this brings me to a part * of Mr. Huskisson's argument, on which he seems to rest his principal reliance for the proof of his supposed depreciation of the paper currency, as

* Pages 21, 22.

compared with the current metals; at least, where he appears to enjoy, with no small degree of exultation, an anticipated triumph on the complete surrender of his adversaries' case, in the inference he chooses to draw from the evidence of Mr. Chambers *; but let me request the particular attention of my readers to that gentleman's evidence as detailed in the Appendix to the Report of the Committee; and we shall then see whether my Honourable Friend has taken much by his motion.

Mr. Chambers being asked, "*Do you consider a Bank of England note for one pound, under these present circumstances, as exchangeable in gold for what it represents of that metal?*" answers, "*I do not conceive gold to be a fairer standard for Bank of England notes than broad-cloth or indigo.*" But the question being repeated, his second answer is, "*If it represents twenty shillings of that metal at the coinage price, it is not.*"

And on this Mr. Huskisson exultingly observes, that "*in these answers the leading doctrine is manfully and ingenuously asserted and maintained, and that all who stand up for the undepreciated value of Bank-paper, however disguised their language, must ultimately come to the same issue.*" Be it so: on such premises

* Minutes of Evidence, page 137, octavo edition.

I am content to join issue with the advocates of depreciation. And now what follows? Mr. Huskisson proceeds to say, "*Mr. Chambers plainly avows that he does not conceive gold to be a fairer standard for Bank of England notes, than indigo or broad cloth;*" and that "*a one-pound note DOES NOT represent twenty shillings of that metal at the coinage price.*" I have known my Honourable Friend too long to suspect him of any thing like wilful misrepresentation, and can, therefore, only impute his error to misapprehension of Mr. Chambers's answer; a mistake arising, in a great measure, from the ambiguous wording, and want of clearness of the question; which, as it was framed, appeared more like that of an *ex parte* counsel, who wished to puzzle a hostile witness, than that of a senator, endeavouring to elicit truth, to whatever side it might tend; for, as it was put to the evidence, he could only state, what is really the fact, "*that gold,*" meaning bullion, or uncoined gold, "*was not, in his conception, a fairer standard for notes than broad cloth or indigo.*" And if the Committee meant gold coin, it should have been so expressed; indeed, if I had been on the Committee, I should, after his second answer, have followed it up with another question, whether he considered a guinea, under the present circumstances, to be more exchange-

able for its weight in bullion, than the Bank, note for its proportioned nominal value?

But the grand misrepresentation arises from the second part of Mr. Chambers's answer; and that, not from a *misconstruction*, but from an absolute *alteration* of his very words; for Mr. Huskisson states that gentleman to have said that "*A one-pound note DOES NOT represent twenty shillings of that metal at the coinage price.*" Now the fact is, that he, Mr. Chambers, being asked, "Do you consider a Bank of England note for one pound, under these present circumstances, **AS EXCHANGEABLE IN GOLD, for what it represents of that metal?**" answers most clearly and explicitly, "*If it represents twenty shillings of that metal, at the coinage price, IT IS NOT.*" It is not *what?* why, *not exchangeable* against its value in gold, that is to say, *uncoined* gold, to which his answer, taken by the context, and by his other answers, most obviously refers. And why not so exchangeable under these present circumstances? **Because**, under those circumstances, the Legislature has very wisely restrained cash payments; and also because the market-price of bullion being at present considerably higher than the mint-price and standard value of a guinea, neither * the

* Evidence of Aaron Asher Goldsmid, Esq. 22d
February 1810.

"At the present price of bullion, how much must be paid, in

guinea nor the Bank-note is at present interchangeable against the weight in gold of its

Bank of England notes, for a bar of gold in weight and fineness equal to 100 guineas?"

"No distinction is taken whether the payment is made in Bank-notes or coin; in sterling money the calculation is easily made in the proportion of 3l. 17s. 10½d. to 4l. 10s."

It is rather curious to observe, that on the next day, viz. 23d February 1810, the following question is put to the same gentleman, with reference, or what is meant as reference, to the above answer:—"You have already stated the difference between go'd, which is our standard, and paper, to be as between 3l. 17s. 10½d. and 4l. 10s.; or nearly 16 per cent.:—if a person, therefore, at Hamburgh, sends over a bill for one hundred guineas, how is it paid?"—"I stated that the difference between the market and the mint price was about 16 per cent.; but I did not make any difference between Bank paper and the coin; the bill can be paid either by the exportation of gold and silver or other commodities; or the purchase of a bill here." I confess, that if I had enjoyed the honour of being a member of that Committee, I could never have silently permitted such an evident misrepresentation of the former words to be put to him.

Evidence of William Merle, Esq. 24th February 1810.

"When you buy gold, you pay for it in Bank-paper?"

"Yes."

"The payment being made in Bank-paper, the price is 4l. 10s. per ounce?"

"What I have sold for the home trade I had only 4l. 8s. for."

"If you were to pay in guineas, should you get the gold at a cheap rate?"

"I could not pay in guineas, I cannot get them."

nominal value. But is there a word in Mr. Chambers's answer, that can be *twisted* into an assertion that a Bank-note *does not* represent twenty shillings, as much as a guinea represents twenty-one pieces of that denomination?—and

“Supposing you had guineas to give, could you not buy that gold at a cheaper rate than 4*l.* 10*s.* per oz.?”

“No; I should not offer a less price certainly; if I was to buy any quantity of gold, and pay for it in guineas, I should offer the same price as in Bank-paper.”

“When you speak of the Mint price being 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* an ounce, do you calculate that in gold coin or in Bank-paper?”

“We make no difference; and I do not believe there has been any difference in paying in specie or in Bank-paper.”

This gentleman is afterwards asked several questions about the value of a gold cup, equal in weight and fineness to 100 guineas; and all his answers go, invariably, to prove that Bank-paper and gold coin are exactly equal in circulating value; but would only lengthen an extract already too long, and may be seen in the Minutes of Evidence, as printed in the Appendix to the Report of the Committee.

And Mr. A. A. Goldsmid, in a subsequent examination, (26th Feb.), being asked, “Whether, if about to purchase on his own account, a gold bar of the weight and standard of 100 good guineas, and he had money enough in Bank-notes in one drawer, and in specie in another, to complete the bargain, he would make any difference in paying the seller in one money or the other?” he answers, “I never would make a bargain in which there should be any difference.” It is not necessary to say a word more on the *very exact concurrence* of the evidence given, the Report framed thereon, and Mr. Huskisson's representation of it in his pamphlet.

yet it *seems* very improbable that Mr. Huskisson should not know that, at this moment, supposing the market price to be 4*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* per oz. it is just as easy for him to purchase 4 dwts. 10.832 grs. of bullion in the market, of any fair and legal dealer with a pound note, as it is to procure from the same merchant 4 dwts. 16.1736 grs. at the same price for a guinea in gold coin.

I agree with my Honourable Friend in a great many of the grounds on which he attributes to the precious metals those qualities, which seem to him to give them a general and exclusive preference, but in my opinion only a partial one, adapted merely to particular occasions, over all other equivalents, in settling and measuring the barter of commodities. I concur with him, that, in the few cases where the transfer of commercial commodities between distant countries cannot be settled as matter of account; and where it is necessary that some substantial, and generally received article of intrinsic value, and therefore generally disposable, should take place of the more usual mode of paying balances by the negotiation of bills—that there the precious metals, not as *coin*, but as *bullion*, are preferable to any other article, as being “* less bulky

* Mr. Huskisson, page 23; and Sir James Stewart's Polit. Econ. book ii. chap. 3.

in proportion to their value ;” as being “accurately, easily, and almost infinitely divisible ;” as “less subject to decay ;” and “more homogeneous and uniform in quality :” but I am not certain that they are “less liable to fluctuate in their supply,” or “less liable to be counterfeited or adulterated.”

But he proceeds to declare his opinion, that *“gold in this country, as silver at Hamburgh, is really and exclusively the fixed measure of the rising and falling of all other things in reference to each other.”* This I have already denied, and therefore need not repeat my arguments.

Mr. Huskisson next says, *“The article itself which forms this standing measure, never can rise or fall in value with reference to this measure—that is, with reference to itself. A POUND WEIGHT OF GOLD NEVER CAN BE WORTH A POUND AND A QUARTER OF GOLD ; and being divided, in this country, into 44 and $\frac{1}{2}$ pieces called guineas, an ounce of this gold will always be worth $\frac{1}{4}$ of this sum, or 3*l.* 17*s.* 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.*”* Now this is all very pretty in theory, but the fact is unfortunately just the reverse ; as a pound weight of uncoined gold, at the very instant when Mr. Huskisson was committing these philosophical effusions to the press, could not be obtained for less gold coin than that quantity which by the law of the land is not passable unless it

weighs 1lb. 2oz. 7 dwts. 13.8 grs. or very nearly that weight which he was then telling us in theory, it was impossible it ever should be equal to.

For an answer to the whole of the next page (24) I have only to refer to the reasons already given, in the preceding part of this publication, why gold is not, nor ever could be, the fixed measure of other commodities; and why the money of account always was, I mean ever since the commencement of any thing like regular commerce, and must continue to be, the sole standard and measure of all value.

In his 25th page, Mr. Huskisson states two causes of depreciation in the currency of a country :

“ 1st, By the standard coin containing a less quantity of the precious metals which forms that standard, than it is certified by law to contain.”

This is correct:—But next we come to the grand question on which the Committee, and all the advocates of theory and abstract reasoning, seem to be at issue with the practical men of business :

“ 2d, By an excess in the amount of that currency.”

And by this latter, after having stated, with sufficient accuracy, the periods and duration of

the temporary evils arising from the first cause, with the remedies applied to them, Mr. Huskisson asserts that the depreciation, of which he is pleased to assume the existence, must be occasioned;—let us try with what justice.

I confess that my comprehension will not easily embrace what is the clear and specific application, I mean the *practical* application, of the term *excess* in this instance. Is it to be understood as signifying a surplus beyond what the real necessities of commercial intercourse can be made easily and wholesomely to absorb in the usual and regular channels of circulation? But how can this arise? Are we to imagine that the well-dressed gentleman who performs his diurnal parade in scarlet and blue before the portal in Threadneedle Street, keeps his pockets stuffed with Bank-bills like those of a quack-doctor or the keeper of a lucky lottery-office, to cram into the hands of reluctant receivers, as they pass in pursuit of their daily occupations; and this without any equivalent, or even without a valuable consideration? or are we to believe, what is told us in their evidence before the Committee, by the present and late Governors of the Bank of England, men chosen for their extensive knowledge and practical experience in the pecuniary transactions of the commercial world, to preside over the immense concerns of

that unrivalled establishment,—that they never issue a note except for advances to Government on the voted taxes, loans, or exchequer-bills; or otherwise on the discount of good bills drawn for a limited period, on *bonâ fide* mercantile transactions, accepted by bankers or merchants of known credit, and even to them only in certain limited proportions*; in every one of which cases the notes themselves being returnable on them in payment in a short time, it is utterly impossible that any such excess can be issued and kept out in circulation; for even if

* “*What a bank can, with propriety, advance to a merchant or undertaker of any kind, is not either the whole capital with which he trades, or even any considerable part of that capital; but that part of it only, which he would otherwise be obliged to keep by him unemployed, and in ready money, for answering occasional demands. If the paper money which the bank advances never exceeds this value, it can never exceed the value of the gold and silver which would necessarily circulate in the country if there was no paper money; it can never exceed the quantity which the circulation of the country can easily absorb and employ.*”

“*When a bank discounts to a merchant a real bill of exchange, drawn by a real creditor upon a real debtor, and which, as soon as it becomes due, is really paid by that debtor, it only advances to him a part of the value which he would otherwise be obliged to keep by him unemployed, and in ready money, to answer occasional demands. The payment of the bill, when it becomes due, replaces to the bank the value of what it had advanced, together with the interest.*”—ADAM SMITH, book ii. chap. 2.

any thing like an excess, above the common average of discounts, were delivered to the merchants in any one month, it is completely evident that within the two next months, or in the third at the latest, there would be such a decrease of demand for fresh issues, and such a return of the excessive issue already made, by the payment of those bills in an equal quantity * of their own notes, as must necessarily cause a very great, sudden, and visible diminution in the total amount of notes in circulation; and even in this case the evil, if it be one, would almost immediately cure itself by such unforced and natural decrease in the fresh issue. But what say the Returns laid before the Committee by the Accountant-General of the Bank? Do they exhibit any thing of this sort? Do they afford an evidence of any such violent and sudden fluctuation? one solitary instance alone excepted; which I shall point out presently; but which having taken place two years before the suspension of cash payments, cannot, by any mode of reasoning, be argued into a

* The quantity returned will, in fact, be superior by the whole addition of the discount, or interest deducted:—for instance, in discounting a bill for 1200*l.* for two months, at five per cent. the Bank will only issue 1190*l.* but receives back the full 1200*l.* or 10*l.* more than the original issue:—and so in proportion on the whole amount of their advances of every description.

consequence of that measure; or does it not, on the contrary, appear, that although from the beginning of the year 1795 to the 7th March following, the general average of Bank-notes in circulation increased gradually from a little more than ten millions to about thirteen and a half, and on the 14th of the same month, rose to something above fourteen millions, but on the 21st (the instance alluded to, and which might probably be affected by the loan of upwards of four millions then raised for the Emperor of Germany) dropt at once to between nine and ten millions; yet from that time to the 12th December following, they kept nearly stationary, with an almost imperceptible but equally gradual rise from ten to not quite eleven millions; in the middle fortnight of that month they rose for a short time to between twelve and thirteen, from whence to the middle of May 1796 they settled gradually down to about ten and a half; and from that time to the 25th *

* The day before the Minute of Privy Council, dated 26th February 1797, by which the first order for restricting the cash payments of the Bank of England was issued; which order was subsequently legalized, and the persons acting under it indemnified, by the Act of 37th of the King, cap. 45. passed on the 3d May following, to remain in force only till the 24th June in the same year. But its provisions, with some few alterations, have been since continued by several other statutes, and finally extended to six months after a definitive treaty of peace.

February 1797, kept narrowing by degrees to about eight millions. On the 1st March, being the first weekly return after the suspension, about one million of small notes, under five pounds each, then first issued, were added to the former amount. Since which period the increase has been nearly regular up to the date of the last return, on the 12th May 1810;—when the small notes amounted to six millions, and those above five pounds each to fourteen millions.

Now is there any thing in this recapitulation which can furnish the smallest ground either for assuming a depreciation of the paper part of our currency as compared with the metallic portion (an assumption to which no practical man that I have conversed with gives the smallest credit), or for attributing that scarcity of the coins, which every one acknowledges to exist, to the *consequences* of an excessive and erroneous issue of the notes of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England; who, on the contrary (in the only instance in which I could at all venture to accuse them of any thing like an error in judgment; and even for this they may fairly plead excuse in the fear of an increased call for coin, and the uncertainty of obtaining the remedy afterwards

supplied by the timely interference of the Legislature), seem rather to have too much narrowed their issues for some time previous to the suspension of cash payments.

It is a fact, however, well worthy of observation, and has a powerful bearing, in my mind, on the fallacy of the *imputed* excess of issue, that the amount of small notes under five pounds each, at present in circulation (according to the latest return before the Committee), and which can only have supplied the place of cash in small payments, and in the change of larger notes, is about six millions, at which it has remained very nearly stationary during the whole of the present year (1810), as far as the Returns extend: that twenty-one millions was, by the same Return, the aggregate circulation of notes and bills of the Bank of England, of every denomination at the same period: that about one million is to be deducted for the value of Bank post bills included in the last-mentioned amount: that the average of Bank of England notes of five pounds and upwards each, has not, from the 1st January 1810, to the 12th May following (being the latest ascertained period), exceeded fourteen millions in value: that the average of the corresponding period in 1795, was about eleven millions and a half.—So that, allowing the six millions of small notes

issued in 1797 to have replaced the *whole** of the money coins withdrawn from the national

* Since the above was written, and ready for the press, I have seen a very able series of Letters on the high Price of Bullion, by Mr. Hill, a gentleman of great mercantile information; in the fourth of which he has given a computation of the probable decrease in the quantity of circulatory gold since the recoinage which took place between 1774 and 1777, which seems to be so fairly grounded in probable fact (and it is not necessary to be minutely precise), that I am very glad to avail myself of the Christmas slumbers of the printing-house, to introduce its substance in a short note. ●

Mr. Hill quotes the authority of Lord Liverpool and Mr. Rose, for stating the recoined gold at 20,447,000*l.* and adding 5,000,000*l.* more for that which remained in circulation without being called in; making together 25,000,000*l.* and upwards as the total amount of the gold coin of full or passable weight in the kingdom in 1797. In the six years intervening before the close of the American war in 1783, the additional coinage was not quite four millions, which Mr. Hill very justly thinks not equal to replace the amount exported during the same period to defray the expenditure in the western hemisphere. But he supposes that the gold coin remaining in circulation after that time did not much exceed 20 millions. To 1792, 18 millions more were coined; of which, however, it is ascertained that 11 millions were re-coined from light gold melted down, leaving only a clear addition of 7 millions, during that period, and fixing the amount of circulating gold at about 27 millions at the commencement of the continental war in 1793. From whence he deducts the same sum of about 7 millions in round numbers for the balance of payments against us at the end of the four next years, viz. about 33,000,000*l.* deducted for continental expenditures and loans, and 26,000,000*l.* added as a set-off

circulation, an allowance which, however, I am by no means disposed to concede—even in that case I find myself warranted in asserting, that the total addition made to the circulating medium during the last fifteen years, by means of the issues of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England, cannot have greatly exceeded two millions and a half, and is probably still less : because, whilst the six millions of small notes must necessarily be confined to pay-

on account of the favourable balance of trade, from whence the above mentioned sum of 7 millions, as an unfavourable balance on the totals of receipts and payments, leaves our stock of circulating gold again at 20 millions, at the æra of Bank restriction in 1797. Mr. Hill proceeds to compute the probable decrease of the circulating gold at one million per annum for the last twelve years (including 1809), and thence supposes the remaining stock in the kingdom to be reduced to about 8 millions :—and this he thinks may be divided nearly thus :

Coffers of the Bank, about	—	—	4 millions.
Gold in circulation	—	—	2
6 or 700 Country Bankers, at 12 or 1500 gs. each	1		
Hoarded in private hands	—	—	1
			—
			Total about 8 millions.
			—

- The bullion he supposes may be one or two millions more.

It is evident, that this is but a loose calculation, and founded throughout on very uncertain data ;—but if it is any thing near the truth, the additional issues of the Bank have not filled up the chasm, instead of overflowing it.

ments under five pounds, which could not have been effected by any thing but coin previous to their issue, it is well known, that many payments between that amount and twenty pounds (or, perhaps, as far as thirty), which used to be made by means of coin, are now only to be liquidated by notes of five and ten pounds each: so that, in all probability, there is a still further deduction to be made on that account; and we shall, perhaps, be nearer the fact, in estimating that the actual addition to the circulating medium of the country, created by the paper issues of the Bank of England, since the beginning of 1795, up to the 12th May 1810, that is to say, during the last fifteen years, has not exceeded, in its utmost computable aggregate, the value of two millions sterling.

But let us take into our consideration the combined amount of both Bank-paper and coin, at each extremity of that period, and we shall probably find, that, as far at least as they are concerned, instead of any excessive augmentation, there has been a very considerable diminution in the circulating medium of the country, and that too during a period when the various payments and transfers of property to be effected thereby, have increased to nearly a two-fold amount.

I am led to believe, from all the different documents I have perused, and from the various information I have been able to obtain, that in the year ending on the 5th of January 1796, the whole of the circulating medium issued from the Mint and Bank of England, and then remaining in circulation, might be from 38 to 40 millions, or somewhere about 39 millions—estimated as follows:—

Gold coin, from	24 to 25	millions.
Silver and copper	2 to 2½	
Bank-paper, including post-bills	} 12 to 12½	
Total . .	<u>38 to 40—Average, 39 mil.</u>	

In the year ending 5th January 1810, the following is the most probable estimate of the same articles:—

Gold coin, from	8 to 9	millions.
Silver and copper	1½ to 2	
Bank-paper, including post-bills and small notes	} 19 to 20½	
Total . .	<u>28½ to 31¼—Average, 30 mil.</u>	

Here, then, as far as the issues of the Mint and Bank of England are employed, we see a

fair probability of a *decrease*, amounting to no less a sum than nine millions, in the circulating medium during the last fifteen years; and those, all years of unparalleled trade, both foreign and domestic, and of military and naval expenditure unequalled in the financial annals of the nation: the increase of which may be pretty fairly estimated from the following brief sketch of the transfers to be effected for the payment of commercial exports and imports in each of the years before mentioned, and of the net payments into the receipt of the Exchequer, in each of them, which were as follows:—

	1795.	1809.
Official value of exports .	£. 27,123,339	£. 50,301,763
Ditto of imports	22,736,889	36,255,410
Ditto of both	£. 49,860,228	£. 86,557,173
Add $\frac{2}{3}$ difference between official and real values }	16,620,076	28,852,391
Real value of both	£. 66,480,304	£. 115,409,564
Net payments into Exche- quer *, about }	38,000,000	76,000,000
Aggregate of commercial and financial payments, as above }	£. 104,480,304	£. 191,409,564

* I have put down thirty-eight millions, in round numbers, for the Exchequer receipts of 1795; because, although the loan and taxes for that year did not produce quite thirty-five, yet, as there were several contingent payments, the

And now, having measured our lever, and viewed the unwieldy mass to be put in motion by it, let us see how the power will prove proportioned to the resistance.

In the year 1795, 104½ millions of payments were to be effected by 39 millions of money; whilst, in the year 1809, 191½ millions were to be made good by means of only thirty;—that is to say, whilst the former power was to the resistance as 1 to 2½, the latter is only in the proportion of 1 to 6½; or, in the plain and practical language of real business, whilst in the course of the annual payments of the former, each Bank-note or guinea would have returned to the coffers of the Exchequer*, or the repositories of the Bank, about once in five months; during the latter year, they must

exact amount of which I could not obtain, without losing more time than the precision was worth, I have added that which I am assured, from the best authority, is fully equivalent to their utmost sum, The year ending 5th January 1810, was also nearer seventy-seven millions than seventy-six.

* This is not to be understood literally, as of the same identical piece of paper, but of an equal quantity: it being well known that the Bank never re-issues the same note, but invariably cancels the old notes, and delivers new ones, on all occasions—but the effect is the same precisely.

have performed the same revolution in something less than two months.

If, then, the whole circulating medium afloat in 1795, was not found to be too great for the operations it was to perform, and that none of those ill effects, which the Committee are pleased to attribute to the present *supposed* excess, were *then* even glanced at, is it possible for any reflecting mind, in contemplating the disproportionate increase of payments, both public and private, since that period, and the actual diminution of the aggregate issues of the Tower and Bank, which, notwithstanding the wide distinctions Mr. Huskisson endeavours to establish between them, must always be taken together, as forming the whole of that medium which, by law, is either *compelled* or *allowed* * to be received as *money*—is it

* Mr. Chalmers having published his very valuable “*CONSIDERATIONS on Commerce, Bullion, and Coin, &c.*” since the above was written; and having therein (page 158) quoted an opinion of the great Lord Mansfield, to show that notes of the Bank of England are, in the eye of the law, considered as cash, I have taken some pains to make myself master of the case, in which that opinion was delivered; and although I am not prepared to take that opinion *quite* so broadly, either as the learned Lord has laid it down, or as Mr. Chalmers appears to me, on a first reading of his book, to have taken it up; I feel myself completely born out, by the *unanimous* decision of the Court of King’s Bench, in my

possible, I repeat, for a reflecting intellect to view, in this, any thing resembling an excess

expression in the text, that Bank-paper is legally *allowed* to be received as cash: for, though I think Lord Mansfield's opinion *rather* too strong, when he says, that such notes had, "by the general consent of mankind, the credit and currency of cash to ALL intents and purposes;" because, if this were strictly and literally the case, they must have been a legal tender, and there could not then have been any necessity for the protecting statute of 1797, to guard the Bank of England from an exhaustion of gold, in the unprecedented demand then already experienced, and still more to be dreaded for the payment of their notes in coin; and here, undoubtedly, the *exceptio probat regulam* must operate in bar of too broad and general a construction of the Noble Judge's opinion— which I am rather inclined to construe as bearing on the transitory nature of the property to be acquired in them *, than on their possession of *all* the qualities of coin—for money I assert them to be; yet, however qualified my construction of the case may be, on its general merits, I have always held the common law to be, that, if a tender of a lawful debt had been made, and not excepted against at the time of tendering, but received, in Bank-notes, although no receipt should have been given—that no subsequent exception could be pleaded against the proof of such payment in full and legal acquittance of the original debt. And this I look upon as fully supported by that part of Lord Mansfield's opinion,

* * Which was, in fact, the main point of the case, being an action of trover to recover a Bank-note robbed from a mail, from the holder thereof for a valuable consideration.—*Miller v. Race—Burrowes*, i. p. 452.

in the increased amount of the Bank of England paper? or does it not go a great way beyond a simple negation of the imputed excess; does it not even afford proof, at least *prima facie* proof, of a very considerable want of Bank-paper, beyond the actual issues, to keep pace with the great extension of public and private payments, and at the same time to fill up the void in the circulation occasioned by the impossibility of finding a sufficient supply of the precious metals for that purpose—especially under the particular circumstances of the continent of Europe; which, whatever may be advanced to the contrary, must, beyond all doubt, have caused a much greater demand for them there, where paper credit and confidence are, for the present, almost annihilated. For if 39 millions of current coin and Bank-paper were necessary—and I have not heard it denied that they were—to fill the channels of circulation in the year 1795, when the aggregate of financial and commercial payments may be estimated at 104½ millions, by the same ratio of calculation, we might suppose that the same payments,

which says, that they “are treated as money, as cash, in the ordinary course and transaction of business, by the general consent of mankind, which gives them the credit and currency of money.”

amounting, in 1809, to no less than 191½ millions, would require a circulating medium of 76½ millions, to effect them with the same punctuality and dispatch. And we are not in possession of the evidence of any greater means of facilitation afforded to the progress of the circulating medium during that period, except the known principle of greater proportional activity in increased exertion. But we have the particular testimony * of the Inspector of the Clearing-house in Lombard Street, that though the quantity of daily business transacted there, by all the bankers in the City, has increased *very considerably* of late years, and that the common business amounts to the average of 4,700,000*l.* † *per diem*; and on settling days at the Stock Exchange, to no less than FOURTEEN MILLIONS; yet, that there has not been any change in the system for the last thirty-five years, which could at all alter the proportional amount of Bank-notes passing.

In this stage of the enquiry, then, it should seem, as if the Bank, instead of discounting

* Examination of Mr. William Thomas.—Minutes of Evidence, Append. Report, oct. ed. p. 236.

† The number of bankers being specified to be forty six, makes the average of business, so transacted by each, to be about 100,000*l.* *per diem*; exclusive of those at the west end of the town, who make all their daily payments in Bank-notes.

too much, had, in fact, issued infinitely too little ; and that by a sum so enormously large, and which would have increased the proprietors' profits, to an annual amount, so extensive, as must argue either an *uncommon* degree of self-denial in men, whose whole occupation is that of making as much gain as they can fairly and honestly acquire—or else, that we must infer something not *quite so accurate as it should be*, in that opinion of the Committee which tells us, that, since the restriction of cash payments at the Bank, the Directors are without control as to the limits of their issues. Let us see whether this be sound reasoning, born out by evident and admissible testimony, or whether it shall be found to be the mere assertion of the framers of the Report,

“ *Unvouch'd by substance, unally'd to proof.*”

The Committee * have charged the Directors of the Bank, with holding and maintaining a fallacious doctrine, with respect to their opinion, that no excess of their paper can be issued, and kept out in circulation, without returning upon them the moment such issue becomes unnecessary in the usual channels of circulation ; and the reason assigned for such

* Report, octavo edit. p. 55. •

chargé in the Report, is principally this* :— that “ *So long as the paper of the Bank was convertible into specie, at the will of the holder, it was enough, both for the safety of the Bank and the public interest, in what regarded its circulating medium, that the Directors attended only to the character and quality of the bills discounted, as real ones, and payable at fixed and short periods. They could not much exceed the proper bounds in respect of the quantity and amount of bills discounted, so as thereby to produce an excess of their paper in circulation, without quickly finding that the surplus returned upon themselves in demand for specie.*” Yet, that since the Restriction Acts have removed this check, there is nothing but “ † *that integrity and regard to the public interest,*”—that “ *forbearance in turning*” this “ *new and extraordinary discretion to the profit to the Bank ;*” for which, the Committee have so justly given the Directors credit, which can at all limit their issues.

The Committee here seem to dwell upon the convertibility of Bank-notes into specie, as the true criterion for distinguishing the proper quantum of good bills to be discounted : but, in a subsequent passage ‡, they express them-

* Report, octavo edit. p. 53.

† Ditto, p. 58.

‡ Ditto, p. 62.

selves, “only anxious to remark, that the largest amount of mercantile discounts by the Bank (if it could be considered by itself), ought never, in their opinion, to be regarded otherwise than as a great public benefit; and that it is only the excess of paper currency thereby issued, and kept out in circulation, which is to be considered as the evil.”

In the long-past hours of early scholarship—the “*annos felices, lætitiæque dies,*” at the Charter-house, I recollect a sort of exercise distinguished by the undignified title of “*nonsense verses;*” in which, provided a set of harmonious words were collected together according to strict prosodial arrangement, all attempts at rational connexion were dispensed with; and where, in short, sense was completely sacrificed to sound. To these I do not, by any means, wish to compare the passages in question—though, I must confess that the first reading of them did bring to my mind a sort of faint and involuntary recollection of the boyish task above-mentioned. But, seriously speaking, I am utterly unable to grasp their meaning—and especially so, if the two passages are taken together.

To the latter, though loosely and inaccurately expressed, I have no very particular objection, as far as I can understand it—being

firmly of opinion, that so long as the Bank Directors discount only *bonâ fide* bills, they cannot but do good in the largest amount they can issue; and that not so much from the necessity of any limits being put to their power of issuing, as because, on good bills, it is impossible for the merchants to ask, and have complied with, a greater demand than that which must benefit, generally speaking, both themselves and the public. But what is meant by the evil arising from the excess of paper thereby issued and *kept out in circulation*, I really do not comprehend. They have already allowed the issue to be good in itself, provided that the security is so upon which the issue is made; but let me request the framers of that Report, to inform me as to the specific nature of the great public benefit to ensue from thence, to which they meant to allude, if it is not the bringing into circulating activity the value of that bill which would otherwise have lain dead for two or three months, but which must inevitably return upon the Bank at the expiration of that period; and, as to the additional discount which may have taken place by that time, as mentioned by the Committee *, this has no connexion with the

* Report, .oct. edit. p. 56.

former, but is a completely separate issue, arising from a new and distinct necessity; and must, upon the Committee's own admission, be equally good with the former, being made upon the same principle. And as to any effect upon the price of commodities; a very few words will show this assertion to be as unfounded as any thing I have yet attempted to correct. For if A, trading to Russia, should sell to B, a ship-chandler, a certain quantity of hemp, tallow, and tar, for which he receives a bill for 1200*l.* at two months after date, drawn on and accepted by the house of C and Co. merchants, and ship-owners, of undoubted stability,—which bill is discounted by the Bank, who issue to A their notes to the amount of 1190*l.*; by which the circulating medium undoubtedly acquires such an increase—yet it is sufficiently evident, not only that, at the end of two months, the Bank will have received again from C, and *cancelled*, more notes by 10*l.* than what they originally delivered to A, but that, also, in the mean time, the stock of ship-chandlery in the market, has been permanently increased by such an equal value of those articles, as shall prevent their rising on the consumers, at least so far as the relative and proportional issue of Bank-notes can be implicated.

But, says the Report, by this time, a fresh issue has taken place upon another discount (for it is not presumed to be a renewal of the same advance, which would then be converted into the nature of an accommodation bill, a transaction very properly discountenanced by the Directors), which has enabled the Bank to deliver another set of notes to D, equal to those returned in by C, in payment of the bill discounted for A; so that, by a succession of such discounts, the Directors can not only issue, but keep out in circulation, whatever they are pleased so to emit.—But what is D, and on what occasion does he apply for this second discount? Being a merchant trading to America, he has purchased at Manchester, and exported to Boston, a quantity of cottons and calicoes worth 1200*l.*; for which he has received from the American E, a bill on F, residing in London, for that sum, at sixty days' sight; having a claim on him to the same amount, for lumber delivered to his plantation in Jamaica. Is it not, then, almost too plainly evident, to need illustration, that here the same process precisely takes place again; and the consequence of the whole transaction is exactly this, that at the end of four months the Bank has issued fresh notes, to the amount of 2380*l.* and has received back

again and annulled 2400*l.* thereby decreasing the quantity in circulation by 20*l.* instead of augmenting it; and in the mean time the market has received an addition of useful commodities, to the value of 1200*l.* by foreign production and import, and of 1200*l.* more by home-manufacture and export, exclusive of the employment and livelihood afforded in their progress to many traders, manufacturers, and seamen. And this may be extended even as "*indefinitely as the range of speculation and adventure in a great commercial country;*" and yet the effect must always continue to be the same. If discount increase commerce and manufacture—and if it does not facilitate them, for what does the adventurer pay his interest?—manufacture and commerce must necessarily bring with them an increase also of the articles in which they deal; and I have yet to learn, that augmented product has a tendency to raise the price of any thing.

That prices of all kinds have risen very greatly of late years—that rents have nearly doubled, and wages increased considerably, are all facts; but certainly not owing to any improper increase of Bank-paper; or to the idle notion of an *imaginary* depreciation in its value; an illusion which could only impose on the public fears at the first moment of false alarm;

and over which I am convinced, from every thing I hear, the good sense of the people is enabling them to triumph, more and more, every hour.

The increase of prices has arisen from the increased wealth, not only of this country, but also, previously to the present disturbed state of Europe, from the increase of riches (I do not mean the precious metals, or currency of any kind; which are only the signs, and not the substance of wealth *) in all parts of the civilized world—from the greater luxury introduced by the greater progress of refinement; and, though last, not least, from the increase of population itself. To say, therefore, that the facilitation afforded to production by the aid of pecuniary and temporary advance, has created obstacles to the acquisition of the articles produced, is about as true philosophy, as would be his, who, speaking of a piece of complicated mechanism, should attribute to the multiplication of wheels †, an increased de-

* *“Money, by means of which the whole revenue of the society is regularly distributed among all its different members, makes itself no part of that revenue.”*

† *“The great wheel of circulation is altogether different from the goods which are circulated by means of it. The revenue of the society consists altogether in these goods, and not in the wheel which circulates them.”*—ADAM SMITH, book ii. chap. 2.

gree of friction, and a consequent diminution of the active powers of the machine.

And now, having disposed of the last of the two passages quoted from the Report of the Committee, and shown to what extent I agree with it (as far as I am able to comprehend its tendency), and in what parts I must dissent from its assumptions, let us revert to the first-recited paragraph, and endeavour, if possible, to reconcile it with plain fact and common reason.

Taking, in this part of their Report *, a narrower ground for their operations (a piece of bad generalship, of which the more liberal extent of the subsequent opinion † seems to prove their having been aware), the Committee here assign as the only correct criterion for distinguishing the proper limitation to the issue of notes on the discount of good bills, not the increase of trade, and the consequent augmentation of call for the circulating medium; or, on the other hand, the narrowing of commercial intercourse, and decrease of necessity for money; but the actual quantity of specie which may happen to be deposited, or which the Directors feel themselves able to collect, in the coffers of the Bank, at the time. So that,

* Page 53, oct. ed.

† Page 62, ditto.

on this principle, in 1795, with a commercial and national expenditure of only about 104½ millions, as the Bank Directors might at that time, probably, be able to command about 12 millions, or one half of the gold coin then computed to be in the kingdom, they might safely and freely discount, in that proportion; whilst in 1809*, although the same expenditures, public and private, have increased to the computation of upwards of 190 millions, yet, as it is supposed, that on a like proportional estimate, the Bank may not have, at present, much more than about 4 millions of gold in their coffers, the Directors now, notwithstanding the great increase of call for such advance, should narrow their discounts in that proportion, or to about one forty-eighth part of the whole expenditure, whilst, in the former year, they might have enlarged their assistance to one-eighth, that is to say, to an extent of six-fold proportion, without any possible risk, either to themselves, or the public, on the greater issue; or without any very serious degree of evil to be expected to the commercial

* The official documents for 1810 not being yet (January 1811) delivered, there are no data sufficiently correct for any calculations involving a later period than the preceding year.

world, as the consequence of the delusive, the *pernicious* theory, recommended for present adoption, in narrowing it now.

This seems such an extraordinary proposition to be suggested as the regulating principle of limit for the pecuniary issues of a great commercial nation—so unlike the result of grave deliberative wisdom—that I rather feel inclined to distrust the fidelity of the transcript of the opinion before me, than to receive that as authentic, which would almost tempt me to exclaim, with Marcius,—

“ *The honour'd gods*

Keep Rome in safety, and the chairs of justice

Supply'd with worthy men.”

It will be observed, that, hitherto, I have kept the question of Country Banks completely out of sight; yet was it not for want of holding them in recollection, or for not perceiving their necessary connexion with a complete discussion of the state of the *whole* paper currency of the kingdom; but because the Committee having said *, “ *that so long as the cash payments of the Bank are suspended, the whole paper of the Country Bankers is a superstructure raised upon the foundation of the paper*”

* Report, p. 67, oct. edit.

of the Bank of England”—I thought it more workman-like, to finish that foundation, before I began to build upon its basis.

In the passage immediately succeeding that which I have just quoted, the Committee appear to have fallen into an error concerning the convertibility of Country Bank-notes—which they seem to confine to Bank of England paper alone, and not to extend to specie; and that I am right in so construing this passage, is sufficiently evident from the concluding paragraph of the Report *, which says, “*It will be convenient also for the chartered Banks of Ireland and Scotland, and all the Country Banks, that they should not be compelled to pay in specie, until some time after the resumption of payments in cash by the Bank of England; but that they should continue, for a short period, upon their PRESENT footing, of being liable to pay their own notes on demand, in Bank of England paper.*”—Now, to this recommendation of the Committee, I cannot, by any means, assent, because, according to my view of the law, the liability to convert their notes, on demand, into Bank of England paper *only*, is not their *present* footing; as no particular statute has been passed for that purpose; and there is not

* P. 78, oct. edit.

a word in any one of the six Acts for suspending the Bank of England payments in cash, that marks the slightest reference to the Country Banks, which in the eye of the law are mere non-entities ; and here, for once, *MIRUM QUÒD EIDEM CREDIMUS!!!*—I actually agree with Cobbett, that every holder of a Country Bank-note has a right to demand the payment of it in specie—a right so injurious, however, to general credit and confidence, under the *present* circumstances, that I am decidedly of opinion, it should be immediately suspended, by making the tender of Bank of England notes a lawful acquittance, not only in this, but every other case, for so long as the suspension of the cash payments of the Bank itself shall be deemed necessary to be continued in force. It is evident that Mr. Huskisson has adopted the same erroneous construction of the law as the Committee, because, in his pamphlet (p. 36), he says, “ *a Country Bank, from its being liable, at all times, to pay its notes in those of the Bank of England, at the option of the holder, is placed precisely in the same situation, by this check upon the amount of its issues, as the Bank of England itself was, by the necessity of paying guineas, before the restriction.*”

But Mr. Huskisson goes on to ask,—
“Whilst near 800 Country Banks, rivals of the Bank of England, and of each other, are exerting every endeavour to put forth their notes, what is it but the check created by this power, in every holder of their paper, to demand Bank-notes or bills upon London, that prevents any local or partial excess, and keeps the circulation of every district in the kingdom upon a PAR with that of the metropolis ?”

A few moments' reflection, and a little more attentive consideration of his subject, would at once have pointed out to my Honourable Friend's *general* acuteness of intellect, a much more efficient and operative check against such excess, and at the same time more real in its existence—the limits of employing the issue by the person receiving it, in such way as shall fairly be expected to yield him a reasonable profit beyond the interest he is to pay for the discount, and also his faith in the solvent security of the issuer: to which, on the other hand, may also be added the confidence of the banker in the substance or integrity of the applicant—as well as in the propriety of the purpose to which it is to be applied.

But in no case whatever can the country issues be limited or increased by those of the

Bank of England, which are completely out of sight and contemplation of all the parties at the time of the transaction. Nor will the un contemplated *effect* be such—at least in the manner laid down, by Mr. Huskisson; but if in any mode of consequence, it will be precisely the contrary, as the increase of either of the two species of paper will rather counteract than augment the other. And, indeed, the Honourable Gentleman himself (in page 39), after saying, “*The circulation of Country Bank-paper being, therefore, in exact proportion to that of the Bank of England, it follows, that, in whatever degree the issues of the latter shall be excessive, the former must partake of such excess; and, consequently, that no regulation, affecting or restraining Country Banks, could be of the smallest avail towards diminishing the total amount of the paper circulation of this country, so long as the Bank of England shall continue to act upon its present system*”—adds, “*If, in any one district, or in all the districts where Country-paper now circulates, one half of it were withdrawn, or put down, its place would be supplied with some other paper.*”—“*The result, therefore, of any intervention of the Legislature, for this purpose, besides being highly objectionable as an interference with the rights of individuals,*

and of private property, would be only to add several millions more, and principally in small notes, to the amount of issues of the Bank of England."

Of these two passages, the last points out what is really the fact, that Country-paper only supplies the deficiency of that of the Bank of England; and that if such paper were reduced to any considerable degree, or, indeed, to any amount whatever, the chasm must be filled up by an increase of the issues of the Governor and Company of that Bank; and that, so far from increasing or diminishing *pari passu*, the two species of paper currency operate on each other exactly in an inverse ratio, or nearly so. I leave it to my Honourable Friend to reconcile his two opinions together; to me they appear perfectly contradictory. In the mean time, however, I concur with him completely, as to the folly of legislative interference; they will each find their own level; and restriction, in any other sense than a *protecting* one, will always be productive of mischief.

It is possible that some, perhaps a good many of the Country Banks, may have been established, without possessing funds of sufficient solidity; but this I believe to be less

frequent now than in the time of the first rage for banking speculations, and probably in most cases the evil has cured itself, either by the integrity and prudence of the speculators, which have gradually improved their slight beginnings; and, in others, by the speedy insolvency of the parties, though, unfortunately, in the latter instance, at the expense of many careless, and even of some few more cautious, individuals: but these are accidents which must occasionally be submitted to, in all human adventure, and are much less to be dreaded than the more general mischief of imprudent restriction.

The popular outcry, that Country Banks have contributed to raise prices, and create monopoly, is, in my opinion, totally unfounded—indeed, on the contrary, I am strongly, very strongly, inclined to think, their advances, generally speaking, have had quite a contrary effect; and have rather tended to lower—that is to say, to prevent them from being so much higher as they would otherwise have been—than to increase, the prices of commodities; and rather to create competition, instead of monopoly, in the markets.

To judge of this with sufficient discretion, it is not enough to assume facts, and reason on them as if proved—which, I am concerned to

say, appears to me to have been too much the course of those who framed, as well as of those who support the opinions contained in, the Report—we must enquire, not only upon what sort of evidence the Committee founded those opinions; but also what weight ought, in any fair and *impartial* judgment, to be attributed to the evidence so given, and by what depth of reasoning the assertions of the persons examined were illustrated (in the absence of actual proof by demonstrable fact), so as to bring home that conviction to the minds of the members, which seems to have been so hastily, and at the same time so strenuously, adopted.

Upon the question of Country Bank-notes, the opinions of a respectable banker in the country might very fairly be expected to afford much sound and practical information; particularly if they are delivered with great clearness, are perfectly consistent with each other, and indicate a competent knowledge of the bearings and consequences of his own transactions. The Committee, therefore, very properly directed a principal part of their enquiries on the business of Country issues, and their effects on local prices, to Mr. Stuckey; a gentleman in whose acquaintance I have great pleasure, and of whose honour and integrity

I have the highest opinion ; of which I should be most happy to give him a convincing proof, by entrusting the whole of my little disposable property in his hands, if residing in his neighbourhood ; in perfect confidence of his complete responsibility and punctual dealing. But on a question of great national importance, the decision of which, when it shall come fully before the whole legislative wisdom of the country, will be found to involve, not only the rights and properties of thousands of individuals, nor even the present advantages alone, but hazarding the permanent solvency, and ultimate safety, of the greatest commercial nation that ever existed—when such a cast is at stake, before I touch the die, I must beg leave to throw aside, for a moment, every idea of personal respect or regard, and, previously to my taking any man's calculation of the chances, pause a little to enquire into his acquaintance with the laws of the game.

Mr. Stuckey * being asked in what branch of trade he is concerned ? answers, “ *In three Country Banks at Bristol, Langport, and Bridgewater.*” And, in answer to another, “ *that the business has increased considerably, at*

* Minutes of Evidence, p. 210, &c. Report, oct. ed.

all of them, of late years." And, after some other questions, not immediately necessary to be specified here, has the following question put to him; to which, and his answer, I must request particular attention:—

"Do Country Banks find it necessary to keep a deposit of Bank of England notes in proportion to the issues of their own paper; and to the probable demands which may be made upon them for the payment of that paper?"—“WE HAVE HITHERTO KEPT BUT A SMALL QUANTITY OF BANK OF ENGLAND NOTES, BUT A LARGE PROPORTION OF GUINEAS.”

I must also request a similar attention to the following:—

"Do you know whether Bank of England notes, circulated in the country, have increased or diminished since 1797?"—“I have no means of ascertaining that fact; BUT THE CIRCULATION OF THE BANK OF ENGLAND NOTES IS VERY SMALL: the people in the country generally preferring the notes of Country Bankers, whom they conceive to be men of responsibility, in the country.”

The next question, and its answer, are not less worthy of attention:—

"Is it not your interest, as a banker, to check the circulation of Bank of England notes; and, with that view, do you not remit to London

such Bank of England notes as you may receive beyond the amount which you may think it prudent to keep as a deposit in your coffers?"—"UNQUESTIONABLY."

If my readers have considered these three questions, and their answers, with that attentive deliberation I requested, there can be no doubt of their joining in my opinion, of Mr. Stuckey's intention to show that the notes of the Bank of England had very little share in the circulation of the neighbourhood of his *three* Banks; from whence, also, like a bashaw of *triple* dignity, my worthy Friend seems to be diving them out with great success, by means of his triumphal tails, inscribed, BRISTOL, LANGPORT, and BRIDGEWATER! But, to speak more seriously, what will those who have read, and considered with attention, the foregoing answers, think of the following, by the same person:—

"Has it been a subject upon which you have formed any opinion, how the circulation of paper generally throughout the kingdom has affected the nominal price of commodities?"—"I have always paid some attention to the subject, and, lately, particular attention; and it does appear to me, that the increase of paper circulation has tended to increase the price of commodities; BUT I THINK THAT INCREASE TO HAVE ARISEN

CHIEFLY FROM THE INCREASE OF THE CIRCULATION OF BANK OF ENGLAND PAPER !!!—”

“ *What different effects, in your view of the case, arise from the paper of the Bank of England and Country Banks?* ”—“ *I think the Bank of England have been the means of giving facilities to circulation, which could not have been done by Country Banks, to the extent it has been done by the Bank of England.* ”

“ *Is it your opinion, that a Country Bank regulates its issues in proportion to its deposits of Bank of England notes, or specie?* ”—“ *We regulate ours by the assets we have in London (as I have before stated), to pay them, WITHOUT MUCH REFERENCE TO THE QUANTITY OF BANK OF ENGLAND NOTES or specie WHICH WE HAVE, although we always keep a quantity of both of the latter in our coffers to pay OCCASIONAL demands made in the Country.* ”

“ *Is it your opinion, that Country Banks generally keep any great proportion of their funds, whether consisting of Bank of England notes or specie, in the country?* ”—“ *I cannot speak positively as to the practice of others, I can only speak as to our own.* ”

And thus ends the examination of Mr. Stuckey. But is it not rather too much, after having informed the Committee, in the former part of his evidence, that he and his partners

kept but a small quantity of Bank of England paper in their drawers; and that the circulation of Bank of England notes is very small in their part of the kingdom; the people in the country generally preferring the notes of Country Bankers; and further, that it was unquestionably his practice to send up to London every Bank-note he could spare, from a prudential reserve in his coffers to pay occasional demands — was it not, I ask, going rather too far, after these recitals of facts, to venture as a matter of opinion, the assumption, “that the increase of paper circulation has tended to increase the price of commodities, but that he thought that increase to have arisen chiefly from the increase of the circulation of the BANK OF ENGLAND paper;” and that the Bank of England had been the means of giving facilities to circulation, which could not have been done by Country Banks to the extent it has been done by the Bank of England ?”

I have no other intention in submitting to the public the inconsistency of the assumptions in the latter part of this gentleman's evidence with the facts recited in the commendatory part, than merely to show upon what slight and unstable grounds the opinions expressed in the Report seem to rest their foundations; and to express my regret, as well as my asse-

nishment, that not a single comment was made upon this evidence, nor another question put to the person under examination, by way of eliciting the grounds upon which he could possibly impute the general rise of commodities in his neighbourhood to that *proscribed* currency; which, after driving so victoriously out of the country, and taking a military possession of it with his own troops, he so unjustly charges with a subsequent plunder of the inhabitants. I cannot, however, pass the opportunity of observing how completely that part of this evidence which states the proportions of London and Country paper, and which is the only part that goes to *facts*, flies directly in the face of Mr. Huskisson's statement*, that *the circulation of Country Bank paper being in exact proportion to that of the Bank of England, it follows, that, in whatever degree the latter shall be excessive, the former must partake of such excess.*

Mr. Thompson, a member of the Committee, also says, "*Bank of England notes, I believe, have not a large circulation in the country fifty or sixty miles from London.*" This gentleman, notwithstanding his answers are generally very discreet and cautious, seems to have

* Question, &c. p. 39.

fallen into the same error as the rest of the Committee, in regard to the provisions of the existing law, as to the liability of Country Bankers to pay their notes on demand in Bank of England paper only, and not in specie; for, being asked, "*Then are not Country Bankers less liable to be called upon to change their notes for those of the Bank of England, than they were to be called upon to pay them in cash, before the restriction on the Bank of England?*"—answers, "*Undoubtedly; especially as the notes of several Country Bankers, within my knowledge, are in as great credit in the country as Bank of England notes.*"

It does really seem to me most astonishing, that gentlemen, who were to decide on so momentous a question as a great and extensive alteration in the monetary system of their country, should not have taken the trouble of making themselves complete masters of the existing law with respect to the pecuniary transactions of that country, before they ventured, not only to promulgate an opinion, but even to recommend an acting upon that opinion, to the assembled Legislature.

But now, having pointed out the inconsistent nature of Mr. Stuckey's opinions, I will endeavour to do him greater justice with regard to the effect of his own banking operations, than he seems to have bestowed on

those of the Bank of England. He says, that he has paid considerable attention to the rise in the nominal price of commodities, and that he attributes it to the increase of the circulation of the Bank of England paper. Now this is proved by his *own* words to be utterly impossible, because his *own* notes have, according to his *own* information, almost entirely driven them out of the neighbourhood, and the evil, if it exists, must necessarily be laid at his *own* door. But from this dilemma, I shall prove myself so much the advocate of my worthy friend, as to relieve him without delay, by assuring him, that neither to himself and partners, nor to those other *very nefarious* paper-manufacturers in Threadneedle Street, is to be attributed the smallest portion of that rise which, from various other causes, has been stealing on us for some centuries, and will inevitably continue so to do as long as we ourselves continue to be a commercial, rich, and independent people; and this in defiance of all the theoretical reasoners that ever mooted an abstract question. That opulence and cheapness cannot exist together, is a truth whose illustration may be traced in every one of those national histories to which we are referred in the Report*: and to endea-

* P. 39, oct. edit.

vour to obtain the enforcing of low prices by the diminution of a circulating medium already rather below, than above, the necessary demand for it, would be only to purchase the ineffectual attempt, at the certain price of bankruptcy and ruin. And such will generally be the fate of reformers and speculators in political innovation.

In order to justify the assertion, that the rise of nominal price in the commodities against which the circulating medium is interchangeably balanced, is owing to the nature and to the excessive issue of that medium, it is necessary that the assertors should have brought before the public tribunal the actual proof of three distinct points: first, that the sort of medium in present circulation has been issued to excess: next, that the increase of price is the absolute consequence of such excess, and of that only: and, lastly, that a medium of any other species issued to the same excess, would not have produced precisely the same effect.

But of no one of these points, so essential to the verification of their opinions, has either the Report of the Committee, or my Honourable Friend, who appears as its advocate, brought forward a single fact, which can be admitted as an established and incontrovertible

proof. And I think it can require but little deliberation to pronounce their mere *assertions* to be erroneous, when we have briefly examined the very slight foundations on which they appear to be raised. The amount of the progressive increase of Bank of England notes recited in the Report *, being taken from the same documents as that which I have already detailed †, need not be repeated here, and only goes to prove what I there advanced, that, since the first passing of the Bank Suspension Act in 1797 (being a period of thirteen years and upwards), the notes of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England of the value of five pounds, or more, each, have not received, during this whole space of unexampled trade, and increasing *real* wealth, an augmentation of more than two millions and a half beyond their former aggregate; whilst the known commercial and financial payments of this country have experienced an ascertained annual increase of nearly ONE HUNDRED MILLIONS; and, indeed, if the last year (ending 5th Jan. 1811) be included, it will be found that the word *nearly* may be exchanged for *full*, as the annual returns from the Exchequer

* Pages 60 and 61, oct. edit.

† Pages 79 to 81.

prove, that even that period, pronounced by the *theorists* to be so pregnant with poverty and ruin, has, in *fact*, produced an increase of net payment into the national treasury of no less than 4,437,509*l.* or very nearly FOUR MILLIONS AND A HALF, beyond that of the year immediately preceding, which was supposed to be a year of unparalleled trade and productive prosperity. And that this augmentation was the effect of general increase in our pecuniary transactions, and not the consequence of any partial arrangements, may be fairly inferred, from seeing that the addition is nearly equally divided between the Consolidated Fund and the War-taxes; the former having increased from 37,838,034*l.* to 40,046,244*l.* making an augmentation, in the latter year, of 2,208,210*l.* whilst the last-mentioned branch of this revenue has risen from 20,798,144*l.* to 23,027,443*l.*; expiencing thereby an increase of 2,229,299*l.* during the same time.

Allowing, therefore, all due weight to the observation of the Committee *—and which, I trust, I am not quite so bad a financier as to throw entirely out of consideration—“*That the effective currency of the country depends upon*

* Page 63, oct. ed.

the quickness of circulation, and the number of exchanges performed in a given time, as well as upon its numerical amount;" it is yet sufficiently apparent, from my former computations *, that if, as far as the Tower and Bank of England are concerned, it was not found superfluous to make use of thirty-nine millions of their issues, when the commercial and financial payments might be taken at 104½ millions, it cannot possibly be imputed to them as an error on the side of *excess*, if, when the same payments may be fairly estimated at double, the corresponding issues in circulation not only are not increased in their combined amount, but are even *actually* reduced, and that, *probably*, by no less than nine millions, or more than twenty-five per cent. of their aggregate. If, then, we had been obliged to trust to these alone for the whole movements of our unwieldy, complicated piece of mechanism, it is clearly evident, that the machine must have come to a final stop, long ere this, if the Bank of England had confined its issues to any thing like their present comparatively restricted amount; for the idea of being able to procure an adequate augmentation of the supply of gold and silver, is too

* Page 88 to 93.

evidently chimerical to waste time upon: the deficit of circulation must, however, have been supplied by some sort of medium; and we have only the paper of the Country Banks to fill up the *hiatus*, and to charge with the guilt of excess—if such excess shall ultimately be found to exist in any species of our currency. But even this examination, also, will, I trust, prove so harmless in its result, as not to disturb even the nicest feelings of my worthy Somersetshire friend, the *Testerdar* of Bristol, Bridgewater, and Langport!

It cannot have escaped observation, that, as yet, I have only included in the pecuniary transactions of the kingdom, the public payments into the Exchequer, and the foreign commerce of the nation, as estimated by the value of imported and exported commodities: now, it has been shown, that these have increased during the period in question, from little more than 100 millions, to at least double that amount; and as it has been ingeniously calculated*, by the author of the Estimate of Great Britain, that our domestic trade is fully equal to our foreign commerce and the coasting-trade to one half of the same—that very large additions are also to be made for

* Chalmers on Commerce, &c. p. 4.

dealings in shipping and other property—by which he has raised the aggregate to upwards of 500 millions; which at least shows, that the foreign commerce and public imposts do not amount to one half of the pecuniary operations to be effected by the whole of our circulating medium; we may, therefore, fairly allow, that a double quantum of aggregate currency to that required for the first-stated payments will be necessary to transact the whole business of the country, in each of the periods referred to; and this, without any invasion of the principle of proportions laid down by the Committee.

By reference to the Minutes of Evidence, subjoined to the Report of the Committee, it will be seen that Mr. Tritton, of the banking-house of Barclay and Co. in Lombard Street, and Mr. Richardson, an eminent bill-broker, and agent for Country Banks in London, are the only two persons who have attempted, or indeed have been called upon, by the Committee, to form an estimate of the aggregate circulation of Country Bankers' paper throughout the kingdom; and very properly so invited to do, being both men of the highest respectability of character and situation, and, from their particular lines of business, especially qualified to give information on this

subject. Of these gentlemen, the former states his opinion to be, that such circulation may be taken at about twenty millions, whilst the latter thinks, it may arise to thirty millions;—as it must be very difficult, if not impracticable, to ascertain any thing like an exact amount; and as the Committee themselves do not seem * to have arrived at any thing of the sort, I think we may venture to take for the present the average of the two estimates above mentioned, and allow that twenty-five millions may be not very widely distant from the actual value in circulation. If this sum, therefore, is added to the thirty millions of Bank-paper and coin, before stated, there will be an aggregate currency of fifty-five millions in 1809. And, with respect to 1795, we are told, by Mr. Thompson, one of the members of the Committee, in his evidence †, that, in his opinion, the circulation of the Country Bank notes had not increased by more than one-fourth since the end of 1796; so that, according to that computation, they must, at that time, have been as much as eighteen or twenty millions: but, if we take the exact era of suspension, when he says, they were

* Report, p. 70, octavo edit.

† Minutes of Evidence, p. 163.

hardly one half of their present number, having, in consequence of alarm, experienced a considerable diminution just at that time, and thereby reduce them to about twelve, or even say, only eleven millions; and add that to the thirty-nine millions of gold and Bank of England paper, and we have an aggregate of at least fifty millions for the currency of the year 1795; whilst, by the same mode of computation, the combined amount of the same kinds of circulating medium in 1810, does not exceed fifty-five millions; or even if we were to take it at the outside, and call it sixty millions, still it would be far from exceeding, and, in my opinion, falling very short of, the proper proportion of increase—even after allowing all due weight to the observation of the Committee with respect to increased activity of circulation. And, I believe, there can be little doubt of the rent of lands, and the improvements of agriculture, as well as the general increase of all kinds of domestic payments, having kept full pace with the rapid augmentation of foreign trade and public expenditure. Upon the first head, therefore, of excessive issue, I cannot help thinking, not only that the Committee, and those who side with them, have entirely failed in point of af-

firmative proof; but that, on the contrary, I have established sufficient testimony, that there does not exist any thing like an excess of any species of the circulating medium.

And now we come to the second question—whether such excess (as it is called), if really issued, would have had any tendency to cause a rise in the nominal price of the interchangeable articles against which it would come in competition in the market. And on this head I differ so completely from Mr. Stuckey, as to have no hesitation in declaring myself perfectly convinced, not only that there is not in actual existence any such effect arising from an excess of the paper either of the Bank of England, or of the Country Bankers, but that such paper, to whatever amount it might be augmented, on the present principles of issue, would rather tend to lower, than to raise, the agricultural or manufactured products of the country, in point of price, or at least to prevent their rising so much as they would have done otherwise. I have already said enough on this subject, with respect to the cost of articles imported and exported*; and may, therefore, confine my present observa-

* From p. 97 to 100.

tions to the effect of increased issues, on the price of commodities in the hands of farmers or tradesmen, produced or retained for the purpose of home consumption.

It is urged, by the advocates of popular misconception, that the advances of Country Banks have enabled the growers of corn, and the feeders of sheep, to regulate the prices of wheat and mutton at their own option, as if the sale of the article were not rather regulated by the demand and ability of an increased or diminished number of purchasers, than the caprice or avarice of the producers: and let it be remembered, as a leading feature in the decision of this most important subject, that it is not the consumer, but the grower or manufacturer of the commodity, to whom this advance, whether by way of discount, or even of loan, is made, and that for the express purpose of augmenting his stock of raw materials, and number of productive hands in his manufactory, or of bestowing on the lands he farms that improved system of cultivation which may enable him to furnish a greater quantity of food for the use of his fellow-subjects—in both cases rather counteracting, than hastening, that rise of nominal price, which the increase of population, and the influx of real wealth, would, I am convinced, beyond

the shadow of a doubt, have brought on, with twofold rapidity, but for the stimulus afforded to production by the timely assistance of the loans to the producers. For, let us suppose, that these advances had not been made; which circumstance, according to the vulgar opinion, would have remedied the evil supposed to be occasioned by their interference; what, then, would be the consequence?—clearly this:—that the consumers, to whom no part of these issues either has, or would have been, given or lent, remaining in a similar situation as to their numbers and pecuniary powers in themselves, would find a market much more scantily supplied, and at a much dearer and higher rate, than in the present instance; at least so far as the application of the Country Bankers' loans is concerned. And this is on the supposition that the consumers were all of the independent and inactive, or, as they are termed, in political arithmetic, the *unproductive* classes of the society; in which case, also, the effect of the loans, if made, would be an actual lowering of the market-prices, and a consequent cessation in the demand for advances by the borrowers, who would no longer be tempted to pay interest for that from which they derived no profit. But, in the case of a considerable

portion of the consumers being also producers of other articles of necessity (which must of course be considered as the fact in such a country as this) then must the two cases stand respectively thus : if the advances are not borrowed, and the additional issues (call them circulation, or capital, at the option of fanciful theorists, for the *practical* effect will be the same) are not delivered—then must the manufacturer pay the dearer, for his scanty supply of corn and meat, to the agriculturist, whilst the farmer will experience the same deficit, in his capacity of a purchaser, at the hands of the artisan ; and each being narrowed, both in capital and income, will be less able to contribute to the exigencies of the State, from the latter, and to the real wealth of the kingdom, by the former. But on the assumption of the aid being afforded by the banker, both tradesman and farmer being enabled to produce more, and supply the market better, will also sell their respective articles at a more moderate rate, and yet, at the same time, making a more considerable profit on the augmented quantity, will also be enabled to pay a greater quota of taxation to the Exchequer, whilst they are also increasing the stock of real wealth in the country.

