

PROFESSOR SMYTH⁹
LECTURES ON MODERN
HISTORY

II.

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LECTURES (ON) (MODERN—
HISTORY

FROM
THE IRRUPTION OF THE NORTHERN NATIONS TO
THE CLOSE OF THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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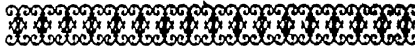
CHARLES WHITTINGHAM
CRISWICK



CONTENTS.

VOL. II.

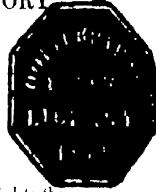
LECTURE XVIII.	Charles II.	1
XIX.	Charles II.	24
XX.	James II. Revolution	50
XXI.	East and West Indies	80
XXII.	William III.	103
XXIII.	Anne	130
XXIV.	Anne	154
XXV.	Anne—Union of England and Scotland	184
XXVI.	Sir Robert Walpole	211
XXVII.	Law—Mississippi Scheme. South Sea Bubble, &c.	242
XXVIII.	George II. Pelham. Rebellion of 1745, &c.	266
XXIX.	Prussia and Maria Theresa	295
XXX.	George III.	323
XXXI.	American War	349
XXXII.	American War	378
XXXIII.	American War	401
XXXIV.	American War	428
XXXV.	American War	448
XXXVI.	American War	470



LECTURES ON MODERN HISTORY

LECTURE XVIII.

CHARLES II.



TOWARDS the close of my last lecture I alluded to the opening scenes of the Restoration. I then reminded you of the remark that political reasoners have always made on occasions of this nature, that as mankind are ever in extremes, their resistance or rebellion no sooner ceases and changes into obedience, than their obedience becomes servility, and that such renewals of an ancient government form an epoch of all others the most critical and dangerous to the liberties of a people.

The scenes that took place every where in the metropolis and through the kingdom, during the first stages of the Restoration, certainly confirmed such general conclusions.

To a certain degree, so did even the proceedings of the restoration parliament. Still it must be allowed that more care was taken of the liberties of the subject by the House of Commons than the general principles of human nature would have led us to expect; and this, as I then observed, is an important merit that belongs to the Presbyterians, who constituted so large a portion of its members, particularly to Sir Matthew Hale, the judge so justly celebrated.

Hale is understood not to have been wanting to his country at this memorable period. He endeavoured to take proper securities for the constitution; to come to some understanding with the king on this subject before he was finally restored; but all proposals of this kind were overruled.

You will do well, therefore, to observe the events that followed in consequence of these securities not having been

taken. You will observe the conduct of the king through the whole of his reign, and finally the revolution that at length became necessary, in the short space of less than thirty years; and that, at this revolution, the patriotic party did only take such securities as Sir Matthew Hale would probably have proposed at the Restoration. You will then make your own inferences with respect to the propriety of all principles of general confidence, when interests so delicate, so important, are concerned, as those of civil liberty. Men of peaceable dispositions and refined minds are always ready to countenance these principles of general confidence in rulers and government; they are the very men, as I have just before observed, who should be the last; for they are the very men who of all others would stand most aghast, when things are at last driven to the dreadful alternative either of asserting the liberties of a people by force, or losing them for ever.

We now proceed to the history of the reign. The first parliament, the Convention or Restoration parliament, was soon dissolved, and a new and regular parliament was immediately summoned, and met in May, 1661.

This was the Pensionary parliament, as it was called, the parliament that sat afterwards for so many years.

Great exertions had been made by Clarendon in the elections, and it is understood that only about fifty-three of the Presbyterian interest were returned.

The settlement of the nation after the rebellion was the great work before them, and was in fact entrusted to Lord Clarendon. This settlement was principally to be directed to two main points. In the first place, the state of the property was to be adjusted. Great transmutations had taken place, amid the rapine and confiscations, forced sales and purchases, which had been made under the authority of parliament and the protectorate.

The adherents of the king were visibly those who had suffered during the commotions.

This subject is left in great perplexity by the account of Clarendon; but, comparing this account with other representations, to be found in a note in Harris's *Life of Charles II.*, vol. i., page 370, on the whole it may be concluded that

such property as had been torn from the royal party, and was still in any very visible and distinguishable shape, was after some delay and management seized upon by the state and restored to its original owners. The crown lands, for instance, the church lands, were taken from those who had purchased and held on parliamentary titles, and some of the estates of the great families were recovered; but on the whole the good sense and legal education of Clarendon, and the natural fears of the king lest his throne should be endangered, concurred in producing the acts of indemnity and oblivion. These were passed in the Restoration parliament, and immediately confirmed on the meeting of the new parliament. By these acts men seem to have been in general secured in the possession of their estates and property, as they then stood, with such exceptions as I have alluded to, and such an endless subject of contention was for ever put to rest.

The next great subject was one of even more difficulty, the final settlement of the church. The church government had become Presbyterian; was it to remain so? Was it to be modified? The circumstances were these. In England intolerance had run, as in other countries, its natural course; first, between the Papists and Protestants, as you will see in Foxe's Martyrs, and Dod's Church History. The Church of England under Elizabeth had waged war also with the Puritans, still more so under James I., and again, yet more violently, under the direction and councils of Charles I. and Laud.

As has you will see in Neal's History of the Puritans (you will easily make out from the prefaces what the chapters contain). In the great rebellion, however, it had happened that the Presbyterians had established themselves, and they persecuted the members of the Church of England in their turn. On this head Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy may be consulted. A few pages of the work, where the author gives a general computation of the numbers who suffered, and a few more where he describes the different cases, will be a sad and sufficient specimen of the subject.

Finally, under these mutual injuries the members of the Church of England, who had been so distressed and overcome, were now once more triumphant by the event of the Restoration.

Such were the circumstances, when the final settlement of the whole awaited the direction of Clarendon.

Now, that the establishment should be suffered to continue, as it then stood, to continue Presbyterian, was not to be expected.

The chancellor had succeeded to the controversial opinions of his unfortunate master, Charles I. A large description of laymen and divines concurred with him, all like himself, long and highly exasperated with the Presbyterians; and the king, in the mean time, was, in secret, chiefly anxious, that in the settlement some kindness and service might be rendered to the Roman Catholics.

Clarendon and the church could not assent to those theological tenets which they considered as false, nor could, in like manner, the Presbyterians to those which they equally considered as unauthorized by the Scriptures.

The only question, therefore, was, whether all mention of the points in dispute could not be omitted, and the communion be thus made sufficiently comprehensive to include both.

This measure was practicable, for the Presbyterians objected not to the lawfulness of an establishment; and their differences with the Church of England related chiefly, in doctrine, to the particular point of the apostolic origin of episcopacy; and in discipline, to some few others of ceremony; such as the wearing of the surplice, and the bowing at the name of Jesus, relics of popery, as they conceived; points which, whether in themselves important or not, became important to the inferior sect if the superior sect insisted upon them, and if they were not passed over in silence. The question therefore was, whether points of ceremony at least could not be passed over in silence by Clarendon and the Church of England.

No adjustment of the kind, however, took place. The misfortune is, than no men have ever yet been able to prevail upon themselves to adopt a system of comprehension, who had it in their power to do otherwise: they cannot bear to omit in silence, for the sake of peace, and on the principles of benevolence and policy, those points which they find disputed; they are rather urged the more, on that account to establish what they believe to be the doctrines of truth. The

love of truth, and impatience of opposition, in this manner become passions that inflame each other, and not only in those who impose the law, but in those who are to receive it, in the inferior as well as the superior sect. Vain, in the mean time, are the convocations, and conferences, and discussions of theologians; and therefore the result of the whole is, that questions of this nature have always been determined, very disgracefully to mankind, merely by the opinions of the strongest sect.

In this instance the Presbyterians, as they were the inferior sect, pressed hard for a comprehension; but their hopes had gradually clouded over after the restoration of the king. Conferences were appointed between their divines and those of the Church of England, which may be judged of, by those who pursue this subject, through Neal, Baxter, and other writers; but all to no purpose, and the act of uniformity was at length passed; the terms of which turned out to be such, that the Presbyterian ministers could not conscientiously conform. Two thousand of them, on the day appointed for their final decision, threw up their livings; a memorable sacrifice, no doubt, to principle, after all that can be said, and that has been said, not very liberally, to explain away its merit.

Lord Clarendon, in the history of his life, gives a full account of this great measure, and of all the acts of his very important administration. Most of this history of his life is extremely interesting, this part particularly. But along with this account in Clarendon, the work of Neal should be considered: part of the fourth chapter, and the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of the second part of the second volume, should be very attentively read. They are not long, and with Clarendon, will be sufficient. But Burnet may be afterwards referred to.

Since these passing observations were written, the Constitutional History of Mr. Hallam has appeared, where the whole subject is very ably and impartially presented to the reflection of the reader, and must by all means be read.

When the student has arrived at the termination of the subject, he ought once more to consider the short, but important declaration of the king from Breda; and again, his declaration

after he was restored, in October, 1660, when enough was promised for the reconcilment of the moderate of both parties; and nothing more could have been expected, if it had been faithfully executed.

It will scarcely be thought that Clarendon and the court were sufficiently observant of the pledges they had there given: all the real spirit and meaning of the king's promises were violated. Clarendon's excuse is not sufficient: it is, that these promises were expressly declared, subject to such limitations, exceptions, and modifications, as the parliament should afterwards make. But the acts of parliament must necessarily be considered, in this case, as those of the king and his ministers; and a splendid opportunity was lost, first, of making a benign and wise effort for avoiding penal statutes, and allaying religious differences, by a scheme of comprehension; secondly, of exemplifying the high honour and integrity of men in exalted stations, and the solidity, under whatever circumstances, of public engagements.

The reign of Charles may be divided into two intervals, by the disgrace of Clarendon.

The first part we have now slightly touched upon; and my hearers must be referred to Clarendon's own life, and the details of the regular historians, Burnet, and Hume, and Rapin, for proper information.

We must now turn to consider the second interval of the reign; that which begins after the disgrace of Clarendon.

Some time after the fall of this constitutional and upright, though not blameless minister, his merits were fully attested by the dreadful alterations that took place in the counsels of the sovereign.

The reader instantly perceives, from the first appearance of the celebrated ministry, called the Cabal, to the end of Charles's reign, that the most important struggle is still carrying on between the power of the crown and the rights of the people; and that the reign of Charles II. is but a sort of supplement to the great rebellion in the time of his father.

It is obvious, through the whole of this latter period of the reign, that the interests of Europe are as much abandoned by the court, as is all care of the liberties of England.

Abroad and at home, the reader's sympathies are excited;

the ambition of Louis XIV. is seen, determined on the destruction of the Dutch republic and of every power that can be opposed to its injustice; while Charles, far from assisting the Dutch, seems rather engaged in an equally unprincipled enterprise against the constitution of his own country, and against every thing that can be an impediment to his expensive profligacy.

The subject then of the second part of the reign, the era which succeeded the disgrace of Clarendon, is the corruption of Charles, his connexion with Louis XIV., his designs against the civil and religious liberties of this country, by means of Louis's assistance,—these are the points to which your attention must be directed; these designs were continued all through the reign, and I know not how better to attract your curiosity to this part of the reign, or better to allude to the connexion that existed between the two monarchs for the destruction of the liberties of Holland and of England, than by describing to you the books and documents which, when you come to examine the reign, will necessarily claim your perusal.

This, therefore, I shall proceed to do. In the first place, it must be observed, that not much can be comprehended of the secret and real history of the period that succeeded the administration of Clarendon from the debates in the houses; they must be read, but they serve rather to illustrate the representations of the historians, than to form themselves the materials of history.

The work of Burnet is to be perused; the reader will then perceive in what colours the scene appeared to a sensible, upright, and very active observer, living at the time. An account of this kind is always quoted by subsequent historians, and has an interest and importance which the reader will soon feel as he proceeds, and which cannot be well described.

After considering the pages of Burnet, I would ask the student, whether his general conclusion is not this, that the whole of this part of the reign of Charles was a conflict between the crown and people, originating in the profligacy of the king; which, requiring larger supplies of money than the commons could or ought to grant, urged him on to the

most desperate attempts and practices against the constitution, rather than deny himself the gratification of his vices, and that it is even very probable, upon the face of Burnet's account, from the nature of a licentious character like this, that he descended to the meanness and criminality of receiving money from Louis, under some disguise or other; sometimes that he might consent to assist, and sometimes that he might not impede that monarch's unprincipled enterprises on the continent. This, it appears to me, would be the general conclusion, deducible from the acknowledged facts of the times, though not the slightest assistance could be obtained from any private memorials, or confidential documents whatever; and this remark I may have occasion to recall to your remembrance hereafter.

After Burnet we may turn to Hume, and read him in conjunction with the debates in the houses. Nothing can be more attractive, nothing can more strongly exemplify the charms and the merits of his seductive pages, than his Life of Charles II. Ready, however, as every reader will naturally be to give his confidence to so masterly a writer, he cannot but perceive that the character of Charles II., as given by the historian, reflects not to his mind the true image of the original; but resembles rather one of those portraits which we so often see presented to us by the skill of a superior artist, where every grace and beauty, that can consist with the likeness, is transferred to the canvass, while every the most inherent deformity or defect is withdrawn or disguised.

It had not escaped the most ordinary politicians in the times of Charles, that there must have been some secret alliance between the king and Louis. It was indeed known as a fact to some of the popular leaders; proofs of the corruption of Charles were at last produced, even in the House of Commons, and became the apparent cause of Danby's impeachment. All the political writers of this period evidently suppose, that not only the House of Commons was bribed by the king, but the court itself by France. In the fourth page of the eighth volume of Hume, there is a remarkable passage, in which he says, that, on the whole, we are obliged to acknowledge (though there remains no direct evidence of it), that

formal plan was laid for changing the religion and subverting the constitution of England, and that the king and the ministry (the cabal) were in reality conspirators against the people.

But after his sagacity and good sense had dragged him into this conclusion, he made inquiries in France during his residence there, and saw with his own eyes that direct evidence which he had not supposed in existence. This evidence was found in some MS. volumes kept in the Scotch college at Paris, and which Mr. Hume was permitted to peruse. These MS. volumes were neither more nor less than a journal written by James II. in his own hand, of his own life, during the most critical period of our history.

From such a treasure as this, it is a matter to be lamented, and indeed deserving of extreme surprise, that such an historian as Hume did no more than produce a single extract. This extract was important, but it might surely have been conceived, that such MSS. would have opened a boundless field of observation to one who was so capable of remarking on human character and political events. But on some account or other, not explained (and which I think cannot be explained favourably to Hume), he contented himself with adding to his history a single note, and nothing more.

There is yet again in Mr. Hume's History a second note on this reign of Charles (page 206), which deserves our attention; this second note is drawn from another source, not from the papers or Life of James II. but the papers of Barillon, who was the French ambassador at the time.

Charles, towards the close of his reign, dismissed his parliament (says Mr. Hume in his text), and determined to govern by prerogative alone; whether any money (he continues) was now remitted to England, we do not certainly know, but we may fairly presume that the king's necessities were, in some degree relieved by France. And then follows a note, the note I now allude to, in which he gives an extract from one of the letters of Barillon, containing an account of a regular agreement verbally entered into, between Charles and Louis, where good services are promised by the one and money by the other, for the purpose, it is said, of putting his Britannic majesty out of the reach of all constraint, from his

parliament, which could interfere with his new engagements with Louis.

This curious treaty was communicated to Mr. Hume while in France, and by him to the public; but Mr. Hume gives no account of any farther attempt to become acquainted with these dispatches of the French ambassador, which it was however evident would unveil, wherever they could be inspected, the most curious scenes of intrigue and corruption. Hume himself thought them important, as appears by one of his letters to Robertson.

After the perusal of Mr. Hume, we may turn to the Life of Charles II. by Harris. The notes are full of information and of particulars which the reader may not have an opportunity of selecting from their original sources, nor indeed of readily finding in any other manner.

The connexion of Charles with France, and the dishonourable nature of it, was sufficiently clear to this diligent investigator from the common authorities; but in his note (page 228, vol. ii.), he extracts a passage "from a letter written to him by a friend, who had that morning heard read a letter from a gentleman, who, while in France, had been permitted to see the memoirs of King James;" his account is the same as Hume's. And now it is observable enough, that there is a passage in Voltaire's History of Louis XIV., which Harris quotes, and which tells the reader in a few simple words every thing which he can desire to know on this subject, and the sum and substance of every thing that there is to be known. "Louis," says Voltaire, writing this long before the publication of Dalrymple's History, which I shall hereafter mention, "designed the conquest of the Low Countries, which he intended to commence with that of Holland; but England was to be detached Louis did not find it difficult to engage Charles II. in his designs; his passion was to enjoy his pleasures. Louis, who to have money needed only to speak, promised a great sum to Charles, who could never get any without the sense of his parliament. The secret treaty concluded between the two kings was" "Charles signed every thing Louis desired," &c. &c.; and then the treaty is given, with the addition of some material circumstances. Such is the important information given by Voltaire.

But Voltaire is a writer who, on account of his universality, his liveliness, and his known misrepresentations on sacred subjects, is never believed on any other, further than he is seen; or rather, as he never intimates, which he ought always to have done, his authorities, every one believes as much of his historical accounts, or as little, as he thinks proper.

The corruption therefore of Charles, and his conspiracy against his people, was an historical fact very fairly made out, when Mr. Macpherson repaired to Paris; an author not a little celebrated in the literary world (the author or editor of Ossian), one who could find MSS. or make them, produce or withhold them, and in short, as it was understood, proceed with equal rapidity and success with them or without them. Two quarto volumes could not fail to be the consequence of this journey; the memoirs of King James could not possibly escape him; and the readers of history were at last gratified with extracts from this interesting performance, and with a regular work, entitled "Original Papers, containing the Secret History of Great Britain," &c. &c.

But when we come to open the volumes of Macpherson, we shall, in the first place, be somewhat dissatisfied with the introduction: Macpherson tells his story, but not with simplicity; while simplicity, detail, minuteness, are on occasions like this, not only the best test in point of literary composition, but indispensably necessary; for what the reader ought to know, and all that he desires to know, is the exact authority on which he is left to depend. When, in the next place, the papers themselves are consulted, they seem not a journal written by the king himself in the first person, but a narrative where he appears in the third; (this however might have been the king's mode of writing, and is not decisive): but it is soon observable that the Duchess of Cleveland is mentioned by that name, when the period of which the writer speaks is nine years and a half before the title was conferred upon her; so that the journal, or narrative, evidently was not written while the events it alludes to were taking place, but long after; it therefore comes not warm from the heart, has nothing in it of that unpremeditated statement, exhibits none of those prompt and genuine impressions of the moment,

which are the great delight and study of the philosopher and historian, whenever they can be surveyed, and is therefore at all events not as valuable as might have been expected.

In the extracts furnished by Mr. Macpherson, little comment can be found on what are known to be the most critical points of the history of the times; and on the whole, as far as the reign of Charles is concerned, the reader is extremely disappointed in the matter and in the manner, in the author and in the editor of this journal or narrative, as exhibited by Macpherson.

But these memoirs of King James were destined to meet with one inquirer more. The late Mr. Fox having formed a serious design of writing a more faithful account than he conceived had as yet been given of the great era in our history—the Revolution in 1688, repaired, as Mr. Macpherson had done, to Paris; and the journal of King James was, of course, one of the objects which occupied his attention. The history of his researches is contained in Lord Holland's Preface to Mr. Fox's posthumous work. From this it appears that there was deposited in the Scotch college, not only an original journal by King James, but a narrative compiled from it, either by the younger Dryden, or one of the superiors of the society; and that it is the narrative from which extracts have been taken by Macpherson, not the journal. Mr. Fox declared, in a private letter to Mr. Laing, that he had made out that Macpherson never saw the journal. And, on turning to Macpherson's introduction, the student will find that, though this skilful artist leads his reader to suppose that he saw this journal and copied it, still that he no where exactly says that he ever did see it; and his not having done so, and his wishing to be thought to have done so, has given rise to that want of simplicity in his statement which we have already noticed, and of which the necessity in all such prefaces is thus rendered more than ever apparent.

The fate of the original journal is curious: it was burnt from terror under the horrors of the French revolution, when any thing connected with royalty, it was supposed, would have been fatal to the possessor. The narrative is still safe, and is in the possession of Dr. Cameron of Edinburgh.

Since I wrote the last paragraph, another copy of the nar-

rative has been purchased in Italy. It was published by the direction of the present king, when he was regent: and his merits were very great in first procuring these papers, and in suffering them afterwards to be exhibited to the curiosity of the public. The *Life of James II.* by Dr. James Stanier Clarke, is the title of the book. An article in the *Edinburgh Review* will give you all proper information.

But another publication remains yet to be mentioned, which deservedly excited the attention of the public on its first appearance, and which must always be examined with great care by every inquirer into the constitutional history of England—the second volume of the *Memoirs of Dalrymple*. You may remember that I have already mentioned a note in Mr. Hume's history, founded on Barillon's Dispatches.

This note showed clearly the importance of these Dispatches of the French ambassador. Sir John Dalrymple obtained permission from the French government to examine these Dispatches, and the second volume contains the result of his researches.

I shall endeavour to give you some general notion of the nature of these original materials, furnished by Macpherson in the first place; by these Stuart papers in the second; and by Sir John Dalrymple in the third.

I have already mentioned why the papers of Macpherson neither are nor could be so interesting as might have been expected, since it is not the king's own journal that the extracts are drawn from, but the narrative which was itself made out of the journal.

Yet it is impossible that some curious particulars should not find their way even into a document like this. We see, for instance, Clarendon censured by James for not having made the crown more independent of the commons in point of revenue; for not repealing the destructive laws of the long parliament, &c. &c.

Opposition to the court is always considered by James, then Duke of York, as, of course, faction and republicanism. Page 50, an account of the celebrated treaty with France, mentioned by Hume, is to be found; it is mentioned more than once with some important particulars,—54. 80. The ministers, it is said, contrived a marriage between the Prince of Orange

and the Princess Mary, to pacify the parliament, James against it. And on the most important struggle of the reign, the bill of exclusion, there are these words—(111): “Algeron Sidney, and the ablest of the republican party, said that if a bill of limitations was once got, they should from that moment think themselves secure of a republic;” and these words are subjoined, “So the king judged.”

Now the answer which the king always made to the popular leaders, when they pressed for a bill to exclude the Duke of York from the throne, was this—“That he would not exclude him, but would grant any limitations that could be thought necessary.”

It is clear, therefore, from this extract, that the king was not sincere when he offered limitations; for he could have offered nothing sincerely which he judged would lead to a republic.

(117.) “The House of Commons,” says the duke, “resolved at some of their cabals, to begin with a bill of exclusion; either *that*, or a bill of limitations, would be the destruction of the monarchy. It would serve likewise for a precedent to meddle with the succession on all occasions, and make monarchy elective.”

In page 124, is mentioned the curious agreement between Louis and Charles, quoted from Barillon by Hume. “The king’s necessities,” says the MS. “forced him to a private treaty with France. Fifty thousand pounds a quarter were the terms,” &c. &c.

There is a curious description of Shaftesbury, and of the king’s death, and of his conformity to the Roman Catholic religion: and, on the whole, the duke appears as bigoted in his religion, and as arbitrary in his political opinions, as might have been expected.

I now allude, secondly, to the Stuart Papers. Macpherson’s work is now not a little superseded by these Stuart Papers, that have been published—the Life of James II. by J. S. Clarke. The same conclusions, however, may be drawn from the whole, and from every part of these Stuart Papers. Indeed, this is the most important point of view in which they can be placed; they will in every other respect disappoint you. They are a life of James, and yet there is little or

nothing said of the civil war, or of the Restoration, or of any other particulars, to which your curiosity would naturally be directed. Much of the work is occupied with that part of the duke's life that was passed on the continent. But these papers are still perfectly valuable, because they every where confirm the reasonings, and justify the opinions that have been formed by historians and statesmen, on the critical topics of these times, the corruption of Charles, the bigoted and arbitrary nature of James, and the necessity of the Revolution of 1688.

Wise and good men have not been at all deceived, as it is now evident from these papers. They vary, however, much in their importance in different places; and if you will only look well at the margin, and consider the subject matter of the page before you, you will easily separate what is trifling from what is instructive, and in this manner find it an easy and even short task, to read these two quarto volumes, large as they may appear.

And now, it must be observed, that it is a point of some literary curiosity at least, to determine, what were the proceedings of Macpherson, when he went to the Scotch college. In the work he has given to the public, whole paragraphs appear, verbatim, as they now appear in these Stuart Papers. In general, the extracts given by Macpherson are abridged from the Stuart Papers.

You may easily compare the corresponding passages in the two works.

But there are passages in Macpherson that I do not see in these Stuart Papers; they are taken from Carte and others. Whence they were originally derived by Carte and others, is not very clear. Carte was a Jacobite, left his papers to the Bodleian library at Oxford, and Macpherson availed himself of them. These matters are, however, of less importance, now that we have got in the Stuart Papers an authentic document, containing always the sentiments and views either of James himself, or of those who were in his court and in his confidence, and who had, therefore, the same opinions with himself.

But the character of Macpherson seems at an end. He endeavoured to deceive the public, and to make them believe, that the extracts he gave were from the king's *own* journal;

this they were not. He never saw the journal, as I have before mentioned. He made extracts from the Stuart Papers, and additions from those of Carte.

I will now give you some general specimen of the information which you may derive from the work of Dalrymple. I will endeavour to exhibit to you their references to a few of the more striking particulars of the reign. It appears from these papers, that Charles made a treaty with the French king, to which only the Roman Catholic part of the cabal was privy, Lord Arlington and Lord Clifford, not Shaftesbury, Buckingham, and Lauderdale. Charles was to get £200,000 for declaring himself a Roman Catholic, was to receive £800,000 per annum during the Dutch war, and was to be assisted with troops if his subjects rebelled, which was called "being engaged in domestic wars;" but as Louis only meant to seize upon the Low Countries, and destroy Holland, and cared not for Charles or his concerns, any further than they could be made subservient to his own; it was next the effort of the French ministry, to persuade Charles to begin with a war in Holland, and to postpone his domestic plans till the successful termination of the enterprise on the continent. This duplicity the Duke of York saw through, and remonstrated, but in vain. The Duchess of Orleans was sent over by Louis with a French mistress, and it was soon agreed by Charles, that the treaty should be executed in the order that the French monarch wished; that is, that Holland should be destroyed in the first place.

A second treaty was then concluded, to which the Protestant part of the cabal was made privy, though they had not been to the first treaty. The second was to the same purport as the first, but with one important omission—the king's intentions with respect to the Roman Catholic religion. This last treaty, whenever alluded to by the king and the duke in their communications with each other, went under the name of the sham treaty; and Buckingham and Shaftesbury, who thought themselves, no doubt, the first men of talents at the time, were, on this occasion, as they knew nothing of the first treaty, the dupes of their sovereign.

The reasonings on which the king and the French ambassador proceeded, are curious.

“Tell your people,” says Barillon (68), “that you will get their trade from the Dutch,” who were represented as insatiably greedy; “the merchants will be satisfied with this commercial reason; your brave officers and soldiers will be occupied with the war in Holland; the secretaries will be in good humour with you, for the toleration you are to grant them; your council are already committed, they will do their duty to you; they will keep those of the parliament to it with whom they have credit; you may then, in the midst of a successful war with Holland, declare yourself a Catholic, there will be no grounds to fear,” &c. &c. But in the midst of all these plots and projects, the Prince of Orange came over from Holland, probably to make out what was the meaning of the late visit from the Duchess of Orleans, the journeys of Buckingham to Paris, &c. &c.

The Prince of Orange, afterwards William III., was therefore now to be practised upon: but the French ambassador writes to Louis, “that Charles had found him such a passionate Dutchman and Protestant, that nothing could be made of him.”

And now begins a pleasant consultation, whether the parliament should be assembled. “No,” says the Duke of Buckingham; “no,” says the Duke of York; “do not call them till we are successful in Holland, and till we can obtain by force what we cannot by mildness.” (80).

We have next notifications from the French ambassador to Louis, of the manner in which he had disposed of what he calls “the marks of the king’s esteem and distinction;” i. e. the French bribes to Charles’s ministers. And in this manner, it seems, were to be intrigued away, for the gratification of the profligacy of one monarch, and the ambition of another, the liberties of England, and the existence of the republic of Holland.

You will now, I conceive, be fully enabled to comprehend the general tenor of these original documents, and their connexions with the history of the reign.

The transactions of the reign (as I have already observed) I cannot further allude to; and such extracts as I have given, and such references as I have made to different books and papers, must be considered, as the only allusions I can make

to the particulars of the reign after the disgrace of Clarendon, and before Lord Shaftesbury and the exclusionists claim our attention.

But there is one transaction so remarkable, that I may select it from the rest, and allude to it more distinctly; this is the king's declaration on ecclesiastical affairs—the declaration that brought the struggle between Charles II. and the virtuous part of the parliament and nation to a sort of crisis.

After alluding to this singular affair, and once more to a few passages in Barillon's dispatches, I shall conclude.

It is probable that Charles cared as little for what Louis called his glory, as Louis did for Charles's authority over his subjects. But Charles hated the Dutch, and he hated his parliaments, as he did every thing that was an impediment to his own vicious indulgences; so he was sincerely desirous to be arbitrary, that he might have money without either the trouble of asking for it, or the inconvenience of accounting for it.

Depending, therefore, on the assistance of Louis and his own ministry, he hesitated not to undertake the establishment of a regular system of arbitrary power; and he began by publishing a declaration of indulgence to nonconformists. It is now very important to observe the conduct of the House of Commons on this occasion. We cannot but be taught how necessary it is for that house, and for all Englishmen, to be scrupulously faithful to the great principles of the constitution, whenever they appear to be in the least disturbed.

The king's declaration only proposed to do, what every humane and intelligent man would wish to have done—to extend relief to nonconformists, to dispense occasionally with the penal statutes, that operated so severely against them.

The king, however, made use of the following expressions in his declaration of indulgence:—"that he had a supreme power in ecclesiastical matters," and "that he suspended the penal laws, in matters ecclesiastical, against whatever sect of nonconformists;" and in his speech to the parliament, "that he should take it very ill to receive contradiction in what he had done, and that to deal plainly with them, he was resolved to stick to his declaration."

Such were the words of the king. "But," said a member of the House of Commons, "if the king can dispense with all *penal* laws, he may dispense with *all* laws." And finally, the parliament, in an address to the king, represented to his majesty, in short, "that penal statutes in matters ecclesiastical, could not be suspended but by act of parliament."

The king and the House of Commons were therefore at issue. The king in his answer declared, "that he was troubled to find his power was questioned: that this had not been done in the reigns of his ancestors; that he did not pretend to the right of suspending any laws, whenever the properties, rights, or liberties, of any of his subjects were concerned; but to take off the penalties on the Dissenters; nor did he preclude the advice of his parliament."

These softening expressions were sufficient to satisfy many of the members of the house, but the major and sounder part were not so to be appeased, and the house returned to the charge. They represented to his majesty, "that his answer was not sufficient to clear their apprehensions; that his majesty had claimed a power which, if admitted, would alter the legislative power which had always been acknowledged to reside in his majesty and the two houses of parliament."

The parties were therefore still at issue. Besides his usual guards, the king had an army encamped at Blackheath, under the command of Marshal Schomberg; and the French king, it may be remembered, had stipulated to afford assistance if force became requisite.

Here then was a crisis truly awful; and as the connexion between the French court and Charles could not but have been observed (for the arms of England were visibly combined in the most unnatural manner with those of France, against the independence of Holland), this crisis must have been sufficiently understood by all the intelligent and virtuous part of the community; i. e. by all those who did not suffer themselves wilfully to be blinded by some base interest of their own, or some stupid principle of general confidence.

In this situation the king applied to the House of Lords, and the lords did not, as Hume and other writers represent, take the part of the commons against the king, for they received his majesty's communication very favourably; and

the king replied to their address in the following manner :—
“My lords, I take this address of yours very kindly, and I will always be affectionate to you, and I expect that you will stand by me, as I will always by you.”

But notwithstanding this disgraceful alliance, offensive and defensive, it appears that thirty peers (and this shows the importance of virtuous minorities) had protested against the courtly address of the house ; and though Lord Clifford, one of the cabal, had made a furious speech against the commons, and though Lord Shaftesbury had done every thing for the court that they could wish, as far as the Dutch war was concerned (having made a speech in his character of chancellor, with which he was reproached to his last hour), still, when the whole cause in which he had so seriously engaged, came to the last critical turn, this very Shaftesbury, to the astonishment of the whole house, and of the Duke of York and king, who were present, rose up in his place and declared, “that he differed toto cœlo from his colleague ; that he submitted his reason to the House of Commons, so loyal and affectionate,” &c. &c.

And the lords, on their meeting the next day, and not before, thought proper to do no more than “thank the king for referring those points to a parliamentary way by bill, that being a good and natural cause of satisfaction therein.”

In the result, the king very wisely broke the seals of the declaration, appeased the House of Commons, and gave way.

It is a curious point in history to determine, what could induce Shaftesbury to make this most fortunate, but most unexpected, turn.

Hume does not appear to have considered the conduct of this powerful man, on this great occasion, with sufficient attention. In like manner, it is not readily ascertained why Charles did not persevere. It may, however, be made out from Dalrymple, and other sources, that Arlington betrayed the secret of the first treaty to Shaftesbury ; and that Shaftesbury must thus have seen that he had been deceived by the king.

It appears, too, that the commons had severely questioned (which again shows the importance of constitutional jealousy) Shaftesbury’s illegal proceedings, as chancellor, with respect

to the writs of election, and that this had alarmed him. Finally, there is exhibited in Dalrymple proof of a very remarkable interference of France, and a letter from the ambassador to Louis, to inform him that he had prevailed with Charles to recall his declaration of indulgence.

“The whole people,” says the French ambassador’s letter to his court, “were alarmed with the expectations of a civil war; bonfires were made on the reconciliation of the king and parliament. The king’s speech,” he continues, “was followed with cries of acclamation and joy from the whole parliament.”