* It has been said, however, that the farmers,

especially the greater ones, have been enabled by the aid of the Country Banks to pay their rents without selling their crops, till a rise of price shall give them such a sort of monopoly, as furnishes them with the power of regulating the markets. I have seen a great deal of country business,^o and am tolerably well acquainted with farming, from practical experience, on an extensive scale, and have been for many years convinced (long before the present question was agitated), that nothing can be more idle, nothing more ill-founded, than the vulgar error on this subject. In the first place, I am strongly inclined to believe, that the eases of loans, borrowed for the exclusive purpose of keeping back the sale of corn, occur much less frequently than the public in general imagine; and that where they actually do take place, they are oftener productive of beneficial consequences, in lowering the price, at a time when it would otherwise be too high, than of any evil effects in giving it a stimulus when it would, without them, be too low for the grower to obtain a fair remuneration^o for his risk, expense, and labour in producing it. But the fact is, that, generally speaking, with the exception of bad seasons (which no human judgment or exertion can counteract), it is the greater farmer^o

who, from growing a more considerable quantity of grain, has more the power (a privilege which, fortunately, he is as much impelled by interest as equity to exercise with discretion) of regulating, or, to make use of a less obnoxious, and more equitable, term, of *equalising* the supply of the market; and this, in general, without the necessity of asking for the assistance of the monied man to enable him to keep back his corn from the market at a moment when an abundant harvest has already rendered it a drug—and when the necessary consequence of its being exposed to sale, would be either a wasteful and improvident expenditure, or its falling into the hands of jobbers, who would demand an additional interest and profit beyond that of the grower.

I am convinced, that, with such few exceptions as all general rules must be subject to, this, like most other popular alarms, is a complete delusion; and that, on the contrary, the greater part of the country advances is appropriated to the laudable objects of increasing the stock, and improving the cultivation of the borrower's farms, as well as of augmenting the supply of agricultural produce in the markets; and that, in both cases, as well of the manufacturer as of the cultivator, the consequences of the paper currency, whe-

ther issued to the *imaginary* extent of excess, or only to the more *real* limits of *proper augmentation*, have been more productive of benefit to society, in preventing the prices of their respective commodities from being raised, by different causes, so much higher, as they would otherwise have been, than of the *imputed* crime of being the great cause of their being so high as they actually are. It appears, in short, utterly irreconcilable to any sense I can entertain of sound reasoning, to attach the effects of scarcity to a productive cause. And if those effects should happen to be felt in another shape, at the same moment when such cause is in full operation, they must, in all fair and candid judgment, be attributed to some other, and more potently operative, counteracting principle. And this over-ruling power, I have already stated * to have arisen from the rapid increase of population, commerce, wealth, and their never-failing attendant, consumption.

It is impossible for any abstract argument to show the folly, the puerile absurdity, of attributing any permanent rise of prices to an excess of paper currency, in half so strong a light, as the mention of one simple, incontro-

* Page 148.

vertible, and striking fact; that, at one and the same time, and that equally whether the issue of Bank-notes has been in an increasing or diminishing ratio; whether the former, as in 1795, or the latter, as in 1796; one part of the interchangeable commodities were experiencing a rise in the market, against the whole quantity of money in circulation, whilst the remaining part were suffering an equal fall in their money-price in the same market. Now, if the theorists assert, that the rise of prices against money, is the infallible test of depreciation in the circulating medium, I have an indubitable right, *è converso*, to insist, that the fall of commodities operates in the nature of a premium upon the money—thus exhibiting the curious phenomenon, of the same article experiencing both a discount and a premium in the same market, and at the same time! Nor can the advocates of general depreciation get quit of this whimsical dilemma, without resorting to the admission of that universally counteracting principle, which operates equally in both cases, as well on the fall, as on the rise, of prices, and which originates in the never-slumbering combat between product and demand—so plainly evinced by the rise of meat, corn, and other commodities, the consumption of which has increased

faster than the commodities themselves ; and by the fall of coffee, tea, and sugar, &c. with which we have been deluged from the East and West ; but the contrary effects of which it is impossible to ascribe, at one and the same time, to the amount of Bank-paper in circulation : unless, indeed, we could suppose the Directors opening separate ledgers to issue different notes for the distinct purposes of bartering tea, coffee, beef, and mutton.

But however ludicrously this may make the proposition appear, every possible way in which the subject can be handled, only tends to strengthen the propriety of that principle of issue, by which the late and present Governors of the Bank have testified themselves * to be *really* directed in the extent of their discounts. As it is sufficiently evident, that good bills will continue to be presented by *bond fide* dealers on account of those articles only which, from their increasing price, give the merchant the fairest prospect of a profitable return for the amount of interest sacrificed at the time of discounting. And let us dive as deeply as we please into the ocean of metaphysics, we shall never bring to light a regu-

* Evidence of Mr. Whitmore and Mr. Pearse, Append. Report, page 111, oct. ed.

lating principle which can more usefully and safely limit the supply of circulating paper to the proper necessities of the public, than that which has been already adopted in practice by the good sense and commercial knowledge of the Directors—and which at the same time gives the most rational promise of a proper supply of the different articles in the public market.

It now remains to make a short enquiry whether the advocates of excessive issue, and depreciation, have produced any evidence to substantiate the third necessary proof—that the same excess of any other sort of currency, would not necessarily have been productive of the same consequence, in the same exact proportion, on the assumption of such excess being in existence, and that the imputed effect could fairly be attributed to either of them: which I deny in *fact*, though I am content to argue it *hypothetically*.

I have examined, with considerable care and attention, every word that has been advanced, either in the Report of the Committee, and the Evidence subjoined to it, or in Mr. Huskisson's pamphlet, which is intended to prove that any increase in the nominal prices of commodities fairly attributable to augmented circulation of the paper currency,

whether really excessive or not, ought not, with the same degree of fairness, to be equally expected from a similar excess or augmentation in the metallic portion of that currency also: or, further, to establish the proof that such consequence of excessive circulation of currency would be sooner or easier remedied when arising from the excess of circulating coin, than if the same evil had originated in the current paper. And I confess, that I do not see a single argument produced in either of those publications which can lead me to concur in the conclusions they have adopted. On the contrary, the very reasons by which they have endeavoured to fortify those opinions are, with me, some of the strongest arguments in favour of a different deduction.

My decisive opinion is, not only that the excess of gold must necessarily produce exactly the same degree of variation in the nominal prices of commodities, as a similar excess in the paper currency of this country—admitting, for the sake of hypothesis, that such consequence is attributable to either of these species of money—but also that, under the acknowledged principles of issue with respect to paper, and the existing laws against the exportation of coin, the evil must sooner, and more naturally, work out its own remedy,

when originating in the issues of the Bank, than if it had taken its origin from a superfluous coinage at the Tower.

It may not be irrelevant, perhaps, to show, in this stage of the discussion, the little probability (indeed I might venture to say, the utter impossibility) of an excess of either species of currency being thrown into circulation—by bringing to the recollection of my readers, the only occasions on which either Bank-notes or guineas are issued from the Bank.

I have already stated, that the Directors of the Bank * never force a single note into circulation (which indeed they could not do, if so inclined), and that they never issue any paper whatever, but in advances to Government on the credit of the voted taxes, or by the purchase of Exchequer bills, the amount of which also is limited; or on the discount of good drafts, drawn by substantial merchants, on *bond fide* transfers of commercial property, and accepted by other merchants or bankers of equal responsibility; in every one of which cases, the full amount of the advance, together with the addition of the discount or interest, is returned upon them by payment

* Evidence of Mr. Whitmore and Mr. Pearse, Append. to Report of Bullion Committee.

in their own notes; and for the issuing of the half-yearly dividends (every three months), the amount is previously transmitted from the Exchequer, in Bank of England notes, paid in there by the Receivers General of the several districts, in discharge of their respective collections on account of the parliamentary imposts—which evidently constitutes a previous deduction to such amount from the circulating aggregate.

And with respect to the issues of coin, it is equally clear, that Government is not at the expense of purchasing bullion in the markets, either at or above the Mint-price, in order to give it away without an equivalent consideration—the only way in which it can come into the hands of the Bank Directors, when new from the Mint, being by transmission from the Exchequer, in lieu of an equal value of old Bank-paper (with which the bullion has been purchased), in part of the dividends due to the public creditors. The issue of either species being so far limited by the sums actually due from the public to individuals, and the combined amount of both considerably* within the bounds of the annual

* The combined aggregate of Bank-notes and coin in circulation at present (1810) is supposed not to exceed thirty

imposts paid back again by the subjects to Government—who, by receiving the same in discharge of all financial payments, strictly conform to that very excellent principle laid down by Adam Smith (I cannot at this moment refer to the chapter, though the passage is completely in my recollection), in which he says, that a prince who issues paper only to the extent to which he agrees to receive it back again in payment of his imposts, can never expose it to the chance of depreciation from an excessive delivery—or words to this effect.

I should not, however, omit to mention, that there is one more channel through which, when gold is cheap in the market, another portion of guineas may come into circulation; that is, by merchants who have received bullion from abroad, at a low price, finding a profit in carrying it to the Tower to be exchanged for new coin—in which case, also, the evil consequence, if any should ensue, would soon be cured, as the officers of the Mint, knowing, from the quantity of guineas delivered out in exchange for such bullion, that the circulation is amply supplied, will

millions, whilst the payments to Government, exclusive of loans, exceed sixty millions, or double the amount.

not coin any additional quantity from the bullion so received in exchange; or if, from want of coin ready stamped, to give for such bullion, they are obliged to melt the identical gold then received—they will also know whether there is or is not a necessity for purchasing more raw material beyond that so recently coined.

The excess of issue, therefore, appears to me to be equally improbable in either species of currency; and in every view of the subject, an alarm, on either account, equally idle and unfounded.

The Committee * tell us, that “*if the gold coin of the country were at any time to become very much worn, and lessened in weight, or if it should suffer a debasement of its standard, it is evident that there would be a proportionable rise of the market-price of gold bullion above its Mint-price; for the Mint-price is the same in coin, which is equivalent, in intrinsic value, to a given quantity—an ounce, for example, of the metal in bullion; and if the intrinsic value of that sum of gold be lessened, it is equivalent to a less quantity of bullion than before.*”

This passage, though only an introduction to a succeeding paragraph more immediately

* P. 16, oct. edit.

relative to the point in present question, appears to me so confused and inaccurate (I make use of the epithet *confused*, because there is not a clear distinction kept in view between the intrinsic and the circulating values), that I cannot avoid an enquiry into its precise meaning. By the market-price of bullion, is it intended to refer to the price at home, or to that of the markets abroad—or does it mean to include both? If the former, I am not aware how the state of the coin already in circulation (so long as it remains *legally* passable, in point of weight and standard, whatever they may be) can have any effect in raising the price at home; unless as, in contemplation of a new coinage, to replace that already in circulation, the expected demand may, like that of any other marketable commodity, have a tendency to enhance its value in the market; so, also, in case of reference to the importation of gold from abroad, to supply the deficit for a new coinage, the imported bullion will not be paid for by the gold already in circulation, either in its present form of coin, or reduced by melting into its pristine state of bullion; because, in the first case, it cannot be legally exported—and in the last, no one will be at the expense of transporting that article to be exchanged for more of the same commodity.

The Mint-price is, certainly, the sum in *coin*, or, to speak more correctly, in *money*, which, at the time of fixing it, was regarded as an equivalent to the intrinsic value of a corresponding given quantity of the metal in bullion; but, as the intrinsic value of every marketable commodity must necessarily be subject to variation, the correspondence in value cannot remain fixed to any permanence; and we accordingly find the Bank giving different prices at different times, and under different circumstances. Neither do I see how the intrinsic deterioration of that sum of gold (I suppose it means *coin*) can make its circulating value as money less equivalent to a given quantity of bullion in the market, than what the same sum of lawful coin, of a purer standard, and heavier weight, would be under a similar rise of market-price; because we know, that, at this moment, 44½ guineas, of full weight, will go no further in the purchase of a pound of bullion, than the same number of a weight barely passable. And, if it is intended to prove, that things intrinsically different, do not possess the same intrinsic equivalence of value, I bow to the discernment of the proposer, and receive his proposition as axiomatic.

I should not have wasted so much time on

this passage, had I not feared, that, if passed over without observation, it might have been regarded as admitted to bear upon that which succeeds, and which is more in point to the question of the inferred difference, as to any permanent effect between an over-issue of gold or paper, on the nominal prices of the marketable commodities. The passage I allude to is this:—“*The same rise of the market-price of gold, above its Mint price, will take place, if the local currency of this particular country, being no longer convertible into gold, should at any time be issued to excess. That excess cannot be exported to other countries, and not being convertible into specie, it is not necessarily returned upon those who issued it; it remains in the channel of circulation, and is gradually absorbed by increasing the prices of all commodities.*”

. And Mr. Huskisson says *—“*Depreciation from excess, if the coin of a country be maintained at its standard, cannot take place to any amount, or continue for any length of time, unless the currency of such a country consists, partly of paper, and partly of the precious metals—except, indeed, in the extreme case of that currency consisting wholly of paper, without any reference to its value in coin.*”

* Pages 26, 27.

“ If the circulation of any country were performed exclusively by gold, for instance, and the supply of that metal in such a country were, from any imaginable cause, doubled, whilst the quantity of gold, and the demand for it, should continue the same in all other parts of the world; the price of gold, in such a country, would be diminished. This diminution of the price of gold would appear in the proportionate rise of all commodities; but gold, being so much cheaper in the country in which its quantity had been thus increased, it would be bought by other countries, and exported from that country, till its price was restored again to a level in the different parts of the world.”

In these passages, both the Committee and Mr. Huskisson seem, first, to have laid down theories and principles, in many parts inaccurate, and, in others, inconsistent; and then to have applied them to the case of a country whose existing circumstances, and operating laws, would render them wholly inapplicable, though ever so correct and consistent in themselves.

I have already said so much in former pages, in exposition of the fallacy of these principles, that it would be a waste of time, and an unpardonable trespass on the attention of my readers, to travel over the same dry

road a second time—more especially, as the whole application of the premises, if ever so correctly stated, would hinge on the exportation of the superfluous proportion of gold, which, according to the laws of Britain, cannot legally be exported, either in the shape of coin, but by incurring the pains and penalties of felony; or when melted down into bullion, without being guilty of perjury. But it is impossible for me to entertain, for a single instant, an idea so indecorous, as to suppose a Committee of Legislators in the act of bottoming an argument on the violations of the statutes their own assembly had ~~enacted.~~ Nor will I pay their discrimination so bad a compliment, as to suppose they would recommend a repeal of the prohibitory Acts against exportation, by way of making gold more plentiful in the kingdom. For, though I am well aware, that the power of exporting corn, under certain limitations, may prove a powerful stimulus to the production of that (of which the growth may be said to be, in a great measure, in the option of the producer),—with respect to gold, which is the staple of other countries, the principle is wholly inapplicable.

But I am, further, decidedly of opinion, that even in the case of such a superflux of coin, as should be universally admitted a sufficient

proof of the propriety of diminishing the quantity in circulation, by suspending the restrictions on the export of gold—that diminution would not so easily, safely, or speedily, take place, as in the case of excess of paper, by the immediate decrease of application for discounts.

I therefore think myself fairly warranted in dismissing this part of the subject with declaring, not only that the advocates of depreciation appear to me to have failed completely in the proof of any one of the three points in question—but, also, my own decided belief,—

First, That the local or paper currency of this country has not been issued to any excess :—

Secondly, That the increase in the nominal price of commodities is, therefore, not attributable to any such excessive issue of paper :—

Thirdly, That if such increase of prices were to exist, at the same time with an equally augmented circulation of the precious metals as of paper—in such case, the said increased prices would be equally attributable to the one species of augmented circulation, as it would have been to the other, and would, in all human probability, be at least as durable, if it arose from a superfluity of gold, as if it had owed its origin to an excessive circulation of paper : AND THAT, THEREFORE, THE

PAPER CURRENCY OF THIS COUNTRY IS NOT, BY ANY EXCESS OF ITS CIRCULATING AMOUNT, IN THE SMALLEST DEGREE DEPRECIATED, IN COMPARATIVE VALUE WITH THE CURRENT COIN.

I have now, I believe, touched upon every point referred to either by the Committee or Mr. Huskisson, as the apparent foundation of their reasons for assuming the existence of a depreciated state of the paper currency, as compared with the current coin; excepting that which they seem to imagine they have discovered in the course of the exchanges between this country and the continent of Europe.

The amount and state of a local currency, confined, by its very nature, to the liquidation of domestic payments only, appear to me to have so little connexion with the exchanges arising from the settlement of foreign balances, and to be so unlikely to influence either the mode or rate according to which they are to be settled, that I could willingly spare both myself and readers the time and trouble of going into any sort of detail on this head, were it not that, on a subject where so few have hitherto found it necessary to acquire the requisite knowledge—assumptions which, however erroneous they may prove, on due examination, would, at first sight, appear plausible,

might, if unanswered and unexplained, create infinite misunderstanding, and produce incalculable mischief.

Almost in the very outset of the Report*, the Committee, after slightly touching on the recent courses of exchange with Hamburgh, Amsterdam, and Paris, which however they acknowledge to have received a gradual improvement during the month of March last preceding, and from thence to have remained stationary, up to the date of the Report (8 June 1810), proceed to say—“*So extraordinary a rise in the market-price of gold in this country, coupled with so remarkable a depression of our exchanges with the continent, very early, in the judgment of your Committee, pointed to something in the state of our own domestic currency as the cause of both appearances.*” And as the Report states, that such conclusion was not adopted, however consonant “*to all former reasonings and experience*”—(of whom?)—before the explanations and evidence of persons of commercial practice and detail, had been heard—it will certainly be fair to make some enquiry into the *opinions* so offered, though, for my own part, I am much more inclined to draw my conclusion from the *facts* contained

* Pages 3 and 4, oct. ed.

in the accounts subjoined in the Appendix to the Report; the comparative statements of which, as I shall presently show, are, in my judgment, conclusively against the admitting of any such connexion or consequence as the Committee seem to have assumed.

It may be thought that I am not consistent, in charging my opponents with slighting the opinions of practical men, and, at the same time, declaring my own preference of resting my case on the statement of facts: but I must be clearly understood to assert, that they have promulgated a report in the face of evidence, both as to opinion and fact—whilst I receive both, but build more confidently on the latter as the stronger foundation of the two. It is a rule of law, to receive any admissible evidence, but always to look to the best that can be found, for the decision of the cause.

That the market-price of gold should have risen, whilst the exchanges, generally speaking, had fallen, is nothing extraordinary or unaccountable; because it is only natural to expect, that, where the general balance of aggregate payments, which is always to be kept distinct from, though including, the balance of trade with all other countries, is decidedly against any one nation, the liquidating of such balance must evidently occasion an augmented

demand for the precious metals, as the only means of liquidation, and a consequent rise of their value, in the home market, of a country so situated; and the longer such state of necessity exists, in so much the greater ratio of advance may we naturally expect such value to be augmented. And this, without the smallest occasion to refer to an imaginary principle of restricting the deviations in the course of such exchange, to the limits of expense incurred in the transmission of the metals from one country to another—a principle evidently fallacious as to any general application—for this very obvious reason, because, that, whilst the balance of payments is unfavourable with one country—particularly if in that country the nation in question should at the same time be obliged to maintain a numerous and expensive army, or engaged to pay a heavy subsidy; for either of which purposes, a quantity of specie must be remitted from home, or else be raised on the spot by bills drawn on the Government; which bills are to be liquidated either by exchange for other bills on countries, against whom a favourable balance can be claimed; or else by the exportation of equivalent commodities, thereby deducting so much from what would otherwise be a favourable balance of trade—such debt may, as just mentioned, be settled

by negotiating bills in exchange on one or more nations, from whom a payment to a similar amount is due; in which case, although the course of exchange will be against such nation with that to whom it has to pay, and in its favour with respect to the other from whom it has to receive; nothing can be clearer than that such courses of exchange cannot be either caused or regulated by the expense of transporting bullion; because, so far as these two payments are concerned, no metallic balance will be carried from one country to another, the whole being settled as matter of account in paper.

Neither can the amount, or the *imaginary* depreciation, of the local currency affect the present question, in any way, because that is not made use of, either in the statement of the account, or in the actual payment of the balance; and that it has not had any such consequence, is clearly apparent, by the following comparative statements of issues of Bank of England paper and the courses of exchange, at the corresponding periods therein mentioned. These statements are faithfully extracted from the Appendix of Accounts, subjoined to the octavo edition of the Report, No. xlix. p. 60; and the par of exchange is, in conformity therewith, taken at 33 schellins 8½ grotes Fle-

mish per pound sterling; which is therein stated to be the par in common acceptation, and, therefore, certainly the *practical* rate by which negotiations of exchange are actually made, though I think it right to mention, that in the Appendix No. 59, p. 73, of the same edition, it is stated, from Dr. Kelly, that the intrinsic par of exchange with Hamburgh is 34 schellins 3.3 pence Flemish by Mint regulations, and 34 schellins 1.4 penny Flemish by assays in gold.

On the average of three months from April to June 1793, the total amount of Bank-notes in circulation at one time was 12,104,040 l.

And the highest rate of Hambro' exchange in the same period, was 37 sc. 6 gr.

5th September 1795, Bank-notes — — — — 11,154,826 l.

1st September 1795, lowest Hambro' exchange — — 32 sc. 6 gr.

By the same comparison, subsequent to the Restriction,

27th February, 1797, Bank-notes — — — — 8½ millions.

Rate of Hambro' exchange — — 35 sc. 6 gr.

In 1797 and 1798, Bank-notes gradually increased to — — 13 millions.

At the same time the course of exchange on Hambro' rose to 38 sc. Flem.

In March 1799, Bank-notes had diminished to — — — — 12 millions.

To which, however, must be added for small notes under 5*l.* each, first issued after the restriction — — — — — 1½ millions.

Making the total of Bank-paper then in circulation — — — 13½ millions.

But after this period, great commercial distress, large importations of corn, and heavy subsidies, occasioned the exchange with Hambro' to continue falling till the 2d of January 1801, to 29 *sc.* 8 *gr.*

In December 1799, however, whilst the notes had increased to, 14 millions, and had been nearly stationary at, that amount for about nine months *,

The exchange had nevertheless risen again to — — — 33 *sc.* 3 *gr.*

Between the end of the year 1799 and that of 1802, the addition of a greater quantity of 1*l.* and 2*l.* notes swelled the amount in circulation to — — — 16½ millions.

And the exchanges had fallen again to — — — — 29 *sc.* 8 *gr.*

* Appendix Report, No. 35, p. 47, Oct. ed.

From January 1803, whilst the amount of notes remained stationary at — — — — — 16½ millions,

The exchange had risen once more to — — — — — 32 *sc.* 10 *gr.*

And by the end of 1807, when the aggregate of notes had reached to no less a sum than — — 18 millions,

The course of exchange with Hambro' had risen to so high a point in our favour as — — 35 *sc.* 10 *gr.*
Being about 6½ percent. above par.

And from January 1808 to Christmas 1809, being nearly two years, whilst the amount of notes rose only from — — — — — 17½ } millions,
to 18 }

The course of exchange fell again from — — — — — 34.9 } Flem.
to 28.6 }

And on Sweden, during the last-mentioned year (1809), whilst the amount of Bank-notes in circulation had experienced this gentle increase from 17½ millions to about 18 millions, the course of exchange, instead of any fall, had also risen in the same gradual manner, and by a completely uninterrupted ascension *, from

* As may be seen in the Appendix, No. 65, p. 78, Rep. oct. edition.

4 rix dollars 20 schellins on the 4th January in that year, to 4 rix dollars 39 stivers on the 22d December following. But if any thing could more completely exhibit the fallaciousness of attributing the fluctuations, or, to speak with more strict correctness in regard of the doctrine in immediate question, 'the depressions of the course of exchange, to the excessive augmentation of the local currency of our own country, I have only to add, that in April and May 1810, when the aggregate notes in circulation had risen to near 21 millions, the course of exchange at Gottenburg had got up to 5 rix dollars 32 and 33 schellins per pound sterling, or about 24 per cent. in our favour, the par of exchange being supposed to be 4 rix dollars 28 schellins*.

Can any man, whose eye is at all accustomed to embrace the power of figures, look at this comparative scale of issues and exchanges without being at once convinced of the error of the Committee † in attributing blindness to all who cannot see with them, and who venture to suppose that exchanges may fall and the price of bullion rise, whilst the issues of the Bank of England are contracting; and what is still

* Appendix of Accounts, No. 65, p. 78, Rep. oct. edit.

† Report, p. 39, octavo edition.

more invasive of their favourite principle, that even the exchanges may rise and the price of bullion fall, at the same time that these most iniquitous Directors are daring to enlarge their discounts? The comparison proves the rule completely fallacious, and altogether inapplicable. The issues and exchanges are sometimes correspondent, and sometimes in direct contradiction.

Before I dismiss this part of my subject, however, I must take leave to observe, as intimately connected with it, that Mr. Huskisson has said *, “*The currency of a country, then, is depreciated,*

“*1st, If its standard coin contains less of gold or silver than it is certified to contain. In that case the paper, as representing that coin, is also depreciated, and precisely in the same degree as the coin.*

“*2dly, If the paper is exchangeable for less of the coin than it represents; that coin containing the quantity of gold or silver certified by law. In that case, the coin, though undiminished in value, must, as part of the currency, partake of the depreciation of the whole.*

“*Consequently, if the coin be itself, as coin, depreciated, the paper which circulates with it*

* Question Stated, &c. p. 28.

cannot be otherwise than depreciated to the same degree. But if the coin be undepreciated as coin, and there be, notwithstanding, a depreciation of the general currency, the cause of that depreciation can be only in the paper; and that cause can be no other than the excess to which that paper is issued."

There are many parts of these positions to which, if minutely criticised, I should object very strongly; but I take them here together only to corroborate the proof of the general fallacy of the opinion assumed by the Committee, as well as by my Honourable Friend, with respect to the influence of the amount of paper issues on the rates of foreign exchanges.— And if I understand them rightly, supplying what is not therein specifically expressed, from the context of the pamphlet, and the tenour of the Report, it is meant to be asserted, that whenever any part of the general currency of a country is depreciated in itself, the whole of that circulating medium suffers an equal depression; inferring from thence, that from the excess of paper at present in circulation, the general currency of this country is now so deteriorated.

Any thing which in itself is *intrinsecally* depreciated, must, as I apprehend, according to every sound principle of reasoning, be equally

so deteriorated in all its *external* relations of value.

The currency of England at this moment suffers an intrinsic depreciation with respect to that of Hamburg, if we were to judge according to the current course of exchange with that place; but it also experiences an augmentation in intrinsic value at the same time, according to the same rule, with respect to the exchange on Gottenburg.

The principle is therefore at variance with, and false in itself, and consequently cannot be admitted as the rule and measure of depreciation in the currency of any country.

If the impeachment of this fallacious principle wanted further argument, the proof is strengthened almost twofold by the acknowledged fact, that, since the former data were taken, the exchange on Sweden has risen up even so much higher still as to near 7 dollars Banco per pound sterling, although the issues of the Bank of England have at the same time swelled to about 23 millions of paper currency. —So that, on the principle of the depreciators, the poor infatuated Swede is content to pay us an enormous and increasing premium, for experiencing at our hands the very identical injury, for which his more intelligent neighbour at the

mouth of the Elbe, the acute Hanseatic, exacts a compensation in the shape of discount.

Can we, then, wonder, if the Corsican, who plays at hazard with the crowns of Europe, should think a monarch unfit to reign, who, like Homer's Lycian, is content to purchase our friendship by exchanging his *panoply of gold* against our brazen armour?

To be serious: Sweden wishes it to be understood, that she does not issue a note for which the amount is not deposited in the vaults of the Government Bank in specie, whilst England fabricates millions which are at present not exchangeable against gold, and which Mr. Huskisson says are not worth more than seventeen shillings in the pound sterling; and yet is the former content to trade with the latter, and, instead of purchasing bills on her depreciated currency at 15 per cent. discount, gives from 23 to 50 or 60 per cent. premium to obtain them*.

* The actual course of exchange between this country and Sweden at the present moment (29th January 1811) is about $6\frac{1}{2}$ rix dollars Banco per pound sterling, or $49\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. above par in favour of England.—The par being taken at 4 r. 28 s. per pound, at which rate the rix dollar, which is commonly called 4 s. 8 d. sterling, is calculated at 4 s. $4\frac{1}{2}$. 45. But at the present course of $6\frac{1}{2}$ per pound sterling, the rix dollar is not exchangeable against more than 3 s. $0\frac{1}{4}$. 60 s. British. And it is to be understood that the reich's-dahler

Without going, therefore, any further into the minutiae of different exchanges,—from which though numberless other instances of variation might be taken, I do not think it necessary to detail them *, because the impeachment of the

Banco is the Swedish money of account only, like our pound sterling; and not a real coin; but bears an invariable agio of 50 per cent. above the Government paper currency or reich's zettel: so that 100 reich's dahlers Banco are equal to 150 R. currency:—according to which, the pound sterling is now equal to $6\frac{1}{2}$ six dollars Banco, or $9\frac{3}{4}$ currency.—I have detailed this, in order to show that the premium of $49\frac{2}{3}$, or near 50 per cent. on London bills, is not owing to their being purchased with the paper currency of Sweden; because in that case the premium rises to near 113 per cent. in favour of this country; whilst it is a well-known fact, that a bill on Stockholm or Gottenburg will sell at the Royal Exchange for precisely the same rate, whether paid for in Bank-notes or guineas.—And yet gentlemen will talk of the depreciation of Bank of England notes!!!

* Neither is it necessary to trespass longer on the patience of the public, by repeating the evidence of Mr. Lyne, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Greffulhe, Mr. Coningham, Mr. Whitmore, Mr. Pearse, &c. as the opinions of all these practical and intelligent merchants, whose names I have mentioned, may be gathered by reference to the Minutes of Evidence, subjoined to the Report of the Committee. And indeed the most valuable part of the evidence of the gentleman *without a name*, and who, as the Quarterly Review has so very wittily observed; “*may be a foreigner*;” even the clearest part of his evidence goes to establish the same points in contravention of the opinions delivered in the body of the Report.

rule, as a general principle, is as well proved by two or three failures as by a thousand,—I close my observations on the subject of foreign exchanges with declaring my decided opinion that, THE AMOUNT AND STATE OF OUR DOMESTIC PAPER CURRENCY, HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE COURSE AND RATE OF OUR FOREIGN EXCHANGES; NOR HAVE THEY ANY VISIBLE INFLUENCE ON EACH OTHER, IN EITHER WAY; EITHER THE CURRENCY ON THE EXCHANGE, OR THE EXCHANGE WITH RESPECT TO THE CURRENCY; THE LATTER BEING REGULATED IN ITS AMOUNT BY THE DEMANDS FOR DOMESTIC INTERCOURSE, AND THE OTHER BY THE AGGREGATE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS OF ALL KINDS WHICH IS TO BE LIQUIDATED BETWEEN US AND ANY OTHER COUNTRY.

I have now gone through all the different points, on which either the Committee or Mr. Huskisson has enlarged; and there only remains the task of endeavouring to place before the public eye in a summary view, the pith and substance of those tedious and dry details into which I found myself obliged to enter in justification of my having presumed to differ in opinion from authorities of such generally acknowledged weight and influence. And if, in the course of this investigation, I shall be found at times to have expressed my thoughts

in language which may be deemed too strong for the occasion, I beg leave to avail myself of this opportunity for disclaiming every idea of personal disrespect, or party hostility; and to assure my Honourable Friend, and all his colleagues, that nothing could be more distant from my intention than the adoption of a single word which might in any way be so taken or construed.

Had the same opinions been promulgated, and the same measures been recommended, from any other quarter, I should equally have deemed it an indispensable duty to point out their fallacy, and warn my countrymen of their ruinous consequences.

Upon a review of the whole case then, and with reference, not only to the arguments of the Committee, and of Mr. Huskisson*,

* It is with the most sincere and heartfelt satisfaction, that, in the observations on the true principles of commercial intercourse detailed in **THE QUESTION, &c.** pages 63 and 69, I recognise all that liberality of sentiment, and perspicuous policy, so natural to the excellent understanding and admirable talents of my Honourable Friend; they are such as do justice both, to his head and heart; and if I feel myself obliged by other parts of the same publication to exclaim, however involuntarily, *O, si sic omnia!* I can only wonder how he has suffered himself to be led astray from a proper confidence in his own judgment, to place his dependence on the opinions of those of less ability.

but also to the evidence detailed in the Appendix to the Report, which I have carefully examined and weighed; as well as to the opinions of many abler advocates than myself, whose espousal of the cause I have taken up, would, probably, have saved me the trouble of so doing, had I been aware of its having so many potent allies ready to arm in its defence. I feel myself perfectly warranted in submitting to the Public the following conclusions, as clearly deducible from the whole of the facts and reasonings which have been stated on either side of this most important and truly interesting question :

THAT the money of account, of which the pound sterling is the fundamental unit, is the only real and invariable standard by which the value of all commodities is measured in this kingdom.

That gold, therefore, is not the measure itself, but one of the representative signs of that measure, and legally established as such in all cases; subject only to such temporary suspensions as have been found necessary to be enacted under existing circumstances.

That Bank of England notes constitute another of those signs, and are equally received as such by the common consent and common confidence of the whole society, but are not

equally compellable by law to be so received, except in certain cases, and under certain conditions.

That gold and Bank of England notes are equally received, in all payments, at the same proportional value according to their respective denominations, as different portions of the circulating medium of the country, with reference to the legal distinctions set forth in the preceding conclusion.

That there is not, therefore, any comparative depreciation between the current values of the metallic and paper currencies of the kingdom.

That, with reference to the great increase of public and private payments, there is not any unnecessary existing augmentation of the circulating medium.

That the annual supply of gold * from the

* It would be difficult to make any very accurate and precise statement of the supply and consumption of gold, without the assistance of much more detailed and specific documents than any which are as yet attainable in this country; but the highest estimate I have ever seen does not carry the average annual addition, from both the old and new world, to the commerce of Europe, beyond the value of $10\frac{3}{4}$ millions of Spanish dollars, or about $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling; and others do not state it as exceeding 2 millions of our money. The chief supply of England appears to have been through Lisbon previously to the year 1792; and

mines is not equal to the increasing demands of the world for that metal.

was at its highest flow from 1740 to 1750; but since the first-mentioned period (1792), it has dwindled away, and is now entirely stopped; and for the last fifteen years the principal influx has been from Spanish America by the way of Jamaica, and is calculated at about 700,000*l.* per annum*. But the Brazil mines being stopped at the same time, it is supposed that the whole supply of the world does not much exceed the value of one million sterling per annum at present. Let us, however, take the highest estimate, being that subjoined to the Report of the Committee in the Appendix (No. 33, p. 43, oct. edit.), and state it at 2½ millions sterling; which at only 4*l.* per oz. makes 625,000 oz. Troy of gold bullion per annum; and then let us endeavour to imagine, for it is impossible to calculate with any probable degree of precision, what the annual demand may be for the consumption, against this very moderate quantum of produce. There is a curious fact stated in the publication I have just quoted, that a watchmaker of the author's acquaintance assured him, that, when he was an apprentice, his master had never more than two or three gold watches in hand at one time; but that of late years he himself has seldom had less than one hundred and fifty in a progressive state towards finishing; and that his annual consumption of gold for the cases alone is one thousand one hundred ounces, or something more than $\frac{1}{600}$ of the annual supply of the whole world; and he thinks that this is not more than the $\frac{1}{120}$ th part of what is used for the same purpose in this kingdom; that is to say, that, according to his estimation, one sixth part of all the gold produced by the mines

* Vide a little pamphlet on the trade in gold bullion lately published in Liverpool.

That, as the increase of paper currency has barely supplied the place of the augmentation wanting in the metallic portion of the circulating medium, there is not any excessive issue of paper now in circulation.

That the suspension of cash payments at the Bank, has, according to the admission of the

of the world, is appropriated to the furnishing of watch-cases in England. Now I am well aware that some part of this consumption may be supplied by the melting down of old cases, and other articles of gold plate; but if we take into consideration the great increase of wealth, and corresponding luxury, referring especially to what the above-mentioned watchmaker has stated, as to the increase in his own dealings in gold; and if we look at the style of decoration and furniture in our own houses, where every part is adorned with a profusion of gilding, so very different from those of our ancestors, who were content with a brass curtain-rod, and a heavy mahogany chair, there can be little doubt but that the consumption of gold, in almost every branch of manufacture, has greatly increased, exclusive of the increasing population and wealth of all countries, and the consequent additional want of circulating medium to effect the necessary payments, while the supply from the mines of the whole world, instead of keeping pace with the augmenting demand, has fallen off, and that to an alarming degree of scarcity; and that, therefore, it is highly incumbent on us to be very sure of our ground, before we venture on any rash and hasty measures for altering the economical system which has been so wisely and providently adopted for husbanding our present stores of the precious metals.

Committee, in their own Report *, spared a considerable quantity of gold for the supply of the Continent.

That, therefore, the repeal of the restraining statutes, by bringing gold more into demand in England, and by narrowing the proportion of supplies to the Continent, would, instead of tending to lower the price of bullion, raise it first abroad, and then eventually at home.

That this increasing profit on exportation would increase the temptation to melt and smuggle the gold from hence to the Continent.

That, as a regular supply of gold is indispensably requisite for the effectuating of cash payments, the gold, so exported, must necessarily be brought back again at an advanced price ; at least, if the Bank suspension were to be removed whilst the balance of payments, between this country and the Continent, should remain in any thing like its present state.

That the amount or nature of the local currency of this country, has not any effect on the course of its foreign exchanges ; because they are proved to be continually at variance as to any proportional gradation.

* Page 7, oct. edit.

That, though the *par* of exchange is founded on the intrinsic values of the coins of any two countries, the *course* of that exchange is regulated by the balance of payments of every kind, to be settled between those countries; and by the greater or less facility of liquidating those payments by the negotiation of bills of exchange, either on each other, or on any other countries, with which they may mutually have pecuniary transactions.

That, though the balance of trade is in favour of this country with the whole world; the balance of payments, between England and the continent of Europe, is considerably against us.

That, consequently, although the balance of trade is favourable, the course of exchange is, generally speaking, and with few exceptions, against us.

That the removal of the Bank suspension, whilst the general balance of payments, and course of exchange, with the continent of Europe, are against us, would only tend to a speedier exhaustion of the precious metals in this country.

That it is impossible for any one to pronounce whether two years, or twenty months, or twenty years, is the precise time when such circumstances shall turn in our favour; or is

even the more likely period for bringing about such favourable alteration.

That, therefore, the enactment of any fixed period, to be at present specified, for the removal of the Bank restriction, would be a most unwise and dangerous measure.

That the return of peace, by removing a great but unavoidable foreign expenditure, and restoring the accustomed commercial facilities, would be most likely to bring with it, also, a power of resuming, under certain qualified modifications, the usual unrestricted option of payments in cash.

That, therefore, it is safest and most discreet, to avoid any rash and premature * alteration in the existing laws, which, at present, point out a period within a moderate distance of time after the return of peace, when we may

* Indeed, were such an alteration to take place, under a continuation of the present existing circumstances, even at the end of two years from hence; the utter impossibility of procuring, then, a sufficient quantity of coin to effect the necessary payments, would immediately point out to the good sense and intelligent foresight of the bankers and merchants, the propriety of meeting and agreeing to receive Bank paper in all transactions as usual, as well as the necessity for all persons to resolve on employing such tradesmen only as should concur in such agreement; and to specify in all written contracts, that the payment is to be made in notes of the Bank of England.

indulge a reasonable hope of being enabled to resume our accustomed freedom of pecuniary transfers with perfect discretion and undoubted safety.

Under these impressions, so deeply engraven by conviction, on my most mature and deliberate judgment, and strongly fortified, not only by the evidence produced before the Committee, but even by their own reasonings upon that evidence, as well as by every fact I have been able to procure the knowledge of elsewhere, in the course of this enquiry; I have no hesitation in acquitting the Bank Directors of this "*magnum crimen! ingens pecunia! furtum impulsens! injuria non ferenda!*" of which they seem to be accused; and in trusting to the good sense of our fellow-subjects to receive, with confidence, my parting assurance, that, **THE PAPER OF THE BANK OF ENGLAND HAS NOT EXPERIENCED THE SMALLEST DEPRECIATION, EITHER IN THE OPINIONS OR THE PRACTICE OF THE COMMERCIAL WORLD.**

THE END.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

PRESENT POLITICAL STATE

OF

AFFAIRS,

IN A

LETTER TO A FRIEND.

BY

WILLIAM HUNTER, ESQ.

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THOUGHTS,

. &c.

MY DEAR SIR,

You have expressed a wish to have my opinion on the present political State of Affairs. With your wishes I am always anxious to comply ; and I shall, in the present instance, endeavour to satisfy you, as succinctly as the importance of the subject will admit.

Through all the wonderful changes which have, of late years, been exhibited to our contemplation, I have steadily adhered to those general maxims with which I set out in life, and which it is not now likely I shall ever forsake. They were, fortunately, founded on just principles ; on those principles which have, at all times, and under all circumstances, powerfully operated on the feelings and conduct of mankind. An early disciple of Burke, I ran little risk of becoming a proselyte to those wild doctrines which were broached by his oppo-

nents, and whose perilous falsity has been since so calamitously proved. I always thought, that the French revolution, which began by the total decomposition of society, which, in its progress, was signalized by every excess of wickedness and folly, would terminate in the sternest despotism that was ever erected, by violence and fraud, over the blindness and perverseness of mankind. I am not, however, disposed to renew the history of these events. We have been witnesses both of their course and their effects, and, whatever may have been the calamities which they have brought on the present generation, they will hold out to after-ages a memorable and profitable example.

The continental states of Europe can no longer engage our interest, or deserve our support, except in proportion as they evince a disposition to struggle in their own defence, or manifest symptoms of a revival of those feelings by which their former independence was established and secured. Those that remain in the trammels of slavish submission must be abandoned to the consequences of their folly, until the intensity of suffering kindle up a spirit of resistance, and impress them with a just sense of the shame and misery of their yoke.

Great Britain has, throughout this tremendous contest, been an object of the noblest interest. She has been the bulwark that has alone successfully resisted the fury of the hurricane. She has been the beacon to which the hopes of mankind have been directed, the rock on which their salvation has reposed. Whatever may have been her errors, her privations, or her losses, she has never descended from her elevation, or ceased to act a glorious and consistent part. She has given a most conclusive answer to the fears of the timid, the doubts of the sceptical, and the assertions of the factious; and has fully proved, in contradiction to all the false hypotheses of short-sighted politicians, that national virtue is the foundation of national grandeur; that industry, inspirited by freedom, is a never-failing spring of wealth; and that courage, when properly controlled and applied, is a perennial source of victory.

The subject naturally divides itself under two heads, domestic and foreign. In the discussion of the former, it is impossible to avoid adverting to a topic which has so long engrossed the public attention, as the present state of the currency of the country.

After the ample agitation which this question underwent in the course of the two last centuries, one should have conceived, that it had, in all its bearings, been reduced to principles on which it was destined unalterably to repose. All the experience of past times has, however, been shaken from its very foundation, and no subject has, of late years, given rise to more vehement or more contradictory argument. Two stout parties, the Bullionists and Anti-bullionists, have ranged themselves under opposite banners, and have attacked each other with a fierceness that has even outstripped the importance of their cause. The collision of intelligent minds must always elicit information. Yet, unfortunately, they have both adopted systems, which they endeavour to elucidate and support by the statement of extreme cases. Hence their inferences, in many instances, are not fairly deducible from the facts which they enumerate. I thus *partly* agree with both, but *entirely* with neither. I think, on the one hand, that considerable mischief, which it will now be difficult to rectify, has arisen from the protracted restriction on the issue of specie; but, on the other hand, I cannot admit, that Bank-notes are depreciated in the way, nor to

the extent, insisted on. My reasons for this judgment I shall state as concisely as I can.

When, in the year 1797, from a variety of unforeseen causes, an unexpected run on the Bank occurred, which it was feared, if persisted in, they might not be able to answer, it was evident that there was but one remedy for the evil, which was the suspension of cash payments. To effect this the authority of Parliament was necessary, which being obtained, the Bank was instantly relieved from their dilemma. Duly impressed, however, with an opinion of the propriety and policy of re-opening their coffers as soon as their arrangements permitted, they, in a few months, declared their ability to return to their old modes of conducting business. On the submission of this proposal to Parliament, it was, perhaps to their surprise, rejected; and the restriction was converted into a permanent measure, during the continuance of the war. To this fatal mistake the chief part of our present embarrassments is, undoubtedly, to be ascribed. What benefit resulted to Government from the determination, I am not desirous of ascertaining; but the Bank, as a trading company, must very soon have discovered the advantage of such an exclusive

privilege. The act being no longer their own, they found themselves sheltered from public reproach ; and, flattered by the enormous increase of profit derived from so prolific a source, the murmurs of disappointment, if they were ever uttered, were soon lost in the tranquillity of acquiescence. In the true spirit of trade, they rapidly enlarged the issue of their paper, and with their paper the amount of their discounts, and with their discounts the receipt of their revenue. It was a long time before the public felt any particular inconvenience from these transactions. The immediate effect of the restriction was to lower the price of gold, by suddenly withdrawing from circulation more than was wanted for the manufactures. Another channel of absorption was, however, easily found, when it not only reached, but soon surpassed, its former value. This circumstance could not have escaped observation, yet it excited no alarm. The confidence in the integrity and solvency of the Bank was universal. Every one was assured that there was an ample sufficiency of funds to liquidate the amount of debt * ; and was even

* This indeed was proved, beyond all doubt, by the investigation of their affairs in 1797, by a parliamentary Committee,

persuaded, that, notwithstanding the decision of Parliament, the stoppage of the issue of specie was a temporary expedient. But, year after year has since stolen away in barren expectation, and hope has at last been wrecked on the shoals of protracted disappointment. These aberrations from discretion have not, however, been persevered in with impunity, and, in proportion to their extent and duration, has the result been perplexing. Public credit is a most sensitive plant, and requires, in its culture, the most unceasing vigilance, and the most practised dexterity. How it has been upheld in this country, throughout the tremendous and accumulating difficulties with which it has had to contend, must be matter of astonishment to every one who has contemplated the variety and intricacy of the machinery by which it is set in motion. These circumstances, instead of prompting us, unnecessarily, to explore the untried regions of experiment, should have taught us sobriety, and have induced us to confine ourselves as closely as possible to those rules, on which we had already acted, and which we knew to be safe.

Committee, when it appeared, that, after satisfying all claims, there would remain in their hands a clear balance of £15,137,690.

From the foundation of the Bank, in the time of King William, till within the last two years, with the exception of a few months after its first establishment, such had been the prudence and skill with which they had managed their concerns, that the validity of their paper had never been questioned. Whatever had been their difficulties, they had always contrived to avoid this lamentable predicament. They had ever maintained its credit unimpeached, and it was, what it declared itself, an equivalent for specie. This, it must be owned, is no longer the case. The present market price of gold is 4*l.* 14*s.* per ounce, which is about twenty per cent. above the Mint price, at which Bank-notes are circulated. Bank-notes, with a reference to the precious metals, are therefore at a discount to that extent.

The Bank Directors, and those who feel bound to support them, among whom is comprehended a great part of the mercantile world, appear, nevertheless, to have latterly altered their opinion, respecting the necessity or policy of a resumption of cash payments, and to have laid down as a kind of general doctrine, that no bad effects have been produced by the disappearance of the precious metals, and the consequent increased issue of notes.

But, in the judgment of those who view the question more dispassionately, and who are unbiassed by any overweening prejudice or interest, it is surveyed with a very opposite, and, certainly, a more correct sentiment. Practical men are not indeed the fittest persons for the discussion of abstract propositions. Their strong attachment to old habits, has a tendency to contract their observation within the boundaries of their own experience, and to disqualify them for enlarged and philosophical research.

I am ready to grant, that in the present extended state of commerce, and increased revenue of the country, a much larger circulating medium than formerly is required. An insufficient circulation is always productive of injurious effects. It discourages all endeavour at improvement; it cramps the efforts of industry through all its multiplied forms; and never fails to relax the invigorating principle of national wealth.

I am also ready to grant, that it is greatly to the advantage of a country, that a large portion of its commercial dealings should be conducted through the medium of paper. Gold and silver being perishable articles of great intrinsic worth, liable to total loss, and to diminution from wear

and tear, and in various other ways, if they alone were in circulation, independently of the manifest inconvenience attending collection and transmission, they would be a source of considerable positive loss, arising from the fore-mentioned causes. Gold also, being a commodity purchased, in the first instance, by something as valuable, the overplus above our wants, would evidently subtract from the operations of commerce a capital to that specific amount. The measure, therefore, of giving currency to paper, as the representative of the precious metals, has, for these obvious reasons, long prevailed in all commercial states. But there is a boundary to this description of representative value, as well as to every thing else, and which is to be known by infallible marks.

One of the most prominent distinctive features between coin and paper is this; that coin, having an intrinsic value, which is universally understood, is readily received wherever we are desirous of circulating it; whereas paper, possessing no such inherent property, can only be rendered current by a constraining act of the Government, or a voluntary feeling of public confidence. These opposite modes of obtaining circulation cannot fail to produce opposite ef-

fects. Its voluntary acceptance arises, not from any false notion of its substantive worth, but from a thorough knowledge and conviction that it is, at pleasure, convertible into that which it represents. While it preserves this character; while it is, on demand, exchangeable into coin, it is evidently as valuable as coin; and, from its greater convenience, will not unfrequently be preferred. But the moment compulsion steps in, to fetter the option, and interrupt the facility, of exchange, suspicion is engendered, and its credit naturally declines.

Between bullion and paper there is another important distinction. If bullion, by any accidental occurrence, were to be forced into the market, to an amount much beyond the demand, although such an event might occasion, in that particular market, a momentary depression of price; yet, from its great intrinsic worth, and the everlasting request in which it is held in all quarters of the globe, the sure remedy of exportation would be at hand, to bring it back to its ordinary level. If, for example, the circulation of a country were to require 20,000,000 of specie, and 10,000,000, in addition, were by some accident suddenly to appear, this superabundance would occasion a corresponding deficiency

in some other part of Europe; and although the influx might, for a short time, be disadvantageously felt, yet the equipoise would, in the course of a few weeks, be restored, by the exportation of the surplus sum. Gold and silver are burdens which are very readily disposed of, and are, of all commodities, the least exposed to any durable depreciation. Wheat, which is in one sense far more valuable, because necessary to human subsistence, might experience, at the same moment, a very sensible diminution of price in every part of Europe, because, in every part, favourable seasons might, in the same year, produce abundant crops. But gold, which is only found in certain regions of the globe, and in known quantities, can never be liable to this variation. Pursuing, however, the comparison, we shall find, that it is far otherwise with paper. If the Bank, having 20,000,000 of notes in circulation, which were sufficient for the demand, were suddenly to issue 10,000,000 more, a depreciation to that extent would infallibly ensue. There being, to that amount, more than the demand required; and, not being an exportable commodity, or current in any other country, the 30,000,000 would represent no more than the 20,000,000, and the depreciation would continue till they were again called in.

The extinction of the surplus would be the only remedy. To gold and silver there is a given limit; to paper there is none. A pound of gold, of a certain fineness, is coined into $44\frac{1}{2}$ guineas, a pound of silver into 62 shillings; but on a quire of paper, you may, with equal facility, stamp a few hundred pounds, or the amount of the national debt. Any sensible reduction in the value of gold, could only be occasioned by the discovery of new mines, and then the reduction would be common to the whole world; but a reduction in the value of paper is confined to the country that issues it. Metallic currency may indeed, in any particular country, be depreciated by debasement, and produce the same ruinous effects as the depreciation of paper by excess. In both instances, in proportion to the degree, it will be felt through every branch both of domestic economy and foreign relation; and, by raising the price of labour and of commodities of all descriptions, will eventually affect the whole mass of productive industry. If it were not for such restraints; if there were neither standard nor boundary which it was necessary to observe; the metallic currency might be debased, or the paper currency issued, to an indefinite extent. But this is an absurdity which no one will venture to maintain.

Under all these circumstances, one of the points, which we are most interested in being able to clear from ambiguity, is the degree of credit to which the national paper has a claim. If it be depreciated, in the way and to the extent insisted on by the bullionists, that depreciation must inevitably go on increasing, till at last the universal distrust in which it will be held, will put an end to its circulation. But I have no fear of such an event. That Bank-notes are depreciated, with reference to gold, I have already admitted as an indisputable fact; but that their depreciation is confined almost entirely to that commodity, is, to my apprehension, fully as demonstrable. Those, who insist on their general depreciation, make out their argument thus: They first say, that the difference between the market and Mint price of gold is about twenty per cent. and that Bank-notes, being issued at the Mint price, are, with a reference to the market price, at a discount to that amount. This is undeniable. They next affirm, that, when we want to ascertain the value of paper, we must refer it to the value of gold, and that, therefore, when we want to ascertain the value of any article which paper buys, the ultimate point of reference being gold, the same scale of depreciation must per-

vade all purchases. They say, that a guinea being intrinsically worth 25s. in notes, if the law permitted me to pass it at that sum, I could purchase with it, nearly a fifth more than I could procure for a pound note and a shilling. This is all very true; but it only proves that a guinea is worth about twenty per cent. more than it was formerly, not only in reference to Bank-notes, but to every object of traffic. Now, if every object of traffic be depreciated with reference to a guinea, instead of proving that Bank-notes are depreciated with regard to other commodities, it is, on the contrary, an infallible indication, that the old relations between them have been preserved. If, for example, I can sell an ounce of gold for 4l. 10s. instead of the old price, which was 3l. 18s. and with this 4l. 10s. am enabled to purchase one fifth more than I could when gold was at 3l. 18s. surely these articles which I purchase, when referred to gold, are as much depreciated as Bank-notes, and of course the old relation between these articles and Bank-notes still exists. The same fact occurs, and the same observation applies, throughout.

If gold were the only commodity to which the definition of wealth belonged, it is very clear

that a diminution of gold would invariably be a diminution of wealth. But as all articles of want are as much wealth, and in some respects are more so than gold, the diminution of our metallic currency is far from being a proof of the diminution of our wealth. Gold, abstractedly speaking, neither contributes to ornament nor to use. It neither satisfies the propensities of taste, nor administers to the support of life. It neither provides raiment nor food. If gold had never been drawn from the bowels of the earth, we might still be as opulent as we are now. In many flourishing countries, it is to this day unknown as a circulating medium. Why then should it be indispensable with us? Gold, in fact, is chiefly valuable from its convenience, that is to say, from the facilities which it affords to the interchange of property. But when its convenience ceases, other modes are adopted. A bill of 1000*l.* drawn by a respectable house in Amsterdam on a respectable house in London, would, in ordinary times, be preferred to the same amount in specie. When we have gold, from the universal estimation in which it is held, we are, to be sure, satisfied that it will procure us the wants and comforts of life. It is this certainty which constitutes its value. But if we be also convinced, that the paper we hold is

issued on a solid basis ; that it is the representation of a description of wealth fully as valuable as gold, but which, not possessing the same faculty of divisibility, cannot be made instrumental to the purposes of circulation ; however we may lament the inconvenience, we may be satisfied with the security. I may have land, or houses, or a great stock of corn or manufactured goods. No one will pretend to say that these articles do not come under the denomination of wealth. Nor can the absence or presence of gold alter the character of their intrinsic worth. Mine indeed may be the superiority of the landed proprietor over the mere capitalist. His wealth an accident might sweep away, but mine must for ever remain.

The surest test, after all, by which we can ascertain whether Bank-notes are depreciated with regard to other commodities besides gold, is this—To inquire whether we can get as much bread, as much butcher's meat, as much porter, cloth, linen, sugar, or tea, for a pound-note now as we could two years ago. Making a fair allowance for increased taxation, and other circumstances which obviously occasion temporary fluctuations in the value of necessary articles, we assuredly can. Bank-notes pay as

formerly, and exactly in the same proportion, parliamentary taxes, parish-rates, house rent, servants' wages, and the tradesmen who supply provisions. These are the chief expenses of house-keeping. The increased price of poultry and fish is confined to the metropolis, and is occasioned by abuses which the legislature ought to correct. But even these evils are, in some measure, balanced by the reduced prices of coffee and tea. This statement, therefore, instead of showing that I am a loser by receiving notes, only shows that I should be a gainer by receiving gold.

How very small a part coin forms of the real wealth of a country, may be further most strikingly exemplified in this way:—In the reign of the present king about 63,000,000 of guineas have been coined at the Mint. This, compared with other reigns, is a most liberal provision. In this space of time, however, the supplies raised upon the people, and constituting the public expenditure of the country, must have amounted to nearly 1,500,000,000*l.*, and the expenditure of individuals may be calculated at the enormous sum of 7,000,000,000*l.*

When, therefore, we compare these 63,000,000 of guineas to the aggregate property of the coun-

try, whatever may have been their use and convenience, as an instrument of circulation, their relative importance, as the criterion of wealth, must be acknowledged to be very small. But if all this evidence were withdrawn, it would even then be difficult to prove that the advance of price was occasioned by the depreciation of the paper currency, because our wealth may have been rapidly increasing, while our metallic currency was diminishing, which would still inevitably raise nominal prices. So far, indeed, is gold from being the necessary concomitant of wealth, that it is very possible that our wealth might be at the highest pitch, when there was not a guinea in the country. Our actual situation is, in some measure, an illustration of this position. When we contemplate the unexampled expense of this endless war; the facility with which the enormous amount of the taxes is collected; the luxury and affluence of private families; the sums that are given away for benevolent purposes at home; the subscriptions that are raised for the relief of our countrymen and allies abroad; the new roads and canals projected and carried into execution; the spacious squares and streets that are every year extending and embellishing the metropolis; the active spirit of improvement of every description that pervades the provincial districts; the useful

institutions for the promotion of the sciences and arts, and even for the instruction of the great mass of the people; the theatres, bridges, docks, and warehouses, that are, in all quarters, springing up;—these are, surely, no symptoms of declining prosperity and approaching bankruptcy. They must be considered, on the contrary, as unequivocal testimonies of overflowing resources. We thus, with a deficiency of coin, have a superabundance of wealth. To suppose that this wealth can be fictitious, is perfectly absurd. It would be supposing, that fictitious and real wealth, however nominally distinct, were essentially identified.

The solidity of the Bank, however, few have presumed to call in question. From its first establishment, it has been a flourishing institution; of infinite service to the support of individuals; and of essential benefit to the community at large. But if its concerns have been always prosperously managed, its wealth, within the last few years, must have enormously increased. Its annual commissions, as agent for transacting the money concerns of Government, may be estimated at 280,000*l.*; and the profits derived from the very enlarged extent of their discounts must be immense. These are certain sources of acquisition. The original capital of the Bank,

which was 1,200,000*l.*, was afterwards extended to 2,000,000*l.* For this sum the holders of Bank-stock are responsible. Their profits have enabled them to increase their dividends to 10 per cent., previously to which a bonus was occasionally paid to the proprietors; and, in spite of the doubts which have been so industriously propagated, every hundred pound stock still fetches in the market 240*l.*, which is an advance on the original price of 140 per cent. In addition to this, they have been enabled to accommodate Government, at different periods, with a loan of 18,000,000*l.* which, whenever their charter is allowed to expire, must be repaid. Their buildings, with the bullion and coin which they contain, must amount to many millions more, and their assets in floating capital must be to a very considerable amount. These are incontestable proofs of substantial prosperity, and are certainly competent to support an issue of 23,000,000*l.* of paper. When, therefore, people say, that Bank-notes are worth nothing, they make an idle assertion, which they are unable to support, even by a shadow of proof. If the credit of the Bank was never doubted when they issued specie, why should the restriction, which is a source of unfailing and enormous profit, create doubt now? They have, by this measure, escaped the necessity of

purchasing bullion, which was always attended with a heavy expense. They have, at the same time, been enabled to extend their discounts, in return for which they get substantial wealth, which, in some way or other, must furnish them with accumulated means of payment. How their property is invested, or under what particular forms it exists, I cannot pretend to say : but its existence is incontrovertible ! Under all these circumstances, it seems perfectly absurd to suppose, that they have not sufficient funds to answer for the amount of their paper.

In the absence of metallic currency, a paper circulation, from the facility with which it is created, is nevertheless very likely to be in excess ; and although I believe it to be in that state in this country, yet I very much question, if that character attaches to the paper issued by the Bank of England. I suspect that the Bank of England has, by refusing, for so long a time, to exchange their notes for coin, been the cause of excess in other quarters ; but, I am also of opinion, that, if circumstances would allow them again to issue gold and silver to the necessary amount, no material reduction of their paper would ensue. Nearly the whole of their present notes, after the first desire to get gold

had abated, would be absorbed by the increased wants and confidence of the public. The country banks, which have occasioned the greatest mischief, would be the greatest sufferers. Many of the minor ones would be completely put down, and a great part of the paper, issued by the most substantial, would be supplanted by a metallic representation. No one will, surely, put the responsibility of any of these banks in competition with that of the Bank of England; nor, indeed, need a stronger proof be required of the inadequacy of the notes of this great national establishment to afford the necessary supply, than the enormous number of private banks with which the provinces are over-run. It has been said, that the issue of the country banks is governed by that of the Bank of England; and that the power of changing the provincial paper into that of the national Bank, is a sufficient security against its excess. But when one considers, how easily these banks are established; the precarious foundation on which many of them stand; the artifices to which they resort to extend the circulation of their notes; and the facility with which they succeed; one is disposed to regard this assertion rather in the shape of conjecture than proof.