But it was not by such honest effusions, such affecting indications of the wish of the people, if possible, to be on terms of kindness with their sovereign, that the conduct of this detestable monarch was to be influenced; and we see through the remainder of Dalrymple’s *Memoirs* the same base and unprincipled conspiracy carried on against the liberties of mankind, and the same senseless disregard, both in Charles and the renowned Louis, of every thing that could form the proper glory and honour of their reigns.

It is not, however, without the most heartfelt triumph that we observe, in this instance at least, the abominable machinations of the king and his ministers and the French court, dissipated and destroyed by the steady integrity and constitutional proceedings of an English House of Commons; and that we see also the Dutch republic, though astonished, borne down, and evidently now at the last gasp, rescued at length from slavery and annihilation by the generous despair of its citizens, and the heroic patriotism of the Prince of Orange.

This most slight and imperfect sketch of a particular though most important transaction, may serve to give some general intimation of what may be expected from a study of the reign of Charles; and it may give you also some notion of the assistance that may be derived from these papers.

But if any thing can attach us more to the constitution of our country, and explain to us more particularly the value of the rights, and the importance of the duties of the House of Commons, it is this reign, and it is these memoirs of Dalrymple. The king was ready, if necessary, to destroy the

constitution rather than be thwarted; the presumptive heir of the crown had no dearer wish; the people were prepared for subjection by the horrors which they had lately seen result from resistance to the crown; no impediment was opposed but the parliament, or rather the House of Commons; the house itself was suffered to continue for eighteen years; a great portion of its members was practised upon; a large number of them notoriously bribed; still the king neither did, nor could succeed in his nefarious enterprises; and the patriotic leaders never entirely lost the cause of the constitution till, on the dissolution of parliament and on their being left without the means of constitutional resistance, they turned their thoughts to open insurrection—to open insurrection, though the people had taken part against them, and clearly ranged themselves on the side of the sovereign.

I shall conclude this lecture with observing, that through the whole of these memoirs, it is quite gratifying to observe the manner in which the French ambassador, and the English negotiators, speak and reason about the parliament. When that enemy is once secured, all is supposed to be safe.

In addition to the passages already mentioned, expressions of this kind occur: "I found (80) the Duke of York," says Barillon, "of the same sentiments with Buckingham, that we should be very cautious of assembling it" (parliament).

(99.) "The king has agreed to prorogue his parliament in consideration of five hundred thousand crowns; and if he convenes it in November, to dissolve it, in case it should refuse to give him money, in consideration for which he is to have one hundred thousand pounds per annum from France."

All this, it seems, was to enable France to carry on the war undisturbed by the English parliament.

(105.) "The king of England convened the Duke of York, Lauderdale, and the high treasurer Danby, to confer with them about the paper which your Majesty knows of. In fine, the treasurer has represented to Lauderdale the risk they shall run of losing their heads if they alone were to deliberate upon the treaty, and sign it. Sire, you will see by all this, that the King of England is abandoned by all his ministers, even the most confidential. The treasurer fears the parliament much more than his master. It is difficult to

conceive that a king should be so abandoned by his subjects, that parliaments are to be feared; it is a kind of miracle to see a king, without arms and money, resist them so long."

(112.) "The English king insists on eight hundred thousand crowns, in consideration of which he offers to prorogue the parliament."

(235.) "The King of England tells me that it is time your Majesty should determine to assist him with a sum of money, that he might not receive the law from his subjects. I took this occasion to beg his Majesty to explain to me his intentions with regard to the sittings of parliament," &c. &c.

The king, it seems, answered, that he had dissolved the last parliament, and could put off the meeting a new one till he could judge of its dispositions to him; but that he could not entirely dispense with them, because he could not hope that the French king would furnish all the sums necessary to support him long without their assistance. "I told him," says Barillon, "that the meetings of parliament always appeared to me very dangerous," &c. &c.

In another place Barillon observes, "What I write to your Majesty will appear no doubt very extraordinary, but England has no resemblance to other countries."

Happ was it for England that this was the case; and long may unprincipled men like these find every thing to surprise them in its virtuous people, and in its free constitution!



LECTURE XIX.

CHARLES II.

IN my last lecture, after calling your attention to the earlier part of the reign of Charles II., while the measures of his government were directed by Clarendon, I endeavoured to give you some general notion of the second part of the same reign, and more particularly of the information that might be collected respecting it, from different publications, and above all, from the papers of Dalrymple.

This second part of his reign is marked by the constitutional struggle between Charles and the patriotic party, and may itself be divided into two parts.

During this first part of the struggle, that to which I have already referred, not only were the liberties of this country in a state of the most extreme peril, but in consequence of the ambition of Louis XIV., and his connexion with Charles, the liberties also of Holland, and the interests of all Europe.

I must now allude to what I consider as the remaining part of this contest between Charles and the friends of civil freedom, when the patriotic leaders had to contend, not only with the king, but also with the Duke of York, and when, on account of the arbitrary nature of the religion of the latter, they were at last driven to the resolution of endeavouring to exclude him from the throne.

During the first period of their contest with the crown, the patriotic leaders must be considered as successful. The king, we may remember, broke the seals of his declaration and gave way.

But during this second period, the event was otherwise; the king could neither be persuaded nor intimidated into any compliance with the wishes of his opponents; and the struggle

ended at length in the execution of some of their leaders, and in the ruin of all.

Whatever difference of opinion there may be respecting their intentions and conduct during this latter period (during their struggle with the king on the subject of the exclusion of the Duke of York from the throne), there can be none respecting the merit of their exertions during the former period. Had the king then succeeded, the liberties of England might have perished.

On the whole, the contest by which the reign of Charles II. is distinguished, can be considered as inferior in interest and importance only to that which immediately preceded it, during the era of the great rebellion; and such was the necessity of resistance to the son, as well as to the father, that the same Englishmen who have loved and revered the memory of Hampden, have never ceased to venerate the virtue, and respect the patriotism of Sidney and Lord Russell.

The regular historians will give you the detail of the transactions by which this period is rendered so memorable. But you must by all means continue your study of the memoirs of Dalrymple, which contain very curious information, and will give you very important hints respecting the characters and views both of the Duke of York, the king, and the popular leaders. I had originally made large extracts to exemplify what I say, but I omit them, and depend on your consulting such original documents, as I have mentioned, yourselves.

As far as principle is concerned, it is the duke, not Charles who appears to be the man of principle; it is he who is a bigot to his opinions, religious and political; to popery and arbitrary power. These, with Charles, were rather the instruments than the objects of his designs; but the duke really had opinions that were dear to him; and he thoroughly and from his heart did detest and abjure all men, principles, and parties that presumed to interfere with the powers that be, either in church or state.

When the duke speaks of the proceedings of parliament (174), his expressions are, "His Majesty was forced to prorogue them; I fear they will be very disorderly. They will leave the king nothing but the empty name of king; no more."

He and the king had now to meet the due punishment of their conduct, the just consequences of their conspiracies against the laws and constitution of their country; and their perplexities and anxieties can be no proper subject of the slightest sympathy or compassion.

But questions like those comprehended in the Exclusion Bill (whether the regular and presumptive heir shall or shall not ascend the throne), must always be considered as the greatest calamities that can befall a nation; and their very agitation is a complete proof of criminality having existed somewhere, either in those who have administered the government, or in those who are opposed to them, and generally in the former.

Nothing can be more easy, and nothing can be more true, than to say, that all government being intended for the good of the whole, the community have a right to deviate from the line of succession when the presumptive heir is a just subject of their apprehension. But what, in the mean time, are to be the sentiments of the existing government and of that presumptive heir? What sort of acquiescence or degree of patriotism is to be expected from them? It is in vain to suppose that questions of this tremendous nature can be decided by the mere reasonableness of the case, or either settled or discussed without the imminent hazard of the peace and prosperity of the country.

The popular leaders contended for the exercise of this great right of society, for entire exclusion; the king proposed the most reasonable limitations; the question was, therefore, rendered as fit a subject for debate as it could possibly become; and as there were men of the greatest ability in the houses, no proceedings in parliament can be more interesting than these must always be to every Englishman who has reflected upon the critical nature of our own mixed and of all mixed governments.

On whatever side the question could be viewed, the difficulties were very great. The popular part of the constitution was almost as much asserted by the limitations as by the exclusion, since the right of the community to interfere and control the executive power was acknowledged in either case. In argument, however, the exclusionists had the advantage

over those who were contented with limitations, because their measure was evidently in practice the only complete remedy for the evil supposed, and the only remedy which could provide at the same time (a most material consideration) for the safety of those who were to administer it.

Still it was, on the whole, impossible that the exclusion could be carried while the king proposed limitations.

The character of the king led the exclusionists to suppose that, if they remained firm, he would give way. This was their great political mistake. For once in his life, as the point of duty was at least dubious, he was steady to his supposed principle; he kept his word. Had the exclusionists turned short, and accepted his limitations, he had been indeed embarrassed.

It is now clear, from Dalrymple and Macpherson, that not only the Duke of York reprobated the scheme of limitations, but that the king himself was not sincere in his offers; and this must indeed have been suspected by the popular leaders. But the truth is, that their cause (as it could not be carried without the *full* co-operation of the public) was from the first not a little hopeless. The nation had but just escaped from all the sufferings of civil war, from anarchy, usurpation, and military despotism; it is naturally, from the general sobriety of its habits both of speculation and conduct, dutiful and loyal; is always very properly attached to the hereditary nature of the monarchy; nor is it ever the natural turn of men, more especially of bodies of men, or of a whole nation to provide against future evils by extraordinary expedients, in themselves a sort of evil, in themselves exposed to objection, and in every respect difficult and disagreeable. The conduct, therefore, to be pursued by the king was plain, and the result much what might have been expected. He kept at issue with his parliaments, making to them reasonable though not sincere offers, and addressing them with temper and dignity; till at last the public, as will always be the case when there is a proper exercise of skill and prudence on the part of the sovereign, sided with him, and left the constitution (as usual) to its fate, and the patriots to their fortunes.

This is a very curious part of our history, and should be attentively considered. The king, having dissolved two par-

liaments rapidly, issued a declaration, which was made public and read in the churches. It contained the defence of his conduct, and his appeal to the people. It is given only in substance by the historians; in Kennet, however, the words of it appear. It is very improperly omitted by Cobbett. All the material parts are given, in the words of it, by the historian Ralph.

A very full and spirited reply was drawn up by the leaders of the House of Commons, chiefly by Sir William Jones, under whose name it was published, and who was one of the most distinguished lawyers and speakers of the time. The substance of this reply is in Ralph, but the whole of it is in the appendix of Cobbett. It is long, and some parts of it may be read more slightly than others; but it is in general highly deserving of attention, not only because it is necessary to the explanation of the great constitutional questions then before the public, but because it shows that the notions of intelligent men, with regard to the constitution itself, were very fully adjusted before the Revolution in 1688, and were, at that great epoch, rather confirmed than altered or improved.

But the reasonings of Sir William Jones were of no effect. "The king," says the historian Ralph, "had the advantage of the dispute (page 589). His condescending to appeal to his people softened their hearts, if it did not convince their understandings; he appeared to be an object of compassion; he appeared to have been all this while on the defensive. The offers he had made were thought more weighty than his adversaries' objections; and, in short, he was no sooner pitied than he was believed; and, above all, the artful turn given in his declaration to the commons' vote in favour of the nonconformists, drew in all the clergy and their followers to his side in a body. The cry of 'Church and king' was again renewed, was echoed from one end of the kingdom to the other; and, as if it were a charm to debase the spirit and cloud the understanding, produced," says the historian, "such a train of detestable flatteries to the throne, mingled with so many flagrant proofs of a sordid disposition to enter into a voluntary vassalage, as might very easily make an Englishman blush for his country while he read them, and

would have made a Roman or a Spartan exclaim, 'The gods created these barbarians to be slaves.' "

The address of our own university on this occasion may be seen in Ralph, and the anathemas of the sister university, two years afterwards, in Rapin or Kennet. At Cambridge they were tolerably satisfied, when they had laid down, with due earnestness, first, the merits of the king (i. e. of Charles II.), and then the doctrine of passive obedience. But at Oxford the tenets of loyalty were announced in a far more effectual manner; "a judgment and decree is passed against certain pernicious books and damnable doctrines, destructive to the sacred persons of princes, their state and government, and to all human society;" certain propositions are produced; some few of the twenty-seven, that are brought forward, no doubt, to be reprobated, and some few despised, but many of them the common political maxims of the Whigs; the compact, &c.; but all and every one of them were now pronounced to be false, seditious, impious, and most of them also heretical, blasphemous, &c. &c. The members of the university are to be interdicted from reading of the books containing them; the books themselves to be publicly burnt, &c. &c.

"The flood-gates of loyalty being opened," says Ralph (592), "the gazettes from the middle of May to the January following (that is, from the publication of the declaration) are little more than a collection of testimonies, that the people were weary of all those rights and privileges that make subjection safe and honourable."

Quotations to show the folly of some, the prostitution of all, would be endless, and at last it seems even Lord Halifax, the minister, turned squeamish, and grew sick of them.

Whatever difficulty may belong to the question of the Exclusion Bill, and whether it might or might not be necessary at the time, still if we consider what had long been the known characters of Charles and James, the licentiousness of the court, its connexion with France (which had been publicly proved in the course of Danby's impeachment), its measures through the whole of the reign, and the idea then entertained of the deadliness of the sin of popery, it must be confessed that the manner in which the community totally

deserted the leaders of the House of Commons on this occasion, was not very creditable to the national character. The result was, a new temptation to the political virtues of the king, in which, as usual, he failed. Instead of justifying the unbounded and headlong attachment of his people, by showing in his turn a due care and veneration for their constitutional rights, a dishonest advantage was taken of their blind partiality, and the administration of the government became, in every point, as arbitrary and unprincipled, as brutal judges, dishonourable magistrates, and wicked ministers, under the patronage and protection of the court, could possibly render it.

And then commenced, in like manner, the temptation of the popular leaders; they had been defeated—what were they to do? The measures of the court were detestable; this must be allowed. The constitution of England seemed to be certainly for a season, perhaps for ever, at an end. Charles might live long, or, as James II. was to succeed, the violations of the law might by prescription become the law. All this was true, and might very naturally affect the popular leaders with sentiments of the deepest mortification and sorrow; more especially, as they saw, that the public had abandoned them, and, with some few exceptions, every where continued to abandon them. But what then was the effect produced on the minds of the patriotic leaders? Instead of reflecting how capricious a master they served, when the public was that master; how prone to run into extremes, how easily deceived, how little either able or disposed to take care of itself, how pardonable in its follies, because always honest in its intentions; instead of meditating on topics so obvious as these, most of the popular leaders, particularly Shaftesbury, seemed to have lost on this occasion all temper and prudence, and to have thought of nothing but an insurrection and force; an insurrection which was only called for by the rabble in London—force, which can never be justified, even with right, but under the strongest assurance of success.

And in this manner are we conducted to the last important transaction of the reign, known under the general name of the Ryehouse Plot; a plot, as it was supposed, of the patriotic leaders against the king.

It appears, however, to have been rather a treasonable plot and insurrection intended by the lower and more desperate members of the party, and countenanced by Shaftesbury, than a regular project formed by the whole party, the more respectable leaders included.

But these machinations, however various their description, were fatal to many who were connected with them—they were fatal to Algernon Sidney and Lord Russell. These distinguished men were tried for treason, and found guilty, with what propriety I cannot now discuss. Sidney marched to the scaffold as to a victory, displaying at his execution, as on his trial, all the bold and sublime traits of the republican character. The steady step, the serene eye, the untroubled pulse, the unabated resolve, “the unconquerable mind, and freedom’s holy flame;” the memory, that still lingered with delight on the good old cause, as he termed it, for which he was to shed his blood; the imagination, that even in the moments of death, disdainful alike of the government, its judges, its indictments, and its executioners, soared away to some loftier code of justice and of right, and hung enamoured on its own more splendid visions of equality and freedom.

The spectators presumed not to shed tears in the presence of Sidney, but their tears had bedewed the scaffold of Lord Russell; Lord Russell, the amiable and the good; the husband with whom the bitterness of death was past, when the partner of his bosom had looked her last farewell; the friend, whom the faithful Cavendish would have died to save; the lover of truth, the lover of England; the patriot who had laboured to *assert*, not change her constitution; filled with no images of liberty, as Sidney had been, drawn from the imperfect models of Greece and Rome, but intent on a monarchy, restrained by popular freedom, and on popular freedom civilized by a monarchy; imprudent, rather than criminal; a memorable instance to show, that they who would serve their country, are not to mix their own good intentions and virtuous characters with those of men of doubtful principles, irregular and violent in their spirit; men whom it is idle for them to suppose they can long control, and whose faults they may discern clearly, but by no means their ultimate designs.

Such was the termination of the struggle between pre-

rogative and privilege, which, after all the horrors of the civil war, it is most afflicting and mortifying to observe, had, in the first place, once more to be renewed during the reign of the restored monarch, and in the second, to terminate entirely against the patriotic cause."

I now consider myself as having arrived at the close of the reign of Charles. But I have passed by many transactions, both curious and important, because they were not only too numerous to mention, but because I was unwilling to have your attention withdrawn for a moment from the great subject of the reign—the resistance of the popular leaders to Charles, and more especially the measure of the Exclusion Bill.

Those transactions omitted by me—the bribes received, as appears from Dalrymple, by the popular leaders, the Habeas Corpus Act, the Test Act, the Popish Plot, must be well observed by you.

I will say a word on the last. This most extraordinary affair may reasonably excite the curiosity, but will in vain exercise the inquiries of the most laborious student.

It was impossible at the time, it has been ever since impossible, properly to understand it, or many of the circumstances which so contributed to its success; for instance, Sir Edmund-bury Godfrey's murder.

Instead of labouring to investigate what the fury of those times leaves us little chance of understanding, there is much remains which may be perfectly understood, and to which it may be far more important for you to direct your reflections: I mean the consequences of the plot, the consequences of the alarm excited by this plot. The rage, for instance, and stupidity of which a community are capable when their religious prejudices are worked upon; the outrages that may be committed by judges, juries, and all the regular authorities of a state, the moment that the great maxims and established forms of equity and law are dispensed with; the melancholy excesses of injustice, cruelty, and absurdity, that in times of public alarm may disgrace the most civilized society.

When the more enlightened part of a nation share, for a time, the same violence of prejudice or terror, which more naturally belongs to the blind and precipitate passions of the

populace, they themselves become populace; like the very mob, senseless and ferocious, and are actually not to be appeased without the shedding of blood.

Lord Stafford and others (supposed conspirators in this Popish plot) were therefore formally murdered. The king durst not interpose, nor was he of a temper to disturb his own security in the cause of insulted humanity. It is here that is to be found the unpardonable violence, the criminality of the popular leaders. The penetrating Shaftesbury becomes either an atrocious statesman, or a blind and vulgar demagogue; and even the amiable and virtuous Russell is, for a season, no longer to be loved.

The historian Hume, the great chastiser of religious and party animosity, is not likely to desert his reader on an occasion like this; and it only remains to treasure up his observations, and apply them to every similar instance (and instances will occur) of public infatuation and guilt.

And now, before I turn away from this second part of the reign of Charles, and these private memoirs and original documents, I must remind you of an opinion entertained by some, to which I alluded in my opening lecture, that history neither was nor could be truth, because it professed to give an account of transactions which could only be understood by the actors in the scene.

I would wish you, therefore, to consider once more these original papers of Dalrymple. Let them be compared with any of our historians, for instance, with the judicious history of Ralph. Let the student, after he has by means of Dalrymple put himself into possession of the state secrets of the reign, turn to that history, which was written *before* this publication, and observe what the historian has been able to perform without them. He will then find, as I conceive, that known facts and visible appearances are sufficient to enable a sensible man, without the assistance of these mysteries of office, to form just conclusions, and exhibit those general views which serve all the great and most useful purposes of history.

Let him turn in like manner to Burnet. I alluded to the inferences to be drawn from his work in yesterday's lecture,

and told you I should have to remind you of them. I do so now.

The general conclusions which Ralph draws, and which Burnet draws, and other historians have drawn, are the very conclusions which we draw ourselves, when, by means of the papers of Dalrymple and the private memoirs, we have become acquainted with all the wretched detail of these disgraceful intrigues.

Instances like these, and it is for this purpose that I mention them, may teach us to depend upon all such general inferences, as are fairly deduced from a sufficiently comprehensive exhibition of facts, explained and illustrated by the acknowledged principles of human nature. That is, to depend on diligence, candour, and sagacity, when exercised on the consideration of the affairs of the world. That is, in other words, to depend on well written history.

On the whole then, to recapitulate what I have hitherto said, the struggle between the sovereign and the patriotic leaders, is the great subject during the latter part of the reign.

The designs of Charles against the constitution, and his connexions with Louis XIV. during the preceding part of the reign.

The settlement of the kingdom in church and state, under the administration of Clarendon, during the first part of the reign.

Having now alluded to these, each in their order, I must lastly introduce my hearers to what I will call, for the sake of distinction, the moral part of the history of this period.

All wars destroy the morals of mankind, by habituating them to refer every thing to force, and by necessitating them so often to dispense with the ordinary suggestions of sympathy and justice. But this is peculiarly the effect of civil wars, where the moral obligations, before the contest, have been more completely established, and are yet during the contest, with more than ordinary violence, torn asunder; that regular occupation of the mind, amid the common pursuits of life, those peaceful habits of thought which are so nutritive, so necessary to most of the virtues of the human character, all these, on occasions of civil war, are most mate-

rially disturbed, and even sometimes destroyed; and the military virtues, high virtues no doubt, but which have been always found compatible with the greatest licentiousness, seem alone to survive.

It is therefore probable that England, on the Restoration, would have exhibited these unhappy effects of the past disorders, under whatever circumstances the kingdom had been placed: but still more unfortunately, to complete the general dissolution of manners after this event, the vanquished party, the Puritans and Presbyterians, had been always distinguished not only, many of them, for the real exercise of the severer virtues, but most of them for a ridiculous affectation of a piety and perfection more than human.

Men always in extremes upon other occasions, were equally so on this; and because the Puritans mistook the true nature of virtue and religion, and rushed headlong in one direction, the cavaliers could do no less than offend every reasonable precept of both, by hurrying away as violently in the other; because the most sacred and awful terms which our religion affords, were used by the one party on the most unworthy occasions, and to purposes the most familiar, their opponents could do no better, it seems, than become scoffers at all religion, and could find no substitute for cant, hypocrisy, and nonsense, but profaneness and infidelity.

These great features of the times have not escaped the notice of our historians and moral writers. On this subject I must refer you to their observations.

I may, however, remark, that if any of my hearers should become very conversant in the history and in the writings of this singular period, he will soon, as I conceive, be but too conscious that the very actors in the scene often impart to it an unworthy charm, from the liveliness of their licentiousness, from the variety, the brilliancy, the strength, of their restless and striking characters.

It is one, and not the least, of the many trials which virtue has to encounter, that she is liable to be seduced from her more tranquil, but happier path, by the imposing bustle, the entertaining whims, the ever changing, careless, animating revelry, which may generally be found in the haunts of her most fatal enemies.

Such was the effect of the fascinating manners and specious qualities of Charles, that he was never hated or despised in the degree which he deserved. Even at this distance of time we may not readily bring ourselves to entertain sentiments sufficiently severe against the king, the courtiers, and all the considerable personages, that appeared during these critical times. The truth is, that this period was marked by a sort of conspiracy against all sobriety and order, against all liberty and law, against all dignity and happiness, public and private; and we must not suffer our taste for pleasantries, and our admiration of shining talents, to betray us into a forgetfulness of every graver virtue, which can seriously occupy our reflection, or engage our respect.

But I must be allowed to make one observation more, which I shall leave to your own examination.

The writers on morals have always insisted, that vice has at least no advantage over virtue, but the contrary, even in this life.

The period of history now before us, is enlivened by the most striking and the most profligate characters, and will, as I conceive, abundantly illustrate this position—a position certainly founded in nature and truth, and which no man ever acted upon—and repented.

The Buckingham, for instance, of these times, the author of the Rehearsal and the delight of the court; “the life of pleasure and the soul of whim,” but the most unprincipled of men, was the Villiers of Pope; the great Villiers, who, though he died not “in the worst inn’s worst room,” died “victor of his health, his fortune, friends, and fame,” and well fitted

“To point a moral and adorn a tale.”

Rochester, at the early age of three and thirty, when his talents might have been ripening into strength, and his virtues into usefulness, sunk into the grave amid the wild waste of his existence and his advantages, and discovered how mistaken had been his estimate of happiness, when it was too late.

In a grander style of misconduct appears the celebrated Shaftesbury. Of powers as universal as his ambition was

unbounded; the idol of the rabble at Wapping, the wit and man of fashion among the courtiers at Whitehall; and a statesman in the House of Lords, whom the king, after listening to him in a debate, pronounced fit, to teach his bishops divinity and his judges law; a minister, a patriot, a chancellor, and a demagogue. In whatever direction he moved, the man on whom all eyes were to be turned; to whom nothing was wanting but virtue,—Shaftesbury, died at last an exile from his country, seeking protection from that very republic of Holland, which in the hour of his corruption and prosperity he had denounced; towering with all the consciousness of genius, yet humiliated by the triumphs of opponents, whom he must have despised even more than he hated, and no longer able to hope, as the scene for ever closed around him, either for the gratification of success, or the comforts (for such to his unchastened mind they would have been thought) of vengeance.

Compare with the lives of these men the life of Sir William Temple, the man of cultivated mind; the man of sense and humanity; of civilized passions, and well directed aims; the philosopher and the statesman, appearing on the stage of public affairs only to be honoured; retiring to the shade only to be more loved and applauded; the minister who could speak the language of patriotism and truth to his corrupted, dissembling sovereign, nor yet suffer himself, by disappointment at this sovereign's subsequent conduct, to be hurried into projects of dangerous experiment and doubtful ambition; and who, on every occasion, converted all the advantages which he had received from nature and from fortune, to their noblest purposes; the fair fame and happiness of himself, the honour of his country, and the benefit of mankind.

Take, again, an instance of virtue in a form more severe, and apparently less fitted for happiness—the patriot Andrew Marvel.*

Of this man it is well known that the treasurer Danby once made his way to his garret, and, under a proper disguise of courtly phraseology, offered him a bribe. It was refused, and this virtuous representative of the people, when he had turned away from the thousand pounds of the minister, was obliged to dine a second time on the dish of the former day,

and borrow a guinea from his bookseller. But which of the two use we to envy?

"Count what the advantage prosperous vice obtains,
Tis but what virtue flies from and disdain."

Pursue the same train of inquiry into the recesses of the cabinet. The king had deceived his ministry, the Cabal; Arlington (one of them) betrayed the king; the Duke of York and the king had cajoled Shaftesbury; and Shaftesbury, at the moment he was most wanted, turned short on his receivers. Danby had preferred his place to his honour, and had committed himself to Montague. At that time they were friends; soon after, enemies; each wished the ruin of the other; but the ambassador (Montague) was more adroit, and the treasurer Danby was lodged in the Tower. What friendship, what happiness, have we here among men like these?

The members of the Cabal gained little by their baseness but disgrace and impeachments. Charles himself was occupied all his life in extracting money from Louis, and in deceiving him for that purpose; but Louis was equally employed in deceiving Charles, and in carrying on counter intrigues with his subjects. Two years before his death, Charles came to the knowledge of all the French monarch's proceedings; he received, says Dalrymple, a yet more mortifying stroke; he found that the court of France had been capable of intending (though the design was at last laid aside) to make public his secret negotiations with the Duchess of Orleans. What was the result? Conscious that he could no longer be either respected or loved by the intelligent part of his subjects; that he was distrusted and despised by every court in Europe, and that he had been all his life betrayed by the very prince to whom he had sold the immediate jewel of his soul, his secret chagrin became at length visible on his countenance, and for two years before his death, he had ceased to be the merry monarch, who could laugh at the virtues, and triumph in the vices of mankind.

Charles, in the earlier part of his reign, had seen Clarendon stand before him the representative of English good sense and English good feelings. He had been afterwards exhorted by Temple to be the man of his people; for such a king, the

patriot minister told him, to use his own words, "might in England be any thing, and otherwise nothing;" but from the first, Charles had traced out another path of happiness for himself, and in the event, as we may collect from the historians, he found he had judged but ill; he is even understood to have formed serious resolutions of retracing, if possible, his steps, and of acting up to the model which had vainly been presented to his view. But life admits not of this neglect of opportunities: he was struck by the hand of death, and what, then, is his history? The history of a man of pleasure; a fine understanding converted to no useful purpose, and at last, as is always the case, not convertible to any; the common feelings of our nature corrupted into total selfishness by sensual indulgence; the proper relish of the gratifications of our state worn down by abuse into a morbid indifference for every thing; with no friendship that he thought sincere; with no love that he did not hire; without the genuine enjoyment of one social affection, or of one intellectual endowment but his wit; floating helplessly on from one amusement to another; oppressed with the burden of time, yet ashamed of his expedients to get rid of it; living and dying, Charles is the proper object of our indignation or contempt; through life a conspirator against the liberties of his people, or a mere saunterer amid his courtiers and his mistresses; and on his death-bed delivering himself over to his stupid brother and a Popish priest. Such is the history of Charles; but what is there here which the meanest of his subjects could have to envy? what to envy in the monarch, however he may be himself, in his humbler station, submitted to the tasks of daily labour, to the duties of self-denial, or the necessities of self-exertion?

But whatever may be our decision with respect to the great position of the moralists (that vice has no advantage even in this world, but the contrary), it must at least be admitted that men like these, whether or not they procure happiness for themselves, undoubtedly produce misery to every one around them; in private life they injure, distress, or corrupt whatever is within their influence, and in public they are yet more injurious to society, by disposing of their talents and integrity under some form or other, to the best bidder.

Some idea of the effect which such men produce on society may be derived from the dramatic representations in the reign of Charles; compositions which, therefore, form a part of its history.

The wits of Charles found easier ways to fame,
Nor wish'd for Jonson's art nor Shakspeare's flame:
Themselves they studied; what they felt, they writ:
Intrigue was plot, obscenity was wit."

If such were the dramas, what were the audience? If such was the picture of life, as it was then understood, what was, and what had been, the influence of the higher orders?

In an age of such depravity, the great minister Clarendon was not unconscious of what was due to his sovereign, to his country, or to his own character; and he resisted, by every effort in his power, the immoralities of his master, and the licentiousness of the court. His gravity, as it was called, was the great object at which the ridicule of Buckingham and the wits was eternally levelled; but the chancellor was of a temperament too dignified to be faced out of his principles either by the frowns of the king or the grimaces of his companions. He would never suffer his wife to visit the lady, as he calls her, that is, the king's mistress; and he continued, as he began, the champion of the ordinary duties of life.

In our own times, the great upholder of the domestic virtues has been, not any particular minister, but the monarch himself (George III.) To whatever variety of criticism a reign like his, so long and so eventful, may be hereafter exposed, this praise—this solid praise—will never be denied him: and it will remain, while the story of England remains, an honour to his memory. His people, in the mean time, have never been backward in acknowledging their obligation. His conduct in this respect has always been the theme of their loud and just panegyric; and they have never ceased to look up to the throne, not only with sentiments of loyalty to the high office, but with feelings of gratitude and respect for the person of their sovereign.

Among many other amusing, rather than improving work connected with the reign of Charles II., must be particularized the *Memoirs of the Count de Grammont*, written by one of the Hamiltons.

The narrative and the pleasantry are airy and elegant, often reminding us of the manner of Voltaire, and the work may be read, as giving a picture of the court and courtiers of Charles, drawn from the life, telling their own story in their own way, and therefore containing not only a delineation of their intrigues, occupations, and pleasures, but of their modes of reasoning and thinking, and the sympathies and principles, such as they were, upon which this licentious and but too entertaining part of society at that time proceeded. Courage seems to have been their only virtue, liveliness their only merit; the manners of Chesterfield, and the morals of Rochefoucault.

An exhibition of the feelings and reasonings of the king and his courtiers on the graver subjects of national policy may be found in the poems of Dryden; the powerful advocate of any and of every cause, whose affluent mind and pregnant fancy were never without an argument and an image, whatever might be the topic either of his poetry or his prose; worthy to be the assertor of the best interests of mankind, and sometimes enforcing them with the most enviable spirit and success; the master of a lyre, no doubt, whose song can never die; whose numbers are always easy, airy, and melodious; often breaking away into passages of the most striking vigour, and sometimes kindling into flashes of the most genuine sublimity; yet a poet, it must at the same time be confessed, whose compositions are often debased by coarseness, and disfigured by extravagance, and who was ready, when occasion required, to give plausibility and force to the most wretched commonplaces of servility or licentiousness, of bigotry or superstition. He who reads his great poetical pamphlet, the *Abalom and Achitophel*, after having previously acquainted himself with the history and characters of the time, will perceive that, however he may have admired it before, he may still be said never before to have read it; and he will neither wonder at the great name which the poet has transmitted to posterity, nor deny him the highest prerogative of genius—the power of stamping on his works the impression of immortality, and of giving a value that shall never cease, to productions which originally served the fleeting purposes of the day.

To find contrasts for the *Mensons of Grammont*, the compositions of the dunces, and the writings of Dryden and the wits; to see the extremes of which human nature is capable, we may turn from these productions, and consult Gray's notes to *Hudibras*, and *Hudibras* himself, with such sermons of the Presbyterian divines, and such public papers of Presbyterian statesmen as have reached us.

As a close to the whole of our inquiries, we may direct our attention to the *History of Scotland* by Laing, a work which will be found often contributing to explain and illustrate the reign of Charles I., but absolutely necessary in considering the reign of Charles II.

Laing is a writer who throws out his opinions so freely and so strongly, on subjects so various and so important, that, from the impossibility of all comment, they must be left by me entirely unnoticed. But it is necessary to observe that the style, which is at first somewhat repulsive, will be found materially to improve, as the work proceeds, and at length cease to remind us of the disagreeable, abstract manner, and of many of the faults of Gibbon. The narrative is necessarily encumbered not a little with church history; and as it places human nature in no new light on these occasions, may in these places be slightly perused.

Laing is not considered as a writer favourable to the Stuarts; but how could he (if fit to write at all) be favourable? It is in the history which he details that the faults of these princes are most unequivocally displayed. Whatever be the excuses for their conduct, which may or may not be found while we read the history of England, they totally disappear when we turn to the annals of Scotland; and from that moment their defence is hopeless.



NOTES.

1810.

I.

CLARENDON relates of Charles II., that he came to him one day when they were both together in exile, and asked him with some astonishment, whether the penal statutes against the Catholics in England could possibly be such, as they had been represented to him, in conversation. The chancellor was obliged to confess to him that they really were, and to endeavour to explain to him how and why penal statutes of this nature had been made. But it is probable that the humanity of the young king, not trained up under the discipline of polemical warfare, received an impression in favour of the Roman Catholics, careless as he was, which could never afterwards be removed. It is at the same time to be observed, that Charles was totally incapable of all severer virtue, and therefore that he recoiled from any description of religion which insisted on the purity of the heart and the triumphs of self-denial; yet was his understanding too penetrating to leave him undisturbed in the indulgence of his vices: he was therefore placed, as sometimes happens, within the reach of the two extremes of infidelity and superstition; and in his hours of gaiety believing nothing, and believing every thing on the contrary, during those cold visitations of melancholy to which men of pleasure are so peculiarly exposed, he was, from the first, a fit subject for the influence of the ceremonies and pretensions of the Roman Catholic church. And from these and other considerations it may be concluded that he came to England, and remained to his death, perfectly disposed to extend every kindness to the members of a church, with the sentiments, at least, of whose religion he could sympathize, and to whose communion, therefore (for religious inquiry into doctrines was out of the question), he must have appeared to himself to belong.

The king, therefore, and the Roman Catholics, saw with pleasure the Presbyterians totally excluded from the establishment, because they conceived that the greater were the numbers of those without the pale, the better would be their treatment; and that the Papists might thus come in with the rest to partake of the benefits of some general act of toleration.

The Presbyterians, on the contrary, intolerant to a degree that would be perfectly ludicrous if it were not for the serious nature of the subject, though they were extremely exasperated when they found themselves so abandoned by the Church of England, could cordially unite with that church in at least equally abominating those of the Roman Catholic communion.

The church, in the mean time, had perfectly resolved to avoid all fellowship with either; and, however, beneath the lowest deep, there was yet a lower deep, they were always ready to accept the services of the Presbyterians against their common enemy, the Roman Catholics; so that in this respect the church and the Presbyterians were united. But still further to perplex the scene, the Church of England had, like the Church of Rome, adopted the tenet of passive obedience, and was thus politically united with the Roman Catholics; and therefore in this manner both were combined against the Presbyterians.

After all the contests, therefore, which had taken place between the Papists and Protestants, and between the different sects of the Protestants, and after so many years of civil and religious dispute, the prospect was still heavy with clouds; the civil and religious liberties of the country were still in a situation of trial and uncertainty; and they might have been for ever destroyed by the entire success of any one of the great parties of the state, or even of some of their particular combinations.

II.

In the debates of the two houses, the secret history of the times cannot now be discovered, but the proceedings of parliament during the whole of this reign seldom ceased to be important.

Among other of their acts may be mentioned the Habeas Corpus Act. The nature of it must be examined in Blackstone and our constitutional writers, and the conclusion to be drawn from the whole of the case seems to be, the extreme difficulty with which the liberty of the subject can be secured; the endless train of impediments which they who administer the laws can, if they please, and will, if they are not prevented, throw in the way of the proper execution of them; and on the whole, a new instance to show how vain is the letter of the law, unless a proper sense of propriety and right is generated by the constitution through the great mass of the community.

It might have been thought that, before this celebrated act, enough had been done for the freedom of the subject; but not so: and an act like this, which only gives the subject, when thrown into prison, a power of asking the reason of his commitment, such an act was declared by the Duke of York to be inconsistent with the existence of all regular government; though the very contrary seems the fact, for without it the liberty of no man is secure; and the law is easily suspended whenever the critical situation of the country renders it necessary. "Nemo imprisonetur nisi," &c., said the barons in Magna Charta; but it was not till the time of this act that their great principle was ever perfectly exhibited in practice.

The very remarkable provision of law, called the Test Act, was the consequence of the very singular times of Charles II.—times when the reigning monarch was believed to be in a conspiracy against his subjects, and the immediate heir to the crown an enemy to their religion. By this act all were excluded from civil offices who took not the sacrament "after the manner of the Church of England." And this religious part of the test was contrived as the only expedient for incapacitating the Papists, against whom the act

was directed. The intention of the legislature was considerably answered. The Duke of York and other conscientious Roman Catholics resigned their seats, though unprincipled men probably retained them. But another consequence followed, which was not within the intention of the legislature; the Dissenters as well as the Papists agreed not with the Church of England in their manner of taking the sacrament; and the act has ever since operated to their exclusion from offices as completely as if they had been the objects against whom it was originally levelled. "Great pains," says Burnet, "were taken by the court to divert this bill; the court proposed that some regard might be had to Protestant Dissenters. By this means they hoped to have set them and the church party into new heats, for now all were united against Popery. Love, who served for the city of London, and was himself a Dissenter, saw what ill effects any such quarrels might have; so he moved that an effectual security might be found against Popery, and that nothing might interpose till that was done; when that was over, then they would try to deserve some favour; but at present they were willing to be under the severity of the laws, rather than clog a more necessary work with their concerns."—(Burnet, vol. i. p. 347.)

The conduct of the Dissenters seems to have got them great reputation. But whenever a penal statute is to be drawn up, its enactments should be very strictly limited, and the future consequences of it be well considered. The Commons had provided by their Test Act for their own defence; but the bill which they afterwards brought in, and which they passed for the ease of the Dissenters, suffered amendments in the House of Lords; and the parliament was adjourned before these proposed alterations could be adjusted. In point of fact, it never afterwards became a law. The truth is, that the Commons should have provided for the case of the Dissenters in their original bill; or, if that might have delayed its enactment, should at all events have insisted subsequently on justice being done. What they themselves neglected to do, no subsequent legislature ever did; and the Dissenters at this moment find their feelings wounded, and the fair range of their talents confined, by an act of exclusion originally passed with the concurrence and co-operation of their own body.

It is not in matters of government, as in other concerns, that a law or any political regulation may be put aside when its object has been accomplished. Such are the passions of mankind, that laws are seldom, nor can they always with safety, be either repealed or improved on the mere suggestions (however convincing) of argument and philosophy. Legislators should be therefore very careful how they ever suspend, even for a moment, the great principles of policy and justice. Their successors are always more likely to acquiesce in their faults than to repair them. This has been shown but too clearly by all the subsequent events of our history.

When William III. came to the throne, it was impossible for him to overlook the religious prejudices of his new subjects, and this most remarkable specimen of their unfortunate influence. His first attempt appears to have been to emancipate the Dissenters from the Test Act. He took the earliest opportunity, in one of his speeches, to observe (1684), "that he was, with all

NOTES.

in opposition he would, filling up the vacancies which were in office and being offered, that as he doubted not but they would sufficiently provide for the Government, so he hoped they would leave room for the admission of all Protestants that were willing and able to serve."

But when a bill was shortly after brought into the Lords, for taking away the necessity of receiving the sacrament prior to any admission to an office, it was rejected by a great majority, and the following protest against this decision of the house appears in its journals, signed by eight lords:—

"Because (page 196 of Cobbett's Parliamentary History, William and Mary)—first, a hearty union among Protestants is a greater security to the church and state than any test that can be invented.

"Secondly, Because this obligation to receive the sacrament is a test on Protestants rather than on the Papists.

"Thirdly, Because so long as it is continued, there cannot be that hearty and thorough union among Protestants as has always been wished, and is at this time indispensably necessary.

"Fourthly, Because a greater caution ought not to be required from such as are admitted into offices, than from the members of the two houses of parliament, who are not obliged to receive the sacrament to enable them to sit in either house.

"NORTH AND GREY.	"CHESTERFIELD.
"J. LOVELACE.	"DELMER.
"GREY.	"VAUGHAN.
"STAMFORD.	"P. WHARTON."

Another effort was made two days after, for it was proposed that it should be sufficient for any man to have taken the sacrament in any Protestant congregation, so that by this proposal the Protestant Dissenters were verbally and distinctly set apart from the Papists. But in vain; the bill was still lost, and all the advantage which the cause of religious toleration obtained was the protest of six of the lords, who on this occasion placed on the journals reasons that will for ever remain unanswerable, and may in time, it is to be hoped, produce their proper effect on the good sense and moderation of the community.

These reasons are to be found page 197 of Cobbett's Parliamentary History. The first, fourth, fifth, and sixth are of a general nature, and will be early conceived by those who have considered the question.

"First, Because it gives great part of Protestant freemen of England reason to complain of inequality and hard usage, when they are excluded from public employments by a law, and also because it deprives the king and kingdom of skilful men fit and capable to serve the public in several stations, and that, for a mere scruple of conscience, which can by no means render them suspected, much less disaffected to the government."

"Fourthly, Because it turns the edge of a law (we know not by what fate, upon Protestants and friends to the government, which was intended against Papists, to exclude them from places of trust, as men avowedly dangerous to our religion and government, and thus the taking the sacrament, which was enjoined only as a means to discover Papists, is now made a distin-

gaining duty among Protestants, to weaken the whole by casting off a part of them.

"Fifthly, Because mysteries of religion and divine worship are of divine original, and of a nature so wholly distant from the secular affairs of public society, that they cannot be applied to those ends, and therefore the church, by the law of the gospel as well as common prudence, ought to take care not to offend either tender consciences within itself, or give offence to those without, by mixing their sacred mysteries with secular interests.

"Sixthly, Because we cannot see how it can consist with the law of God, common equity, or the right of any free born subject, that any one be punished without a crime. If it be a crime not to take the sacrament according to the usage of the Church of England, every one ought to be punished for it; which nobody affirms. If it be no crime, those who are capable and judged fit for employments by the king, ought not to be punished with a law of exclusion for not doing that which it is no crime to forbear.

(Signed) "OXFORD. "MORDAUNT.

"J. LOVELACE. "R. MONTAGUE.

"P. WHARTON. "PAGET."

The next attempt of the king was a bill of comprehension: as he could not relieve the nonconformists, while they remained such, he laboured to induce the church to enlarge her pale, and by omissions and concessions, to render it possible for the Dissenters conscientiously to join her communion.

But the difficulty soon started in the House of Lords was, who were the proper persons to decide on these concessions—a committee of the clergy or a committee of the *clergy and laity conjointly*.

Barnet tells us that he himself made a mistake (and a very egregious mistake it was), and that he argued for the former—the house decided with him, i. e. in favour of a committee of the clergy only.

A protest was, however, again left on the journals, though signed only by three. Among other general and constitutional reasons for the interference of the laity in such subjects, the following one is given more particularly applicable to the case.

"Fifthly, Because the commission being intended for the satisfaction of Dissenters, it would be convenient that laymen of different ranks, nay, perhaps of different opinions, too, should be mixed in it, the better to find expedients for that end, rather than clergymen alone of our church, who are generally observed to have very much the same way of reasoning and thinking.

WINCHESTER. MORDAUNT. J. LOVELACE."

But the Commons were still more intolerant than the Lords, and an address soon appeared from them, requesting the king to continue his care for the preservation of the Church of England, whose constitution they told him was best suited to the support of this monarchy, praying him to call a convocation of the clergy, assuring him, at the same time, that it was their intention to proceed to the consideration of giving ease to Protestant Dissenters.

When the convocation came to decide on the humane intentions of the king, the reasonableness of the protest of the lords was soon apparent.

Barnes, in pages 11 and 30, vol. ii., gives us some account of what passed both before and during these meetings.* The more rigid thought, "that too much was already done for the Dissenters;" "that the altering the customs and constitution of our church, to gratify a peevish and obstinate party, was like to have no other effect on them but to make them more insolent;" "as if the church, by offering these alterations, seemed to confess she had been hitherto in the wrong;" they thought this attempt would divide us among ourselves, and make our people lose their esteem for the liturgy; if it appeared that it wanted correction.

To these arguments, which may be considered as the permanent arguments on the subject, the bishop offers his reply, and then goes on thus:—"But while men were arguing this matter on both sides, the party that was now at work for King James took hold of this occasion to inflame men's minds; it was said the Church was to be pulled down, and Presbytery was to be set up." (Life, &c.) "The universities took fire upon this." "Severe reflections were cast on the king as being in an interest contrary to the church." "So that it was soon very visible," says at last the bishop, "that we were not in a temper cool or calm enough to encourage the farther prosecuting such a design."

This want of religious moderation, of which the bishop speaks, must be considered as a striking proof of the deep impression that had been made on the community by the civil wars and long habits of religious dispute; for at the time that the Declaration of Rights was becoming the acknowledged constitution of the country; at the time that England had advanced so far before the great rival country of France in all the doctrines of *civil* liberty; in *religious* liberty she was actually a century behind her; the twenty-sixth article of the edict of Nantz, enacted by Henry IV. (the contemporary of Elizabeth), admitted the Protestants to all civil offices indiscriminately with their fellow Christians, the Roman Catholics.

The real ground on which these religious exclusions were, and always have been defended, is that of terror; terror, lest the inferior sect, by obtaining political power, should, after a struggle for equality, contend at last for superiority.

It is not very creditable to human nature to observe, that when this terror is *really* felt, it operates in a contrary way. In the settlement of religious claims and differences, the inferior sect often gains something from the fears but never from the generosity of the superior; the Protestants, for instance, had waged a long and desperate civil war with the Roman Catholics in France, and the terror which they *really* inspired, enabled Henry IV. to procure for them such of the terms of the edict of Nantz as are of an equitable nature. Similar effects have been more or less produced in other countries on similar occasions of reconciliation and pacification, through all the periods of these dreadful contentions.

Afterwards, when the Protestants ceased to be such objects of terror, Louis XIV. could indulge his intolerance, and banish them from their country in a manner the most impolitic and cruel.

In England, in like manner, had the Papists been at all competent to

enter into a contest of force with the Protestants, there would never have appeared such a dreadful array of penal laws on our statute books. The Scotch obtained from us, by arms, their kirk; so, too, the nonconformists in William's time would never have been excluded from offices, or even from the pale of the Church of England, if they had really inspired those apprehensions which their opponents affected to feel, or at least persuaded themselves that they, on the whole, might as well act upon. In seasons of real terror, religious factions either conciliate or positively murder and destroy each other, as in the pacifications with the Hugonots and the massacres of France and Ireland: it is in intervals of comparative repose and of considerable security that the superior sect suffers its malignity calmly to expand into penal statutes, sweeping accusations, and ungenerous suspicions; into arguments that admit not of answer (because they turn upon their own feelings and apprehensions), and into amusing exhortations to the inferior sect, "to wait for better times," &c. &c.



LECTURE XX.

JAMES II. REVOLUTION.

ON the death of Charles II., the Duke of York took as peaceable possession of the throne as if no effort had ever been made to debar him from the succession.

If the exclusionists had carried their measure, James would have been always represented by a very large and respectable description of writers, as, on the whole, a victim to party rage.

Without perhaps denying exactly the right of a community to provide for its own happiness, they would have contented themselves with observing that religious opinions were in themselves no just disqualification; that it by no means followed that James, though a Papist himself, would have violated the constitution of his country, rather than not make his subjects the same; that the conduct of men altered with their situation; and that, at all events, the patriotism and good sense of James were not fairly tried.

But happily for one of the most important of all causes, the cause of civil liberty, the experiment was really made; and all that the exclusionists had foreseen, all that with very manly wisdom they had endeavoured to prevent, actually took place.

When, however, the expectations of the exclusionists were verified, and the arbitrary and bigoted nature of James was inflamed rather than pacified by the possession of power, it by no means followed that the community would be then able to relieve itself from the calamity which it had incurred. It is very easy for an atheist to say, that a nation has only to will to be free, and to be so. The affairs of mankind proceed in no such manner.

On such a subject as the Revolution in 1688, the student will surely think that no pains he can bestow are too great.

But he will rise from the whole with very different impressions from what I have done, if he does not entitle this Revolution not only the *glorious*, but, in the first place, the *fortunate* Revolution of 1688. If he can but place himself in the midst of these occurrences, and suppose himself ignorant of what is to happen, it is with a sort of actual fear and trembling that he will read the history of these times; let him consider what his country has become by the successful termination of these transactions, and what it might have been rendered by a contrary issue; how much the interests of Europe were at this juncture identified with those of England; and what a variety of events, the most slight and the most natural, might have thrown the whole into a state of confusion and defeat.

The first question to be examined is the conduct of James, his unconstitutional measures, his arbitrary designs.

After the student has perused the history in Hume and Rapin, and compared it with the parliamentary debates of Cobbett, he will see that the indictment that was afterwards preferred against James by the two houses of legislature was strictly founded in fact, point by point.

As it is impossible for me to detail the history, not an incident of which is without its importance, I will just state what that indictment was. When the crown was afterwards offered to William and Mary, both houses prefaced their offer by declaring the reasons that compelled them to adopt a measure so extraordinary. They were these; and they form a sort of summary of the reign of James II., and therefore I shall read them to you; in every word they deserve attention; they are the case of the people of England on this great occasion.

“Whereas the late king, James II., by the assistance of divers evil counsellors, judges, and ministers employed by him, did endeavour to subvert and extirpate the Protestant religion, and the laws and liberties of this kingdom; By assuming and exercising a power of dispensing with, and suspending of laws, and the execution of laws, without consent of parliament; By committing and prosecuting divers worthy prelates, for humbly petitioning to be excused from concurring to the said assumed power; By issuing and

causing to be executed, a commission under the great seal, for erecting a court called 'the Court of Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes;' By levying money for and to the use of the crown, by pretence of prerogative, for other time and in other manner than the same was granted by parliament; By raising and keeping a standing army within this kingdom, in time of peace, without consent of parliament, and quartering soldiers contrary to law; By causing divers good subjects, being Protestants, to be disarmed, at the same time when Papists were both armed and employed contrary to law; By violating the freedom of election of members to serve in parliament; By prosecutions in the Court of King's Bench for matters and causes cognizable only in parliament; and by divers other arbitrary and illegal courses: And whereas of late years partial, corrupt, and unqualified persons have been returned, and served on juries in trials, and particularly divers juries on trials for high treason, which were not freeholders; and excessive bail hath been required of persons committed in criminal cases, to elude the benefit of the laws made for the liberty of the subject; and excessive fines have been imposed, and illegal and cruel punishments inflicted; and several grants and promises made of fines and forfeitures, before any conviction or judgment against the persons upon whom the same were to be levied: all which are utterly and directly contrary to the known laws, and statutes, and freedom of this realm."

Such were the articles of accusation preferred, and it will be found justly preferred, against James.

And thus much for the external facts of his administration.

From these, the conclusion to the internal principles of his conduct is sufficiently clear; and the very particulars of these proceedings, such as they have been collected by historians, are all teeming with evidence of a bigotry and a rage for arbitrary power that advanced to a state of perfect infatuation.

With respect to such facts and intrigues as were concealed from the public, sufficient evidence may be seen in Dalrymple of the baseness of their nature, and of their entire hostility to the liberties, civil and religious, of the English nation. This evidence has been made still more abundant by the late pub-

lication of Mr. Fox, which contains a new supply of authentic documents from France, and the most interesting letters between the French king and his ambassador Barillon. The instruction to be derived from these original letters is the same which we have already announced, when we considered the communications that passed between the French court and Charles II. We are here, for instance, taught the importance of the two houses of parliament, particularly the commons, the arts by which they were to be managed, the pretences by which they were to be deceived, the topics by which they were to be soothed, the principles by which they were to be betrayed, the expedients by which they were to be corrupted, the obstacle that their meetings and debates always opposed to the designs of the French and English courts, and on the whole, the impossibility that schemes of arbitrary power should succeed, while the parliaments retained the control of the purse, and still preserved their integrity.

Having now, in a general manner, considered the nature of the attack that was made by James on the constitution of the country, which is the first part of the subject, we may next turn to examine the nature of the resistance that was opposed to him; which is the second part.

And when this part is considered, the conclusion seems to be, and it is a melancholy conclusion, that if James had not violated the religious persuasions of his subjects, he would have met with no proper resistance whatever, and that the English nation, after all the sufferings and exertions of their ancestors, would at this period have submitted to such violations of their civil liberties, and would have allowed such precedents to be established, that in the event these liberties might very probably have been lost, like those of the other European monarchies.

The natural guardian of the community was, in the first place, the parliament. But so successful had been the practices of the king, and of his predecessor, Charles, that when he looked over the list of the returns, he declared "that there were not more than forty names which he could have wished not there."

The parliament was only suffered to sit a year. Some proper feeling was indeed shown, when the king intimated to

them (clearly enough) that he meant to maintain a standing army. But their expostulations with the crown in this last address were merely directed against his suspensions and violations of the law in favour of the Papists.

Expostulations of the most dutiful kind; to which his majesty replied, by saying he did not expect such an address; and when Coke, of Derby, animated for the moment with the remembrance of the better days of the constitution, stood up and said, "he hoped that they were all Englishmen, and not to be frightened out of their duty by a few high words," he was immediately sent to the Tower "for his indecent and undutiful reflection on the king and on the house."

The king immediately prorogued the parliament, and never suffered it again to assemble; and here, for any thing that can be discovered to the contrary, in the honest, unpremeditated effusion of a single representative of the people, might have ended all the efforts that could be made in the cause of the civil liberties of the country.

For from what quarter comes the next resistance to the illegal proceedings of the crown? From the ecclesiastical bodies—the Charter House, the University of Cambridge, the colleges of Oxford, and the seven bishops, the representatives of the English clergy; that is, from men who had been so lately, at the close of the reign of Charles II., the addressers of the crown in the language of servility, and the preachers and the propagators of the doctrine of passive obedience.

Happily for the nation, the clergy at this period, venerable in their characters and situation, however mistaken in their political theories, however the teachers of passive obedience, could after all resist, when their own acknowledged rights, when their own established opinions in religion, were endangered; and the community, on their part, could be roused into some sense of their danger when they saw the most dignified ministers of their religion, even the prelates of the land, hurried away by officers of justice and consigned to imprisonment in the Tower.

The king's own standing army, and the very sentinels who had to guard these peaceful sufferers, participated with the multitude in their sense of religious horror at the king's in-

tolerable violation of all law, privilege, and security; of every thing that was dear and respectable in the eyes of his subjects.

The fact was, that the age still continued to be an age of religious dispute. In the former part of the century, we saw the sectaries, animated by the religious principle, enter into a contest with the Church of England and the crown; we now see, by the unexpected direction of the same religious principle, the Church of England itself slowly and heavily moved onward into an opposition to the monarch.

Not that the church had begun to entertain more enlightened notions on the subject of civil obedience, but that the crown had most fortunately allied itself to Popery; and the church, though it abjured the doctrines of resistance, however modified, abominated with still greater earnestness the tenets and superstitions of the Roman Catholic communion.

It is not too much to assert that the resistance of the people of England to James was *universally* of a religious nature; of a very large portion of the country, the high Tory and ecclesiastical part, exclusively so.

But besides these, there was another great division of the nation, of which the resistance was not exclusively of a religious nature. The resistance here was compounded; it was not only of a religious, but also, and very properly, of a civil nature. This party was the Whig party, the exclusionists, who, like Coke of Derby, were not to be put down by high words; these, however fallen and trampled upon since the victory of Charles II. and the accession of James, still existed, though discountenanced and in silence; and they must no doubt have observed, with pleasure, their cause strengthening as the king proceeded, and new prospects arising of civil happiness to their country from the religious fury of their arbitrary monarch, the very prince whom they had endeavoured, from an anticipation of his character and designs, to exclude from the throne.

So much for the resistance which the king experienced at home. The next great division of the subject is the resistance which James experienced from abroad.

Charles II., in a most fortunate moment of improvidence, had suffered his minister Danby to connect the Prince of

Orange with the royal family of England. If James had no male children, the wife of William thus became first in succession. Even if he had, she remained so, in case the direct male line was to be departed from.

The great enemy of the civil and religious liberties of Europe was, at that time, Louis XIV.; their great hero, William. William had seen his own country nearly destroyed, when he had to defend it or perish in the last dyke. The great assistants of Louis had been Charles and James. Between William and Louis there could be no peace, and only the appearance of amity between William and his father-in-law, James.

In the situation of England, all eyes were naturally turned upon this great and hitherto successful assertor of the rights of mankind.

William on his part could not but be perfectly alive to any representations that reached him from a country like England.

The communications that passed cannot now be thoroughly known. This was to be expected. But some idea of them may be formed from the publication of Dalrymple.

Much of the intercourse between William and the patriots must have been of a verbal nature, carried on by his two agents, Dyckvelt, and Zuylistein, men of address and ability, whom, under different pretences, he sent over into England.

The letters in Dalrymple must, of course, be examined. Dalrymple speaks of them as showing, that "there are few great families in the country, whose ancestors had not a hand in the Revolution." To me they appear to show nothing of the sort; making every allowance for the necessity of concealment and caution, they are neither so many, nor so strong, as might have been expected; and it is not a little remarkable that the great families of this country have never produced any letters or memoirs to illustrate the more secret history of these extraordinary times. I am not aware of any means that we have to gratify the curiosity with which we so naturally turn, to inquire after the more secret intrigues that concurred in producing this memorable event of the Revolution.

Among the letters produced by Dalrymple, there are more

from the Tory lords, than could have been looked for; but the association for joining William, if he came over, was after all not sent till the end of June, 1688: he landed in November; and was at last only signed in cipher by four lords, Devonshire, Danby, Shrewsbury, and Lumly; two commoners, Mr. Sidney and Admiral Russell, and one bishop, the Abdiel of the Bench, Compton, then Bishop of London.

The seven patriots just mentioned (there were no more), to whom we are so deeply indebted, assure William in their letter, "that the greatest part of the nobility and gentry are as much dissatisfied as themselves: that nineteen out of twenty are desirous of a change; that very many of the common soldiers do daily show such an aversion to the Popish religion, that there is the greatest probability they would desert; and amongst the seamen there is not one in ten who would do James any service."

But here we ought certainly to ask, how, after all, was the Prince of Orange to attempt any regular enterprise against the crown of England? Observe his difficulties, and you will then understand his merit. He was only at the head of a small republic; that republic had been reduced, but a few years before, to the very last extremities by the arms of Louis. How was William to prepare an expedition, and not be observed by the French and English monarchs; how to prosecute it, and not be destroyed by their power? If he attacked England with a small force, how was he to resist James? if with a large one, how was Holland in his absence to resist Louis? In either case, how was he to extricate himself from the English and French fleets, which might prevent his landing in the first place, or at least render his return impossible in the second? How could he expect that the English who had so long contended for the empire of the seas, with their great rivals, the Dutch, would forego the triumph of a naval victory, if it was once put within their reach? How was William to trust to the representations of the English patriots, who might be suspected of judging of their countrymen, through the medium of their own wishes and resentments? How was he to expect, even if he landed, that the gentry and nobility would hazard their lives and fortunes by appearing in arms, when only seven of them had

as yet ventured, by any distinct act, to incur the guilt of treason? What spirit of freedom, much less of resistance, had the nation shown, now for seven years, since the political victory of Charles II. over the exclusionists? Monmouth, the idol of the English populace, had just been destroyed by James without difficulty; so had Argyle. What was to be expected from a country that was loud indeed in their abuse of Popery, but whose pulpits, and public meetings, and courts of justice, resounded with the doctrines of passive obedience, and whose very parliaments seemed to admit the same fatal principles?

Put the case that William should even succeed so far as to oblige James to call a parliament, give up his illegal pretensions, and promise conformity to the laws in future. To what end or purpose, as far as William was himself concerned, what benefit was to accrue to *him*, but the mere liberty of returning; while James was to be left in silence and at his leisure, to wait for more favourable times, watch his opportunities, recover his authority, and persecute or destroy, one by one, all who had contributed to resist or modify his prerogative.

It is by reflections of this kind, I must repeat, that we can alone be taught duly to estimate the merits of William. The difficulties of the enterprise show the greatness of his genius, and the extent of our obligation.

As far as the continent was concerned, some idea may be formed of the merits of William from a chapter in Somerville (the eighth), and they may be still further investigated in Tindal. It is true that many favourable circumstances concurred to enable William to combine the discordant materials around him to his purpose; but the sagacity, activity, and steadiness, with which he availed himself of every advantage which fortune offered him, were above all praise.

So much for the resistance to James from abroad, preparatory to the enterprise of William.

Some assistance may be derived from Burnet, particularly in the next stage of our inquiry, the enterprise itself.

Burnet had all the merits, and all the faults, of an ardent, impetuous, headstrong man, whose mind was honest, and whose objects were noble. Whatever he reports himself to

have heard or seen, the reader may be assured he really did hear and see. But he must receive his representations and conclusions with that caution which must ever be observed when we listen to the relation of a warm and busy partisan, whatever be his natural integrity and good sense.

He is often censured and sometimes corrected, but the fact seems to be, that without his original, and certainly honest account, we should know little about the events and affairs he professes to explain. Many of the writers, who are not very willing to receive his assistance, would be totally at a loss without it.

One of the first remarks to be made on this enterprise is, that with an armament that stretched out to the distance of twenty miles, William was not prevented by the English fleet from landing at Torbay.

But the second remark is most highly discreditable to the English nation. William landed, and was not joined; and seems to have remained a whole week, at and about Exeter, without any material assistance or countenance either from the clergy or gentry, nobility or people.

It is well that he did not retire, as he once thought to have done, while to retire was in his power. But perhaps it struck him (very properly), that though nothing was done for him, nothing was done against him; that the king, with his thirty thousand men, did not after all appear and drive him and his fourteen thousand foreigners into the sea.

We know something, but not much, of the secret history of the court during this critical period.

There is a diary by the *second* Earl of Clarendon, published with his letters. Clarendon was connected with the royal family, and seems to have put down, from time to time, some of the facts that passed before him, and some of the thoughts that occurred to him. Any genuine living account of this sort, however scanty, or by whatever person made, cannot be otherwise than interesting. It is mixed up too with all the particulars of his own concerns and petty engagements, and what little therefore is said, must be considered as said without art or affectation, and therefore the proper subject of observation.

The diary begins to contain passages of interest at the

forty-first page, in May, 1688. What appears confirms the general accounts given by the historians.

The great question is, why the king did not take more vigorous measures to prepare for the approach of the Prince of Orange; or afterwards, when the prince really had landed, to drive him out of the country.

"September the 24th," says Lord Clarendon, "I went to the king's levee. He told me the Dutch were now coming to invade England in good earnest. I presumed to ask if he really believed it, to which the king replied with warmth, 'Do I see you, my lord? and now,' said he, 'I shall see what the Church of England men will do.'" Again: "October 16, I was at the king's levee. His majesty told me that the Dutch troops were all embarked, &c. &c. 'You will all find,' added the king, 'the Prince of Orange a worse man than Cromwell.'" *

So that the king seems to have been fully aware, though late, of his danger.

At last appeared the declaration of the Prince of Orange, and then the king perceived that the ground was hollow under him. "November 2, Friday. The archbishop," says the diary, "and Bishop of London were with the king, having been sent for; there were likewise present the Bishops of Durham, Chester, and St. David's. The king showed them the Prince of Orange's declaration, and bade Lord Preston read that clause which says, 'that he was invited by several of the lords, spiritual and temporal.' They all, as I have been told, assured the king the contrary. The king said he believed them, and was very well satisfied. He told them he thought it necessary that they should make some declaration, expressing their dislike of the prince's coming in this manner, and that they should bring it to him as soon as possible."

But the bishops, after all, never did nor would express any such dislike.

At the end of this volume, in the appendix, there are some very curious particulars of what passed between the king and the bishops on the subject of distributing and reading his majesty's declaration of indulgence; and again, on the subject last mentioned, when the king required from them an

abhorrence of the designs of the Prince of Orange—the particulars are remarkable. He seems to have begun with Compton, the Bishop of London, and to have closeted him first. This bishop had, in fact, signed the invitation to the Prince of Orange, it may be remembered; he was one of the seven. The king read to him the short paragraph in the prince's declaration, where the lords *spiritual*, as well as temporal, are mentioned, as having invited him over. The moment must have been trying: but the prelate had been a soldier in his youth, and seems to have faced the enemy with steadiness in the first place, and then to have drawn off his forces with all due expedition and decorum. "I am confident," he replied to the king, "that the rest of the bishops would as readily answer in the negative as myself." His majesty then said he believed them all innocent, but he expected a declaration of that innocence and an abhorrence, &c.

"That is a matter to be considered," said the prelate. It was considered; conferences held. A very singular dialogue followed between his majesty and his prelates, and it might soon have been very clear to the monarch, that the trial of seven of them in Westminster Hall, and the imprisonment in the Tower, whatever might be the passive nature of their obedience, neither could nor would be forgotten, when *active* exertions were required from them.

James too must have perceived, or thought that he perceived, that his army could not be trusted; and that, however he might despise their theological learning, they would probably think it a point of honour not to fight against what they considered as their religion.

On the whole, it appears from the diary, that the king had received the account of the prince's landing the day after he had effected it, that is, on the 6th of November, and that it was not till the evening of the 17th, that he set off to join his army at Sarum.

There is a book sometimes quoted by historians,—the *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*; it is worth reading. Sir John was attached to the royal family, and had always lived about the court. He says, what he has to say, with ease and without affectation; never enters into any profound or long discus-

sions; but gives an account of his life and proceedings in parliament, in much the same agreeable, sensible manner, that a man of this character would tell his story in conversation, to any of his friends, to whom he chose to be communicative, if not entirely confidential. Sir John's words are these:—"On the 24th of November the king returned to Andover; but at night Prince George of Denmark deserted him, together with others of good note and account. Yet the number of all that thus forsook the king, did not as yet amount to one thousand. But such a mutual jealousy now took birth, that there was no relying on any one; no knowing who would be true and honest to the cause: wherefore the army and artillery were ordered back to London, where his majesty arrived on the 26th." Such is the account of Sir John.