In the general investigation of this subject, our commerce and our currency have been too indiscriminately blended. Although connected to a certain degree, they are by no means so intimately dependent on each other as is generally imagined. Any sudden check or arrestation experienced by a commerce, extended as ours has been, through every ramification of civilized, and I had almost said of savage, society, must necessarily be productive of inconvenience, confusion, and loss. But these circumstances, though they may materially relax speculation, and occasion a certain stagnation of capital, would not, of themselves, drain us of our specie. What the advantages of our trade with foreign countries have been for the last few years, disguised and shackled as it is by freight, insurance, duties, and other charges, it is difficult, with any accuracy, to ascertain. From the documents laid before Parliament, it appears, however, that the balance between our exports and imports is still largely in our favour. But admitting that it has been against us to a considerable amount, it cannot have been sufficiently so, as to exhaust us completely of our coin. We should still have a long succession of prosperous years to bring to the credit of the account. This being admitted, we must look to more

ostensible causes for the disappearance of the precious metals.

This leads to an examination of a very important part of the question, by a moderate attention to which, much of the mystery, in which it has been involved, will disappear. That the real wealth of this country has, within the last twenty years, enormously increased, may be authenticated in so many various ways, that the fact admits not of controversy. Now, we all know, that it is the natural consequence of a great accession of wealth, not only to multiply the conveniences and luxuries of life, but to raise the nominal price of every article of consumption. If this latter effect have been much assisted by the duties imposed by Government, still the facility with which these duties are collected, affords a strong collateral evidence of the accumulation of the means of payment. But as wealth becomes more abundant, and every article, whether of luxury or necessity, becomes dearer, the wages of labour must also progressively keep pace. This must ever be the case, because, as any object of desire is rendered more common, and is distributed, to a larger amount, among a greater number of individuals, its value must, in general estimation, be proportionally

diminished. Of course it will purchase less, and every article of consumption, with which labour is connected, will inevitably be affected by the change. Still, if we trace things up to first principles, and estimate the quantity of provisions that may be procured for a day's or a week's labour, and compare the result with the same calculation at any antecedent period, we shall find, that the relations, generally speaking, are in our favour: and that, though the present prices are nominally much higher, the real prices have, on the whole, declined; that the comforts, which wealth commands, are in the hands of a greater proportion of the community; and that the situation of all classes has been ameliorated: in other words, that wealth has been lowered in price in a greater ratio than labour has risen. This is, certainly, no new observation, but it is still one, which, in a discussion of this kind, cannot be too distinctly stated. It is indeed a great fault in many of the publications on this subject, that the author has imagined that his reader was in possession of elementary principles, and, building on that presumption, has entered at once on the more abstract reasoning of which these simple truths are the index and foundation. The enlightened parts of society, and more especially those who turn

their thoughts to philosophical investigation, do not, certainly, stand in need of such guides; but on a topic of general interest and curiosity, there are thousands who are in this respect deficient, and to them chiefly are such works addressed. On questions of this nature, it is always better to be prolix, than to be obscure; to repeat, than not to be perspicuous. But if it be acknowledged, that this country has greatly advanced in wealth; that, in consequence of this augmentation of capital, money is cheaper, and labour dearer; the difficulty of accounting for the sudden disappearance of the precious metals is further increased. Under such circumstances, it cannot have been occasioned by any thing peculiarly unfavourable to the resources of this country. It must, therefore, have been caused by the general unsettled state of the world, or by the failure, in quantity, of the precious metals themselves. On this, I imagine, the problem principally hinges. I myself, indeed, have no doubt, and I shall presently produce my reasons for the opinion; that both gold and silver, but particularly the former, are absolutely scarcer, and are consequently more valuable, throughout Europe, than they were twenty years ago.

We will suppose, by way of illustration, that 200,000,000*l.* sterling, in the shape of gold and silver coin, of various standards and denominations, was, twenty years ago, distributed over the different European states, and that this aggregate sum was fully sufficient to answer all the purposes of domestic and foreign trade. We will also suppose, that the mines of Peru and the Brazils, together with the product of Africa, regularly replaced the deficiency which this sum sustained, from actual loss, wear and tear, gilding and plating, and the manufacture of watches, trinkets, snuff-boxes, and the great variety of vessels and utensils both for ornament and use. This statement, I fancy, approaches very near the fact, for a long succession of years; and, while the demand and supply were balanced in this way, it was not likely that any sensible alteration in the price would, in the aggregate, occur. If the precious metals rose in one country, they fell in another; and the wants and ingenuity of commercial men readily devised means of restoring the level. Such indeed was the easy and rapid communication throughout Europe, that nothing but a great increase of stock, occasioned by the discovery of fresh mines, or a great diminution, occasioned by the failure of the ordinary means of

supply, could produce, for any length of time, any material change in the value. Fifty or sixty years after the discovery of America, towards the close of the fifteenth century, the former effect was exemplified, from the vast accession of the precious metals which was poured into the different states of the old world. As they became more common, a proportionate advance in the price of all commodities rapidly absorbed their circulation. The latter effect is taking place now, and, from a defect of supply, the precious metals are becoming more rare, and the prices of all commodities, in the relation which they bear to gold and silver, are on the decline. To this scarcity the unsettled state of the continent has greatly contributed.

In the progress of the French revolution, we have seen all the commercial states of Europe, either disorganized or ruined, infected with the same disease, and a prey to the same confusion. We have seen them all driven from those avocations and pursuits, which were the sources of their prosperity and wealth. In times of such general incertitude and distress, whatever may be the experiments of ardent and aspiring minds, prudent men, of which the bulk of every society must ever consist, will not be induced to expose

to hazard what they think they can secure. They no longer speculate, they realize. Taking warning from the numerous examples of failure which, on every side, surround them, the spirit of commerce, which shuns restraint, and only spreads with celerity through an attenuated medium, loses its vigour. Alarm attends the hour of danger. Timidity and circumspection instantly clip the wings of enterprise; and property is converted into that form, under which it is most easily preserved. Instead of diffusing their wealth, they concentrate it; instead of circulating it, they withdraw it from circulation; instead of increasing the risk of its loss by exposing it to public view, they strive to secure its possession by concealment. In this manner, enormous sums, many of which will never reappear, have been secluded, and again deposited in the bowels of the earth; first in France, then in Holland, and, as the revolution proceeded on its march, in Switzerland, Germany, Poland, Portugal, and Spain. Even in these two last countries, which were formerly the grand emporiums of these commodities, which were the central point from which, like the radii of a circle, they diverged over Europe, the precious metals are no longer in abundance.

When we refer to natural causes, how indeed are we to expect that it can be otherwise?

France has a military strength, which the states of Europe have either wanted the courage, or the capacity, to resist. This fearful force is at the absolute disposal of a man, who devotes it to the perpetuation of his usurpations, and to the furtherance of an ambition, whose declared purpose is the subjugation of mankind. He comes as a destroyer, not as a benefactor. He fills his treasuries, not by the contributions of his happy subjects, but by the plunder of his oppressed slaves. His army, the constitution of which partakes of his nature, is the instrument that upholds him. To his army, therefore, is every thought devoted. Unable to support it by regular means, it is quartered on the comforts of mankind. Hence the contributions that are every where levied; hence the extortions, devastations, and barbarities, that are every where practised. Circumstanced as France is, and groaning under the weight of the most vexatious taxation, the imposts that are raised can be barely sufficient to administer to the wants of her internal economy. Her military establishment must, consequently, derive its subsistence from other sources. For these reasons it

has been converted into an association of robbers, of which the chief magistrate is himself the commander. They are a host of Vandalic free-booters, not an army of Christian soldiers. Wherever they march, they destroy. They plunder, not only the government, but the population; and what can be spared from the wants of his troops, or wrung from the cupidity of his generals, is transmitted to his own exchequer. This is the reason why France, while other countries have been left destitute, still continues to possess specie, a possession which is intimately connected with the vitality of her government. Paper, in the absence of specie, must be entirely dependent on public confidence. But under such a government as that of France, it is utterly impossible that public confidence can exist. If specie were to disappear, no authority would be able to maintain the credit of paper. It would inevitably experience its former fate. Buonaparte is aware of this, and provides accordingly. But to return to our original argument,

If a fourth part of the precious metals, which were formerly in circulation, be thus, by the fears of individuals, withdrawn, and deposited in places only known to themselves, and if the

mines of America continue to furnish no more than the usual supply, it is very clear, that there must be a deficit to the above specific amount. And as the value of articles of universal and constant demand must ever be regulated by their abundance or scarcity, if a fourth part disappear (it matters not in what way), the price, as the effects spread, will rise in that identical ratio. Although what is withdrawn, may be still in existence, and may, at some future period, be again produced, yet, while it is confined to a dormant state, it is exactly, as far as this question is concerned, as if it ceased to exist, and must be attended with similar results. When, however, in addition to all this, we extend our inquiries, and find that the actual quantity of gold sent to Europe, for the last three or four years, has been little more than one-fourth of the usual importation, the causes of its scarcity are sufficiently explained. If this point be admitted, the whole fabric of the reasoning adopted by the Bullionists falls to the ground, they having all along proceeded on the supposition that gold is as plentiful as ever.

While, however, France is in possession of specie, and we are, apparently, without it, it is no small consolation to reflect, that the presence

of gold and silver, or their absence, neither constitutes wealth on the one hand, nor poverty on the other. Gold and silver are, in fact, not absolutely wealth: they are only the medium through which we procure those objects, to which the definition of wealth, in its strict acceptance, appertains. Gold and silver are raw commodities, which, from certain qualities they possess, have, by the general assent of mankind, been admitted as the measure of wealth. Their value is, therefore, conventional. They are neither abstractedly, nor positively, so useful as iron. Like other articles, they are bartered against equivalents. Gold no more purchases cloth, than cloth purchases gold. Gold is, therefore, no more wealth than cloth. From a general misconception of this simple elementary distinction, there has been a strange confusion of terms. However desirous, therefore, a portion of the precious metals may be, a superabundance of them is a misfortune; and we have only to refer to the well-known history of Spain, to be convinced, that, instead of being a proof of wealth, it is often a cause of poverty.

Spain, which was, till lately, the great reservoir that fed, through innumerable channels, all the countries of the old world with a supply of

the precious metals, was, from the time she devoted her attention to her American mines, in a state of progressive impoverishment. From the æra of her mining prosperity may be dated her political decay. The sun of her glory, from that epoch, began to decline from its meridian altitude. Activity became nerveless ; idleness supplanted industry ; and agriculture was abandoned for gold. The system of mining produced in Spain the same effect on the body politic, as vicious luxury produces on the natural body. Redundancy of nourishment induced indolence and debility, till at length the vital functions were completely paralyzed. National wealth, and with it, liberty, virtue, manliness, vigour, and knowledge, flow from purer sources. They do not depend on accumulated masses of brute matter. They spring from the inherent properties, the elastic energy and ingenuity of the human mind ; from liberal and enlightened thought ; from impartial laws, and a free constitution ; from the virtues of a people, and the spirit by which they are animated. Gold, from its nature, if circulated, or used in any other way, wastes. It is, consequently, in some degree, continually falling off in value, and cannot, in itself, be the cause of increasing wealth. Ingenuity, industry, and labour, are, on the con-

trary, reproductive to a greater or more valuable amount; and to their efforts must wealth be ultimately referred. If a guinea be thrown into circulation, it every year becomes lighter from mere friction, and, in the revolution of many years, it would wear out. But if I sow a bushel of wheat, in the course of one year, it may multiply an hundred fold; and, in the course of twenty years, it might feed a nation.

It is absurd, therefore, to suppose, that because France has specie, and we are, or appear to be, without it, that France is rich, and we are poor. France, as I before observed, must have specie, because she is without credit. If she purchase it, she must pay for it a price fully adequate to its value. If she rob it, which, by the by, is her chief mode of acquirement, she procures it, in my estimation, at a rate infinitely more exorbitant. Plunder and violence may appear to power to be a ready and cheap mode of acquisition; but despotism is the worst purveyor that avarice can select. Its very exactions dry up the sources of supply. Insecurity of property strikes immediately at the root of permanent prosperity, by confining the efforts of industry to the necessities of subsistence. In the government of nations, as well

as in the conduct of individuals, we must attend to moral causes ; and no system of manifest injustice and cruelty can be successfully enforced.

If gold were, in reality, much cheaper in France, or in other parts of the Continent, than in this country, in spite of exchanges or restrictions, it would, to a certainty, by some means, find its way hither. It might pass through many circumvolutions ; but to this country it would finally come. In the precious metals, a greater value lies in a smaller compass than in any other article of general use. They can consequently be transported from one place to another with greater facility, and with less liability to detection. In France, it is difficult to ascertain the exact value of gold ; but it is not, apparently, more abundant than formerly. Payments are still made by the bankers in silver, and an agio is still given for gold. Gold at Hamburgh, according to the present rate of exchange, is worth 5*l.* 12*s.* and silver is at 7*s.* 3*d.* per ounce. The circumstance of its dearness and scarcity on the Continent is further authenticated, by the total disappearance of our coin as fast as it is received. In former times it used to return. The large amount of British guineas which had been sent to America during the war,

came back shortly after the cessation of hostilities ; but what has been sent to the Continent, within the last few years, has been consumed by current wants.

The amount of gold annually imported into Europe from the other three quarters of the globe, generally amounted, on an average, to about 2,000,000*l.* sterling *. Of this sum, the Brazil mines, which are now no longer worked, yielded nearly a half. Till the year 1780, the importation of gold was about equal to its consumption. From that date, there has been a gradual defalcation ; and towards 1790, the scarcity began to be apparent. Many causes, as I have before stated, have since co-operated to increase the deficiency. Within the last ten years we have exported, according to regular entries, 275,930 ounces of gold, and 37,000,000 ounces of silver. A very large additional sum must be put to the account of clandestine shipments. In the article of watches alone, the whole importation of gold, for the last few years, has been nearly consumed. An equal quantity has been converted into articles of luxury and ornament, by goldsmiths, gilders, and other mechanics. No one can look at the

* See Statement of the Trade in Gold Bullion, by John Theodore Koster, Esq.

dress of a modern beau, and reckon up his chains, and seals, and rings, and snuff-boxes, without being satisfied that this must be the case. Our great foreign expenditure, occasioned by the war which we are carrying on in Spain and Portugal, and the large purchases which we have been obliged to make in grain, have, at the same time, combined to drain us of our specie. For the article of corn alone, the country paid last year 7,000,000*l.* of money; and the amount of our expenditure for our army in the Peninsula, was about 10,000,000*l.* more, independently of nearly 5,000,000*l.* for foreign freightage; making an aggregate sum of 23,000,000*l.* sterling. This enormous amount might, I think, under wholesome regulations, have been materially reduced. The produce of grain must depend on internal management; but surely a great part of the expense incurred by the transmission of specie to Portugal and Spain might, by a proper arrangement with those powers, be spared. It seems strange, that the money required for the pay and support of our troops, who are fighting in behalf of these countries, cannot be procured directly from the colonies in which it is produced, by which a great part of the freight, insurance, commission, and other charges, would be avoided.

After, however, the statement of all these causes of the scarcity of gold, we need no longer be surprised at its disappearance from circulation, and at its consequent high price.

I have already said, that it appears to me, that neither the state of our trade, nor the rate of exchange, operates, by any means, so powerfully as is generally imagined. Exchange has been a handle made use of to perplex the subject, and it must be allowed to be a convenient weapon for the purpose; for, however simple in its principle, its operation is extremely complicated. If, for example, a merchant in America has a debt due to him from a merchant in London, and is himself indebted, to the same amount, to a merchant in Liverpool, it would naturally occur to him, that, by a transfer to his correspondent in Liverpool of what was owing to him by his correspondent in London, the claims of all parties would be satisfied, and the expense, trouble, and loss of time, attending a transmission of the money, first from London to America, and then from America to Liverpool, would be avoided. This is exchange; and, from its obviousness and simplicity, must have been one of the earliest discoveries in modern commerce. But, manifest as the ope-

ration is, in an instance such as I have quoted, when we come to pursue it through the innumerable channels which the multiplied connexions among individuals of all countries have explored, and the endless variety of causes, political and private, by which it may be affected, it must be admitted to be one of those subjects that most easily eludes satisfactory investigation.

But, however complicated in its modifications the system of exchange may be, there can be no doubt of its being regulated, in a great degree, by the state of commerce. At the same time, to every one who can trace effects to causes, it must be evident, that it is frequently liable to fluctuations, which are totally unconnected with the price of bullion. It is admitted, on all hands, that a high or low exchange principally depends on the proportion which exports and imports bear to each other; that, when there is a balance to be paid by one country to another, and a difficulty of procuring bills, the exchange will rise, and, under opposite circumstances, will fall. Political events may also produce a favourable or unfavourable sensation. It must also be granted, that a balance being due from one country to an-

other, if bills are not to be procured, the debt must be discharged in bullion. But, though the price of gold may thus be frequently influenced by the rate of exchange, it is very far from being under its supreme and exclusive control.

We shall find, that the course of exchange much more invariably follows the price of corn: and that one of the principal causes of the unfavourable state of the exchange, in most parts of Europe, is to be traced to our enormous importations of that necessary article. In the course of the last year, 2,000,000 quarters of grain were imported into this country. For fourteen years previously to 1797, the average price of wheat was 47*s.* 3½*d.* per quarter, and of bread 7½*d.* the quartern loaf: for the fourteen subsequent years, the average price of wheat has been 70*s.* and of bread 1*s.* 0¼*d.* The exportation price of corn, which was formerly 54*s.* is now 66*s.* It is, also, during the last fourteen or sixteen years, that the great advance has taken place in the price of most other commodities. For the 150 preceding years there had been very little variation. But this advance is not confined to us—it more or less pervades every other country. That the ex-

change has been influenced, and with the exchange the price of bullion, by the importation of grain, the following facts will further illustrate.

When our crops failed in 1800 and 1801, bullion suddenly rose; and the exchange with Hamburgh, which, in January 1799, was at 37*s.* 6*d.* fell, in January 1800, to 31*s.* 7*d.* and, in 1801, was further depressed to 29*s.* 8*d.*; making, on the whole, a variation of 22 per cent. Wheat, which, at the average price, had been, in 1798, at 50*s.* 3*d.* and, in 1799, at 67*s.* 5*d.* had advanced, during the two years of scarcity, to 113*s.* 7*d.* and 118*s.* 3*d.* In 1802, it again fell to 67*s.* 5*d.* and the exchange with Hamburgh again kept pace. In proportion as grain fell, the exchange rose in January 1802 to 32*s.* 2*d.* and, in December of the same year, to 34*s.* It thus appears, that grain and gold, and exchange, are intimately connected with each other. Foreign expenditure, and purchases of wheat, have nearly the same effect,

But however these objects may be connected, and may have operated on each other, the issue of Bank-notes is not subject to the same laws.

Of our exchange with foreign states, it seems to be quite independent: it is an insulated operation, productive of no sensible variation. This will be made fully apparent by a reference to the following facts.

When the Bank restriction first took place in the year 1797, the amount of their promissory notes in circulation was 8,500,000. To supply the deficit of metallic currency, which was the immediate consequence of the restriction, 5,000,000 additional notes were sent forth. The exchange of Hamburgh, which was then the barometer of all the continental exchanges, rose about that time, and continued rising throughout the year, and for nearly two years after. In the two following years it experienced a considerable depression; but from causes totally unconnected with the Bank of England, and which have been already explained. In 1803, 4,500,000*l.* making the whole amount 18,000,000*l.* was added to the Bank circulation; yet, for that year and the five following years, till toward the close of 1798, the exchange was, on the whole, gradually improving. Since then, it has experienced a deterioration, which has continued to the present time. It thus appears, that the exchange has risen with

an increased issue, and fallen with a diminished issue; from which if any inference is to be drawn, it will be in favour of the Bank. But I imagine that we shall be nearer the truth, by attributing to Bank-notes no influence whatever, either one way or the other.

It has been assumed as an unerring principle, that the legitimate depression of the exchange is limited by the expense of the transmission of specie. In ordinary times this may be a correct proposition; but, in the actual state of the world, it is far from being confined to so exclusive an operation. The great and increasing decline of the exchange with the continent, for the last two or three years, is to be accounted for on other principles. Commerce, which was formerly free, has been completely interrupted in its course, and fettered by restraints and impediments, which, till lately, never entered into the conception of the human mind. A few years back, it was governed by certain positive rules, which were within the reach of every one's comprehension, as they spontaneously arose out of the unrestrained communication and correspondence which associated the mercantile world. But now, every thing is reversed. Every shipment must be concealed; and a bill or a letter, instead

of being conveyed by a direct channel, must pass through numberless hands, and travel, clandestinely, over a wide and tortuous tract, before it arrives at its destination. Of course, time is lost, markets are missed, and heavy expenses are incurred.

I have been led into the examination of this question, and the numerous details connected with it, far beyond my original design. But, having taken a different view of it from other writers; as I proceeded, I found fresh arguments present themselves, which I was unwilling to reject. Its importance all acknowledge; and although it has called forth a greater mass of elaborate disquisition than any subject that has, for many years, engaged public attention, it is not yet either exhausted, or divested of its interest. While it remains in its present state, it must continue to call forth investigation, because the evil, whatever the sum of it may be, is still to be corrected.

But it is far less difficult to ascertain the amount of the evil, than to discover the mode of getting rid of it. Whatever measure may be finally adopted, it cannot be too seriously deliberated on beforehand. This is a case from

which all rash speculation must be dismissed, and in which we must not allow ourselves to indulge in fanciful experiment for the chance of remote discovery. We must not travel in the dark. We must plainly see our way as we go along. The resolutions recommended by the Bullion Committee, I cannot approve of; for, however theoretically plausible, they are practically bad. Besides being the occasion of great individual distress, they would, at once, throw into confusion the whole financial system of the country. Whether that system be beneficial or injurious I shall not discuss; but, after having been persisted in so long, it is very clear that it cannot, without considerable risk, be suddenly deserted. Any changes, to be brought about advantageously, must be cautiously introduced. The dashing plans of wild projectors will never answer. The debate on the Bullion Report has, however, been productive of much good. It has thrown a considerable body of new and satisfactory light on the subject. It has also, in great measure, tranquillized the public mind; and the panic, which had been stirred up by the bold assertions of individuals, is beginning to subside. The Bank has again declared that they are ready to reissue specie, if Parliament will consent to remove the restriction. Their issues, however, would avail little towards

reducing the market price of gold to the Mint price. The wants of the continent would completely counteract that tendency, and, in the course of a few months, in spite of all law, temptation would prevail, and gold would again disappear. As far, indeed, as the circulation of coin is concerned, I do not conceive that any benefit would result from legislative interference. If, as to my apprehension is clearly the case, gold be substantially scarcer, and intrinsically dearer than it was; were we to compel the Bank to issue it to ever so large an amount, it would, to a certainty, vanish. Thus circumstanced, a great point would be gained if we could hit on any rule of measuring its real value, and of proving the accuracy of that measure to the satisfaction of the public. I know of no mode so likely to ensure this desirable end, as the annulment, for the present, of all our restraining laws, and allowing gold and silver to pass at the market price. This would be sure to bring all the gold and silver, that is in the country, into immediate circulation, without exposing it to the risk of exportation. There might be great fluctuations in the price at first; but it would, in the course of a few months, find its natural level, and arrive at a steady and fixed rate. According to this rate, the necessary alterations in the standard of our coin

might be regulated. I am aware that this is a delicate subject to touch on; and impressed, as I am, with all its importance, I speak with great diffidence, and throw out these hints rather as subjects for deliberation, than rules of practice.

Great as the difficulties and obstructions are, with which Buonaparte has, by his unnatural and barbarous decrees, encumbered commerce, I nevertheless survey his continental system, as he calls it, not only with complacency, but with satisfaction. It unmasks him to the observation of the mechanic as well as the philosopher and statesman. It spreads, through every hamlet of Europe, the infamy and the odium of his name, and must essentially weaken that stupid and abject devotion, which has so long been offered up to propitiate the clemency of this merciless despot. I cannot help regarding it as a conquest which we are, by slow but sure steps, obtaining over him; and which, if we have patience, must be attended with the most beneficial results. If we gain a signal victory by land or by sea, it cannot be acquired without partial loss to ourselves. Ships are damaged and sunk, officers and men are wounded or killed, and individuals have to mourn over re-

latives and friends whom all would wish to preserve. But still if our enemy suffer to a far greater extent, a political advantage is derived from the contest, and the nation has cause to rejoice. So it is, in my estimation, with the present state of commerce. What is a confined and supportable evil here, is, on the continent, a dreadful and universal affliction. Our trade may be circumscribed, but that of the continent is annihilated; and those oppressive and insane regulations, which Buonaparte is every where so anxious to enforce, must eventually recoil on his own head, and as essentially contribute to reduce his power, as the defeat of his armies and fleets. Interrupted and molested as our trade has of late years been, by these arbitrary restraints, it must still be considered in a flourishing state. Every thing is comparative; and certainly, with reference to what it was in time of peace, and to what it would be, were peace to return, it is on a most extended scale. If we go back to the year 1792, we find our exports limited to 24,905,200. In 1793 they amounted to 30,518,913, and, in 1800, to 50,801,763 official value, which in real value may be estimated as high as 63,000,000. The official value of the exports in 1810 was 45,800,000, and of our imports 33,100,000, leaving a ba-

lance in our favour of 12,700,000. I am aware that the amount of our exports has been greatly aided by duties and foreign expenditure; but still, with all these drawbacks, there are much stronger grounds for congratulation than complaint.

The permanent and substantial sources of our commercial prosperity are, fortunately, beyond the reach of Buonaparte's malevolence or control. Our internal trade, which is fed by the solid wealth of the country, and on which our chief dependence must ever be placed, no efforts of his can limit or injure. To this abundant and perennial source, we have to add our trade to the East Indies, to our numerous colonies in the West, and to our possessions in North America. Our trade with Turkey is still successfully pursued; and, though our relations with the United States and with the continent of Europe are very much confined, the whole continent of South America is thrown open to British enterprise. If governments choose to impose fetters on their own trade, we must also suffer in our commercial intercourse with them; but slight and trivial must be our sufferings to theirs. However inconvenient to us, they must, if persevered in, be eventually ruinous to them.

But this atrocious system cannot long endure. Human nature cannot be long passive under the privation of pursuits, from which not only their comforts but their subsistence is derived. A country may be completely exhausted; but, as long as wealth remains, it will contrive to procure what appetite covets. The chief weight of Buonaparte's prohibitory decrees is felt by those who are under the immediate impulse and weight of his despotism. What must be the sufferings of the old commercial states of Europe; of Holland and France particularly, which, formerly, rivalled us in the extent and magnitude of their dealings; of the Italian states, of Hamburgh, and other parts of Germany? What commerce still exists in the world is almost entirely in our hands, into which it has been consigned, partly by our own exertions, and partly by the ill-directed views of the continental tyrant, who has completely extinguished every hope of competition.

Nothing can exhibit more forcibly the total dominion which a blind and outrageous passion has assumed over the plainest dictates of justice and policy, than the unexampled absurdity of the French commercial code. That politician may be said to act with judgment, who, at the

expense of a trifling inconvenience to the people whom he governs, inflicts on his enemy a severe and durable evil. But what are we to think, either of the wisdom or the humanity of that man, who, in obedience to a mean and pitiful revenge, regulates himself by the reverse of the proposition, and, in order to visit on his adversary a slight misfortune, exposes his own people to the most disastrous calamities? Such, however, is the rule by which this ferocious usurper, in his commercial ordinances, is guided. He makes his enemy suffer through the medium of the augmented sufferings of his friends; and, to ensure our partial punishment, he condemns his own subjects to a ten times heavier penalty. In order to exclude us from a branch of commerce which we can, without any very serious injury, forego, he excludes France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and Italy, from all commerce whatever. That he may have the gratification of wounding us slightly, he inflicts on them a mortal blow. But such are the unnatural passions and appetites of this monster! So long as he can pamper his revenge, he cares not in what way; and whether a single individual suffer in a slight degree, or millions of human beings are torn from every comfort of existence; are events

which are surveyed by him with equal indifference.

Holland is, by nature, a commercial country: From commerce all her greatness was derived. It was the field in which she reaped both her prosperity and her glory. It was by her commercial industry, that she multiplied the means of subsistence, and acquired a population which her natural territory was unable to support. Hence arose the proud monuments of her ingenuity and labour. What Nature did not voluntarily grant, she conquered from Nature, and extended her territorial empire, by encroaching on the dominion of another element. The land, which now supports a multitude of people, and on which many of her most splendid cities stand, has been gained from the sea, and has been, for centuries, defended from its ravages, by ramparts which are among the noblest proofs of the enterprise and perseverance of man. Under the old government, the preservation of these dykes was an unceasing object of attention, and immense sums were annually expended on their reparation. In consequence of the restraints that have been imposed on trade, and the enormous taxes and contributions that have been levied, these sums have long ceased

to be applied to such beneficial purposes, and little or nothing has, for many years past, been appropriated to their maintenance. They are consequently falling rapidly to decay; and the time is, possibly, not very remote, when towns and inhabitants will be swallowed up, and the ocean will resume its empire. Through all this scene of misery, one can however easily trace the leading motive by which Buonaparte is actuated. He wishes to crush commerce as he wishes to crush science, because he knows that commerce and freedom are natural associates; that commerce leagues nations together; that it generates sympathies; that it imparts activity to every source of information; and, above all, because he knows, that it ever engenders a spirit of obstinate attachment to civil and municipal rights, and a steady and resolute resistance to the encroachments of arbitrary sway. On these accounts has he determined on the destruction of the Dutch. He is well read in their former history, and is fearful that a Prince of Orange may again arise. His ultimate intention is, possibly, to remove the population of Holland to the Low Countries, and to make that ancient possession of the House of Lorraine the boundary, in that quarter, of his modern empire.

How the Dutch, bending as they have done under the burden and ignominy of a foreign yoke, and contemplating as they must do, in no very distant perspective, the total ruin of their population, and the very extinction of their natal soil, can continue to linger in tame and abject submission, is quite astonishing. I know that the military force which oppresses them is powerful. I am also aware of the difficulty of concerting any hostile plan, unobserved by the vigilance which watches them. I can imagine the dread of domestic traitors and spies, and the horrors of domiciliary intrusion. But I should still conceive, that, to gain relief from such oppression, one common acclamation would sound through the land invoking to arms, and one common impulse, provoked by an exasperation that could no longer be repelled, would rouse to vengeance. Does not every manly and honourable mind feel, that there are conditions of existence, to which death is preferable; and that the disgrace of chains is still more intolerable than their confinement? The Dutch, probably, are watching, in sullen inactivity, for the auspicious moment of success. It is impossible to bring to mind their former achievements; their remarkable aptitude both for the cabinet and the field; their brilliant feats

in arms terminated by successful negotiation; and to conceive, that the lofty and ardent spirit which animated them to the performance of such heroic efforts, can be totally extinguished. It can never be. The day of retribution may be deferred; but it must arrive; and, when it does come, dreadful will be its visitation. In other countries the same disposition, repressed by the same fears, must be supposed to exist, and, in proportion as it is compressed within a narrow compass, will its explosion be destructive. It is a conviction of the existence of this sentiment, that alone feeds the hope, that Europe may yet accomplish its deliverance.

Under these circumstances, so far from repining at the inconveniences to which we are exposed, we ought, by a voluntary abstinence, to exert every nerve, to make our enemy feel the pressure. On these principles alone should our commerce be regulated. Instead of encouraging those indulgences, which, by affording a few facilities to ourselves, impart to our enemy advantages in a tenfold proportion, we should sternly reject them, and let him feel the full reaction of his own violence. I allude particularly to the trade which is carried on through the medium of licenses. They were resorted to,

in the expectation of counteracting Buonaparte's prohibitory decrees ; but, having failed in their object, they should be instantly abandoned. They have been granted with a carelessness, and a want of inquiry and discrimination, which, I am satisfied, have been highly injurious to the best interests of the country. The whole system is indeed bad, and unworthy of our character. The object being concealment, the foundation is deceit ; and, from the ambiguous terms in which the documents are made out, it is scarcely possible that the real destination of any foreign ship, or the real owner of any foreign cargo, can be detected. Vessels, provided with these licenses, are not bound to put themselves under convoy till they arrive on our coast, which enables them to elude the vigilance of our cruizers, and to furnish the enemy with his necessary supplies at the smallest possible risk. So far, therefore, from their being the means of increasing our exports, or of establishing any thing like a reciprocity of commercial intercourse, their principal effect is to protect the enemy's property from capture, and to enable him to carry on with security, and almost without molestation, a most beneficial and lucrative traffic*. It is to be hoped, that

* See a very judicious pamphlet, chiefly on this subject, entitled,

this evil will be instantly corrected, and that, if we consent to receive the produce of an enemy's country, an equal quantity of our own shall be taken in return.

There are still articles of necessity, some of which we do not produce at all, and others not in sufficient quantity to meet our wants. These we must, consequently, import from foreign parts. Among the latter, that of the greatest importance is grain, which, for many years past, has fallen far short, even in productive seasons, of our consumption. Corn, as we have seen, was, in the course of the last year, imported to an enormous amount. Now, as we were formerly exporters of corn, this circumstance must be regarded as a proof of one of two things—either that the land employed in tillage has been very much reduced in quantity, or that the population has enormously increased. The insufficiency is, I imagine, to be attributed in part to both these causes. As long as the means of subsistence are to be procured, the natural tendency of population to increase is not likely to be checked; and the

entitled, "An Inquiry into the State of our commercial Relations with the Northern Powers, &c."

wealth of the country ensuring a supply of its wants from other quarters, the Government has not been sufficiently solicitous to enable it to support itself. Immense tracts of land have, no doubt, within the last twenty years, as the bills of inclosure demonstrate, been brought into cultivation; yet I question, if the average quantity of corn has been much increased. From the growing opulence and luxury of the times, all classes of people live in a more expensive manner. The farmer and tradesman, who used to practise economy, can now afford to keep a sumptuous table; and even many of those, who were once satisfied with wheaten bread and vegetables, with an occasional slice of bacon, are now regaled every day with butcher's meat. Hence has arisen the profitable avocation of a grazier; and thousands of acres, which were formerly turned up by the plough, are now laid down in pasturages, to feed and fatten oxen and sheep. But, however profitable this alteration in the distribution of land may be to particular individuals, it is far from being the most beneficial for the state. 'A given quantity of grass-land will,' by no means, support so great a number of people as the same quantity of land in tillage; and it should be the object of Government to stimulate and encou-

rage, by every incentive in their power, the labours of the husbandman. At all events, should we endeavour completely to shake off dependence on France. In this view, the deficiency at home, under wise regulations, might, in great measure, be supplied by importations from our own colonies. Our provinces in North America yield excellent wheat; and, if agriculture were properly patronized and understood, vast tracts of excellent land, now totally unproductive, might be brought into cultivation, and converted into one of the finest granaries upon earth. To that quarter we might also look, in the course of a few years, for an adequate supply of hemp and timber, and thus render ourselves independent of the Baltic.

Events are, at length, daily occurring, which clearly show, how easily the inroads of the French might have been arrested in the outset, had a feeling of honest zeal and manly spirit been any where displayed. People may exalt, as they will, the talents of Buonaparte. But to those opinions I never will defer; because, in every action of his life, I see more of fortune than of merit; and I discover all the baseness, but none of the magnanimity, of the human soul. Buonaparte's success, throughout his

career, is far less attributable to the ascendancy of his own genius, than to the total absence, both of talent and honesty, for which his opponents have been conspicuous. He has, in every instance, owed his success, either to those crimes which our nature abhors, or to those arts to which a generous mind would scorn to stoop. Cunning, circumvention, bribery, corruption, that kind of mute intimidation, which is engendered and kept alive by an unrestrained commission of the most atrocious enormities: these have been the steps by which he has ascended to his present eminence. When I allege this, I can conscientiously avow, that it proceeds from no desire to detract from Buonaparte's celebrity, because I contemplate in him the bitterest enemy of my country. Would that he were as entitled to praise, as he is deserving of execration! The peace and happiness of the world would then be near at hand. But this is a fruitless wish. Every action of his life testifies the incorrigible infamy and atrocity of his character. In domestic and in public conduct, he is equally abandoned.

When he was first jerked into power, by one of those convulsive freaks which fortune, now and then, exhibits, for mankind to gaze at, every

thing was already prepared to promote and accelerate his design. The revolution was in its full swing. It required no auxiliary force to propel it. Its momentum had been received, and an inherent principle of activity pressed it forward. Buonaparte had only to watch, and to take advantage of events as they arose. The population of France had been already reduced to ruin. He had a nation of military paupers at his disposal, without religion or morality, ripe for every species of iniquity, and panting for plunder and blood. All that he had to do, was to give a direction to the stream, which, wherever it was turned, was calculated to commit the most disastrous ravages. Such was its pestilential character, that it not only destroyed the wealth and fertility of a country, but swept away every vestige of its courage and virtue. The resistance which was opposed to it partook of the moral apathy and degradation which, in all quarters, prevailed. It was vapid and inert, kindled by no generous interest, cherished by no lofty sentiment; faint and insincere in its outset; in its termination prostrate and base. The soldiers slack in zeal; the generals corrupt in principle; by turns suspecting and betraying each other; what was to be looked for, but the consequences which ensued? The armies were vanquished before they were attacked. Their

fears anticipated what their conduct completed. Their hearts were not in the cause: they fled before the battle was begun. Are we then bound to insist, that it requires transcendent talents to obtain such victories; to overpower men who are parties against the cause which they are nominally espousing? Was it by such actions that Cæsar or Marlborough acquired renown? That such, however, was not the case, it is in vain to contend. Every campaign has added a fresh verification of the fact. Had it been otherwise, could an empire have been won by a battle? Had Austria been true to herself, would the standard of the Corsican have been planted on the ramparts of Vienna, and Francis been reduced to the humiliation of abandoning his daughter to the adulterous embraces of a successful adventurer*? Had Prussia been true to herself, could her colossal military strength have been annihilated at a blow? Could

* In speaking of Austria, I allude entirely to the want of zeal among the people. The only true devotion that was shown, was by the generous Tyrolese, who have most signally suffered for their attachment. Had the same patriotic feeling spread through other districts, the throne of Francis would have been still entire. Errors were committed by the government, but its integrity was never suspected; and the members of the Imperial family, except in two acts, have, throughout their lamented misfortunes, displayed a constancy and dignity every way worthy of their illustrious descent.

her armies have been circumvented; her territory over-run; and the strongest fortresses in Europe, competently garrisoned, and amply provisioned, have surrendered, on the first summons, without firing a shot? Is there any parallel to such events in the history of the world? The case is as evident as noon-day. All was previously arranged. Buonaparte knew, before he embarked in the cause, the issue of the contest. Gold had penetrated through every avenue; the state was rotten to the very core; treachery, disaffection, and cowardice, were in every quarter. Holland, Switzerland, and Italy, fell nearly in the same way. Disunion, suspicion, mutual jealousies, indifference to the constituted authorities, unnerved every energy that was calculated to defend them, and delivered them up to the most implacable tyrant that ever preyed upon the rights of mankind. How different would have been their fate had their conduct been worthy of their former fame, or their zeal proportioned to the value of the stake which was intrusted to their custody, the events of the present times are daily revealing. The example which this country has all along held out, other states are at length beginning to profit by; and if once the sentiment be properly diffused, the downfall of the Corsican is ensured. We have a right to calculate

on this result, because, in every instance in which the energy of public spirit has displayed itself, his speed has been arrested, his fame has dwindled, his laurels have withered. The recent occurrences in Spain have dissolved the spell which so long darkened both the mental and corporeal sight. Men have, at length, discerned, that the cause of their defeat did not proceed from any invincible quality belonging to the soldiery of France; but from their own timidity and inaction. If troops run away, it is an easy matter to pursue them. But under such circumstances, whatever disgrace may belong to the fugitives, the glory to which the victors have a claim must be evanescent. Glory is the trophy which the brave earn from the brave: it is the result of long-disputed superiority: it is the recompense that crowns successful exertion after valorous and powerful contention.

The only true resistance, with which Buona-
parte has come in contact on the continent of
Europe, has arisen in Portugal and Spain. Both
these kingdoms, by the exertions which they
have made, have furnished to other countries a
noble precedent, and have gloriously distinguished
themselves from the rest of the European
states, What has already happened in the Penin-
gula has tended, more forcibly than any other

event in the war, to develope the true character both of Buonaparte and his troops, and has afforded to the whole world the means of forming a pretty accurate estimate of his strength. It has also evinced, that he is very far from being endowed with that degree of political sagacity and foresight, which his admirers are constantly setting forth. Three years ago, he was in alliance with Spain, and, availing himself of his political ascendancy, he treated her with the contempt and cruelty which he has ever shown to every other political connexion. Spain was overawed; she crouched at his feet; and tamely surrendered into his hands the administration of her resources. In possession of the power, he employed it in a manner in all respects congenial to the profligacy of his nature. Meditating the plan which he afterwards executed, he made the government the instrument of its own degradation and destruction. The treasure, as it arrived from America, was instantly forwarded to the exchequer of France: not even enough was suffered to be retained, to defray the ordinary and current expenses of the executive power. But this was not all. By degrees, and under different pretences, he withdrew from Spain her native defenders, and supplanted them by his own buccaneers; and, when he had kidnapped the royal family, he promulgated his

usurpation. If consummate villany, scheming and undermining in secret, till the peril of declaration is apparently removed; if the most malignant perfidy, concealed by the basest affectation of friendship, be entitled to praise, to Buonaparte that praise is certainly due. But, like many another traitor, he has, in this instance, been ensnared by his own toils, and overreached by his own artifices. With all his dissimulation and wariness, he did not foresee the perils with which this diabolical plot was pregnant. He imagined, that all popular feeling had evaporated; that all national attachment was extinct; and that he might trample with impunity on the liberties, the laws, the habits, and the religion of the people. He imagined, that he had secured the unmolested possession of the Spanish monarchy. His personal presence was a proof that he conceived all opposition unavailing. But the Spaniards, although taken by surprise, and equally confounded at the impudence and atrocity of the transaction, soon began to muster their strength, and to manifest symptoms of resentment. They were instantly denounced as rebels, and threatened with all the penalties which this breach of allegiance deserved. Proscription, confiscation, imprisonment, torture, and death, were in all quarters busily employed. But Spain was not to be intimidated.

She resisted, and will be saved. The few Spanish troops that remained, although aided by the militia and peasantry of the country, did not, at first, assume a very formidable aspect. But the French had soon a British force to contend with, which although afterwards, from adverse circumstances, compelled to evacuate the country, left behind them a splendid memorial of their fame. Even in their retreat, surrounded as they were, on every side, by the treachery of foes, and unaided by the assistance of friends; exposed to every description of hardship and privation; without provisions, without shoes, without information, they never, for a moment, failed to command the respect of their adversaries. Wherever they fought, they conquered. Buonaparte himself, at one time, was affecting to pursue them; but when he, unexpectedly, discovered that he was so near them, that a part of his own guard, in an affair of cavalry, fell into their hands, he thought it prudent to halt. The event which occurred in Egypt, no doubt, at that moment rushed on his mind, and suggested to him the expediency of discretion. He had no objection to follow at a distance; but close quarters he was studious to avoid. The battle of Corunna was the last achievement of this gallant army, a battle which proclaimed to the whole world, and particularly to France, the

superior prowess of British troops, and afforded Buonaparte ample reason to applaud the caution which he had, a few days before, observed. Unfortunate as this campaign was in its issue, it was, nevertheless, attended with this beneficial effect. It gave the Spaniards time to look around; to rally their broken spirits; to concert future plans of operation; and infused into their harassed breasts a portion of British perseverance and valour. A sudden light seemed to burst upon their perceptions, and to warm their hearts. The animating example which we had set, became an object of earnest emulation, and the spark of enthusiasm kindled into a flame. They began to discover that they were a people endowed with the means of defence; and that God had given them a country which was worth defending. The impulse once given, its efficacy was simultaneously proved. They felt that national independence was one of the most fruitful sources of national glory; and that, of all foreign dominations, that of France was most to be dreaded and abhorred. What has been the result of this popular inspiration? A vigour and devotion prophetic of final success. Buonaparte, instead of at once accomplishing his nefarious purpose, has been wasting his resources, and tarnishing his reputation, in the disastrous struggles of desultory warfare. After the multiplied efforts of three years, we find

himself in possession of the country than he was three months after his first entrance. We find, that the Spaniards are daily increasing in strength, in confidence, and skill, while the French are dwindling in numbers and renown, and brousing on the unprofitable productions of a blighted harvest. The atrocity and barbarity of their crimes is, at the same time, extending the degree of execration with which they are universally regarded. Their barbarity kindles resentment without exciting intimidation; and, in spite of their numerous legions, they can only hold in obedience the ground which they occupy. Without a civil government, the chain of communication is every where broken, and their possession is purely military. The hatred and resentment of the population they are unable to eradicate. The moment they change their quarters, the Spaniards are again in arms, harassing them on every side, and thinning their ranks by individual slaughter. Every day their views become more dreary, and their success more hazardous. Does not all this unfold to other parts of Europe a most consoling prospect? Does it not present to its overshadowed destiny the dawn of a brighter sky? Does it not afford a glimmering of hope on which they may fondly fasten? Does it not declare to them the means

by which their thralldom may be dissolved, and their emancipation ensured? Does it not point out to them the erroneous notions which they have imbibed of French prowess? Does it not prove to them that these modern Vandals are endowed with none of the heroic virtues which they were supposed to possess; that, instead of being irresistible, they are not even a match for the populace of a country, if that populace is inspired by patriotism?

It was a well-known opinion of Henry the Fourth, a hero of peculiar sagacity; well versed in the knowledge of mankind; bred in camps; taught in early life in the school of adversity; humble but firm under misfortune; mild and beneficent in prosperity; adorned with every military virtue and talent; amiable in private life; in the luminous path of his public career always great, munificent, and consistent—it was the well-known opinion of this celebrated monarch, that every attempt by France to conquer Spain, would always be attended with disappointment and disgrace. He was well acquainted with the country and the people; and both his humanity and policy conspired to divert him from so hopeless a project. He knew that in Spain there existed strong national prejudices,

and that one of their leading features was a rooted antipathy to the French. He also contemplated the extent of the country, the nature and variety of its productions, and its local strength. He conceived that to overcome such obstacles, if they were to be overcome at all, it would require a greater military force than France could spare, and that the impossibility of supporting such a force, if it could be spared, presented another insurmountable difficulty. Such was the opinion of this great Prince! It will, perhaps, turn out fortunately for the world, that Buonaparte was not governed by the same foresight, for his character would not then have been brought to light in all its weakness, or in all its profligacy. Spain, which he imagined was to be so easily overcome, may yet prove the source of his overthrow; may yet prove the rock on which his fortune may be wrecked. On this iniquitous, and hitherto frustrated project, he has already sacrificed millions of treasure, and above 300,000 of his best soldiers.

Britain has had the distinguished honour of supporting Spain, both in men and money, through this arduous and wasteful contest, with unremitting zeal and unbounded generosity; and, what is of equal import, with the wisdom of

her councils, and the influence of her example. With an alacrity and munificence becoming our character, the moment Spain manifested a disposition to assert her independence, and repel French aggression, our enmity was converted into friendship, and we administered the most substantial aid. Destitute of that, she might have been overwhelmed in the infancy of her struggle. Insidiously robbed of her regular army, without finances, without a government, without a point of union, however desperate the attempt, it might have proved fruitless. There was little chance of a successful opposition to the military swarms of her faithless ally. But a British army once in the field, they were convinced of our sincerity in their cause. Their confidence was renewed; their exertions were animated; their courage was inspirited; their hopes revived. There is no instance, in the history of mankind, of such a prompt, opportune, and effectual support having, under parallel circumstances, been voluntarily granted. Every one must recollect with pride the sentiment with which the news of Spanish indignation was universally received; the rapidity with which it spread through the country; the enthusiastic joy which it every where occasioned. A fresh ray of light was thrown upon the horizon of hope, and we

hailed it as the commencement of the returning honour of Europe. Both the government and individuals caught the flame, and vied with each other in unqualified congratulation. Though we acted from the pure impulse of disinterested virtue, our generosity was fortunately coincident with our policy. What we, in the first instance, bestowed as a boon, has yielded a most abundant harvest; and in no instance, throughout the war, have we injured France so essentially as in the assistance which we have given to Spain. Under our auspices and supervision, the Spaniards are rapidly becoming a nation of veteran soldiers; and I am convinced, that the day is fast approaching when the government of France will be compelled to acknowledge to the world, that their hopes of conquest in the Peninsula are at an end. Their discussions on this subject, in the *Moniteur*, are no longer so numerous, nor their flourishes and speculations so highly coloured; and, although they cannot, at once, abandon a confirmed habit of gasconading falsehood, one yet perceives that the course of events has produced a decided alteration in the tone in which they are delivered. The battle of Vimiera first put a bridle on their imagination. Since that event, they have not so frequently indulged in that favourite and fanciful figure of rhetoric,

of driving the English into the sea. The battles of Talavera, the Douro, and Barossa, have since taken place, and have still further contributed to make them comprehend the folly and ridicule of the expression. They have each had the merit of producing a most powerful sensation both on the physical and moral constitution of the Gaul. His nerves are not so firmly strung; his spirits are not so gay; his heart does not beat so lightly; he is not quite so *enchanté de nous voir*.—By no means—he would rather *nous faire un éternel adieu, et cela même à la distance*. These are feats, on which his silly levity, combined with his arrogant presumption, did not allow him to reckon. He had been led to believe the stories which had been so industriously propagated to the discredit of the British army. He had been trained to think, that we were merely men on paper, and that, so far from having any chance of victory, we should not dare to show ourselves. These were the accounts disseminated by the French officers to check discontent; to reconcile their men to their hardships; and to inspire them with confidence in the field. But we have now been several times in contact; and the soldiers, as well as the officers, are aware of what they are to expect, when they encounter British troops.

If we turn our eyes towards Portugal, we have there a still more gratifying scene to contemplate. In that quarter our efforts have been crowned with complete success. By the prudent and skilful management of Lord Wellington, the kingdom of one of our most ancient, and certainly our most faithful ally, has been delivered from the presence of a French army. Every French soldier, except those who remain as prisoners, has been expelled; and the most renowned of the French generals has been forced to make a most disastrous retreat before inferior numbers. If this event, to which the eyes of all Europe have been long directed, is not decisive of our superiority in military affairs, whether the question be referred to the qualities of the soldier, or of those who command, nothing can be. Lord Wellington has mastered Massena in every way; and whether the attack has been made straight forward with the bayonet, or has been the result of the multiplied and complicated arrangements of military combination, his superiority has been equally evinced. He has completely *out-soldiered* and *out-generalled* him—I must beg pardon for the uncouthness of the terms—their meaning cannot be misunderstood.

It has been much the fashion, among a certain set of people in this country, who, however, can have very little of the feelings of Englishmen about them, to endeavour to decry the British army. But they must now, as well as the French, and perhaps with the same reluctance, surrender speculation to facts, and renounce their opinion, even at the hazard of their consistency. I never, for a moment, was influenced by their declarations; and I was certain that, whenever their value could be proved, their validity would be destroyed. I always felt certain, that, whenever an English army encountered a French army, numbers being not too disproportioned, the French would be overthrown. I reasoned from past events, and from the natural analogy of things. I saw our navy every where triumphant. I knew that our army was formed of the same materials, and was, in all respects, stamped with the same impression. If defects of skill, from want of experience, existed, I was sure that those defects would soon be remedied, not only by our natural aptitude for war, but by the high spirit and enlightened intelligence of a brave, generous, and free people. My opinion has, fortunately, turned out a just one. Had it been the reverse, I should, at least, have enjoyed the pleasure of thinking well of my countrymen,

till events had undeceived me; and I should have escaped the mortification of having harboured in my breast that base and odious desire of detraction, which is unwarranted both by the history and the character of the people. After, however, the proofs that have been afforded, from the commencement of the Egyptian campaign, which was the first time that British and French troops came fairly in contact, and which have certainly not been disparaged by recent events, I may, I hope, be allowed to say, that not only the British troops, but the British officers, are the best in the world; and that, whether the contest be by sea or land, we are equally secure of victory. In Egypt, Buonaparte was present himself, and when, beaten at all points, his army capitulated, he effected his escape by stealth. He was also himself in Spain, and a second time shunned the hazard of capture by retreat. He has since sent, both to Spain and Portugal, his choicest troops, and his most distinguished generals. He has, for the last two years, had nothing else to do; neither men nor money have been spared; on the contrary, every effort has been put forth that was calculated to ensure the completion of his wishes. Yet, in every action which his troops have fought with the British, although they have always had a superiority in point of

number, they have been uniformly defeated. At Corunna, Vimiera, Talavera, the Douro, and Barossa, we have been decidedly triumphant. Whether in skirmishes or in pitched battles; whether in attacks of cavalry or infantry, the event has been precisely the same. Some there are, who, not being able to deny these victories, endeavour to cancel their merit, by throwing out insinuations that they have been too dearly purchased. But these are cold and timid, or base and disaffected calculators, who, looking to nothing but immediate effects, have neither spirit nor capacity to extend their views to the circle of a wider horizon. The death of a brave man is always to be lamented; but, as no great achievement in war is to be performed without loss, individual grief must yield to public benefit, and we must put against the loss, not only the immediate but the consequential advantages. And what have been the consequences of the transcendent exploits of the British army, not only in the Peninsula, but in other parts of the globe? what have been the weight and influence of their moral effects? They have given a character to our troops which is no longer disputable; they have imparted vigour and confidence to our allies; they have spread disunion and consternation among our foes. They have rendered problema-

tical the character of the French army; they have changed mute acquiescence into eager inquiry; they have set to work all the busy spirits of Europe. They have not only ruffled the surface, but they have disturbed the depths and foundations of political affairs. They have rendered Buonaparte's talents more questionable, and his government more insecure. They have confirmed the hatred of the people, and shaken his popularity with his army; and they have, for ever, put at rest the question of the invasion of this country. On this menace, I confess that I never could bestow a serious thought; but all pretence for such a supposition must now vanish. Buonaparte, after having been so frequently beaten by inferior numbers on foreign ground, cannot be supposed to be so insane as to encounter superior numbers on their natal soil. He well knows, and has well known all along, that the inhabitants of this country are men, both for thought and action; that of all slavery they would least tolerate his; and that he might as well attempt to sink the island in the sea, as to subjugate its population. It is this thought and conviction that goads him to madness, and prompts him to exhaust the rage of his infernal soul on defenceless individuals.—It is for this, and because they are brave and good, that Bri-

tish officers, and soldiers and sailors, are persecuted and pillaged; that they are consigned to dungeons and hard labour, and doomed to submit to punishments and degradations that belong to the most infamous crimes. But Buonaparte can have no sympathy for the warrior's sufferings, for he has none of the generous feelings which so frequently characterize and exalt the profession of arms. He has no soul for appreciating those glorious properties of our nature, which soften the stern dispensations of hostility; which shed the lustre of compassion over the most afflicting scenes; which, amid the horror and desolation of carnage, confine its destruction to its necessity; and, whether exhibited by a friend or a foe, are equally calculated to command our veneration and esteem. To be applauded by Buonaparte, you must become his instrument, and, by that act, resign the only valid title to applause. No virtuous or high-minded man would consent to serve under such a system, or in such a cause. Hence it is, that those who have most distinguished themselves by talent or success, during his usurpation, have been, like himself, men of low origin, and who, from want of the education of gentlemen, have never felt the influence of that elevation of sentiment which early reflection and habit can alone

confer. No exaltation of rank can correct the groveling views of their early life, or impart dignity or urbanity to the natural conceptions and effusions of their souls. They know how to infuse terror; by pillage, confiscation, and death; but not how to excite gratitude, to inspire confidence, or to conciliate esteem, by the practice of Christian virtues.

It is difficult to figure to ourselves the impression which our late brilliant successes must have made on such a mind as Buonaparte's. They rise in splendour as they extend in duration, and illumine, with renovated lustre, a long train of glorious exploits. Instead of finding us, as he expected, exhausted by the contest, he finds in every artery a more powerful principle of vitality, and in every nerve a strength increasing under the pressure of exertion. He must have received the account of our success in the Indian seas, and before Cadiz, nearly at the same time. The names of Graham and Rowley must still be ringing in his ears. Nothing in the annals of history, in their different ways, has ever surpassed the brilliancy of these exploits. Whether we consider the smallness of the means, the intelligence by which those means were directed, the hardihood

of the enterprise, or its successful termination, an equal degree of surprise is awakened, and an equal degree of applause due. If any such proofs were wanting, they have furnished two most decisive and incontestable ones, not only of the superiority of British valour, but of the pre-eminence of British talent. Banda and Anholt have since been the scenes of fresh laurels; and this quick succession of victory has been, at length, closed by the retreat of Massena from Portugal.

By the capture of the Mauritius, the last remnant of French colonial territory has been wrested from the dominion of France, and a death-blow has been given to one of the leading objects of Buonaparte's ambition. At the disgraceful peace of Amiens, every thing was restored to France, and he was overjoyed with the recovery of possessions, which he imagined his increased power would enable him to preserve. In this conviction, he laid aside his usual secrecy, and, in the fulness of his heart, betrayed his opinion of their value. Ships, colonies, and commerce, were his exclamation. These were the themes of his fondest speculations, and the avowed objects of his heart. How his wishes, in this respect, have been ful-

filled, is before the whole world. Commerce he has none; colonies he has none; and, if he were without ships, it would be better for him, because he would not then be liable to make such powerful and numerous contributions to our maritime strength. Since the loss of the Mauritius, which had always been regarded as an impregnable station, and by the capture of which, as much has been acquired in glory as profit, he affects to regard this event as a misfortune of little or no moment, and consoles himself with the certainty of its cession, improved by British capital, at some future period. Reasoning from past events, he certainly has a plausible pretext for such an expectation. But, I hope, we are grown less prone to these absurd blunders; and that we are not for ever to be proving, that we are below every other European state, in our capacity for profiting by the lessons of past experience. It does surely seem an unaccountable contradiction in our character, that while we have the sagacity and the activity, which are necessary for the accomplishment of an end, we should be defective in our application of the uses to which our acquisitions may be converted. The world has laughed at us, on this score, much too long. Whether the whole of our conquests would, at the restoration of

peace, be worth retaining, is a calculation of policy, which must be referred to that epoch; but, for whatever we give up, we should insist on the receipt of something of equal value. Ministers ought to be able, even at this probably distant date, to form some judgment of what portion of our conquests it will be for the interests of the empire to annex definitively to the British dominions, and to act accordingly. What is of essential advantage, and has been of difficult acquisition, I should conceive, would never be ceded. Under this head, Malta, the Cape, and the Mauritius, will probably be ranged. On these, therefore, we might safely expend money on their improvement and security. On the contrary, what it is likely will be resigned, should evidently be surveyed with a very different feeling. These, so far from being a source of disbursement, should be made a source of profit, and instead of being improved, should, before we quitted them, be rendered defenceless; so that, in the event of renewed hostility, they would again fall an easy prey to us, or be the cause of an enormous expensè to our rivals. We should, by such measures, completely frustrate the plans, and disappoint the expectations of Buonaparte, and secure to ourselves the perpetuation of our colonial empire.

Our superiority at sea is of too decisive a stamp, to be an object of the remotest solicitude. It is just as unlikely, that Buonaparte should obtain an ascendancy on that element, as it is, that the element itself should cease to be agitated by storms. He may thunder out his abuse in his frothy and vulgar phraseology; he may vaunt as he will; but his words, in that respect, will be as barren as his fame. So far from our feeling any alarm at his building ships, we ought to give him every encouragement to follow that propensity. Whatever number he may launch, should they venture to quit their harbours, they must soon be in our possession; and, instead of being the objects of his defence, will become the ministers of our vengeance. With the complete control which we exercise in maritime affairs, it is perfectly ridiculous to suppose, that any other country can, in that particular, be capable of exciting alarm. Nothing can now swim on the ocean but by our permission; and the very terror and celebrity of our name is almost sufficient to blockade every port of France. He may build his twenty-five ships of the line every year. So much the better for us, if he be guilty of such egregious folly. What, at the expiration of the prophetic four years, will his hundred sail be worth? Whence are his navigators to

spring? Like the teeth of Cadmus, are they to arise finished men, out of the earth? Where are they to acquire their nautical science? Whence is to be derived that bravery and skill which shall induce them to contend with those, who, for the last fifteen years, have been their acknowledged masters, and who are constantly improving in every branch of their profession? I am aware that it is the opinion of many, that if once Buonaparte be in possession of the ships, he will easily find the sailors. This opinion is founded on the dominion which he has more or less assumed over all the maritime states of the continent, and the extent of coast which he actually governs, and which furnishes him with innumerable facilities of equipment. These fears are further fortified, by the knowledge that the coasting trade of this country is one of our most prolific nurseries, and that many of our best sailors are bred up in that occupation. This is so far true. But we must, at the same time, consider one important point, which is, that our coasting trade is not only of great extent, but that it is free and uninterrupted: whereas that of France is exposed to every risk and impediment which is calculated to interfere with its success, and confine its circuit. His coasting vessels can do little more than row-boats.