But for the king to fall back on London without opposing the progress of those whom he had considered in his proclamation as rebels and invaders, was to leave his partisans no hope, and his enemies no fear.

The prince had landed on the 5th, but it was not till the 16th that the gentlemen of Somersetshire and Dorsetshire had joined him in sufficient numbers to be collected together in a body, and to be publicly addressed. It was not till the 16th that Lord Delamere appeared in favour of the Prince of Orange in Geshire; only at the same instant that the Earl of Devonshire declared for him at Derby. It was not till the 22nd that York was surprised by Lord Danby, and about the same time that a great number of the nobility and gentry at Nottingham published the resolution to join the Prince of Orange for the recovery (as they said) of their almost ruined laws, liberties, and religion.

Not only were the people of England thus tardy (so tardy, that in any ordinary case of tyranny in the monarch, the fate of the contest would in the mean time have been decided), but it is observable, that it was only in this last public paper from Nottingham, that the feelings of men, who thought they had been insulted, as well as injured, really appear. In this Nottingham manifesto some flashings of the spirit of Colonel Hutchinson, are still visible. "We own it rebellion," they say, "to resist a king that governs by law, but he has been

always accounted a tyrant that has made his will his law; they hoped all good Protestant subjects would, with their lives and fortunes, be assistant to them, and not be bugbeared by the opprobrious terms of rebels, by which the court would fright them to become perfect slaves to their tyrannical insolences and usurpations."

Had the general strain of the papers that were published at this time been of this kind, been as worthy of Englishmen as was this, the Prince of Orange could have found no material difficulty, whatever had been the measures which James pursued: but the general expression of the public sentiment was of the most dissent and temperate kind: what was called for was the Protestant religion, and the laws and liberties of the country; but above all, the summoning of a free parliament, to which the settlement of every difficulty and grievance was to be entirely intrusted.

If we consider the offensive outrages of James, we must allow that the effect of the civil wars was now discernible in the temperament of the nation, and they who insist, that after a convulsion, the restoration of the old dynasty is the worst calamity that can happen to the liberties of a country, may here find no inconsiderable illustration of the general propriety of this opinion.

Had James stood firm and called a parliament, and abided by the event, it is difficult to say what material advantage could have ultimately resulted to the constitution of the country; but most happily, the same civil wars that so impressed upon the people of England the terrors of anarchy and military usurpation, contributed no less forcibly to impress on the mind of James the images of the trial and execution of the monarch. By a most fortunate want of political sagacity, he thought it his best policy to fly from the country and leave it in confusion, the more complete, he thought, the better. The result, he supposed, would be, that he should be recalled to settle it, or that at all events he might thus preserve himself and the royal family, and by the assistance of Ireland, Scotland, and Louis, be hereafter in a condition to return to it.

Lord Clarendon was attached to James, Burnet to William. From a comparison of the accounts of each, a very sufficient

idea may be formed of the very singular situation of every thing just before and during the interregnum. *

Lord Clarendon and others were aware of the mistake which James was committing, and they laboured to prevent it. By an extraordinary indulgence of fortune, James had to commit his mistake not only once, but even a second time; he fled, and was stopped at Feversham; he returned to London, and fled once more. After flying the first time, he was alarmed into a flight the second, and it is evident that if he had on the last occasion resisted, he could not have been compelled to fly, and that the prince and the cause of the Revolution might soon have been in a state of the most irretrievable embarrassment and ruin.

The prudence and skill of William continued as perfect as they were in James defective. A House of Commons was peaceably formed, and the convention of the two estates assembled.

And now begins the last and not the least curious scene of all—in some respects the most so; for what was now the result? The church party and the Tory party, when James was gone and the danger removed, renewed their doctrines of passive obedience and the indefeasible tenure of the crown; scripture, law, custom, seemed equally to confirm their tenets. “Be subject to the higher powers;” “the king can do no wrong;” “the crown of England never was nor ever can be considered as elective;”—these were their positions, and these the Whig party and the friends of the prince knew not well how to deny; but they could see plainly that all was lost, if they were acted upon.

From the first, therefore, they had seized upon the mistake of the king, his departure from the country, and they converted it into an argument, which upon every hypothesis they might, as they conceived, fairly urge. They insisted that it was an abdication of the crown, and that no expedient remained but to fill up the throne, which had thus become vacant.

Most fortunately it happened that the gentry of England had their understandings less bewildered by the abstractions of divinity and law than the nobility and bishops. In the commons, the Whig party were nearly two to one; however,

after a very curious debate, they thought proper to produce only the following heterogeneous and inconsistent vote:—

“That King James II., having endeavoured to subvert the constitution of the kingdom by breaking the original contract between king and people, and by the advice of Jesuits and other wicked persons having violated the fundamental laws, and, having withdrawn himself out of his kingdom, has abdicated the government, and that the throne was thereby vacant.”

We will observe for a moment the words here used:— “That King James II., having endeavoured to subvert the constitution of the kingdom by breaking the original contract between king and people,” (so far we have the great interests of civil liberty and the Whig principles making their appearance,) “and by the advice of Jesuits and other wicked persons having violated the fundamental laws,” (here we have the religious part of the contest,) but in consequence of all this— what? that his majesty had forfeited his right to the crown? that the next in the Protestant succession should be called to the throne? are these the words that follow? (as apparently they ought.) No; the words that follow are these: “and having withdrawn himself out of this kingdom (not voluntarily, as every one knew), has abdicated the government,” meaning by the word “abdicated” to imply, that he had done a legal act, that he had formally divested himself of the crown; and then and at last came the necessary conclusion of the whole, “that the crown was thereby vacant.”

As the Whigs were, in the House of Commons, the stronger party, and, after asserting their principle of the original contract, had not chosen to push it to its logical conclusions, which would have been so offensive to the Tories, but to rest the vacancy of the throne on the departure of the king, the Tories of the lower house probably thought that no better terms were to be had; and, after a debate of four hours, the motion which the Tories made was only for an adjournment, and this was with some hurry and noise overruled, and the original vote, without a division, was carried, and sent up to the Lords.

Burnet should now not only be consulted, but by all means

the journals of the Lords, or Cobbett's Parliamentary Register, and Clarendon's Diary.

The vote no sooner reached the upper house, than it was immediately separated into its component parts, and debated clause by clause.

From the journals it appears that the house had already taken due pains to collect all their members; some were sick, some out of the kingdom, some absent, probably by design.

But before the vote of the commons was debated, paragraph by paragraph, the first effort of the Tories was to slip aside (if possible) from these disagreeable positions of the original contract and violation of fundamental laws, and, without expressly saying whether the throne was or was not vacant, to obtain a vote for a regency. On this occasion the Whigs only overpowered their opponents, and maintained the fortunes of the Revolution, by a majority of two voices, fifty-one to forty-nine. The names of the members present are in the journals; the whole number in a former page; the names of the minority are in Clarendon's Diary: so that every thing respecting these important votes, how each peer voted or conducted himself, may be ascertained. Lord Churchill, afterwards the great Duke of Marlborough, and a few others, chose to be indisposed; Sancroft, the archbishop, in like manner to be absent. Of the fourteen bishops that attended two only, Bristol and London, voted with the Whigs.

On the next sitting, the lords debated, in the first place, the great Whig doctrine of the original contract between the king and people, and the affirmative (that there was such an original contract) was carried by a majority of seven; fifty-three to forty-six. The Whigs, therefore, were gaining ground.

But here their triumphs ended; they could not get the word "abdicated" carried; nor, the next day, that the Prince and Princess of Orange should be declared king and queen, which was lost by five, forty-seven to fifty-two; nor, "that the throne was vacant:" lost by eleven (forty-four to fifty-five, not forty-one to fifty-five, as it is in Lord Clarendon, probably by a mistake of the figure). The word "deserted" was substituted for the word abdicated; the clause about the

vacancy of the throne omitted; and in this state the vote returned to the commons.

But the commons could not see the propriety of these alterations; a conference, therefore, took place.

The discussion which took place on this remarkable occasion is represented by some writers, and even by Hume, "as turning (to use his own words) upon frivolous topics, and as more resembling the verbal disputes of the schools than the solid reasoning of statesmen and legislators."

They who are at all acquainted with the very metaphysical nature of Mr. Hume's most favourite compositions will be somewhat surprised at this sudden impatience and dislike of those verbal disputes, as he terms them, or rather, as he ought to think them, of those explanations and distinctions of words and phrases, without which no subject of importance ever was or can be thoroughly examined.

This conference between the lords and commons, far from being cast aside as the mere idle discussion of unmeaning subtleties, should (I conceive) be considered with the utmost attention. It is given by Cobbett. Some of the first men the country has produced were engaged in it; the occasion, the most important that has ever occurred; and the debate itself will be found in no respect unworthy of the character and abilities of the speakers.

The value of this conference appears to consist in this, that it is a development of those principles which must always more or less exist in a mixed monarchical government—of the principles, and of their consequences when applied to practice; and such a development is and must ever be of importance, not only to ourselves, but to all who are ever to live under any reasonably mixed form of government; because the laws and ordinances of any such form of government can never speak, any more than our own do, of resistance to authority, of dethroning of kings, of trying, of punishing them, of the paramount authority of the public, and other political positions and maxims of the same kind. Such can never be the *language* of the constitution of a country; but if it be from thence inferred, that no language but the ordinary language of the constitution is ever to be used, that no maxims but the ordinary maxims of the laws

are ever to be proceeded upon, *then* these memorable debates, and above all this memorable conference, will be of value, to show in what inextricable, what fatal perplexity, a nation and its statesmen must be left, if, when its liberties are invaded, they will not submit to acknowledge, that however sacred the general rules of hereditary monarchy or civil obedience may be, exceptions must be sometimes admitted, and whether admitted or not in theory, must at all events be sometimes proceeded upon in practice.

On the whole, it must be confessed that the Whig leaders conducted themselves through all these transactions with a temper which no political party ever before showed; they neither considered their opponents as necessarily knaves or certainly fools, as combined to destroy their country, or as holding principles inconsistent with society; compliments that were no doubt paid them out of doors very liberally; but no impatient expressions nor accusations of the kind seemed to have escaped them. While, on the contrary, the Tory lords were insulted repeatedly in their passage to the house; the public in London (for the Tories were probably predominant in the country) intimated to them very plainly that they considered themselves as somewhat forgotten in their debates. The Whig leaders, however, contrived, by every possible forbearance and palliation, to render the acquiescence of the Tories, in the new settlement of the government, as little offensive to their particular principles, and therefore to their feelings of honour, as possible; a wisdom this, very rare, and at all times very desirable.

Great bodies of men seldom understand very thoroughly those principles of religion and politics which they profess, or rather never understand the real value of the difference that exists between them and their opponents on these subjects; but they can always comprehend fully that it is dishonourable for them to desert, in time of trial, what they have been accustomed to profess, and therefore, right or wrong, *this* they will not do.

Here lay the great merit of the Whigs; their temper, their spirit of conciliation, their practical philosophy, their genuine wisdom, so different from the wisdom of those, who, on occasions of political or other weighty discussion, ignorant of the

business of the world, and untrifled for it, bustle about with importance, displaying all the triumphs of their logic, and hurrying their opponents and themselves into difficulties and disgrace from the very offensiveness of their manner, and from their vain and puerile confidence in what they think the cogency of reason and the evidence of truth.

And now comes forward the great merit of William himself.

William had done every thing from the first which he understood to be consistent with the liberties and laws of the country; he then waited the event: but he perceived that the parties were far more nearly balanced than he had probably at first supposed; that if either of these parties insisted on their own opinion in defiance of the other, a civil war might ensue; that the Tories were, in practice at least, indifferent to the service he had rendered them, now that they were safe from Popery; that the Whigs themselves seemed to be thinking more anxiously of the maxims of the constitution of England than of what was due to the great cause of civil and religious liberty, not only in England, but in Europe; and that no one could be found who appeared sufficiently impressed with what was owing both to the states of Holland and to himself, for embarking in an enterprise originally so unpromising, always so perilous, and hitherto so successfully conducted.

That William had a perfect right to be considerably out of humour, cannot be doubted; and if he had not expressed his own sentiments at a proper juncture, and given the weight of his decision to the arguments and expostulations of the Whigs, it is impossible to say how long and how preposterously the Tories might have persevered in their most impracticable opinions, and again, how long the moderation and caution of the Whigs might have been able to sustain itself, and might have continued to maintain the peace of the community; in other words, whether a civil war might not have been the result, or at least the return of James. What passed on this occasion between William and the Whig leaders is well known. "They might have a regent," he told them, "no doubt, if they thought proper, but he would not be that regent; they might wish him, perhaps, to reign in right, and during the lifetime of his wife, but he would submit to

nothing of the sort; and he should certainly, in either case, return to Holland, and leave them to settle their government in any manner they thought best."

The conclusion from all this was plain, that he and the princess were to be raised to the throne, and that he chose himself to possess the crown, as if it had regularly descended to him, or not at all.

This conduct in William was at the time, and has often since been branded by many reasoners and writers as not a little base and criminal,—criminal from the violation of duty to James, his father-in-law, whom he was accused of having thus dethroned; base, from the proof thus exhibited, that from the first he had been actuated merely by selfish ambition; that from the first he had but dissembled his real designs on the crown; that from the first every thing he had been doing was in direct contradiction to all he had professed and avowed in his own declaration.

To consider this subject for a moment—In his first declaration he had said that his expedition was intended for no other design but to have a free and lawful parliament assembled as soon as possible; "that he had nothing before his eyes in this undertaking but the preservation of the Protestant religion, and the securing to the nation the free enjoyment of their laws, rights, and liberties under a just and legal government;" and again, in his additional declaration, "that no person could have such hard thoughts of him as to imagine he had any other design in this undertaking than to procure a settlement of the religion and of the liberties and properties of the subject, upon so sure a foundation that there may be no danger of the nation relapsing into the like miseries at any time hereafter; that the forces he brought over were disproportioned to the design of conquest, and that of those who countenanced the expedition, many were known to be distinguished for their constant fidelity to the crown." This last is the strongest expression to be found, the only one where the crown is exactly mentioned.

To representations of this nature it may be briefly answered, that it is mere mockery to speak of William's duty as a son, to one who never was or wished to be his father-in-law in any

sense of the word, and that whatever construction might be given, by the Tories or by the Whigs, to the terms of the prince's declaration, it was quite idle to suppose that he and the states of Holland would embark in an enterprise like this, and put every interest that was dear to them into a situation of the most imminent danger, for the sake alone of the good people of England. What was England to either of them but as a member of the great community of Europe; as a country that might be Protestant or Popish, that might concur to protect or destroy them, merely as James did or did not succeed in his designs upon its liberties and constitution? Their civil and religious interests, and those of England, thoroughly coincided, and the whole cause was the most generous and noble that could well be proposed to the human imagination; but when it had succeeded, and succeeded so completely—when without disturbance or bloodshed the whole force and energies of such a country as England were within the reach of William, to be turned to the defence of every interest of his own country, of Europe, and of England itself, when this could only be done by his requiring for himself the executive administration of the government, when every other expedient could only have served to renew the designs and power of James and Louis, and must have ultimately ended in the ruin of the civil and religious liberties of mankind; in this situation of things, was it for William to have disappointed the reasonable expectations of his own country, and of every intelligent man in Europe; to have been wanting to his own glory, and to have shown himself incapable of discharging the high office of humanity, to which, in the mysterious dispensation of events, he had been called? Was it for William to have abandoned all the great pretensions and honours of his life, embarked, as he had been from the first, in opposition to Louis, and placed on the theatre of Europe in a situation of all the most elevated—that of the champion, and hitherto the successful champion, of the civil and religious liberties of mankind?

The fact is, that what was required or expected from William by the moralists and statesmen who criminated or even censured his conduct then or afterwards, was in itself inconsistent and impossible.

No man with the views or feelings of such moralists or statesmen would have ever engaged in such an enterprise at all, much less have conducted it with success.

Enterprises like these that produce an epoch in the annals of the world, and give a new career of advancement to society, are neither approached nor comprehended at the time, but by men of a more exalted order like William. Even to such men the latent possibilities of such enterprises, from the uncertain nature of every thing human, can only be apprehended, dimly and at a distance, and suspected rather than seen; the prospect clears or darkens as they proceed; it opens at last, or shuts for ever; but if the moment of visible glory once presents itself, it is then that these heroes of the world march on as did William, and decide for themselves and for posterity the happiness of kingdoms and of ages.

In consequence of William's decided and critical interference, the lords at last agreed to withdraw their amendments, to consent to the word "abdicated," and to admit the vacancy of the crown.

Burnet seems to say that these important points were only carried at last by a majority of two or three voices.

When it was at last resolved to crown the Prince and Princess of Orange, a new oath of allegiance was to be constructed. This was done with very commendable attention to the Tories, that their principles might be as little interfered with, while they concurred with the new settlement, as possible.

And now began the benefits of this successful enterprise. First, the line of succession was departed from, and it was declared that no Papist should reign; Popery was therefore escaped. Secondly, William was made king, though it was his wife, not himself, who was next in succession; William therefore was considered as elected. The right, therefore, of the community, in particular cases, to interfere with the disposal of the executive power, and even of the crown itself, was exercised and admitted. Thirdly, before the crown was conferred, as a preliminary part of the ceremony, the opportunity was taken, which had not been taken at the Restoration, of making some provision for the future security of the constitution, and certain rights and

liberties were claimed, demanded, and insisted upon, as the undoubted rights and liberties of the people of England. The constitution was therefore renewed and confirmed. The prince and princess, when they received the crown, which was after this declaration tendered to them, in their turn declared, that they shankfully accepted what was offered them.

These remarkable transactions have been a fruitful source of political discussion; and as it is difficult, indeed impossible, to refer to the various inferences that have been drawn from them with respect to the constitution of England, I shall select as prominent specimens, and of an opposite nature, the Sermon of Dr. Price on the Love of our Country, and the Reflections of Mr. Burke on the French Revolution;—and it is to them that I shall chiefly allude, in the observations which I shall now offer.

From the general turn and result of these memorable proceedings, it appears to Dr. Price, that the people of England have acquired a right, to use his own words, to choose their own governors, to cashier them for misconduct, and to frame a government for themselves. All this is resisted by Mr. Burke; and stated in the unqualified manner of Dr. Price, it cannot well be admitted.

Yet something more must be admitted than Mr. Burke seems willing to allow. As far as precedent can establish a right, it must be conceded, both from all the language of the parties at the time, and from the result of these transactions, that the right is established in the people of England on very grave and urgent occasions of departing from the hereditary succession, and therefore, as Dr. Price would have it, in such cases, of choosing a governor for themselves; for it was in this manner that King William was chosen.

But the same reasonings, and every other fact, conspire to show that this is a right, as Mr. Burke contended, to be exercised, rather as of necessity than of choice; to be admitted as a mere exception to the general rule of hereditary succession, and as in no respect to be considered as the rule itself; a right to be exercised with the same unwillingness and doubt with which any great rule in morality would be broken—broken from the mere necessity of the case.

In reasoning of this tenor and spirit, Mr. Burke seems

perfectly supported by the whole of the expressions that appear on the face of these proceedings, and the facts that took place. Reference may even be had to the sum and substance of the whole, and it may be asked what were the alterations which the patriots in 1688 really did make in the constitution?

These will be found very much to disappoint the expectations of all such reasoners as suppose that constitutions of government are in the first place to be planned out, according to the suggestions of deliberative wisdom, and when reduced to shape and order and perfection, then to be proposed and accepted by a people, and the people thus made to grow up and fashion themselves to their prescribed model.

There is certainly little in these transactions to countenance any experiments or reasonings of this nature.

The same rights and liberties which had been claimed, demanded, and insisted upon, when the crown was tendered, were afterwards converted into the materials of an act, which was presented to the king, and received the royal assent, and the whole was then "declared, enacted, and established by authority of that present parliament, to stand, remain, and be the law of the realm for ever." This was done, and no more; this was all that, apparently at least, was attempted; no pretences were made to any merit of salutary alteration or legislative reform; the original declaration, the subsequent Bill of Rights, were each of them expressly stated to be only *declarations* of the old constitution; they were each an exhibition of the rights and liberties of the people of England, already undoubted and their own; experiment, innovation, every thing of this kind, is virtually disclaimed, for nothing of the kind is visible in the style or language of these singular records.

It must, however, on the other hand, be carefully noticed, that though the Bill of Rights might not propose itself as any alteration, it was certainly a complete renovation of the free constitution of England; the abject state to which the laws, the constitution, and the people themselves, had fallen, must never be forgotten; and it then can surely not be denied that this public assertion on a sudden, this establishment and enactment of all the great leading principles of a free govern-

ment, fairly deserves the appellation which it has always received, of the Revolution of 1688.

It is very material to observe that the declaration and enactment were totally on the popular side, were declaratory entirely and exclusively of the rights and liberties of the people, in no respect of the prerogatives of the crown; the Bill of Rights was in fact a new Magna Charta; a new Petition of Right; a new enrolment of the prerogatives, if I may so speak, of the democratic part of the constitution, which, though consented to by William, an elected prince, and perhaps even thought necessary to his own justification and security, could only have been extorted by force from any reigning hereditary monarch, and, in point of fact, was certainly not procured by the English nation on this occasion, till the regular possessor of the crown had ceased to wear it, and till the country had appeared in a state of positive and successful resistance to his authority.

It must be always remembered that through the whole of these proceedings there was an acknowledgment, and a practical exhibition, of the great popular doctrine that all government, and all the forms and provisions which are necessary to its administration, must ultimately be referred to the happiness of the people. This is supposed at every moment from the first resistance of the measures of James, to the last act of the ceremony of crowning the Prince of Orange; and it is this acknowledgment, and this practical exhibition of a great theoretical truth, which constitute the eternal value and importance of these most remarkable transactions. The caution, the moderation, the forbearance, the modest wisdom with which the leading actors in the scene conducted themselves, are the proper subjects of our panegyric, but must never be so dwelt upon, that we are to forget the real meaning of these proceedings, their positive example, their permanent instruction, transmitted practically and visibly not only to the sovereign, but to the people.

Hitherto we have considered the Revolution chiefly with respect to the civil constitution of the kingdom; but another subject, to which, before I conclude this lecture, I must briefly advert, still remains. The student must never forget that he is at all times to keep his attention fixed, not only on

the state and progress of the *Academy*, but of the *religious* liberties of mankind.

As the connexion between them is so natural, it might fairly be supposed that the same advancement which the former seemed at this epoch to have received, would have been received in like manner by the latter; but there is more difficulty in this latter case than there is even in the former, and the same sort of efforts for religious liberty that failed at the Restoration, failed likewise at the Revolution.

But with respect to these efforts, the merit seems to have belonged almost exclusively to William. The great defender of the religious as well as civil liberties of his own country and of Europe, the great assertor of the Protestant cause in England, and on the continent, was not inconsistent with himself; there were no exertions which he did not make to introduce into the houses of legislature, and among the people of this country, those generous and reasonable notions which he did not find, and with which his own elevated nature, even in a religious age, was so honourably animated and impressed.

His first attempt appears to have been to emancipate the Dissenters from the Test Act; this was an act passed in the reign of Charles II., and originally levelled against the Papists, or rather against the Duke of York, not against the Presbyterians. They had indeed been persuaded to concur in it, lest at that very critical period the bill should by any hesitation of theirs, or even modification in their favour, be lost; and it was understood that they were subsequently to be released from its provisions. This, however, they never were, nor are they, even at this day; so easy in politics is it to be wrong, so difficult afterwards to become right. King William, for instance, found all his efforts entirely fruitless; the business was indeed agitated in the lords, in the commons, in the nation—the protests in the journals of the lords are remarkable, as are all the proceedings related by Burnet; but the bishop closes his account by saying, “it was soon very visible that we were not in a temper cool or calm enough to encourage the further prosecution of such designs.”

You will see in the note book on the table a few more observations on this subject of the Test Act to explain its history.

It has always been represented as the palladium of our constitution in church and state; this I think is the expression made use of in sermons, and addresses, and episcopal charges. I must take the liberty of considering it, as a monument of national impolicy, and even national want of good faith and honour.

We now, therefore, turn to consider what this intelligent statesman, really and in point of fact, was able at last to accomplish for the cause of religious liberty in England, at that time the most enlightened country in Europe in all the principles of *civil* liberty. He obtained then the Toleration Act.

"Forasmuch," says the preamble to the act, "as some ease to scrupulous consciences in the exercise of religion may be an effectual means to unite their Majesties' Protestant subjects in interest and affection," &c. &c. On this account the existing penalties were taken off from the body of Dissenters with respect to the exercise and profession of their faith, on condition of taking the oath of allegiance, an oath to which they had no objection. This act, therefore, with respect to the great body of the Dissenters, was really an Act of Toleration.

But you will observe that besides the body of the Dissenters, there are the teachers of the Dissenters to be considered. With respect to the teachers of the Dissenters, the nonconforming ministers, the existing penalties of Lord Clarendon's act were strong, that they were not to come within five miles of corporate towns, &c. &c. These were by the Toleration Act taken off, but, on a certain condition, that these teachers signed those articles of the Church of England which related to faith.

The toleration, therefore, and indulgence granted to the dissenting teachers, was this, that they were excused from signing those articles which related to discipline.

This act, therefore, as far as mere reasoning was concerned (but this, in the affairs of mankind, is only one point among many)—this act, I say, as far as mere reasoning and logic were concerned, bore upon the face of it its own condemnation; for if the dissenting ministers differed from the church in articles of faith, they could not yet sign; and the act

extended to them no toleration; and if they differed from the church only in points of discipline, then those points of discipline and church government should not have been insisted upon by the church, and they should have been brought within her pale. But allowance must be made for mankind on subjects like these.

On the whole, the Toleration Act was an act of relief and indulgence; as such it has always been considered; it has been administered and interpreted very favourably to the non-conformists, and very inconsistently with the mere letter of it; that is, very creditably to the government, from the increasing humanity and more consistent Christianity of the times.

The Toleration Act was an act with which, defective as it might really be, and must necessarily have appeared to William, still it was perfectly incumbent on him to rest contented, as society was at the time not in a temper to grant more; probably the king thought so, for having made these wise and virtuous efforts soon after his accession, and established the kirk of Scotland, agreeably, as he conceived, to the wishes of the nation, he seems to have turned immediately, and without further expostulation, from this not altogether ineffectual campaign in the cause of religious liberty, to face his enemies in the field in defence of the more intelligible rights of civil liberty.

These enemies he found in Ireland and in the continent of Europe, and he was happy enough to overpower the one, and at least to check and resist the other.

Since I drew up these lectures, the Stuart Papers have been published, and the historical student will naturally refer to them—the Life of James II., edited by Mr. Clarke.

I have not found it necessary to make any alterations either in my first or in this second course of lectures, in consequence of the perusal of them. All the regular conclusions of historians and intelligent writers seem to me only confirmed and rendered more than ever capable of illustration, by the new materials of observation that are now exhibited to our view.

The same might be said, I have no doubt, if the very journal of the king (James II.) had been placed before us; this has unfortunately perished. We have only in the Stuart Papers the representation of it, given by some friend or

confidential agent of the family; but between this representation and the real and original composition of the king himself, the great difference would be, that the king's own journal would have shown, in a manner more natural and striking, all the faults of his mind and disposition; of these there can surely be no further evidence necessary; certainly not to those who understand and love liberty; but after all, these are not the majority: and the loss of the journal, independent of the curiosity belonging to the other characters of these times, must be considered as a great loss, because, though no new light would have been thrown on these subjects, there would have been more; and there cannot be *too much* light thrown. They who run should read.

LECTURE XXI.

EAST AND WEST INDIES.

WE must now consider ourselves as having made a sort of progress through the more important parts of the history of modern Europe. We have alluded to the conquests and final settlements of the barbarous nations, the dark ages, the progress of society, the ages of inventions and discoveries, the revival of learning, the reformation, the civil and religious wars, the fortunes of the French constitution and government; the fortunes, in like manner, of our own civil and religious liberties, till they were at length successfully asserted, confirmed, and established, at the Revolution of 1688. We have made our comments on that most fortunate event.

We might now, therefore, proceed to the character and reign of William, and to the history of more modern times; but I must first attend to a part of the modern history of Europe, of which I have hitherto taken no notice; and I must go back for nearly two centuries, while I advert to a series of events which distinguished the ages of inventions and discoveries, and which are on every account deserving of our curiosity. I allude to the discovery of the new world, and the conquests and settlements of the different European nations in the East and West Indies.

This omission of mine you have no doubt remarked; but to these topics I have as yet forbore to make any reference, because, among other reasons, I wished not to interrupt the train of your reflections and inquiries, while directed to the subject of the progress of Europe, more particularly in its great interests of civil and religious liberty; a subject which, if surveyed apart, has a sort of unity in it, which I have in this manner endeavoured to preserve.

I must not, however, be supposed insensible to the curiosity

and interest which belong to such events, as distinguish the lives of the discoverers and conquerors of a new hemisphere, the great navigators and military captains of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. I have only wished to adjourn for a season, by no means to disregard, such memorable transactions.

While we read the civil and religious history of Europe in the manner I have supposed, the general facts respecting America and the Indies will present themselves, and may be received without any immediate examination; nor is this of any material consequence; we may still hasten on. We can easily conceive, what in fact took place, that these vast and unknown regions, when once discovered, would be converted into the great theatres, where enterprise and courage were to be exhibited. We can find no difficulty in supposing, that the woods and morasses of America, however gloomy and inhospitable, would still seem a retreat and a refuge to those, who were exasperated by persecution, or inflamed by religious enthusiasm. We may easily take into our account the effect which would be produced on the minds of men by the novelty of their prospects and situation, on the discovery of a new portion of the globe: all this we may conceive, and in a general manner take for granted, while we read the history of Europe; and we may afterwards turn back and examine the more particular history of these expeditions, and give them such attention, as on the whole, and in comparison with other objects of reflection, they may appear to deserve.

But here again, as on all former occasions, we should transport ourselves in imagination back to this distant period and assume, for a time, the opinions and sympathies of those who went before us, the better to understand their merits and to be instructed by their faults; the better to be animated by their history, and improved in our own minds and dispositions, by the spectacle before us; by the images of our common nature placed in scenes so fitted to display all the possible varieties of the human character.

Science has been now advanced, navigation brought to comparative perfection; the winds and currents of other climates and seas, the shores and rocks, the rivers and the harbours of an unknown hemisphere have been now ascertained; and we

travel over the ocean as we journey over the land, expecting at a given time to reach a given place, and with little more fear of miscarriage and disappointment in the one case than in the other; but the situation of mankind at the close of the fifteenth century, in none of those respects resembled ours: the difference is one of the greatest testimonies that can be produced to the progressive nature of human improvement; and before we open the History of America, we must endeavour to forget, for a season, our present situation and our comparative advantages. After all our efforts, it will scarcely be possible for us properly to comprehend and sympathize with the various strong and contradictory emotions, to which these enterprises gave occasion in the course of their origin, progress, and success.

The work of Dr. Robertson is well known: the whole subject, as far as we need at present consider it, is there fully discussed. To his History of America I must refer you.

In his work we are made acquainted, first, with the progress of navigation anterior to the time of the great Columbus, the discoverer of America; the nature and the fortunes of his enterprise; the fortunes of Columbus himself: the conquest of Mexico, by Cortez; of Peru, by Pizarro; and we have also a very full discussion of a subject so extraordinary, as the situation and nature of whole races of men, that before had never been supposed to exist.

Themes so striking, and so interesting, have not in vain been presented to this accomplished *historian. He has formed a narrative and composed a work, of all others the most attractive, that the range of history affords; and along with the other merits which his writings so generally exhibit, this production has another, not so obvious, and surely of very difficult attainment; he is never betrayed into inconsiderate enthusiasm by the splendid nature of his subject; his imagination does not improperly take fire, amid events and characters of a cast so dazzling and so romantic; he is still an historian—he is still calm, deliberative, and precise. While delivering a story, which an epic poet might have been proud to have invented, he never loses for a moment the confidence of his readers by any appearance of exaggeration, or any passion for dramatic representation. Content with the

real interest of his theme, he proceeds with his usual dignified composure, and delivers to posterity those inestimable pages, which may be at once an amusement for the most young and uninformed, and a study for the most grave and enlightened.

Such, I confess, is the general impression which has been made on my own mind, by the perusal of the work of Dr. Robertson, and I think it quite sufficient to refer my readers, for an account of America, to his History of America. This history is, unfortunately for the author, like his other compositions, put into our hands very early in the course of our education, and too soon, before its merits can be properly understood; and it is in general not read again, at a maturer period, because it is supposed, very *unreasonably*, that it has been already read. This mistake, I must entreat my hearers not to commit with any of his writings, or indeed any of the great classical works of our literature. The pages of Dr. Robertson have not the unwearied splendour of Gibbon, nor the sudden flashes of sagacity which so charm us in the historical writings of Hume; but Robertson is always an historian, with all the important merits which belong to the character.

Mr. Southey, indeed, accuses him of leaning to a system, and of unwarrantably depreciating the character and civilization of the two great nations of America—the Mexicans and Peruvians.

I see not what temptation he could have for doing so, and if the student should turn to Clavigero, and Garcilaso de la Vega, to whose accounts Mr. Southey refers, to Clavigero's strictures, and Dr. Robertson's replies to him, I do not conceive that your confidence in our own historian will be at all disturbed.

Once, more, therefore, referring to his history, as perfectly adequate to all the purposes of your entertainment and instruction, I am yet desirous that you should, at the same time, undertake the perusal of some of the original authorities. I will mention such as I think you may read.

. The subject teems with striking events and characters, of which too much cannot well be known. Columbus, for instance, seems to have been a man whose merit was above all praise; whose character, if we consider the very extraor-

dinary energy which it both possessed and exhibited, was yet so tempered and chastised, as to be rendered faultless, to a degree of which there is in history no parallel; of such a man every original notice is invaluable. There is a life of him by his son; it is not long, is easily found, continually referred to by Robertson; and on these accounts I recommend it to your perusal. A translation of it is given in the second volume of Churchill's *Voyages*. A son of Columbus might, perhaps, have been expected to have said more of such a father; but there is a simplicity in what is said, and an attention to the paramount importance of precision and truth, that render every word of consequence. When men who have communications of real interest to deliver to the world, are not regular writers, their narratives only gain a new interest from the very manner, imperfect and unadorned, in which they are conveyed. On these occasions we want only facts and observations: the facts that occurred, and the observations to which they gave rise at the moment. In original works, the finer the manufacture the more suspicious is the article.

In the five chapters between the fourth and the tenth, of the *Life of Columbus*, may be traced the manner in which, this extraordinary man at last persuaded himself, that the *East Indies* might be found by sailing westward.

It is surely curious to observe, the wavering and unexpected streams of light, that penetrated through the great mass of darkness that lay before the contemplation of Columbus; the strange mixture of ancient authority and of modern report, of fable and fact, of truth and falsehood, out of which this enthusiastic, yet reasonable, projector was to create, as well as he could, conclusions convincing to himself, and, if possible, satisfactory to others.

But it is not only curious, but useful; that we may learn to understand the workings of the human mind in extraordinary situations, surrounded by conjectures and possibilities, fair deductions, and mistaken inferences; and wandering, as it were, alone and unprotected over the doubtful confines of the reason and the imagination.

In this manner we may be taught the respect that is always due to the suggestions and plans, however wild and imperfect

they may at first appear, of schemers and projectors of every description—men often of original and powerful minds, who must be listened to with patience, and soothed and assisted by our calmer reflections, not ridiculed or repelled by indifference and scorn. Every encouragement ought always to be afforded to creative genius; and amid a world where every thing may be obtained by enterprise, and nothing without it, no chance should be lost for the accommodation of our nature, and the progress of human prosperity.

Reflections like these are but confirmed by the chapters which succeed in the work now alluded to. “The king of Portugal gave ear,” says the biographer, “to the admiral’s proposals; but at last resolved to send a caravel *privately* to attempt what had been proposed to him; and the navigators employed,” says the recital, “after many days wandering upon the sea, turned back to the islands of Cape Verd, laughing at the undertaking, and saying that it was impossible that there should be any land in those seas.”

In this manner were to be treated the elevated views and generous nature of Columbus. When no further hope therefore remained for him in Portugal, and when his plans were, in consequence, submitted to the Spanish court, the observations of those judges who were appointed to decide upon a man like this—a man whom they were totally unworthy to estimate, appear to have been these; I will give them to you, because they are specimens of human reasoning on all such new occasions, and therefore instructive.

“That since, in so many thousand years that had passed since the creation, so many skilful sailors had got no knowledge of such countries, it was not likely that the admiral should know more than all that were then, or had been before.” Others said, “That the world was so prodigious great, that it was incredible three years’ sail would bring him to the end of the east;” and Seneca, it seems, was quoted against him. Others argued, “That if any man should sail straight away westward, as the admiral proposed, he would not be able to return into Spain, because of the roundness of the globe.”

The argument that follows, and which I will mention, may appear at first ludicrous, but it should rather serve to show.

you, as may the others, the manner in which a cause is prejudged by ignorance and indolence. "They looked upon it," they said, "as most certain, that whoever should go out of the hemisphere known to Ptolemy, would go down, and then it would be impossible to return;" affirming, "that it would be like climbing a hill, which ships could not do with the stiffest gale."

The admiral, as we are told by his biographer, sufficiently solved all these objections; but it was in vain that he solved them—it was in vain that this Hercules, in the infancy of his fame, strangled the serpents that hissed around his cradle. He retired—he was obliged to retire. Five years were to be wasted in these fruitless endeavours to satisfy and inform these arbiters of his fate; and he was then to be dismissed with a civil rejection of his proposals.

Yet some there were, as it appears, who were not insensible to the merit of this great man; and he himself remained collected and unmoved, confident of success, and not to be beaten down by ignorance or insult. The assistance of Queen Isabella was procured for him, however, slowly, by his protectors; and he became, at length, the great Columbus of history, who unveiled to us the surface of our planet, and showed a new world to the civilized portion of mankind.

There is here surely much of encouragement to be found for the patrons of genius; much of animating instruction for genius itself; much of admonition to the presumptuous stupidity of inferior minds.

The same interest, and the same moral belong to the succeeding chapters. These describe the voyage of this fearless navigator over an ocean, pathless and unknown; where every new occurrence was to his sailors an object of terror, and a reason for an instant abandonment of the enterprise. If the weeds appeared, it was that rocks were concealed; if they thickened, that their progress must soon become impossible; if the winds were steady and favourable, it was to preclude them from all hopes of return; if the magnetic needle varied, it was that nature was no longer nature; and to please whom, his companions asked themselves, and for what purpose, were these intolerable terrors to be endured?

It is clear from the narrative, that nothing but the extraordinary merit of Columbus saved him from destruction; and that no human powers of sagacity, fortitude, and skill, could have longer preserved him from the very natural despair of his sailors, when land at last appeared.

Great military captains and conquerors have been often able to govern the minds of those around them, in situations of the most trying difficulty and danger. But they are themselves animated by fierce and impetuous passions, so are their followers. Both leaders and followers on these occasions, have at least land on which they can tread, and they have their swords in their hands. It may at least be known where, and how, they are to perish; and they are in perils and alarms which others have experienced before them.

But Columbus was a man of benevolent temper, and peaceful mind; with no resentments to exasperate his feelings, no lust of empire to inflame his reason; animated only with the pure and innocent enthusiasm of a projector, with the commendable love of true glory, and with sentiments of piety to his Creator. His associates were to be controlled in the midst of an ocean, which no beings but themselves have ever presumed to enter. There was nothing near them but the sea and the clouds; nothing above, below, or around them, but uncertainty, danger, or death. They were exiled from all existence: enterprise seemed no longer to have any meaning, courage any object. There was nothing on which they could fix their eyes, and no enemy whom they could attempt to subdue, but standing before them, Columbus himself, single and unprotected; a man of like nature with themselves, and the cause of all their sufferings.

The merit of Columbus does not yet cease. The land had been discovered, his projects successful; and he was then, on his return to be overtaken by a tempest, which threatened every moment to bury at once and for ever himself, his companions, and his fame. In this last and most overpowering calamity of all, he writes, and commits to the chance of the waves, the letter addressed to his sovereigns, the letter so justly celebrated, the monument of that presence of mind, that piety, and that fortitude, which the visible approach of death, not only to himself, but his fame, could not disturb,

LECTURE III

and the situation of disappointment or affliction could apparently destroy.

Pursuing his history, it is evident that an ordinary man would have been soon overpowered by the rebellions and mutinies which he had to encounter; and even the mind of Columbus himself must be considered as fortunate in the use he made of the natural phenomenon of an eclipse to extricate himself from his dangers in the island of Jamaica.

And as if nothing were to be wanting to recommend this extraordinary man to the regard of posterity, to the tenderness as well as admiration of future ages, he was destined to lead a life continually chequered with difficulties and defeats, disappointments and injuries; marked with the most brilliant success, but marked also by misfortunes of the most overpowering nature, and outrages not to be endured; to have inscribed, indeed, upon his tomb, by the command of his sovereign, that he had given Spain a new world; but to have buried with him in the same tomb, the fetters in which he had been sent home as a public offender and a convicted criminal.

What I have now said will give you a glimpse (a most imperfect one) of the first memorable enterprise, the subsequent fortunes, and the extraordinary merits of Columbus: it was written many years ago, and I have now, in 1828, had my attention called to the *Life of Columbus*, by Mr. Washington Irving. By the accession of his volumes, we have now the biography of Columbus; as by Robertson's work we before had, and still have, the history. Mr. Irving's has been to me a very interesting production, sometimes marked with passages of great force and beauty; and it contains every thing respecting Columbus that can be wanted. He has had valuable sources of information, which he describes, and which were not within the reach of Robertson. Still, his volumes only show, as usual, the merits of Robertson. Upon looking over the historian's account once more, I see no mistakes, and no material omissions; in a concise and calm manner every particular of importance is intimated to the reader; and Mr. Irving has only told in the detail (but in a very interesting and agreeable manner and I recommend his volumes to you) what our excellent historian had told before.

Having thus alluded to the first and great hero of the general subject, I must proceed to other parts of it. I come next to the conquest of Mexico.

We have here, also, original authorities, which may be procured and read.

In the first place it must be observed, that the great repository of all original documents respecting the new world is the Italian collection of Ramusio, the work quoted by Robertson. Here will be found translated the letters of Cortez to his sovereign; memorials that so particularly deserve our consideration. The first letter seems lost, but it is sufficiently clear that it was not of any great consequence. The second is of the greatest importance. There was a Latin translation made of two of these letters (the second and third; there are in all four) so early as in 1524, in *the time* of Cortez, but the book is now very rare. It has lately been bought for our public library.

Another original authority we have in the work of Bernal Diaz del Castillo, a faithful follower and fellow-soldier of Cortez; a translation of which has been made by Mr. Keating, and was published in London in 1800.

And lastly, as a comment upon the whole, we have the work of Clavigero, which has been translated.

The history of Herrera, to which Robertson so constantly refers, is to be found, in the original Spanish, in some of our libraries; and some of the *decades*, particularly those which relate to Mexico, have been translated into French. There is an English translation of the work of Herrera by Stephens, in six volumes, octavo, published in 1725.

I would recommend the second letter, at least, of Cortez to be perused. It is unfortunately too much after the manner of a state paper, and transactions are related in that general, official style, which precludes those details, that enumeration of minute circumstances, those passing discoveries of personal feelings, which, when a distinguished man is giving his own history to his friend or even to the world, often render his account a study for all subsequent ages. Still the letters of Cortez are an authentic, though summary, relation of his proceedings from the planting of the colony at Vera Cruz to the conquest of the Mexican empire and the discovery of

the South Sea. And when we know the facts from him and from other sources, it must always be a subject of some entertainment and curiosity to observe how such a man could represent such facts to his court.

In reading the achievements of Cortez, as in reading the life of Columbus, it is to be wished that the mind should forget, if possible, its knowledge of the events; for by this temporary oblivion alone, can we feel all the interest of the story, and perceive the full merit of these Spanish conquerors.

This merit is not merely that of other conquerors, the courage and skill which can attack and overpower the enemies that appear before them; in addition to this merit, they have one (unless perhaps the enterprise of Alexander against India be thought of the same nature), exclusively their own—that of marching forward into an immense country, totally ignorant of what they were to expect, by what enemies they were to be attacked, by what dangers assailed. They were landed on the edge of a continent, and then to proceed among nations of whom they knew nothing, over a tract of country which they had to discover, uncertain of their provisions, or of any proper sources of intelligence. It is quite an event, for instance, in this history, that by a fortunate accident they acquired the means of understanding the Mexican language. If they were worsted, how were they to retreat? But even if they conquered, what were they afterwards to do? Were they to remain in the capital of an unknown empire, supposing they could get possession of it, five hundred men in that insulated situation to keep millions of men in subjection!

This appears to me the more appropriate merit of Cortez and his followers, and the extraordinary interest of this history. At every moment the reader may stop and ask himself what must be the *next* result? What measure is Cortez *next* to adopt? What will the Indians *now* attempt? This sort of sensation of uncertainty, of indistinct and strange expectation, which so belongs to this history, is not conveyed to a reader by the formal narrative of Cortez himself, but it is to a certain degree by Bernal Diaz; and it would be *entirely* so, if he had not mixed and confused the parts of his story.

The consequence of this want of proper distinctness and arrangement is, that the reader is not properly conducted from step to step gradually and slowly, seeing nothing before him, nothing but the ground on which he stands, and therefore as uncertain as the Spaniards must themselves have been of what was next to follow. This want of arrangement in Bernal Diaz is unfortunate. The defect, however, is properly supplied by Robertson, whose relation, as it ought to do, gradually awakens, and then duly gratifies, expectation and anxiety.

But to return to the letters of Cortez, and to give a specimen or two of their contents.

And, first, it may be curious to observe the sentiments by which these plunderers and destroyers of innocent nations conceived themselves to be actuated. After having made a certain progress in the country, the soldiers, when they saw the numbers and the courage of their new enemies, murmured aloud that it was folly to proceed, that retreat would soon be impossible, and that they would leave Cortez to go alone if he persisted in his impracticable enterprise.

“I told them to be of good courage,” says Cortez, in his second letter; “to remember that they were the subjects of your majesty; that Spaniards had never been wanting in proper spirit; that we were so happily situated, that ours would be the fortune to acquire for your majesties greater kingdoms and empires than the whole world could elsewhere furnish; that we ought to behave ourselves like good men, and like Christians who were to be rewarded by supreme felicity in the life to come—by greater honour and renown in this, than any other nation had ever acquired; and that they were to consider the assistance which was afforded us by that Almighty with whom nothing was impossible, and who evidenced his favour to our cause by the victories which he vouchsafed to us—so fatal to the enemy, so bloodless to ourselves.”

Such were the motives which Cortez produced to his sovereigns. He omits another, which he certainly produced to his soldiers, the prospect of gold and plunder; no doubt the never-ceasing and strongly exciting cause of all that astonishing perseverance which the Spaniards, already brave,

exhibited in the discovery and conquests of the new world.

Again, Cortez, as he proceeded in his enterprise, clearly perceived that though he had a powerful monarch and an immense empire to oppose in Montezuma and Mexico, still that he should find allies as he went along, and that, therefore, success was at least not impossible. "It was with the greatest pleasure," says he, "that I saw their dissensions and animosities, for a way was thus opened me for their subjection. From the mountain proceeds, according to the proverb, what burns the mountain; and the kingdom, says the gospel, that is divided against itself, cannot stand."

One of the most daring achievements of the military skill and policy of Cortez was the seizure of Montezuma in his palace at mid-day. He takes no pains to varnish over this transaction to his court; to such a court (that of the emperor Charles V.) it would have been unnecessary. "I thought," says Cortez, "that it would be of material consequence, and conduce to the advancement of your majesty's state, and very much to our protection and security, if the aforesaid Lord Montezuma was placed within my power."

He mentions the pretences he made use of; but he hurries over, with all possible brevity, the distress and expostulations of the unfortunate emperor. "There was a long altercation between us," says he, "on these points; and it would be tedious to enumerate what passed on each side."

From a word that escapes Cortez, and from a single word only, may be conjectured the effect that was produced on the nobles by this extraordinary outrage on the majesty of their sovereign. "In the deepest silence and with tears they placed him on his litter!"—"fientes lecticæ imposuerunt."

Cortez says nothing of the real intrepidity and hardiness of this transaction; and Cæsar himself relates not his exploits with a more distant neutrality than through the whole of these letters does the conqueror of Mexico. But Bernal Diaz del Castillo, who is more disposed to do himself justice, cannot help observing, "Now let the curious consider upon our heroic actions; first, in destroying our ships, and therewith all hope of retreat; secondly, in entering the city of Mexico after the alarming warnings that we had received;

thirdly, in daring to make prisoner the great Montezuma, king of all that country, in his own capital, and in the centre of his own palace, and putting the king in irons during the execution (the execution of Montezuma's officers). Now that I am old, I frequently revolve and reflect upon the events of that day, which appear to me as 'fresh as if they had just passed, such is the impression they have made upon my mind. I say that it was not we who did these things, but that all was guided by the hand of God; for what men on earth would otherwise have ventured, their numbers not amounting to four hundred and fifty, to have seized and put in irons a mighty monarch, and publicly burned his officers for obeying his orders, in a city larger than Venice, and at a distance of a thousand and five hundred leagues from their native country!! There is much matter for reflection in this, and it merits to be detailed otherwise than in the dry manner in which I relate it."—Bernal Diaz, page 158.

The horrible outrage to which Bernal Diaz here alludes certainly took place. Montezuma was obliged to deliver up to Cortez the officers who by his own order had fallen upon a party of the Spaniards, and had put some of them to death. Cortez ordered these unfortunate subjects and defenders of an invaded monarch to be burnt alive, he saw the sentence executed, and he even threw Montezuma himself into chains.

Even these transactions he relates in no apologetical manner; he seems to think it sufficient that Montezuma's officers had killed the Spaniards; no further crime was necessary in them: and that Montezuma had ordered them to do so; this was an offence sufficient in *him*. "Et hoc modo," these were his words, "fuerunt publicè in plateâ sine aliquo tumultu aut seditione combusti." Again: "Eodem die quo combusti fuèrè, Montezuma in compedes collocari jussi."

The last scene of degradation for Montezuma yet remained; he was publicly to acknowledge himself the vassal of the king of Spain. Here Cortez does not disguise, for it enhanced his own merit with the court, the mortification and pangs of an outraged monarch and his insulted people. He gives the speech of Montezuma; it was no doubt dictated to him by Cortez. Its purport was to show that the master of

Cortez was the true descendant of the original head of the Mexican race to whom they owed allegiance. "Such were the words," says Cortez, "which he delivered, with tears and sighs more and more deep than any tongue can adequately tell." The nobles participated in the anguish of their sovereign, and even the Spaniards themselves, the unfeeling arbiters of his fate, could not escape from the contagion of the general sympathy. Nothing, it is probable, but such passions as avarice and ambition could have kept them firm to their purpose.

In this second letter of Cortez may be also found a description of the city of Mexico. The facts he states are many and curious. The single fact of his seeing more than sixty thousand people every day meeting in a place for the purposes of buying and selling, is quite sufficient to indicate the general civilization and importance of any community. "Est in eadem civitate platea ubi quotidie ultra sexaginta millia hominum vendentium ementiumque cernuntur."

The third letter contains the account of the protracted siege and final contest of the city of Mexico. The bravery of Guatimozin, the virtuous Hector of his Troy, is noted by Cortez; but there is no account of the subsequent transactions which relate to this unfortunate prince, and which have consigned the principal followers of Cortez, and even Cortez himself, to the eternal reprobation of mankind.

The work of Bernal Diaz has been described by Robertson, and must, by the recommendation of such an author as Robertson, be sufficiently introduced to your curiosity. I know of no portion of this original work that can be well omitted, as the whole is not long, and as it is not an historian writing, but an old soldier talking to us, deeply impressed, and very naturally impressed, with his own merits and those of his companions, and with the extraordinary scenes in which he had been engaged. It is not easy to turn away from a recital which, however rambling and often confused, bears always its own internal evidence of fairness and truth. "Let the wise and learned," says this honest veteran, "read my history from beginning to end, and they will then confess that there never existed in the world men, who by bold achievements have gained more for their lord and king than

we the brave conquerors, amongst the most valiant of whom I was considered as one, and am the most ancient of all. I say again, that I—I myself—I am a true conqueror, and the most ancient of all."—Bernal Diaz, page 501.

The narrative of Bernal Diaz is always more minute and artless, and therefore very often of greater value, than even the letters of Cortez; and there is scarcely a point which can attract our curiosity that is not in some part or other touched upon.

In the two quartos of the work of Clavigero, the three last chapters of the first volume, the fifth, sixth, and seventh, are worth reading and may be compared with Robertson. His preface should be looked at, and the list of authors and original authorities. Most of the second volume is also worth reading; and it is very agreeable, and in some respects instructive, to compare together Bernal Diaz, Clavigero, and Robertson. Clavigero is too minute, and Robertson perhaps not enough so.

For the next division of the general subject, the conquest of Peru, I cannot but consider the account of Robertson as sufficient. Pizarro was, after all, a vulgar conqueror, and is from the first detested, though he seizes upon our respect, and retains it in defiance of ourselves, from the powerful and decisive nature of his courage and of his understanding.

The Peruvians, too, excite in us no emotions but those of the most genuine compassion. They repel not our imagination, as do the Mexicans, by the abominable rites of their superstition; but neither, on the other hand, do they occupy our respect by any proper defence of their country.

When the facts of the discovery and conquest of the new world have been thus investigated, the original subject of interest should then again present itself to your consideration. In this new world we have races of men who were never before suspected to have been in existence. Are they, then, like ourselves? If different, in what respect different? Are there any new principles in human nature to be here discovered, or is there only to be seen a confirmation of the old? What materials are here supplied for the consideration of the statesman, the moralist, the metaphysician? It is with this sort of speculating spirit that the history of the

new world and of its inhabitants should be considered anew, after the curiosity which belongs to the *mere narrative* has been once satisfied.

Robertson, in his references and in his own very calm and intelligent observations, opens a wide field for meditation to a contemplative mind, and has neither declined nor treated unworthily this important part of his general subject.

But no observation upon it can be expected from me when it has not only been discussed by such a writer, but is in itself too extensive for a lecture.

On the whole, the distinction which Dr. Robertson has made between the inhabitants of Mexico and Peru and all the *other* more rude nations of America, will be found to contribute materially to a clear view of the whole subject.

With respect to these latter (the more savage nations), I would recommend, in addition to the pages of Robertson, the notes in Murphy's translation of Tacitus, "De Moribus Germanorum."

These will afford you a general idea of the uniform effect of natural and moral causes upon human beings, by the comparison which is there exhibited between the characters and manners of our savage ancestors in the woods of Germany with the savages in the woods of America.

But with respect both to these more savage nations and also to the Mexicans and the Peruvians, I may remark, on the whole, that in this new world, as in our own, it is still the *same* human nature which appears before us. The metaphysician will find the human being still furnished with ideas exactly in proportion to his sources of sensation and reflection, and the *same* pervading influence of the principle of association. The moralist will see, in like manner, the same original feeling of selfishness, modified more or less by the social feeling; the same hopes and fears, pleasures and pains, affections and passions. The naturalist will perceive the same influence of climate; and the statesman, of political institution. There are, no doubt, some very remarkable varieties in the Peruvian character, not only of a physical, but of an intellectual nature; more, indeed, than Robertson can entirely explain; but his knowledge of the political situation of the Peruvians, at the time of his *visit*, is *very* imperfect.

and our knowledge of the effect and operation of climate not adequate to the discussion of the subject.

It may be added, with a reference to Robertson's account, that the difficulty is not how the Mexican superstition became ferocious and terrible, but how the Peruvian could have ever been mild and innocent; and he gives a description of the state of property in the Peruvian nation which is scarcely to be understood—not at all, but upon the supposition that the Peruvians, with respect to waste land, were still in the situation of the inhabitants of a new country.

On the whole, it may be observed, that after we have entered upon the history of this new world, and for some time accompanied the march of Cortez, we perceive that it is our own fellow mortals with whom we are still concerned; and that we might in many respects conceive ourselves to be still reading the history of Europe. We find a large tract of country divided into different states; we see different forms of government, republics and monarchies, a sort of feudal system, an aristocracy, different ranks and professions, wars and insurrections, conquests and rebellions, and the inhabitants of the new world not distinguishable in their principles of political action from the nations we are already acquainted with in the old.

The first impression, too, of wonder with which we hear of the conquest of a whole continent by a handful of Spaniards, abates as we proceed. Cortez conquered the great empire of Mexico as much by his Indian allies as by his European followers. That empire, it appears, had spread its conquests far and wide, and had every where become an object of hatred or terror by its ambition and harsh government. The fall of Mexico is only one instance in the new world, to be added to all those in the old, of the impolicy of such harsh government, and of such unprincipled ambition.

When the Spaniards appeared, the superiority of their arms and discipline made them to be considered, and indeed actually rendered them, for all purposes of war, superior beings. In the battles of Homer, the only difference between the celestial and terrestrial combatants, was that the former cannot be killed. The same was the difference between the Europeans and their opponents. For instance, the Indians had such a superiority

of numbers in one of the engagements, that Bernal Diaz declares "they might have buried the Spaniards under the dirt they held in their hands." But it appears, from the account of the same eye-witness, that when the field was afterwards walked over and examined, there were eight hundred Indians lying dead or dying of their wounds, and only two Europeans, one by a wound in the ear, and another by one in the throat.

The wonder is rather that the Mexicans defended their empire so well, when we consider the nature of the Spanish soldiery; and the unfortunate description of the character of Montezuma.

Pizarro, in like manner, had every necessary advantage over the Peruvians; a disputed succession, a civil war raging in the country, allies wherever he moved, and a people so inferior in the military art, that these new invaders were here also considered, and very naturally considered, as more than human.

One topic, among many others, connected with the discovery and conquest of the new world, is that of the cruelties which were exercised by the Spaniards upon the defenceless Indians. These cruelties, while they have left an eternal stain on the Spanish name, have consigned to immortality the virtuous labours of Las Casas, the celebrated bishop of Chiapa. His efforts in the cause of suffering humanity make a short but interesting portion of the history of Robertson. The bishop's own book will, I think, disappoint expectation. It is somewhat too declamatory and sweeping in its statements. This mode of writing and of statement, however, rather presupposes, than invalidates the general truth of the account. It is natural for a man to write thus, who is full of his subject, and of the heinousness and extent of the crimes he is reprobating. Such a man feels calmness and detail and minuteness impossible, and a sort of insult on his feelings.

The empires of Mexico and Peru, their situation and conquest, are the great, and indeed the only subjects in the history of the Spanish achievements that deserve our study. But here are other subjects connected with the East and West Indies, that must be attended to, and on which I must, before I conclude, refer you to some sources of information.

While the Spaniards were stretching away to the west, the

Portuguese, who had been for some time creeping down the coast of Africa, at length doubled the Cape, finding in Vasco de Gama and Albuquerque, the Columbus and the Cortez of the Eastern Indies.

On this subject, information will be found in a few pages of the fifty-seventh chapter of Russel; and a more elaborate account (though not more than should be read), in the first three sections of the eighth volume of the Modern History. Dr. Robertson's last work on India should be read, as a very complete introduction to the whole.

As the Spaniards went round the world in one direction, and the Portuguese in another they at length met; and their concerns and conquests became extremely entangled. On this subject there is a great deal more than can well be considered in the eighth volume of the Modern History. There is an account of the Brazils in Harris's voyages. The Brazils had been seized upon by the Portuguese. When Portugal fell under the dominion of the Spanish crown, the Dutch made their appearance every where as the invaders of the possessions of their enemies. Of their conquests, settlements, and discoveries, a sufficient account is given in the thirty-third chapter of the Modern History.

A very tedious detail is also given of the history of the English East India Company, and all these subjects are briefly dispatched in the eleventh letter of Russel. *

All these works refer to more elaborate accounts, which may be consulted, if necessary.

But the more interesting part of the *English* achievements in these new worlds was their attempt to establish settlements in *North America*. Of this very curious subject a very adequate idea may be formed from the beginning of a great work which Dr. Robertson did not live to finish, and which has been since very properly published by his son. The references will conduct you to the original and more circumstantial histories of others.

The first half of the first volume of the *Life of Washington*, lately published by Mr. Marshall, will be sufficient to supply what Dr. Robertson did not attempt to give.

The work of Raynal treats of every thing that can be sought for connected with these subjects. But as the author comprehended in his plan such an extensive field of inquiry,

it was not possible that he should not be often inaccurate; and as he does not cite his authorities (an unpardonable omission) he suffers the fate of Voltaire, and is seldom quoted but to be reprehended.

If, however, the student will pursue through the work all the great leading historical events, without troubling himself with the Abbé's exclamations and superfluous eloquence, and without depending on the minuter parts of his relation, there can be no doubt that these celebrated volumes, thus perused, will be found not only agreeable, but highly useful.

And now I must allude, in a few words, to a celebrated and somewhat singular work, of which the title is, "The Account of the European Settlements in America." I would recommend the perusal of this work before the details, I have proposed, have been begun; and again, after they have been gone through; i. e. I would recommend the perusal of it twice. It may be a map of the subject in the first instance, and a summary in the second.

This work has been always understood to be the work of Mr. Burke. Indeed, it could be attributed to no man of the period in which it was published, though a sort of Augustan age in England, but him. From the ease of the narrative, and the beauty of its observations, it might have belonged to Goldsmith. But there is a greater acquaintance with the commerce and politics of the European nations, than could well be supposed, even in an author whose pen could touch upon every thing, and upon every thing with success. Add to this, that the rapid and fine philosophy, the careless spirit, and all that affluence of mind which so uniformly distinguished the works of Burke, are all as clearly discernible in many parts of this anonymous and unpolished production, as in any of the most regular performances of that extraordinary man. As the work proceeds, the subjects diminish in real interest; and the delight, though not always the instruction, of the reader, diminishes also. It has been said, and with much appearance of probability, that these volumes were written by Burke in conjunction with his brother, who had lived in the West Indies, and who must have had much local and valuable information to communicate; that the heavier parts were consigned by the orator to his more humble associate, and

that after treating himself the more interesting topics in the earlier part of the work, he did no more than revise and retouch the remainder.

The great misfortune of the work is, that subjects which deserved all the powers of Burke are often dispatched in too summary a manner. The great defect, that the author announces not his own sources of information, and leaves his readers without a wish to inquire after any other works but Harris's Collection of Voyages, and Lasiteau; valuable works, no doubt; but Mr. Burke might have assisted an inquirer with his observations on all the writers and documents which he had consulted; and such observations would have been inferior in value only to the work itself.

During the period which we are now considering, the commerce of the world, and its knowledge, were rapidly progressive. There are those who have a pleasure in tracing out the steps which lead to permanent alterations and improvements in the concerns of mankind. To minds of this speculative and superior cast, the early collections of voyages may be recommended—Hackluyt and Purchas. Works like these are very curious monuments of the nature of human enterprises; human testimony and credulity; of the nature of the human mind and of human affairs. Much more is, indeed, offered to a refined and philosophic observer, though buried amid this unwieldy and unsightly mass, than was ever supposed by its original readers, or even its first compilers.

In addition to the sort of interest which belongs to these ancient accounts of the first efforts of discoverers and settlers, in the latter volumes of Purchas will be found very valuable abridgments of the original accounts relative to the achievements of the Spaniards in South America, particularly a curious exhibition of the Mexican painting; and a very sufficient, though too favourable idea may be here formed of Las Casas' book, of which the greatest part is given. These collections of voyages were followed by the collections of Churchill and Harris. But you must note, that when Harris's work is quoted, it is the last edition, not the first, that is referred to.

Before I conclude, I must observe that this most extensive subject of the conquests and settlements of the European nations in the East and West Indies divides itself into two

What were the conquests and discoveries of modern history? Secondly, What were the consequences of these discoveries and conquests?

With respect to the first part of the subject, I have already endeavoured to introduce my hearers to such works as I conceive will be adequate to their information.

The second part of the subject (the consequences) belongs to the remaining portion of modern history.

The discovery of these new tracts of country, these new sources of affluence and strength, as they were every where considered, necessarily affected, and has never ceased to affect, the politics of the nations of Europe. A new object of observation is thus opened to the philosophic reader of history; and this is to be added to those which have before occupied his attention.

Modern history thus appears to me to present two great fields of investigation,—the progress of the human mind, and the progress of human prosperity.

The progress of the human mind, as seen in the advancement of literature and science, and as seen in the different modes, which the European nations have adopted for administering the blessings of government and religion; to be traced, it must be confessed, through the wars and the disputes, foreign and domestic, which such most serious, most interesting subjects could not fail to occasion.

The progress of human prosperity, as seen in the growth, multiplication, and extension of the accommodations of life; to be traced, it must also be confessed, through systems of unenlightened legislation; through monopolies and restrictions; and what is still more to be lamented, through atrocious enterprises of cruelty and conquest. To the former of these subjects—to the fortunes of the civil and religious liberties of mankind, we have hitherto more particularly adverted: for they form the most important and critical portion of the first part of modern history.

But the latter, the subject of the internal trade, manufactures, commercial greatness, and rivalry of the different states of Europe, must hereafter share also our attention. When united they constitute the great interest and instruction of the more modern history of Europe and of the world.

LECTURE XXX

1811.

WILLIAM III.

THE great subject of all history is the civil and religious liberties of mankind, for on these depend their intelligence, their prosperity, their happiness, private and public; and hence arises the extraordinary interest which belongs to the era of our Revolution. In consequence of that most fortunate event, these liberties were in England asserted with a success unexampled in the history of the nations of the earth; and we must now therefore proceed to consider, as we have already in part done, how far they were at that period of 1688 adjusted and established, and what was their subsequent progress.

The first object of our attention is the reign of William III. Then follows that of Queen Anne, both very critical.

This will appear very evident to those who examine them with any care, more particularly to those who have the faculty of placing themselves in the scenes that they see described by the historian, a faculty of great consequence to those who are to read history.

In the present lecture, I shall first mention the books that must be either consulted or read. I shall then make some observations on the parties by which these and subsequent periods have been distinguished.

I shall then allude to some of the constitutional questions which occurred in the reign of William, such as were *then* of importance, and such as I conceive will be *ever* of importance to the inhabitants of this country, while their free and mixed form of government remains.

And now when we enter upon the reign of William, we have no longer the assistance of the philosophic Hume. We have

no longer within our reach those penetrating observations; those careless and inimitable beauties, which were so justly the delight of Gibbon, and which, with whatever prejudices they may be accompanied, and however suspicious may be those representations which they sometimes enforce and adorn, still render the loss of his pages a subject of the greatest regret, and leave a void which it is impossible adequately to supply.

In the absence of Hume, the histories of Dr. Somerville will be found very useful, nor are they as yet sufficiently known, nor duly estimated.

Belsham will, I think, in like manner be found, for a considerable part of his work, very valuable: spirited, intelligent, an ardent friend to civil and religious liberty, and though apparently a dissenter, not a sectarian. In his latter volumes, indeed, from the breaking out of the late French war in 1793, he has departed from the equanimity of an historian, and has degenerated into the warmth, and almost the rage of a party writer.

Of these authors (Somerville and Belsham) the use to the student will be the same. They will show him those more important subjects of reflection which the detail of the history contains; they will offer to him observations generally very judicious, and always the results of much more labour and investigation than he will himself be disposed to undertake. These more important subjects may, whenever occasion requires, be followed up in their references; and some of them may be investigated in this more complete manner, on account of their own general importance, and as a portion of the proper labour of a philosophic reader of history.

For the *detail*, Tindal will be found not unworthy to be the successor of Rapin; equally diligent and copious, with the same attachment to the best interests of Englishmen, and, like his predecessor, a sort of general substitute, in the absence of other writers.