They must watch the opportunity for quitting their ports, and, during the voyage, must be under constant apprehension. They must skulk along the shore, or seek shelter under the protection of batteries. Such a pitiful mode of navigation can never form a sailor's heart; can never generate a spirit of hardihood and enterprise; nor even provide the means of acquiring the necessary knowledge to steer a ship properly in her course. With good officers, and a small proportion of able seamen, a ship's company may, no doubt, be easily formed; but then there must be an unconfined field for action. This is indispensable. A ship, of all things, requires plenty of room, and is least calculated to move on a limited scale. Another very important consideration is, how can these men, to whom Buonaparte must resort for aid, be supposed to be affected to his cause? Even granting, that the Dutch, the Danes, the Swedes, were in possession of their former naval celebrity, can it be imagined that they would enter the French service with any sentiments but those of hatred and disgust? Is it likely, that they should be zealous in a cause which has occasioned their ruin; that they should wish to strengthen that power, which has reduced them to slavery; that they should be emulous to

raise the glory of that man, by whom their own glory has been obliterated? It is absurd to calculate on such results. Experience is also in our favour. Why are we to conceive that Buonaparte will accomplish more in the next four years, than he has accomplished in the last four years? His enmity for the last four years has been at the highest pitch of malignant inveteracy. His extent of coast has been the same; and he has had more devotion to his interest, and more positive strength, than he is likely ever again to possess. His Spanish plot had not revealed to the multitude all the infamy of his character; nor had military events so decidedly tarnished the false lustre of his arms. On what foundation then is such an hypothesis to be built? Facts are decidedly against it, nor can conjecture be supported by any rational conclusion. Such predictions, therefore, when they come to be sifted, cannot derive any consequence from the calculations of probability, or from the tone in which they are delivered. I go on these data. France, at the commencement of this war in 1793, had as numerous a fleet as ourselves. Even since Buonaparte's usurpation of the supreme power, her numerical strength has been nearly equal. In this space of time, four general engagements have been

fought, in every one of which France has sustained a signal defeat. In every action between squadrons or single ships (I can almost say without an exception) she has experienced the same fate. Such has been the extent of her losses, that scarcely an atom of her old navy is afloat, and such are her consequent fears, that it is not likely she will ever voluntarily face us again. We go into action flushed with the persuasion of certain victory; she, disheartened by the prospect of certain defeat. The result is in a manner ascertained before the contest begins. The event is so invariable, that they tremble to meet us, and, before the ships are in close conflict, their minds are subdued. This is no vaunting. It is an unvarnished statement of historical evidence, and I appeal to facts for its verification. On what sound principle of reasoning then are we to conceive, that if France, having great naval strength, which, before it was tried, was thought might encounter us on equal terms, was uniformly beaten; being dispossessed of that strength by the decisive superiority of our prowess and skill, she is now to overmatch us? This is a complete inversion of the nature of things. It would be making the effect powerful in proportion as the cause was weak. It would be making the end totally independent of the means. It would be

giving to ignorance and debility the advantages of knowledge and strength. But that such expectations are totally futile and ridiculous ; that they are a glaring departure from all grounds of probability, and in manifest violation of every principle of logic, it is quite unnecessary to prove.

There is another point to which I am desirous of adverting before I conclude. It has been rather generally, but in my opinion most erroneously, supposed, that the power of Buona-
parte has kept pace with the increasing extent of his empire, and that the superiority in his favour, relatively to this country, is so enormous, that the struggle must, if persevered in, terminate in our destruction. This is a statement so contrary to any conjecture founded on the occurrences and experience of former times, that it is astonishing how it can be, for a moment, entertained by any reflecting mind. Unlimited empire belongs alone to its Eternal Author. The power of man is, like his faculties to acquire it, circumscribed ; and he who attempts to pass the boundary must suffer for his rashness. Both nature and history tend to show, that the earth was destined to be divided into different states, and to be subject to different

governments. Hence the variety of languages, prejudices, habits, customs, and laws, irreconcilable by their opposition into one mass; yet, at the same time, tending, by their variety, to promote the aggregate comfort, convenience, and happiness of mankind. Can, for example, any one believe, that England and France could ever be amalgamated into one empire, and blended under one form of constitution? There are, in their separate characters, inherent antipathies and predilections, constituent and radical contradictions, that must for ever render such an idea preposterous. Is it not, on the contrary, evident, that either country would be seriously weakened by the experiment, and that the force necessary to compel obedience, would more than countervail any advantage that could possibly arise from so unnatural an union? So it is with other countries. Holland, Spain, Italy, Brabant, Switzerland, and Germany, are as distinct and dissimilar from France, in laws, customs, manners, habits, and prejudices, as countries, in nearly an equal state of civilization, can well be supposed to be. However, therefore, they may have been terrified or cajoled into submission, the practical effects of their annexation must long since have convinced them, that their interests and prosperity and those of

France can never be associated. Hence must arise, in all these countries, an ardent and unceasing desire to be released from the consequences of this ruinous connexion, and the weight and ignominy of this galling yoke. Buonaparte is evidently well acquainted with the utter detestation in which he is every where held, and sees the necessity of maintaining, in all quarters, a commanding military force. This force he still contrives to support, chiefly at the expense of the countries in which it is resident; but by this oppressive measure, added to his total extinction of commerce, and his various modes of extortionary taxation, he is rapidly impoverishing the people, and exhausting the very means from which his supplies are drawn.

It is naturally enough observed, if this statement be correct; if Buonaparte is reducing the energy and activity of his power by the extension of its boundaries; how happens it, that he can be so blind to his own interests and security, as to be guilty of so egregious a folly? The reasons are obvious. In the first place, his ambition is of that restless and insatiable nature, that as soon as one object is acquired, it is eternally prompting him to further acquisition. In

another point of view, and, what acts still more potently on his conduct, a state of war is necessary to his existence. It would not be possible for him to retain his usurped crown in times of peace. What would become of his numerous hordes of soldiers, in the event of a cessation of hostility? How are they to be maintained as an army? And if he disband them, how are they to support themselves? Whence are they to derive the means of subsistence? Are they likely ever to return to habits of sobriety and industry? And, if they were, what pursuits would be open to their selection? Men, who have been trained up in habits of dissolute debauchery; who have been the members of a marauding camp; who have been familiarized with every crime; who have been accustomed to derive their subsistence from pillage and rapine; who have been totally estranged from the practice or influence of moral and religious duty; whose desires have only been controlled, and whose excesses have only been arrested, by the exhaustion of nature, are not very well adapted for the avocations of peace, or very likely to be captivated by the regular routine of civil life. The soldiery of France can only, in fact, be contemplated as a trained banditti, fed by plunder, and

supported by crimes ; and who are so addicted to the commission of acts of atrocity, that wantonness is frequently as powerful a motive as booty. To be convinced of this, we have only to refer to the history of their late proceedings in Portugal, and particularly to those dispatches of Lord Wellington, which contain the account of the retreat of Massena's army. Strong as the language is, it falls far short of private recitals. Massena entered Portugal as a protector : he has quitted it as a scourge. He has visited on the defenceless population, that vengeance which he was unable to inflict on his opponents in arms. The people, whom he had sworn to protect ; who, in consequence of the most solemn assurances, had been persuaded to remain in their habitations ; with whom he had, for many months, been living in friendly and intimate intercourse ; and from whom he had procured valuable and constant assistance ; when they could no longer be useful, he did not merely leave them thankless and unrequited, but he surrendered them to the passions of a licentious soldiery, instigated by officers as rapacious and abandoned as themselves. Neither age nor sex has been spared. Men, women, and children, have been delivered up to promiscuous carnage, or to cruelties and insults

even more terrible than death. How many mothers, how many orphans, are, at this moment, weeping over the loss of their nearest relatives! All the most sacred ties of nature have been rent asunder; every claim of justice has been violated; every appeal to mercy has been disregarded. Property has been abandoned to pillage, houses to conflagration. Cottages have been levelled; palaces have been sacked; churches have been plundered and profaned. Even the wells have been poisoned, and the land laid waste. These are the benefits, as Lord Wellington, in the spirit of a true soldier, observes, these are the benefits of Buonaparte's government: this is the security which it affords. But has not this identical scene been exhibited in every country where the French have gained admittance? Have they not uniformly come with promises of protection and redress? And have not these promises been uniformly and systematically broken? This is no fabulous composition. It is a plain narrative of facts, an unexaggerated picture, the colours of which are reflected by their crimes.

In this deplorable state of the world, it is, naturally, a most anxious inquiry, how peace, which is the only legitimate object of

war, is to be restored. Unhappily, there is but one answer to this question:—by the destruction of Buonaparte. As long as this man is suffered to continue the scourge and reproach of humanity, it is an event that can never be expected. A hollow and temporary truce, if we are weak enough to consent, may no doubt be botched up: but as long as this monster is permitted to wield the physical strength of France, nothing like solid and lasting tranquillity can be hoped for. If he propose accommodation, it will be to gain a breathing-time; to have leisure to recover from a feeling of debility inflicted by his recent reverses; and to concert fresh plans of future destruction. In making peace, Buonaparte would merely consult his own interest or convenience; and an offer from him to that effect, so far from being listened to, should be a signal to us for a more vigorous prosecution of hostility. Has he not made peace with every country that he has enslaved; and has not its subjugation been accelerated by the cessation of active war? Have not we ourselves tried the experiment; and have we not severely smarted for our simplicity? Let us not then be again guilty of the same folly; but, regarding Buonaparte as the sole obstacle to the consummation of our wishes, let that consideration excite

against him a keener resentment, and in favour of our country a warmer devotion.

I have ever thought it the duty of every man, who wishes to disseminate his political opinions as connected with the present war, to give a representation, as faithful as words can convey, of the character of the French ruler; to separate him as much as possible from the countries which he has enslaved; and to demonstrate how hopeless the discontinuance of war must be, while he remains possessed of his present office. His means of acquiring and retaining power are equally odious. Of that dominion which he gained by usurpation, he has ever made the most diabolical use. He has, on every occasion, employed it in the destruction of the rights and happiness of his species. He is not only the most atrocious, but the basest of mankind. His ambition is not only insatiable; but it is unqualified with any noble or generous sentiment. He lives by violence and slaughter, by the ruin and desolation of the earth. From his massacres at Toulon, where he first brought himself into notice, to the present day, he has manifested the same contempt of justice, the same callous turpitude of heart, the same profligate and selfish motives, urging him to the

perpetration of the same dreadful enormities. They may have varied in degree, as his passions have been accidentally inflamed, or his apparent interests have seemed to require; but they have always been marked with the same features of vindictive rage, or barbarous spoliation, or pitiful revenge. The tide of public opinion is, however, most happily beginning to fluctuate; and, when once it turns, it will flow with overwhelming force. When stripped of the gaudy trappings and false splendour with which the pusillanimity and credulity of mankind have invested him, we shall be able to survey him as he really is, surrounded with all the monstrous and hideous depravity that is inherent in his nature. When the dread of separation is removed, the semblance of attachment will vanish, and the distinction between interest and love will be fully revealed. He who has never performed a kind or virtuous action, can never have kindled a sentiment either of friendship or respect. He who has never conferred a favour, or bestowed a recompense, but as it was calculated to advance the projects of his unprincipled ambition, can have no claim to the gratitude of his dependents. None of the prejudices of mankind can be in favour of him who has provoked all their resentment, without at-

tempting to soothe the irritation which he has excited, by any common observation of kindness, humanity, or decorum. Would such a monster be suffered to exist in this country for a single day? Would not thousands of swords, if they were necessary, start from their scabbards, to arrest his sanguinary career, and terminate his presumptuous ambition? His friends in this country may rail, or bluster, or prophesy—they may all prate, as they think fit, about foreign invasion, domestic ruin, and approaching civil war: their lamentations and predictions must equally provoke a smile. They may plaster as thickly as they please with their clumsy panegyric, the object of their idolatry: they may tell us of his talents and his prowess: he stands in need of all their aid to assuage the torture, and cicatrise the wounds, which we are daily inflicting. He is fast sliding from his eminence; and there is a gulf preparing below, which will eventually swallow him up. If we have worsted him in the meridian of his power, there surely can be no cause of apprehension from his declining fortunes.

But though most are easy about Great Britain, many imagine that Ireland is not so secure. They avowedly regard that country as the weak

part of the empire. But those who entertain and disseminate such opinions are no true friends to Ireland. They betray a distrust highly derogatory to that gallant and patriotic nation. The Irish, so far from giving room for any such suspicion, have, in every instance that has presented itself, distinguished themselves, not only by their courage, but by an entire devotion to the common cause in which we are all embarked. They are of too generous a nature to betray their country : they are of too lofty a nature to court a despot. There may be, and there no doubt is, a lingering spark of discontent kept alive, in consequence of the remaining disabilities under which the Roman Catholics labour. I am sorry for the feeling; I am also sorry for the cause. I wish, and I believe that the wish is general, that the cause should be removed; that all distinctions should be levelled; and that every individual of the empire should be invested with the same rights. I wish it for the sake of justice, as well as on the score of policy. The link of union would then be stronger, and that cordial co-operation, which is now called forth on great occasions, would pervade and vivify all the minor channels of association. Such a concession would be a source of much positive good, without the risk of incidental danger.

Toleration is the most powerful subduer of religious prejudices. Take away the penal code, the Catholics would be left without a rallying-point, and their reason would be open to the influence of the liberal and enlightened doctrines of the established church. The days of superstition are gone by. The current of popular opinion runs in an opposite direction; and the present age has much more to apprehend from the slackness, than from the fervour, of religious zeal. As for the Pope, where is the Protestant who does not venerate his virtues, and, if he had the power, would not afford him shelter from the persecutions of Buonaparte? Reasons, however, which at present are insurmountable, interfere with these immunities. But because this object of their desire is postponed, is it to be supposed, that the Irish, on that account, will set up the standard of rebellion, and, for the gratification of a revenge, excited by such a cause, resign all the great privileges and blessings which they enjoy? Is it to be imagined, that, for the sake of separating themselves from the friendship and protection of England, they will run headlong into the arms of France, and place their independence and glory at the disposal of the most dangerous enemy to their liberties, and

the bitterest persecutor of their faith? Such conjectures are perfectly preposterous, and only betray the contaminated source from which they flow. The Irish are, like the English and Scotch, generous, loyal, and brave; impelled by the same feelings, and actuated by the same love of constitutional freedom. They live under the same laws; they fight in the same ranks; they participate in the same misfortunes; they share in the same success. The measure of interchanging the militias, I consider as a very salutary one. It will blend the people more together; it will make them better acquainted with each other; and, by removing their prejudices, will consolidate their interests.

If our sufferings have been great, our career has been splendid, and, what is of far higher consideration, it has been consonant with our duties as citizens and Christians. We have formed the rampart that has stemmed the torrent of infidelity and of moral vice, which was threatening to overwhelm the civilized globe. In the defence which we have made, has been comprehended all that is valuable in life, all that can impart happiness or dignity to the sphere of human action. Our parents, our children, our friends, our fellow-citizens, our laws, our liber-

ties, the country that gave us birth, and the religion which we profess, are all contained within this enlarged circle. When these sanctified ties are contrasted with the abandoned motives by which our enemy has been actuated, we may humbly, yet firmly, hope, that the Great Ruler of the universe will condescend to look down upon us with interest and favour. He may chastise us, for well have we deserved chastisement; but the visible laws of his moral government justify the expectation, that he will never permit the triumph of universal vice to be established on the total extirpation of virtue. This dreadful visitation, which has so long afflicted Europe, must be verging towards its completion; and, when the day-spring of light shall again burst forth, and order, peace, industry, and morality, be again established, our exertions will be duly appreciated. Let us then not be disheartened, but bear, with becoming fortitude, the hardships and privations to which we may yet be exposed. A nation that has, for so many centuries, acted a most distinguished part on the theatre of the world, can never retreat with credit from the field of glory, nor conceal herself with safety in the shades of obscurity. Honour is the shield of reputation, and admits of no compromise with disgrace. We must greatly

flourish, or greatly fall. And if we be destined to meet this fatal termination, we shall be embalmed in the recollection and gratitude of future generations, and must console ourselves with the conviction of having deserved a better fate. But why should I allow any desponding thought to cast a gloom over the prospect of futurity? All around is bright and exhilarating. The tide of success is running strongly in our favour. Every week brings some fresh intelligence, that imparts vigour and consolidation to our cause. Within the last ten days, accounts have been received of the recapture by the Spaniards of the important posts of Figueras and Gerona, and of a most brilliant naval action gained by Captain Hoste, in the Adriatic, over a French squadron of more than double his force. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has declared to Parliament, that, such is the flourishing state of the finances, instead of levying new imposts, he can afford to repeal old ones; and at this moment the guns are announcing another splendid victory gained by the illustrious Wellington over the most renowned General in the service of France.

I am, &c.

POSTSCRIPT.

WHILE the foregoing pages have been printing, the news of another great victory has arrived. The sanguinary battle of Albuera has been fought, and the French have again been vanquished. All the troops of the allied army have equally distinguished themselves. The attack of Soult was a branch of a desperate plan, concerted between him and Massena, to attempt to retrieve the faded lustre of the French arms. The relief of Almeida and Badajoz were the important objects. But they have in both instances completely failed, and have been compelled to retreat with immense loss, abandoning the fortresses to their fate. We, unluckily, in these battles were deficient in cavalry. Had it not been for this, they would have been *routs*, instead of defeats. Ney, Junot, and Massena have been all beaten in their turn, and are summoned to Paris to answer for their conduct. Victor and Soult, who have met with the same disasters, will, in all probability, experience the same fate. So much for five of the Marshals of France! Joseph Buonaparte has also taken

flight; and, accompanied by his faithful grantees, thinks it prudent to avoid the summer heats of his Spanish dominions. After all we have heard of annihilating the Spanish rebels, and driving the English into the sea, how these ruffians must stare at each other, when assembled in a room at the Thuilleries, in the presence of their enraged and disappointed master!

London,
June 8, 1811.

* THE END.

LETTERS

ADDRESSED

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TYNE MERCURY,

ON THE

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

FOR

THE SONS OF THE CLERGY.

BY W. BURDON.

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1811.

LETTERS.

LETTER I.

*To the Editor of the Tyne Mercury.**

SIR,

THE annual scandal of begging for the clergy having lately been repeated, permit me, Mr. Editor, to trouble you with a few remarks on the indecency and impolicy of the practice. The clergy of the diocese of Durham are the richest body of men in England, and yet, though they derive their riches from the public bounty, they venture to call upon the public to assist in providing for their poor, as if they had neither hearts to suggest, nor heads to contrive an economical scheme of doing that which the lowest and the poorest mechanics do for themselves, and for their widows and children. The revenues of the church in this diocese, including that of the Bishop, amount to near one hundred thousand pounds a year, and yet because this is so unequally divided, that many of its members have little more than a bare subsistence, and often leave their families in poverty, the pompous dignitaries, rectors, and vicars, not able,

poor men! to support the indigent relatives of their indigent brethren, "the labouring clergy," as Bishop Horsley, the proudest of all proud priests, contemptuously called them, annually apply to the mistaken charity of the laity, to aid them in what they are fully sufficient to do from their own revenues; for one pound a year in every hundred, from the income of every individual or body possessed of above three hundred pounds a year, would soon raise a fund fully equal to the maintenance of all their poor. Let them look at the clergy of the church of Scotland, where there is not one living above three hundred a year, and yet, by time and œconomy, they have raised a fund not only equal to the necessities of their own body, but now applied to other purposes of benevolence. The clergy of England would do well to follow their example, and more particularly those of Durham, for it is a shame that those who are so amply provided for, should not provide for their own poor. The wealth of the clergy has in most countries reached its utmost height, and even in the priest-ridden countries of Germany and Spain they are beginning to apply the revenues of the church to the service of the state. The church of Scotland, by its poverty and its virtues, is almost the only one that needs not the hand of reform to crop its redundancies,

I remain, &c.

W. BURDON.

Hartford, near Morpeth, Sept. 13th, 1811.

LETTER II.

To the Editor of the Tyne Mercury.

SIR,

A COPY of the *Newcastle Courant* has just been sent me, containing an anonymous answer to some remarks which I lately published in your *Mercury*, on the annual subscription for the Sons of the Clergy. It would have been somewhat more satisfactory to me had the writer given me his name, because I should then have had it in my power to judge whether he writes from any motive of personal interest, or from a disinterested regard for the clergy: however, as his arguments have some plausibility, and may possibly mislead those who have only slightly considered the subject, I will attempt to reply with as much candour as the nature of the subject and the warmth of my own temper will admit. The gentleman's first argument is derived from a slight mistake which escaped me in the heat and ardour of composition, for I seldom revise what I have written: I am willing to confess that it is a fault, and my antagonist's eagerness to lay hold of it will teach me, if possible, to avoid it in future, and for the purpose I will borrow a little of his latin, "*Fas est et ab hoste doceri.*" I intended to assert that the clergy of Durham were the richest body of *clergymen* in England; that is, that they are richer than the

clergy of any other diocese. In affirming that the clergy derive their riches from the public bounty, I meant that they originally derived them from that source, which I believe will be found a true statement, unless the gentleman will affirm that priests are coeval with the origin of society, and joined with conquerors in the plunder of their fellow men: in thus ascribing the origin of church property to the bounty of the public, I derive it from a much purer source than that of most other property in the kingdom; it was given freely, the rest was gained by force, though it has since been legalized by time and transmission. I never could mean, as the gentleman supposes, that the clergy are indebted to the present owners and tenants of land for their support, they are indebted to the former bounty of individuals or the public who gave those lands and tythes, and to the laws which secure the possession of them; but the legislature has a strict right to withhold or to modify that bounty, so as to accommodate it to the wants and the circumstances of society. The clergy have not the same right to their tythes that other men have to their lands, because they possess those tythes conditionally or in return for a service to be performed, and if it ever should be the opinion of the legislature that that service is not duly performed, or that it may be dispensed with, they have both the power and the right either to modify or to apply those

lands and tythes to any other purpose. It is upon this principle that parliament frequently alters the disposition of public charities, and in so doing, they cannot deviate from the intentions of the donors who intended them for the public good. It is surprising how any man could gravely assert, and expect to be believed when he asserts, that the qualifications required and the duties to be performed by the clergy, make no difference in the nature of the property bequeathed to them by the laity. Does not this make a difference in all property? Suppose I hold an estate on performing certain conditions, who will venture to say that my estate is the same as one which is held without any conditions? Will the reverend gentleman, for such I believe him to be, deny that the clergy are the servants of the public; and if they are servants, then they cannot have the same rights as their masters. The fact is, that in former times it was judged most convenient and suitable to the notions with which the clergy impressed the minds of the laity, to pay them in lands and tythes, (though directly contrary to the express commands of Christ,) rather than by annual salaries, for such things were not known in those early times; but unless the clergy can prove that they receive their pay wholly independent of their duty in any respect, and acquired their property for themselves like the rest of society, either by force, fraud, industry, or descent, they must, however unwillingly, con-

fess that they derive it from the public, which sanctions that which was at first individual bounty. My opponent judges wrong, in comparing me to the sanguinary and head-long reformers of the French revolution; I am for moderate reform both in church and state. I detest all violent revolutions, and having something to lose on a scramble and nothing to gain, I am not wild enough to seek my own ruin for the sake of speculative opinions; but I hold the church and the state, however they may have been artfully confounded, to be distinct bodies; or rather I hold the church to be a body existing solely by the will and permission of the state and the law.

The *argumentum ad hominem*, as the logicians call it, or personal argument, which Mr. Walker's correspondent has addressed to me, when he asks me if I should like to have my estate at Hartford considered as one derived from public bounty, I feel no difficulty in replying to. I will answer him, no; because I never can nor ever will consider it of the same nature as that which he derives from my tithes at Wooperton. (I think I am not mistaken, if I am, it may serve to shew the evil of anonymous writings). It is a fee simple, vested in me and my heirs; whereas his is only one which he enjoys as an individual member of a public body, which body is in all respects under the control of the state, and though the state might possibly take it from him, but certainly from the body

he belongs to, without any public or private injury, they could not take mine from me or my heirs, without the grossest injustice, without a violation of the first law of society, the right of private property, whereas his estate is only to be considered in the light of public property, the same as the pay of the army and navy; the only difference is in the mode of payment. I am sorry for the alarm I have given the *worthy* gentleman, but I must tell him that in case of an earthquake, the houses which are built upon the land are not so safe as the land itself, and if a political earthquake should happen here, (which God forbid!) I must tell him that the stake against which he leans will give way, for the clergy have not such firm hold in the soil as they formerly had. Their whole property and existence rest on opinion, and that opinion is considerably shaken. The reverend alarmist is determined however, not to quake alone, and therefore he tries to communicate some of his fears to me and my brethren of the laity, by holding up to us the French revolution *in terrorem*, and telling us what befel that unhappy country after the reformers had destroyed the church. His threat reminds me of a very silly book written by a very sensible man, no less than the great Sir Henry Spelman, “ *De non temerandis Ecclesiis*, in which he attempts to shew the miserable fate which befel all those who in different ages had divided the

spoils of the church. I remember also to have heard one of the present bench of Bishops, in a private company, when declaiming against the French, conclude his harangue with these emphatic words: "And besides, sir, they have destroyed the hierarchy, which they had from God himself, how then can they hope to prosper?"— It is by such language and by such ideas that the clergy have terrified themselves and others into the belief that a reform in the church must inevitably occasion the ruin of the state; that these fears are vain and idle, I will shortly attempt to prove.— My reverend antagonist, flattering himself that he has obtained, but I am sorry he has not communicated, "some clear and accurate ideas of church property," proceeds in the second place to consider what he justly calls the "professed object of my letter," viz. the indecency and impolicy of the annual subscription; and as a cordial to his troubled spirit, he consoles himself with the belief that it is no very general feeling. That the laity will bear a second shearing, after being first fleeced whether they will or not, is certainly a very comfortable consideration for those who enjoy the benefit of their wool: but the lamb, though the meekest, is not the wisest of all animals, and I certainly cannot much extol the wisdom of those who, being *compelled* to pay a tenth of their goods for the support of the clergy, kindly contribute even a sixtieth,

merely because they are asked for it. As to the new annual subscriptions which the reverend beggar ascribes to his *zealous coadjutor*, I will not venture to say what may have been his means of persuasion, but I should think they must have been more than mere requests, for we all know that the requests of our superiors in many cases amount to commands, and in the district in which I reside, there are not many above the condition of farmers. If the lower and middle ranks are still deceived as to the true character of churchmen and church property, and rather than consider them as the "mere hired servants of the state," will invest them with a divine character as the servants of God, after all that has been said and written to place them in their true light, let them be deceived. *Qui vult decipi decipiatur.* It is not my fault if they throw their money away, if they give their apples to Alcinous; if they carry their coals to Newcastle. I have attempted to shew them that the clergy of Durham at least, are fully able to support their own poor; nay, that they are bound to do it if they were less able, because other bodies of men, even of the poorest mechanics, rather than be burdensome to society, contrive, by the appropriation of a small sum weekly from their hard earnings, to raise funds much greater in proportion than are now raised both by clergy and laity together, for the support of their poor. This

will shew what may be effected by time and economy, and how little claim therefore the clergy, with their immense revenues, have to the further bounty of the laity. On this account I have said that the practice is both impolitic and indecent.

The learned writer in the *Newcastle Courant*, who signs himself "A late Steward to the Society of the Sons of the Clergy," is very angry at my comparison between the churches of England and Scotland, and well he may, so far as regards their riches, but let me tell him he is mistaken when he asserts that the livings in the latter country are mostly from three to five hundred pounds a year, for, I will venture to affirm, that one-fifth of them have not had more than £100 a year, till the late increase obtained by Mr. Perceval's bill, which raised all livings to £150 per annum; one quarter of them were under £150, and more than a half are at present under £200; that there are not twenty clergymen in Scotland who have £250 a year, about five or six have incomes above £500 a year, which arises from their glebe land being let upon building leases, and two more who, from the same circumstance, have above £1000. One of these, the priest of Greerock, who, like most of the godly members of the kirk, used to declaim against plays and play books, derives, at this moment, the greatest part of his income from the stage, as the theatre of that opulent town has been

lately built on his glebe land. Who will say that the clergy cannot worship both God and Mammon? I blame not the reverend pastor for making the most of his land, but I blame him and all those who pretend to follow the precepts of a master who enjoined the strongest contempt of all worldly wealth. A few days ago I received two letters, addressed to me under the title of *reverend*, which I imagine was meant as a joke, and a poor one it was; one of these letters contains a statement of the scheme adopted by the Scotch clergy to provide for their poor, which, the gentleman says, was very judiciously laid aside, but for what reason it was judicious I am at a loss to perceive, except that it was prudent in the richer clergy not to bind themselves to contribute to a fund from which they could derive no benefit. That the clergy of the church of Durham were some time ago doing what I have recommended them to do, without my knowing it, is a proof that my recommendation was not an idle one, and I am glad that they have had the merit of adopting any scheme that may put an end to the necessity of being annual beggars for their own poor; but I think as the sums subscribed are merely voluntary, and not laid as a tax upon the different benefices, the subscriptions, after the novelty of the thing is over, may in time drop off, and the fund, so far from increasing, dwindle away to nothing.

I must say, Mr. Editor, that the subscription of the bishop is by no means proportionate to his princely revenue. In my first letter, I stated the income of the clergy of Durham to be near £100,000 a year; I have since been informed that it is nearer £200,000 a year; now as we all know they are fond of tythes or tenths, why should not a tenth, or at least a twentieth part, of this be appropriated to the maintenance of their poor? The gentleman's sly insinuation, that I have some sinister purposes of my own to answer in my wishes for reform, I disclaim and despise, and when he knows, as he ought to be told, that I might have been in possession at this moment of a college living worth £1000 a year, had I chosen to go into orders, I trust he will learn to be more careful how he suspects the motives of others, merely because they do not coincide with his own.—Whom he means by the sneering appellation of “your friends,” I am at a loss to determine; if he means the demagogues and bawlers for reform, who act as a public party in this metropolis, I must tell him such men are not *my* friends, and I am not *theirs*, for though they may incidentally do some good, their conduct is too reprehensible to leave their motives at all equivocal; my friends are not among the noisy candidates for public fame, they are few, but they are select; they are men of minds as pure as human

frailty will permit, and actuated by motives as honourable as human excellence can furnish, and it costs me no slight pang to repeat that the number of those I have now alive is not more than equal to those who are lost to me and to the world for ever. In cropping the redundancies of the established church, it is by no means my wish to hurt the feelings or destroy the comfort of any individual. Whether it may be found requisite to equalise the different benefices, or reduce the revenues of the clergy on the whole, nothing should be taken from the present incumbents. I am, and always have been, a gradual reformer, being convinced that all violent changes do more harm than good. It is hardly possible to believe that any clergyman can be indiscreet enough to lament the immense mass of church property which was secularised by the reforming hand of Henry VIII, however he may lament the means by which it was effected. Can any man at this time of day calmly say, that it would have been for the good, either of the church or the nation, to have had the clergy in possession of all the wealth they had before the reformation? or, will any man say, they have not enough at present, or that they ought to have more? If he does, let him think how little they do for it; and had they been all rich, who would have performed ecclesiastical duties? for it is well known that the

higher a man gets in the church the less he has to do, so that almost the whole labour is performed by deputy. The gentleman has supplied me with so much matter, that I find it impossible to conclude at present.

The clergy of the church of Durham ought to consider themselves much more indebted to me than to him who has kindly undertaken their defence. An honest enemy is better than an injudicious friend: "Defend me against my friends," said a great man of antiquity, "and I will defend myself against my enemies." But I am not the enemy of the clergy, as individuals, though, as a body, I think they have done much harm, and always in proportion to their power, I therefore wish to see that power wholly reduced to their spiritual functions. So differently does the same thing seem to different men, that the thing which the reverend champion of the church would regard as one of the worst signs of the times, I should regard as a proof of the progress of reason and reflection; for were the more opulent laity to perceive that very little benefit arises to the public from a wealthy and established ministry, and were they to cease to confound the distressed families of the poorer clergy with others of their distressed fellow creatures, because the former have rich friends whom they ought to look up to for support, and the latter have generally none:

when the laity are wise enough to know that it is no act of charity to provide for the indigent relatives of the clergy, it will be a proof that they have at least advanced one step in discrimination, and can discern between those who are objects of charity and those who are not. It is high time that they should know better than to believe all they are told by the clergy, and yet this gentleman seems to be very unwilling that they should think for themselves. When the clergy at length determine to do something for their own poor, it is all very right, according to this clerical defender; but for any layman to presume to think of it, or suggest it, before that time, is impiety and presumption. Very right, sir; you do very well to persuade the laity that no one ought to advise or disobey you in any thing, but to take all you say for granted; and yet this will not do now-a-days so well as it did fifty years ago: men are grown wiser, and begin to examine a little into the nature and origin of things. The constitution of this country, the gentleman boldly affirms, consists of church and state, (mind, the church goes first), and why not of army and navy, for they are essential to the support of the state and the church too. I will, however, venture to say, that it consists of no such things, and that the political body is the sole body of which the constitution is formed. The church of Christ, as described by

Christ himself, is not essentially united to any body politic or state whatever; the Popish religion, in the plenitude of its power, disdained an union with the state, and asserted its supreme authority over kings and princes; and the clergy, during the whole of our history, to the time of the reformation, claimed an exemption from the burdens of the state, and when that could be no longer endured, they were suffered to tax themselves in convocation. It is true that Edward the First summoned the bishops and abbots to his great council, not as spiritual peers, but as holding lands under the crown, and it is well known that even now the bishops do not sit in Parliament in right of their bishoprics, but in right of certain baronies which they are supposed to possess, or formerly possessed. The church is a corporation protected by the state, not equal to it any more than any other corporation; the body politic is formed of the King, Lords, and Commons, and though it has pleased the bishops to call themselves *Spiritual Lords*, (a term strictly forbidden by Jesus Christ), yet I have already shewn that the bishops only sit in the upper House as temporal peers. The executive power is the head of the church, say the clergy; and so he is of the army and navy, and yet neither of these ever put themselves on a level with the state or constitutional body: if the language used

in the words church and state has been tolerated, it is because the clergy have a greater influence over the minds of men than any other body, not because they have a better right to associate themselves with the civil power. The church of Christ is essentially different from every civil establishment on earth, and so far from arrogating an equality with any one, he inculcated on his disciples the most complete submission "to the powers that be." Besides, what two things can be more different than church and state? the one provides for our souls, the other for our bodies, and therefore their functions and their duties are essentially different, and the language of the constitution when it speaks of the church, is the church of England as by law established.

To represent those who are no friends to the church as enemies to the constitution of the state, is a diabolical artifice, better suited to the disciples of Ignatius Loyola than to the protestant ministers of the nineteenth century, as it is intended to single such men out as the subjects of political persecution. It is thus that the clergy attempt to identify themselves with the state, and silence all those who dare to deny the union; but it is to be hoped the attempt will no longer succeed, and that all sensible men will discern, that to be an enemy to the enormous power of the church, and a friend to the state, are by no means

incompatible. It would have been well if the overflowings of clerical bounty, which are represented as having fallen unknown upon the laity, had been reserved for the clergy's own poor; it might have saved them having recourse to the contributions of the laity, and so avoided that scandal which has been so frequently and so unwisely repeated. Let not the dignitaries of the church of Durham, at least, make a merit of what is so strongly enjoined them by their statutes; but rather let them take shame to themselves, that they so grossly misapply it, in giving to the rich that bounty which was expressly bestowed on them solely for the maintenance of the poor, and for the repairs of their church, not in pulling it down, as they did the chapter-house; let them remember also, that by these same ugly statutes, their salaries are fixed at a certain sum, beyond which they are forbidden to apply their revenues to their own private use, that sum is small indeed, and too small for the present times, but why not apply to the legislature to extend it, rather than violate their consciences by swearing to what they never intend, nor attempt to perform. "They that *will* be rich, lead themselves into temptation and a snare, and pierce themselves through with many sorrows." So the apostle thought, but I believe the clergy are not much troubled about swearing to what they never can

perform; and with most men, when an oath is considered as a mere matter of form, it gives the conscience of him that swallows it very little trouble. That "by our happy constitution we have an order of men set apart from secular concerns," I deny; they are not even set apart from these concerns by the religion they profess, for the apostles themselves laboured in their secular vocation, even when engaged in preaching the gospel. The law certainly forbids the clergy to engage in any trade or employment, but the very management of their tythes and their glebe is a secular concern, and the clergy engage in many others: at least, in all secular amusements they are to be found in numbers, such as balls, routs, and dinners; to represent them as solely engaged in attending to the spiritual and eternal concerns of mankind, is therefore to state what is not the truth, and being so easily contradicted, can do no good. To affirm that the clergy occasion no expense to the public, is as much as to say that they are not employed in the service of the public, but that all they do, all their preaching, praying, baptism, catechising, and confirming, is all out of pure generosity and kindness. "Surplice fees and Easter offerings," all that the clergy cost the public: this is bold at least, if it is not discreet! Are tythes, nothing; glebe lands, nothing; church lands, nothing? Surely this is too much to be

borne: nay, these very Easter offerings, which we are told in many parishes are given as tokens of affection and regard, are often wrung both from churchmen and dissenters by the severest process of ecclesiastical law, so that to enforce a claim of 6d. or 1s. many pounds have been spent, to the great delight of doctors and proctors, and to the heavy cost of the mistaken wretches who refused to offer these "tokens of affection and regard." All these things must tend to make the clergy greatly beloved by the laity, and inspire them with a vast commiseration for their widows and fatherless children. Had not this honest, clerical advocate, brought forward his Easter offerings as "tokens of affection and regard," I should never have thought of producing instances of the contrary; and to support my assertion, I need only refer to the perpetual disputes about tythes and moduses, and all the subterfuges the laity resort to, for the sake of lessening the weight of those grievous impositions.

Having gone through the whole, or most material parts of the gentleman's letter, I must now advert to his postscript, wherein he defends an expression of that haughty prelate, Bishop Horsley, and I will candidly confess, that upon reverting to his charge, I find he used the words "labouring clergy" not contemptuously, but "as descriptive of those who occupy the most labo-

rious situations in the church." Such a term, however, applied to the inferior clergy exclusively, is a tacit reproach to their superiors, as it implies that they do all the duty of the church, while the others, like lazy drones, consume the honey.— Permit me now, Mr. Editor, to say a few words on the general spirit and particular utility of the clergy. All bodies of men distinguished by any particular pursuit or profession, are actuated by a certain spirit and principle, both as individuals and as a body, (which the French have very aptly termed *l'esprit de corps*) whether they are exalted, oppressed, or unmolested by the government; and that spirit is in general hostile to the rest of society; the more powerful, therefore, any corporate body of men becomes, the more harm they are capable of doing. The clergy, under the pretence of taking care of men's souls, have contrived to acquire a pretty large portion of their worldly goods, and therefore as a body they have, in all countries where they have been established, become extremely powerful; both in a spiritual and a temporal light; that is, they have forbidden men to exercise their faculties on religious subjects any further than to convince themselves of the truth of what they preach; and as to their temporal concerns, they have all the influence that money and land can bestow, and then they presume to tell the people that it is their own, that they are

indebted to no one for it, that they have as good a right to it as any man has to his land; and so they have, when they do their duty; but when they neglect it, and become burdensome to the public, they may be dismissed, or else they are the rulers, not the servants of the state, like all other men who perform public duty; the only difference is, that they are paid in land and not in money, which makes no difference as to the right of the government to dispense with or modify the whole institution. Whenever the clergy are rich and powerful, they trouble themselves very little about the private concerns of the laity, being satisfied with their public influence both in spiritual and in temporal affairs: when they are poor, and dependent on the people for their support, they contrive to acquire private influence, and to manage the spiritual concerns of the people with a semblance of the most disinterested zeal for their good, but in reality from a love of that influence which all men like to possess, when it gives them wealth and even subsistence. This is precisely the difference between the Scotch and the English clergy, and it is this difference which has raised up a body of dissenters in England, who are now almost powerful enough to withdraw from the clergy the influence they possessed in the state: for a late event has shewn, that it is no longer in their power to lay restraints on the

liberty of teaching, without an opposition which it would be hazardous to irritate.—The utility of a body of clergy depends solely on the morality they teach, and the orderly, composed state of the people; for the end even of religion itself is morality, much more the end of a priesthood. Religion is only a means to enforce the precepts of morality; for a God who is infinitely great and powerful, cannot be exalted by the worship of his creatures; it is only to make them love each other, that he can wish them to love him, and if religion does not produce philanthropy and benevolence, it is a mere mockery of the Deity. Could men be taught to love and to do good to each other from pure and rational motives alone, without regard to any other being, the will of God would be equally well answered, for it is not to be supposed that he can be increased or magnified by our worship; therefore the great end and object of a body of clergy, is to teach morality, and this they may do without any great burden or expense to the state, and without neglecting their own temporal concerns; a clergy such as this, who by their moral discourses and friendly attention, improve the lower ranks of the people (who are most in need of instruction), are a blessing and an ornament to society; but a clergy, whose whole mind is occupied in managing and increasing their worldly possessions, who are proud,

selfish, and arrogant; who take no interest in the welfare of the people, and delegate the office of instruction, both in public and private, to ignorant hirelings, are not the men whom Jesus commissioned to *feed his flock*—they are the men whom Milton has described in his *Lycidas*, and in various parts of his prose writings. Such men have, in my opinion, forfeited their claim to public bounty.

I remain,

W. BURDON.

Somerset Street, Portman Square,
Oct. 16th, 1811.

LETTER III.

To the Editor of the Tyne Mercury.

SIR,

THE Rector of Haltwhistle is determined to weary both the public and me in his zeal to defend the church, for which his clerical brethren are much indebted to him, but it is hard upon a poor layman to pay so dear for the verbosity of his antagonist. Having, however, both got heartily into the battle, there is nothing left for us but to fight it out, and, to use a fashionable phrase, we must have another round or two before either of us can give it up. My second letter was in answer to one of Mr. Hollingsworth's: he has now pelted me with another, which, as it contains more words

than matter, will not require quite so heavy a return. The clergy, I repeat it, are originally indebted to individuals, but since the reformation they are indebted to the public, for at that period the church was new modelled by the king and parliament, the enormous wealth of the clergy was diminished, and applied partly to the service of the state, and partly, I am sorry to say, according to the pleasure of the monarch; and the remainder, though ill distributed, is more than sufficient for the support of the reformed clergy in affluence and plenty. That which the legislature has once done, (without its right being called in question,) it may do again, and I trust without danger or injury to the commonwealth. To answer an argument by repeating an assertion, is a new kind of logic to which I have not been accustomed, and therefore I leave the gentleman in full possession of it. I have proved the distinction between church property and that of the laity, by shewing that the one is given for services to be performed, and that the other is unconditional and as ancient as the origin of society. My antagonist answers me by repeating his assertion. I am sorry he is not very accurate in perceiving distinctions, but he either will not or cannot perceive them. I said that servants have not the same rights as their masters; he asks me if they have not a right to their own? Certainly they have; but they have not the same right to the fund

whence it arises as their masters have, which is precisely the case with the clergy; they have a right to their annual revenue; but they have not the same right to the lands and tythes from whence it issues, as laymen have, and as a proof of this, they cannot dispose of it, they cannot alter it in any shape—which, if it was their own, they undoubtedly might; they are but trustees for their successors; the fee simple is in the public, or in the legislature, the representatives of the public. Servants have a right to their wages while they serve, but if masters choose to do without servants, can servants demand their wages and say they are their own? Certainly not. The illustration of conditional possession so aptly introduced from the Blenheim estate, makes exactly for my argument; the circumstance of carrying the flag to Windsor, is a proof that when the estate was conferred, the legislature meant to shew it was derived from public bounty, and though the resumption of it would be an odious exertion of power, it would be according to strict right; it would have been well, as it was meant to be perpetual, if it had been given without any condition.

To the gentleman's personal arguments and replies I shall make no answer, except to one, in allusion to an expression of mine which he has unfairly laid hold of, and given it a wrong application. When I spoke of the "heat and ar-

dour of composition," I referred *merely* to composition, or the mode of putting my thoughts upon paper. I never meant to say, nor to have it understood, that I ever sit down to write, without having studied and examined my subject to the best of my ability; and I hardly ever write upon any subject which has not employed my thoughts for many years. It may possibly be my misfortune not to succeed in comprehending and illustrating that subject so well as others might, but it will at least relieve me from the charge of writing without thinking, and attempting to teach others what I hardly understand. I am sorry to be compelled to speak so often of myself, but it is the fault of my antagonist. To say nothing about many captious arguments which the gentleman has employed in his last letter, I must briefly notice those which are of the greatest consequence. He tells me he has been unable to find where Jesus Christ has expressly condemned the accumulation of church property.—Let him read the sermon on the mount, let him read the gospel of St. Matthew, and he will find that Christ expressly forbids his followers, not merely his disciples, to accumulate any kind of property. He tells them to "take no thought for the morrow, what they shall eat or what they shall drink, or wherewithal they shall be clothed." Mr. H. will there find that I have not led him to combat with a shadow, but with the founder of that

religion which he is paid for teaching : he will there find that the whole life and conduct of the clergy, are expressly contrary both to the letter and the spirit of Christ's precepts ; and that even the institution of the order is no where enjoined. The assertion that the church and state united form the constitution, is again repeated ; but it is a mere assertion, and contradicted by every page of our history. Before the reformation, the church was a rival and independent body, though its power had been considerably repressed by many of our most spirited monarchs. By the reformation it was put in complete subjection to the state ; the King was declared the head of it, and the convocation was its legislative assembly. Since the revolution, that assembly has lost all its powers and its privileges, and the church is still more subservient to the state ; and I will be bold to maintain, that as the state has continued to exist and to flourish for three centuries since the abolition of the catholic church, it may do the same after the abolition of the protestant establishment ; and whoever affirms the contrary is an enemy to the constitution, inasmuch as he maintains that the constitution is indebted for its support to a body to which it has no natural alliance or analogy. To make round assertions is very easy, but to prove them is very difficult ; and the gentleman has not attempted to shew how the church and the state contribute to each

other's "firmness and excellence." That the church owes much to the state, can never be denied: the converse of the proposition can never be proved, except it can be shewn that £200,000 a year in one county, given to a set of men who hardly do any duty but by deputy, can contribute to the prosperity and comfort of its inhabitants; that it is a good thing for the laity to be perpetually harassed with tythes and church leases, with increasing fines and renewals, and Easter reckonings, with all the great and all the petty gains of the clergy in various shapes and modes; and that the Scotch clergy, who are moderately and equally paid for their instruction, are not more exemplary in their lives and more sedulous in their duty, than those of the church of England. When the gentleman will prove to me that the present church property is not oppressive to the laity, and that the clergy strictly and literally adhere in all things to the precepts of Jesus, then I will allow that they contribute to the maintenance of the state, but not before.

I remain, &c.

W. BURDON.

Somerset Street, Portman Square,
Nov. 7th, 1811.

LETTER IV.

To the Editor of the Tync Mercury.

SIR,

MR. HOLLINGSWORTH has supplied me with ample matter for discussion were I disposed to notice all that is contained in his very copious communications since the foregoing letters were written ; but to avoid wearying myself or the public, I intend only to reply briefly to a few particulars which ought not to go unanswered. In his last letter but one, he denies that the clergy are the hired servants of the state, and asserts that they are directly and immediately the servants of God, that is, that they have a divine right to all that they possess, independent of human laws and institutions—thus has he revived the old high church doctrine which was believed to be happily extinct and forgotten. He denies that the clergy are paid by the public, or that they are, in any degree, supported by taxation. I must ask him what are tythes but taxation, and the most oppressive species of taxation—they are a mode of taxation derived from the Jews, and revived in Christian countries long after the establishment of Christianity for the support of the church, and in this country were imposed by our Saxon monarchs for the maintenance of the clergy and the poor; but, in succeeding

times, the clergy were powerful enough to shake off their partners and take the whole to themselves.

Mr. H. next insinuates, that if I perceive no difference between the pay of the army and navy and that of the clergy, I am grossly stupid. I must again tell him there is no difference among them so far as they all depend on the will of the legislature; they are all the servants of the public, and therefore, though the legislature has chosen to pay them differently, their payment and existence as a body depend wholly on the legislative power; and I have proved this in a reference to the reformation, when the King, Lords, and Commons, resumed into their own hands the property of the church, and portioned it out in a mode different from that in which it existed before; and they did this because they conceived it, or pretended to conceive it, for the public good; and they had a strict right to do so, because the lands and tythes possessed by the clergy were given them for the public service, whereas, had they acted thus towards individuals, they would have been guilty of the greatest injustice, because every man holds his property for his own good, and not for that of the public. If this is not clear I despair of making it clearer, but I will repeat it;—Private property cannot be taken away even by the legislature without injustice—church property may be, and has

been taken away by the legislature for the public good; and that which Mr. H. calls the rapacious zeal of Henry VIII. I must ever consider as a fortunate interference of the crown to retrench the enormous power and property of the clergy. The expression "constitution in church and state" is a faulty expression, for the church of England exists only as by law established, and the law itself arises out of the constitution, therefore that which owes its existence to the law cannot be a part of the constitution.

* Mr. H. next says, "Taking for granted the truth of the Scriptures, the clergy of the church of England," *à fortiori*, the Roman Catholic clergy, and why not the dissenting clergy? "are the servants of God." Having, to my own satisfaction at least, proved in another place, * I will not repeat it now, that the clergy are not the legitimate successors of the apostles, that neither Christ nor they appointed a particular set of men, distinguished from the laity by dress, by office, or by ordination; that the apostles themselves acted as laymen in following their secular vocations; and that the word *επισκοπος* which we translate bishop, is always used in the New Testament as synonymous with *πρεσβυτερος*; which we translate presbyter or elder, and that till the middle of the second century there

was no such thing as a single *επισκοπος*, or overseer, presiding in any of the churches established by the apostles. Hence it follows that the succession is completely interrupted, and that the institution of bishops, and all the office of ordination as existing at present, is not of higher date than one hundred and thirty years after the birth of Christ. It has also been abundantly proved in the publication abovementioned, that of all the offices and ordinances of the church not one is to be found in the New Testament, nor can be proved to have had its origin in Christ or his apostles.

Let Mr. H. and his brethren now pride themselves, and look with contempt on the laity, which no doubt they do, as being the servants of God, and call all those who deny their divine authority, *the servants of the devil*, all this will not avail them much longer, when the eyes of the people are opened to this spiritual imposture, and they find that no human being has an exclusive right to this proud superiority.

Mr. H. accuses me of attempting to steel the hearts of the laity against the widows and orphans of the clergy; what then will he think of the clergy themselves, whose hearts are steeled against their own poor, when I tell him, on the authority of a respectable lay steward of the clerical charity, that he was once refused a subscription from two well beneficed clergymen; but, if this be not a suf-

ficient motive for the laity refusing to contribute to their fund, a much stronger is to be found in the full ability of the clergy to raise the whole among themselves, considering that many very indigent members of society contribute to the support of their own poor.

I remain, &c.

W. BURDON.

Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square,
Dec. 5th, 1811.

LETTER V.

To the Editor of the Tyne Mercury.

SIR,

Mr. H. having found that my letters have left an impression on the minds of the laity not very much to the advantage of the clergy both as to the original subject of the dispute and many other particulars concerning the whole body, has very craftily, but not very honourably, turned entirely from the main question, and fallen into a strain of personal abuse against me as the author of a book which he seems to conceive renders me totally disqualified to speak of the clergy or their concerns: whatever temporary advantage he may derive from calling me an atheist, and referring to my book for a proof of his assertion, he will, in the end, neither do himself nor his profession much

good. The principles of that book I will neither stoop to defend nor retract: they are founded on that eternal rock of truth which time can neither diminish nor impair; they are not exclusively *my* principles or opinions, they are the principles of reason, comprising the interests and advantages of mankind in all ages and countries, and the more they are examined and illustrated, the more they will prevail. Mr. H. has contributed to give them a circulation through the medium of a sixpenny newspaper which they never could have gained in two octavos, price 14s. and therefore I am indebted to him much more than he intended, if he proves the means of selling me half a dozen copies, or only one copy of a book, whose sale is unavoidably very slow and limited.

Mr. H. in his last letter having ventured on some assertions which are not founded in fact, and been guilty of some misrepresentation of considerable moment to me and my book, it is requisite for me briefly to notice them, and then finally to leave the whole controversy to the determination of the public, and to the impression it may naturally tend to leave upon their minds. The gentleman boldly asserts, that the doctrine of necessity is subversive of all religion and morality; for the former I will say nothing, because necessity is the doctrine of reason, and reason is subversive of religion, but reason and morality agree most cordially, and there-

fore the doctrine of necessity, which supposes that all human actions are the result of the strongest motives, cannot be, in any degree, subversive of morality, if morality rests upon motives, and motives are influenced by habits. Mr. H. supposes me to waver between atheism and scepticism, which arises from his mistaking the sense of a passage he has quoted; the passage is as follows: "If there is such a Being as an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent God, there cannot be any other Being in the universe who has the power to act freely." Now the "if" is not a doubting "if," but an inductive "if;" I did not mean simply to doubt whether there is such a Being, but to say, if there is, then the deduction or consequence must be, that no other creature can be wholly free. Mr. H. accuses me of condemning the Bible because it forbids the *vicious* indulgence of our appetites and passions. I did not use the word *vicious*, but *generous*, which he interprets to mean *vicious*—I did not even say this, I only said that the general dislike to the Bible among young people arises from the *idea* that it interferes with the generous indulgence of the appetites and passions; now I believe none but a visionary ascetic will deny that the moderate indulgence of the appetites and passions contributes materially to the happiness of our nature. That Jesus Christ, who was a quietist in the strictest sense of the word, forbid even the

most moderate indulgence of these propensities is evident from many of his precepts in their literal acceptance, and therefore it is that none but those whose senses and passions are almost worn out, are very constant readers of the Bible: and Mr. H.'s long note about the number of Bibles annually distributed will not convince me to the contrary, he must prove that all who receive a copy of the Bible are much employed in reading it. But even here he mistakes me, I never meant to say that the Bible ought not to be universally read—far otherwise, I only said that it is not so read, because the generality of mankind mistake its general tendency. It is a book like all human compositions, for a human composition it most certainly is, and must ever be considered, till we can prove what is meant by divine inspiration; like all human compositions it contains much good and much evil; but as the morality of the Old Testament and much of the New is of the most useful and practical tendency, and as it has been so long rendered almost vernacular to the English, I certainly know of no book that can be substituted in its room as a system of morality, and as such I rejoice at the means that have been taken to extend its circulation, and render it familiar to the greatest possible number of mankind in all nations. Let Mr. H. therefore retract his assertion concerning *my system*, for I have no system

independent of the general principles of morality, which are to be found in the Old and New Testament, and let him remember that the doctrine of immortality which he so highly prizes is not to be found in any part of the Jewish scriptures; therefore, when he talks of *my system* as of something new, and rings all his changes about the French revolution, let him revert to his Bible and his classics, and he will find that I have written nothing which is not to be found in these celebrated repositories of ancient wisdom, I have only opposed the pretensions of Moses and Jesus Christ to a divine revelation, but I have not touched one atom of the morality of Solomon, of Jesus the son of Sirach, or of Jesus the son of Joseph, and his apóstles, where it is consistent with the principles of reason and general utility. Let him consider also, that in all writers of all countries the principles of morality are nearly the same; the morality of Confucius, of Solomon, and of Socrates, all rest on the same firm foundation, the good and happiness of mankind; the religious systems of different nations differ as much as their climate or their character; therefore Mr. ~~H.~~ ought to blush for having asserted that my system, as he calls it, which contains no more than the general principles of morality, acknowledged by all civilised nations, tends to “banish all moral goodness from

the world, and to let mankind loose as so many wild beasts against each other, and that the ruin of every state must speedily ensue.”

Mr. H. either knows, or ought to know, that such an assertion is false, scandalous, and malicious, that it is a libel upon human nature, inasmuch as it supposes man to be incapable of acting rightly from honest and conscientious motives, (that is from the dictates of justice and reason), and is only to be influenced by imaginary hopes and terrors. In opposition to this I affirm that the morality of the Bible, without a single word of its religious system, which contains many things offensive to decency and common sense, is fully sufficient, were it generally diffused, to improve the condition of the world, and to make mankind more generally virtuous than they have ever yet been, and for this purpose I should be glad to see the moral precepts and historical beauties of the Old and New Testament separated from the dross with which they are at present mixed, and circulated all over the world as a manual of morality; at any rate, however, I rejoice to hear that so many thousand copies of the Bible, even as it is, have been dispersed abroad without gloss or comment.

The coarse and illiberal censure which Mr. H. has passed on me, and all those who preach the doctrine of pure morality, unadulterated by the mixture of religion, I should never have noticed, did it not give me an opportunity to affirm the

direct contrary of what he has arrogantly pronounced to be the state of my mind and the nature of my motives. That I have had my share of trouble and uneasiness, and perhaps more than falls to the lot of most men, I will not attempt to deny, and if I have at times felt "the want of internal peace and enjoyment," it has not arisen from "any sullen dissatisfaction at the decrees of Providence, nor have I vainly hoped for the removal of my disquietude in the changes and revolutions of the constituted authorities of the world." A philosopher of old wished that he had a window in his breast, that all the world might see what was passing in it; and were I to repeat this wish, it would be without vanity or ostentation, and solely to convince other men of the purity of my motives; but they who know me best will bear me witness, that I have never been actuated in any transaction of my life by a regard to sordid interest, and that I have sacrificed the esteem of my friends and the hopes of preferment to what I have conceived the good of mankind. So far from murmuring at the dispensations of Providence, I have for many years been convinced that the world is governed by an irresistible necessity, and under this conviction I have ceased to murmur seriously at the evils of life, though practically speaking, I have many times attempted to mitigate their force; and perhaps Mr. H. will envy me when I tell him of the pleasure I receive

from contemplating the progress of human improvement, and from witnessing a successful opposition to the will of tyants. So far from "wishing for power or distinction in times of confusion," the tenor of my life has been so private and retired, so averse to the bustle of public business, that I shrink from all crowded and tumultuous meetings as I should from a touch of the torpedo, and even in private society I feel afraid to speak before two or three strangers; and as to desiring the homage of mankind, I wish for no other praise than the simple acknowledgement, that I have attempted to the utmost of my poor ability, and according to the dictates of my conscience, to improve the condition of the world. From private afflictions I have suffered much, and for many years, but from all that I have attempted to do for the public, I have experienced no sensations but those arising from conscious rectitude and benevolent intention; if Mr. H. wishes to know further, how much he has misrepresented me, let him inquire of those few who know me; to say more of myself would be both distressing and indelicate. To affirm that I am generally "hostile to all the institutions of man," is a base and unfounded calumny, and it requires all the restraint of philosophy to check the natural warmth of my temper in repelling so infamous an accusation. I well know that mankind cannot be governed without civil ordinances and regulations, and be-

cause I have expressed a wish to see these rendered as excellent, and administered with as little corruption as the weakness of human nature will permit, to represent me as a monster, who is the enemy of the human race, is a degree of wickedness which I hardly could have expected from * *a servant of the devil*, much less from one of those who wish to be considered as the chosen servants of God. For my detestation of French tyranny, French anarchy, and the excesses of the French revolution, I must refer the reader to all that I have ever written. Surely, had the gentleman recollected St. Paul's definition of charity, he would have hesitated before he imputed to any man motives so base as those he has imputed to me; for others who have written like myself, I will not venture to answer, but I am willing to believe that they have been actuated by motives no less pure and benevolent. Had Mr. H. ever read the *Materials for Thinking* for any other purpose than the mischievous satisfaction of pulling it to pieces, he would have found in the *Essay on Liberality of Sentiment* some hints which might possibly have corrected his uncharitable disposition.

The same clerical censor, who has so harshly interpreted my general motives, insinuates that

* If the clergy are the servants of God, *whose servant is Mr. Burdon?*—Vide Mr. H.'s letter, dated Nov. 23d, 1811.

I only *pretend* not to discern the connection between church and state; if I should say that he only *pretends* to be a servant of God, I should have more truth on my side, because I believe it impossible for him to prove his divine commission. I am not apt to pretend any thing, much less to pretend ignorance of what I think I understand, and there is nothing clearer to my mind than the distinct nature of church and state, and the impossibility of their union as equal and co-ordinate bodies, according to the precepts and practice of Jesus Christ. As a spiritual body the church of Christ can have no connection with the state, and as a civil body it has no existence, for he has strictly commanded his disciples to submit themselves to every species of civil government, now where there is submission on one side there can be no equality.

Mr. H. next ejaculates a pious wish that I no longer may produce, among other kinds of nauseous fruit which he has enumerated, "an aversion to all morality except such as centers in selfish interests and enjoyments;" had he read the *Materials for Thinking* with any other motive than that of abusing it, he would have found that I am the avowed enemy of that system of philosophy which pronounces all men to be actuated by gross self-love; and he would have found that sentiment expressed in my review of the system of Rochefoucault, vol. ii. p. 151, and in other

parts of the book, p. 240, 241; but it did not answer his purpose to represent me, or even suffer me to represent myself, in an amiable light, it was his object to hold me up to the world as only worthy of detestation, because I have dared to deny the truth of that which he holds most sacred, and to exalt morality above religion.

Having now examined the principal parts of Mr. H.'s last letter, and I sincerely hope it will be his last to me, I must not forget to advert to his postscript, which reminds me of an old captain of a ship, who used always to begin his letters to his owner with P. S. as that generally contained much more than the letter itself. Mr. H.'s postscript is much like the tail of a comet, longer and more fiery than the body; he has also a wonderful talent for digression, by which means he has drawn out this controversy to an unreasonable length. I began it with a single unconnected assertion, that the clergy of Durham were fully able to support their own poor, and had it not been for Mr. H.'s overheated zeal, I should probably have never written a word more about the clergy or their subscription, but he has drawn me to other matters, and enticed me to speak more at large on the civil and ecclesiastical constitution of the church, of which I had not originally the smallest intention. Mr. H. has kindly quoted, for the confirmation of my opinions on the mortal nature of man, several passages from the heathen

classics, but it is not from the classics that I have drawn my opinions on that momentous subject, it is from a candid and laborious examination of the scriptures and the early fathers, that I have derived the conviction that Christianity is nothing more than a mere human system, and that many of its doctrines are contrary to reason and experience, and I have found a still stronger testimony against its truth in the miseries it has intailed on mankind ; and though I am far from defending the atrocities of the French revolution, I only request any impartial man to compare the numbers of those who have suffered from the persecutions of one sect of Christians against another, in every part of the globe, from the birth of Christ to the present times, with those who suffered during the French revolution ; but it is not merely the numbers of those that have been openly persecuted that are to be considered, but the miseries and dissensions which religion has occasioned in private societies, and even now occasions in the most civilised nations of the world. It is more than probable that Mr. H. will never hear of me, nor from me again, and I heartily wish he would leave me to the enjoyment of that undisturbed tranquillity, which is my greatest comfort and delight.

I remain, &c.

W. BURDON.

Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square,
Dec. 11th, 1811.

Lately published by the same Author.

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PLAIN STATEMENT,

§c. §c. §c.

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PLAIN STATEMENT

OF

THE CAUSES

THAT LED TO A PROSECUTION,

WHICH WAS
TWICE ENTERED FOR TRIAL
IN THE COURT OF KING'S BENCH, WESTMINSTER,
BEFORE LORD ELLENBOROUGH,
AND A SPECIAL JURY,

WHEREIN

JEREMIAH TIBBLE WAS PLAINTIFF,

AND

THOMAS NEWBERY, Esq. DEFENDANT,

LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT

Reading Volunteers,

RESPECTING

AN ALLOWANCE OF PAY TO THE SAID TIBBLE, AS ONE OF THE
DRILL SERJEANTS OF THE REGIMENT, BUT WAS WITHDRAWN
BY THE PLAINTIFF'S COUNSEL.

WITH SOME

REMARKS ON THE VOLUNTEER SYSTEM,

AND THE BENEFITS WHICH MIGHT HAVE RESULTED FROM A PROPER
MANAGEMENT OF IT ON THE PART OF GOVERNMENT.

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Advertisement.

THE Author of these sheets has no other motive for their publication, than to lay an impartial statement before a candid and discerning Public.—an indulgence, which he is anxious to obtain, but presumes to claim only in proportion to the interest, which its perusal may excite. Although feeling some regret, that his endeavours to promote the welfare of the corps should appear to have been requited by a kind of ingratitude, to which he had been hitherto unaccustomed, yet he is willing to suppose, nor does he

refrain from hoping, that it has no stronger traits than such as human frailty too often exhibits.

He begs to say that this pamphlet would not have been intruded, particularly as respecting himself, had not he been aware, that the prosecution was of too public a nature to pass unnoticed ;—a prosecution, not likely to have any other tendency, than to discourage that voluntary spirit, that active service, which had been so laudably and disinterestedly exerted by every loyal subject on a former occasion, and which the state of the country might, at some future period, again require. The only satisfaction the author can feel, will be in having suggested to those, who may be inclined to fill the same respectable situation, to which he was appointed, the means of avoiding that unpleasant trouble, which the Commandant of the late Reading Volunteers has, in so unmerited a manner, experienced.

By endeavouring to make this Tract as clear as possible, the Author has been induced to take the liberty of subjoining other matter, besides merely the exposure of this prosecution, but intimately connected with the cause of it. The whole is comprised under three heads:—one part relates to the disbanding the Regiment:—another is the Commandant's statement of the condition of the corps, previous to, and at that period;—and the last contains some remarks on the Volunteer System, endeavouring to show the probable benefits, which might have resulted from a proper management of it on the part of Government.

FIRST:—DISBANDING THE
REGIMENT OF READING VOLUNTEERS,

July 8, 1809.

Letter from the Lord Lieutenant to the Commandant.

Hartwell Farm, June 27, 1809.

SIR,

I AM directed by his Majesty's Secretary of State, to apprise you of the contents of a letter received from the Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant of the Royal Berks Local Militia, and of several affidavits forwarded by him.

The letter states, that "the Local Militia under his command having met on the 5th of June, to celebrate his Majesty's birth day,

were interrupted in their exercise; himself, and officers insulted, and an attempt made to excite a mutiny," and that he therefore "lodges his remonstrance against the *Reading Corps of Volunteers*, who from accompanying affidavits appear to be the aggressors, and sole perpetrators in this business," and that "to many of the facts stated he was an eye-witness."

Affidavits.

No. I. Asserts, that Captain Simonds mentioned his fear that there was a disposition in Cowdery, a serjeant in his company, and some other tinmen, to vindicate the claim to be made by the privates in the Local Militia for the marching guineas.

II. Asserts, that on the 5th of June, as the grenadiers were marching from the private parade to the Forbury, they were met by several of the Volunteers with their arms, who said: "Grenadiers, stick out for your rights, and have your guinea," and passing afterwards several companies of volunteers, *not dismissed*, similar language was held.

III. Asserts, that on the 5th of June, as the regiment was going to the parade, many Reading Volunteers, in London-street, addressed the men: "My boys, stick out for your guineas;" that when Major Marsh on the parade was explaining the Act of Parliament, respecting the disposal of the guinea for necessaries, a great noise was made by the populace, consisting chiefly of Reading Volunteers, crying out, "stand out for your rights," and pressing upon the centinels who were keeping the ground; that Capt. Tanner addressed them as soldiers and townsmen to keep behind the centinels; but this not being effectual, he directed the centinel to do his duty; that the musket was taken by a

serjeant, and brought down to the charging position, but some of the Volunteers seized the bayonet, and one man is understood to be hurt by it—that the Woodley Cavalry coming in, the Volunteers retired—and that the serjeant who had so charged the bayonet was marked out by the mob, and but for the rescue of him by the constable, material injury to him was to have been apprehended.

IV. Asserts, (respecting the same time, place, and business,) that several Reading Volunteers were behaving in a violent and improper manner, forcing themselves upon the centinels, and calling upon the Local Militia to stand to their rights, and insist upon having their guinea, exciting them to resist their officers; that Major Simonds, after a considerable time, came, and used his endeavours to disperse them, but ineffectually.

V. Asserts, to the effect of the last above, adding, that they declared, that if the men who were taken into custody (see affidavit ix.)

“ were not liberated, they would fetch them out.”

VI. Asserts, (respecting the same time, place, and business,) that a great number of people, principally Reading Volunteers, excited the Local Militia to resist their officers, and lay down their arms, declaring “ that the men ought to have their rights, and the money paid to them,” *which they were determined on seeing should be done*; they also pressed upon the centinels, and only ceased on the arrival of the Woodley Cavalry.

VII. Asserts, (respecting the same time, place, and business,) as No. IV. adding, that they said, “ down with them, down with them,” that one of them struck Lieutenant Robinson, who was dissuading them from pressing upon the centinels.

VIII. Asserts, that several of the Reading Volunteers on the 5th of June last, as the

Local Militia were marching to the Forbury, used these expressions, “well done my boys, stand up for your rights, stick out for your guinea, *and we will help you, if you want us.*”

IX. Asserts, (respecting the same time, place, and business,) that there was a riot in the Forbury, that several of the Volunteers were calling to others to fetch their arms, declaring “that they would fetch out a Serjeant of the Local Militia, who had stabbed one of their men.” That Major Simonds applied to them to disperse, but they replied, “he had nothing to do with them, and they would go where they pleased.”

X. Asserts, that great numbers of the Volunteers and others assembled in the Forbury, and made a great noise, while Major Marsh was reading the Act of Parliament, pressed upon the centinels,—that two persons, *not Volunteers*, who were encouraging the riot, were taken into custody by Captain

Tanner's order, and that several Volunteers, with drawn bayonets, avowed their determination to rescue them.

XI. Asserts, (respecting the same time, place, and business,) that John Willis, one of the Rifle Company, declared, "he would knock down the centinel," (who by order was keeping off the crowd,) "if he touched him with his piece."

XII. Asserts, that on the 5th of June many, the greater part wearing the uniform of the Reading Volunteers, were violently exciting the Local Militia Men to stand up for their rights.

XIII. Asserts, that a Volunteer, who declared "he thought there would be a disturbance on the 5th of June," bought that evening half a pound of large shot.

I am further directed to say, that "I am ready to receive any statement, that can be offered on behalf of the Corps."

You will please to acknowledge the receipt of this to me in Grosvenor-street, London.

I have, Sir, the honor to be,

(Signed) RADNOR,

Lieutenant of Berks.

To Lieut.-Col. Newbery, &c. &c.

The Commandant's answer, dated June 29, 1800.

(COPY.)

MY LORD,

I lose not a moment in answering your Lordship's letter, but cannot refrain, in the first instance, from expressing my surprise, on observing, by the remonstrance of the Lieutenant Colonel Commandant of the Royal Berks Local Militia to his Majesty's Secretary of State, and the Affidavits annexed, that the improper conduct of the privates of that regiment, the misunderstanding between them and their officers, or whatever it may be called, should be made a subject of complaint against the Reading Volunteers.

I forbear to state to your Lordship, how much in general terms, I could speak of the good behaviour of the corps, which I have the honor to command, as that, at present, would be going from the purpose. In confin-

ing myself strictly to the circumstances, as they occurred on the 5th of June last, I fear your Lordship will think me remiss, by not giving a full relation; but I trust, that I shall be excused, when I declare, that to this hour, I am entirely ignorant of the greatest part of them—That the regiment paraded in the Forbury in honor of his Majesty's birth-day, and that their appearance, steady behaviour, and firings, were such, as did them the highest credit, hundreds of persons, as well as myself, can justly testify—That they assembled at two o'clock, and were dismissed about four, in the most orderly, quiet, and peaceable manner, I will likewise, upon my Honor, declare—What might pass afterwards in the streets between individuals, about marching guineas, &c. or any thing of that kind, I confess, that I cannot take upon myself to say, nor can I possibly learn from the most diligent inquiry.—I believe, whatever it might be, it was merely trifling, in comparison with the exaggerated statements there made.

The men, on leaving the Forbury, were sent by companies to some public houses, to celebrate the day by a slight refreshment, and the officers adjourned, about an hour afterwards, to dine with Lieutenant Colonel Fuller Maitland, at the Crown Inn, when in the midst of it, there came a message from the commander of the Royal Berks Local Militia, by a non-commissioned officer, that some of the Volunteers were disorderly at his parade. It was advised by the whole of the officers, (and thought proper by me) that the Major and one Captain should *immediately* go, to see what was the matter, and that it would not be right for all to go, except called on by the civil authority.—In a short time it was quiet, but I was informed afterwards, that the Woodley Cavalry, who were dining near, had been desired to parade about, and this brought a great number of Volunteers from the different houses; for before then, there were very few indeed of them, as spectators.

I do not know of any of those expressions, asserted in the affidavits, being uttered, nor can I, in the least, give credit, that there was

an avowal of a determination to acts of violence. The pressing on the centinels, who were stationed to keep the ground, I impute to the curiosity of the inhabitants and volunteers mixed together in a crowd, and I conjecture, it was at the time, when the Local Militia Men were laying down their arms and refusing to exercise—first one company—then another; however, every thing was perfectly quiet and peaceable the next day.—They were dismissed, with the thanks of the town, for their general good conduct, and this affair seemed to be hardly worth mentioning afterwards.

I have gone to a great length, much further than I intended, but I should be better satisfied, were your Lordship to apply to the Magistrates of this Borough, and you would be more satisfactorily informed by them, than I am able, though I believe, I have mentioned every thing that I can now recollect relating to it.

I have the honor to be, my Lord, &c.

(Signed) T. NEWBERY.

Lieut. Col. Commandant, Reading Volunteers.

The Earl of Radnor, &c. &c.

Letter from the Secretary of State.

(Copy.)

“ Lord Liverpool observes, that nothing in the reply of Lieut. Col. Newbery, to certain charges contained in a letter of the Lieutenant Colonel Commandant of the Royal Berks Local Militia and the accompanying affidavits, invalidates the charges, which have been brought against the Corps of Reading Volunteers, and which have been corroborated by no less than thirteen affidavits, several of which have been made by persons wholly unconnected with either of the parties in question, that he has therefore felt it his duty to submit to His Majesty, the expediency of disbanding a corps whose conduct appears to have been so improper, and that in consequence, he is commanded to signify to the Lord Lieutenant of Berks, His Majesty's pleasure, that the corps should be disbanded accordingly.”

On Lieut. Col. Maitland's personal application to Lord Liverpool, his Lordship was pleased to say, that if he had been rather hasty in recommending the Reading Corps to be disbanded, it was partly owing to Lieut. Colonel Newbery's answer to the Lord Lieutenant's letter being unaccompanied with the proper documents, to invalidate the charges he had received, but that if Lieut. Colonel Maitland would procure and prove a counter-statement, the whole should be reconsidered, on which the following were transmitted to the Lord Lieutenant, to be forwarded to the Secretary of State.

*To the Right Hon. The EARL of LIVERPOOL,
one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State,
&c. &c.*

The Memorial of the undersigned Officers, in
the late Regiment of Reading Volunteers,

Respectfully Showeth,

That the Regiment was embodied, in the month of September 1803, a period when the voluntary military services of the country were called for, by Government, and that it has continued at considerable expence, and personal inconvenience to your Memorialists, until the 20th day of July last, when they were informed by a letter from the Lord Lieutenant of this county, that His Majesty could no longer accept their services, in consequence of a complaint lodged by the Lieutenant Colonel Commandant of the Royal Berks Local Militia, accompanied by affidavits, stating that the Volunteers on

the 5th of June last, had excited the said regiment of Local Militia to mutiny.

Your Memorialists have heard of this decision of His Majesty, with the greatest grief, and astonishment, because they had every reason to believe, that the services of the Regiment had been acceptable to his Majesty, and because its conduct had been always marked by the most decided loyalty, and affection to His Majesty's Person and Government. No complaint, they believe, had ever been made of the behaviour of the regiment before the 5th day of June last, and if testimonies are wanting of its good order and regularity, your Memorialists beg to refer your Lordship to the Magistrates of this borough for its readiness at all times to support the civil authority, and to the Inspecting Field Officer of the District for its steadiness and regularity in the field.

With respect to the transactions of the 5th day of June, alluded to in the complaint and affidavits annexed — Your Memorialists could have immediately procured

others made by persons well acquainted with the conduct of the Volunteers, on that day, if they had been informed, that such were expected by Government, to enable it to form an accurate opinion upon the subject; but your Memorialist, Thomas Newbery, late Lieut. Colonel Commandant, not having understood from the Lord Lieutenant's letter, that more was required from him than a statement of such circumstances, as had come to his knowledge, had not communicated the abstract of the affidavits to the other officers of the regiment.

Your Memorialists have here to express their regret, that Government has thought proper to adopt the opinion communicated in the Lord Lieutenant's letter, knowing as they do, that many, if not most, of the facts contained in the affidavits are either mistaken or untrue, and persuaded as they also are, that the more the conduct of the Volunteers is inquired into, the more it will be found consistent with the character, which they have always borne for steadiness and regularity.

With this view your Memorialists now transmit to your Lordship for the consideration of his Majesty's Government, a series of Affidavits relative to the conduct of the Volunteers on the 5th day of June, by which it will be seen that the disposition and intention to mutiny in the Local Militia existed and had been known for several days previous to the 5th of June, and that so far were the Volunteers from contributing to this disposition, that the privates of the Local Militia had expressed their apprehensions, that such their mutinous intention would be impeded or prevented by the Reading Volunteers.

It will be farther seen, that when the Local Militia were in a mutinous state in the Forbury on the 5th day of June, the Woodley cavalry were sent to by the Commandant of the Royal Berks Local Militia, requesting their assistance to quell the disturbance in that corps, which was complied with, and the cavalry turned out for this purpose, and not to disperse the Volunteers, as stated in the affidavits.

On the whole therefore, your Memorialists beg leave to express their confidence, that when the affidavits annexed shall have been duly examined and considered, and your Lordship and his Majesty's Government shall have given the case the attention to which it is apprehended to be intitled, his Majesty will do them the justice to order the re-establishment of the regiment, that its honor may be restored, and that every individual of which it is composed, both officers and men, may be enabled to evince their loyalty and attachment to His Majesty's Person and Government, as on all former occasions.

* Dated at Reading, this 4th day of August 1809.

Affidavits.

Edmund Cowdery, of Reading, tinman, maketh oath, that he was a Serjeant in Captain Simonds's company of Reading

* Signed by the Field Officers, Captains, and nearly the rest of the Officers of the Corps.

Volunteers, and that after the corps was dismissed on the 5th of June last, he was not in or near the Forbury, during the remainder of that day, and to the best of his knowledge and belief, he never had conversation, or communication with any person whatever, on the subject of the privates of the Royal Berks Local Militia being intitled to marching guineas.

Blackall Simonds, Esq^r of Reading, Re-
 Captain in the late Reading Volunteers, maketh oath, that he never expressed a fear, that there was a disposition in Serjeant Cowdery to vindicate the claims of the privates in the Royal Berks Local Militia, but on the contrary has ever had reason to suppose his said Serjeant to be a quiet, steady, and good soldier.

Henry Grover, of Reading, innholder, maketh oath, that he had twelve of the Royal Berks Local Militia men quartered on him, and that on several days previous to the

5th of June last, he heard them express their determination to lay down their arms, unless they were paid their marching guineas; that one evening in particular, four more of the same corps, who were not quartered in his house, came into the kitchen, and staid a considerable time, during which he heard them repeatedly use the same expressions.

William Golding, of Reading, shopkeeper, maketh oath, that on the 5th of June last, three of the grenadiers of the Royal Berks Local Militia, came into his shop to purchase necessaries, and said that they understood the light company of their corps meant that evening to lay down their arms, in consequence of their marching guineas not having been paid to them, which they thought themselves intitled to; that they, the grenadiers, intended to do the same, and expressed a hope that the battalion would follow the example.

John Marshall, of Reading, hair dresser, maketh oath, that on the morning of the 5th

of June last, he heard four or five of the grenadiers of the Royal Berks Local Militia say, at the corner of the Market-Place, that the light company of the same corps, intended that evening to lay down their arms, owing to their not having received their marching guineas, which they thought themselves intitled to, and the said grenadiers declared they would lay down their arms, and hoped the batallion would do the same.

Nathaniel Hone, of Reading, innholder, maketh oath, that he was in the Forbury on the 5th of June last, and saw the Volunteers dismissed, that the Local Militia immediately marched in by companies to take the ground, and that previous to their forming into line, he heard the grenadier company huzza; on inquiring the cause, he was informed by a person, who appeared to be a bargeman, that he would hear something more presently; in an instant they huzzaed again, and were followed by the rest of the companies from right to left and left to right, and the light company in particular, many of whom laid down

their arms, owing to ~~not having received~~ their marching guineas, and after some time, on being persuaded to take them up, they shouted and halloed, with their caps on their bayonets, and the same conduct was followed by the other companies. This deponent declares, that he did not see one Volunteer in the Forbury, at the time the Local Militia conducted themselves as before stated.

George Wix Joplin, of Reading, ironmonger, maketh oath, that he was in the Forbury about 5 o'clock in the afternoon on the 5th of June last, and saw the light company of the Royal Berks Local Militia in a very refractory state, and the Serjeant Major endeavouring to pacify them; they were surrounded by persons of the town, but he did not observe any Volunteers amongst them; about a fortnight after, he was informed by an officer of the Local Militia, that on the 5th of June last, he was at the mess at the Bear Inn, that the serjeant major came into the room, and went to the Commandant, and told

him, the men had been very riotous in the Forbury, and it was with great difficulty he could get them on, from an opinion that the marching guineas would not be paid them; that Major Marsh, in consequence, either went or sent for the Act of Parliament, for the purpose of explaining the matter to them in the Forbury, and that no mention was then made of any misconduct of the Volunteers.

Thomas Ridgeway, of Reading, weaver, and a private in the Royal Berks Local Militia, maketh oath, that he understood, some few days previous to the 5th of June last, that several of the said Militia were determined, on the evening of that day, to assert their rights respecting the guineas, and that consequently, as soon as the regiment had taken its ground by companies in the Forbury, the grénadiers began to make huzzas, which were followed by the light company, and also by the others: on his enquiring the cause of the huzzaing, he was informed it was a signal, for one and all to speak for their rights.—That at the time of

such huzzás, there were very few of the Volunteers in the Forbury, and that they were not at all concerned in encouraging the said Militia, to act as they did, but that it was previously settled by the Militia only, that as the regiment was afterwards passing from the Forbury to the Bear Inn, several of the Militia said to the Volunteers, whom they happened to meet, "Volunteers, we are going to seek for our rights to night.--You wo'n't hurt us;" but the Volunteers made no reply.

Dennis Haycroft, of Reading, watchmaker, maketh oath, that at the time the Royal Berks Local Militia came into the Forbury in the afternoon of the 5th of June last, they were in a disorderly state, and particularly the light company, and that the said company did, in his hearing, insist on having their guineas, and that they did five or six times take off their caps, and put them on the butts of their muskets, and that the serjeant belonging to the said company, told him he would do the same, provided he had not his piece, and the same serjeant encou-

raged the men, by saying to them, "my lads, stick up for your guineas," and this he repeated to them several times; and this deponent also saw the grenadier company of the Local Militia lay down their arms, and then give two or three loud huzzas; and this deponent declares, that to the best of his knowledge, there were not more than ten of the Volunteers in the Forbury at the time, none of whom took any part in the disturbance occasioned by the Local Militia.

William Langstaffe of Reading, bookbinder, and Samuel Harrison, of the same place, watchmaker, severally make oath, that they were in the Forbury on the 5th of June last, during the time of exercise of the Reading Volunteers, that on their being dismissed by the Colonel of each company of the said volunteers, they retired from the Forbury in the greatest order and regularity. Immediately after which, the Royal Berks Local Militia marched in for afternoon parade, that the said Local Militia very quickly manifested a great degree of dissatisfaction and mutiny.

respecting marching guineas, which they claimed to be due to them; and they both believe that not more than ten or twelve volunteers returned to the Forbury, during the time of such mutiny; that they first heard a great murmuring among the said Militia, but that none of the few volunteers, or other spectators, interfered with them; that they both stood near the light company, who the more to manifest their dissatisfaction, placed and hoisted their caps on their muskets with huzzas, which signals were answered by the grenadiers, and other companies of the centre, and then the light company laid down their arms.—That no commissioned officer of the said corps was then present, the regiment having been marched by the Serjeants into the Forbury, merely for muster, and then to the Bear Inn, where the officers were dining, who were to take their stations, and accompany their several companies back to the Forbury, for the usual exercise, that before the said regiment would march to the Bear Inn, the Serjeant Major formed the light company into a circle, to explain to them in what manner the marching

guineas had been appropriated, and assured them that the officers would give them further explanation, and then the men, although evidently dissatisfied, marched to the Bear Inn, and the officers then took the command of their several companies, and they are confident that during the time they were in the Forbury, there were not more than ten or twelve Volunteers present, who as well as the rest of the inhabitants, were quiet spectators, that neither of these deponents belong to, or have connexions with either of the regiments in question — and William Langstaffe, for himself further saith, that on the return of the regiment of Local Militia to the Forbury, it was formed into a square, for the purpose of having the Act of Parliament read and explained, that different centinels were placed to keep the crowd (which was become numerous) from the said regiment, and this deponent, who was as near as the centinels would permit, did not hear any expressions whatever made use of by the Volunteers (who were even but few) which could tend to excite, or encourage any fresh disorder in the Local Militia; that while

Major Marsh was reading the said Act, Mr. Ring of Reading, surgeon, entered the line kept by the centinels, and insisted on approaching the square, to hear the Act read, upon which James Clifford, a Volunteer, but who was not in his uniform, stated to the centinel, that Mr. Ring, being wholly unconnected with the regiment, ought not to be allowed to break the line; that if he was allowed to pass, others ought to be permitted the same, that the said James Clifford did afterwards pass, when Captain Tanner violently seized and assaulted him, which was the cause of some tumult and disorder, but that none of the Volunteers, nor any inhabitants of the town, had any connexion whatever with the mutiny and disorder of the **Local Militia.**

George Knight, of Reading, weaver, maketh oath that on the 5th of June last, he went to the Forbury at the time the Royal Berks Local Militia marched from the Bear Inn, that soon after they were formed in a square, and Major Marsh read to them the Act of

Parliament respecting the disposal of the guineas. There was a great crowd, and several of the bye-standers said, "Speak out, speak out;" at that time there were very few of the Volunteers present, and he did not see any improper conduct on the part of them; Major Marsh stopt reading in consequence of the cry "speak out," and desired the centinel to take them into custody, immediately on which Captain Tanner and Lieut. Robinson came from the square and seized two men, neither of whom were Volunteers; and this deponent believes that in consequence of the said two men being so seized, it led to the subsequent disturbance which happened, but which was of a trifling nature, and peace was immediately restored.

Henry Herbert, of Reading, flax-dresser, maketh oath, that he went to the Forbury on the 5th of June last, that the regiment of Royal Berks Local Militia was then formed in a square, and he understood Major Marsh was addressing them, but he could not distinctly hear what was said, that a person

not a volunteer, said aloud, "speak out," when he was immediately taken into custody by one or some of the officers, and delivered to a file of men, on which another person, but not a volunteer, exclaimed, "fetch him out," on which Captain Tanner and other officers took him also into custody, that the crowd then began to increase very fast, and to press on the centinels, who were keeping the ground, on which Serjeant Hawkins* took a musket with the bayonet fixed, from one of the privates—passed through the line of centinels, and slightly stabbed a volunteer, who was standing in the rear of them, and who had not in the least interfered; this deponent further saith, that he did not see any improper conduct on the part of the Volunteers.

Charles Cooper, of Reading, painter, maketh oath, that he was a Serjeant in the late Reading Volunteers, and that on the regi-

* Serjeant Hawkins was, for this offence, tried at the sessions of the peace, held for the Borough of Reading, found guilty of the assault, and sentenced to pay a fine.

ment being dismissed in the Forbury, on the 5th of June last, he marched the company to which he belonged into the town to drink his Majesty's Health, that he passed several companies of the Royal Berks Local Militia, but that he did not hear any expressions whatever made use of by his company as they passed—if any had been uttered he must have heard them, as the company were marching by fours, and he was nearly opposite the centre.

Depositions to the above effect have been made by the Serjeants, who marched from the Forbury the other nine companies, but being only repetitions, it would be unnecessary to insert them.

W. B. Simonds, Esq. of Reading, Major in the late Reading Volunteers maketh oath, that on the 5th of June last being at dinner at the Crown Inn, with the rest of the officers of the said regiment, a non-commissioned officer of the Royal Berks Local Militia came with a message to the Commanding Officer,

complaining that the Volunteers were disorderly disposed, and desiring his interference, on which he, the Major, immediately went out, and seeing a servant on horseback at the inn door, he borrowed his horse and rode it at three quarters' speed to the Forbury. On his arrival he found a crowd, consisting of volunteers and town-persons in a seeming confusion, that on endeavouring to persuade all the former to go home, one of them replied, that he, the Major, had no business with him, and that he had a right to go where he pleased; on which he immediately ordered him to be taken into custody, which was done in the adjoining street; he was afterwards released on his concession, and proving to be a person of civil and good character; that directly on this, most of the Volunteers retired, and very soon afterwards the Woodley cavalry arrived.

Jonathan Elliott, of Shinfield, yeoman, and a private in the Woodley cavalry, maketh oath, that on the 5th of June last, he attended his corps into the Forbury, in consequence

of a message from the Commandant, this deponent understanding there was a riot amongst the Local Militia. When the cavalry arrived; they were formed in a line at a considerable distance from that corps; he did not see any disposition to riot in either the volunteers or populace, that the cavalry remained some time in the same situation, and then returned to the Market-place to be dismissed.

Letter from the Secretary of State.

“ Lord Liverpool has perused the contents with much care and attention, but there does not appear to him any circumstance, which could justify him in recommending to His Majesty to allow^d of the re-establishment of the Corps.”

The Editors of the Reading Mercury of Sept. 25th 1809, with their usual perspicuity and moderation, and with a proper feeling of delicacy to both corps, conclude with these observations—"On the above, we offer no comments; yet this conviction presses strongly on our minds—Under no circumstances does it appear, that any Volunteer was in the least concerned in the previous disorderly disposition of the Local Militia. To what then are we to impute the charge of improper conduct, stated in Lord Liverpool's letter? Was it to the mere accidental bustle, arising from an eager curiosity in a mixed croud to see what was going forward? Or shall we rather ascribe it to what we apprehend to be the real cause,—a determination in Ministers to take every opportunity of abolishing Volunteer Corps?—Willing as we are to allow, that there may be sufficient reasons to justify an alteration in the system, yet why should it be done in so abrupt—so unhandsome a manner? Was there an absolute necessity of spurning or treating with unmerited severity a body of men, who had, for many years, proved their loyalty, who had supported to

its fullest extent, and at a comparatively trifling expense, so well appointed, and well disciplined a regiment?—A return so ungrateful we cannot but lament: we hope that, in its consequences, it will not be deplored.”—

SECOND:—CONDITION OF THE CORPS PREVIOUS TO, AND
AT THE PERIOD OF, DISBANDING.

Thomas Newbery, Lieut. Col. Commandant of the late Second Reading Volunteers, states, from the best of his recollection, that soon after the regiment was accepted, which took place Sept. 13th, 1803, he, in conjunction with a * *Committee*, which had been previously formed, employed nine or ten serjeants, of whom those mentioned in the

* The *Committee*, which at first consisted of the whole of the officers, with the staff of the regiment, was increased afterwards by the addition of four or five gentlemen of the town (independent of the corps) including the Mayor for the time being. It was formed for the purpose of directing its pecuniary concerns. The weekly allowance, paid to the drill Serjeants, was a part of their management, and appears to have received the sanction of his Majesty, a printed copy of the regulations having been transmitted to the Lord Lieutenant, to be submitted to his Majesty's Principal Secretary of State, in conformity to the 56th section of the 4th Geo. III. Cap. 54, and returned, approved, and confirmed, (dated Oct. 2, 1804) from the Lord Lieutenant to the Commandant, and by him communicated to the Corps the succeeding parade. Finding the Corps thoroughly established, the committee soon afterwards declined acting, and the Commandant had the sole management of all the affairs of the regiment.

* margin were a part, for the purpose of drilling the privates of the corps—That he thought proper to allow them chiefly 2s. 6d. per week † *extra*, none more—a sum he conceived adequate to the trouble they might have on its first formation ;—That the above weekly allowance, which was paid partly from the ‡ *parishes* of Reading, and partly from the subscription fund, could not be considered more than temporary, no sum whatever being, at that time, allowed by government for contingent expenses ;—That on receiving from the general agent a copy of a § *circular letter*, signed by his Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department, dated the 18th of March, 1804, wherein it was expressed, that an allowance was granted to Volunteer Corps of Infantry for the pay of drill Serjeants, in lieu of those which had been directed by the

* Eldridge, Bowler, Patry, Willats, Tibble, Hannington

† They received 20s. per annum besides.

‡ By the 43d Geo. III. Cap. 120, there was an allowance of 17s. 6d. per week to be paid by the parish or parishes where Volunteer Corps were raised, for the purpose of paying the drill Serjeants.

§ Vide page 20.

43d Geo. III. cap. 120, to be paid by the parishes, and to take place the 25th of March 1804, the said Commandant conceiving, from the expression "in lieu of" that it was a maximum allowed by government for that purpose, as well as to enable the regiment to defray its unavoidable contingent expenses, (none of which were otherwise provided for) at the succeeding parade, to the best of his knowledge, acquainted the *officers** commanding companies, of his having received this letter, and requested them to inform these six men and † *two* others, who had been engaged afterwards, that if it was agreeable to them, they would be continued on the same terms, and be inserted as drill

* The Commandant could not but conceive that he was acting in strict conformity with the purport of this letter, by continuing the allowance to the drill Serjeants, at about the same rate as that, which had been received from the parishes. He does not, at this distant time, recollect the particular conversation which passed, on the parade, between him and the officers, except his recommending them to give the preference to those, who had been already engaged, and had acted as such; if any others were fixed on, they were requested to inform him of it;—but he is certain that no officer spoke to him afterwards on the subject, except the Captain of the Grenadiers, who recommended his three equally.

† Pickett, Cooper

serjeants at the future musters, and considered as such; and he further desired the paymaster, at the next payment he made to them, if he had no opportunity before, to take down in writing their specific qualifications of service, which being reported to him, he was enabled to send in as directed. The said Commandant was fully convinced, that the above 2s. 6d. per week extra was sufficient, as by having a serjeant-major on constant pay, nearly every kind of duty, between the parades, would be performed by him, and the others could have little to do besides paying a proper attention to the drilling part, if required, when the regiment was at exercise, which took place about once in a fortnight. What confirmed him particularly in the opinion he had formed that the pay to them was sufficient, was, his having * *twelve or fourteen* more men, (chiefly non-commissioned officers) in the corps at the same time, as properly qualified by former service as the eight appointed, and

* Hunt, Hill, B. White, Silver, Fancy, Graham, Keep, Rogers, Button, Emery, Wheeler, Rackley, Wickens, Ashcroft.

who were equally willing to have undertaken the duty for the same weekly pay of 2s. 6d. in case any of these men had not agreed.

The only exception to the above rule was in the grenadier company, the * *Captain* of which informed the Commandant, that he could not fix on either of his † *three serjeants*, they being equally qualified, and all desirous of being appointed ; but that, if the Commandant approved it, they would divide the money, and perform the duty between them, consenting that the ‡ *person's name* mentioned in the margin should be nominally returned to Government.

Before detailing the circumstances which led to this prosecution, the Commandant wishes briefly to ask :—How was he to have acted upon receiving the circular letter, respecting the allowance of pay to the drill serjeants?—Having † twelve or fourteen men in

* *Captain Glead.*

† *Serjeants Sudbury, Stevens, and Pickett.*

‡ *Pickett.*

the corps, as before described, besides these eight, any of whom were willing to have done the duty at the rate of 2s. 6d. per week each, was he to have said: "No, I will select eight of you, and you *must* have half a guinea each per week though there is nothing for you to do, except attending about three or four hours in a fortnight!" Would he not have been justly charged by the rest of the corps with an useless expenditure of the public money?

But the Commandant was of opinion that, had he drawn for, and paid, these drill serjeants 1s. 6d. each daily, it would not have been likely for the regiment to have continued long in existence; no sum being allowed, during that period, for the * *pay* of the *drum major*, nor for the *practice* of the *drummers*, *bugles*, *flugel*, *fifers*, &c.; nor

* Their duty, besides attending the exercise of the regiment, was to beat through the three parishes of the town an hour previous to the parades, and to assemble for practice once and often twice a week, about two hours each time, for which (if paid strictly as inserted in the War Office Returns) they would have received only about a shilling a fortnight.

for any contingent expenses; and he was likewise convinced that, had they received the said pay, which would have amounted to one guinea each parade (there being only about one in a fortnight on an average, and no duty for them to perform at other times) it would have disgusted the other serjeants, and have caused a sort of dissatisfaction in the regiment. For although the officers (none of whom received any pay) were from their liberality induced to contribute occasionally a guinea, and half a guinea each for particular expenses, yet it could not be reasonably expected that (in case these men had been paid so much money for doing almost nothing) they would have consented to have subscribed a permanent weekly sum for the pay of the flugel, drummers, fifers, bugles, or for similar expenses.

The arrangement being settled, the aforementioned drill serjeants performed their respective duties, apparently well satisfied, but were discontinued being returned to Government as such from the 24th of June 1806, in consequence of the Commandant receiving ano-

ther **circular letter*; bearing date the 18th of June 1806, signifying that the allowance of 1s. 6d. per day would cease, but that sixpence per day per company, would in future be granted in lieu of it, for defraying the contingent expenses of the regiment.

The inspecting Field Officer of Berks likewise verbally informed the Commandant, that he had no occasion to insert them as drill serjeants, at any of his future musters.

Respecting the † *duty* to be performed by these eight men, the Commandant feels it

* The Administration, of which the late Mr. Windham formed a part, made this alteration, conceiving that a considerable portion of this sum might be saved. He asserted in a speech in the House of Commons (which though rather intemperate in its language, afforded a strong proof of great solidity of argument) that, owing to this, and other extravagant expenses, such as, June allowances, † superfluous staff, and permanent duty; but which were all meant to be got rid of, the cost of the Volunteer Establishment was equal to the whole produce of the Income-tax.

† The Commandant does not presume to state, that in no case ought volunteer drill serjeants to have been paid above the rate he allowed these men; on the contrary, he is of opinion, that there may be many parts of the kingdom, where corps are so

unnecessary to say much. As the regiment had seldom more than from twelve to twenty recruits at one time, who required to be drilled separately from the rest, and in that case two serjeants at most, who understood the practice, were sufficient for that purpose, it happened that other serjeants were as often employed in this performance, as these men, and the Commandant, having been eleven

situated, that the proper number of persons qualified could not have been procured for less than full pay: nor in those consisting of two or three companies only, (no serjeant major being allowed by Government) does he think, that the duty of *one* drill serjeant might not have been adequate to 10s. 6d. per week. What he means to aver is, that in corps, which are exercised but a small portion of the year, there ought to be some discretionary power in Commanding officers to regulate this kind of allowance of pay, in such a manner, that by not giving a few considerably too much, it might prevent its operating to the disgust of many; and that the drilling part of a regiment, and the mode of paying those, who may be employed in it, being solely military, should not, several years afterwards, at a great *additional trouble and expense*, be adjusted in Westminster Hall, on the imperfect evidence of such oaths, as could be obtained, after the corps had long ceased to exist. If these men had been *really* dissatisfied at the time, there was the Inspecting Field Officer frequently on the spot, to whom they might have made their complaint, and who, on his representation to the Commandant, would have immediately seen the *voluntary* appointment of eight other proper men in their room, at the same weekly pay as the former had received.

years a commissioned officer, six of which he was senior Captain in the Oxfordshire regiment of militia, thought proper to drill and manœuvre the corps himself together in a body, except for about half an hour previous to their being wheeled into line, when he generally wished the officers, and serjeants most capable, to drill them by companies or divisions, as they found necessary.

It was gratifying to the Commandant that this mode of discipline succeeded so well, and more particularly to the corps at large, when they found from a return presented to the House of Commons, and ordered to be printed on the 26th of March 1806, containing lists of all the volunteer corps in Great Britain, with abstracts signed by the Generals of Districts, it was reported, that the arms, accoutrements and clothing of the Second Reading were "in good condition," and that the said regiment was "fit to act with troops of the line."

Notwithstanding the alteration adopted by Government respecting the drill serjeants, the

Commandant felt himself disinclined to make any, if it could be avoided, particularly as every individual in the corps seemed perfectly satisfied with the method hitherto pursued. He therefore desired the Paymaster to acquaint these eight men, that, as they had been in the regiment a considerable time, were punctual in their attendance at the parades, and had been in the enjoyment of a weekly pay, they would still be permitted to receive it as usual, and which they all continued to do, till the 8th of July 1809, when Government thought proper to disband the regiment.

As a proof of the efficiency, as well as the good condition, of the corps, the Commandant states—That when Government required a general return to be made to the 1st of April 1808, for the purpose of being informed of the effective strength of each corps of volunteers, and to ascertain where the deficiency lay, which Lord Castlereagh stated to amount to between 30 and 40,000 men, when he moved the House of Commons for leave to bring in a Bill for establishing a

Local Militia, the Second Reading did, on that said 1st of April, consist of 525 rank and file, being its full number, and was likewise complete in every other part of its establishment, with the exception of two officers only.

And as a further proof, if any were wanting to justify the foregoing method in the management of the corps, it may be satisfactorily asserted—That on the day it was disbanded, amongst the 525 rank and file (of which it then likewise consisted) there was not one person, who had not properly learnt his exercise; the Commandant having made a rule, to admit none into the regiment, until they had been thoroughly drilled by the serjeant major, and had been reported by him, “fit to join the regiment.”—He was likewise attentive to preferring those, who, from their settled habits of life, were the least likely to enlist in the disposable part of the service.

On the regiment being disbanded, the Commandant did not perceive the slightest

dissatisfaction expressed by any individual respecting money or pay, nor for upwards of four months afterwards; but in November 1809, * *two* of those, who had been drill serjeants, brought him a letter in the names of themselves and the six others, and on the Commandant asking them the purport, was informed, that it was an application for arrears of pay, which they conceived due to them some years since. The Commandant's answer was, "That he knew nothing about arrears of pay, nor could he receive an application on the subject."

Within a month or two afterwards, a person, who said that he was an attorney, and brother to † *one* of the drill serjeants, but himself not ‡ *residing* in Reading, came to the Commandant and informed him, that he was employed by the whole of them to procure their || *rights* in respect to arrears of pay, which he considered due to them; that he had made a

* Eldridge, Tibble. † Cooper. ‡ At Maidenhead.

|| Eight hundred and twenty-one days pay from the 25th of March 1804, to the 24th of June 1806, at 1s. 6d. per day, amounting to 61l. 11s. 6d. each person.

personal application to the War Office, where he had met with great encouragement; that he had been shown by persons in that department the Commandant's pay lists for the years 1804—5 and 6; in them he had found sufficient grounds for actions, and that he now desired to know, whether he would compromise the matter, if not, he should proceed by due course of law. The Commandant replied, "that the drill serjeants had been amply paid, and that he knew of no arrears of pay, nor would listen to any proposal of compromise."

The Commandant had, very soon, four writs of action served on him, viz. Pickett, Willats, Tibble, and Hannington, and * *two* notices of trial at the following Lent Assizes, (1810), but they were withdrawn a day or two before the Judges came. Willats gave the Commandant a second notice of trial (1811), but that was likewise withdrawn soon after. Tibble moved his suit to the Court of King's Bench, although contrary to the

• Willats, Tibble.

solicitation of the defendant (through his * *Attornies*) who wished it to be tried within the county. The Plaintiff, however, entered it in that court the † *two* following terms. In the former, his attorney did not attend in time, and in the latter, the record was withdrawn, owing to a material witness not appearing, viz. one of the clerks, or examiner in the Auditor's office. There had been three subpoenaed; one from the General Agent's; one from the War Office, and the other who did not attend in time. It would have been as much to the credit of the Attorney for the prosecution, if he had subpoenaed these gentlemen, more for the purpose of producing the ‡ *inspection* returns of the regiment, to have proved its good management and efficiency, than of endeavouring to procure

* Messrs. Blandy and Saunders, Reading.

† Michaelmas 1810, and Hilary 1811.

‡ The number of rank and file, present under arms at the musters and inspections in the years 1807, 8, and 9, were as under:—1807—June 8th, 370; July 21st, 356; September 8th, 406; November 10th, 469.—1808—March 29th, 488; May 31st, 458; July 20th, 463; September 27th, 494.—1809—March 14th, 505; May 9, 492.

evidence, four, five, and six years back, to criminate a Commanding Officer, for misapplying the public money, who solemnly declares upon the word and honor of a gentleman, that he did not, from the acceptance of the corps in 1803, to its dissolution in 1809, even see a shilling of any of the sums, which he drew from the General Agent; the whole amount was drawn payable to Messrs. Stephens, Simonds, and Harris, Bankers in Reading. All the demands on the corps for five pounds and upwards, he drew on them for. The smaller sums, as well as the weekly payment to the serjants, drummers, &c. were paid from the Commandant's cheques by Mr. David Leggatt, the Quarter Master and acting Paymaster, who kindly and liberally undertook the whole trouble, as well as the care of all the returns and books, without any salary, emolument, or gratuity whatever, or the least expectation of any, but merely on the principle of volunteering his services, wherever they could be most useful.

*Copy of a Circular Letter referred to in page 46,
which the Commandant received from the General
Agent.*

Whitehall, 18th March 1804.

SIR,

I AM commanded to signify to you His Majesty's pleasure, that daily pay be allowed to one serjeant for every company of volunteer infantry, consisting of not less than sixty privates established and receiving the **allowances* specified in Lord Hobart's circular letter of the 3d of August last, and that you do give the necessary directions for the issue thereof; such pay to commence from the 25th of this instant, March, if the appointment shall have then taken place, and if not, from the date of the appointment, and to be substituted in lieu of all pay heretofore paid by the respective parishes, under the Act of the 43d of Geo. III. cap. 120. .

* Twenty Shillings per annum, per man, for pay, and twenty shillings each, every three years for clothing: these were called August Allowances, from their being granted in that month.

The serjeants receiving the said pay are to be regularly attested, and will be subject to martial law, in like manner, and under the like regulations, as the serjeants of his Majesty's militia forces.

In order to qualify a man for this situation, it is necessary that he should have served two years, as a non-commissioned officer or private soldier in the Regulars, Embodied Militia, Fencibles, Marines, or East India Company's service, and have been creditably discharged therefrom; or that he should have served three years in some company of Volunteer Infantry. In both cases, the fitness should be certified by an Inspecting Field Officer of the district, who may dispense with the period of service, if the real sufficiency of the individual should justify a departure from the strict rule, but cannot dispense with the service itself as above required.

The certificate of the Inspecting Field Officer, as to the sufficiency and former service of such individual is to be annexed

to the first pay list, which shall be transmitted to the War-Office, after the appointment takes place.

I am to desire, that you will cause this regulation to be made known to the several Commandants of Volunteer Corps, through the General Agent.

I have the honor to be, &c.

(Signed) C. YORKE.

The Right Hon. the Secretary at War.

The sum to be paid to the drill serjeants is not here specified, but it is presumed, that the General Agent informed the Commandant what allowance, per company, he might, on * estimate, draw for, though this parti-

* The printed forms of the pay lists are sent from the War Office at the end of every year, for the purpose of being filled up and signed by the Commandant. How was he to have known, at the time of receiving this letter, March 20th, 1804, in what manner, or under what head, of service, this allowance was to be inserted in the subsequent December? He thought that economy was the surest principle of action.

cular is not now in his recollection. By one expression in this letter, it would seem that there was no necessity for its being more to the whole, than what was heretofore allowed from the respective parishes, which was 17s. 6d. per week to the eight companies. If 2s. 6d. to each weekly, was sufficient to satisfy the drill serjeants, on the first formation of the regiment, and which an eager competition of men, properly qualified, proved to be so; surely there was no occasion to increase the allowance afterwards, when the employment became less.

The Commandant has now only to add, that he is happy to be able to state the receipts and disbursements of the corps, in a clear and concise manner; for, by certified copies of returns, which he has obtained from the War Office, it appears, that the whole of the different Sums, for which he has drawn on the General Agent, on account of the regiment for the service of the years 1803, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, amounts to * £6152. 11s. 6d,

* A regiment of Local Militia of the same strength, viz. 525 rank and file, during the same period, including the bounty to

all which were drawn payable to Messrs. Stephens, Simonds, and Harris, bankers in

the men, annual allowance for their necessaries, pay to the officers, extra pay to the adjutant, pay and allowance to the surgeon, salary to the battalion clerk, constant pay to the serjeants and drummers, clothing, allowance in the difference of the prices of bread and meat, would cost full £12,000, or £2000 annually, even on the plan of fourteen days' exercise in the year only; besides the hindrance to trade and agriculture, by taking them out yearly a fortnight together; and the more serious injury, which the recruiting for the Regulars and Militia sustains, by exempting from the ballot so many men of an age and description best calculated to enlist in the disposable part of the service. The expense of a regiment of Volunteers, of the same establishment, and on its present plan of twenty days' exercise in the year, amounts to £783, or nearly £4700 in the six years. It is not easily conceived, that reducing the number of days for training the Local Militia, can answer the purpose intended, as there will be scarcely time for improvement, unless they are kept closer to their duty, and that may be rather the means of giving them a dislike to, than a favorable idea of, the life of a soldier. Indeed, this appears already from the twenty-one days' exercise, as only about 9000 men enlisted in the line the last year, instead of considerably more than double that number, the usual average of former years. If ministers had considered wisely, they would not have created fresh obstacles to the recruiting. By employing a portion of the population in the Local Militia, for the purpose of supplying the army, they seem to act like those indiscreet parents, who, if physic be necessary for their children, allow them to taste it first, but find a greater difficulty in persuading them to swallow the dose afterwards.

After the next year, a fresh ballot must take place, and consequently there may be many recruits to train, which will take

Reading; and it appears, by their books, that the Commandant had drawn on them payable to different persons concerned in the pay, allowances, or expenses of the corps, for the sum of £6248. 13s. 6d.—making a balance due to the above bank of £96. 2s.—but at the dissolution of the regiment, there being some articles, (including two new brass field-pieces, six pounders,) belonging to the corps, to be disposed of, the Commandant has been enabled to liquidate the above balance; and had there been a surplus remaining, he should have considered it at the disposal of the regiment at large.

On reviewing the preceding details, the author is not aware that he has stated any circumstance, or even expressed a thought, that can wound the feelings of a liberal and

twenty-one days at least. It will be the means of adding to the expense, as well as to the hindrance of their time. In the Volunteer System, no change of this kind happens, for, if kept strictly to their duty, which might be easily done under a small, but frequent army of reserve, or militia ballot, (although subject, by a removal of residence, to a few occasional resignations) still the Corps would have continued steadily progressive in point of discipline.

impartial mind. Although perplexed for more than eighteen months, with not only the idea, but the reality of a prosecution, yet he ventures to presume, that he has not been unmindful of his own honor, nor so indifferent to the opinion of the public, as to have inserted the slightest particular, which he is unable to substantiate, or that would not bear the test of strict investigation.

Unpleasant in general are suits of Law, but deeply should they be deplored, when persevered in for the purpose of harassing a person, standing in the situation here described. Where a similarity may happen to prevail, a comparison is not difficult to make; and if, in these remarks, a digression were allowed, the writer might be permitted to draw an inference from himself, as Commander of a provincial Corps, and apply it equally to him, who, in a more domestic department of life, undertakes the office of guardian, &c. To both situations, expense or trouble usually attaches. In the former,—and not unfrequently in the latter, —neither emolument nor reward can be expected. The one pre-

sumes, that he is fulfilling a duty, which he owes to his country ; the other, that he is complying with the earnest request of a deceased friend. And yet, if there should happen to be any inadvertent, or mistaken conduct in either, (though ever so well intended) and vexatious suits, such as these, were, in consequence, to follow, the *Country* might seek in vain for voluntary defenders, and the friendly and kind office of Trustee, or Executor, would be unperformed. The author cannot here refrain from remarking the conversation, which passed between him and a legal friend. On his observing to him, that he had paid the serjeants amply, and to their satisfaction, for all the duty they had done ; that they, at the time, neither earned, were promised, nor expected more ; his friend immediately replied, that he could not in the least doubt that he had been actuated by the best motives ; yet, “ let me remind you,” said he, “ that a Court of Law is not a Court of Equity, and you may, possibly, from a failure of evidence, so long back, or some unexpected cause, be punished by a serious expense, for acting from the best of your judg-

ment, even although every thing you did, was with a view to the welfare of the Corps, and the benefit of the country."

The expense of the suit to both parties amounts to upwards of four hundred pounds. Had it been tried, and a verdict given against the defendant, subject to costs, this, with the others (if prosecuted separately, as intended,) would probably, under these circumstances, have cost the Commandant altogether £3000 --a large sum indeed to have been incurred by one individual for disinterestedly coming forward and rendering personal assistance, in a crisis of public danger ; but proportionably more expensive would such a suit have been to the Commander of a Volunteer or * *Local*

* Had this suit terminated in favor of the plaintiff, the commanders and captains of Local Militia Corps of ten companies, who, for the purpose of keeping more of each in constant readiness, had paid the regulated number of serjeants and drummers, a less sum than full weekly pay (and which was equitable, considering the trifling duty for the whole year, might, between them, have had twenty-five different actions to have defended : viz. fifteen brought by the serjeants and ten by the drummers. There was pay allowed for three serjeants and two drummers for every two companies previous to 1810, when the allowance was reduced to that of two serjeants and one drummer for ditto. By

Militia Corps, had he been situated one hundred miles from the Court of King's Bench, instead of forty, and who might, for the sake of economy, or for the purpose of increasing the number (where it had been insufficient) have paid the drummers, as well as the serjeants, a less weekly sum, than constant full pay, but which could not have been inserted agreeably to the War Office forms of returns, at a less weekly rate than 10s. 6d. for the regulated allowance of serjeants, and 7s. for that of drummers.

In a Court Martial, which may be justly termed a Court of Equity, the person accused is usually tried, as soon as the charges are preferred, and the members of it can be conveniently assembled. When the prosecutor's evidence is closed, his own is heard, not

drummers, in government returns, are always meant drum-major, drummers, fife major, fifers, and bugles, as well as bass and tenor drummers. How are five of these altogether (being the number at present allowed) to be sufficient for a corps of ten companies, unless the pay be divided, by which the number may be increased; and yet, in the War Office printed forms of pay lists, there is no room to insert more than five at 7s. per week each?

merely from others, but from himself, in his defence, and if no criminality appears, or is proved, he is most probably honorably acquitted. But, different is the case in a Court of Law. There the defendant's own statement cannot be allowed. His motives cannot be explained; but his whole defence must rest on the slender information of others, who might happen to have some recollection of agreements, which had been made (perhaps on the military parade) between the Commandant and these men, but which, after the lapse of several years, they possibly are unable, on oath, to verify. Should every trifling sum, which the Commander of a Corps has been accustomed to save, for the purpose of adding to the stock purse of the regiment, be made a subject of legal investigation, it would be necessary for him to have an office, a clerk, many law books; as well as to be in frequent correspondence with his counsel and solicitor, or he would never be safe from the danger of some *low retainer*, and an expensive law suit. This would be so repugnant to the feelings of military men, that it may be rea-

sonably presumed, after a few more such exhibitions as these in Westminster Hall, there would not be many commanding officers to prosecute.

THIRD:—SOME REMARKS ON THE VOLUNTEER
SYSTEM.

The author has now to apologize for the length of the foregoing pages, particularly on a subject, in which the public in general may not feel themselves much interested; but as many, at some period or other, may have been inclined to give a personal or pecuniary support to the Volunteer System, he hopes that a brief statement of his sentiments may not be totally unregarded. Had not this prosecution occurred, he should have been for ever silent; nor to any observations, which may hereafter be made, shall he think himself necessitated to reply.

It will not be forgotten that, immediately after the rupture of the treaty of Amiens, great exertions were witnessed through the kingdom, in producing an immense voluntary force, commensurate to the then apprehended dangerous state of the country. It was the theme of panegyric for persons of all descriptions; but this system, from some de-

fect in its nature, or from the timidity of Ministers, although it had a wonderful and rapid growth, was soon found to want a proper stability. Alterations were daily seen, not for the better; and during the frequent changes of administration, it was bandied from one nurse to another like a rickety child. The plan of the late Mr. Windham, of an armed peasantry, although he meant well, and had great merit in considerably curtailing the unnecessary expense, was too speculative to produce any practical good; and after being the means of frittering the then thin ranks of the Volunteers, left them where they were found. The present Local Militia establishment appears to be pregnant with a vastly increased expense, nearly **three times as much* as the same number of Volunteers would cost; for the author will, from his own experience, aver, that persons exercising twenty times in a year, at regularly stated periods, will do more towards perfecting themselves, than in the same number of days together. In the former instance, a

* Vide page 64.

man, who does not feel himself quite expert with his musquet or in his marching, will get some private tuition from one of his acquaintance, during the intermediate times; but this cannot be said of him who goes out yearly: the *one conceiving it to be a task, the other a pleasure.

* The projectors of the Local Militia system appear to have neither considered the effects, nor calculated the expense, should it ever be practicable for the Ruler of France to attempt an invasion of any part of the United Kingdom. Recent events indeed, seem at present to have placed such an occurrence at some distance, yet, within a very few years, it may again become probable. They, it might be imagined, have supposed, that a descent of the enemy would be made by one great effort, but by their having previously called out, and placed on permanent pay and duty, the whole of that body, a sufficient force, they think, would be collected to overwhelm the largest army of invaders, that could possibly be brought over. This may do very well for general reasoning, but are they aware that a teasing and desultory kind of annoyance would more probably be practised, and that alarming and menacing our widely extended coasts, on distant points, and at different times, would be a preferable object for them to pursue? Our inveterate foe well knows that the increase of our expenses, and the diminution of our resources would be a likely means of producing a discontent, which would, at such a time, be very injurious to the public welfare; and what would sooner effect this, than our having three hundred thousand additional troops to pay, merely for internal defence, at the same rate as regulars, and these men taken entirely from their occupations, many from their labor

There was nothing that did, in any degree, so essentially contribute towards the forma-

in the fields, at a season, perhaps, when their presence might be essentially necessary.

It is certain, that neither the same expense nor inconvenience would have resulted from the Volunteer system, if properly managed. Being always within the call of the drums, and effective in number, there would be no occasion for their being placed on permanent pay, until the last extremity; for, as danger approached our shores, they might be ordered on one, two, or even three days' exercise and duty (of six hours each) in the week. The cost at most would be only three shillings per man in seven days, without any other expense, and the hindrance to trade and agriculture would be but trifling. Suppose any part, or the whole should be wanted in this country, where the means of conveyance are so abundant, they might be brought to face an enemy in three or four days at furthest. Should such a crisis occur, would it not be invidious to doubt, or taking into consideration the kind of men, of which each force would be composed, could any person deny, that the Volunteers would be capable of giving quite as good an account of Bonaparte's invincibles, as those who are formed on the plan of fourteen successive days of annual training?

One of our *discerning* Statesmen lately observed, that in a case of extreme danger, the Local Militia corps would amalgamate with such corps of Volunteers, as happened to be then in existence. But what kind of amalgamating, a person might ask, would it be, where every Field Officer of the former, even the youngest Major, would command any Lieutenant Colonel of the latter, although of ever so long standing? The author cannot but feel a trifling concern in being obliged to state, that, by the

tion of that prodigious Volunteer strength, as the act for raising the army of Reserve, which whilst in its operation, did more to induce a full attendance at the musters and exercise, as well as a strictness of discipline, than could possibly have been conceived; for let what will be said with respect to patriotism and the love of our country, still it may be questionable, whether a person can be reasonably expected to continue long in sharing another's burden, as well as his own, either in taxation, or any personal service whatever.

Local Militia Act, he had eleven Field Officers, within the county of Berks only, placed over his head, to the whole of whom he had been senior, when His Majesty was graciously pleased to review the Volunteer Corps of that county on Bullmarsh Heath.

It is to be regretted, that those men, who enlisted into the Local Militia for two guineas bounty, (by which they hazarded the certainty for the chance of keeping their employments, till they were disembodied) should not have had spirit enough, for a much higher bounty,* to have volunteered their services where they were more wanted—into the Line, or Regular Militia. This seems to be another great error in Administration: for had there been no bounty for the one, they would probably, in the time of their necessity, have been induced to have taken that of the other.

The ballot for the Army of Reserve, not continuing operative, after the number fixed on was raised, Volunteer corps, in general, wanting their first impulse, soon felt a considerable degree of relaxation. Had it been thought proper to have raised annually 12 or 15,000 men for this purpose, as well as for the regular militia, so as to have had a ballot for the above number, of one force or the other, every six months, from the * *ages of eighteen to thirty-five*, it would have had the

* Although a ballot may be deemed unpleasant and rather partial, yet experience has proved that it cannot be entirely dispensed with. It would be less extensive by this mode than any other; for 80,000 men being the full number wanted in each year, and that for the Local Militia being done away, substitutes would, of course, be in great plenty; besides, many more would enlist by beat of drum, were a small ballot in frequent and regular operation. The fine should be considerably higher than the current price of substitutes: formerly, when men were to be had for the regular Militia for six or seven Guineas, and the fine ten pounds, very few thought of paying it, but of late years it has acted in an inverse proportion, the fine being now no more than twenty pounds with an indemnification for five years, but the price of substitutes nearly double that sum, scarcely any, who are drawn, endeavour to procure the men, which makes the ballots tiresome, and of long continuance; but, let the amount of the fine be what it will, it should not indemnify for more than a year.

full effect of having every young married man of health and activity as well as of sober, settled habits of life in the Volunteer regiments. None others should have been * *accepted*; there would have been a sufficient number of this description to have made the corps effective, as well in officers as privates; and the remainder of the population, consisting chiefly of unmarried men between the above ages, would have been liable to these two ballots; those only, best calculated for the disposable part of the service, would, by these means, have been procured. Had such measures as these been resorted to in time, from those who would have † *annually volunteered* from the regular

* It is not meant, that the acceptance of Volunteers should be strictly confined to those only between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five, but it might be left to the discretion of the commanding officer.

† By this mode of balloting for 15,000 for the regular Militia every year, the surplus only might have been allowed to volunteer. It would have amounted to more for the line, on an average, than the casual one, which has been practised; and besides, the Militia regiments would have been always complete in number, which ought to be an important consideration, instead of the reduced state in which they have frequently been.

militia to make room for the balloted men, and from those who would have been raised for the army of Reserve, many regiments of light infantry and rifle-men could have been formed. In the late campaigns in Spain and Portugal, we might have had 100,000 British troops, instead of 40,000; and had nearly half of these been composed of the * *above descriptions*—would not the public hopes have been justly raised? Would they not have been highly flattered with the cheering expectation, that nothing short of complete success must eventually have attended such exertions as these? So large a body of the most active, so numerous and well-appointed an army of the bravest, men that ever appeared on the theatre of war, and under some of the most skilful generals, could not have failed to recover from the common enemy those wreaths of victory, which the rest of Europe had so supinely,

* It may be recollected, that in the capture of the enemy's colonial possessions, there have been frequent instances of small bodies of light troops, acting with the promptness and intrepidity of British sailors, and gallantly carrying posts, which were defended by three times their own number.

and alas! but too unfortunately planted on his brow. Had forty thousand been judged necessary, a number, which under a Wellington, a Graham, and a Beresford, have proved sufficient to hold an imposing attitude on the frontiers of Portugal, and to cover Cadiz, and a part of the province of Andalusia, how greatly would it have taken from the advantage of the enemy on these particular points, had 40,000 more been spared for the eastern side of Spain, to have acted in conjunction with the Patriots of Aragon and Catalonia, whose enthusiastic ardor and brilliant achievements, (though comparatively on a small scale) have been equal to any, that ever adorned the page of history. The remaining 20,000 would have been disposable for the north of Spain, or for a descent at Genoa, Leghorn, or any other part of Italy, that might have been favorable to British arms, and a British cause. Under these circumstances, it cannot be supposed that any detachments, which the French Emperor might have endeavoured to have sent, for the purpose of succouring an army, carrying on offensive opera-

tions on the western side of Spain, would have been of the least avail; or that the greatest part of that kingdom, with the whole of Portugal, would not have been preserved from the grasp of France. But these pleasing illusions, owing to the mismanagement of Administration, are entirely vanished. The die is cast. An unfortunate battle might, through the superior number of the enemy's troops, take place; the Peninsula might, in consequence, be for ever lost, and, by its fall, the fate of Britain determined!