But the great historian for detail, even more than Tindal, is Ralph. Such subjects as may be thought, from the representations of Belsham and Somerville, to be important may be read with much advantage in this author; ill-humoured,

no doubt, but laborious and impartial. Indeed, the whole work should be looked over, though it cannot, and for general purposes, it need not be regularly read. Burnet must, of course, be diligently perused, as an eye-witness and actor in the scene; his merits and defects seem to remain in this part of his history, what they were from the first. He is often blamed, but his reports and representations are seldom without their reasonableness or their foundation, and must always be at least taken into account. Of late the credit of Burnet, even for accuracy, has been rising; and since I drew up this lecture, a new edition of the work has been very properly published at Oxford, in which, for the first time, are given the abusive notes of Swift, the unfriendly comments of Lord Dartmouth, and the very excellent and constitutional observations of Speaker Onslow.

Cobbett will supply the debates. In the appendix to the fifth volume, there are several tracts published which will give an idea of the views of reasoners and statesmen at the time; and there is not one of them which will not be found, in some way or other, valuable; more particularly Lord Shaftesbury's tract, No. 1, containing his objections to the representation of the House of Commons, and a scheme for its reform. Lord Somers' No. 4; his explanation and vindication of the merits of the Revolution, and the subsequent system. Mr. Hampden's No. 6; a general description of the state of public opinion at the time and of the constitution, and against an excise. Mr. Lawton's No. 9 is a sort of specimen of the discontents of the Whigs. In No. 13 will be found all the arguments in favour of the liberty of the press. No. 15 is worth reading, and particularly Nos. 17 and 18, the Kentish petition, &c.

The leading views, that I should propose to the student, of the reign of William, are these:—Supposing himself, as usual, to be unacquainted with all subsequent events, he is to consider as the great object before him: first, the liberties of England; secondly, the liberties of the Continent; that is, in other words, first, whether the Revolution of 1688 was destined to succeed; whether the exiled family was to be restored: secondly, whether the ambition of Louis, whether the aggrandisement of France, was to be checked. These

time, for Louis to see a sufficient chance of success, unless some insurrection first encouraged his interference. It was not easy for the parties to combine their measures and views. The personal character of James was ill fitted to recommend his cause. The character of William, on the contrary, was marked by great qualities which were worthy of the confidence of brave and intelligent men. The friends of James were even divided in their political sentiments: some who were friends to him meant (so endless are the mistakes of men on political subjects) to be friends (can it be believed?) to the constitution, and by no means to establish arbitrary power. William was often absent from England, and the regency of Queen Mary was, on these occasions, conducted with a prudence and moderation that gained friends among every party in the nation, not to mention that she was the eldest daughter of the exiled monarch; and her rule was, therefore, more agreeable to the prejudices of the Tories. Her death only united the interests of William and the Princess Anne; and set the exiled family at a greater distance by intercepting their more immediate return, and giving an opportunity of securing the descent of the crown in a line of Protestant successors. Lastly, as the constitution improved, all orders in the state became more and more alienated from the maxims of arbitrary prerogative, and were more and more disposed to a settlement, which gave them a greater share and interest in the constitution of their country.

On the whole, the Revolution in 1688, while William lived, appeared to succeed; and on his death-bed, he had the gratification of reflecting, not only that he had maintained this great cause during his reign, but that he saw, through his exertions, the crown descend to Anne on the principles of the Revolution, and provisions made for its subsequent transmission to the Protestant line, in exclusion of the exiled family.

The next question therefore is, to whom are we indebted for the happy issue of so doubtful an experiment during this most critical period of the reign of William?

On inquiry it will, I think, be found that the greatest share of the merit must be allotted to William himself; but much will still remain to the great Whig leaders, and to their

friends and adherents in the parliament and the nation; very little to the Church and Tory party, who acquiesced in the new order of things, and nothing more; and who negatively, rather than positively, contributed to its establishment. It was on the whole very fortunate for these kingdoms that the growing prosperity of the community had multiplied a description of men in the great cities and commercial and manufacturing towns, who were active, independent, and intelligent; who were therefore favourable to the Whigs, and could be successfully opposed to the landed proprietors; persons of great natural consequence and power, who in general had inherited, with their estates, opinions and feelings unfavourable to the civil and religious interests of mankind, derived from their too literal interpretation of particular texts in the Epistles.

But these conclusions can only be drawn from a consideration of the conduct of all concerned; that is, from the history of the reign. To that history I therefore refer you.

With this inquiry will be found connected another, by no means unworthy of consideration,—the conduct of William with respect to the two great parties then in the state, the Whigs and the Tories.

Every thing which a speculator on human nature could have anticipated with regard to the situation of the Prince of Orange, when he became king, was abundantly realized. William endeavoured to balance between the two parties; to retain the affections of the Whigs, and yet acquire those of the Tories; to give his favour to the one, but not to exclude the other from his kindness.

The propriety and wisdom of his conduct, under all the existing circumstances, can of course be estimated only by a consideration of the history of his reign in all its detail, and must, after all, be not a little decided by the general confidence of the reader in his sagacity and good sense.

But on the whole he failed, and the failure of such a man is an example to show the difficulty of mediating between two parties, and the impossibility of receiving the proper benefit of the talents and virtues of both. No monarch ever possessed more knowledge of human nature, more equanimity, more elevation of mind, than William: yet he

found it impracticable to harmonize to the purposes of his government, men animated by principles and interests so discordant.

But the king, though failing in the manner and to the degree, I have noticed, was successful in the main. He so triumphed over the difficulties of his situation, violent passions on the one side, and unfortunate opinions on the other, that he at least supported the cause of the Revolution; and though his own personal comforts and composure of mind were continually disturbed, and sometimes destroyed, the civil and religious liberties of a great people and of the continent were, with whatever sacrifices, embarrassments, and dangers to himself, asserted and maintained.

This is a merit which will always place him high in the scale of estimation, even when compared with the greatest of his fellow mortals.

On the whole, the first parliament in King William's reign was the conventional parliament, which legalized the Revolution, and enacted the Bill of Rights. But this was the work of the Whigs; and if they had done nothing more, they might, by these merits, have compensated for any subsequent faults, any faults but that of undoing their great work, and bringing the Stuarts back to the throne. This last crime, however, to the liberties of their country they neither did commit, nor endeavour to commit. It is painful, it is disgusting, it is astonishing, to find individuals among them corresponding with the exiled monarch, as if they were disposed to propitiate him, at least, and be considered as his friends rather than as his enemies, if fortune, by any of her unworthy caprices, placed him once more upon the throne. Of this baseness there were too many of them guilty, guilty as individuals; but as a body, and as a party, they were never guilty. They were faithful to England and the best interests of mankind; and they never failed to show a lively sense of the great cause which was at issue, whenever the personal safety of William was in danger, or his throne was seen, as it sometimes was seen, really to shake under him. This is their paramount merit to all succeeding generations: they were the authors, the conductors, and the maintainers of the Revolution.

The reign of Elizabeth is recommended by Hume to the

particular study of those who would wish to understand the nature of the English constitution; so may I think the period before us.

By the Revolution and the Bill of Rights, no doubt, the liberties of the country received a most important advancement. But the constitution was settling, not settled; and questions of great consequence to its interests were agitated during the whole of this reign of William. We have the Civil List, the Place Bill, the Triennial Bill, the Treason Bill, the question of the liberty of the press, the question of standing armies, of the responsibility of ministers, and finally, we have the veto of the king more than once exercised, and even a sort of debate in the commons upon this assertion of the prerogative. We have all these questions making their appearance in the course of a single reign of thirteen years. They comprehend most of the points which belong to the formation of a good government: and it is to these questions, the debates upon them, the conduct of the two parties, and of the king, that I would more particularly wish to call your attention.

But when I recommend it to you to pursue these subjects through the debates of the houses, and in some instances through the statute book, I am obliged to confess that the debates themselves will on these occasions much disappoint your expectations. They have been taken down so imperfectly, that each of the speeches given seems to resemble the hints or heads of a speech put down by a speaker before its delivery, rather than the report of a speech already delivered. Many of the parts are unconnected with each other; the sentences, as they stand, often unintelligible, and passages in the speech of one member replying to passages in the speech of another which do not appear. All this was a necessary consequence of what was at that time considered as a privilege of the house, one which the house ought always to insist upon—the privacy of their debates. Their privilege it is still, and ought always to be, but it is now very properly only insisted upon occasionally, under some particular circumstances that seem to the house to require it. Instances of the assertion of this privilege occurred during this reign in 1694: one Dyer, a news-letter writer, having presumed in his news-

...of the proceedings of the house, as was mentioned to the house, reported, &c. and in the journals appears the following order:—"That no post-letter writers do, in their letters or other papers they compose, presume to intermeddle with the debates or any other proceedings of the house."

No stronger proof need be given of the advanced state not only of society, but of the political situation of the country, than the decided improvement that has gradually taken place in this important particular. An estimate can now be formed, not only of the topics insisted upon by the speakers in either house, but generally of the relative beauty and eloquence of the speeches themselves. The judgment that may now be made; the criticism that may now be exercised, not only on the integrity but on the ability of the members of the two houses, cannot but be of the most salutary consequence to them as well as to the public. Posterity will be able to derive an entertainment and instruction from the parliamentary debates, which is to us, during a long period of our annals, not at all, or but too imperfectly supplied. It is in vain for us to inquire after the parliamentary eloquence of Hampden or Lord Bolingbroke, but after ages will not be entirely without the means of appreciating the powers of the two great orators of our own days—of Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, the Demosthenes and the Cicero of modern history.

But to return. In examining such questions as I have stated to occur in the reign of William, recourse must be had, for want of better materials, to the debates, which may be found in Cobbett; and if reference be had to his authorities, they will be found, properly represented; and concise, broken, and unsatisfactory as they may be, they may still convey much valuable instruction; and from different paragraphs scattered over the speeches of a debate, a general notion may be always formed of the tone and temper of the period before us, and of the progress of the constitution of the country. Blackstone also, and the statute book, must occasionally be referred to. The statute book, it must be always remembered, is itself a history; to a philosophic eye none so instructive. To convert it, however, into a history, requires

leisure and capacity, and knowledge, and very patient habits of reflection and study.

The subject of the civil list is embarrassed by what was then the mixed nature of the revenue of the crown: there is some account of this revenue in Blackstone. But the best notice of it, as far as relates to William's reign, is to be seen in Burnet; and as the passages in his history are characteristic of the times and of the opinions of former statesmen, I recommend them to your perusal.

It appears that the revenue was first given for a year, then for five years, then for life. At last, in the April of 1689, the revenue was properly distinguished into different parts, and it was resolved that six hundred thousand pounds should be allowed for the charge of the civil government, and seven hundred thousand pounds "toward the occasions in charging the navy."

To us, no doubt, it must appear that the distinction between the personal expenses of the sovereign, and those that belong to the state, which were formerly confounded, is not only perfectly just, but somewhat obvious; that it was not only desirable, but necessary, that the crown should be furnished with a regular revenue of its own, either by inheritance or the positive settlement of parliament, and not be left to come continually to the house for pecuniary support, like a dependant on a benefactor.

But the sentiments which our ancestors had imbibed, not only from the analogies and general spirit of the constitution, but from the dreadful lessons of former events, are sufficiently plain from their speeches and resolves on all these occasions, and as such, highly worthy of remark. A Place Bill was brought in; by this bill all members of the House of Commons were incapacitated from holding places of trust and profit; it was brought in by the Whigs, but at a time when they were in opposition. It was rejected by the lords, but only by a very trifling majority, and not till after a very celebrated, though not very valuable or comprehensive speech in favour of it by Lord Mulgrave, which you will see in Cobbett. When the Whigs were in power, it must be observed that the bill was again brought forward, was carried through the houses, and only lost by the positive and very reasonable rejection of the king.

The commons were angry and addressed his Majesty; they received a civil, though evasive reply, and they then proceeded to comment very freely upon this reply, but the power of the veto was not denied, and when the motion for a further and more explicit answer from the king was made, it was very properly overruled by a majority of two hundred and twenty-nine to eighty-eight. The whole proceedings are very curious.

It must be remembered that *this* Place Bill went to incapacitate *all* members of the house from holding posts and places of trust and profit. The bill was modified in this respect afterwards, when it was brought forward in Queen Anne's reign. It is a very different question whether *all*, or whether *some* are to be incapacitated.

The third subject which I mentioned was the Triennial Bill. This bill was in like manner brought forward by the Whigs in the House of Lords. It was passed by the commons two hundred and ten to one hundred and thirty-two on the first reading, and only two hundred to one hundred and sixty-one on the second. The speakers in favour of it seem to have been the Whigs, and the arguments in support of it were all drawn from their school of political reasoning. This bill was also rejected by the king. Two years afterwards, however, the bill was once more carried through the two houses, and at last received the royal assent. This bill, in the ancient parliamentary manner of truck and barter, was coupled with a bill of supply; and the consideration of this supply, united to the expectation of the queen's death, probably procured from the king that assent which he had before so positively denied.

This statute is not, as has been represented, an infringement of any right or custom of annual parliaments. No such right or custom ever existed since the known appearance of the House of Commons; it was, on the contrary, a limitation of the length of parliaments which had been accustomed to sit till the crown thought proper to dissolve them and call a new one; in Charles the Second's time, one and the same parliament sat nearly eighteen years. The statute of William was to limit the continuance of any one parliament to three years; it was a most distinct infringement of the power of the

crown, which in this point, as it then stood, was inordinate; it was felt as an infringement, and so resisted even by William III.

We owe this bill, and this happy alteration of the constitution in this particular respect, to the Whigs, which should be remembered by those who undertake to censure them for their Septennial Bill in the reign of George I.

The Treason Bill was revived and carried. By this bill it was enacted, that the accused should have a copy of his indictment, counsel to plead for him, not be indicted except on the oaths of two witnesses, and within three years of the offence; that a list of the jury should be furnished, and a power to summon witnesses allowed. That provisions like these, so natural and so indispensable to the cause of justice, should be still wanting in the year 1695, and in a country like England, where of all other countries the principles of civil liberty had been most uniformly and successfully vindicated; that enactments like these should still even in this kingdom be wanting, surely forms a very striking proof of the difficulty with which all efforts in the cause of political right can be successfully made. I need surely say nothing of the merit of those men who engage in such attempts, or of the good fortune of the country where such advantages are obtained.

The reign of William is also remarkable for the sentiments and conduct of our ancestors on the subject of a standing army. Their jealousy was such that the king was denied not only the continuance of his defence against Louis XIV., but even his Dutch guards, the companions of his victories and the followers of his doubtful fortunes; an intolerable outrage, he could not but think, on his feelings of natural and honourable attachment. This subject is well treated by Somerville, and in pamphlets and speeches that may be found in Cobbett.

In our own times, with our large masses of manufacturing population, such jealousy is in vain.

The liberty of the press is likewise one of the subjects belonging to this remarkable period. I will dwell a little on the subject, on account of its importance.

The first measure which a country naturally adopts is, to take the regulation of the press into its own hands, or rather to leave the executive magistrate to do so. "It was

therefore, with us, at first regulated by the king's proclamations, prohibitions, charters of privilege and licence, and finally by the decrees of the star-chamber. A licenser is among the first expedients resorted to by a government, and beyond this stage in France the state seems never to have advanced.

So slow is the progress of mankind on such subjects, that even the long parliament, while it demolished the star-chamber, assumed the very powers which the star-chamber had exercised with respect to the licensing of books; and as if the constitution was in this point to be benefited by no variety of change, a licenser was still the expedient *after* the Restoration. This appears from the act made in the year 1662, when the subject fell again under the consideration of the legislature, or rather of Clarendon. The act itself should be perused. It is in the eighth volume of the statutes. A licenser, I must repeat, was still the expedient.

The language of the preamble is the natural language of mankind on these occasions; it is this, "that by the general licentiousness of the late times many evil-disposed persons have been encouraged to print and sell heretical, schismatical, blasphemous, seditious, and treasonable books, &c. &c., for preventing whereof no surer means can be advised than by reducing and limiting the number of printing presses," &c.

And what then is to follow? First, that no person shall presume to print any heretical, seditious, schismatical, or offensive books or pamphlets wherein any doctrine or opinion shall be asserted or maintained, which is contrary to the Christian faith, or the doctrine or discipline of the Church of England, or which shall or may tend, or be, to the scandal of religion or the church, or the government or governors of the church, state, or commonwealth, or of any corporation or particular persons or person whatsoever, nor shall import such books, &c. &c. These are very general and comprehensive terms.

What then were the printers or authors to do? As the terms were so general and comprehensive, how were they to be secure from offending?

Why, by the next clause, all books concerning the common laws of this realm were to be printed by the special allowance

of the Lord Chancellor, the Lords Chief Justices, &c. or one of their appointment. All books of history and affairs of state, &c. by the licence of the Secretaries of State, &c.; books of divinity, physic, philosophy, &c. by the licence of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The penalties of the act were, that the printer for the first offence should be disabled from exercising his respective trade for the space of three years, and for the second be disabled for ever, with further punishment of fine and imprisonment to any degree not extending to life and limb, at the pleasure of the judges.

Now, here we have the first movement that is made by a state on this momentous subject. It wishes for knowledge, for inquiry, for literary exertion, for government, and for religion, but for no knowledge, and no inquiry inconsistent with the interests of either that government, or religion, which are actually established at the time. It therefore denounces every thing that is in its opinion heretical and seditious, and produces its licensers. And this I conceive to be the first stage of legislation on the subject.

The next stage is to lay aside the expedient of a licenser, to have no previous restraint on publications, but to give a general description of such books or writings as are illegal, and then to punish the author or printers of any publications that come under such general description.

This is the second stage, and one of great improvement; that to which you will see Blackstone allude, and in which he seems to rest content. But much remains to be discussed and determined; for instance, what really are the general terms which the state makes use of? for if general terms are to be used, there is no work where the slightest freedom of thought is exercised, that may not be brought within their meaning. Here there is a great difficulty; and yet how is this difficulty to be avoided? What terms but *general terms* can be adopted? No other certainly; it is therefore of very great importance what the general terms are; and this reflection will immediately lead to another inquiry,—*Who* are to decide whether the publication in question fairly comes within the general description of the law or not? The judges of the land, it will be answered, on the first view of the subject; for

such men can alone know what is the exact meaning of the general terms made use of from their long familiarity with the phraseology of the laws; and they must, from their situation, necessarily possess minds more enlightened, and understandings more powerful, than can be expected to fall to the lot of ordinary jurymen.

And thus we arrive at the completion of the second stage of legislation on the subject; no longer a licenser as in the first, but a law made in general terms, and the judges of the land left to decide whether an author has offended against the law or not. This is a situation of things much more favourable to the interests of mankind.

But at length men will reason thus:—What is it that the laws mean? Only to prevent and punish such writings as are injurious to morals and religion or dangerous to the state? They mean nothing more; they *ought* to mean nothing more. If therefore the writings are such that twelve ordinary men can see neither injury to morals and religion, nor danger to the state, in any reasonings or expressions which they contain, what can in fact be the injury or the danger?

The province, therefore, of deciding upon such cases, it will be argued, ought to be withdrawn from the judges, who are not, on the whole, sufficiently unprejudiced and disinterested, and should be transferred to twelve ordinary men, to whom no such objection, and certainly no very reasonable objection, can be made.

Here we seem to have the third and last stage to which this most important subject can be brought; a law in general terms, and a jury to decide whether the law has been broken.

One point still remains—the penalty. When the NATURE of the penalty has been previously described by the law in general terms—imprisonment and fine for instance—the DEGREE of it must be left to the discretion either of the jury or of the judges; to which, then, of the two?

With whatever hesitation, we must intrust it to the latter—to the judges; that is, to those who are accustomed to the use of power, to the exercise of their judgments on different cases, and who decide, happily for their country, in the face of the bar and of that country. To men like these rather than to successive bodies of men like jurymen, who would each act

upon views of their own; whose punishments would therefore be capricious, and not to be calculated upon beforehand, and who, being liable to be affected, still more than judged by the passions of the hour, would make their decisions sometimes improperly lenient, and at other times preposterously severe.

Here I must leave the subject, but I must leave it with addressing three observations to those who wish to make it, what it highly deserves to be, a subject of their meditation.

The first is this, that the law must unavoidably make use of some general terms to describe what it prohibits. The difficulty then is to determine what those general terms shall be; what words and phrases will best allow to society all the means of information, and yet secure to it the peaceable enjoyment of some of its most important interests.

The difficulty is very great; and it will be found more and more great, the more it is considered; at the same time, that it is the very point which must be laboured, whenever any improvement in any existing system is thought of.

My next observation is, that as the jury is to decide whether the law has been violated, it is of great consequence how that jury is composed; who is the officer that selects them; in what manner, &c. Discretion must be lodged somewhere, no doubt; but here is another point in itself difficult, and that should be well considered.

My last observation is, that we have been obliged to leave the *degree* of penalty to depend on the good pleasure of the judges, and that therefore the subject of the liberty of the press cannot be considered as one that can ever be dismissed from public anxiety; because, though judges are men who go through the duties of their situation with more uniform accuracy, integrity, and intelligence than perhaps any other description of public functionaries that can be mentioned, still it must be observed that they are not likely to be of themselves very favourable to the liberty of the press. They are men accustomed to observe the benefits, not of criticising the laws and government of a country, but of administering them; — peace, order, precedent, usage, these are the objects that naturally excite their respect; the necessity of control, of punishment, of reverence for established laws and institutions, these are the considerations that are alone familiar to their

minds. The habits of their lives, the learning they possess, lead to no other trains of thinking or sympathy; and they are not likely to be very indulgent critics of popular feelings or even popular rights. Whatever be their personal integrity or professional ability, they are clearly distinguishable from the philosopher or patriot, who may be speculating both on them and the laws they administer and the government they serve; and the extent and ultimate wisdom of whose opinions they are never very willing to examine and understand.

They are not therefore very eligible dispensers of the penalties of the law, if any less objectionable could be found; but none can, and here therefore is a difficulty not entirely to be overcome—the unfavourable temperament of the judges. But the temperament of the judges will sympathize with the temperament of the surrounding society, the bar in whose presence they act, the houses of legislature, and every intelligent man in the kingdom.

Discretion must always be lodged somewhere, but the manner in which it is exercised will always depend on the habits of thought and feeling known at the time to exist in the community; so little can a constitution provide for its own administration and security.

The liberty of the press is therefore a very faithful index of the state of the public mind and of the public happiness; for the press is more or less restrained (it can never be left without some restraint, from the very nature of some particular subjects), but it is more or less restrained, as a country enjoys more or less a pure religion, and a reasonable government, a wide circulation of knowledge, and a general diffusion of commercial and manufacturing prosperity.

To conclude my enumeration of important subjects, the student must not omit to consider the proceedings in the case of the impeachment of Lord Somers. I mention them for the sake of one conclusion, that may at least be drawn from them, the responsibility of ministers for every thing they do; that they are not to shelter themselves under any plea of deference to the opinion of their sovereign; that they are not to advise or to act in any manner inconsistent with their own views of propriety and policy, when the case before them is of sufficient importance.

From a consideration of the debates and transactions of this period, the constitution appears to be in the act of assuming its last and more regular form. Its different parts must be looked upon as at that time falling, rather than as having already fallen into their appointed places. Thus we have in the cabinet, administrations made up of men differing from each other in their principles. In the houses, the members of a party often opposing the measures of their friends in office; the king giving his veto to bills that had passed the houses, from his inability to resist them in any other manner; the decisions of the commons, and even of the lords, very uncertain; their debates stormy. Occurrences like these indicate a constitution settling rather than settled. But the whole is, on this account, only the more interesting and instructive.

The civil liberties of the country must, upon a review of the questions and the proceedings to which I have now briefly alluded, be considered as in a rapid state of progress; and this it was natural to expect would be the case, when the king was seated on the throne on the popular principles of resistance to illegal rule; when the patrons of arbitrary power were thrown into opposition, and therefore often compelled to adopt language and measures favourable to civil freedom; when the Whigs, who were now become the courtiers of the realm, could not but be influenced by their old habits of thinking and feeling on constitutional questions; and when the nation itself could adopt no sentiments favourable to arbitrary power without being immediately reminded of James II.; his judges and his priests; of popery, and all the evils they had so narrowly escaped.

With regard to the religious liberties of the country, progress had likewise been made by the passing of the Act of Toleration.

The king's efforts in this great cause I have already noticed—his somewhat unsuccessful efforts. No brighter part of his character can be found. Of the Whigs, the best panegyric, as far as relates to this subject, may be seen in the accusations of their political opponents, the Tories; who always called them Dissenters, and represented them as indifferent to the real interests of religion. This, however, was not their fault. They were guilty of no indifference to

religion, but of a base fear of such accusations, and of a disgraceful compliance with the intolerant measures proposed to them; proposed to them by those who were not unfrequently, on these occasions, their rivals for popularity; that doubtful criterion of public merit on many subjects, but above all on religious subjects; for on religious subjects popularity can always be acquired by stigmatizing with terms of reproach, or pursuing with penalties or restrictions, any opposers to the established system.

When, therefore, we mention the Toleration Act which William procured, we must not forget the penal acts that were *also* passed. The Papists, the Arians, the Socinians, fell more particularly under the persecutions of the legislature.

These descriptions of men saw themselves proclaimed in different penal statutes, the one (the Papist) enemies of the state, who were not to exercise the offices of their religion, nor educate their children (as they thought best), nor receive the inheritances of their fathers; and the other, the Arians and Socinians, publishers of blasphemous and infamous opinions (I use the words of the act) contrary to the doctrines and principles of the Christian religion, greatly tending to the dishonour of Almighty God, and that may prove destructive to the peace and welfare of mankind.

“If any popish priest,” says the third clause of the 11th and 12th of William, chapter 4th, “shall say mass or exercise any part of the office or function of a priest, or if any Papist shall take upon himself the education of youth, every such person shall, on conviction, be adjudged to perpetual imprisonment.”

If, on the contrary, any person shall be convicted of sending his child abroad to be educated in the Romish religion, he was to forfeit one hundred pounds, by the sixth clause of the same act.

By the fourth clause, if a Papist took not the oath of supremacy (which a Papist could not take—Sir T. More could not, nor Bishop Fisher, and were therefore put to death), he was disabled and made incapable to inherit or take by descent, &c. &c. And if, again, he was possessed of any capital in money, he was equally disabled from purchasing

in lands. In the former case, the land bequeathed was even to go to the next of kin who was a Protestant. Such was the state of the public toleration with respect to the Papists.

With respect to the Arians and Socinians, the act of the 9th and 10th of William (c. 32, p. 277) declares, that if any person (having been educated in the Christian religion) shall deny any one of the persons in the Holy Trinity to be God, or shall assert or maintain there are more Gods than one, or shall deny the Christian religion to be true, or the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be of divine authority, such person shall, for the first offence, be disabled from enjoying any office or offices, ecclesiastical, civil, or military; and, if a second time convicted of the said crimes, be disabled to sue or prosecute in any court of law or equity, or be guardian or executor, or capable of any legacy or deed of gift, or bear any office or benefice, and suffer imprisonment for three years.

Acts of parliament like these make a considerable approach to the excommunication of the Romish see in the dark ages.

The truth of the doctrines, and of the principles which these acts were meant to propagate and secure, is no part of the question now before us. Truth cannot be so propagated, and must not, even if it were possible, be so secured. The intelligence and humanity of the present age would revolt from acts of parliament like these. Such is the happy influence of general prosperity and of a free government, not only on the community, but on the mistaken men, who forget, in the ardour of their zeal, and the supposed duties of their situation, all the rights of the human mind, and all the precepts of their divine Master. But these acts must ever remain portions of historical reading, as indicative of the nature of the human mind on these important subjects.

Before I conclude my lecture, I must allude, however shortly, to the second object of inquiry, which I originally proposed; the foreign politics of William, or the history of the civil and religious liberties of Europe.

The general description of this part of our labours may be short. Louis was every where the enemy of mankind; William their defender. His campaigns against the celebrated Luxembourg, the peace of Ryswick, the two partition treaties,

and the renewal of the general confederacy against France, just before the death of William, form the chief topics of examination and reflection.

Particulars, respecting these subjects may be found in the Memoirs of St. Simon; in Burnet's History of his own Times; in the Hardwicke Papers; and finally there is an estimate of the whole subject in Bolingbroke's Letters on History, in the seventh and eighth. An estimate so full, so reasonable, and in every respect so masterly, that it is useless for me to do more than refer to it.

Macpherson has written a history of Great Britain from the Restoration to the accession of the House of Hanover. This history may always be resorted to whenever an unfavourable representation is wanted of the conduct or character of William. Yet, even with respect to that part of our subject which is at present before us, the foreign politics of William, Macpherson is obliged to allow that William was placed at the head of his native country as the last hope of her safety from conquest and a foreign yoke; that he was raised to the throne of Great Britain under the name of her deliverer from civil tyranny and religious persecution; that he was considered in the same important light by the rest of Europe; that the Empire, Spain, and Italy looked up to his counsels as their only resource against the exorbitant ambition and power of Louis XIV.; and that France herself, when she affected to despise his power the most, owned his importance by an illiberal joy upon a false report of his death.

Higher praise than this cannot possibly be received. Men who engage in the affairs of the world, and have talents sufficient to influence and control them as William did, can neither appear to be nor can really be without decided faults. But if such be the bright side of any human character, we may turn away from its obscurities.

William was a patriot and a hero, but not a successful warrior. It was said that he had raised more sieges and lost more battles than any general of his age. But he was opposed to the most consummate commanders that even France has produced; and his own armies were composed of the officers and soldiers of different nations. "His defeats," says Bolingbroke, "were manifestly due, in a great measure, to circum-

stances independent on him; and that spirit which even these defeats could not depress, was all his own. He had difficulties in his own commonwealth; the governors of the Spanish Low Countries crossed his measures sometimes; the German allies disappointed and broke them often; and it is not improbable that he was frequently betrayed."

The peace of Ryswick was loudly censured by the French politicians. It may be considered, on the whole, as a monument to the glory of William.

With respect to the partition treaties, the letters in the Hardwicke Papers sufficiently exculpate William from the censures and accusations of his detractors. They have been defended by Bolingbroke as the only measure which the king had it in his power to take.

The wars of William on the continent may be read in the accounts of the reign. They are portions of history, and must be considered. I cannot enter into any detail or even description of such transactions.

But I may stop perhaps to mention, that they are now connected with the literature of our own country; that they give life and beauty to some of the pages of Sterne. Steenkirk, and Landen, and Comte Solms, and the Siege of Namur are names well known to those who are conversant with the writings of that enchanting but sometimes objectionable author; and the student, while he is travelling through the records of *real* calamity, and contemplating in history the picture of the dreadful warfare of mankind, may be often reminded of those more pleasing moments, when he surrendered his fancy to the harmless campaigns of my Uncle Toby and Trim, and his heart to the story of Lefevre.

I conclude this reign of William with observing, that almost all the important subjects connected not only with our constitution, such as I have mentioned, but connected also with our systems of internal and external policy, appear before us during this particular period. An union with Scotland was recommended by William; the case of Ireland occurred; its dependence on the legislature of England; the affairs of the East India Company were considered; the Bank of England was erected; societies for the suppression of vice were formed; the employment of the poor was made a topic in the

specimens of the King; the coinage was adjusted; experiments on finance and paper securities attempted; and, above all, a funded debt was created.

These are subjects and concerns that have subsisted to the present times; and it is now the business of a reader of history to observe them on their first appearance, with the reasonings of our ancestors upon them in the speeches and pamphlets of the day. They must be borne in mind, and traced, if possible, through their effects, as we continue to read the history of the last century down to the present hour. To them must be added, and to be treated in the same manner, and for the same reason, the great question of the interference of England in the affairs of the continent; an interference which now began more particularly to be a feature of our general policy, and therefore from this time began to be, as it has never ceased to be, a subject of controversy and discussion among our philosophers and statesmen.



NOTES.

I.

Reporting of Debates.

IN 1694, one Dyer, a news-letter writer, having presumed in his news letter to take notice of the proceedings of the house, he was summoned to the house, reprimanded, &c. and on the journals appears the following order:—“That no news-letter writers do in their letters, or other papers they dispense presume to intermeddle with the debates, or any other proceedings of the house.”

This most important subject sometimes occurs in the proceedings of the house, and should be always well observed. To this moment it has never been regularly adjusted; but on one of the greatest occasions of the late Mr. Pitt's eloquence the reporters were fortunately excluded; they very properly attempted not to give any idea of his speech. Mr. Sheridan, with his usual patriotic alertness on such occasions, was ready to take advantage of the public disappointment, and make some motion on the subject. But having been given to understand, and it appearing to be the general sense of the house, and of the ministers themselves, that no disturbance should be in future offered to the reporters, the motion was dropped. Not only had society improved, but the distresses and dangers of the country had shown the ministers of later times the necessity of keeping the public properly informed even on their own measures, and therefore of reporting the debates.

II.

THE proper adjustment of this delicate point—of the revenue of the crown—is one of the great features of what may be called the second part of our history. During the first part, prior to the Revolution, when the king, as the great executive magistrate of the realm, had to bear the expenses of the state by means of his own funds and the supplies he could extract from his parliaments, the welfare of the realm was not only too immediately affected by the nature of his personal qualities, but it was impossible that the question should not give occasion to constant bickerings and jealousy between the king and his parliaments. In ruder ages, the king, without much inconvenience or injury, might be considered as taking upon himself the charge and management of the great concerns of the state, and as wielding all the physical strength of the community for the defence, and even benefit of the realm; but that such a disposition of things should survive the causes which gave it birth, and should descend to so late a period, is only one proof

among history, how little of contrivance or regular adjustment there is in the affairs of mankind; and how governments, after their first rude formation, and at particular epochs, and in a most dangerous manner, tumbled and tossed into shapes of greater convenience by the unexpected, and often violent operation of mere chance and change, rather than moulded into forms of symmetry and usefulness, by reasonable alteration and timely improvement.

The subject of the revenue of the crown was finally settled early in the reign of George III.; as may be seen in Blackstone.

There are, however, some sources of revenue, that still very properly exercise the vigilance of patriotic members in the House of Commons during the time of war.

III.