FINIS.

A
VINDICATION
OF
The Reign
OF
HIS PRESENT MAJESTY,
KING GEORGE III.

LONDON :

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PREFACE.

THE following Vindication was intended to appear on the last Jubilee-day, the 25th of October, 1810; but, from the unfortunate events occurred in the Royal Family just at that time, the publication was suspended. The importance of the subject is, however, in no degree diminished; and there are some strong reasons for thinking it will be more useful than could then have been supposed.

Since October the reins of government have been in other hands, and the Prince Regent has acted so admirably, that there is every reason to expect that, whether Providence seats him on the throne as King, or continues him as Regent, his constant endeavour will be to make his people happy. His Royal Highness has given proofs of a good head and an excellent heart; but there are some reasons for apprehending that he is inclined to the opinion entertained by many, that the policy of his Father's reign has been a mistaken policy, and, therefore, that he may be disposed to follow a different system, which the author of the Vindication is convinced would be

the greatest misfortune which could befall this country.

With a view to make some impression on the public mind, many facts, which the rapid succession of events hinders people from reflecting upon, are recalled to memory, and those occurrences which we lament, such as the long wars, the separation of America, and the great increase of taxes and debt, are proved to have originated, not with the British government, but to have been the consequences of events which British policy could neither avert, alter, nor control.

The first occasion of entering upon this subject, was the effect produced on the public mind by the trial of the proprietor and printer of the Morning Chronicle for a libel, in which an indirect attack appeared to be made on the policy pursued during his Majesty's reign.

What the real meaning of the inuendo contained in the Morning Chronicle was, it is not necessary to say. The Attorney-General thought it a libel on his Majesty's government, but the Court thought otherwise. I have no intention to libel either the Attorney-General or the Court, but, speaking to matter of fact, I can assert that the impression left on the public mind was, *that the successor of his present Majesty might ob-*

tain great praise and honour, by following a different line of politics, from that which has been pursued during the present reign.

Being fully convinced that this is a mistaken notion, and that the political line of conduct has been founded on the best principles, the following Vindication was written merely as an outline of what might be said on that highly important subject; to which I am the more readily led, because, ever since the year 1792, I have been a volunteer in support of these measures, without once differing from the main and general plan of opposition to French principles, with the evil tendency of which I became early and intimately acquainted, from a residence in Paris at the first breaking out of the revolution*.

The second reason for this Vindication is a speech reported to have been made at the Pavilion at Brightonstone last August, in which

* Great pains have been taken to assign the war and other events as the causes of the failure of French liberty. This is a total mistake: the first principles of the French revolution—the declaration of rights—led necessarily to anarchy, wretchedness, and, finally, to despotism. I first told this in May, 1792, in a pamphlet printed in Paris, and published by Lane, in Leadenhall-street.

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A

VINDICATION,

&c.

CHAP. I.

Review of the Discontents in England from the End of the Seven Years War in 1762 till 1775, when Hostilities commenced with America, a Period now held up as the Zenith of our Prosperity.

WHEN his Majesty mounted the throne, he found the interest of the national debt augmented, within the space of seven years, from 6,200,000 to 9,200,000; and the nation engaged in useless hostilities; his first endeavour was to procure peace, which was obtained on the most honourable terms. Notwithstanding the increase

of debt, it is from that period a new energy seemed to pervade the whole nation; her wealth, her commerce, her manufactures, her improvements in agriculture increased, at a rate altogether without example; and those who complain of England being ruined and her sun set, consider the interval of peace, previous to hostilities with America, as the most prosperous period England ever saw.

It is really true that it was a most prosperous period, but it is likewise true that never did political murmurs and discontents rise to a greater height, without breaking out into open rebellion, than during that happy period, that golden age! What a polluted atmosphere must it be where such a blasphemous meteor as John Wilkes could shine resplendent and adored—a man without moral principle, religion, decency of manners, decorous conduct, or even of common honesty, become the idol of the discontented and the emblem of liberty in England, as we have since seen a naked prostitute adored on the altar of the Most High, in a neighbouring country, as the Goddess of Nature*:

* This scandalous scene took place in the metropolitan church of Notredame, where a common prostitute, the mistress

It were unnecessary to call to mind the particulars of the unprincipled and absurd effervescence, it is sufficient that it proves that the real prosperity which people felt and experienced could not make so powerful an impression on the minds of those who were inclined to discontent, and who take to themselves exclusively the title of Patriots, as the wild assertions of a turbulent and unprincipled demagogue, who, as soon as he had filled his pockets and provided for himself, left the croud of gaping followers to seek out another idol.

Never did discontent run higher than when prosperity was unexampled; but it had been asserted that his Majesty had secret advisers, and, because he was an affectionate son and would neither persecute nor bring to punishment the Earl of Bute, but, conformably to the practice of his whole life, yielded to public opinion in chusing another minister, but readily resisted every measure which was contrary to justice,—he was termed positive, and represented as attached in private to those only whom in public he did not avow,

of Herbert, the vilest revolutionist, was exhibited in a state of nature to represent the goddess and receive the adoration of the frantic assembly.

It is singular enough, that, though those persons, who were so long suspected and accused of advising his Majesty, have gone to another world long ago, and that many, who have since advised him, were not then born, still the idea, the opinion of those secret advisers is as strong as ever, and it is believed and asserted that they have been uniformly guided by the same spirit, and, like the phantom in the Arabian Tale, which, in the midst of all his wealth, persecuted the merchant of Bagdat, telling him to search for the talisman of Oromanes, we are constantly told that we are ruined, our liberties gone, and by a secret influence the nature and essence of which they do not know, and the effects of which are represented as baneful in the extreme—represented thus by the same malignant, or at best mistaken, species of patriotism which asserted that England was ruined with taxes at a time when it was, as has been subsequently acknowledged, bursting with a plethora of prosperity.

It is an inconsistency not to be passed over, that the same party which represented Britain as ruined before the American war, now cite that epoch as the zenith of our prosperity.

During the peace which preceded the American war, a sinking fund was established for the reim-

bursement of the national debt; and, if that fund had been preserved, during times of difficulty, as Mr. Pitt has since preserved that which he established, we should now have had scarcely any debt to reimburse: thus, previous to the American war, the discontents may be fairly said to have arisen from faction, and the blame, thrown on his Majesty, to be founded in error.

Lord North was nominated minister; all the nation allowed him great abilities, and even his enemies admitted his integrity and honesty of character. Lord Bute never approached the throne for many years: but still it was not till real and serious business occurred, that calumny and suspicion were banished, as the hurricane disperses the winged insects of the air, only that they may return when the calm and the sun-shine are restored.

How is this to be accounted for? Trade was rapidly increasing, and the Sinking-fund was making such a progress in payment of the debt, that the monied people had actually taken the alarm; for there were more lenders than borrowers, and capitalists looked out with anxiety to find good security at low interest, in which they did not always succeed!

The only mode of accounting for it is either

by supposing that the English are an unjust, discontented people, or that some undue cause operated upon their minds. The latter certainly was the case. The laws of this country are such, that men know exactly how far they may go with safety and without danger, and there are a certain number of the community undoubtedly inclined to be gloomy and discontented without any personal interest; so that it is not difficult for designing men, who find they can get money by it, to stir up discontent, and, as the opposition for the time being always encourages, under-hand, such proceedings, there is no judgment to be formed of the state of the country from the degree of discontent which prevails.

The discontents were blown into a flame more easily at this period than at most others, from the circumstance of Lord Bute, the minister, being a Scotchman. The ancient animosities between the two countries had not, at that time, subsided, and a scheme was formed, by those whose design and interest it was to promote discord, to found their grievances on the pretended influence of Lord Bute. His lordship soon retired from his official situation, but the clamour, once raised, continued, and we have, ever since, been told of secret influence; of influence, in-

deed, so very secret, that it never could be discovered—yet, to the present hour, the cry has been maintained; but with what justice, what colour, or what foundation, we shall see as we proceed in our inquiry.

Upon the whole review of this period, we find a great desire, in a certain party, to calumniate and misrepresent, and, at all events, right or wrong, to praise *time past*, lament *the present*, and predict *misfortune for the future*. Such was the characteristic of the spirit of patriotism during, what patriots now term, the most flourishing period which Britain ever saw.

CHAP. II.

The Policy and Conduct of the American War, with Reasons for concluding that it was unavoidable, and that, though the Americans were not wrong, Britain was quite right.

DURING the period of which we have already spoken, the American colonies approached that state when, from the nature of things, they must be prepared to seek independence.

There were then thirteen states; some of which were greater in extent than England, France and Spain united. The soil was fertile; the people proud by nature, and independent by their situation; and among them were many able men and daring minds, and not a few who were actuated by the same spirit with those who praised and followed Wilkes in all his extravagancies which so nearly approached rebellion.

Secretly the Americans aimed at becoming independent, and Dr. Franklin, since so famous,

has been known to declare that the plan for independence was laid in the reign of George II. and that he himself wrote a pamphlet to induce the French to give up Canada to Britain, not in order to serve Britain, but that Britain and France might no longer have the same interest in keeping America in subjection; but, on the contrary, that France might, on the first occasion, assist America to throw off the yoke*.

Resolved; as the leaders in America were, to become independent as soon as possible, they were wise enough to conceal their aim under a demand which appeared, at first sight, reasonable and conformable to the rights of British subjects.

On some new taxes being demanded, they exclaimed, We will readily submit to taxation, if you will grant us representation, but not otherwise. As this is a principle with regard to Scotland and Ireland, it seemed reasonable that it should be extended to America, or, if not

* This declaration, from such a man, one of the prime movers, is a sufficient proof that independence was the aim, and that the means were to be such as they found most adequate to the purpose. The publisher is furnished with the name of the gentleman on whose authority the statement is made.

extended, the Americans might complain that they were treated as slaves and not as freemen.

The question instantly assumed this complexion, and all those who were, from interest, principle, or habit, inclined to oppose the government at home, took part with the Americans, not considering that, if the principle of representation were granted to so extensive a country, its representatives must, in the end, far outnumber those of the three European kingdoms, England, Scotland and Ireland. This representation would have been a *felo-de-se* committed by England, not indeed by one violent explosion, but by a deleterious operation of the most certain nature.

First, the Americans would have ruled us in our own country, and then they would have transferred the government to America, to which we should have become only an appendage—a proud appendage, indeed, to America, but disgracefully humiliating to those Britons who might live to see that day!

The Americans, we mean the few leaders, never expected that England would grant representation, and they knew that, though the principle applied safely and well to Scotland and Ireland, both smaller in extent than England, it

could never with safety be extended to America—they knew, therefore, that all the comparisons, though apparently just, were illusory in the extreme; but they knew also that the uninformed would not see the illusion, and that the factious and ill-intentioned in England would refuse to see it; they therefore played a sure game, as far as gaining over opinions to their side was useful*.

His Majesty and his ministers had only one of four things to do,—they must either desist from farther taxation, admit the principle of representation, or give up America, unless they were determined to enforce by power what they did not think it right or wise to grant.

To desist from farther taxation, when America had cost us so much to settle and protect, was out of the question. It would have been injus-

* Had the Americans demanded at once what they were determined to obtain, not only would their party in Britain have been small, but even at home they would have been divided. By asking what appeared reasonable, but what Britain could not safely grant, they managed to get a number of friends here, and to be unanimous amongst themselves. Not only did this mode of acting succeed at the time, but the British government has never taken the proper means of proving that independence was determined on by the leaders in America from the very beginning.

tice to British subjects at home, who already paid ten times as much individually, for the expences incurred on account of America, as the individual American paid in toto. As to the representation, we have already said how it would have ended: it remains to explain the manner—representation must naturally, and indeed necessarily, in such a case, bear a certain proportion to the population, and consequently the number must have increased as the population augmented: or, if the number had been limited, then a principle, equally sacred with that first advanced, would have been violated, and revolt would have followed: it was therefore better and wiser to refuse it at once; it was a manly and magnanimous way of doing the business.

The relinquishment of America, and saying, as a father does to his son, when he arrives at years of discretion, is, it must be admitted, a beautiful speculative reverie.—“ So,” says Britain, “ when I first planted a colony on a continent which contains three millions of square miles, I knew the day must come when you must become your own masters. I am not of the opinion that the time has yet quite arrived, but it approaches, and you are impatient—be it so. Hitherto I have provided for and protected you—

for the future, that must be your own business ; let us part friends—never forget parental affection, though you refuse parental obedience.”

Undoubtedly, this would have been great and glorious ; but the minister, who would have advised such a step, would have been much more certain to mount a scaffold, than his master would have been to remain on his throne. It is a rule with the English nation to give up nothing ; and it was out of the question, as the king and his ministers all knew it : therefore it never was in contemplation for an instant.

The last alternative was, then, to enforce the taxes, which was attempted ; but whether or not success was expected, it is scarcely necessary to inquire : we have seen that it was necessary to try, for that the three other methods were more dangerous to this country.

The American question has always been discussed in an unfair way with respect to the government of England. The Americans, it is said, were right—they contended for what they had a right to enjoy ; but it does not follow from that, that England was wrong—each sought its own interest, and amongst nations that is allowed : therefore, though in opposition, both may be right when there is an important and

real cause of difference of interest, as there^s was in this case.

It would be difficult, indeed, to shew how the American war could have been avoided: therefore, his Majesty's ministers were not the cause, though they had the misfortune for themselves to be ministers just at the time when the resistance took place. It would be full as proper to accuse Queen Elizabeth, who planted Virginia, and was thereby the original cause of the American war, as to accuse those who, by chance, happened to be rulers of England at the time.

The same party in England, who had always opposed government, assisted America much, in her efforts, both morally and physically, and Britain was unable to exert her strength with success. The means taken to enforce taxation might have been different with regard to America, but France and Spain united against us: then Holland assisted our enemy. The Irish patriots seized on this occasion to cripple the efforts of England; and the patriots at home left ministers scarcely time to breathe, much less to make any active exertion. Thus it was that Britain lost America. Whilst the national opinion was in favour of war, the war was carried on; when the national opinion changed, his Majesty

changed his ministers, and made peace*: in all this there was nothing which can be blamed; on the contrary, it would be difficult to find out how a contrary line could have been pursued without bringing great misfortune on the nation.

Thus, then, in the American question, which has been always argued in a wrong way, no sort of blame whatever attached, but rather great praise is due, and at all events the quarrel was not brought on by a wish to exert arbitrary sway. The Americans wanted to be free, either by concession or contest, and our government adopted the only alternative which was either wise, magnanimous, or practicable.

* The coalition is yet well remembered, and never was a more unprincipled transaction, till that which took place between the same Mr. Fox and Lord Grenville. The serpent, with its tail in its mouth, is the best emblem of All the Talents, in which the extremes met. The chief of democrats, and the proudest aristocrat in England, united to form an administration and make peace with Bonaparte, who crushes both aristocrats and democrats.

CHAP. III.



Review of the Period from the End of the American War till the Hostilities with France in 1793, with Proofs that Britain was not the Aggressor, and that it had not the Means of remaining Neutral.

No sooner was the American, French, Spanish and Dutch war terminated, with a great increase of debt, than Lord North, the late minister, coalesced with Mr. Fox, the leader of Opposition; thus the two parties proved too strong for the new minister, Lord Shelburne, who was therefore obliged to resign.

His Majesty, in taking Shelburne, certainly did not consult that secret adviser who was supposed to be behind the throne, for he was no favourite with any person who was conceived to enjoy secret influence, but he simply, and like a wise monarch, chose a minister of known abilities; and, when that minister was obliged to resign and the public voice pointed out William Pitt, as the able

son of the great Lord Chatham, who had been the sworn enemy of Lord Bute and of those accused of advising the king, he certainly did not listen to secret advisers, but chose the fittest and most unexceptionable minister he could find: this did not look like a sovereign actuated by any other motives than the welfare of his people.

The first step of the new minister was to restore order to the finances and reestablish the Sinking Fund, which had been appropriated, by Lord North, to the exigencies of the American war. England again mounted up as it had done after the seven years war; and, notwithstanding the weight of taxation, wealth, trade, and manufactures increased still faster than at any former period. But on this occasion the interval was short, for an event was preparing, which Britain had nothing to do in bringing on—which she had no hand in, but, from the consequences of which, she could not, by wisdom, or by any possible line of policy, be protected against, either in one way or another.

As the foundation of the American war was laid in the nature of things, and as the only circumstance which depended on accident was the time of its breaking out; so the revolution of France, since

become that of the continent, originated in the gradual decay of the feudal system, the pertinacity of the court of Versailles, and the intrigues of designing men.

Britain had no hand in the revolution at first, therefore it is not necessary to trace its origin, which, however, is pretty well understood; but let it never be forgotten that, in a very early stage, the French professed principles and adopted practices which endangered all the nations around! Hatred to kings, and a new system of liberty, which wise and considerate men knew was only calculated to mislead, were inculcated with an energy and boldness to which other nations could not well shut their eyes: nevertheless, so great an objection had England to opposing a people who pretended to be fighting for liberty, that, when the Treaty of Pilnitz was entered into, which commenced the continental coalition, England not only refused to join in the league, but Sweden, one of the parties, stipulated to send her contingent by land, expressly because she believed that England would not allow it to proceed by sea.

Not only was this a proof of the determination of England in 1791 to avoid joining in an attack on France, but, even in the year 1792

when hostilities were actually begun, the navy and army of Britain were reduced to the lowest peace-establishment.

Those persons, whose memories are as treacherous as their assertions are bold, and who accuse the British government of being inimical to the French revolution from the beginning, would do well to recollect that the case is exactly as here stated, and that it is a decisive proof that, from whatever motive England interfered afterwards, it was no motive arising from determined hostility to the revolution.

When a decree was passed in November 1792, which, in very plain terms, invited all men to throw off their sovereigns, by men who had dethroned and imprisoned their own, some measures of precaution were taken against the discontented at home, to whom they had promised aid and assistance; but it was not till after an unprincipled attack made by the French armies on the Dutch, our allies, that we resolved, in conformity to a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, to assist the Dutch. We did so—we broke the peace, and kept our word of honour unbroken—a most grievous error in the eyes of those who wish success to the French cause! and one for which this government has been re-

proached ever since; but the reproachers have taken great care to put an extinguisher on the cause, and have uniformly and impudently asserted that England made an unprovoked attack upon France.

That we were not able to withstand the great armies which France sent forth, and that, ultimately, Holland was not protected, is true; but it is of reasons and motives that we speak: we kept our faith unbroken; and, if Holland and our allies (for all those engaged against France became allies from the nature and circumstances of the case) were not able, even without assistance, to oppose the enemy with success, that has no reference to the question of right, of propriety and justice. Holland, when attacked, had not offended France, and, till she was attacked, we made not a single movement which indicated hostility.

The enemies of government have been very careful to split the question into as many pieces as possible. The dismissal of M. Chauvelin, which took place some months before hostilities, has been termed an hostile act; but, be it remembered, that Lord Gower, our ambassador at Paris, had not been treated as an ambassador after the 10th of August, 1792. He could not

even send off his dispatches without special leave, depending on caprice; and, as to his person, he did not feel even that to be very safe.

..In another point of view, had Chauvelin been continued and accredited, that would have been sanctioning the imprisonment of the king, which we had no right to do. The men who dethroned him had no right to expect to be represented in England by the very person who had been sent over by that king.

Another reason still existed, which, if not more dignified, was at least more politic. Chauvelin had become the centre of re-union of the disaffected, both natives and foreigners, and, while he retained the character of an ambassador, he was a protector of all who placed themselves under his care: could there be a milder way of ending this national intrigue, than that of dismissing Chauvelin? Mr. Fox, and others of inferior note, who frequented him, might complain, but had they any good reason for it?

England was, at that time, to all appearance, very fast approaching to a state of open rebellion. For the first time, the public, that is, the people in general, conceived that France, hitherto considered as an enslaved country, was free, and that her freedom was more perfect, more com-

plete than that of England. This idea alone, when it became general, was sufficient to breed discontent; for, though nothing was more false, the bold assertions of the pretended rights of man, and a number of publications, founded partly in error and partly in falshood, led the great majority of the people into the mistake, the natural consequence of which was great discontent.

This nation, at all times ready to listen to those who tell it that it is ruined and undone, even when there is not the smallest cause, must very naturally attend to political quacks, who boasted of having, in two years, regenerated France and established a constitution which, on the first appearance, and even to men of abilities, appeared a great and a good work.

The able discussions which took place in this country, previous to hostilities, respecting the French revolution and the constitution they had established, will remain eternal testimonies of the seductive tendency of the projected liberty. Even after the French nation was ruined by the failure of this constitution and France was deluged with blood—after the constitution was overthrown, because it was impracticable—after the men, who had formed it, were discovered to be a sort

of monsters in human form—and after the national character of the French had been degraded below that of any other people, owing to want of moral principle, of religious duty, or of any of the virtues attached to humanity—I say, after all this, Mr. Fox praised, to excess, the French constitution: so that the enthusiasm must have been very great in its favour, before it was weighed in the balance and found wanting.

The decree of the 19th of November, 1791. which invited all nations to revolt, promising aid and assistance—the correspondence entered into with societies in this country, and the dissemination of writings to pervert the minds of the people, were all acts of hostility, though they were not preceded by a declaration of war, and were certainly not in the usual form nor customary array of battle, with infantry, cavalry, drums and trumpets.

To men of plain common sense, who consider good and evil according to their quantity, rather than to the manner in which they are produced, the endeavours to create disturbance, whether it be by an invading army or by corresponding societies and incendiary writings, distributed at the expence and at the instigation of a powerful nation, too daring either to retract or make an apology, the end is the same.

It was just previous to hostilities that Mr. Fox wrote the famous letter to his constituents to vindicate his conduct, in wishing the English government to let the traitors proceed to overt acts before any notice was taken, and to send an ambassador to the French rulers, that is, to Robespierre, Danton, Brissot, &c., who were just then occupied in murdering their sovereign, but had not begun the work of blood amongst themselves.*

If any arguments were wanting to prove that government acted right, and that Mr. Fox was wrong, they would be supplied by the pamphlet, which, coming from so able a man as Fox, and containing so little argument in his favour, prove the weakness of his cause.

Why not send an ambassador? said Fox: you had one at Vienna, when the dismemberment of Poland took place; you sent to the Dey of Algiers, when he had risen to his

* Mr Fox's letter is dated five days after the king of France was murdered, but before the news of it arrived. This he afterwards notices in a note, speaking with a very proper degree of horror of the act, but not altering his opinion of the propriety of sending an ambassador to the regicides.

throne by murder. Now, if this is reason, or if there is any analogy, I confess I know nothing of analogy. The French government was overturned, the monarch was in prison, and a set of men had met, tumultuously, to erect a government, having first overturned the throne, and then the constitution, which the whole French nation had sworn to preserve: but was that the case with the court of Vienna? Though it acted badly in Poland, that was not equivalent, nor resembling, in any manner, a revolution in the government. Are we to become judges of the conduct of other nations and withdraw our ambassadors because they do not act as we think right? As to the Dey of Algiers, there is rather more similarity, though the shade of difference is extremely small, even in semblance, and nothing in reality. Assassination, if not a natural death for the Deys of Algiers, is a very common one. It is the manner of ordering things there, and is no more a reason for changing an ambassador, than the natural death by disease. Mr. Fox knew well that, so far from being merely innocent, it would be taking a part in a contest not decided between the king and his subjects, a proceeding which he has always very properly opposed.

We have since then had a pretty good speci-

men of the efficiency of Mr. Fox's negotiations with France, and let it be considered how it would have been if the French convention, which encouraged our seditious people, and tried to make a revolution here, had been in a voluntary manner *courted to be quiet*.—Mr. Fox speaks of dignity. The French might not understand that well, in their republic, but well were they acquainted with hauteur, the bastard sister of dignity, and who often counterfeits her form.

The advice of waiting for overt acts at home, was a pretty conceit enough. Sir Francis Burdett wanted overt acts, perhaps, when he resisted the Speaker's warrant, and we know that, in the language of the law, he took nothing by his motion, but we know also what these overt acts produced, to many persons in London.

In the long and rapid succession of important events which have taken place since the revolution began; it is perfectly natural that many of the individual links of the chain should have been forgotten, and the same cause has rendered it very easy for those, who wish to misrepresent matters, to succeed in doing it.

From these causes has arisen a pretty general belief that the English were the aggressors, and began the present war; whereas quite the con-

trary was the case, as has already been proved, and as the French themselves confessed, which is an additional proof, though none more than what has been given is necessary, namely, the low establishment on which the navy and army were put at the very time that the continental war broke out, and many months after the treaty of Pilnitz, to which this government, not only refused to accede, but was hostilely disposed, as appeared from the stipulation of the king of Sweden, who was assassinated by a partisan of French democracy to prevent his interference.

Add to these the fact of opening the Scheldt contrary to treaty with the Dutch, but still more, direct hostilities being commenced on the Dutch territory, by an armed force, before Britain intermeddled in the fray.

It might have been very easy for Britain to have abstained from hostilities a few months longer, with the loss of honour and forfeiture of her word: but honour and fidelity to allies are the last things which a nation should forfeit, or rather the only things which should be maintained at any price. As to those who say, in a tone of triumph, See what you have done for your allies, they are ruined and undone,—I answer, That is nothing to the business; Britain was bound to

assist heartily, and she did assist; but success depends not upon either the will or the exertion, and therefore nations never stipulate for success, but for aid and assistance.

If a gentleman and man of honour gives his word for a friend, and interchanges an honourable guarantee, and it should turn out that the friend wants aid, is the honourable man to sit down and calculate whether the aid will be effectual, whether it will be safe, or prudent, or advantageous, to give what he has promised? Certainly it is too late for such calculation, which should very wisely and properly precede the promise or guarantee, but are totally inadmissible after it, when the only thing to be done is to keep the promise, not in appearance, but with sincerity and fair intention.

But, supposing that England had been mean and base enough to abandon an ally thus attacked, is there any one who can suppose that peace could even then have been long preserved? The French themselves are much more open and candid than their friends and advocates amongst us, for they never reproach the British court with the war; they know that the destruction of this country, or its subjugation, has been their constant aim, and they are sorry, but not angry,

because we defended ourselves; for, amidst all their atrocities, they admit that the love of one's country should predominate. In conformity to this it is that they try to persuade the inhabitants of other nations that it will be for their good to submit to, or enter into friendship with them; but they have never attempted to persuade the people of any country to prefer France to their own. This sort of political lesson was left for some of our own countrymen to teach, which they have done, but without producing either the effect they expected, or bringing down upon themselves the punishment they deserved.*

Previous to the unavoidable war, the prosperity of this country was again at the highest

It is perhaps one of the greatest singularities of the present time, which is unexampled for producing strange events, that the French themselves execrate their first leaders and their theories, and that they respect and admire the conduct of the British; but that a very numerous sect amongst ourselves persist in praising every thing emanating from France, whether from the sans-culotte, with a red bonnet, blasphemy, and preaching up equality, or the great Napoleon, with his imperial diadem and his iron crown, trampling liberty in the dust; and they persist equally in blaming the conduct of England, predicting misfortune and grieving at success.

pitch, and every step was taken by government, which was possible, to increase commerce and encourage manufactures.

Before 1793 our exports had risen to twenty-three millions, which is one fourth more than they had ever been before the American war, and nearly double what they were in 1782. The finances were in good order, the revenue productive, and the sinking fund making a great progress by accumulation; so that, in the pacific administration, there was much to applaud and nothing to blame, and, as to its termination, it arose from external causes, from the situation of Europe and passing events on the continent, for which the British government was by no means answerable.

CHAP. IV.

*Review of Politics, from 1793 to 1802.*

WE now come to the war so much reprobated ; but, having already proved that the war was not voluntary, on the part of Britain, but necessary and unavoidable, much is not necessary to be said with respect to it; for the conduct of the British government is not to be measured by the event altogether : however, in order to leave no room to say that I blink the question, the matter shall be taken up in that way only, assuming, as a fact, that Britain was forced into the combat.

Let us consider what was to be done, and what has been done.

France, having assumed principles and an attitude which threatened, openly and distinctly, every other government with ruin, it was a duty, incumbent on the British government, to protect itself, and not tamely to become a department of France, then ruled by thieves, ruffians, and murderers, who have been since con-

centrated into one—Napoleon! This was the ultimate end of the contest; but circumstances obliging us, at first, to begin for the sake of our allies, the Dutch, we were only auxiliaries, and contributed but a small contingent to the general cause: therefore, success did not depend on any efforts within our power, at a time when France was absolutely exerting her power beyond what had ever been seen in any nation. There were, in 1793-4, not less than fourteen armies, in different directions, amounting in numbers to about 1,200,000 men. The assignats, the spoils of the nobility, of the church, and of neighbouring nations, supplied every pecuniary want, and the soldiers were animated, to the fury of bacchanals or mad-men, by the idea of liberty and equality, added to the hopes of plunder and the gratification of the passions. Such armies would have, at any time, been formidable from their numbers, their resources, and their enthusiasm, but, to the allies, they were invincible, because those allies persevered in the old military tactics; that is, they adhered to an old mode of defence, while the French had adopted a new mode of attack; and they came into the field to be beaten, on almost every occasion, as if they had come with that design.

It must be admitted that, what with astonishment, an attachment to the old military habits, and a sort of contempt for men who fought without any consideration for the numbers slain, it was not a very easy matter for the regular armies to adapt themselves to this new mode of warfare. They might, however, very easily have altered their conduct, so as, more effectually, to have resisted their enemies, without imitating them; but they did not do so, and they failed. The history of their failure is known, and therefore would be useless here; and it is not the vindication of the allies which is my business.

Britain could do nothing more than assist, to the best of her power, in resisting the revolutionary torrent by such aid as she could afford, whether in men or money; it was a great combat, not like common wars, for some commercial privilege or possession of foreign territory;

“The prize contended was great Hector’s life.”

Nothing less than the independence of Europe, of which Britain forms a part, was the object; and those who deny that, are less candid than the French themselves, who admit that England’s destruction has long been their object, and that it would be written on a stone on the banks of the Thames—“Here London was.” Is

it possible that there is an Englishman who could hear this vain boast, coming from a powerful people—a people having more than a million of soldiers—a people engaged in actual hostilities with us, and yet lament the efforts made to resist so terrible a foe? Is it possible that they should magnify all the sacrifices made to render themselves efficient, and make light of the danger with which they were threatened, and from which they have hitherto happily escaped?

Strange as it may be, all this is possible. The same spirit of discontent, which, at an earlier period of his Majesty's reign, converted our prosperity into a cause of discontent, has since turned, to the same baneful purposes, the efforts made to preserve that prosperity.

The magnanimity with which the British government aided those who resisted oppression, and the generosity with which it granted assistance to those who fled from the oppressor, will be recorded, to the honour of the sovereign and his ministers, to the latest period. Men may affect to blame and censure such conduct, but they cannot help admiring it, for it commands admiration. Admiration is not voluntary on such occasions, and, when contrasted with the meanness, the cunning, and cruelties of the

French, it becomes absolutely impossible to withhold it.

Wherever Britain was accountable for success, she succeeded. On the ocean we have risen to the highest point; and the whole shipping of mankind would be unable to stand a contest of half an hour with one-fourth of the British navy! It was not so when his present Majesty mounted the throne. From the times of the Stuarts till 1759, a period of more than seventy years, there was not one great victory at sea; and frequently the French had rather the advantage! What a great, what a glorious change has taken place for Britain!—a change, indeed, begun, but only just begun, before his Majesty ascended the throne. This, perhaps, is one of the facilities which his Majesty's successor will find the most solid, for it may possibly enough lead to the total destruction of the naval power of all our enemies.

What is not the least worthy of notice is, that a new phenomenon was witnessed in Britain, which had hitherto, like all other nations of modern times, declined in commerce, industry, and wealth, during war, on all former occasions; but now the case was reversed: never did wealth increase so rapidly—public works, canals, docks, bridges, &c. &c. went on with unexampled ra-

pidity; great manufactories rose up, as if by some magic power, in every quarter; private buildings increased, were ornamented and inhabited, much more rapidly than during any period of peace; and, though last, not least, our exports doubled in nine years; from above 20 millions, in 1793, they rose, in 1802, to above 41 millions a-year*, that is to say, they had quadrupled from the year 1782, and doubled from 1792!!

The malcontents, like Haman of old, exclaimed—"All this availeth me nothing, while Mordecai the Jew sitteth at the king's gate. Our taxes have increased," say they, "and the day is an evil day; we are bowed down, and our burthens are greater than we can bear." This has been the regular tune which the malcontents have sung, from the days of Queen Ann to the present time. Places, pensions, and the national debt, were the themes of declamation and complaint, when our taxes, in all, amounted to only about three millions a-year;

*See Mr. Chalmers's Chronological Account of Commerce, which is contained both in his Comparative Estimate and in his "Considerations on Commerce," &c.; two works which should be in the hands of every political economist.

and they had been so, at earlier periods, when the whole revenue did not amount to half a million *.

The men, who exclusively consider themselves as patriots, are like a hypochondriac, who, if he has no disease in his body, carries a cruel and fatal one in his mind, which supplies the place of all the ills which ever issued from Pandora's box. Not only do they persuade, and are persuaded, that much evil hath arisen, but they most carefully suppress every circumstance which indicates prosperity, or has a tendency to counteract the evils they affect to deplore.

Britain has, during the war, exhibited, to the whole world, an example of a country preserving honour and principle; religiously keeping her engagements; paying all her debts; lending to those nations which are in want of assistance, and resisting tyranny all over the world; and, at the

* Lord Henry Petty, now Marquis of Lansdowne, said, very properly and well, though in opposition at the time (in 1809), that, to persuade the people that the abolition of pensions would afford much relief, was a deception; for all these, which could be possibly cut off, would not amount to a week's contribution.

same time, increasing in private wealth and prosperity;—while other nations, shrinking from difficulty, and committing frauds on their creditors, are ruined and undone.

Britain, from her insular situation, and from the manner in which she was forced into the war, could not be prepared with a powerful army, and found it impossible to command a successful issue to the contest. The troops of the allies, inferior, in numbers and in energy, to those of France, were defeated in every quarter: with assignats for money, requisitions for men, and new modes of fighting, which regular German tacticians disdained to imitate, and had not the genius to defeat, the allies continually lost; and Britain, by land, shared in the disasters, but she preserved her honour, and, whenever she fought alone, with numbers nearly equal, she conquered, as the shores of Egypt and of Syria and of Italy can attest. At sea we were unrivalled, and, lest the idea should be encouraged that there is no merit due to his Majesty's government for that, because it is our natural element, let it be remembered that, from the revolution to the year 1759, during which period the great campaigns of Marlborough were fought, we gained

no great naval victory, and it is during the present reign alone that we have risen above all nations.

Notwithstanding the great and glorious efforts made to withstand the tyranny of France, on the continent, there was no obstinate perseverance in the contest; peace was made, because the nation called for it, though those who knew the spirit of the Ruler of France, never expected that it would last—it was an experiment to save blood and treasure, and to please those who had, in all its stages, opposed the war: but our enemy soon acted in such a manner, that hostilities recommenced, attended with the conviction that, until the French system and mode of acting were changed, the blessing of peace was not to be expected.

Before our ambassador, the Marquis Cornwallis, had quitted the hall where the treaty was signed, intrigues were commenced, contrary to good faith, honour, and the spirit of the agreement; and, from that moment, every artifice was set on foot, by the French, to deceive and overreach the British government; and it was not till the impossibility of preserving peace, with safety, was ascertained, that a new war was undertaken.

During the first war, into which Britain was

led from honour and necessity*, moderation, on our side, was strictly adhered to, in the midst of

* Besides the attack on our allies, the Dutch, abroad, the open protection given by the Convention to the malcontents in England, would have warranted any prudent government in going to war, as the following correspondence, now nearly forgotten, will shew, bearing in mind that the Convention was too haughty to retract, explain, or extenuate, in any case whatever, and therefore that remonstrance would have been useless.

“ The Revolution Society of London—*‘ Above all we rejoice in the Revolution of the 10th of August, so necessary to secure to you the advantages which the former had taught you to expect. We feel an agreeable sensation, that the right of insurrection has been so successfully exercised.*

Signed, J. TOWERS,
— COOPER.”

“ The Friends of Liberty and Equality at Belfast—*‘ For the glory of humanity, may your Declaration of Rights be every where put in practice.’*

• “ The Volunteers of Belfast—*‘ The successes of the French secure liberty to the neighbouring nations.’*

“ The United Societies of London—*‘ An oppressed part of mankind, forgetting their own evils, are sensible only of yours; and, beholding the present events with a disturbed eye, address their most fervent prayers to the God of the universe, that he may be favourable to your cause, with which theirs is so intimately connected. Degraded by an oppressive system of insularism, the invincible, but continual*

the greatest provocation from the French; and on every occasion, wherever any practical measure

encroachments of which quickly deprived the nation of its boasted liberty, and reduced it almost to that abject state of slavery from which you have so gloriously emancipated yourselves. FIVE THOUSAND English citizens, fired with indignation, have the courage to step forward to rescue their country from that opprobrium which has been thrown upon it by the base conduct of those who are invested with power. Frenchmen, our number will appear very small, when compared with the rest of the nation; but know, that it increases every day; and if the terrible and continually elevated arm of authority overawes the timid—if falshoods, every moment dispersed with so much industry, mislead the credulous—and if the public intimacy of the court with Frenchmen, avowed traitors to their country, hurry away the ambitious and unthinking, we can, with confidence, assure you, Freemen and Friends, that knowledge makes a rapid progress among us. You are already free, but Britons are preparing to be so.

Signed, M. MARGAROT,
T. HARDY.

“Constitutional Society of London—‘Innumerable Societies of the same sort are forming in every part of England. After the example given by France, revolutions will become easy; reason is about to make a rapid progress; and it would not be extraordinary if, in a much less space of time than can be imagined, the French should send Addresses of Congratulation to the National Convention of England. Other Nations will soon follow your steps in the career of improve-

could be pointed out, which was consistent with the national honour and safety, it was adopted, in

ment, and, rising from their lethargy, will arm themselves for the purpose of claiming the Rights of Man.

Signed,

SEMPILL,

D. ADAMS,

JOEL BARLOWE,

J. FROST.

“ The President's Answer was a real Declaration of War against this kingdom.—‘ *The shades of Penn, of Hampden, and of Sydney, hover over your heads; and the moment, without doubt, approaches, in which the French will bring congratulations to the National Convention of Great Britain.*’

“ Of the same complexion was the Declaration, December 15th, of the Convention—‘ *That it will treat us enemies, the people, who, refusing or renouncing Liberty and Equality, are desirous of preserving their Prince and privileged Casts, or of entering into an accommodation with them.*’

“ Let those men (not Jacobins) who condemn the war, or who think it might have been avoided, seriously consider these extracts of the direct communication of English republicans with French cut-throats. Can any person, not absolutely bereft of reason, conceive it possible that such men, thus machinating the destruction of our constitution, could continue their connection with the French Convention, which peace gave a boundless power of doing, without our running the most imminent hazard of every thing that government and law secure to us—that is to say, life and property.

The ‘ *Proceedings of the Association of the Friends of*

contradiction to all assertions that his Majesty's government was obstinately bent on prosecuting war, at the risk of sacrificing the prosperity of the nation.

the Constitution, Dublin, the Duke of Leinster in the chair! is a publication that deserves notice. These 'friends' call on the people to 'SUBDUE the corruption,' 'the infamy,' 'the foulest acts under the foulest names,' which form the 'regular system of government,' by 'a RADICAL REFORM;' by a body of 'representatives, an integral and essential part of the constitution, derived from the people by GENERAL election.'—The English language could scarcely, in an equal number of words, paint, in stronger terms, the fire-brands of sedition. To call on the people not to crave, or petition, but to SUBDUE the errors of government, —to SUBDUE them by a RADICAL reform, and GENERAL representation, is, in other words, to demand a Convention, the king at Tyburn, the lords annihilated, and property the reward of new Robespierres, Brissots, and Marats. But these expressions are too remarkable to be accidental; they coincide too exactly with the threats of the Jacobins in France, to allow us, for one moment, to believe that there is not a clear intelligence and union between them."—*ARTHUR YOUNG'S Examples of France a Warning to Britain.*

VINDICATION OF THE

CHAP. V.

Review of the Period from 1802 to 1811

As the conduct of France soon rendered it evident that it would be impossible to preserve peace for any length of time, the only line for Great Britain to pursue, was to adopt that moderation which should leave the blame of the renewal of hostilities with the French government; and so completely did Britain succeed in this, that there was little difference of opinion on the subject, and even most of those who had been clamorous for peace, acquiesced in the declaration of a fresh war.

The same difficulty, which stood in the way of Great Britain in the former revolutionary war, still existed. The continental armies adhered to their ancient mode of fighting, and only went into the field to be beaten; and, though the despotism, the injustice, and cruelty of Buonaparte augmented every day, nothing could rouse the continent to make a combined or simultaneous

effort to regain what was lost, or to preserve what was left.

The conduct of Prussia was, beyond that of all others, base, disgraceful, and absurd. After shewing the greatest desire to obtain possession of Hanover, by a guilty participation with Buonaparte, she was disappointed and laughed at; and, after refusing to co-operate with Russia and Austria, when success was almost certain, she declared war, single-handed, against France, and the armies which had been bred, under Frederick the Great, were overturned in a single day.

Never did the world witness so signal a defeat in so short a time. Before the end of the third day, Prussia was overrun by French armies, who were well supplied with every necessary, driving before them the Prussian fugitives, who were famishing in the midst of their own country, where those strangers were well supplied.* This was the

* A singular fate enough for an army, raised by an atheist, and conducted entirely on the plan of making men machines, without any moral principle. Mind could not be altogether prevented from acting; but Frederick only considered it as acting by the fear of punishment; and he said, repeatedly, on various occasions, that, provided the soldiers performed their manœuvres and attended military duty well, they might do as they pleased in matters of moral con-

last great triumph of the new mode of carrying on war over ancient regular armies, for neither was the victory on the Vistula, nor on the Danube, at Wagram, complete nor decisive. The weakness of the chiefs converted doubtful conflicts into ruinous disasters; but, in every case, Britain has been irreproachable, except during that aberration from the general policy of the present reign which took place on the decease of Mr. Pitt.

By the general policy of this reign, I mean that policy which prefers the permanent interests of the country to temporary advantage, and which is the best policy on all occasions. From this permanent policy, there was a deviation, when we made the useless and humiliating attempt to bring about peace, and when an English ambassador, by a clumsy manoeuvre, was permitted to go and bend before the second class of commis in Paris; for Talleyrand, it is said, disdained to receive the man whom he meant to amuse as long as it suited his master. There was some sort of dignity, and even generosity, in this

duct. The Prussian government was the most unprincipled in existence; and it has suffered in a signal manner, with none to help or to pity it.

way of acting. We had begged a kind of permission to send an ambassador, and, though there never was the smallest intention, on the part of France, to treat, yet the mere permission of coming to Paris could not be considered as a fraudulent manœuvre, for it was of our seeking, and there never was any encouragement given to us, although it happened to be very opportune for France, as it made the powers on the continent think that Britain had abandoned their cause.

The Confederation of the Rhine, the seizure of Genoa, the defeat of Prussia, and, finally, of Russia, were all prepared while our ambassador was making useless efforts to obtain attention in Paris.

During twelve months that Britain followed this devious path, the greatest shock was given to the independence of the continent; for the peace of Tilsit was the signal for the subjection of Italy, for the attack on Spain, and the seizure of the fleet of Denmark by the French, had we not anticipated that blow.

Let those, who blame the usual and steady policy of the present reign, only consider what was the consequence of abandoning it for one single year, and then let them give an opinion.

It is a very easy task to criticise and find

fault, and, as things are managed, to point out how they might have been better; but we have had some lessons lately, which ought to make us rather grant a sort of academical faith to patriots, than that full, unqualified confidence which they arrogantly demand and confidently expect.

Mr. Fox is gone from this mortal scene, and the good and amiable qualities of which he was possessed, render it a harsh and a disagreeable task * to make any personal allusions to him: let what follows, then, be applied to Opposition in a body, and let them, collectively or individually, deny the facts; and if they cannot deny them, let them be at least a little moderate in their language; let them be more diffident of their own powers, and have some compassion for men who, having to govern the nation, in very difficult times, are liable occasionally to commit errors, and are not always successful.

When Mr. Pitt, who had so long, so ably, and so disinterestedly, guided the helm, resigned his efforts, for the deliverance of Europe, with his breath, then those, who had systematically

* There is a pamphlet—"Mr. Fox's Title to Patriot Disputed," which contains some strong facts, plainly told, and will amply repay the time bestowed on its perusal.

opposed him in every measure, got into power, and had an opportunity of shewing with what dexterity and success they could conduct affairs.

When those, who had railed against Mr. Pitt's administration, came into power, they disappointed all their friends, and shewed, without any kind of ceremony, that they had only opposed ministers from policy, and not from principle.

Were taxes oppressive before, and the income-tax, as they said, the worst of all? The Talents doubled the income-tax, and put it in a state of rigorous activity before unknown!! Were pensions a grievance? The Talents increased the list of pensioners!! Were peerages multiplied too much? The Talents made more peers than ever were made in an equal space of time!! Was the power of the crown too great, from the influence exerted by means of excisemen and revenue-officers? The Talents laid a plan for augmenting the number of revenue-officers, expressly for the purpose of augmenting their influence!! Is the manner of electing members to serve in parliament defective? The Talents tried to make it worse!!

The finest piece of manœuvring in the Talents, was one which passed over without meeting with that observation it deserved. When Opposition

first came into office, they declared that they were lying on a bed of thorns, and that the finances were in such a state, that they scarcely knew how to raise money for the year. To believe the then ministers, bankruptcy was staring us in the face; but never did any mountebank or juggler handle hocus-pocus better than they did—for, next year, to the amazement of all those who had been made believe that we were ruined, Lord Henry Petty, and a select number of algebraists, produced a plan, by which it appeared no more taxes would be necessary; and it was proved, by A , minus B , multiplied by X , and divided by C , that the nation could carry on the war for ever, without any fresh burthens; and, in short, that the gloomy pictures of the year before were mere phantasmagoria—a sort of magic-lantern figures, which appeared and vanished at the will of those who held the machine.

No sooner had those wonderful conjurors proclaimed the prosperity of the nation, after having frightened us almost into fits with a gloomy picture, than they considered themselves so securely seated, that they might venture to force their Royal Master to sanction a measure which, they knew well, was contrary to his conscience;

but, to make the matter more secure, and success more certain, they concealed the extent of the measure. Without entering here into the controversy about the Catholic question, it is sufficient to observe, that there was no prudence in bringing on the measure, and there was much mean duplicity in the manner in which it was done. His Majesty's character was totally mistaken, for, where his conscience was concerned, he would yield to no earthly consideration, and the nation highly approved of his firmness.

The Talents went out, with their grand plan of finance, unregretted; and so little value was set on that famous plan, that it has never been thought of since; and even those who proposed it, are silent as to its magic qualities, which, it is more than probable, they never fully credited, but considered it as a good opiate while they remained in place*.

It is to be hoped that it will not be forgotten that the men, who, by means which were far from frank and open, far from plain, simple, and direct, had attempted to bring his Majesty

The acts of this administration are detailed in a masterly style, in the celebrated poem entitled "All the Talents," and from which it took its name.

into a measure which, they had every reason to believe, he did not approve, and would not go into with his eyes open; when a dismissal from his service was the consequence, made an appeal to Parliament against his Majesty. Such a step had not been ventured upon since the revolution of 1688: it was unconstitutional, indecorous, and, in that case, founded in misrepresentation.

The attack on the liberties of Spain and Portugal were planned when Britain stood aloof—and, surely, more unprincipled ones never were conceived or attempted; but, by a return to the old steady line of policy, in protecting all those who desired it, from the despotic grasp of France, we have amply atoned for the error of leaving Europe to its fate for one season.

We have now not an enemy to fight with on the ocean: by land, whenever we meet him in equal force, we conquer; and, by the generosity of our behaviour, as well as by our honourable conduct and bravery, we have become the friends of the Spaniards and Portuguese, whilst the French, by their atrocious conduct, have rendered themselves detested and abhorred.

This is not one of the least important considerations in examining the policy of the pre-

sent reign. Had Spain and Portugal been left without aid, they, most probably, must have submitted, and, at all events, they must have considered that Britain had no friendship to expect; therefore, the navies of France, Spain, Holland, and Portugal, might have been seen united against us. Now, that is out of all question, for some centuries at least, and, probably, for ever: which is a great point gained: besides, if the Spanish nation is fairly roused, France will no longer be able to exert all her force on the east and the north. As it was the family compact which sunk Spain in indolence, and gave France security on the south, this will put a period to the indolence of Spain and the security of France, and prepare the way for that ancient distribution of power which constituted what was called the balance, and what certainly answered the purpose of preventing one nation from oppressing and swallowing up others which were smaller and less powerful.

Never did the character of Britain stand so high as it does now, nor, take it for all in all, did the character of any nation *ever* stand so high. The French see the contrast between their infamy, cruelty, and duplicity, and English honour, generosity, and good faith; but what hurts their

national vanity still more, they feel their own want and wretchedness, and see this country flourishing and happy. They are enraged and mortified, as well as their chief, but perhaps the day is not far distant, when we shall assist even these our bitter enemies, to break the cruel bonds by which they are held in such thralldom and subjection; so that the world may once more see a system followed, whereby arts and industry may flourish, and under which men will not be forbidden to enjoy the fruits of their labours in their own way, nor have their children dragged off to fight in a cause which makes humanity shudder, and disgraces those who are engaged in its support.

CHAP. VI.



Conclusion—Increase of Commerce and Manufactures—Improvements in Agriculture, and general Increase of Wealth—Increase of Debt and Taxes—Calculation of what we have lost, and what gained, in Civil Liberty, during this Reign ; shewing that our Situation is ameliorated, that Patriotism is a Trade, and that Public Discontent is the Patriotic Exchequer.

WHILST England has been fighting to maintain her honour and independence, and the liberties of mankind, though the war has been attended with unexampled facility, the facility with which the money is obtained, is more unexampled still ; and quite the contrary symptoms have accompanied this war which attended all former wars.

Money is easier to be obtained than at the beginning. In former times every year made it more difficult. Buildings, canals, bridges, new manufactures, and public works of all de-

scriptions, go on more rapidly during this war than they ever did before in the most profound peace; and, formerly, during war, they used to be completely at a stand. Improvements in agriculture proceed fast, and our foreign commerce has nearly doubled.* These phenomena in commercial history cannot be explained on any other principle than that of the policy of Britain having been such as to make it the centre, the only place where persons and property take refuge, and, consequently, where wealth is accumulated to an immense extent.

Either the influx of wealth, from abroad, or the operation of the Sinking-fund, must be the cause of this great difference in the circumstances attendant on the present war, and all the wars which have preceded it; for they are the only two things which can account for

* By Mr. Chalmers's Chronological Account of Commerce, &c., in 1700 our exports were, annually.....6,045,432

1760	- - - - -	15,781,175
1770	- - - - -	15,994,571
1780	- - - - -	12,648,616
1790	- - - - -	20,120,121
1802	- - - - -	41,411,966
1809	- - - - -	50,301,763

such extraordinary phenomena, which are at open variance with the most esteemed theories of financiers and economists, as well as in direct opposition to the experience of all other countries, and of this too during all former wars, whether carried on by sea or by land, with good or with ill success.

Whether it be to the Sinking-fund, or to the asylum which this island furnishes to the oppressed, or to both, that this affluence and prosperity, during so long and so expensive a war, is owing, the same honour is due to the manner in which public affairs have been conducted during the present reign; for such has Britain been under the reign of his present Majesty, and if his successor can do better, it will be a happy surprise to all who are interested in the welfare of this country: but let it never for a moment be imagined, that it will be an easy task, or that it will be done by reversing the system.

Mr. Hume, and all writers of character and reputation, on subjects of moral good and evil, as well as writers on natural philosophy, maintain that, as nothing is perfect, the qualities of good or bad, whether we speak of the moral or of the physical world, are, in all cases, comparative.

and that the judgment is to be formed by comparing things which are similar. By that rule, the British government, though not perfect, is most certainly to be termed good; for, when compared with all other governments, we find that it is the best, not only which now exists, but which has existed; and therefore, though, most probably, it admits of improvement, still that is but a matter of speculation, and we have no right to find fault with it.

There are numbers of persons who talk of bringing back the constitution to its first principles, to its original purity; empty, unmeaning and unfounded declamation! When was the constitution better? when was it more pure? Were there no boroughs in the time of William and Mary? Were there no peers? no court influence, places, nor pensions? Look farther back, was it not still worse? The British constitution, excellent as it is, is not the produce of a fixed plan and theory, like what was attempted in France. The quarrels between King John and the great barons produced Magna Charta; and the quarrels between Henry III. and the Earl of Leicester and his adherents, gave rise to the House of Commons and representation of the people; but it was a repre-

sentation begun by accident, and regulated by expediency; it never was in contemplation to make it what time and circumstances have since made it.

The civil wars of the York and Lancastrian lines, by their long duration and alternate success, gave rise to so many attainders and so much blood-shed, that the great feudal lords were nearly annihilated; and the progress of commerce, under the succeeding reigns, threw much power into the hands of the Commons, whom the Tudor family encouraged, in order to counterbalance the few great families which remained. They remembered the Earls of Warwick and Leicester, the Percys and the Mowbrays, and they did not wish to see such powerful subjects. After the vigorous reign of the House of Tudor, the feeble and imprudent princes of the Stuart line, by bringing on the great rebellion, increased the power of the Commons; and the revolution of 1688 gave the nation an opportunity of entering into a compact with William, who had no right to reign, and who, therefore, must agree to stipulate the conditions.

Thus accidental circumstances, and the good sense and good intention of the nobility and gentry, framed, at distant intervals, and by degrees,

the best constitution we have yet seen established in any country ; and, to say that it is not perfect, is to say nothing more than that it is the work of man*.

*As Mr. Fox, in his latter days, so highly approved of the French constitution of 1789, and he still preserves the credit of being nearly infallible, the following quotation from Mr. Burke, which, though in great warmth of style, is not exaggerated, may serve to shew what sort of a fabric he did admire.

“ When the French assembly came to provide for population, they were not able to proceed quite so smoothly as they had done in the field of their geometry. Here their arithmetic came to bear upon their juridical metaphysics. Had they stuck to their metaphysic principles, the arithmetical process would be simple indeed. Men, with them, are strictly equal, and are entitled to equal rights in their own government. Each head, on this system, would have its vote, and every man would vote directly for the person who was to represent him in the legislature. ‘ But soft—by regular degrees, not yet.’ This metaphysic principle, to which law, custom, usage, policy, reason, were to yield, is to yield itself to their pleasure. There must be many degrees, and some stages, before the representative can come in contact with his constituent. Indeed, as we shall soon see, these two persons are to have no sort of communion with each other. First, the voters in the *canton*, who compose what they call *primary assemblies*, are to have a *qualification*. ‘ What ! a qualification on the indefeasible rights of men ? Yes ; but it shall be a very small qualification. Our injustice shall be very little oppres-

If there had been any tendency, in his Majesty's government, towards despotism, the great stand-

sive; only the local valuation of three days' labour paid to the public. Why, this is not much, I readily admit, for any thing but the utter subversion of your equalizing principle. As a qualification, it might as well be let alone; for it answers no one purpose for which qualifications are established: and, on your ideas, it excludes, from a vote, the man, of all others, whose natural equality stands most in need of protection and defence—I mean the man who has nothing else but his natural equality to guard him. You order him to buy the right, which, you before told him, nature had given to him gratuitously at his birth, and of which no authority on earth could lawfully deprive him. With regard to the person who cannot come up to your market, a tyrannous aristocracy, as against him, is established at the very outset, by you who pretend to be its sworn foe.

“The gradation proceeds. These primary assemblies of the *canton* elect deputies to the *commune*; one for every two hundred qualified inhabitants. Here is the first medium put between the primary elector and the representative legislator; and here a new turnpike is fixed for taxing the rights of men with a second qualification: for no one can be elected into the *commune* who does not pay the amount of ten days' labour. Nor have we yet done; there is still to be another gradation*.

* “The assembly, in executing the plan of their committee, made some alterations. They have struck out one stage in these gradations: this removes a part of the objection: but the main objection, namely, that, in their scheme, the first con-

amount, would all have favoured the attempt; but there has not been the smallest indication

thing politic; nothing that relates to the concerns, the actions, the passions, the interests of men. *Hominem non sapiunt.*"

"Your new constitution is the very reverse of ours in its principle; and I am astonished how any persons could dream of holding out any thing done in it as an example for Great Britain. With you there is little, or rather no connection between the last representative and the first constituent. The member who goes to the National Assembly is not chosen by the people, nor accountable to them. There are three elections before he is chosen: two sets of magistracy intervene between him and the Primary Assembly, so as to render him, as I have said, an ambassador of state, and not the representative of the people within a state. By this the whole spirit of the election is changed; nor can any corrective your constitution-mongers have devised render him any thing else than what he is. The very attempt to do it would inevitably introduce a confusion, if possible, more horrid than the present. There is no way to make a connection between the original constituent and the representative, but by the circuitous means which may lead the candidate to apply, in the first instance, to the primary electors, in order that, by their authoritative instructions (and something more perhaps), these primary electors may force the two succeeding bodies of electors to make a choice agreeable to their wishes. But this would plainly subvert the whole scheme; it would be to plunge them back into that tumult and confusion of popular election, which, by their interposed gradation-elections, they mean to avoid, and at length to risk the whole fortune of the state

of a wish towards any thing of the sort. When the Habeas-Corpus Act was suspended, in order

with those who have the least knowledge of it, and the least interest in it. This is a perpetual dilemma, into which they are thrown by the vicious, weak, and contradictory principles they have chosen. Unless the people break up and level the gradation, it is plain that they do not at all substantially elect to the Assembly; indeed they elect as little in appearance as in reality."

"Let us now turn our eyes to what they have done towards the formation of an EXECUTIVE POWER. For this they have chosen a degraded king. This, their first executive officer, is to be a machine, without any sort of deliberative discretion in any one act of his function; at best, he is but a channel to convey, to the National Assembly, such matter as may import that body to know. If he had been made the exclusive channel, the power would not have been without its importance; though infinitely perilous to those who would choose to exercise it. But public intelligence and statement of facts may pass to the Assembly, with equal authenticity, through any other conveyance. As to the means, therefore, of giving direction to measures, by the statement of an authorised reporter, this office of intelligence is nothing.

"To consider of the French scheme of an *executive officer* in its two natural divisions of *civil* and *political*.—In the first, it must be observed, that, according to the new constitution, the higher parts of the magistrature, in either of its lines, are not in the king. The King of France is not the fountain of justice: the judges, neither the original nor the appellate, are of his nominative: he neither proposes the candidates, nor has a ne-

to save the country, not a single individual was meddled with, where disaffection to the govern-

ment was on the choice; he is not even the public prosecutor; he serves only as a notary, to authenticate the choice made of the judges in the several districts; by his officers he is to execute their sentence. When we look into the true nature of his authority, he appears to be nothing more than a chief of sum-bailiffs, serjeants at mace, catchpoles, jailors, and hangmen: it is impossible to place any thing called royalty in a more degrading point of view. A thousand times better had it been for the dignity of this unhappy Prince, that he had nothing at all to do with the administration of justice, deprived as he is of all that is venerable and all that is consolatory in that function, without power of originating any process; without a power of suspension, mitigation, or pardon. Every thing, in justice, that is vile and odious, is thrown upon him. It was not for nothing that the Assembly has been at such pains to remove the stigma from certain offices, when they were resolved to place the person, who lately had been their king, in a situation but one degree above the executioner, and in an office nearly of the same quality. It is not in nature, that, situated as the King of the French now is, he can respect himself, or can be respected by others.

View this now executive officer on the scene of his political capacity, as he acts under the orders of the National Assembly. To execute laws is a royal office; to execute orders is not to be a king. However, a political executive magistracy, though merely such, is a great trust; it is a trust, indeed, that has much depending upon its faithful and diligent performance, both in the person presiding in it and in all his subordinates.

ment was not known : their numbers were few, and, in no one instance, did any persecution

Means of performing this duty ought to be given by regulation ; and dispositions towards it ought to be infused by the circumstances attendant on the trust : it ought to be envired with dignity, authority, and consideration, and it ought to lead to glory. The office of execution is an office of extension. It is not from impotence we are to expect the tasks of power. What sort of a person is a king to command executory service, who has no means whatsoever to reward it? Not in a permanent office ; not in a grant of laud ; no, not in a pension of fifty pounds a year ; not in the vainest and most trivial title. In France, the King is no more the fountain of honour than he is the fountain of justice. All rewards, all distinctions are in other hands. Those who serve the King can be actuated by no natural motive but fear ; by a fear of every thing except their master. His functions of internal coercion are as odious as those which he exercises in the department of justice. If relief is to be given to any municipality, the Assembly gives it : if troops are to be sent to reduce them to obedience to the Assembly, the King is to execute the order : and on every occasion he is to be spattered over with the blood of his people. He has no negative ; yet his name and authority is used to enforce every such decree. Nay, he must concur in the butchery of those who shall attempt to free him from his imprisonment, and in the slightest attachment to his person or to his ancient

“ I think it impossible that any king, who has recovered his own terror, can cordially infuse vivacity and vigour into measures which he knows to be dictated by those who,

originate, either in the spirit of oppression, or in a wish to extend the power of the crown.

The affairs of Ireland have not yet been noticed. During the American war, Ireland obtained great privileges, and its condition was, even by the admission of Mr. Grattan, greatly ameliorated; but the discontents of the people rather increased

he must be persuaded, are in the highest degree ill-affected to his person. Will any ministers, who serve such a KING with but a decent appearance of respect, cordially obey the orders of those whom, but the other day, in his name they had committed to the Bastille? Will they obey the orders of those whom, whilst they were exercising despotic justice upon them, they conceived they were treating with lenity; and for whom, in a prison, they thought they had provided an asylum? If you expect such obedience amongst your innovations and regenerations, you ought to make a revolution in nature, and to provide a new constitution for the human mind. Otherwise your supreme government cannot harmonize with its executive system. There are cases in which we cannot take up with names and abstractions.

A KING, circumstanced as the present, if he is totally stupified by his misfortunes, so as to think it not the necessity, but the premium and privilege of life, to rest and sleep, without any regard to glory, never can be fitted for office. If he feels as men commonly feel, he must be sensible that an office, so circumstanced, is one in which he can obtain no fame or reputation. He has no generous interest that can excite him to action; at best his conduct will be passive and defensive."

as the real cause of them decreased, and, in 1797, the country broke out in open rebellion, in concert with France, as has been completely proved; after which, the union of the two kingdoms was brought about, in order, if possible, to prevent a repetition of such scenes.

The wisdom and policy of this measure, it is not necessary to examine: but let it be remembered that Dr. Swift wrote an allegorical tale, soon after the union with Scotland, to complain of the ill-treatment Ireland met with, in not being united to England also. Swift was the most popular political writer in Ireland, and it was very natural to conclude that, what he so strongly recommended, if not altogether so advantageous as he represented, would, at least, be beneficial in conciliating the minds of the people. Such a conclusion would have been very fair, and was very natural; particularly, as Ireland was much more favourably treated than Scotland; and still more particularly, because the union with Scotland had produced far greater advantages to that country than Dr. Swift could possibly imagine.

That disadvantages have followed the Union, is true; but the advantages expected, have not had time to be felt yet; and, even if it is not so good a measure as it was intended to be, it makes no

leading feature in the present reign. Something was evidently wanting for the tranquillity and happiness of Ireland, and it was attempted in the very way that there was reason to think would be most acceptable to the country; and it is yet too soon to say that it will not produce happy effects. It was much longer before the advantages of the Union was felt by Scotland; but they have been long felt and universally acknowledged since.

The Roman Catholic question is one which it is impossible not to notice, in speaking of Ireland; but, even in that, his Majesty's government has acted rightly. The refusal of the Veto plainly shews that more is meant than meets the ear; and if there were nothing more than reason for doubts as to the expediency, those doubts would be a good cause for suspending the measure; for, wherever there are doubts, it is more prudent to sit still than to act; in as much as, if suspension is an error, it can be remedied, but the adoption of the measure never can be remedied, by the consequences what they may. This would, in a case of doubt, I say, be a sufficient cause for suspending the measure. Now, this has always been a case of doubtful expediency, until the objection, of submitting to the Veto, which puts the matter out of all doubt, by shew-

ing that the Roman Catholics not only will not stop at an equality with the Established Church, which is under the controul of government, but aspire to be totally independent; which neither is the case in Britain, nor in any church in any country. It was reserved for the Irish to exhibit a picture of men beginning by asking to be put upon an equality with others; yet, before they obtained what they at first professed to want, declaring openly that nothing would content them, less than being placed far above the others. If this were only an awkward absurdity, it might pass: but it is more, and shews that the Roman Catholics aim at much beyond what it would be prudent to tell—they aim at independence, and disconnecting entirely Church and State—a thing never before attempted. And what is the pretence for this? Why, that the Pope is the head of the Church, and that the King of Great Britain, not being a papist, cannot, with propriety, be permitted to interfere. This is indeed very fine; who is this Pope, this head of the Church at this time? He happens to be an old man shut up in a prison under the lock and key of Buonaparte. Far be it from me to turn into ridicule even the religious absurdities of any religion; but, when we are gravely told that the successor of St. Peter, who pretends to

keep the keys of Heaven—whose long line of predecessors were as proud in prosperity as he is humble in adversity—men who, in the days of their power, burned the Protestants at the stake*, we cannot avoid suspecting something. The fact is, that, at present, there is not a head to the Church of Rome, and the Roman Catholics of all countries, except the Irish, know that well, and, therefore, on what grounds they can expect to be listened to, it is very difficult to imagine; for, besides its being a ground for violent suspicion of bad intention, it is an insult to the sovereign and to the whole nation.

It is not necessary, for the vindication of his Majesty's reign, to enter at length into the merits of the Roman Catholic question; but it is fair to say, that both Catholics and Protestants owe much to his present Majesty: it is further fair to say, that no portion of his Majesty's subjects is so easily led astray, or stirred up to discontent, as the Irish. When the Union with Scotland took place, the Irish were highly offended, at the pre-

* See Stockdale's History of the Inquisition, in the Preface to which, the Roman Catholic question is very briefly, but very powerfully, stated.

ference, and Dean Swift, in his vulgar and obscene allegory of the Two Sisters, raised a great ferment on that subject. The Union with Ireland is on a much fairer principle than that with Scotland; still it causes discontent: so difficult is it to satisfy the Irish.

It may be said, and no doubt will be answered, to what is here advanced, that, notwithstanding our affluence and apparent prosperity, we are on the brink of destruction; that, whatever may have been the case hitherto—whatever may be the case now, we shall soon be at our last resource.

Without any attempt to penetrate the secrets of futurity, which, for wise purposes, are concealed, we may venture to calculate on probabilities—and thus they stand:

The Sinking Fund now pays off as much money, very nearly, as we borrow in a year; so that we are like a merchant who pays what he owes, and takes credit for what he wants; and, as he cancels as many debts as he makes, his debts do not increase.* Add to this, that the Sinking

* The Sinking Fund now pays above thirteen millions of old debts; we borrow, on an average, about as much; but, in a few years, the Sinking Fund will pay off twenty millions a

fund, if continued, will outstrip, in amount, any possible degree of expenditure upon foreign wars; for, what a nation pays, within herself, is only a transfer, and may extend almost without limit. What she pays for foreign wars does not return, and is limited at all times, and frequently within very narrow bounds.

But let us look to our enemy:—The situation of affairs which most resembles the present, was during the reign of Charlemagne, whom Buonaparte has taken for his model, and whom he affects to imitate. Let us look at the durability of the dynasty, and of the empire of Charles the Great, and we shall there see the fragility of a power composed of discordant materials, and bound together, by the talents of one man, after that man is no more.

The empire of Charlemagne, which consisted of France, Germany, and Italy, was divided on the death of the Conqueror: civil war ensued amongst his sons, and, finally, Hugh Capet, in little less than half a century, drove the last of the race, now known by the more dig-

year; and in 14 years will be paying 28 millions, if we are at peace: and, if we are at war, and borrow as we do, it will be paying off above 30 millions annually. •

nified Chinese term of Dynasty, from the throne of France, and reigned in his place. Such was the fate of the empire and of the family. Let us next look to the state in which France, the Great Nation, found herself after her *great* monarch and her *great* conquests.

This was in the ninth century, nearly one thousand years ago. The situation of the country was very disorderly, and the history of that period is not very complete; but one leading fact is sufficient to shew that France *was reduced to a state of feebleness which EXCITES PITY, CONTEMPT, and ASTONISHMENT.*

About one century after the death of Charles the Great, the city of Paris, which had been his capital, was, two different years, attacked and pillaged by marauding piratical Danes, who ascended the river Seine in boats, to accomplish their purpose. The number of the Danes is not known, but it could not be considerable. The ascent was long and tedious, 250 miles; the river is rapid, in winter, and shallow in summer: so that Paris must absolutely have been in a state of weakness, the most complete; and the inhabitants must, not only have been few in number, but their spirit must have been completely broken. Were the fact not well attested, it

never could obtain credit, for the Seine is not like the Thames, a river to let a great force ascend in a short time: it is absolutely inferior to a canal navigation, only that it has no locks.*

This was such a fresh-water invasion as, at this day, would not be submitted to by the village of Paddington: yet, so exhausted was the capital of Charles the great—the capital of the Empire of the West, that its inhabitants fled from the first invasion, and purchased an ignoble safety, on the second, by the payment of a large sum of money.

The great effort made by France, in the reign of Charlemagne, brought on a weakness which was not repaired for many centuries. Want of population, and want of industry, are the two things which it requires the longest time to remove; but, while a nation is in the line of conquest, it feels neither. When the conquests cease, it feels both, and there is very great rea-

* The durability of the empire of Alexander the Great was not longer than that of Charlemagne. Alexander left no sons; Charles left sons. Whether the French Ruler will leave his empire to his sons or his generals, is unknown; but we have a case in point both ways, and both were equally short in remaining one united empire. It is the union, not flourishing separately, which is the question.

son for believing that, comparing times and the situation of different nations in Europe, France has lost more in population and real strength since the beginning of the revolution, than she did in the reign of Charlemagne. *

There is then great reason to hope that the continent of Europe cannot long remain united under one head. Holland and Spain hate France, and will not long submit; and, from being submissive vassals, they will become bitter enemies. Then we may make peace, *but not till then.*

* The internal disorders of France, during the first part of the revolution—the want of all family comfort, which prevented marriage—the neglect of the children born—the number of persons who were sacrificed at home, and slaughtered abroad, in a war, where superiority of numbers were the only means of obtaining success, and where those numbers were wasted with a prodigality of human existence which is without example, together with the long continued war, after the male population was reduced far below its level, leaves France sadly depopulated at the present time: but, even if the war were to cease now, it would be ~~..D.ite in ten~~ *ten* years hence than it is at this time; and if the war continues twenty years more, and finishes with a general crash of the Empire of the West, as it must, sooner or later, France will be the weakest, most depopulated country in Europe. It wants the honour of being the chief, and it must pay for that honour.

As that period is not, probably, very distant, it is for us to economise our means, so that we may be able to hold out till then ; it is, therefore, our business to enquire into the length of time which we may probably be able to maintain the contest.

Fortunately for Great Britain, its enemies do not understand on what its prosperity depends ; if they did, they could not materially injure us. Our internal industry*, the great quantity of

* Some persons, proceeding on the ideas of the French economists, think that commerce and manufactures are useless, and that agriculture alone is sufficient to make a nation great. Our enemies know better than that. They have been in Italy and Flanders, which were the richest countries in Europe when they had commerce. They have been in Holland, at Amsterdam, and Alexandria ; and they have still learnt that power, wealth, and importance fled with commerce. They have read history too, those enemies of ours, and they know that Rome was the only powerful nation which despised commerce ; but they know also that the Romans were robbers, and took the wealth from those who followed commerce. Britain, an island, cannot become a nation of robbers ; and, if it will have wealth or power, it must maintain its commerce. Such men as Mr. Cobbett and Mr. Roscoe are not quite so well informed on the subject as the French are.

every thing which we produce, enables us to maintain ourselves in our present lofty and dignified situation ; for it is evident, that, if one man produces as much as five men, he may consume as much. Now, this is the case with Great Britain ; so that all our enemies have done to reduce us, has proved ineffectual ; and as the revenue is fully equal, with a little economy, to our expenditure, we may go on, without borrowing another shilling, or augmenting our debt.

With these retrospective views—with attention to the present proud situation of Britain, and the prospects before us, who will say that the yoke will be easy, or the burthen light, of him who succeeds to his present Majesty ? If this inuendo is meant as reversing the policy of his reign, it is wrong. If, instead of an inuendo, it means that his Majesty's successor has only to follow the same outline of politics, and, in that case, his task will be easy, then he is right ; but there are many reasons for believing that this was neither meant, nor intended.

Taking, then, a general view—considering that his Majesty reigned when the revolutions of America and France were natural, from the state of things, and that they were independent

of British will or exertion *; not attributing to him the blame of those events, we have only to look to his success in warding off the blow from his kingdom, and, when we find that it is the only flourishing nation on earth, and inhabited by the only happy people, can we do other than approve of his policy and the conduct of his reign?

This is not intended to convert the disaffected, for, if the event of the French revolution has not converted them, neither would Lazarus, if he were to rise from the dead. But *it is meant to lay a plain and a true statement before that excellent Prince, who is now Regent, and who has begun by a display of talents and dispositions which cannot fail to be at once* THE PRIDE AND THE HOPE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

* It has been proved, in the former part of this, that the Americans only wanted to quarrel, that they might quit Britain entirely.

Before I finish this outline of a vindication *, in which I confess I am unable to do justice to the subject, I should like to ask those who think that the successor of his Majesty will have an easy task, what they mean by the inuendo, for it is nothing till they explain how the task will be easy.

Will the successor of his Majesty easily excel him in his virtues as a private man?—as a father, a husband, a supporter of morality, of religion, and a practiser of all the greater virtues? That the sovereign should be one of the most exemplary characters, one of the most moderate and least oppressive men in the kingdom, is no small praise, when we consider the failings of human nature, and see how men, dressed in *only a little brief authority*, shew their consequence. From the Teller of the Exchequer, to the Beadle with his gold-laced hat, there is not a man in the kingdom who has borne his faculties so meekly about him, nor been so free from even the semblance of oppression.

* A proper vindication of his Majesty's reign ought to be at considerable length, and historical. Such a work would be a national benefit, as well as doing nothing more than justice to one of the best of kings.

Will the successor of his Majesty bear the abuse of factious men with more patience, or sacrifice his private feelings for public good more readily? or will he, any more than his Majesty, be able to control or stop the current of time? If his Majesty had been able to prevent America from rising to years of maturity, he might have prevented the revolution; and, if he could have pensioned all the factious men in the kingdom of France, if he could have bought up all the books distributed, for fifty years, by the revolutionary philosophers, he might perhaps have procrastinated the existence of the Bourbon dynasty: and, if he had been willing to crouch, like Spain, he might have avoided war for a few years, in order to prevent taxation; and, if he had laid his hand on the Sinking-fund, he might have lessened taxes, and put it out of the power of his ministers to borrow another guinea;—but the general depreciation of money all over Europe, when compared with the price of labour or of bread*, he could not have prevented.

* A writer, some years ago, observed that there is a constant emigration from the parts of the nation where rent, taxes, and living are the lowest, to land on which they are the highest, adding—“If men could have changed countries

The great events of the present day originate in other countries, and not in this; and that, under our sovereign's government, we should be the only nation which has flourished, is by no means a matter of small moment. We have seen, widely extending, waste and ruin all around; but, under his Majesty's government, we have escaped, though, it is to be admitted, we have paid a price; but what then? We paid a price for what is above all price—our honour, our liberty, our persons, our property, are safe, and, as a nation, we stand higher than at any former period of history; whilst, either vice or villainy or misfortune bear down all the proud and ancient nations on the European continent*.

as they do counties, the subjects of the good Queen Bess would have emigrated to the good King George."

* Since this was written, a very excellent pamphlet has appeared, which proves that the influence of the Crown has not increased. (See Mr. Ranby's Inquiry into the supposed Increase.) Corruption, by bribery, selling of places, and close loans, are abolished, and tectat service money limited to ~~the small sum~~ !!!

King.

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REPORT

OF

THE TRIALS

OF

THE REV^d. ROBERT BINGHAM,

CURATE OF MARESFIELD,

SUSSEX;

**ON CHARGES OF WRITING A THREATENING LETTER,
AND OF SETTING FIRE TO HIS HOUSE:**

BEFORE

The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD MACDONALD, Knt.

† LORD CHIEF BARON;

**At the Sussex Spring Assizes, held at HORSHAM,
the 26th March, 1811.**

LONDON:

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SUSSEX SPRING ASSIZES.

Horsham, March 26, 1811.

CROWN SIDE.

Before the Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD MACDONALD, Knt.
Lord Chief Baron.

THE KING *v.* ROBERT BINGHAM, CLERK.

THE Rev. Robert Bingham was arraigned on two indictments, the first charging him with sending a letter without a signature, threatening to burn the houses, barns, &c. of Richard Jenner, of the parish of Maresfield, in the county of Sussex, Farmer; and the other charging him with setting fire to his own house, with intent to defraud the Rev. Thomas Rivett, its owner, the rector of the parish, and the Insurance Offices, in which the same and the prisoner's furniture, &c. were insured. To both indictments the prisoner pleaded Not Guilty.

He was first tried on the former indictment, which stated that he did on the 1st of December last feloniously and wilfully send a letter,

without a name, addressed to "Mr. Ri. Ginner, Maresfield," and which letter was as follows :

"Murder, Fire, and Revenge!

"Fifty of us are detarnd to keep our lands or have revenge. Therefore Pason, Churchwards, and Farmers, your barns and houses shall burn if you take our lands, your lives two shall pay, your sheep we will eat, your oxen we can mame, your stacks shall blaze, and Dick you shall be shoted as you return home from market or fair. We are united and sworn to stand by one another. Fifty good fellows."

Mr. Serjeant BEST stated the case on behalf of the prosecution. After some prefatory observations on the sacred character of the prisoner at the bar, he stated that the parish of Maresfield had been long infested with a class of people called *foresters*, who housed themselves in the forest of Maresfield, and lived upon the plunder of the peaceable inhabitants of the parish and neighbourhood. Enclosures upon this forest had been made by the inhabitants, and these enclosures were invariably destroyed by the foresters, who were determined to restore the common, and to "keep their lands," as they called them. The letter, which the learned Serjeant now read and commented upon, was meant

to be supposed to come from one of these forgers; but though it affected to be written by a low person, the Serjeant pointed out strong marks of the composition of a person used to better language, and these he said were plainly to be discovered through its bad spelling. The case of the prosecution however did not rest upon suspicion; and unless it ripened suspicion into proof he desired the jury to acquit the prisoner. But he was afraid he should trace the letter to the pocket of the prisoner, and prove it most incontestibly to be his hand-writing. The history of the transaction was briefly this. On Saturday, the 15th of December last, the prosecutor left his home for London; and on the following day (Sunday) his two sons and nephew (boys) had attended Maresfield church, where the prisoner had officiated as curate. The service was over at about twelve o'clock, and on the road where the letter was found afterwards, it would be proved that there was then no letter. That road the prosecutor's sons and nephew were taking on their return home from church; they were overtaken by the prisoner on horseback, who jocularly said to them, "Get out of the way, or else I shall ride over you." These boys had been or were the prisoner's scholars: they withdrew to one side of the road and the prisoner passed. After he had cantered by to a

little distance, one of the boys observed a paper floating, as he described it, *widdle-waddle* in the air, as if it came from the prisoner's pocket. It fell to the ground, and the boys picked it up, saw it was addressed to their father, and recognized the hand-writing of their schoolmaster. Their father being from home, when they got there, they delivered it to their mother, who opened it. As the boys picked up the letter, they observed the prisoner looking round to see whether they did so. On the Thursday following the prosecutor came home, having previously heard in the village that his wife had opened a threatening letter. The instant he saw its direction he exclaimed, "This is Mr. Bingham's hand-writing." But when he read its contents, his respect for Mr. Bingham's character made him doubt; and he kept the letter about him for several days, at the end of which, having before been in the habit of consulting the prisoner, he went to him and asked his advice upon the subject of the letter. The prisoner looked at the letter, and discovered the water-mark of the paper to be "Evans and Sons, 1806," upon which he desired the prosecutor to go round the neighbourhood to the different shops, and endeavour to learn which sold paper with that water-mark. He did so; but discovered none. All further search was impossible, and nothing

ure was done. It had been the prisoner's practice to invite his parishioners to spend an evening with him about Christmas, and in the last Christmas invitation the prosecutor was as usual included. Upon his arrival at the prisoner's house that evening, he was accosted by his host, "Well, Dick, you are not shot yet." The prosecutor was hurt at this joke, as his suspicions of the prisoner were by no means set at rest; and upon its being afterwards repeated, he replied, "Why, Mr. Bingham, if I had not great respect for you, I should suspect that you wrote it." The prisoner upon this turned away, and affected to laugh; but never afterwards did he repeat that joke. On the 17th of January last, his house was burnt down, and the circumstances with which this casualty was connected, revived the prosecutor's suspicions of the prisoner. After the fire, he observed the prisoner digging in his garden, and upon turning up the earth there, several copy-books were found, without the water-mark of the incendiary letter; but, concealed over the privy of the prisoner's house, paper was found with the very same water-mark. The prisoner's bills for the schooling of the prosecutor's sons were also made out on paper with the same water-mark; and the prosecutor now doubted no longer, but caused the

prisoner to be apprehended ; and here he was for trial.

Upon the subject of the motive, which the prisoner could have for writing this letter, the learned Serjeant said but little. Motives were often not to be fathomed by men ; and it was well observed by an eminent writer, “ When men do evil, they little reckon what may come of it ; or if they do, have not power to curb the sway of their own wickedness.” The prisoner’s conduct would be proved ; the learned Judge would take care of the conclusions which might be drawn from it ; the prosecutor was anxious only for justice ; and, if the prisoner was really innocent, he heartily echoed the wish of the Clerk of the Arraignment, “ God send him a good deliverance !”

The counsel for the prosecution then proceeded to examine the following witnesses :

John Jenner, aged 12 years, said his father the prosecutor lived at Maresfield, and that he himself had been at school to the prisoner at the bar, two years ago, by whom he was taught to write. He had seen the prisoner write. He recollected going to church on Sunday, the 16th of the last, with his younger brother Richard.

He returned home with that brother and his cousin. As they were going home, about half a mile from the church, Mr. Bingham, who had officiated there, overtook them on horseback, and said, in a joke, that he would ride over them. He was cantering; they got out of the way; and, afterwards, the witness saw a letter dropping to the ground. Mr. Bingham was then six rods off, or between 30 and 40 yards. The witness saw the letter before it got to the ground. It was not so high as the witness's head when he first saw it. He thought it came from Mr. Bingham, but he was not sure of it. Mr. Bingham was before the letter, which kept wavering in the air till it fell to the ground. There was nobody else near the letter but Mr. Bingham. He saw a man and woman, and two children, on the road, before Mr. Bingham came up; but he did not overtake them at all; they were more than 30 or 40 rods off, further on than Mr. Bingham. He did not know who they were. They had not turned the corner of the road before the letter dropt. The witness came up to the letter, and pick'd it up. Mr. B. as he rode forward, looked back at the witness and his companions very much, after the paper was dropt. The witness did not observe whether he looked back after the paper was pick'd up. He delivered the letter (which he identified) to his

mother; it was wafered. He told his cousin, at the time, that he thought it was Mr. B.'s hand-writing: his cousin said he thought not: he replied he thought it was. He judged from the general look of the writing of the direction. The next morning he went to Mr. B. to buy a Christmas-piece for writing upon. Mr. B. said "You found a pretty letter, yesterday, did not you, John?" The witness had not previously said anything to the prisoner about it.

Upon his cross-examination by the Common-Serjeant, this witness said, that before the next morning his mother had shewn Mrs. Bingham the letter, which had been talked about in the village by his mother and aunt, Mrs. Thomas Jenner. He did not go to school to Mr. B. during the year 1810; but his cousin did. His cousin's age was eleven. The letter was dropt on the left side of Mr. B.'s horse, on which side the witness was. He had never had occasion to buy other paper of Mr. B. than ornamented paper for his Christmas-piece.

In answer to a question from the Lord Chief Baron, the witness said that it did not appear to him that the horse kicked up the letter in cantering.

William Jenner, aged 11 years, cousin of the last witness, did not see the letter till 3 or 4 yards before they came up to it. His cousin said, "Look, William, there's a letter dropping to the ground;" but he did not see it till it had fallen there. The letter was quite clean. Mr. B. was 2 or 3 rods off when they picked up the letter: he looked back at them very much.

Upon his cross-examination, by Mr. GURNEY, this witness said, that the road was that leading to the forest, and that which the foresters would have taken. He did not remember saying he wondered Mr. B. had not picked up the letter. He did not know whether other boys bought paper of Mr. B.: he never had occasion to do so. He writes and reads as well as his cousin.

Thomas Bates, house-dweller, or tenant under Richard Jenner, was at Maresfield church on the 16th December last, and returned home with four more by the road where the letter was found. As they went along the middle of the road, which, although 30 or 40 feet wide, was very level, they must have seen any thing lying upon; it but there was no paper or letter.

Upon his cross-examination, he said, that he did not stay the singing after church; and how

many persons passed the road besides, he could not say.

Martin Hose stayed the singing, which lasted half an hour, and passed by the witnesses, the lads, observing to them, "We're before you." He saw nobody on the road after he passed them, and observed no paper. If there had been a letter on the road, it was probable he should have seen it. He had just gotten home, when he saw Mr. B. at the turnpike-gate.

Sarah Jenner, wife of Richard Jenner, and mother of the witness John, recollected her son's coming from church with his cousin William on the 16th December. He gave her a letter (which she identified) sealed with a wafer, which was then not quite dry. Her husband was in town, and did not return till the Thursday following, when she gave him the letter, which she had before opened directly it was brought to her, and about which she had conversed with Mr. Thomas Jenner's wife, after dinner, on the same Sunday. She had also afterwards met Mrs. B. and shewn it to her.

Upon her cross-examination, she said, she recollected her son's (not her nephew's) saying, he wondered Mr. B. had not picked up the letter.

She said, while she was reading the letter, she supposed the foresters had dropped it as they went from church. Mr. B. and his wife, and the witness and her husband, were upon friendly terms: nobody was upon better. So of Thomas Jenner and his family. Mr. B. was very attentive to his duties as a clergyman.

Richard Jenner, farmer at Maresfield, proved that he possessed barns, houses, sheep, corn, oxen, cows, hay-stacks, and the articles which farmers usually have; and that he had been familiarly called Dick. He returned from London to Maresfield, on Thursday the 20th December, in the evening. He had known Mr. Bingham five or six years as the clergyman of his parish, and the schoolmaster of his children. He was the last person whom he should have suspected would have done him an unkindness. Upon reading the letter, he believed himself meant by the appellation "Dick," and that it was his barns and houses the letter alluded to. He had frequently received letters and writings from Mr. B. and had seen him write. He had had bills from him for his children's education, and was well acquainted with the character of his hand-writing. (Looking at the direction) he believed that to be Mr. Bingham's hand-writing, and said so, as soon as his wife gave

him the letter, and he observed its direction, before he had either seen or heard of its contents. It was put into his hand without any observation whatever: when he read the contents of it, he could not think his friend would do such a thing: but independently of that sentiment, he believed the inside of the letter to be of the same hand-writing as the outside, and that they both were Mr. Bingham's. There was a little attempt at disguise in the writing. The witness had observed before a singularity in the whole tenour of Mr. Bingham's writing, particularly in his writing "Ri" for "Richard," as the letter was directed. The witness had received notes and letters from him directed "Ri," and he always abridged "Richard" so. There was also a peculiarity in his throwing off the last stroke of his capital R's at a square. These peculiarities struck the witness at first in the direction. There was also a peculiarity in Mr. Bingham's capital G's. The G, with which the word "Ginner" was written in the direction of the letter, was at first a "J," and was now a mixture of "G" and "J." The witness had before observed, that Mr. B.'s capital G's were small ones enlarged. He had also observed the nature of Mr. Bingham's small f's in Maresfield. That word occurred frequently; and Mr. B. always made the f without a loop. He detected

Mr. B.'s hand in the letter further from the b's and & *per se* &'s. The witness called on Mr. B. the Sunday after he had received the letter, for his advice how he might best find out its author, as he had occasionally consulted Mr. B. before. He advised him to go to all the shops in the neighbourhood, to search for paper with the water-mark of the letter. He did so, and bought paper for the purpose of examining it; but found none with that water-mark, viz. "Evans and Sons, 1806." He now produced a paper, however, which he had found among his own private papers, and which Mr. B. had long before put into his hands. It was of the same size and water-mark with the letter. Upon this there was no hand-writing of Mr. B.'s. The witness also delivered to Mr. Adkins, the Bow-street officer who came down to enquire into the circumstances of the fire, the following other papers which the witness found in his bureau. The first was in the hand-writing of Mr. Bingham, and was his bill for the education of the witness's children; it was indorsed "Mr. Ri. Jenner," and was, the witness said, the same hand-writing as the direction of the letter in question. The paper contained also part of the paper-maker's water-device, as in the letter. The second paper contained a small part of the water-mark of the letter, and was all written by

Mr. B. The third was addressed "Mr. Ri. Jenner," and was another bill for education; in this the witness's name occurred several times. The fourth was another bill, indorsed "Ri. Jenner." The fifth contained a considerable portion of the water-mark of the letter, and was in the hand-writing of Mr. Bingham. This the witness saw Mr. B. write: the word "grass" in it was spelt with one of Mr. B.'s capital G's. The witness acquainted Mr. B. with the ineffectual result of his search; and the prisoner said, once or twice since, "Well, Dick, you ar'n't *shooled* yet." *Shooled* is not a provincialism: Sussex men generally say *shot*. The witness went in the Christmas-week to spend an evening with Mr. B. He did not arrive till after tea, and told Mr. B. he was sorry he did not get there sooner, but he had been engaged elsewhere. "Then," said Mr. B. "You ar'n't *shooled* yet, as you come home." The witness had never joked with Mr. B. about the letter; and replied, "No, and I hope I never shall be." The prisoner seemed to throw it out again in the course of the evening; and the witness thought it not pleasant, and at last said, "By God, Mr. Bingham, if I had not as good an opinion of you as I have, I should have thought you'd wrote that letter." The prisoner turned his head off, and said "ha! ha! ha!" affecting to laugh. The

subject was never mentioned again that evening, and the parties continued good friends. It was no secret that the witness had received such a letter: on the very evening he came home, he attended a quarterly meeting of an association for protecting property, of which he was a member, and shewed it there.

Upon his cross-examination, he said, he never left the letter with Mr. B. He was by the prisoner's counsel shewn a capital R of his handwriting, without the peculiarity he had described, and a small f with a loop. The latter the witness allowed. He did at one period think the letter came from the foresters, in consequence of Mr. B.'s naming one Goldspring, who kept a public-house, as its author. But the witness never said he thought it came from him. Upon being asked what sort of people these foresters were, he said they were much as others. There was a letter once dropped before, but not a threatening one; and a faggot-stack had once before been fired. When a man of the name of Best was taken into custody at Lewes, he might have said he thought that man might know something about the letter. He went to Lewes to enquire into that, by desire of Mr. B. and the parish. Mr. B. performed his duty regularly as a clergyman, and had been instrumental in instituting a charity-school in the parish, of which he was treasurer.

Upon his re-examination by Mr. GARROW, he explained the passage in the letter " Fifty of us are determined to keep our land," by saying that some enclosed land in the forest had been thrown open by the foresters. He never suspected Goldspring till Mr. B. said he did, and had got his licence as a publican refused.

In answer to questions from the Lord Chief Baron, he said there had been threats to revenge the enclosures, and that Mr. B. himself had land enclosed which was thrown open.

Richard Trill, a farmer in an adjoining parish to Maresfield, had sons at school to the prisoner, and had received notes and bills from him. He had seen him write once, and had always settled accounts upon the bills he had received from the prisoner. He firmly believed the letter to be the prisoner's hand-writing. It was partly disguised.

John Knight, Overseer of the parish of Maresfield, was satisfied that the letter was the prisoner's hand-writing. He had before observed the peculiarity of his capital R's; and now produced private papers in Mr. B.'s hand-writing, which he had before acquired from Mr. B. with the watermark, " Evans and Sons, 1806."

John Maynard, shopkeeper at Maresfield, had been in the habit of giving the prisoner cash-drafts for accommodation-bills for three or four years past, and had seen him write. He believed the direction of the letter to be Mr. B.'s, but its contents were a fictitious hand.

Mr. *Turner*, attorney at Lewes, was concerned for Mr. Rivett, the prisoner's rector: he had seen the prisoner write, and firmly believed the letter to be of his writing.

Samuel Attree, smith at Maresfield, had been employed by Mr. B. and had frequently seen him write. He believed the letter to be of his writing.

The case on behalf of the prosecution here closed; and the prisoner was now told by the Lord Chief Baron, that if he had any thing to say in his defence, this was the time.

The prisoner then read a written paper to the following effect:—

“ May it please your lordship, gentlemen of the jury, The awful situation, in which I am now placed, will readily account for any agitation which you may have observed in my behaviour,

or for any incorrectness in the few observations to which I now request your attention. "I am accused of the dreadful crime of writing a threatening letter to my near friend and neighbour. Now, gentlemen, you are possessed of the feelings of honest men, and know very well that crimes are not committed without some inducement. The minds of men are differently formed, and actuated by different motives: in many the love of revenge, or the gratification of some other passion, is motive enough for the commission of crime; but surely no instance has ever come before you, in which a man has entailed upon himself misery here and eternal punishment hereafter, for no reason whatever. And yet let me earnestly entreat you to consider whether this is not my situation, under my present charge. I had no quarrel with my prosecutor: he was my neighbour, my friend, and to a certain extent my companion. I loved him no ill-will: his sons, together with those of his neighbours came daily to school to me (I mention this as a proof of their regard for me). And can it be believed then that I would have committed so absurd, and so foolish, as well as so wicked an act, as that with which I am charged, and one so wholly without motive? If I could have committed such an act, in the face of every inducement pleading strongly on the other side,

At the risk of exposing myself to want, of the loss of my school, and of the final destruction of myself and family, could I have been so weak and stupid as to have dropt a letter in my own hand-writing in the very eye of my pupils, who were in the daily habit of seeing me write? But, gentlemen, this is not all. One of these boys, and only one, remarked that he saw the paper near the ground a little behind my horse. If, as he must have done, he had thought it dropt from my person, would it not have been natural for him to have called after me and told me I had dropt something? But the other boy is not in the same tale, and wondered I had not picked up the letter. All this, however, the boys never communicated to their father and mother till four or five weeks after the transaction, when they were examined before the magistrate. If they had told this at the time, their mother could never have observed that she supposed the foresters must have dropt the letter. I entreat you to observe what the mother says. If the boys had really believed that the letter dropt from me, would they not have said, "No, mother, don't be afraid of the foresters, for I saw the letter fall from Mr. Bingham, who must have dropt it in joke." But, gentlemen, I put it to your own experience, whether you have not often found that a fabri-

eation often repeated is at last believed even by the fabricators themselves, who beg one part of the fabrication in order to prove the other, and fancy the whole to be confirmed beyond a doubt. The road upon which the letter was found is five or six inches deep in sand at every step of the horse's feet, and consequently my horse might have thrown it up in cantering. I entreat you totally to divest your minds of every bias they may have received from those reports which have been so industriously circulated against me (and some of them must have reached you) before you consign me to eternal infamy, and my family to want. If a person in a little village happens to be somewhat above the vulgar, he is sure of his enemies, and that I am afraid has been my case. As to the evidence of hand-writing, I believe I shall be sanctioned by the learned Judge, when I say that it must not be from general opinion of me that a witness is to conclude the hand-writing is mine; but would he say that this writing is mine, if it were written on any other subject? Gentlemen, I do not complain of the witnesses against me: I know how impossible it is for them to lay aside their prejudices. My sad story has been the conversation for three months past of all the little clubs and parties in the county. Circumstances only prove my guilt; and by what but

circumstances can I repel the charge? To establish a positive contradiction of it is impossible. Gentlemen, my counsel will call my witnesses; and with my earnest and unfeigned thanks for your patient attention, I leave my cause, under the direction of Almighty God, into your hands, humbly but confidently hoping that your verdict will restore me, in some degree, to my situation in society, to my afflicted wife, and my almost innumerable offspring."

The prisoner's counsel then called the following witnesses:—

John Reed, Stationer, of the corner of Bow-lane, Watling-street, London, was in the habit of serving the neighbourhood of Maresfield with paper. Among others, he had served Mr. Hobbs, of Newick, with Evans's paper, 1806, and other shops in the neighbourhood of Maresfield.

Upon his cross-examination, he said, that having so much of that paper induced him to suppose he had sent it into Sussex, among other places to Mr. Bingham himself.

Upon his re-examination, he said, he had no reason for supplying Sussex with different paper

to any other county, and he had no doubt he had sent Evans's paper to the neighbourhood. He sent it off immediately after he came from his journey, and he always sent from his largest stock.

William Cramp, keeper of the House of Correction, at Lewes, said, that on the 10th of January last, Richard Jenner called on him and conversed about William Best, whom the witness had in charge for felony. He said, he supposed I had heard of the threatening letter which had been sent against him, and thought Best must know of it, as he was one of the fifty good fellows: he said, he had no doubt the letter was written by the foresters, people who taken possession of great part of the forest, and established themselves there, living upon plundering the gentlemen and farmers in the neighbourhood, and that I should get out of Best, who wrote the letter. Best must know, for his old father was heard to say a few days before, "Now my son Will's in jail, I'm afraid the truth will come out about that letter." Richard Jenner also added that he himself had done every thing in his power to extirpate the foresters; but there was a gentleman who did not do every thing in his power.

Upon his cross-examination, he said, that this was a week before Mr. Bingham was in custody.

Lord Sheffield said, that Sheffield-place was three miles from Maresfield. He knew the prisoner; there was no person more assiduous in suppressing the disorders of the public-houses in the neighbourhood, and this circumstance his lordship thought had excited a good deal of rancour against the prisoner. His lordship had a very good opinion of him, especially for those exertions. There had been several threatening letters received in that neighbourhood.

Archdeacon Doyley resided at Buxtead, in the neighbourhood of Maresfield. He had known the prisoner 7 or 8 years: he thought him attentive and assiduous to the duties of his parish, and knew him to be the founder of a charity-school there.

John Martin Cripps, Esq. Magistrate of the county of Sussex, resided at Lewes; and knew the prisoner when he was curate of West Minston, from 1802 to 1804: he had frequently dined with the witness, who thought him a person of integrity and humanity. As a father, no man surpassed him.

The Rev. Richard Turner, of Hartfield, had known the prisoner more than ten years; and, as far as his observation went, thought his general conduct correct and rigid.

The Rev. Mr. Bradford had known the prisoner for the three or four last years, and gave him a good character as a parish priest and a man. As did

Mr. George Mott, of Brighton, and the *Rev. Sackville Bayle*,

THE LORD CHIEF BARON then charged the Jury, prefacing his recapitulation of the whole evidence by observations upon the want of motive which appeared for the crime with which the prisoner was charged: he could derive no advantage from it; and if this gentleman committed the crime, it was absolutely gratis. It certainly had happened, however, that a Jury had found a prisoner guilty, when no motive for his guilt appeared; but that was only when the evidence of his guilt was so clear and convincing, that the presumption was that he must have had some secret motive for the crime, although it did not appear. But when no motive appeared, and there was reasonable doubt as to the commission of the crime, then were the tables

turned the other way. It was also when a doubt of this kind existed that evidence of good character was to be thrown into the scale. The learned Judge then remarked upon the probability that the prisoner's pupils might have been mistaken in what they saw, attending the finding of the letter on the road, and on the prosecutor's assertions at Lewes, differing as they did from his evidence that day. He was perhaps afraid of the foresters, and therefore held back. His lordship also remarked that it was the prisoner himself who recommended the examination into water-marks, which was brought so strongly against him, but which, in his lordship's opinion, was repelled by the evidence of the stationer who had supplied the whole neighbourhood with paper of a similar water-mark.

The Jury, after some consultation, found the prisoner—**NOT GUILTY.**



THE same prisoner was then tried upon the remaining Indictment, charging him with setting fire to his own house on the 17th January last, with intent to injure the Rev. Thomas Rivett, to whom the house belonged, and to defraud the Union Fire Insurance, in which the prisoner had

insured property, which the fire had destroyed, to the amount of £500, and the Sun Fire Office in which the house was insured by the Rev. Mr. Rivett.

Mr. Serjeant BEST also stated this case on behalf of the prosecution. The prisoner he said was only the curate of the parish, and consequently not the owner of the parsonage-house; that belonged to Mr. Rivett, by whom it was insured. On the evening of the 16th January last, the fire happened; and on the 15th preceding, the prisoner's servant carried a quantity of papers into a room over the stable; and there were other valuable papers removed by the orders of the prisoner. On the evening of the fire he was seen in the fowl-house, and said to his servant-boy, who went out for some purpose, "when you come back, don't pass by this way." Between seven and eight o'clock, he was also half an hour at the same place with a lantern. He had before moved the parish registers from his house, where they had long been kept. He had also removed the insurance of 50l. upon a cottage which he possessed, to the 450l. in which he had insured his furniture, which it was quite impossible was worth half that sum. On the night of the fire, the family went to bed at nine o'clock, the prisoner being last up; and between twelve and one o'clock, the family were alarmed

by the prisoner, completely dressed, who told them the house was on fire, of the origin of which he gave this account. He said he went to bed between nine and ten o'clock, with a strong opinion that his house would be set on fire that night: he had been troubled with a bowel complaint, and could not sleep. He got up, and saw a man going away from the house: he accordingly went down stairs, and found the school-room door fastened against him. Now the learned Serjeant would prove by the prisoner's servant-boy, who saw the school-room early in its flame, that there was nothing against the school-room door to prevent its being opened. The fire was then in a state which a few buckets of water might have extinguished, as the prisoner himself admitted. When he was asked as to his loss, he said he had saved nothing; his plate and all was gone. He was afterwards observed, however, to bury property, for which he refused to give any reason, and several things of value were afterwards found concealed over the privy. The learned Serjeant made few comments on the case; but proceeded to call and examine the following witnesses:—

Richard Jenner, in going home with his brother on the night of the 16th January, passed near Mr. B.'s house, and saw all quiet. In about three quarters of an hour after he arrived

home, a servant-boy from his brother gave the alarm of fire. The witness immediately went up the street to Mr. B.'s house, and saw the fire raging violently. This was after one o'clock. The school-room was quite burnt. In about five minutes he saw Mr. B. who appeared anxious to save the liquors in his cellar, and the neighbours who were there endeavouring to extinguish the fire sought to comply with his wishes, by throwing dirt into the cellar. Mr. B. said that the fire was maliciously done: he went to bed about ten, and about half an hour afterwards Mrs. B. thought she heard somebody about the house. He got up, and looked out of the window, but could not see any body. "You know," said he, "I have been very unwell." He went to bed again, but could not sleep. Between twelve and one he fancied he heard somebody about the house, and put on his breeches and shoes, and went down stairs, and looked about the lower rooms. When he came up, Mrs. B. asked him whether he had been in the school-room, and advised him to go there. He put on more clothes, and looking out of window, saw some person going away from the corner of the house into the turnpike road. He told Mrs. B. to prepare to dress, for there was something wrong about the house. The witness then left the prisoner, and returning about break

of day, the prisoner took him by the arm, and walked to the church for his children's clothes, which had been removed thither. The witness also met the prisoner at breakfast time; he seemed very ill, and said he was a ruined man, for all his effects were burnt. The witness replied he hoped not, and asked him what he thought they were worth. The prisoner estimated his clothes and linen at from £100. to £150. and his whole effects at from £900. to £1000. where as he had insured for only £500. He said he tried to enter the school-room through the study-door, but it was barricadoed, and he could not get in. He thought he saw smoke issuing through the cracks of it, and went round to the outer-door. That had been forced open by some bad-disposed person, who had put faggots and tables against the inner door. The room he said was full of smoke; but he pushed up to a drawer where were some writings, of which he brought out a handful. Upon his opening the door the fire kindled up, and had he had three or four pails of water, he thought he could have put it out. The witness afterwards went to the bottom of Mr. Bingham's garden, where he found sixty blank copy-books concealed under some fresh-turned earth, and chickweed planted over them. He carried them to the Chequers Inn, at Maresfield. The witness was also present when Joseph Adkins discovered

concealed under the earth, and a flower which was planted over them, some cyphering books. Afterwards, on that evening, he crawled into Mr. Bingham's chicken-house, from the back of it, and found some accompt-books concealed under a stump of trees. On Sunday the 27th January, he found a brown paper parcel, which he produced, over the cieling of the privy; it contained quills and private deeds and papers of Mr. Bingham. There was a pond not far from Mr. Bingham's school-room: there was also a well at an equal distance, but that was deep.

Upon his cross-examination, this witness said he saw some plate which had been found among the ruins of the fire, in a melted state.

Thomas Caley, aged twelve years, late servant to the prisoner, recollected that he was employed the day before the fire in carrying parcels of nails, and hooks and riders, to the stable. He also carried parcels which felt like books. He had occasion to go into the yard about five or six o'clock of the evening of the fire, when he saw Mr. B. in the chicken-house, who said, "Where are you going?" he replied, "To the yard for some peat;" Mr. B. then told him not to come that way back. At nine o'clock the witness went to bed. He went back through

the other yard; he could not see what Mr. B. was doing. He did not wake till Mr. B. called him, between twelve and one o'clock. Mr. B. told him to alarm the village.* He went down to the school-room: the fire was not very large then: he stood on the door-sill and saw one side of the room in flames, but not the ceiling: there were faggots in the middle of the room, of the holly, the witness had removed the day before. He removed fourteen or fifteen, but he could not see how many were burning. There was nothing against the inner-door which communicated with the house. In the morning he found only two of the faggots, which he had removed, left; he was certain the burnt faggots were the same. Some of the tables and forms near the faggots were burnt. The outer-door of the school-room was not broken.

Upon his cross-examination, this witness said, his master had corrected him for telling lies, as he charged him. He was quite sure he did not tell John Palmer he did not see the fire, but that if he had gone down the other stairs, he should have done so. He now served Richard Jenner. He told nobody he saw the fire till he was examined before the justice.

Mary Cox, nurse in the prisoner's family, said

that he went to London on the 29th October, and returned on the 12th January. He was out a quarter of an hour on the evening of the 16th, and went out with a lanthorn for half an hour. The boy went out too, the first time. The family went to bed about ten; Mr. B. was last up, as usual. The witness had seen her mistress and family to bed. A little past twelve, she was called by Mrs. B. who had all her clothes on but her gown and neckerchief. There was a pond near the house, from which there would have been no difficulty in procuring water, and there was a bucket in the brew-house at the other end of the house. Her master was completely dressed when she was called up. She knew of the furniture of five rooms in the house, besides the two cellars. There were a sofa, chairs, and carpets.

Harry Adkins, Bow-street officer, came down to enquire into the fire, and saw Mr. Bingham at Thomas Jenner's, who said, "I suppose you are come from London to enquire into the fire." The witness replied, he was, and wished to know the circumstances at and previous to it. The prisoner said that he suspected a man of the name of Goldspring, in consequence of his having been instrumental in taking the man's licence away. He said that about ten o'clock,

he and his family went to bed ; and at half past ten he heard footsteps under his window : he looked out, but saw no one. At half past eleven he heard the same noise, and again looked out without seeing any one. About a quarter before one, he and his wife were alarmed by a noise like that of wrenching the school-room outer-door, and then upon looking out of the window he saw a man walking from the house. It was moonlight ; but he could not tell whether the man had a brown coat or a white smock-frock. He then put on his breeches and stockings, and went down stairs with the poker in his hand. He looked through the passages and was returning up stairs, when Mrs. B. called and asked him if he had looked into all the rooms : he replied he had not been into the school-room : he then put his coat and waistcoat on his arm and returned down stairs directly, and went to the inner-door of the school-room which was fastened, not in the usual way. Through the crevices of the door, he perceived a little smoke ; and went round to the outer-door of the school, which he found open, and against the inner-door were piled several faggots with tables and benches over and against them. He intended to take £30 out of a drawer in the school-room, but he had not the key of it with him, and could not : he took three bundles of sermons, how-

ever; and those he threw out of the window. Upon searching the stable, the witness found six or seven papers of seeds. This was on Monday: on Tuesday he came with a warrant to apprehend the prisoner: he told him he was not satisfied with what he had stated the night before, and wished to ask him a few more questions. The prisoner replied, "Are you come to take advantage of me?" The witness said "No," and that he would not press the questions. The prisoner then asked him if he had a warrant; to which the witness replied in the affirmative; and the prisoner asked to see it, which he did. "Now then," said the prisoner, "I must go." He then asked the witness to burn the warrant, and he would tell the witness all. The witness found three dozen copy-books in one of the garden walks adjoining; and asked the prisoner what he had done with them. He appeared much agitated. After some minutes he said he had buried them; and upon being asked why, was still more agitated, and said, that from a conversation which had passed between him and the witness the night before, he was afraid of the witness's seeing them. Upon asking why, the witness received no answer.

Upon his cross-examination, he said that it was Mr. Bingham himself who told him to break

open the stable-door, where one concealment was made. It was only lately that the witness saw the remains of the prisoner's plate and watch.

During the cross-examination of this witness, a statement of the witness's *ex parte* examination before the Magistrate at Lewes, in the *Hue and Cry*, or *Police Gazette*, was produced, which the witness said was taken by the reporter for that paper from the report which the witness was required to make at Bow-street. The learned Judge reprobated the publication.

Mr. Verrall, attorney to the Sun Fire-office, went down to Maresfield after the fire; and to him the prisoner related nearly the same story as to the other witnesses. He also told him that he had 100l. worth of books burnt, many dozen copy-books, stationary, and 1000 quills. He had also a box of plate, containing a waiter and other articles, and that he was surprised the remains of this were not found. Upon being asked why he did not endeavour to quench the fire at first, he said the well was 75 feet deep, and in the agitation of his mind he thought of his family, not of buckets.

Richard West, Cordwainer, saw the prisoner

digging before day-light on Tuesday after the fire, and mentioned the circumstance at the time; from the place where he was digging, the witness afterwards saw Mr. Jenner take a parcel.

James Standard, Parish-clerk of Maresfield, said the prisoner sent for him on the 29th December last, and gave him the parish registers to deposit in the church chests. for he was going to town, and it was very likely his house would be burnt down before he came back. The registers had been at the parsonage-house for years. Upon his cross-examination, the witness said that the prisoner had had a stable burnt down before, and this had been the talk about the place.

Mr. John Warren, Accountant to the Union Fire-office, said that on the 12th September, 1810, the prisoner had made insurances in that office, in the whole to the amount of 1050l. whereof 400l. was on furniture, wearing apparel, plate, printed books, wine, and other liquors, and 50l. on glass, china, and earthen ware.

Mr. Charles Philip Galabin, Secretary to the Union Fire-office, had known the prisoner six months, having one of his sons under the witness. He called on him before the fire, and wished the policy of 50l. on a house, in which he had then

no further interest, transferred to his insurance of furniture. He stated he was fearful his house would be destroyed by fire, incendiary letters having been sent.

The Rev. Thomas Rivett, Rector of Maresfield, proved his ownership of the house. He knew nothing against the prisoner's character, and had been always on the best terms with him. He lived in Hants.

Mr. George William Vaughan, proved the insurance of the house in the Sun Fire-office.

The case for the prosecution here closed ; and the prisoner again read his defence. Having been acquitted of one heavy charge, he now had to defend himself against another ; and he trusted that under the load of misery which he sustained, no apology could be thought necessary for the imperfections of his address. He would make no moving appeal to the jury's feelings ; he would only address them as (some of them) fathers of families, and as men of reason and good sense, whether it was probable or possible that he should have been guilty of the crime with which he was charged. His property, as would be proved, was of much more than the value for which it was insured, of more than twice

its value. Was the price at which his property could be rebought not to be taken into the account!—his wife and nine children at that moment deprived of a comfortable home, without a single change of garment!—was no value to be set upon his MS. books and papers, many the labour of years!—and though he saved some of them from the flames, it was only by accident and at the moment. He had altogether twelve children, of whom his bitterest enemies could not say that he was other than a fond father. He was respected and kindly treated by some of the first persons in the country, from some of whom he had expectations of preferment in his profession. From childhood he had always been attached to gardening, and with his own personal labour and expense, he had brought into a state of comfort and beauty a plot of ground which had before been a wilderness. Only a few days before the fire, he had expended a considerable sum in improving this garden: and yet it was to be believed, that he in one instant deprived himself of all these comforts, and voluntarily dragged down eternal misery upon his head, for what? for the paltry sum of £500. With his own hands it was to be believed, he set fire to a house in which his wife and nine children were wrapt in sleep, and from the flames of which it was not to be expected they could all escape.

He must be convicted of madness before this could be credited. He asked the jury, as fellow-creatures, whether, except they believed him an idiot, or a madman, they could think that he thus deprived himself and family of a comfortable home, for half the sum of money he could have obtained by selling his goods at a public auction? It had been insinuated that he looked to the charitable contributions of his neighbours. Alas! the hand of charity was often cold; and although he had large connexions, to some of whom he was grateful, it could not be believed that he would exchange a certainty for an uncertainty, and trust to the precarious source of public bounty for a support. Besides, crimes seldom remained long undiscovered; and by this casualty he was deprived of his school and profession, and had lost one of his infants by a cold which it caught that fatal night. He concluded with a similar pious recommendation to that which closed his former defence; and his counsel then called the following witnesses:—

William Wheeler bought the cottage of which the prisoner had changed the insurance.

Hannah Jenner, wife of *Thomas Jenner*, said, that *Mrs. B.* came out of the burning house in a whiskey-coat, and pillow-case underneath, in

her night-cap, and without a gown. She also saw one of the children in a blanket. Mr. B. was a kind and affectionate husband and father.

Thomas Marlow, Sergéant in the Warwickshire militia, quartered at Maresfield, saw Mr. B. several times actively employed in extinguishing the fire. He saw the remains of a metal watch the next morning, of a locket, and of plate. He saw one of the children carrying another from the flames, the one in its night-clothes, the other without her stockings.

Samuel Atrée produced the remains of the plate, weighing now about 3lbs.

Mrs. Hobden, wife of a farmer in the parish, knew of the furniture, and many books, which the prisoner possessed: of these she assisted in making out a catalogue (which was produced) and believed, from what she knew, that all the articles mentioned in it were in the prisoner's house. It was well and comfortably furnished, and contained a very good stock of very good linen.

Upon her cross-examination, she said, she had been in three chambers, and Mrs. B. had many

times shewn her apparel out of her drawers. This was two months before the fire.

Mrs. Clarke, wife of a storekeeper stationed at Maresfield for six years, knew the lower rooms of the prisoner's house, and Mrs. B.'s bed-room. They were well furnished. The prisoner had been visiting her on the evening of the fire, and was troubled with a bowel complaint, which compelled him to leave the room twice. He left his watch in the privy on one of these occasions; and sent back for it that night.

Mary Stevens, nurse to Mrs. B., said that the family were very well supplied with linen in May last.

The Rev. Richard Bingham, magistrate for the county of Hants, and incumbent of Gosport chapel, brother of the prisoner and of the barrister of his name, said, that a year and a half ago he visited the prisoner, together with Mrs. B. and two of his children. They slept there two or three nights, and were comfortably accommodated. The prisoner had then a large family at home, but no boarders. The witness believed his brother took him into every part of his house to shew him how comfortable he had made it. He knew his brother's library well:

it was not large, but consisted of 300 or 400 volumes. The house was not by any means elegantly furnished; but the witness did not believe it could by any means be refurnished for less than 900 or 1000*l*. His brother was by no means in want of money; if he had been he would have applied to the witness, as he had before done, and always been relieved.

Captain Joseph Bingham, of the Royal Navy, had been fifteen years post-captain, and about a year and a half ago, on his return from the East Indies, laid down a very large sum to clear the prisoner of every incumbrance, upon the express condition, that he had disclosed every debt to him; and he was afterwards assured by his brother, that he was made a free and happy man.

John Palmer, newsman, of Maresfield, knew the witness, Caley, and saw him the day after the fire, when he told the witness that he came down the front stairs, and did not see the fire; but if he had come the other way, he should have seen it. He did then, and now, believe the boy in that story.

Sarah Townsend assisted in ironing the prisoner's linen the day before the fire. It was all in the house.

Mary Horsecraft washed the linen.

Edward Bateman, the prisoner's servant, said that the stack of wood was exhausted on the Monday before the fire, and was therefore replenished.

The counsel for the prosecution admitted the testimony as to the prisoner's character, which had been given in the former indictment, without recalling the witnesses.

The LORD CHIEF BARON then charged the jury, who he said were required to find a man guilty of the diabolical crime of *arson*, as it was alleged, only for a gain of about 200*l.* sterling. But his lordship was inclined to believe the testimony of the prisoner's brother, and those who valued the prisoner's property at double the insurance; and adopted the expression of the prisoner, that he must first be convicted of madness before he could be found guilty of the crime with which he was charged. The prisoner's brothers were honourable men; and it was not to be supposed they would swear themselves black in the face even for their brother. His lordship went through the whole of the evidence, late as the hour of the day was, in justice to the prosecutor, who,

seemed, he observed, somewhat eager for the conviction; and the jury then found the prisoner **NOT GUILTY.**

The trial of these indictments lasted from eight o'clock in the morning till nearly nine at night.

THE
RESOURCES OF RUSSIA,
IN THE EVENT OF
WAR WITH FRANCE;
AND
AN EXAMINATION
OF THE
PREVAILING OPINION RELATIVE TO THE POLITICAL
AND MILITARY CONDUCT
OF THE
COURT OF ST. PETERSBURGH,
WITH A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE
COZAKS.

By M. EUSTAPHIEVE,
RUSSIAN CONSUL AT BOSTON.

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LONDON:

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1812.

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO WIT ;

District Clerk's Office.

BE it remembered, That, on the eighth day of May, A. D. 1812, and in the thirty-sixth year of the Independence of the United States of America, **MUNROE** and **FRANCIS**, of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit :

“ The **RESOURCES OF RUSSIA**, in the event of a war with France ; and an examination of the prevailing opinion relative to the political and military conduct of the Court of St. Petersburg, with a short description of the **Cozaks**.”

Conformity to the act of the congress of the United States, entitled, “ An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned ;” and also to an act, entitled, “ An act, supplementary to an act, entitled, an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned ; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.”

WILLIAM S. SHAW,
Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.

THE
RESOURCES OF RUSSIA,

IN THE EVENT OF A WAR



RUSSIA, for some time past, has been the sport of two-fold injustice. The inconsiderate zeal of some, who were exaggerating her power, and the rooted, persevering enmity of many, who delighted in depreciating it, have driven her, in the public opinion, from that real intermediate station, which she might claim of right, and fill without giving offence. Both friends and enemies have wronged her, and both have finished by deserting her. The former, disappointed and vexed that she did not reach the height they wished, gave her no credit for the effort; and by fixing upon her unmerited disgrace, sought to justify their own unreasonable expectations. The latter, on the contrary, whose joy at her misfortunes could only be equalled by their grief at her successes, have steeled their breasts against every conviction in her favour; and, chasing from their cheek the conscious blush of self-reproach, with triumphant alacrity mounted the rostrum, or with exulting

eagerness seized the pen to declaim on her political impotence. Like determined atheists, they laboured wantonly to destroy the only hope and consolation, which, in the prospect of futurity, her existence presented to the suffering nations.

*The insufficiency of her resources,—the vacillation of her policy,—foreign influence and corruption,—and the defects of her military system,—*form now a creed so general, and so readily embraced, as to call loudly for a candid and impartial examination of each of these topics. In obeying this call, we may possibly discover the true proportion between our hopes and fears; fix the balance of public judgment, and relieve the general anxiety, as to the result of the war, which seems now stealing upon the north, with the cautious step of a midnight assassin, or of a wary wolf, whose silent approaches in the depth of darkness are only betrayed by the portentous glare of his eye.

Whether the following sheets may prove satisfactory or not, I shall find some consolation in having attempted to perform my duty; and in having led the way for some abler pen to undertake and successfully to execute the task in which it may be my misfortune to fail. I must be understood to proceed upon a general principle, independent of accident; and not influenced by the question, whether the expected war will or will not take place, and whether it may happen sooner or later. Come when it will, the ability of Russia to defend herself, is the only object of this inquiry. I must further premise, that, in the progress of this little work, I have entirely confined myself to the Russian authorities; and

left foreign writers to reconcile, as well as they can, their own contradictions. I feel the more justified in this preference, as a complete statistical account of the Russian empire has been published, as late as the year 1808, under the sanction of government, and with a free use of all the official documents in the various departments of state.* The correctness of this account is unquestionable, and supersedes all foreign accounts; inasmuch as these never could have been made with the same advantages of necessary information.

First then, *as to the insufficiency of resources.*

The population of Russia, as a source of national strength, claims our earliest consideration. The first computation was made by order of Peter the Great, in the year 1719; and the return was 14 millions of both sexes, including the Ukraine, and the newly conquered countries of Estonia, Livonia, and part of Finland. So small a return, notwithstanding the considerable acquisition of territory, will not be surprising, when we reflect on the anarchy, confusion, cruel wars, and other calamities which had, in the preceding ages, desolated the Russian empire.

By the second enumeration, in 1743, there appeared an increase of upwards of two millions; and by the third, in 1761, of four millions more. In the year 1781, when a fourth report was made, eight millions were gained; and the fifth and last census, which took place in 1794, by an accession of four millions, gave the total at 32 million inhabitants. About this time, from 1794 to 1795, the annexation of Lithu-

ania and Courland to the Russian crown, brought in five millions more, and increased the whole population to 37 millions.

As no disastrous events have since impeded the progressive operation of natural causes ; and as the tables presented annually to the synod, from all the parishes throughout the empire, of births, marriages, and deaths, shew the regular increase of 500,000 for each year ; we can, without fear of error, state the present population of Russia, ending with the last year (1811), at 45 and half, or at 46 millions, if we add the tract of country acquired from Poland by the treaty of Tilsit.

This is a prodigious population, and inferior only to that of France, swelled beyond all proportion with the overflowing tribute of her conquests. But the formidable magnitude of numbers, with regard to Russia, does not afford a safe ground for conclusion ; and, like the rising moon, reflected and magnified by the floating vapours in the atmosphere, deceives the eye as to its real appearance. The population, to be efficient, must be in some degree commensurate with the territory ; and a single glance at the geographical situation of Russia is sufficient to shew how immensely the latter exceeds the former. Her 46 million inhabitants, if distributed over the surface of no less than 340,000 geographical square miles (16,000,000 square weists, or near 11,000,000 English square miles), will appear like a few solitary shrubs, scattered over a vast desert to remind the traveller of helpless weakness, rather than of energetic grandeur. The proportion of 46 million souls to the stated number of geographical miles, will be only 129 souls to each square mile ; and when it is

considered that in France and other populous countries in Europe, each square mile is supposed to contain about 2000 people, the ability of Russia to make conquests and even to preserve her existence as a nation, will appear a miracle, or one of those phenomena in the political world, which set conjecture at defiance, and mock every effort to comprehend them.