THE proceedings in Sir John Fenwick's case took place in the reign of William III., and are highly disgraceful to the Whigs. It is scarcely possible that bills of attainder should be otherwise than perfectly disgraceful to those who have recourse to them. They are the convenient, but coarse and savage expedients of power; for bills of attainder take away the life of an offender by positive enactment, and that, because according to the existing laws he cannot be pronounced guilty. The bow-string of a sultan, or the execution of a tyrant, can do no more. In each case there is a departure from those known forms and antecedent provisions of law which are the only real protection of innocence. Sir John Fenwick was, there can be no doubt, guilty of treason; but it is to be feared that many who voted away his life, when the laws could not take it, voted from the basest motives, to remove out of hearing a man who knew, and could have proclaimed too much.

On this occasion, it is the arguments of the Tories only which we can read with pleasure. These men might have been taught, while they were using the generous maxims of government, introduced to their understandings on this particular occasion, their cogency and their justice on every other occasion. "This bill," said the great Tory leader, Sir Edward Seymour, "is against the law of God, against the law of the land: it does contribute to the subversion of the constitution, and to the subversion of all government; for if there be rules to be observed in all governments and no government can be without them, if you subvert those rules, you destroy the government. The law enjoins forms strictly, even to the least circumstance: men are not left to a discretionary power to act according to their consciences."

"Sir John Fenwick," said Howe, another Tory leader, "though he should not be a good Englishman, yet his cause may be the cause of all good Englishmen. Our enemies, you say, may have an advantage, and our government is at stake: we sit not here to patch the failings of the one by an unwarrantable prosecution against the other."

Lord Clarendon's act of 1662, for the licensing of the press, &c. &c. was to be in force for two years; it remained so; it was then continued. It was again continued by James II. in 1688, and enacted for seven years. It therefore existed at the Revolution, and was left to continue until 1692, four

years after the Revolution, and through all the periods of the succession of parliaments. In 1693, when the Tories were in power, it was renewed for two years longer, but it then expired in 1694. What business was then done by the parliament?

It appears, by the journals of the commons, that directions were given by the house to two of its members, at four different times from the years 1694 to 1698, to prepare a bill for the licensing printing presses, &c. &c. On one occasion the Whigs seemed almost ready, from the irritation of the moment, to have disgraced themselves by some bill of the kind. They however, did not disgrace themselves. On another occasion a bill of this sort passed the lords, and was even once read in the commons. It was, however, lost on the second reading; and the act of Charles II. having expired in 1694, and having existed till the influence of the Revolution and the general progress of society had enabled men to discover its very objectionable nature, no efforts seem afterwards to have been able to revive it, and it now remains on our statute book only as a monument of that well-intentioned but unenlightened legislation, which constitutes so important a part of the instruction to be derived from the perusal of history.

I must observe, that I cannot find any detail of any debates connected with these proceedings. The journals of the house give nothing but the mere facts and results; and such debates as have been published entirely fail us on this very interesting occasion.

V.

THE Act of settlement was the last labour which William III. contributed to the great cause of the Revolution. The heads of this act were prepared in a committee, and we cannot now discover the different views of the subject that were taken by the statesmen of the time. This is to be lamented. The act seems to have given occasion to no debate in the houses. On the whole it does honour to the Tories who were then in power. Provisions were made against the consequences of a foreigner coming to the throne, though they were not afterwards found to be complete. The laws of England are pronounced to be the birthright of the people thereof. The kings and queens, it is declared, ought to administer the government according to these laws. But in a manner somewhat strange and not very systematic, there are three constitutional points provided for, and not more: that those who have places and pensions should not be members of the commons; that the commissions of judges shall be made "quoniam illi se ipse gubernant;" and that no pardon under the great seal shall be implorable to any attachment.

Descending into these particulars, it is singular that they proceeded no further; still more so, that they should incorporate the *Præsumptio* Bill (as it is called) upon this, the most solemn and important enactment, the disposal of the succession of the crown, which they could not have done.

LECTURE XXIII.

ANNE.

THE reign of William is interesting on many accounts: from its immediate connection with the Revolution of 1688; from the suspense in which the cause of that Revolution still hung, on account of the parties that then existed; from the conduct of William to those parties; from their conduct to him and to each other; from their relative merits; from the relation which questions connected with the monarch and such parties must *always* bear to our mixed and free constitution; from the great subjects that occurred in the course of the administration of William—the Civil List, the Place Bill, the Triennial Bill, the liberty of the press, a standing army, the responsibility of ministers, the veto of the crown; from many other subjects connected with our internal and external policy—the situation of Ireland, the East India Company, the bank of England, questions of finance, of the coinage, the funded debt, and others, such as I could only mention. These are topics that must always deserve the attention of the inhabitants of these kingdoms. The very narrative of the reign is also interesting, and full of events and business, foreign and military, as well as civil and domestic; add to this, that this era of our annals has been always highly attractive to the readers of history. William is not only the deliverer of England, but the great hero of the age in which he lived; and they who have accustomed themselves so meditate on the characters of men and the fortunes of the human race, have always lamented that the story of William has never been undertaken by any writer so distinguished for the superiority of his talents as to be worthy of a theme so splendid and so important.

This lecture was written many years ago, but at this mo-

ment, while I am now reading it, covers the great subject of regret to literary men, and particularly those interested in the history of their country, the loss of Sir James Mackintosh. This great thinker and accomplished writer was worthy of such a theme, and had undertaken it; what he has left us is the best account we have of the ominous proceedings of the reign of James II.

The reign of Anne may be considered as a continuation of the reign of William. The great features are the same: national animosity against France; resistance to the aggrandizement and the ambition of Louis; contending parties, the Whigs and Tories; the constitution settling; and the great question of the return of the exiled family, i. e. the success of the Revolution, i. e. the cause of the civil and religious liberties of England still suspended on a shifting, doubtful balance.

Our best means of information are likewise the same. St. Simon and the French writers, Burnet, Macpherson's Original Papers, the Debates in Parliament, the Statute Book and Journals, Tindal, Belsham, and Somerville are to be read or referred to in the same manner as before.

To these sources of information, on which I originally depended, I can now add the Life of Marlborough, by Mr. Coxe, which has been lately completed from the Blenheim papers. To write the life of Marlborough is to write the history of the reign of Queen Anne; and it is impossible for any one to judge properly of this part of our annals without a diligent perusal of this very entertaining and valuable work.

I must also observe, that a very good idea may be formed of the general subjects connected with this period, and of the original memoirs and documents which should be referred to, by reading the appendix to Belsham's History: it is very well drawn up.

My hearer, therefore, will bear in mind, that the great subjects before him are, the resistance made to Louis XIV. and the power of France, abroad; and at home, the different parties of the Whigs and Tories, the various questions that arose connected with our civil and religious liberties, the union with Scotland, and above all, the great question of the success of the Revolution, the security of the Protestant

succession, and the chance of the restoration of the House of Stuart.

We will first advert to the foreign concerns; afterwards to the domestic.

Many subjects must be necessarily omitted, and cannot even be mentioned, but they will occur to you in the reading of the history; some can be but adverted to; a few, and but a few, on account of their superior importance, may be a little dwelt upon; but on this occasion and on every other through the whole of these lectures, I am oppressed with the consciousness that I can attempt little more than barely lead up my hearer to the consideration of different subjects, and, having stated their claim upon his attention, leave him to examine them for himself.

The reign opens with the great War of the Succession.

I have already observed, that questions of peace and war are peculiarly deserving of attention. They cannot be made too often or too much the subjects of your examination. No more valuable result can be derived from the meditation of history than habits of dispassionate reflection, of caution, foresight, a strong sense of the rights of independent nations, of justice and of humanity on such momentous topics. It is on these occasions more particularly that the philosophic statesman is distinguished from the ordinary politician; and when we suppose a minister in a cabinet, a member of either of the houses in his place, an individual at a public meeting, or an intelligent man in the private circles of social life, contributing to make his countrymen more upright, reasonable, conciliatory, patient, while the tremendous issues of war are dependent, are hanging on the balance of words and expressions, are dependent, not merely on the wisdom or the folly, but the good and ill humour of the parties; we, in fact, suppose a man elevated to something above his nature, and for a season assuming the character and office of a superior being, one whose voice breathes the heavenly accents of peace on earth, and good will towards men.

In a government that is free, where every individual is educated upon a system, not of servility and baseness, but of personal dignity and independence, of submission to no power but the laws; in such a government, one like our own, there

is no fear on these occasions of any want of equality to national honour, or of any contemptible sacrifice to present ease and short-sighted policy. The danger is on the other side, and the habits of thought to be cherished in free and powerful countries are entirely those of a deliberative, cautious, and pacific nature.

The opening of this reign of Anné affords an opportunity to the student, such as I have described. One of these great questions is before him, that of the War of the Succession, a long and dreadful contest. Let him try to examine and consider it in all its bearings and aspects; and in this manner he may school his mind, and prepare it for important occasions, when he is hereafter to interfere, as every man of education ought actively to do, in the concerns of the community.

I will now make an effort to give him some slight idea of what I mean, some idea of the subject now presented to him; and I must begin, in point of time, at some distance from the period more immediately before us.

At the peace of the Pyrenees, Mazarin united the royal family of France with that of Spain. As this union might eventually make the princes of the House of Bourbon heirs to the crown of Spain, this was always looked upon as a masterpiece of policy.

The first question which I would propose to the student is, whether it was so? The King of Spain was at the time sufficiently aware of the possible consequences, and he therefore took due care that all title to the future succession to the crown of Spain, of whatever kind, should be publicly and for ever renounced.

This is a part of the case, and being so, the policy of the whole transaction, as far as Mazarin is concerned, may, I think, be proposed as a question.

Among other considerations that will occur to the student when he looks at the history, I would wish to leave the following more particularly to his examination.

First, whether the avoidance of all causes of war, and all temptations to war, is not the first point of policy to be secured?

Secondly, whether the union of the families was likely to

influence, especially the future intercourse of the two nations, and make it more friendly than hitherto it had been? If so, this was a most weighty consideration in favour of the measure. But on the other side, and

Thirdly, whether the union of the families did not rather hold up to the ambition of all succeeding princes of France the most tempting object, the succession to the crown of Spain; and yet the renunciation render that ambition totally unlawful; and whether the result was not therefore sure to be, that France would be engaged in a series of dishonest intrigues for the accomplishment of this object; and afterwards in a war with the powers of Europe for the maintenance of this unlawful object, if those intrigues were successful; for the acquiescence of the powers of Europe, without a struggle, could not possibly be expected.

Now, if this last question be answered in the affirmative, as well as the first, where was the policy of Mazarin?

The event turned out to be, that the prospect of the succession kept continually opening to Louis, and that his family at last became the regular heirs to the Spanish monarchy.

But it must not be forgotten that they were incapacitated by their renunciation. This renunciation was the very condition of their birth, for it was the condition on which Louis was married to the Infanta of Spain, in right of whom they claimed.

I must now recommend the sixty-seventh chapter in Coxe's *Austria*, where the subject of the Spanish succession is concisely and clearly stated, and on the proper authorities. The claimants were the Dauphin of France, the Emperor Leopold, who had married the next sister of the infanta, and the Elector of Bavaria, who had espoused the issue of this last marriage, and was the son in law of Leopold.

The father, Leopold, it must be observed, had induced his daughter, on her marriage with the elector, to renounce her claims to the Spanish succession; but this renunciation was considered invalid, as not having been approved by the King of Spain, nor ratified by the Cortes. In this state of things, the second question that I should wish to propose to the student, is this: What was our own King William to attempt

to do? How was he to prevent the succession from devolving on Louis; a prince who was not likely to adhere to his original renunciations?

As I have before recommended Coxe, I must now recommend the eighth letter of Bolingbroke on the study of history, as the most ready and complete means of putting you into possession of all the reasonings that belong to the subject.

I must suppose these parts, both of Coxe and Bolingbroke, read, particularly the latter. I cannot give any abridgment or representation of it, because I think the meditation of the whole of it the very best practice, to use a common term, for a statesman, that perhaps the compass of our literature affords.

William made a partition treaty with Louis; i. e. he compounded with him. He consented that part of the Spanish possessions should be transferred to France, the better to secure the remainder from the ambition of Louis; and to this end, that the elector might receive, undisturbed, the main part of what, by inheritance, devolved upon him; that in this manner the balance of Europe might be tolerably well preserved, and yet a war avoided. These were his objects.

Lord Bolingbroke contends, that there was no other measure which William could possibly take. He is great authority, and cannot be supposed too partial to the monarch.

Unfortunately the elector died, and a second partition treaty was therefore to be made: the archduke was substituted for the elector, and the terms made more advantageous to France. Now the point I would submit to your consideration is this: whether, besides the alternatives which Lord Bolingbroke enumerates as all that the case admitted of, whether another did not remain, that of doing nothing at all; not abandoning all care of the succession, but taking no distinct measure; certainly none but with the privy, and in conjunction, with the court of Spain?

To parcel out the dominions of an independent kingdom, however agreeably to the general interests of Europe, and from the best of motives, without the interference or consent of that kingdom, was in itself unjust, and therefore not to be thought of; and was at the same time so offensive to Spain, that it could not possibly have any other effect but that of

thereby, like the state of France, for the sake of preserving the integrity of her empire and the dignity of her crown.

What line of policy in the mean time, was the emperor to pursue? Of this there can be little question; he was to send to the court of Spain a minister of attractive manners, and by conciliating at the same time his own Hungarian subjects, to leave himself in possession of the full force of his empire, in case he had to contend with France.

The emperor did neither: he neither sent a minister of an agreeable accommodating temper, nor did he relax his harsh, severe system of policy to his Hungarian subjects.

It seems impossible for the haughty and ceremonious ever to think there is any thing of value in the world, but dignity and form; and the policy of mild government is a secret which, on some account or other, can never be discovered by those who have an opportunity of exercising it.

But to return to the succession: the King of Spain died, and, most unfortunately, at last made a will in favour of the French line.

Here comes the next question; was Louis to accept the testament? On this point must be read, not only Lord Bolingbroke, but that part of the works of St. Simon which relates to the succession. It is not long.

In De Torcy's Memoirs will be found the defence of Louis, who *did* accept the testament; and in Mably's *Droit de l'Europe* (not his history), an argument in opposition to the reasoning of De Torcy, and in favour of adhering to the treaty of partition.

Many other books might be referred to: but these will be found very ample to supply the reader with materials for his meditation. He is to suppose himself placed in the cabinet of Louis, and then to consider what advice he would have given.

In the third volume of St. Simon's Memoirs, and in De Torcy, will be found accounts of the debate that actually did take place in the presence of Louis. There is some little difference in the representation of these two authors with respect to the part which the speakers took; and Madame de Maintenon was consulted, according to St. Simon, which

is positively denied (though it is somewhat impossible to suppose that she was not) by De Torcy.

The question debated was, whether the king should accept the testament, or adhere to the second partition treaty; and the case supposed was (which was indeed the fact), that the succession was to be offered instantly to the House of Austria, if declined by the French monarch. On the one side it was observed (even in the cabinet of Louis), "the national faith is pledged (I translate from the French writers); and even in point of mere advantage, more will in fact be gained by the partition treaty than by placing the French line on the throne of Spain; the princes of which will soon lose their partiality to France, and become as jealous of her power, as have hitherto been the princes of the House of Austria. If we accept the testament, a war must follow; Europe will necessarily oppose itself to what will then be thought the colossal power of France. We have already had one war; we are only now taking breath; we are ourselves exhausted, so is Spain; of a new war it will be for us to support all the charge. We have here, therefore, before us, a train of consequences, of which the final issue no one can presume to tell; but in the gross, and at once, it is easy to pronounce, that it is but common prudence to avoid them, by adhering to the partition treaty. France, by this proof of her good faith, will conciliate all Europe—Europe, which she has seen leagued against her because she has been considered as aspiring, like the House of Austria, to universal monarchy; and if she now accept this testament, will the truth of these accusations admit longer of a doubt?"

Such was, according to the more probable account of St. Simon, the statement of De Torcy himself; offered by him as the statement of *one* side of the question. But such were entirely, and stated as a proper estimate of the whole of the case, the sentiments of the Duc de Beauvilliers, the tutor of the Duke of Burgundy, the discerning and good man who had selected Fénelon to assist him in his momentous office; and similar to these are always the sentiments of discerning and good men on all such occasions. These are the natural and weighty topics that are insisted upon by all such reasoners, when peace and war can be made a question: national faith,

the opinions of surrounding nations on the conduct; what there is, or what there may be, of justice in their accusations; the advantages that may possibly be derived from peace; the evils that inevitably result from war; the calamities that will certainly, the very serious rain that (it is possible at least) may result from dangerous experiments.

In the instance before us, the successes of Marlborough, the appearance of such a commander among the enemies of France, could not indeed have been expected by Louis or his counsellors. But even according to the ordinary nature of events, there were not only possibilities, but there were probabilities, and there were certainties sufficient to induce the Duc de Beauvilliers to insist, as he did insist, on the solid wisdom of the counsels which he recommended.

The chancellor, on the contrary, too much disposed, as it is thought by St. Simon, to sacrifice to the wishes of his master (such men will always be found among the counsellors of princes), presented to Louis views more splendid, and reasonings more attractive. He found it easy to show, how fitted were the kingdoms of France and Spain to constitute a great empire under the dominion of the House of Bourbon.

There was no difficulty in depreciating the advantages presented by the treaty of partition, or in rendering suspected the policy of any system to which William, the great enemy of France, had become a party. It was not difficult to show, that it must always make a very material difference to France, whether there were seated on the throne of Spain princes of the House of Bourbon, or princes of the House of Austria, however interested the former might at length become, in the prosperity of the particular kingdom which they governed.

These were topics of fair debate, provided the question could ever have been brought to a point where it was proper to discuss them. The chancellor also insisted, that since the treaties of partition were made, new circumstances had occurred which rendered them no longer binding: the testament, for instance, had been made in Louis's favour.

This is the sort of dishonest reasoning that on all such occasions is produced, and it is therefore universally instructive. For the chancellor omitted to state, that the testament had been procured by the intrigues of France, and that Louis was thus to profit by his own wrong.

Again: "France," said the minister, "by refusing the testament, will gain, not the character of moderation, but, that of pusillanimity; will become an object of ridicule, not of respect, to surrounding nations, as was our good Louis XII. and Francis I., to Ferdinand, Charles V., the pope, and the Venetians: not indeed that the point of honour is against us," said the chancellor. "Can it be supposed that such a succession as that of Spain is ever to fall into our hands without a war? Even to the treaty of partition the Emperor will not assent: and then if we are, on every supposition, to have a war, is it not better to fight for the proper benefits of success, after first possessing ourselves of what is already within our grasp? Let us at least contrive not to show ourselves to the world unworthy of the high fortune to which we are so unexpectedly called."

These also are, I think, arguments universally instructive; for it is by considerations of this kind that nations are always inflamed, their passions excited, and their judgments betrayed by their orators, statesmen, and princes. It is even by considerations of this kind, that they who should counsel others are themselves led astray; and these therefore, as they continually occur in history, become the genuine instruction of history.

On the whole of the case, Louis might accept the testament; he did so. The defence of this measure will be found in De Torcy; and in the reasons given by the chancellor in St. Simon.

Secondly, he might have rejected the testament, and adhered to the remaining partition treaty. This measure is proposed and supported by the Abbé de Mably.

Lastly, he might have done neither. The whole question is argued by Lord Bolingbroke. But when he considers it under three different views—the view of right, of policy, and of power, the first, that of right, is surely too loosely determined, and too hastily dismissed.

The fact was, that when the Spanish line was originally connected with the French, every precaution was taken by the Spanish monarch to prevent a crisis of the nature that afterwards took place, and all future title to the crown of Spain, whether by treaty, will, testament, or otherwise, was renounced. Louis XIV. therefore should not have left

William to suppose, that the treaties of partition were at all necessary. He should not have thought it honourable to receive any advantages which could only be offered him on the supposition that he was not likely to fulfil his original engagements. On the same account he should not have accepted the testament, for to accept it was contrary to the spirit and meaning of the most positive and solemn engagements. The testament itself would never have been made in his favour, if he from the first had openly and sincerely disclaimed the succession; and had spoken from the first steadily and clearly the language of uprightness and honour. Whatever right the monarch of Spain might have to offer Louis the succession by his testament, Louis had no right to receive it. The offer had been made in consequence of a long series of intrigues, all of them in every respect, and from the first, dishonourable to him and base. Their success could give Louis no right which belonged not to him before. He was not to profit, as I have before observed, by his own wrong.

The question of ambition and aggrandizement; the considerations that *alone* weighed with him and some of his counsellors, may be disposed of with a rapidity that would have been inconceivable to Louis and his cabinet.

To France, above all kingdoms, the most effective means of aggrandizement were peace, and justice, and honour. Her people full of genius and activity, her territories pregnant with the most varied and inestimable advantages, she had only to defend herself, and, if possible, keep Europe at peace, and she could not fail of being prosperous and happy.

The politicians of the world have never ceased on these subjects to commit, as did first Mazarin, and afterwards Louis, the most cruel mistakes. The gain of one country has always been supposed the loss of every other: colonies are to be fought for, and commerce is to be fought for, and kingdoms are to be fought for, and all for the sake of prosperity and power. Human life is to be wasted, all the proper materials of strength and accumulation to be dissipated and annihilated, to be directed to the purposes of destruction, and every experiment is to be attempted but one, the only proper and rational experiment, that of making

governments gradually more free, the laws more equal, and the maintaining of peace.

Turning now from the continent, the next question before us is the conduct of our own country, and the point to be determined is, whether we had no honourable or safe alternative, but war.

William III. had just time before his death to decide, that we had no other. He thought the ambition of Louis left no other.

The reign of Anne opens with the speeches of the queen to the privy council and the two houses, with their answers. Mention is here made of measures entered into to reduce the exorbitant power of France, to obtain such a balance of power and interests, as may effectually secure the liberties of Europe. This is the language of reason and sound policy; but the causes of the war are more distinctly shown in the declaration of war itself, and the question then is, whether the acknowledgment of the pretended Prince of Wales by Louis, under all the circumstances of the case, was such an affront to the English crown, as could only be vindicated by a war, and whether representations had been made to Louis on the subject of his aggressions and offences, sufficiently patient and conciliatory to render the war on our part a war for the defence of the balance of power in Europe, and therefore for our own dignity and safety; whether no reparation could be procured to our honour, but by arms; whether the offence was sufficient to justify such an extremity; whether it was reasonable to expect that the affair of the succession could now be materially altered for the better by an appeal to force, and the renewal of the calamities of Europe.

These are questions that may fairly be supposed open to discussion, for the national animosity to France, was, on all occasions, very strong, and even Tories and Whigs united, when a sentiment was to be expressed of hostility to that kingdom.

But whatever may be the decision of the student on the general question (and it may turn out to be very different from what he might at first have expected), let him carefully remember, that it was to reduce the exorbitant power of France, and to vindicate the honour of the English crown,

justified by the acknowledgment of the pretended Prince of Wales; that these were the objects of the war, and that war was an every supposition no longer to be maintained, when these objects were once accomplished.

All this is, I say, to be well remembered, for we may remember it perhaps with some advantage hereafter, when we come to the remaining transactions of the reign—those more particularly connected with our foreign politics. This war with France is the great centre on which they all turn, and therefore, with respect to our foreign politics, the two great points of attention which I shall propose to you are,

First, the character and victories of Marlborough.

Secondly, the use that was made of them.

On these subjects the historical works of Mr. Coxe must be studied; first, his *House of Austria*; secondly, his *Memoirs of the King of Spain*; and lastly, and more particularly, his *Life of the Duke of Marlborough*.

This last work I have had to consider, since I drew up my present lecture. I have had to modify a little my opinion of the Duke of Marlborough. I can no longer consider him as so betrayed by a spirit of personal ambition, as I had once suspected, for he seems not to have been more ready to persevere in the war against France, than Godolphin and others, and sometimes to have been more reasonable; and I have a still stronger impression of his amiable nature in domestic life.

Of his talents for public life, I could not have entertained a higher opinion than I had already formed; the same must have been always the opinion of every reader of history. The great Duke of Marlborough has been always his proper appellation, and he is only made greater by being made more known from the publication of Mr. Coxe, nor can it be doubted that he would appear greater still, the more the difficulties with which he was surrounded on all occasions could be appreciated. These difficulties, however, may now, from the work just mentioned, be partly estimated; the impetuous temper and consequent imprudence of a wife, whom for her beauty, her talents, and her affection he naturally idolized; the low, narrow mind and selfish nature of the queen he served; the unreasonable wishes and strange prejudices of the

men of influence in his own country; the discordant interests and passions of different states and princes on the continent; the pertinacity of the field despots of Holland, whose he could not send over into the camp of the enemy, their more proper station, and to whose absurdities it gave him the headache to listen. As we continue our progress through the pages of Mr. Coxe, the queen, the court, the houses of legislature, the nation fall deeply into the shade; the duke is dismissed.

“Diram qui contadit hydrám,
Comperit invidiam supremo fas Jovisari.”

He is actually sued for the expenses of the workmen at Blenheim; is obliged to retire to the continent, and it is there, not in his own country, that he is to see his victories remembered, and his merit acknowledged.

In Tindal's Continuation of Rapin, and now more completely in Coxe, may be read the history of his military exploits; and it is here that Marlborough seems to tower above all praise. It would be difficult to find any commander in any age or country to whom he can be thought inferior; he might rather seem to have united the merits of them all. He had the praise of Hannibal, for he had to oppose the armies of one great military nation by armies composed of many different nations. He had the praise of Caesar, for though an enterprising, he was a safe commander; he lost no battle; he failed in no siege; he was no desperate knight-errant like Alexander in ancient story, or Charles XII. in modern. He lived not like Attila, or Tamerlane, among barbarous nations, when the event of a single battle, decided the fate of an empire, and when, if fortune once smiled, her smiles were afterwards superfluous; nor did he live like the great conqueror in our own times—the Emperor of France, in a revolutionary age, when the new and dreadful energies of a particular nation could be seized upon and directed against surrounding nations; against armies formed on a different model, statesmen obliged to deliberate under a different system, and governments submitted to different habits and principles of action.

The Duke of Marlborough was in no favourable situation

LECTURE XXIII.

Instead of these crests of tyrants or destroyers of King-
 doms, he flourished when war had been
 reduced to a science, and when likewise it could be waged in
 no sweeping or convulsive manner; he had to do with regular
 governments, orderly statesmen, soldiers animated by no fury
 of enthusiasm, political or religious; princes, magistrates,
 financiers, officers civil and military, individuals in all their
 divisions and departments, moving, each of them after the
 prescribed rate and fashion of society in its most civilized and
 appointed state; nay more, he had to sway the factions of
 England, to animate the legislative bodies of Holland, to
 harmonize the members of the Germanic body; and all to the
 one single purpose of overpowering on the continent the vast,
 concentrated, prompt, and matured strength of France (an
 object this which no human art or genius could ever, before or
 since, be properly said to have, by regular military warfare,
 accomplished). Even the great William, trained up amid
 a life of difficulties and of war, with an intrepid heart and a
 sound understanding, was only able to stay the enterprises of
 Louis; successfully to resist, but not to humble him. It was
 for Marlborough to teach that unprincipled monarch the
 danger of ambition and the instability of human grandeur; it
 was for Marlborough to disturb his dreams of pleasure and
 of pride, by filling them with spectres of terror and images
 of desolation. Of Marlborough might be said, in a far more
 extensive sense of the words, what was afterwards said of
 Lord Chatham, that with one hand he wielded the aristocracy
 of England, and with the other he smote the House of
 Bourbon.

The great praise of Marlborough is, that his glory was
 reached step by step, by no sudden indulgence of fortune,
 by no single effort of military skill and valour. Enterprise
 succeeded to enterprise, campaign to campaign, and the result
 was always the same; progressive fame, and victories and
 triumphs either accomplished or prepared. If commanders
 were sent against him who made the slightest mistake,
 victories like Blenheim and Ramillies were the consequence.
 If a man of consummate skill like Vendôme was opposed to
 him, he consented to attempt nothing impracticable. No
 success improperly inflated his expectations, yet could he

show, as in the case of Marlborough, that he was not only a man of calmness, but also of a disposition, disposed to see the good in the changes at least of success, and he could bear them with equanimity, and prove that, whatever might be his circumstances, he was equally gifted with the powers of military invention, and the spirit of military enterprise.

The career of other great generals has been always marked by varieties of chance and change, of light and shade, of success and defeat. But the panegyric of Marlborough is contained in a single word—he was always right;—that is, he proportioned well his means to his ends, and did not, like other statesmen and generals, mistake passion for wisdom, wishes for possibilities, and words for things. On the whole, though, in his character as a man, some failings must be allowed, parsimony for instance (the result so often of the necessity of economy in early life), and the fault, the crime, of corresponding with the exiled family; on the whole, a degrading and a most unworthy attention to his own interest, such was his good sense, his military genius, the charms of his address and appearance, and his high and commanding qualities of every description, that he must even now be considered, what Lord Bolingbroke was compelled to call him in his day, the greatest of generals and of ministers.

Turning now from the character of the Duke of Marlborough, who won the victories that distinguished this reign, to the use that was made of them, though no difference of opinion can exist with regard to the first, much may with regard to the second question:—

How far the allies were or were not unreasonable in their demands; which of the parties was most in fault during the negotiations for peace, particularly during the first, that at the Hague?

I cannot repeat too often that questions of this sort are among the most profitable portions of study which can belong to the readers of history. We may not be able always to understand by what varieties of character or of personal interest, in the agents or in the principals, negotiations break off or terminate with success; but by being removed to a distance, we can take a commanding view of what were the real interests of the parties at the time. Each man

are well fitted to prepare us for the discussion of those subjects when we come to be ourselves concerned, to free us from unreasonable terrors or extravagant hopes, and show us to prevent us from magnifying points, for which we have been contending, into an importance which does not belong to them, and which temporary importance becomes to succeeding politicians not unfrequently a subject of surprise, compassion, or even contempt.

The authors you must consult are Dr. Somerville, Coxe, Tindal, De Torcy, and lastly, Swift's pamphlet on the Conduct of the Allies—a pamphlet most effective at the time, but disgraced by the most vulgar matter and exaggerated statements, and therefore now very edifying as a specimen of what a party pamphlet may be, and not unfrequently is.

I cannot attempt, for want of time, any discussion of this great question. You will see what is said very fully and distinctly by Coxe. I cannot think, for my own part, that proper use, that the right use, was made, by Marlborough and Godolphin, of the victories of Blenheim and Ramillies; and I cannot think so, even after the perusal of every thing that this valuable historian has delivered to the contrary, in his Life of the Duke of Marlborough.

I must now remind you, as I apprized you I should, of the reasons for the war, which were given when it first broke out. It is curious to remark the manner in which the tone of the allies altered, and their views enlarged, with their victories. This may be very *natural*, but it is not entirely and ultimately wise. A war is not to be entered upon without a grave and specific object; but when success has enabled a nation to obtain that object, and this had surely been effected by the great battles just alluded to, upon every principle of wisdom as of humanity, the war must close. If new objects are to arise and to be considered as indispensable to peace, the system of warfare is then converted into a system so much nearer the most protracted possible, and therefore the most ruinous possible; a system more protracted than the passions of our nature, violent as they are, at all require. Peace is the first cause of human nature, it is the great secret of prosperity to all nations, collectively and individually. It is,

therefore, the common policy of all; not to say, that even according to the short-sighted notions of rivalry and selfishness, a successful nation often carries on a war too long; more is lost by the expense of an additional campaign, than the advantages of a campaign do or can repay; and what is of still more consequence, the fortune of the contest may alter.

Again, it should have been considered that those who propose fair terms of peace, as Louis did, never fail of securing a most advantageous alternative. They obtain either a peace or a just cause. Louis, for instance, could not bring the allies to grant him honourable conditions (hard terms are never the true policy); he therefore published those which they had insisted upon, and he had it then in his power to say, as he did say, to his subjects, in a public address, "If it had depended on me, you should have enjoyed this blessing which you so earnestly desire, the blessing of peace; but it must be procured by new efforts; the immense sacrifices I have offered are of no avail; I can perfectly sympathize with all that my faithful subjects must endure, but I am persuaded they would themselves recoil from conditions of peace as repugnant to justice as to the honour of the French name."

These considerations were not addressed to the French people in vain, and they never will or can be addressed in vain to any people by their rulers. It is true that when the successes of the allies were so great, it then, as the Whigs thought, became to them a question whether the opportunity was not to be taken of attempting to deprive France of all the additions which she had made to her power since the peace of Westphalia; but surely it should rather have been thought (and long before this extreme point of depression in the affairs of France had occurred) that the failure of the succession in the family of Spain, and the provisions of the will of Charles, created a conjuncture the most unfortunate that could possibly have happened, one from which it was not in the nature of things that Europe should be able entirely to extricate itself; that the people and grandees of Spain had already decided against the pretensions of the House of Austria and the projects of the allies; that if

France was to be protected from the ambition of Louis, some effort of a very different nature must be made; that the transfer of Spain and the Indies to the House of Austria was impossible; was at all events the least feasible project that could be attempted; and that, on the whole, taking into account the natural and honourable feelings of a distinguished monarch like Louis and a great nation like France, and again the same natural and honourable feelings of the grandees and people of Spain—taking into account these important points, surely it should have been thought that all that was reasonable, and at all events all that was practicable, might have been produced by the allies at an early period, immediately after the battle of Ramillies, or even before, and certainly during the negotiation at the Hague.

The Whigs ought surely to have been eager to have made the best bargain for Europe which they could, from the obvious probability that the queen, who always hated and feared them, as they well knew, would contrive to get other ministers, and the consequence be, a peace on terms much less advantageous to England and the continent than they could themselves obtain. They might easily see how difficult it was to keep up a combination of powers against France, and how many chances and how many reasons might make a war unpopular.

These I conceive to be some of the points for you to consider, and you should fix your attention on early periods in the war, immediately after the battle of Ramillies, and rather on the negotiations that precede than those that took place at Gertruydenburg; the peace should have been made long before the conferences at Gertruydenburg. They who would decide this question in the shortest time possible, may take into their consideration a few pages in the different chapters of Coxe's *Austria*, and Somerville's *History of Queen Anne*.