The prospective contemplation of 875 million souls, which Russia ought to have in proportion to her territory and the population of other countries, only heightens the sense of her present deficiency; and harasses the mind with doubts whether, owing to the rigorous climate and other causes unfavourable to her northern possessions, she can ever hope for such an increase as would place her in every respect on a par with other powers; and whether it would not be best for the peace and happiness of mankind, that such a project should never be realized.

In pursuing, however, this track of reasoning, we should escape one error only to fall into another of a no less serious nature; and to appear as voluntary followers in the train of those, with whom spots pass for eclipses, and who find it painful to turn their eyes for one moment from the unfavourable view of the picture.

We have only to choose the middle way, and the vast disproportion between the population and territory of Russia, as well as the apprehensions thereby excited, will be wonderfully lessened by the discovery, that no less than three fourths of her immense territory contain only one fifteenth part of her population; and that consequently, fourteen fifteenths of her population are concentrated only on one fourth of her territory. In other

words, to the 258,000 geogr. square miles which Siberia contains, there are 2 million inhabitants; and to the 82,000 geogr. square miles of Russia in Europe, there remain 43 millions; which is more than one fourth of 160 millions, said to be the whole population of Europe. Twelve persons in Siberia, and near 100 in the European part of Russia to each geogr. square mile, must therefore be a fair and correct calculation; and though it is much below the standard of European population, appearance, even in this case, is more unfavourable than reality; for, many parts of European Russia, especially towards the north, are very thinly inhabited, and bear almost the same small proportion to the rest as does Siberia. The thickest population of Russia is between 18° and 55° of latitude, and from 42, to 68° of longitude, comparatively on a small space, including the governments of *Moskow, Wladimir, Riazan, Kursk, Orlow, Charkow, Voronj, Penza, Kazan, Tambow, Pottava, Tchernigoff, Minsk*, and others; some of which contain from 1300 to 2100 souls to each square mile, and bring Russia nearer to an equality with other powers, than may have been at first imagined.

If the comparison should still be in favour of France, it will be lessened by the consideration, that her population is more numerical than effective; and that this last, as it appears at present, is better preserved in Russia, where persons from 20 to 30 years of age are not near so scarce as in France. Besides, national strength, derived from population, depends in a great measure on the peculiar character of that population; and on the energy of government in seizing and bringing that character into action. Of the first almost every page

of the ancient and modern history of Russia presents us with the most pleasing assurances; as to the last, we have no reason to be distrustful, since the contest which the Russian government is likely to maintain, will be, no longer for any foreign interest, but for her own immediate defence and safety. The question will not be, whether Austria or Prussia are to be assisted with her arms; or whether England is to be supported in her intercourse with the European continent; but whether Russia shall exist, or be erased from the list of nations. France cannot, as formerly, pretend that she entertains no direct hostility, and no wish to invade the territories or destroy the political influence of Russia. The enemy's designs will be unmasked; and his arms openly pointed against the dearest interests of Russia. His assaults will have no other plea but inordinate ambition, an avowed object of enmity, a manifest desire to molest and destroy, and a premeditated, unwarrantable appeal to force; he therefore will be opposed with corresponding vigour, and determination suitable to the pressing occasion; with a magnanimity and patience fully proportionate to the magnitude of danger; and with that firmness and perseverance, which, if protracted, will be finally crowned with success. It would be no less unjust to suppose the Russian government so wanting in wisdom and foresight, as not to have beheld the enemy's preparations with a suspicious and jealous eye. Whatever may be his success, it will not be owing to the chance of surprise.

Nor are the pecuniary means, which are emphatically called the sinews of war, so scanty in Russia, as they have been generally imagined. The comparatively low

state of her finances, if fairly viewed, may tend to raise our confidence rather than depress it.

The following are the sources of the yearly revenue of Russia.

	Roubles
Poll tax - - - -	52,000,000
Duties on distilleries - -	25,000,000
Custom-House duties - -	13,000,000
Produce of the mines and the mint	10,000,000
Stamp duties - - -	8,000,000
Fisheries, mills, forests and post-offices	6,000,000
The tribute of subjected nations	1,000,000
Total	115,000,000

As this revenue is not dependent on the fluctuating state of foreign exchange, it must be calculated at par; and is therefore equal to 15 million pounds sterling. Unquestionably it makes no figure by the side of 30 millions in the disposal of France, or 50 millions annually brought to the British exchequer; but then it should be considered, that the above revenue of Russia is free, permanent, unincumbered with heavy interest on national debt, and has all those additional sources untouched, which in France and England are nearly exhausted.

The system of taxation can scarcely be said to exist in Russia. The poll-tax, amounting to little more than one rouble per head, and being nearly all the people pay, certainly deserves not the name of a system. The manufacturing interest, if we except the articles exported, is not burthened with taxes; and from its visible progress, as appears from the yearly important diminution of almost 2 million roubles in the imports

of foreign manufactures, this branch of industry promises to Russia, in the hour of need, no inconsiderable support. •

The produce and consumption of salt, amounting yearly to 20 million pouds, upwards of 300,000 tons, formerly an important branch of revenue to the government, but now free and unproductive, may be resumed on emergency, and under the auspices of the superior administration now placed over it, may be rendered more than ever profitable. All the branches of agriculture, as regards consumption at home, are free from taxes, and may be made largely to contribute to the relief of national necessities. Russia has not as yet had recourse to duties on malt-liquors, the consumption of which is immense ; or on houses, windows, dogs, coaches, and every domestic and foreign luxury ; nor has she wielded yet the potent engine of a funding system. In short, she has the example of France and England before her ; and if the worst comes, she can but relieve herself in the same manner ; though, I think, she is in no immediate danger of being driven to this extremity.

Her commerce, though small when compared with that of England, is profitable enough to bear additional burthens ; and her circulating capital, which is computed at 200 million roubles in specie, and 100 millions in paper, exhibits at once the sufficiency of her credit and the solid foundation of her prosperity. Add to this, that she never subsisted on foreign plunder, as France has done, and never counted it one of the principal sources of her revenue ; the approaching annihilation, therefore, of this source, in proportion as the countries which supplied it become more and more exhausted,

may soon reduce her formidable rival to an equality with herself.

Granting, however, the balance at all events to be against her, as to the relative means and resources of France; the advantage of acting on the defensive is more than sufficient to turn the scale in her favour. In this point of view, we have to consider, not whether she can go as far as France in sending and maintaining troops abroad; but whether she has a sufficient force at home to repel the enemy; and whether her internal resources are adequate to the support, maintenance, and due exertion of that force. This is a cheering subject: and we shall take a short retrospective view of it.

A century ago, that is in the year 1712, the military force of Russia amounted in all to 107,350 men. As this muster was made three years after the memorable battle of Poltava, I cannot help observing here, that unless Peter the Great had brought almost every soldier he had into the field, a thing in its very nature impossible, the statements of Swedish and other foreign historians, of 80,000 men in one place, and as many in another, with which Peter overwhelmed Charles, must appear to every intelligent and candid man, what it really is, an absurd and inconsistent exaggeration.

At the death of Peter, the country inherited from his genius and perseverance a well appointed and disciplined army of 200,000 men, having almost doubled within the short period of twelve years, that is, from 1712 to 1725, in which that great prince died. In 1771 it was considerably augmented: and from that time to 1794 it was increased to 312,785 men; and now it is not

much less than 700,000 men. The following are its component parts :

REGULAR TROOPS.		Rank and file.
1. Life Guards (horse) consisting of five regiments - - - -		3,316
2. Ditto foot, six regiments - - - -		9,305
3. Field Cavalry, 46 regiments - - - -		49,788
4. Ditto Infantry, 130 do. - - - -		219,125
5. Garrisons, 19 do. - - - -		70,884
6. Artillery - - - -		42,963
		395,381
Officers - - - -		12,709
	Total	408,090

IRREGULAR.	
Different regiments of Calmucks, Tartars, Don Cozaks, &c. &c. - - - -	98,211
Officers - - - -	2,189
	Total 100,400
Invalids, including officers, - - - -	24,660
	Grand total 533,150

The provinces, which were mentioned before as the most populous in the Russian empire, and which contain about 15 millions of male population, by a new levy in 1806 of one in a hundred, furnished an additional number of 150,000 men ; which makes the present force of Russia amount to 683,150 men. By deducting 70,884 for garrisons, and 24,660 invalids, there remains 587,606 effective men ; or 487,206 regulars, and 100,400 irregulars,—a force which, if

assisted by local advantages, can defy the united efforts of all the invaders Europe can send against her.

It is a consoling and pleasing consideration, that the population of Russia has not since been drained by fresh levies, as it has been in France by the system of conscription, enforced and executed, with such rigour, in anticipation. Moreover, a militia was raised in the same year (1806), of no less than 600,000 men, who were already in motion, and in condition to take the field. In consequence of the peace of Tilsit, this force was dismissed, with the exception of those who wished to enlist in the regular army, and with the reservation of 200,000 men for any future emergency; so that with this ample reserve, and in consequence of the natural progress of population in five years, or the great number of those who have attained the proper age for service, Russia bids fair to maintain the contest without resorting to any extraordinary measure, and exhausting those regular and main sources of strength, which in the last extremity must still prove her safeguard. She may still present—what imperial France cannot—the cheerful countenance of man. From St. Petersburg to Moscow, and from Moscow to the Euxine, the traveller may still see that active and smiling industry, which neither feels nor fears the hostile sword—but which, in the regions of France, shrinks with the chill blast of war, and withers in the meretricious embraces of a hollow peace. The tearful eye, the mournful visage, the wide-spreading desolation,* and the melancholy

* The author's personal experience, and all recent accounts of France confirm the desertion of roads even in the vicinity of Paris; and the difficulty of meeting, out of the army, young persons from 15 to 30 years of age. Boys, women, and old men are the only beings that present themselves to the sight of a traveller.

spectacle of helpless infancy, and tottering age, torn from their natural prop of manhood; all the calamities which France in the fulness of her pride and the wanton exertion of her power has brought upon herself, while wishing to afflict others,—are yet unknown, unfelt, and unseen in Russia: and may remain so, though hosts of foes should conspire her ruin.

The natural situation of Russia is such, that she can with ease and convenience maintain and support while on her own ground, not only the formidable force she possesses, but double that number, if necessity should require it. All her means are within herself; and no country in the known world is so little dependent on commercial or any other intercourse with foreign nations. Could commodities or the necessaries themselves be transported with the same facility as money which represents them, she might provide for her armies, at any distance from home, better than any power in Europe, France herself not excepted. There is nothing relating to the maintenance of an army, but what she can draw from herself, find on her own land, and manufacture with her own hand; an advantage which she pre-eminently enjoys, of which no external cause can deprive her, and which, as long as it is enjoyed, must render her, on her own territory, invincible. Food, clothing, and ammunition of every kind, are amply supplied to her by art and nature; and placed at her absolute disposal.

From the report of the minister of the interior on agriculture, for the years 1802, 1803, and 1804, it appears, that after all the exports to foreign countries, and all the deductions for distilleries, and those pro-

vinces or governments which are unfavourably situated, and where annual harvests are not sufficient to maintain the inhabitants ; there remained, as an average surplus of corn for each year, 50 million tchetverts, or 450 million pouds, about 7 million tons ; which, if sold at the usual price of 4 nobles per tchetwert, would bring Russia 200 million roubles a year, almost twice as much as the whole revenue of the empire. Those who calculate the resources of Russia only by their nominal representation, money, will do well to pause and reflect awhile on the above prodigious source within herself, which must increase with the population, and outrun, for whole centuries to come, the demand at home, by reason of the vast superabundance of soil, and which may, ere long, be converted into the circulating medium.

The cloth manufactories of Russia, according to the report of 1804, were 1553 in number, containing 2428 looms ; and employing 28,689 hands of both sexes. The quantity of cloth, manufactured that year only for the army, was 1,806,632 arshins, or about 1,405,158 English yards.

The leather manufactories, 850 in number, which, besides domestic consumption, exported in the year 1804 to the value of 1,786,871 roubles ; as well as the linen manufactories, 285 in number, employing 23,711 hands, and enabling Russia annually to make considerable exports, are too well known to suppose the Russian soldier can ever be in want of things so necessary to his health and comfort.

The manufactory of arms in Tula, from 1770 to 1780, produced upwards of 162,500 muskets, and

63,000 pair of pistols, besides the correspondent number of swords, sabres, and other arms, at the low rate of 4 roubles per musket, and the rest in proportion. The annual produce of this manufactory must have materially increased since 1780, though no account of it has yet been published. There are, besides, several other manufactories of less importance, which however furnish a considerable quantity of arms every year, and secure Russia against any want in articles of such indispeusable utility. The Russian soldier has not, as yet, used any other arms than what were manufactured at home. A small supply from England, in the last war, had for its object to assist Prussia, and was not received in time.

The copper mines of Russia, through the means of her founderies, can always supply her with the requisite proportion of cannon. Her iron mines are too well known to need any comment; and the produce of her gold and silver mines is nearly the whole circulating specie, the amount of which has already been mentioned. Her lead mines are also sufficient to supply her wants; and the following is the annual quantity of metal in pouds, and value in roubles.

	Pouds.	Roubles. Copecks.	Value in Roubles.
<i>Gold</i>	40	15,000	pr. poud 600,000
<i>Silver</i>	1,300	1,000	„ 1,300,000
<i>Lead</i>	50,000	4	„ 400,000
<i>Copper</i>	185,000	20	„ 7,000,000
<i>Iron</i>	8,000,000	4,80	„ 14,000,000
Total	8,236,340		Total 20,400,000

Owing to the natural abundance of all the necessary

materials, the quantity of gunpowder manufactured in Russia has always been more than sufficient not only for public purposes, but for the private use of individuals. The frequent fire-works, being the favourite amusement of the Russians in general, are supposed to consume more gunpowder than would supply the army of a moderate power. For want of documents to ascertain the exact quantity with which Russia is yearly furnished, we must take its cheapness as the criterion of its abundance. The foreign supply of powder as well as lead, which was drawn from England during the late war, was merely on account of the ships of the line which were at a distance from home.

It does not come within my present object to give a statement of all the manufactures of Russia, which, generally speaking, are such as to make her independent in all the necessaries, and in some of the luxuries of civilized life; and it was sufficient to mention only those which are intimately connected with the maintenance of her military force, in order to shew that her efforts are not likely to experience a check from any failure of natural or artificial resources, as regards her own defence and protection. We shall, however, be further convinced of this by considering at what small expence her armies are supported, and how ample are her nominal or pecuniary means, in relation to the real commodities or necessaries, which she can always purchase from her own subjects, and obtain from her own soil.

The whole of her regular forces cost in time of peace only 10,683,711 roubles; which, in proportion to her revenue, being a little more than a 15th part of the

whole, is certainly cheaper than in any military nation in Europe. In time of war, the additional expence is only 200,000 roubles; and if we add the irregular troops, which, with the exception of officers, receive their pay only for the time of actual service, we cannot be far from truth in stating the whole expence at 11 million roubles; a very small portion, and can be easily spared from the revenue of 115 millions.

The first idea that occurs on seeing this statement is, the miserable, starving state of the soldier; but the advantage of possessing *real* means will soon banish this idea, and shew the Russian soldier, though apparently worse paid, yet substantially better maintained perhaps than in any other country. The average sum which he receives, about 12 roubles and 50 copecks a year, is certainly a trifling pay; but then he is provided with flour and other articles of provision, which are sufficient to support him through the year, and enable him in some measure to consider his pay as mere pocket money. His clothing, which is entirely at the expence of government, costs only 12 roubles extra; and affords an additional proof that a government, possessed of a revenue so large in proportion to its expences, can raise, in self-defence, increase, and maintain a force adequate to every political emergency.

How far we may rely on the moral character of the Russian population, under a well-directed government, history can furnish us facts on which it will be perfectly safe and just to reason.

During the period of terror and desolation, which terminated in the election of Michael, ancestor of Peter the Great, to the Russian throne, the reins of govern-

ment were abandoned to the uncontroled rage of anarchy and lawless faction, and Russia, torn by internal and external wars, was neither able to crush the domestic traitor that led upon her vitals, nor resist the insolence and wanton cruelty of the foreign invader. Impostors multiplying fast, and rebels springing up on all sides, harassed her provinces and preyed upon her towns ; while the ferocious Tartar ravaged her fields, and spread, far and wide, the torrent of destruction over her dominions. The rapacious Pole found way to Moskow, and held it firmly in his grasp ; and the Swede in the seeming garb of a deliverer, perfidiously seized on Novgorod, and unblushingly extended his usurpations to other cities. The empire was assailed in all its points at once. Serpents nestled in its bosom, and its extremities were lacerated with the edge of the enemy's steel. No arm was uplifted in its defence ; for the few that were faithful to its cause, had been dispersed and exterminated. National spirit was subdued, national efforts were paralyzed ; and the country was sinking apparently to rise no more. The whole space of Russia was within the city-walls of Nijucz Novgorod ; and there was also her final deliverance.

Kuzma Minin, a person of mean condition, by trade a butcher, in spirit a patriot, and indeed a hero, suddenly appears in the market-place with all his property at his feet. He calls on his townsmen, he paints in true colours the miseries of their country, points to his bare arms and swears to exert them for its deliverance or lose them ; he points to his property, swears to sacrifice it in the common cause ; and his manly appeal thrills like an electrical shock through every heart, and in a

thousand breasts at once kindles the noble flame of patriotism. The citizens hear him, and vow to conquer or to die.' They follow his example, they bring all their property to the common stock, they seize their arms, they raise a number of warriors from the sale of their effects, they enlist their children and servants, they place the gallant *Pojarsky*, a noble veteran, at their head, they march against the enemy, they drive him as the rising tempest does the autumn leaves; and in a few weeks, the impostors, the rebels, the Tartars, the Poles, and the Swedes, were seen no more. Russia, astonished and rejoiced, could only observe by the bloody track left behind, which way her enemies had disappeared. She looked back with the assured eye of experience, respired with conscious gratitude under the protecting shadow of the family of Romanow, and with prophetic delight contemplated her future greatness.

So small were the means, and so great was the event; yet nothing in all this was extraordinary or miraculous. The whole was the natural result of the inherent energies of Russia, which did not break forth only for want of proper excitement. Russia was not prostrated or undone; she slept, and had only to wake in order to shake off her ignominious fetters. It was a giant stumbling over the rock of faction, somewhat hurt but not crushed; a feeble hand chanced to bind his wounds, and helped him to rise—and his first step was a total destruction of his foes. It was a dormant mass of combustible ingredients, pent up for years within the bowels of the earth, which wanted only the help of a spark to throw off in an instant the cumbrous weight that pressed it down.

Such was, and is still the character of the Russian people. Instead of degenerating, it has improved with the general civilization and social order since that time introduced, and till now happily maintained. What benefit has been subsequently derived from a character so improved, we may judge by the glorious and unprecedented reign of Peter the Great, who with only 7 millions of male population, and 8 million roubles of revenue, was enabled to fortify the boundaries, to build fleets, to raise cities, to maintain armies, to subsidize his allies with troops and treasure, to unite the Caspian and Black Sea with the Baltick, by means of prodigious canals—the completion of which is reserved for the happy reign of Alexander—to make head against his combined enemies, and finally to come off a conqueror from the protracted and sanguinary contest of twenty years.

And shall the increased resources of Russia—shall her prowess, so often tried and grown to maturity, be now deemed so little, as to excite no respect, and no confidence? Shall her advantages and her reputation, the laborious acquisition of years, be in a moment surrendered at the shrine of that terrific idol which the name of France has set up for universal worship and adoration? Has the prosperity, bequeathed by Peter the Great to his country, so little solidity in it, that the first bold invader may, if he pleases, pull it down, like some gorgeous overgrown fabrick, too heavy for its puny and slender foundation? No! Impossible! The enemy that hopes to conquer Russia, on her own territory, must be prepared to pay in tenfold measure for each drop of blood she sheds, and for each groan

that may be extorted from her. Before she falls, every one of her 700,000 warriors, and more if necessary, must be destroyed; and every one will be preceded by many a foe to his grave. The Russian soldier, ever since he has been invested with that name, has not once yet flinched from the combat,* and ere he dies,

* The individual superiority of the Russian soldier cannot be doubted by those who are in any degree acquainted with his character. The physical strength of man is nearly the same in all countries, yet there are various and powerful causes, which, in the exertion and application of that strength, may produce a considerable difference between the natives of one country and another: *local connection; local prejudices; the imperceptible influence of a peculiar constitution of laws, and a peculiar formation of society; temporary enthusiasm; principle; and habits of life;* are so many causes whose operation is very powerful in producing that difference. Thus a Frenchman's superiority consists at present in temporary *enthusiasm*, created by the revolution and maintained by Buonaparte's subsequent victories; that of an Englishman in *principle*, a cause whose action is *permanent* as far as the stability of the human mind can go. *Habits of life* are to the body what *principle* is to the mind. The union of both must make the possessor doubly strong, and their operation must be more powerful and lasting in proportion. The Russian soldier is the only one, perhaps, in whom these two causes are closely united. The habits of his life are such, that there is no soldier in the world whose wants are fewer, and who can bear fatigue and the hardships of war with equal fortitude. He is truly outfatigable. He can brave hunger, thirst, weather, wind, frost, unusual toil, and extraordinary privations, to the utmost and almost incredible strength of the physical powers of man. It is by no means an uncommon thing for a Russian soldier to march three days and nights almost without interruption, engage the enemy immediately, fight him for as long a period of time, and come off victorious. It was this extraordinary physical strength, that is acquired and improved by habit, which prevented the otherwise certain junction of Moreau and Macdonald in Italy: who never believed, never thought it was possible for one of them to be separated from the other, and defeated by an enemy so distant from both.

The *passive strength* of a Russian soldier or the *ability* of suffering long all bodily inconveniences, owing to the same habit, is almost unexampled. As to his *principle*, it is exclusively calculated to make him *invincible*.

That *principle* is founded upon religion, and sacred devotion to duty. He goes to battle with an almost certain anticipation of his end, to meet which

in a cause so dear, will execute such revenge, as in a short time will leave the enemy no victim to feed it.

Of the pretended *vacillation of policy* with which Russia has been charged, I have only to trace the origin to that political and self-conscious delinquency, which had no other means to screen itself from the piercing eye of public inquiry ; and which by a short statement of facts may still be forced from its dark retreat, and dragged into open day, from whose light it shrinks with such unequivocal terror.

In the war which terminated in the peace of Tilsit, the emperor of Russia appeared only in the character of an ally, ready in conjunction with England to assist the weaker powers threatened by France ; the sudden dispersion however of the Prussian armies, and the apathy of Austria who remained an indifferent spectator, drove the whole storm of war upon Russia, and her sovereign became, against his inclination and original intention, a

he is not only resigned, but even determined. To die in battle, he thinks, is a straight road to Heaven ; Death, therefore, which is the only enemy that could make him shrink from combat, is the very one whom he seeks to encounter, and who, so far from being an object of fear to him, is that of a joyful expectation of a glorious reward hereafter. The only danger he knows and fears, is to disobey his officer's commands. Such is his sense, opinion, and conviction of duty, which is constantly uppermost in his thoughts, excluding every idea of peril and danger, that to fulfil it, to execute his orders, or do nothing contrary to them, is his only system, admitting of no modification in peculiar cases of imminent danger, of no exception, no allowance whatever. To perform whatever he is commanded, or to die, is the only alternative he adopts. Were one officer, and one soldier only, left on the field, out of a whole Russian army, and surrounded by thousands of the victorious enemy, the soldier would not lay down his arms, if the officer commanded him not to do it. Indeed, there have been instances approaching to this as near as possible.

principal in the contest for which he had not been prepared. It was certainly in his power to recede, since he wanted neither the tempting opportunity of doing so, nor a combination of circumstances to justify the step; but the principle of honour was paramount to all other considerations, and he resolved on a strict and faithful adherence to those pre-existing engagements with England, which though on her part were yet to be fulfilled, it was repugnant to his feelings to doubt; and which, he hoped, might yet inspire Austria with confidence, and rouse her into activity. Such were the sentiments, and such were the motives, that determined Alexander to continue the war in which he had no immediate interest, and by declining which he might have spared much horror and bloodshed, and yet gained the same final advantages of additional security and protection to his frontiers.

But Alexander was deceived. The destinies of England were no longer in the same hands; and the illustrious son of Chatham was no more. The man whose active genius was the shield of protection, and whose word was the rock of confidence, and the rallying standard of the oppressed nations, was gone; and with him public integrity, generosity, and honour, which bloomed on the brow of England, descended to the grave. His unostentatious firmness was succeeded by arrogant imbecility; and his skill and experience gave place to a splendid pageantry of pretensions, which the first experiment dissolved into a mere noxious vapour. The restless demagogues who clamoured during his laborious life, seized on his armour, even before the

body that wore it was laid in the earth; but they found it more ponderous than they expected, and staggered under its weight. They clothed themselves in his plumage; but a jackdaw could not be long concealed under the borrowed feathers of a peacock. They found that it was much easier to censure, and declaim with vehemence, than govern and act with energy; and that it was less difficult to command a "keen encounter of tongues," than to hurl the thunderbolt of destruction upon the foe, and direct a mighty conflict between powerful nations. Instead of a supple and elastic body which moved, contracted, or expanded, with a single effort, they brought one of monstrous size, disjointed, and so constructed, that one muscle hindered the motion of another, and each limb served a separate head. On the fading traces of a constellation removed to another and a happier sphere, they came like fleeting, illusive meteors, which it would have been certain destruction to follow. In short, the men who at that time governed England under the modest assumption of "All the Talents," had neither candour to disavow their engagements, nor honesty to fulfil them; neither boldness to proclaim their wishes and predilections, nor magnanimity to retract those wishes, and subdue those predilections; neither fear of the success of France, nor assurance of the effectual resistance of Russia; neither sense and virtue to be just to others, nor policy and generosity to assist their friends, and thereby render justice to themselves.

To expect from men like these any efficient co-operation, or an honourable discharge of the obligations into which they solemnly entered, was perhaps the only

weakness that could expose Alexander to censure ; for, through the flimsy texture of their promises, it was easy to perceive they never meant, to perform them ; and that their first determination, on hearing of the fate of Prussia, was to abandon the field to France, and to throw no obstruction in the progress of her arms. In vain did the emperor of Russia remind them of what was expected from them. His applications and remonstrances were answered with soothing words, that meant nothing and cost nothing ; or softened with the truly consoling presence of an agent *, who, instead of money, brought with him pride enough to imagine himself the supreme dictator, and colours dark enough to paint

* It was said with some reason, that Lord Hutchinson, encouraged by Mr. Windham, had really entertained a notion of being, at least virtually, commander in chief of the Russian forces ; and finding his very moderate expectation disappointed, and his bringing off the British troops from Egypt, (after Abercrombie's death had sealed their victory,) not considered by the barbarous Russians so great an exploit as he fondly imagined it, he grew morose, sullen, and but too well complied with the wishes of his ruling friends at home, in sending them dispatches without a single white spot in them ; and of so black a complexion, that it was deemed imprudent to publish them ; as in such a case it would have been necessary to produce the dispatches of Sir Robert Wilson, who was also with the Russian army ; and who, not having the honour of being one of the "Talents," and therefore not keen or profound enough to see things differently from what they were, used much less ink in his compositions, than the depraved consistency of the party required. The whole of this conduct was so preposterous, so palpably unjust and impolitic, as to be generally believed ; for the greater its absurdity, the more it was palpable and characteristic of the party, possessing among other peculiarities an uncommon sagacity in the choice and appointment of agents and ministers, who, from the great Lord Hutchinson down to Mr. Erskine (the remaining twig of the Talents), have always proved themselves of the genuine stock, and by their marvellous independent, self-acting, and self-sufficient wisdom, have seldom failed to widen the breach which it was their duty to mend, and to irritate the wounds they were sent to heal.

things in the only light in which his employers wished them to appear. Like a boding raven, he hovered near the Russian troops; and his croakings, though at variance with each succeeding event, were hailed at home with that unfeigned joy which the mere possibility of doubting the prowess of Russia was sure to inspire.

One battle followed another; yet not a jot of the promised supplies was obtained by the emperor. Even when the chief object of his being so urgent was understood to be the relief of a distressed ally, the same niggardly economy, the same ungenerous, penny-wise policy, was still pursued on the part of the British administration; as if to exhibit a striking contrast between his disinterestedness and their meanness, between his noble perseverance and their sordid obstinacy.

They left nothing undone to probe his feelings to the utmost, and bring his magnanimity to the most desperate trial: *still he remained faithful to their cause.*

Scorning the idea of subsidy, he, at length, applied for a loan of five millions sterling, offering ample securities for the payment of interest and principal; and though he was refused, *still remained faithful to their cause.*

To the injury of refusal they added insult by pretending to grant the loan, but declining to be security to the British stockholders, who, of course, could not, without such security from their own government, gratify their own wishes by complying with those of the emperor: *still he remained faithful to their cause.*

In the attempt to relieve Dantzick, they prevented him from employing his ships, by promising to send

their own; which promise not being performed, Dantzick, so important to future operations, fell into the hands of the French: *still he remained faithful to the cause.*

Instead of making a descent on the coast of the Baltic, they thought of conquests for themselves; and sent out their puny expeditions to Egypt and Constantinople, as if to convince the world, by a succession of ill luck, of their eagerness for political depravity, and of their want of ability to execute even their own schemes: *still the emperor remained faithful to their cause.*

They suffered him to be lampooned, and laughed at his simplicity in fighting for no object at all: *still he remained faithful to their cause* *.

In face of the world, in the august presence of parliament, they dared to plead the necessities of Russia in defence of their deserting her; and to assume as the ground of such desertion, her being forced to fight in consequence of their "bringing war to her door †:" *still he remained faithful to their cause.*

By their withholding all assistance, and thereby extinguishing all hopes, till then indulged, of effectual co-

* It is highly gratifying to the feelings of the author, that his uniform prediction of the Prince's not admitting these men to his confidence, has been verified. In excluding them, the Prince Regent has evinced his consciousness of their shuffling policy and dishonourable conduct towards the Russian government; and has given a fair pledge of his disposition to do Russia justice whenever a fit opportunity should present itself.

† The speeches and sentiments of Mr. Whitbread, a prominent star in the "Talent" firmament. It is difficult to decide whether iniquity or folly was the parent of such sentiments; for, on one hand, there was an unprincipled desertion of a friend in distress by the very persons who had contributed to that distress; on the other, there was an infatuation which blinded them as to the possibility of his relieving himself at their expense.

operation from England, Prussia was not able to collect even the wrecks of her army; and Austria, who, by interposing her forces between France and Buonaparte, might have decided the fate of Europe, remained irresolute, and lost the only opportunity she ever had of recovering her independence. In consequence of this, the emperor of Russia found himself alone, and deserted by the very powers for whose particular interest he entered the lists with France: *still he remained faithful to the cause.*

While he was shedding the dearest blood of his subjects, the ruling party in England had the cruelty of pretending to doubt the sincerity of his professions, and the hardihood to disregard the strongest proofs that can be given by a sovereign loving his people: *still he remained faithful to their cause.*

Buonaparte, possessing all the wisdom they wanted, and much more, perceived at once the situation of Alexander; and finding his own invincibles sufficiently feasted on hard blows, professed his friendship for Russia, disclaimed every purpose of hostility, sought every opportunity of reconciliation, urged the criminal duplicity and selfishness of the British administration, and the self-immolating indifference of Austria, offered even a share of his conquests*, and, in short, exerted all his means, and they were great, to detach Russia from a cause so unprofitable and hopeless: still the Russian emperor hesitated to comply, still he would have persisted in his sacrifices; but at this time

* It is certain that Buonaparte offered to Russia all the country eastward of the Vistula; but Alexander declined it, and accepted a small portion merely for the sake of a more regular boundary.

he had arrived at a point beyond which patience was a crime, and perseverance nothing less than treason against his people. He therefore yielded; and at Tilsit concluded that peace, which in justice to his own interests ought to have been made much sooner.

Then it was that "All the Talents" were confounded and astonished, exclaiming, with a vacant stare, "Who would have thought it*?" Then it was that the people awoke from their lethargy, drove these pretenders from their seats, and filled them with men who talked less but performed more, and who, by coming in one month sooner, might have yet preserved the friendship of Russia.

But though this change of men and measures came too late to retrieve the mischief, it was not too late to call its authors to an account. In vain the great Lord Hutchinson committed a breach of confidence by disclosing the private conversations he had with the emperor Alexander. His own vanity was gratified in being known to have conversed with an emperor; but his friends were ill served, and driven to extremity. Bad was made worse, and they had to choose between humiliating confession and open dereliction of principle, which last, having dared already to boast of it, their pride induced them to maintain without hesitation.

* Mr. Sheridan on a former occasion related a story, which he little expected would so soon apply to his own political friends. A good housewife, he said, to prevent a cat from doing mischief, shut the poor grimalkin in a closet full of china and various dainties; and when, on opening the closet, she found her fine china scattered in fragments, and the dainties some gone, and some polluted with "touch impure," she was petrified with grief and horror; her arms were extended, her eyes rolled wild, and she at length exclaimed, "Who would have thought it?"

They nobly resolved to shift all blame upon Russia, to call her constancy *vacillation of policy*, and to defend their own conduct on the ground that Russia had neither strength, means, nor skill, to resist France; and that they, foreseeing her certain defeat, like *honest patriots and wise statesmen*, thought it was best to keep the promised sums at home.

However, as the three successive battles of Pultusk, Eylau, and Friedland, the most bloody, protracted, and obstinate the French ever fought, stared the plotting junto in the face, and proved to the world that Russia wanted neither strength, means, nor skill; and as the terrible defeats foretold by these inspired seers had not yet taken place, they set about to disprove facts by speculations, and to convince whom they could, that what had happened *ought not to have happened*. But even in this they had not the merit of originality; for Voltaire, in his tale of Zadig, had long ago introduced a certain quack personage, who finding that, contrary to his prediction, Zadig recovered one of his eyes, wrote a large volume to prove that the patient *ought certainly to have lost it!*

The separate peace which Russia made with France they tried to convert into a measure brought on by wavering policy, and enforced by fear and necessity; whereas they well knew it to be their own work from letters received in London long before the battle of Friedland, in which letters the departure of Alexander for the army, and the probable event of peace, in consequence of their own neglect and equivocation, were commented upon, and foreseen with more certainty than what was found in their own gloomy prophecies of the fall of

Russia. From the emperor's requiring their aid and assistance they endeavoured to establish the conclusion that they were right in supposing Russia destitute of resources, and unable to resist the enemy; but they took good care not to explain that the emperor required what was in some measure his due; that he was not acting in his own defence, and neither surprise had allowed him time for preparation, nor the foreign interest for which he took up arms, made it wise or just to waste his internal resources.

In short, they set every engine in motion to coin the basest metal into their defence. Pamphleteers, news-mongers, editors, travellers, agents, reviewers, and whosoever they could press into their service, were sent to hunt in every direction and every corner, from the palace to the cottage, for any thing, ever so trifling, which might vilify the moral and physical character of the Russian nation, fix on its sovereign the stigma of dishonest policy, and support the doctrine of its political impotence. Nay, with eagerness which betrays itself, they went so far as, through some of their mouthpieces*, openly to insult the bleeding victims of French oppression with an insinuation, that it is much better to be enslaved, prostrated, trampled upon by France, than hope or seek for consolation and deliverance in the suspended, but not yet palsied, efforts of Russia.

I must dismiss the disagreeable subject, as I cannot, I own, even at this distance of time, treat it with becoming

* *Vide* the concluding part of the Review of Dr. Clarke's "Travels in Russia." in the Edinburgh Review.

ing temper; I will, therefore, proceed to the next, of *foreign influence and corruption*.

Fears and apprehensions on this score are not only exaggerated, but appear to me totally groundless.— Foreign influence and corruption, and their offspring treason, have visited every country; yet that such visitors were ever treated with more welcome in Russia than in any other country, is an opinion not supported by facts and experience. Ever since the time of Peter the Great, who had established the government on a solid foundation, traitors have been scarce and harmless in Russia. The so much dreaded French influence which carries deadly corruption on its tongue, has not yet reached her; for, what appears influence at present is only the common effect of peace, caused by the preceding enmity of that faction which had unfortunately governed Great Britain. During the last and the former contest with France, some instances of mismanagement may have appeared; but not a single one of treachery; which, until it is established, cannot be without flagrant injustice imputed to any of the Russian subjects.

The truth is, that in Russia, while the power of the sovereign is more than sufficient at any time to crush treason in the shell, and while the motives to cherish foreign influence and corruption are as few as in any country whatever; the means of spreading such influence and corruption are very difficult, and I may say impracticable. There are no political parties, no factions to agitate the mass of the people, or give to the public mind any general impulse inconsistent with the interest of government, which is always the inter-

est of the country, both being permanently united. Nor is there the least chance of success in propagating any specious doctrines, pregnant with latent mischief, through some surreptitious means or underhand channel; for no press can be hired to publish treason, no hands can be found to distribute its poison; and, if the vigilance of government should be so far baffled by a kind of miracle, the people at large will neither read nor understand the jargon submitted to them. The Russian peasantry would laugh at the French rhapsodies, which have misled and ruined so many nations; I say *they would laugh*, because they have actually done so whenever a few partial attempts have been made to seduce them from their allegiance. The point of the sword is the only weapon which can be used in penetrating into Russia.

The two most important departments, civil and military, where influence and corruption are most to be dreaded, are chiefly in the hands of the nobles and the sons of clergy. The former enjoy so many immunities, such legitimate influence, and such vast possessions, that, independent of family pride and domestic partialities, their very interest, being identified with that of the sovereign and country, makes them proper and safe guardians of national welfare. Their yielding to corruption would be digging a grave for themselves, and inviting the first murderous blow of treason to their own heart. Accordingly they have always been ready to shed their blood in the preservation of their country; and in the records of history they have always filled the first rank among the Russian patriots. Any peculiarity, or difference of political sentiment, which

may have induced them to act under the appearance of some secret foreign influence, has nothing in common with corruption ; and only shews that freedom of which they cannot be easily deprived, and which strangers affect to discredit, but which nevertheless is actually enjoyed under the monarchical government of Russia.

The clergy, as a distinct body, share with the nobility some of the most important privileges, such as exemption from taxes, and from all the burdens of military service, and also a right to be judged in criminal cases by their peers in the ecclesiastical court ; but their sons, who are employed in the most laborious and important offices under government, besides the rights inherited from their fathers, have the prospect of nobility before them. Their education in colleges, and afterwards in universities, confers on them personal nobility ; and if they do not choose to return to the profession of their fathers, a few years of faithful service and irreproachable conduct make their nobility hereditary, and open the way, on a level with the most ancient and exalted families, to the highest trusts, dignities, and honours in the empire. This class, which has the greatest share of talent and youthful activity, has also the greatest losses to fear, the greatest advantages to gain, and the strongest excitement of ambition to be honest ; and, therefore, being triply fortified, is inaccessible to corruption.

Nor are the other classes debarred from all these advantages, provided they are inclined to enter the service, and had received an education to qualify them for the same. It is the happy feature of the Russian go-

vernment, enforced and perpetuated by the immortal example of Peter the Great, that the nobility, though entitled to all their special and individual privileges, are excluded from official precedence, unless they obtain it, like the rest, by personal merit or service; so that the son of a clergyman, merchant, or even a peasant, by a higher advancement in office, obtains a positive pre-eminence over the son of a nobleman; and a prince or a count, both in military and civil service, is often placed under the immediate command of a person of low origin. This produces an equality of chances and advantages, in the preservation of which all ranks, more or less, are interested and united.

The Russian merchant, though enjoying many important privileges, gives himself up to trade and industry, and never meddles in politics. A shield of national prejudice guards him from all foreign influence and corruption, and he is thrown into the mass of population, which, besides the same prejudice, has loyalty interwoven with its very nature, habits, and religion.

That class of peasantry which Europeans call slaves, and on whose impatience they calculate the enemy's success, are not numerous or important enough to endanger the safety of the empire, even were they inclined to do so; but they view their own happiness without borrowing the eyes of strangers, and have in no instance as yet, failed in loyalty, or appeared inferior to other classes in their attachment. The glorious little band which had saved Russia under Pojarsky and Mipin, as has been stated in a preceding page, was chiefly composed of this class of men. They have, at all times, furnished the bravest and the best soldiers for the

Russian army—soldiers who, according to the enemy's own account, when prostrated on the field of battle, and while a single spark of life is remaining in them, always, before they expire, cast a lingering look of farewell towards their beloved country. Even the Polish peasantry of the same condition, and so lately subjected, have completely disappointed the views of Buonaparte, whose public proclamations preceding the last war prove how much, and how prematurely, he had relied on their co-operation.

From men so devoted what cannot be expected, when their unchangeable loyalty is further strengthened by uncommon love and attachment to the person of Alexander, who like a benignant deity smiles upon them, and by sure and gradual steps leads them all to the temple of freedom*?

In short, among the causes which may operate against Russia, foreign influence and corruption, which to be effectual must be extensive, are the least to be feared; while on the opposite side she has many sources yet unexplored, and perhaps unsuspected. It is probable that the extremity of distress would only make Russia better acquainted with her own strength; at all events, she is certain of commanding all that invincible force,

* It was reserved for this truly benevolent prince to complete the happiness of Russia by devising a plan which, in a short time, will emancipate every portion of its population. He has caused a considerable fund to be laid apart, and augmented every year, from the general revenue, for the sole purpose of taking on mortgage and redeeming the estates with peasantry; and of purchasing such as are offered for sale, by means of agents established for that end in every province of the empire. The success has answered the most sanguine expectations; and several hundreds of thousands have already been emancipated, and restored to their proper ranks in society.

which enthusiasm can impart, and exalted patriotism can inspire.

During the last war, no sooner had the government proclaimed the project of raising militia, than 600,000 men were immediately enlisted and equipped for the field. The nobles set the first example, and the ardour thereby excited in all the ranks was incredible. The spirit of emulation removed all distinction between the prince and the peasant; and conferred it only on those who made the greatest sacrifices. For two or three years afterwards, the public papers teemed with the names of those patriots who had contributed their mite to the common stock. Some gave all their personal effects, and some disposed of their houses, in order to enlist and maintain themselves; while others parted with all they possessed, in order to bring the produce into the public fund, which was raising for the support of this new race of warriors. Instances occurred of gentlemen selling their whole estates, that they might raise whole regiments at their own expense, and, at the head of them, present themselves to the delighted eye of their monarch. After this, it would be an insult to suspect among the nobles, or any other class of the Russian people, the existence of foreign influence and corruption.

With regard to *the defects of the military system of Russia*, I know not on what ground this opinion has been permitted to prevail; or why the successes of Russia have been overlooked and forgotten, as if they were merely accidental; and her failures uniformly attributed to some permanent defects in her military sys-

tem, such as want of skill in officers, and discipline in soldiers.

While other European nations, who have opposed France with much less effect, and have been crippled and ruined, still were allowed to retain, in the public estimation, their original military character; Russia alone, after sustaining several contests without being either crippled or ruined, cannot, it seems, lose a battle or a single inch of ground, without losing at the same time her military fame, and exciting distrust as to the skill of her officers, and the discipline of her soldiers. If the French are beaten, it is considered as the effect of accident; but if the Russians fail, they are instantly deprived of all the indulgence which might be claimed from the unforeseen operation of chance.

An army, equal, and even inferior, in skill and discipline, may beat another better equipped, merely by the temporary superiority of its general and the adventitious aid of numbers, without depriving, however, the vanquished of the credit due to them; yet, with regard to the Russians, no allowance is made in this respect, though it is well known that the French, whenever they opposed them, had the double advantage of an able and experienced general, and of numbers greatly superior. If Massena, at the head of a French army, engaged Buonaparte at the head of another French army, and either of them were defeated, as both could not be victorious; the comment would be, that the conqueror was a better general, or had a superior force, or that both were in his favour; and none would say that the beaten army wanted good officers and discipline; why, then the reverses of the Russians under

similar circumstances, should be viewed in a different and less favourable light, appears to me a manifest injustice, and mysterious, incomprehensible infatuation.

In all the sanguinary battles which took place in Poland, the Russians were decidedly inferior in numbers, and their general was by no means equal in reputation to Buonaparte. Moreover, they fought fair, breast to breast, and face to face, in an open field, without any local advantages to counterbalance the disadvantages under which they laboured—to speak more technically, they fought general engagements or regular pitched battles, one after another, and upon the largest possible scale; yet, far from being dispersed, routed, or disabled from action, they firmly maintained their ground, and, whenever it was necessary, retreated in perfect order,—retreated before a veteran and more numerous army, commanded by Buonaparte and the greatest generals of the age! How could the Russians have done this, if they had not skilful officers, to command every movement, and execute every order with promptitude and habitual intelligence? If they did want such officers and good discipline, in addition to all other disadvantages; then Napoleon, his generals, and his army, are not deserving half the credit given them; for they ought to have, in an instant, annihilated their weak adversaries. But if Napoleon, his generals, and his army be fairly entitled, and I think they are so, to all their fame and renown; then the Russians, who could oppose them with such well-directed efforts, and with such well-regulated bravery, could fight in retreating, and, for a series of days, disputing every inch of ground with the enemy, without the least disorder or any other

loss than was occasioned by death, must have had officers and discipline of no ordinary kind, but such as were grown with years, and matured by experience; such, in short, as cannot be easily arrested in their progress, and must continue unimpaired by any temporary or accidental advantages of the enemy.

The first attempt of the first regular Russian army failed at the battle of Narva; but Peter the Great, who had formed that army, soon placed it on a foundation not to be easily shaken. The very men who had thus fled at the sight of an enemy, in a short time were able to face him, and beat him upon equal terms. The Swedish general *Schlippenbach* in Livonia, and another Swedish general, *Crooniort*, in Finland, only two years after, were each defeated with terrible loss in a pitched battle; and were the first to feel the valour of the Russians, directed by skill and discipline. At the action of *Czar-napata*, prince Galitzin, with only 8 battalions and 13 squadrons, completely defeated and routed a Swedish force of 5000 men, commanded by general Rosen, and the best in the king's army. At the battle of *Lezno*, Peter the Great, who commanded in person, with 10 regiments of horse and 10 battalions of foot, attacked, routed, and took 20 Swedish regiments, amounting in all to 16,000 men, whom general *Lewenhaupt* was leading to the king's assistance: the general himself, and about 50 men more, were all that escaped. At the memorable battle of *Poltava*, where the Russian force was divided into three lines, so as to form a kind of reserve to each other, the first line of foot, 10,000 men strong, was the only one engaged in the main action, and had the honour of defeating a most formidable ene-

my, before it was necessary to bring the rest to its assistance: a wonderful progress of skill and discipline in nine years, and perfectly authenticated by the official account of that battle.

The same progress was visible at sea; for the first regular fleet which Peter had built, and fitted out under his own command, attacked a Swedish fleet, commanded by vice-admiral Ehrenchild; and, though the Swedes were much older sailors, their metal heavier, and their commander an officer of great skill and experience, they were completely defeated, most of their ships taken, and the admiral himself made prisoner.

Was all this the effect of chance? Has the art of war, since that time, been less cultivated by the Russians? Or has their military character degenerated? Frederick the Great, and the inhabitants of Berlin, who saw the Russian eagles planted on their ramparts, can testify to the contrary. The young tree, planted by the

* The following anecdote will further convince us of the loyalty and discipline of the Russian soldier. Peter the Great, at an interview with the kings of Denmark and Poland, hearing them boast of the superiority of their soldiers, instead of disputing the point with them, proposed an experiment which was immediately assented to, and which was, to order a grenadier to jump out of a third floor window. The king of Denmark tried the experiment on one of his bravest and most loyal soldiers, who on his knee refused compliance. The king of Poland waved the trial altogether, conceiving it to be hopeless; when Peter ordered one of his soldiers, the least promising that could be picked out, to descend the window. The soldier merely crossed himself, touched his hat according to form, boldly marched to the window, and had already one of his legs out, when the emperor stopped him, and told him he was satisfied. The kings were astonished, and each made the soldier a present of five ducats, requesting Peter to promote him to the rank of officer. The czar answered, that he would do so to oblige them, but not to reward the soldier; for all his soldiers would do as much, and by rewarding them in the same way he would have no soldiers at all.

care and genius of Peter, had a soil too congenial and well chosen not to thrive. It has cast a deep root, and is still in its vigour; and though the storm may bend it, and the frost may strip it of its leaves, the chilling hand of decay has not yet touched it.

I will pass the victories over the Turks and Poles, and bring Russia into contact with France, the terror and the scourge of the present age.

From the year 1799, when the contest first began between France and Russia, to the treaty of Tilsit, there had been seven great, regular, or pitched battles, fought in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and Poland, and with what success may be seen from the following comparative statement.

IN FAVOUR OF RUSSIA.

The decisive battle of Cassano, where the French, under Moreau, were defeated by Suwarow.

The battle of Trebia, fought by the same general, which lasted three days, and terminated in the total destruction of the enemy, commanded by Macdonald.

The battle of Novi, the most bloody and obstinate in Italy, which finally ended in the decisive victory of Suwarow over the French generals Joubert and Moreau.

IN FAVOUR OF FRANCE.

The battle of Zurich, under Massena, decisive, and destructive to the Russians, who were commanded by Korsakoff.

None.

None.

The battle of Pultusk, where general Beningen repulsed Buonaparte with great loss.

The horrid, sanguinary battle of Eylau, where general Beningen commanded, and which, for its obstinacy, slaughter, and a series of bloody actions, that for fourteen days preceded it, has no parallel in the history of modern warfare. It completely arrested the progress of the French, and, in spite of Buonaparte, drove them back into winter-quarters.

The battle of Austerlitz, in which the Russians attacked Buonaparte; but were driven back with loss, though they still kept their first position.

The battle of Friedland, in which, after fighting for sixteen days incessantly, Buonaparte succeeded in driving the Russians from their positions; and gained ground without any other advantage than the possession of Koningsberg.

From this statement, of the correctness of which any one may judge, the events being within his memory, there is a clear balance of two battles in favour of the Russians; and a general balance of decisive and destructive termination of their victories. It also appears that, even in carrying on a defensive war, the Russians with Suwarow and equal numbers, were more successful over the French, than the French with Buonaparte and superior numbers were over the Russians. But when all minor actions are considered, in which the Russians had generally the advantage, such for instance as the exploit of prince Bagration, who, before the battle of Austerlitz, while the Russian army was retreating, with six thousand men, and in sight of Napoleon, cut his way through a French army; and, above all, when we reflect on the unprecedented passage of Suwarow over the Alps, which, from his first entrance into

Switzerland to his quitting it *, was a constant chain of brilliant achievements, and an uninterrupted series of splendid triumphs over the foe, over the perfidy of an ally, and over nature herself; the balance in favour of

* The Austrian army, under the Archduke Charles, in Switzerland, which, in conjunction with the Russians whom Suwarow was coming to take under his command, kept Massena in check, was ordered to withdraw: and the Russians, left to the mercy of the enemy, more than double in numbers, were attacked and defeated. The victorious enemy then turned his main forces upon Suwarow, cut off his communication with the fugitives, and surrounded him on all sides. No alternative remained apparently, but to surrender at discretion, or starve by famine. The enemy already made sure of his prey. At one time Suwarow was represented to fight as a *dévil* (vide Massena's bulletins to the Directory); at another, to have lost the whole of his army (which, indeed, was scarcely equal to one fourth of the enemy's force), in killed and prisoners, being himself among the latter. But Suwarow was no ordinary being. With a handful of men who thought nothing impossible under their general, and who by death alone could be parted from him, he forced his way sword in hand, and led his victorious few, through the hostile ranks that vainly opposed them. The enemy, who the moment before, confident in his numbers, was boastingly anticipating the fall of Suwarow, was defeated, and by yielding four thousand prisoners, added one more to the already numerous trophies of the aged hero. This action, the last, but perhaps the most splendid of all the preceding, closed the long and brilliant career of the illustrious veteran, and secured him the title of "Invincible," due to him in the strictest sense of the word; for he never lost a battle. It is but justice to acknowledge here, that Suwarow acquitted the Archduke Charles of any ill intention or equivocal conduct towards the Russians, well knowing that the Archduke could not have withdrawn his forces so prematurely from Switzerland, and exposed them to a defeat, without previous orders from his Cabinet; it being the established rule with the Austrian government, a most preposterous and fatal rule to her interests, that no commander in chief can resolve upon any measure of importance, though on actual service, and at a distance from home, without receiving orders for that purpose, from the council of war at Vienna! Suwarow was only five days' march from the Russian army, which was defeated in Switzerland. Had the Austrians therefore waited only five days longer, he would have effected a junction with it, and Massena would have shared the fate of the French army in Italy.

Russia will be prodigiously increased; and though she is now depressed by being deprived of her best general, while France is raised by possessing hers, it will still be sufficient to console us with the assurance, that if Suwárow could not conquer France, Napoleon cannot conquer Russia; that the latter on her own territory is, like the former, invincible; and that a single genius may produce many important changes, without their being connected with any difference or permanent defects in the military system of either. It is impossible to repel this assurance while we behold Spain and Portugal with no government, no resources, and no regular force but what their ally furnishes them, successfully defying the utmost efforts of gigantic France.

The last campaign in Poland, distressing as it was to the French, is nothing to what they must experience if they dare again to invade it. At that time the sudden overthrow of Prussia enabled them to seize on many fine and fertile provinces, which furnished them with necessary supplies; but which are now exhausted, or will be prevented from furnishing any. The more men Buonaparte brings with him, and the farther he penetrates into Russia, the nearer he will draw to the fate of Charles XII. Again the Russian peasants will be removed, again their habitations will be destroyed, and again whole fertile regions will be, for safety, converted by the Russians into a barren wilderness. The French, if they advance, will see nothing but the Russian bayonets, bristling in front, and receding only to strike with surer aim; nothing but fugitive Cozaks * hanging on

* The name *Cozaks* is general, and applied to all those tribes which follow the same irregular and almost optional method of warfare. The par-

their wings, who, used to this distressing mode of warfare, will harass them by day and night; and nothing behind or around them but sterility, famine, and desolation.

ticular bodies of the *Cozaks* are distinguished from each other, not so much by the different nations which compose them, as by the places they respectively inhabit. Thus the *Don Cozaks* take their name from the river Don; the *Ouralian Cozaks* from the Ouralian mountains; the *Cozaks of the Ukraine* from the name of the country; and the *Zaporavian Cozaks* from the cataracts of the Dnieper, as the word *Zaporavian*, or more properly *Zaporostzi*, signifies, in the Russian language, "people living beyond the Cataracts." The two former are chiefly the colonists of Great Russia, and the two latter are formed of Malo-Russians; these wear no beards. The Zaporavians shave even their heads, and leave only a small piece of hair upon the crown, long enough to reach the nose, priding themselves upon every thing opposite to civilization, and to the common feelings of man. There was a time when no woman whatever was permitted to live in their society; and though they began lately to have more intercourse with the sex, still they retained strongly the marks of their former ferocity, and might be called, with great propriety, a gang of desperate outlaws, of robbers, and all sorts of public offenders, who were suffered to exist merely on account of the mischief they did to the enemy. They are now abolished, or sunk in the more civilized race of *Tchernomorskje Cozaks*.

The *Cozaks of the Ukraine*, and the *Don Cozaks*, are more advanced in civilization: the latter are seen sometimes with and sometimes without beards; but the former exist now merely in name, applied indiscriminately to all the inhabitants. There are also *Cozaks* formed into regular regiments, but of these we need not speak. Excepting the *Cozaks of the Ukraine*, and the *Zaporavians*, the Tartars and Calmuks are so interspersed with all other *Cozaks*, as to form the most conspicuous and prominent feature in them. The Calmuks seem to be the real descendants of the ancient Scythians, who dwelt on the borders of the Don (Tanais). Their features are broad and flat, with a pair of small, fiery, and piercing eyes. They are of small stature, very robust and active, and expert in the use of the bow and arrow, which they to this moment manage with astonishing dexterity. They are extremely skilful in taming wild horses, and are hired expressly for that purpose by the horse-contractors for the army, who have to choose these animals out of the wild studs bred chiefly by the land proprietors in Little Russia. A Calmuk rides into

The French soldiers feel this ; Buonaparte knows it too, and hence is his delay ; for Russia has taken a decisive stand against him, ever since she has refused to adopt his continental system, the darling child of his

the midst of these ungovernable creatures, and after a horse is singled out, which is to be taken, he throws a loop round his neck with such expertness, that, though the distance is considerable, as the ferocious animal will not suffer any one to approach near him, he seldom misses his aim. No sooner does the loop fall upon the horse's neck, than the Calmuk fastens, with amazing rapidity, the other end of the rope to the saddle he sits upon, in such a manner as to prevent all possibility of the horse's escaping. The unruly savage, thus surprised, struggles hard ; but the other horse, which the Calmuk rides, takes such a position by the direction of the rider, that the strength of the captive is exhausted, and he at length suffers himself to be led away, and is soon tamed. The Tartars, who are like Calmuks in their persons, are so intermixed with them as to be seen every where together. They eat horse-flesh, without any other preparation than the warming it under the saddle they ride upon. For this reason, they have in general two or three horses with them ; so that their provisions and the means of travelling proceed with them without any incumbrance. Both these nations, or tribes, are extremely numerous among the Don Cozaks ; and all together form those terrible warriors, whose aspect alone is sufficient to dismay an enemy not accustomed to such a sight.

The Cozaks are a valuable appendage to a regular army—they are its guides and satellites. It is their particular business to obtain intelligence from the enemy, which they do sometimes in the manner that a Calmuk takes a wild horse. As soon as a Cozak comes near enough to the object of his search, he throws a loop round his waist, fastens it to his saddle, and gallops off with the prisoner. All the outposts are formed chiefly of the Cozaks. They are constantly upon the look-out, and cut a conspicuous figure in skirmishes. The desire of gain, or the prospect of booty, is the main spring of their actions ; and a Cozak will seldom flinch from attacking two opponents, if he sees the probability of plunder. Their chief and most destructive weapon is a long lance, suspended upon a sling from the waist. When they are upon the attack, they let the lance down to a level with the stirrup horizontally, and after drawing it back with the right foot, to which the butt-end is fastened, they hurl it forward by the same foot, with such force and destructive aim, that it generally proves fatal to the enemy. They are, besides, armed

ambition, and the constant object of his dreams and visions. His character is too well known to suppose he would not have long ago marched his myrmidons against Russia, if he were not somewhat deterred by the hazard of the undertaking. The policy of Russia, on this occasion, seems replete with wisdom. While she is conscious of her own strength, she leaves to him the choice of war, and preserves for herself the incalculable

with a gun, a brace of pistols, and a sword something in the shape of a Turkish sabre. Though in their military appearance they preserve a certain degree of uniformity, still their dress, according to their fancy or means, makes the scene, whenever they march in a body, chequered and truly grotesque. Though they are irregular troops, still they have a certain order, a certain principle of rude discipline, with officers regularly appointed and obeyed. Their horses are so diminutive and apparently weak, that they seem more calculated to be carried than to carry; yet a Cozak, whether through prejudice or real conviction of their excellence, never will, never was known to part with his horse, nor exchange it for one ever so valuable, unless it is of the same breed. These horses are a race altogether anomalous; for whether fed luxuriously or sparingly, they maintain invariably the same niggardly appearance, and, like the Russian soldier, can exist almost upon nothing, which may, perhaps, account for the Cozak's attachment to them. Such is the thirst of the Cozaks for war, that when the number required is considerable, and they must cast lots who shall go, a serious quarrel is frequently the consequence of not being included in the number. He that returns home without booty, or has not been in action, is viewed by the women in a despicable light; so that their manners and mode of living all tend to make them warriors. They think it charity to kill their own comrades, when wounded past recovery, or likely to fall into the hands of a merciless enemy. They disperse in such small parties, that it is almost impossible to stop their incursions; and for this reason they are the most dangerous set of men that can enter a hostile country. Nor are they less so to a routed enemy; for, though they do not fight in the rear, they are the first in pursuit, and the last in desisting from it. They performed wonders in Italy, under the command of Suwarow; who knew, better than any other Russian general, how to employ them to the best advantage. Their officers have lately been receiving a regular pay, but the men are only paid during actual service.

table advantage of not appearing the aggressor, but of appealing, with a resistless voice, to her people in self-defence, and in revenge of that violation of sacred engagements which France, in attacking her, must necessarily commit. Whether Russia repents of her alliance or not, her strict observance of the treaty, and her steady adherence to her promises, while they show the value and constancy of her friendship, and cover with confusion those who doubted it; teach Europe to rely in future on her fidelity and perseverance, and may possibly raise against France powerful and determined enemies, even where they are least expected.

Let, therefore, France buckle on her armour; and in hostile array march against Russia. Let clouds portending disaster gather on; and the threatening tempest again spread wide its rapid wings, and pour its deluge upon the north: Russia undismayed awaits, nay, invites the blow. Next to Providence, she relies on the tried heroism of her people, and on the prayers of the suffering millions whose champion she now stands forth. Her struggles will be against universal tyranny, and her success will be the deliverance of all. Her safety will be the protection, and her independence the relief and security of the oppressed. Her cause is the cause of freedom; and every soil trod by the foot of a freeman, shall yield to it a tribute of sympathy. Her cause is the cause of humanity; and wherever man draws the breath of life, blessings shall be its enviable portion.

It is with Russia that the fallen nations can even hope to rise. The frowning idol, under whose iron foot numberless victims daily expire, may yet be hurled down

its ensanguined throne, and awe the world only by its tremendous ruins! The overgrown colossus, from whose fatal grasp Europe in vain strives to free herself; can only on its own element be crushed. The thunder of Albion has only struck at its shadow on the ocean; but the huge substance, in which all the ingredients of mischief are consolidated, still remains the same. Some of the distant sparks have only been intercepted; while the main furnace, wherein such horrid conflagrations are engendered, still remains unextinguished. Even in the regions of the now respiring Lusitania, only some of the monster's limbs have been shattered; the enormous body is still animated with life and vigour, is still fed by daily torrents of human blood, and endowed with the unnatural power of renovating and increasing its strength at pleasure. To assault its extremities is only to provoke its rage and fury; but to encounter it at once in all its dimensions, heart to heart, is the only chance of destroying it. This may yet be hoped from an invasion of Russia.

THE END