I cannot but observe, as I am finally quitting this subject, of the use which the allies made of their victories, that in every free government it is the interest of the members of a cabinet, even with a view to their own personal aggrandizement, to proceed as much as possible on a system of peace,

for the uneasiness which is occasioned by the pressure of war is very easily converted, by their political opponents, into the means of dislodging them from their power. In all free governments, those who make a war, as was the case in the present instance, seldom make a peace; war comes at last, with or without due reason, to be unpopular; and the war and its advisers are discarded together.

Again, from the whole of the War of the Succession, it is evident how great must always be the difficulty of supporting a combination of many states against one.

Their interests, or at least their own views of their interests, are seldom the same while the war is carried on, still less, when peace begins to be thought of. It is very difficult to combine them so as to render them successful for any long period. Prosperity disunites them, from jealousy; adversity still more, from views of self-preservation.

In combinations of different powers, the great duty of all is disinterestedness. In this respect the Whig ministry of England set an example highly creditable to their characters as wise and honourable statesmen. They might mistake (it is a great question) the wisdom of the case at the proper season; but their language and their views were, resistance to the ambition of France—the establishment of the general interests of Europe.

But the question is, whether they suffered not the justice of the cause at last to be transferred to the French monarch. He had recourse to negotiation, was unsuccessful, and then appealed to his people and to the world.—I must ask again—

Were the allies and their ministers sufficiently attentive to the claims of humanity and to all the suggestions of sober policy at home and abroad on this occasion and in the course of these successes? To me it appears not.

If the rulers of mankind would not mix their own passions in the contests of nations, it is impossible that these appeals to negotiation should not be more frequent; it is impossible that wars should be drawn out to the protracted period we so often witness. All parties would be thrown more and more into a state of deliberation; would be reminded of the desirableness of peace; that it was the proper and only end of all war: that the real causes of hostility were always exagger-

rather, that in these cases there was nothing to be met with but misapprehension, fury, and absurdity.

But the whole system of national policy is mistaken, and cabinets, instead of considering how their own nation may be extricated from a contest with safety and honour, think only how the enemy may be reduced to the lowest possible state of depression, how their own views of political aggrandizement may be realized, how their own particular nation may be left hereafter without an equal, and the rest of mankind be taught to fall down and worship themselves and their countrymen. I cannot further allude to this question, and it must be now left to your own diligence and curiosity.

As you proceed in the general history, you will find the influence of Marlborough and the Whig ministry gradually decline, and at last a new Tory ministry formed, and a peace concluded.

These events will be found sufficiently explained in the authors I have already referred to; and after their details have been perused, the account which the Duchess of Marlborough herself gives of her conduct from her first coming to court till the year 1710, should by all means be read. It is not long, sometimes important, and always entertaining.

But peace was at last made, and made by the Tories. Some opinion should be formed of the merits of it, and of the negotiations that led to it.

To the account that is given by the regular historians, should be added the third volume of the Memoirs of De Torcy. It is still the French statement and view of the case, but even as such it should be read. The work, however, is not only in many places characteristic of the nation to which the author belongs, but the notices that are to be found of the English people, and of the views and characters of the parties of our island, are often amusing and instructing. It may serve to display the nature of negotiations, the difficulties that continually arise, and the patience and dexterity that are always necessary to compose the differences of belligerent powers, even when the negotiators themselves feel and know that it is their interest to come to an adjustment.

When the detail of these transactions has been read in

De Torcy and our common historians, the Correspondence of Bolingbroke, which was not long ago published by Mr. Parke, should be looked at. It touches only on the surface of these important negotiations, but after the detail is known, the rapid allusions and brief notices that are taken by the Secretary Bolingbroke from time to time, of these affairs, are not without their interest. Those of Prior's letters which appear here are lively and entertaining, so are indeed those of Bolingbroke; but from a correspondence of this sort we expect to acquire a greater insight into the transactions to which they refer than it must be confessed we can here obtain.

The merits of the peace of Utrecht was a question which you will perceive, from the occurrences that took place in and out of parliament during the close of this and the opening of the succeeding reign, extremely agitated the public mind. There is a short disquisition on the subject in the twentieth chapter of Somerville, to which I must refer. The historian there arrives at a conclusion which appears to me reasonable, that the peace was censurable rather as being disproportioned to the success of the war than as having fallen short of the ends of the grand alliance.

The question of the peace as between the Whigs and Tories may be seen argued in the eighth letter of Bolingbroke, on the Study and Use of History, and in the reply of the first Horace Walpole. It cannot be denied that the French court saw that it would be the personal interest of the English ministers to make a peace; that of this advantage France was ready, most ungenerously to those ministers, to avail herself; and that the English ministers exerted themselves in no proper manner to preclude France from any such advantage. They in no respect showed, as they ought to have done, that though desirous of peace, as good and wise men should always be, that though cooler and more equitable in this important respect than the Whigs, still they were as determined, as the Whigs, to make a common cause with Europe against the power of France; and that whatever France might conceive with respect to their personal interest as leaders of a party in England, that they would still do nothing inconsistent with their character as the arbiters, for

such they were, at the time, of the great interests of the most of the nations of Europe.

De Torcy, through the whole of the third volume of his *Memoirs*, cannot help repeatedly contrasting, with pleasure, the existing and former situation of France: and these expressions, connected with the attendant circumstances of the case, amount to something like a reproach to the Tory ministers, with whom France had now to deal, instead of Marlborough and the Whigs.

Again, it cannot be denied that Harley, the first minister in the Tory administration, by the shuffling, temporising, and narrow nature of his mind, was totally unfit to compose the differences and adjust the interests of Europe at that remarkable crisis. Bolingbroke should have been the Tory minister, not Harley, if any great and decisive alteration was to be made in the policy and measures of the country, and if a peace was to be attempted. England would not then have been disgraced by some of the wretched and even dishonourable measures that were resorted to. Bolingbroke, in his very curious close of his eighth letter seems often to defend more than he can approve, to defend measures of which certainly he would not have been the author, and to some of which, it is to be hoped, if prime minister, he would not have submitted.

To the general train and object of Bolingbroke's very able and spirited reasonings, the *Memoirs of De Torcy* seem to me, though little intended for any such purpose, to be a very adequate reply. The question is not whether the Whigs made a proper use of their success in war, when they came to negotiations for a peace, but, when that question has been decided, as I think it must be, against the Whigs, the question is, whether next the Tory ministers made fair use of that success, and whether *they* conducted themselves in a spirit of good faith with their allies, or proper sympathy with the great interests of their country.

This second question must, I think, be determined against them—decidedly, and even with indignation.

* Since I wrote the lecture which I have now delivered, the work of Mr. Coxe has appeared, his *History of the Princes of the House of Bourbon in Spain*. Every subject that I have

now alluded to is here treated very fully, and I must refer to it. I have not found any occasion to alter what I had written, I do not admire the Tory ministry any more than Mr. Coxe; but whether the Whigs, from the first, were sufficiently moderate and disposed to peace, is another question.

Mr. Coxe's work is in many places entertaining, and is on the whole a valuable accession to our historical information; but, in the present state of the world and of literature, I suspect that much of the work will be passed over with a slight perusal by the general reader.

LECTURE XXIV.

ANNE.

THE reign of Anne is distinguished, even in the annals of England, for the violence of its politics. Party violence has been not uncommonly a topic of censure and lamentation with good men, and their accusations and reproaches have been urged often with sincerity, and sometimes with reason; but care must be taken on these occasions both by those who are disposed to make these indiscriminate indictments, and those who are disposed to listen to them. It is in itself rather a suspicious circumstance, when men who are at all conversant with the business of the world are found expressing themselves very strongly or very often against the violence of parties or the fury of factions. In a mixed and free government, there will naturally arise, as I must for ever repeat, two great and leading divisions, those who lean to the side of authority, and those who lean to the side of privilege. Questions, unlike in name and form, will often involve the same general principles, and men are not, therefore, always as inconsistent as they seem. Trains of measures will often emanate from one point, and proceed in the most strictly logical succession, and must be therefore supported and resisted always by the same men. It is, therefore, not possible that those who are really independent and sincere should not often in free legislative assemblies, vote in sets and parties, and it is equally impossible that they should not become inflamed by sympathy and collision. Read the works of Soame Jenyns, and of Locke. Would not each of these men, for instance, while they retained their integrity, have been seen always on the opposite sides of any question that could affect the constitution and government of a free country?

The real and proper topic for lamentation and reproach, is

not, exactly, that men are often violent and systematic in their opposition to each other; but that they do not adopt their principles with sufficient care, and then follow them up with sincerity and honour. Moderate men, as they call themselves, and men of no party, as they profess themselves to be, will generally be found to be men who take little concern, or are but ill informed, on political subjects; and if they are members of the legislature, they are pretty uniformly observed, as they are of no party, forsooth, to take care to be of that party which is the strongest—to be of the minister's party (be he who he may), and to benefit by their neutrality. It is possible, indeed, for men to be of no party, and to assume the high station of real patriots; and even when they are of a party, to remain patriots, by refusing to sanction those measures of the party which they disapprove. This is, perhaps, the highest possible ambition of an intelligent and virtuous man, but such an eminence can only be attained on one hard condition, that of never receiving a favour from those in power.

I may recur to this subject on some occasion hereafter; for the present, however, I conclude by observing, that the causes of political animosity were, in these times, very peculiarly weighty and animating. The questions that lay often between the parties were, in reality, what family was to possess the throne; whether the title of the crown was to be founded on divine and hereditary right, or on the principles of an original contract, that is, whether on arbitrary or free principles; whether the religion established in the country was to be certainly Protestant, or probably Roman Catholic; in a word, whether principles decidedly favourable, or principles clearly hostile, to the civil and religious liberties of the country, were to be maintained and established.

But in a sort of connexion with this subject, I may mention, that in a mixed government like this, the attention of those who wish well to the popular part of it, has been always very naturally directed to the influence which the executive power can directly exercise on the legislative bodies, by means of posts, places, and pensions, given to their members.

Place bills have therefore at different times been attempted,

and others of this kind were also made in the reign which we are now considering, and with some success.

It is to be observed, however, that it seems not now to have been any longer proposed, that every man should necessarily be shut out of parliament by holding an official situation. The bills were for *limiting* the number of such members, not excluding them altogether. The number, for instance, was to have been fifty; and to limit the number is a measure of a very different complexion from a general bill of exclusion. You will see speeches in favour of and against the measure in the debates.

Bills were brought into the commons, and rejected by the lords, one in 1712, only by a majority of five; but instead of following the fortunes of these bills through the houses, I shall prefer calling your attention to some observations on the general subject, which may be found drawn up by Paley in his chapter on the British Constitution.

Nothing can drop from the pen of such a writer, so remarkable for his clearness and excellent sense, that can be without its importance, particularly where the subject has any immediate connexion with the business of human life. This eminent reasoner, however, feels it necessary to protest against any influence, but that which results from the acceptance or expectation of public preferments; nay more, against any influence which requires any sacrifice of personal probity.

This last seems a large concession—a concession which might at first sight, be thought to leave no further difference of opinion possible. What could the most ardent patriot wish for, but that the house should be so constituted, that no sacrifice of personal probity should be required?

Dr. Paley must, however, be again heard.

He contends, that in political, above all other subjects, the arguments, or rather the conjectures, on each side of a question, are often so equally poised, that the wisest judgments may be held in suspense. These he calls subjects of indifference. And again, when the subject is not indifferent in itself, it will appear such to a great part of those to whom it is proposed, from want of information, or reflection, or experience, or capacity to weigh the reasons on each side. “These

cases," he says, and not unreasonably, "compose the province of influence." But then he adds, "that whoever reviews the operations of government in this country since the Revolution, will find few, even of the most questionable measures of administration, about which the best instructed judgment might not have doubted at the time, but of which he may affirm, with certainty, that they were indifferent to the greatest part of those who concurred in them."

This whole doctrine of indifference is evidently very suspicious, and if carried into practice would, I fear, be found but too soothing and convenient to that numerous description of men, who are neither very virtuous, nor the contrary; and who, though they may be induced to act ill, must first practise upon themselves some arts of apology and self-delusion. Such doctrine of indifference would surely be destructive of all that plain, straight-forward, simple, and intelligible integrity, which should never be parted with; which is the best ornament of the character of every man, in public as in private life; the best security for his virtue, and even for his wisdom.

But further: were in reality the political questions, since the Revolution, in general such as Dr. Paley supposes; such, that influence might fairly decide them? and may, therefore, the same be concluded of almost all political questions; for that is the inference intended: or is at least the practical inference? What are the facts? What says the history? I would recommend this subject to your attention, as I would recommend it, when you arrive at similar reasonings urged by Dr. Somerville. Bear it in mind, while you read the annals of this country, from the Revolution to the present moment.

Not to decide at present on reigns which we have not yet considered, can it be true of the reigns before us—the reigns of William and of Anne; take for instance, the latter; could not men form an opinion, and were they not bound to vote according to that opinion, on the Occasional Conformity Bill, and on the Schism Bill; that is, on all questions where the toleration of religion was concerned? Again: could they not form an opinion on the question of peace and war at the opening of the reign? Again: whether the ends of the war had not been sufficiently attained about the middle of the

...at the close of the reign, whether the negotiation which led to the peace of Utrecht, had been properly conducted; whether the peace was well made? Whether it should then have been made at all? Whether the Hanover family should have been called to the throne? Whether the Protestant succession was in danger? Whether the union with Scotland should have been attempted? Whether, when once effected; it should afterwards be broken? Are these, and could they ever have been, questions of indifference? What are the questions, agitated in the parliaments of Anne, which were not connected with the great leading questions of the balance of power in Europe, and the success of the principles of the Revolution? How were men of independence and reflection to avoid forming some opinion, to avoid feeling some strong sentiment, on the one side or the other?

The truth is, that questions where suspense of judgment is allowable, questions of indifference, such as Dr. Paley inaccurately, as I suspect, dangerously, as I am sure, represents the greatest part of political questions to be, excite, when they occur, no sensation; none in the public—none in the house; are the mere ordinary and common-place business of the kingdom; what any minister may, and what every minister does, carry on, and what no minister finds it necessary to carry on by the exertion of influence. It is not by votes on cases like these, that a minister is obliged by any member, and is expected, consequently, to oblige that member in his turn.

It is on questions where the great system of his administration at home or abroad is concerned, where the conduct of those he has intrusted, his officers, civil or military, is to be censured or approved; where public offenders are to be screened, or where even his own wisdom or integrity is to be questioned. It is on occasions like these that influence is wanted, and is exerted: these are the cases that, far more than the cases of indifference, compose the real province of influence. It is impossible to say, that man shall either decide, or even deciding, on occasions like these, without implicating in their vote, or in their absence from the house, the character of their personal probity.

The more natural view of this subject seems to be, that in a mixed and free government like our own, all questions that either occupy, or deserve to occupy attention, have a reference either to the prerogative of the crown, or privileges of the people, to religious toleration, to mild or harsh government, to peace and war, or finally, to some of the more important subjects of political economy; that suspense in all these cases is impossible, that honest men therefore vote with those who best promote such systems and principles as they approve; that in this manner are disposed of, and ranged on *different* sides, the men of *political integrity*; and that the remainder are those who are in the habit of thinking all questions matters of indifference, and of joining the men or the ministers, who are most likely to furnish their relations or themselves with emoluments and offices; but that such men are, and always have been, the proper objects of the suspicion and contempt, not only of the public, but of the very house itself; and it is impossible to suppose that they can be necessary to the stability of any good government; certainly not in any greater number than the infirmity of human nature will always produce them, after every possible political expedient and contrivance has been resorted to, for the purpose of diminishing their number, and weakening their efficiency.

I have now another topic to propose in like manner to your reflections.

The reign of Anne is remarkable as exhibiting in a very strong point of view one of those peculiarities in the constitution of a government which can only occur in a free and mixed form, like our own. I allude to the manner in which the executive power can be restrained, and even controlled by machinery not *expressly* provided by the constitution for the purpose, and yet acting with far more certainty and success than any that could be devised by the most skilful contriver of political systems.

For instance, Queen Anne carried on the war against France when neither her wishes nor her opinions were favourable to its continuance: The Whig administration remained in power long after they had become disagreeable to her; and Marlborough was her general, and even the arbiter of her

of the queen for peace, when neither he nor his friends any longer possessed her favour.

LOUIS XIV. at the same time, had always understood that it was the acknowledged prerogative of the crown in this country to determine the questions of peace and war; that it was equally so to choose its own ministers; and though he must have known that these prerogatives, however acknowledged by the constitution, were, after all, not exercised in the manner they were done by himself, still he had learnt that the Duchess of Marlborough was supplanted, that Harley and Mrs. Masham were the real favourites; that the Whigs were on the decline, and the Tories preparing for their political triumph; and what difficulties, he must have thought, were left, and what was he now to fear?

All this is made very apparent by a few pages in the Duchess of Marlborough's Apology, describing the situation of things so early as in the winter of 1706 and spring of 1707, about a year after the battle of Ramillies, the great battle which seemed to decide the fortunes of the war. Yet all through the war of 1708, the war, and the great supporters of it, the Whigs, were still highly popular. At the end of this year, 1708, November 25, a new parliament met, in which the Whigs had, as before, a decided ascendancy, and they were possessed of a power that was still firm, and as yet not to be shaken. The nation and the houses of parliament were still in their favour, and though the queen longed for their dismissal almost as impatiently as did her secret counsellors and the rival party of the Tories, it required a certain lapse of time, and a continuance of mistake and infatuation on the part of the Whigs, to produce the great political events, which Louis perhaps expected to have taken place long before, without difficulty or delay.

When the Whig administration was at last fairly swept away, the queen was felicitated on her success, and even in express words, congratulated as being again a queen.

Instances of this sort of control over the wishes of the sovereign sometimes occur in our history since the restoration of Charles II., and they deserve attention. While the government remains mixed and free, they will never cease at particular periods to occur.

As on these occasions it is always said that the Sovereign has absolutely a right to appoint his own ministers, and as this observation is generally considered as decisive, a few remarks may not be entirely without their use to those who would study these, the most critical portions of our annals, and certainly by far the most important peculiarities of our constitution.

To consider them a little. The great problem of government is to make the executive power sufficiently strong to preserve the peace and order of society, and yet not leave it sufficiently strong to disregard the wishes and happiness of the community. When this point is attained, every thing is attained that the nature of human society admits of.

But referring to our own history, we may say that this was not done in our own country before or during the reign of Elizabeth, nor yet during the reign of Charles I.; a crisis of the most melancholy nature ensued. From this time, however, what had always been more or less the doctrine became at last the practice of the English constitution, and while the executive power was, in the person of the king, considered as incapable of doing any wrong, the ministers of that executive power were considered as its advisers, and therefore very capable of doing wrong, and as the proper and only subjects of national censure or punishment.

It is not easy to discover a more happy expedient than this for solving the great political problem which I have just mentioned; certainly no better has ever appeared in any government that has hitherto existed among mankind. The regular growth and final maturity of this expedient, if I may so speak, among all the changes and chances of the events of our history, may assuredly be esteemed one of the greatest blessings by which this country is distinguished; but the original difficulty is so very great, that it is scarcely possible for human beings entirely to escape it; and it is not escaped, but much the contrary, if it be once considered as a political maxim, that the sovereign can appoint his own ministers, and that no further debate is necessary.

I will now put two cases: one to show, in the first place, the impropriety of this political maxim, that the king can appoint, and that nothing more is to be said; and another, in the second place, to show the impropriety of any maxim

directly the contrary; that the sovereign, for instance, should be more consulted on this point. Lastly, I will propose a resolution from the whole.

And first, to show the impropriety of the maxim, that the sovereign can choose his own ministers, and that no further debate is possible.

Suppose, for instance, that Queen Anne, during the administration of the Whigs, had satisfied herself that the war ought to be terminated, and yet found her ministers of a different opinion; suppose in this case she had dismissed them, and appointed others; suppose that the houses of parliament were unfavourable, agreeing with her own ministers, and refusing her new ministers their support, that she therefore dissolved the parliament, and appealed to the people. Now, if on this occasion her people had returned her such representatives as were favourable to the new ministers, merely because the queen was vested by the constitution with the prerogative of making peace, and of choosing her own ministers, what difference would there in fact have been between her and Louis XIV.? None but this, that the sovereign in this country had to go through the ceremony of dissolving an existing parliament and calling a new one, and that Louis could follow his own opinion without any such delay.

* Or to put a still stronger case to the same purpose: suppose Queen Anne had resolved if possible to restore her brother and her family to the throne, she had found, we will imagine, her Whig ministers impracticable on this occasion; she had perceived that Bolingbroke and others on the contrary would try the experiment, if sure of her support. Bolingbroke, therefore, is made minister; her intentions, and those of her new adviser, become manifest; the houses of parliament, as before, thwart her measures, and the votes necessary for her purpose cannot be carried; she therefore dissolves the parliament, and appeals to the people. Now, if in this case also the electors return a House of Commons friendly to the new ministers, merely because those new ministers are the objects of the queen's choice, and because the constitution has given her the power of choice, if such had been the reasoning considered as final on the occasion, what would

have been the result? That the Protestant succession would not have taken place; that the Stuarts would have been recalled; the Revolution failed; and more than this, all these events would have happened contrary to the real opinion and wishes of the community.

That is, in other words, this single maxim, if it should really obtain and be acted upon, would at once make the sovereign arbitrary, whenever any personal pique with his ministers, any particular views of his own in politics, or any great projects with respect to the descent of his crown, or to the constitution of the country, inspired him with a wish to become arbitrary; that is, to do what he thought best.

We will now change entirely the aspect of the reasoning; to show, in the second place, the impropriety of any maxim, exactly the contrary to that we have noticed. We will suppose that an appeal on some account or other had, as before, been made by the sovereign from the parliament to the people, and that the maxim in the mind of the electors had no longer been such as we have hitherto supposed, but that the reasoning had been of a nature totally different; for instance, that the legislative bodies, more particularly the House of Commons, were the natural protectors of the community; that the sovereign in a free government was not to do whatever he thought good; that the liberties of the country had always owed their existence to the control which the houses had exercised upon the executive power; that a free constitution in reality meant this, and meant little else, and that therefore the people should ALWAYS support their parliaments, who could not be expected to bear up against the executive power without the most ready sympathy and protection; without the most implicit confidence on the part of their constituents.

Now, it is evident that if reasonings like these were supposed to be *always* decisive, and to preclude, as in the first cases, *all further discussion*; that then the executive power would be a mere cipher, would be always at the mercy of those, who by whatever means had possessed themselves of the confidence of the houses.

I do not say that even this would be a bad species of government, or at least that it would not be the best alternative

of the law, but I may safely say that it is not properly the prerogative of England, and that therefore, as before, this may be the merit, viz. that the breach, or perhaps, as the case may more probably be, that the House of Commons is at all events to be supported.

Taking, therefore, the difficulties on each side of the question into account, I now proceed, in the third place, to propose a conclusion drawn from the whole, and it is this, that whenever an appeal is made by the executive power from the House of Commons to the nation by a dissolution, the veil of the constitution is for a time drawn aside; the personal conduct, the political wisdom not only of each representative of the public, but even of the high and supreme magistrate of the realm himself, is for one short interval brought before the consideration of the public, and is even subjected to their decision. The most important question that can possibly be proposed is then, in fact, proposed to every individual of intelligence or influence; for it is this—to which of the two parties (however elevated in the view of reason and the constitution one of these high parties may be)—to which of the two parties he is to give his support? And the result of the whole is this, that this support is to be given not in compliance with any pre-established maxims either of a monarchical or democratical nature, but after the most careful deliberation on the merits of the precise case before him; for it is by these merits he is to be decided, and not by any sweeping general preconceptions on the one side or the other, such as preclude at once all further discussion; he is to be determined, on the contrary, by a deliberation careful, honest, and independent; a deliberation which is the very virtue and the very office that on this occasion is required from him; he is to deliberate as having now become for a season the guardian and the arbiter of the British constitution, of the happiness of his country, of the rights and welfare of the existing generation and posterity. According to the issue of his inquiries and meditations, he is bound to return to parliament: those who would be most likely to favour those views of the case which he himself entertains; and a greater fault, I had almost said a greater crime—can scarcely be committed, than for any man to suffer himself to be swayed on great occasions like these by

any motives of base and sordid self-interest: by any hopes of preferment for himself or his relatives, or even by regard to his family connexions, his personal friendships, his obligations of kindness, or, in short, by any motive even generous and virtuous, but the sole and proper motive which can alone in this particular instance be generous and virtuous, his real view of the case, the calm, plain, honest, unsophisticated decision of his judgment.

If ever the constitution of England is to be admired, it is on occasions like these; in every crisis of this nature, when the supreme executive power was in fact to be criticised and publicly controlled, at Rome a tribune was to appear on the part of the people with his veto; in Arragon a justiza was to be a sort of representative and guardian of the community. These are but very indifferent expedients; such as have appeared in Grecian or other republican forms of government are little better; in arbitrary governments there are none; but in our own happy country civil wars, violence, and bloodshed, those contests so disgraceful to humanity, so fatal but too often to the interests of the people, are avoided; they have now been so for a century and a half, and all this by the regular and orderly exercise of the different functions that belong to the sovereign, the houses of legislature, and the people. In England, if the great magistrate of the realm is at issue with other powers in the state, the question is for some time kept in suspense; the public attention is excited, and then, before either of the parties is irrecoverably committed or irreconcilably inflamed, the parliament is dissolved, a third party is called in, and that third party is the nation itself; not acting in any tumultuous or extraordinary manner; not exerting any physical force; not called upon to show any giddy rudeness, any vulgar insolence, any upstart airs of authority over their sovereign, to whom they owe a general obligation of duty and obedience; and on the contrary, not called upon to show the slightest disrespect or indifference to the office of that part of the legislature, their house of parliament, to which they owe a general sentiment of confidence and affection, but called upon gravely and peaceably to furnish a new representative; a new special reporter of their opinion to their sovereign; one with whom he may again consult, and

expressing his own particular views of the nature of his prerogative or of the national interest. If the sovereign should have been too willing an ear to counsel unfavourable to the constitution or the welfare of his people, he may be thus warned of his mistake in time, by the opinions of the representatives which the people have returned to him, and be warned in a manner the most respectful, the most gentle, the most consistent with the high reverence that is due to his exalted station; and if, on the contrary, the people themselves mistake or betray their own interests, and send an improper representative, they must suffer, and they deserve to suffer (as men must always do in every concern and situation of human life), the natural consequences of their own servility, inattention, or ignorance.

When the sovereigns of this country have neglected the known sentiments of the people, or have disregarded the answers that have been made by the nation, through the medium of their new representatives, in consequence of appeals of this kind, in each case, deplorable have been to them the events that followed. Of the Stuarts, one lost his life, and one his crown, and even Charles II. precipitated himself and the nation to the very brink of confusion; yet the people of England appear to have been always, notwithstanding their natural attachment to the House of Commons and their concern for their own liberties, very indulgent critics to their sovereigns. Even Charles II., the most worthless of men, obtained an answer from them on an appeal of this kind, at last, quite favourable to his wishes.

There is considerable difficulty, no doubt, on these occasions, and as the physical strength is with the nation, and only opinion and the reverence of authority with the sovereign, the balance of the scale is not on light grounds to be made to turn against him.

I will now propose a case to you for your own application of these general reasonings. I will take a particular point of time in the reign before us.

Of the various periods in our history, when a sort of crisis of this kind, to a greater or less degree, was understood to exist, I know of none, in which a decision would have been made with more difficulty than during those very times which we are now considering.

I propose to therefore to your reflections—the epoch of 1710; you will find the cause to be shortly this:—The queen had long disliked the Whigs and their administration, but they were triumphant in the houses of parliament, and carried on the business of the nation with great ability and success; for the first time in the annals of the world, England had rendered herself, by her continental interference, the leading power in Europe; the queen was therefore obliged to submit; she could neither consult the wishes of her secret advisers Harley and Mrs. Masham, and get clear of her ministers, nor her own views and opinions, and get rid of the war.

The Whigs had, however, while they were vindicating the great cause of the nation at the trial of Dr. Sacheverell, unfortunately for themselves, excited in that nation so violent a ferment, and discovered to the queen so plainly the secret of her own strength, that she no longer thought it necessary to keep any terms with them; she dismissed them from their offices; ordered a proclamation to be issued for dissolving the parliament; and when the Chancellor Cowper on this occasion, rose to speak, declared that she would admit of no debate, “that such was her pleasure.” Here, then, was an appeal to the public.

Now, the question is, what ought to have been the answer returned by the nation. If a Tory House of Commons was returned, a peace would probably be the result, and one of the greatest calamities that can afflict mankind at an end. If, on the contrary, a majority of the Whigs was to be returned, the war would be continued, under the auspices of the greatest commanders, and France, probably reduced so low as never again to be in a condition to disturb the tranquillity of Europe. In the one case, a sanction would be given to the arbitrary principles that had been avowed by Dr. Sacheverell and his adherents, and even the queen herself would be encouraged and assisted to patronize and establish them; her attachment to her brother, and to her own house of Stuart, was well known. What might not be the consequence?

But if, on the contrary, the Whigs were protected, the principles of the Revolution were protected; the Protestant succession was protected, and the great cause of civil and religious liberty that had been decided, with a great victory so signal and unexpected, a few years before, in favour of the

might be pursued from its new and most promising source, and probably placed on a secure footing to the most advantage.

In the first case the queen was to be gratified; a queen neither tyrannical nor exalted in her nature; exemplary in her conduct; and though not of an understanding the most commanding, on that account the more to be trusted with the enjoyment of a political triumph. In the other case the Whigs would be told, and all public men hereafter, that they might safely endeavour to promote the glory and interests of the nation, even at the risk of thwarting the wishes of their sovereign; that the public might be depended upon: that their favour, if merited, would be a support as effectual as that of the crown; that a minister's self-interest and political virtue were not necessarily at variance with each other.

Such are some of the considerations on which any lover of his country would have had to decide at the time, and on which we may also endeavour to decide, now that all the means of forming a judgment are in our possession; considering the uncertainty of events, the aspect of things at that particular juncture, and the great stake at issue (the success of the Revolution), I think the question extremely difficult. But the nature of the queen's character, her want of political courage, her evident inaptitude to bold and hazardous counsels, might, perhaps, with those who also duly considered the desirableness of a peace, have turned the decision in her favour. The decision was so turned, but it is extremely doubtful if the queen had lived (as Bolingbroke would have been her minister), what might have been at length the consequences.

These allusions will give you some general notion of the political questions that occurred during this period of our annals.

But among the different transactions of a domestic nature that took place in the reign of Anne, I would particularly recommend to your study, the proceedings in the case of Dr. Sacheverell.

I recommend them, not on account of any interest that can now be felt, either to the doctor or his country, either of which are in themselves deserving of the slightest regard; but on

account of the lively picture that is here exhibited of the times; and above all, of the manner in which the great Revolution of 1688 was explained and defended by the first statesmen of the country about twenty years after the event.

And it is in this spirit, and for this purpose, that I would wish the student to read them, not as a juror who was to decide whether the doctor was or was not guilty of the charge preferred against him, but as an inquirer into the history of our constitution, as one who is to observe the political principles exhibited on this occasion by the managers of the House of Commons, by Sacheverell's defenders, by the lords, and by the nation.

The trial is ever memorable, because at this trial the Revolution was avowed to be a case of resistance—resistance justified, indeed, by the necessity of the case, but still resistance.

At the time of the Revolution it may be remembered that the houses of parliament, or rather the House of Commons, in their celebrated vote, had rested their justification on somewhat various, and indeed on very inconsistent grounds, "that King James having endeavoured to subvert the constitution, by breaking the original contract, having violated the fundamental laws, and having withdrawn himself out of the kingdom, had abdicated the government, and that the throne was thereby become vacant."

That is, in other words, the Whigs, for the sake of the Tories, stated the Revolution to be a case of *abdication*, and for the sake of themselves, a breach of the original contract, i. e. a case of resistance.

But on the present occasion the preamble to the articles exhibited against Dr. Sacheverell begins in this remarkable manner:—

"Whereas, his late majesty, King William III., then Prince of Orange, did, with an armed force, undertake a glorious enterprise for delivering this kingdom from popery and arbitrary power, and divers subjects of this realm, well affected to their country, joined with and assisted his late majesty in this late enterprise, and it having pleased Almighty God to crown the same with success, the late happy Revolution did take effect, and was established, and the said King

with general assent is approved by several acts of parliament." &c. &c.

And the first article of the impeachment was, that Dr. Sacheverell had maintained, that to impute resistance to the said Revolution, was to cast black and odious colours upon his late majesty and the said Revolution.

Now the difference in the tone and language of the Whigs forms the remarkable part of these proceedings, and nothing can be more curious than to observe, how the different parties comported themselves,—the Whigs, the Tories, the church, and the queen,—on this great occasion, in the presence of the nation, and, in reality, of subsequent ages.

The doctrines of resistance are not doctrines which can find their way into the courts of law of any country, or be the language of the public ordinances of any regular government. These doctrines, therefore, could not be stated by the Whig managers of the impeachment, in the presence of all the constituted dignity and authority of the realm, without the strongest qualifications, without distinguishing the case of the Revolution from every other ordinary case, without considering it as a case of the most overpowering necessity—by necessity, and by that alone, to be either explained or justified.

In our own times, therefore, on the breaking out of the French Revolution, when Mr. Burke had to vindicate his own account of this Revolution of 1688, his own representation "of the spirit by which it was conducted, and the true nature and tenure of the government formed in consequence of it," he immediately appealed to the speeches of the Whig managers on this very occasion; and it was easy for him to show, that the Revolution was *then* justified, only on the necessity of the case, as the only means left "for the recovery of that ancient constitution formed by the original contract of the British state, as well as for the future preservation of the same government."

Now, though I think allowance must be made for the peculiar situation in which the managers in Dr. Sacheverell's trial stood, and the necessity they were under to qualify to the utmost their doctrines of resistance, still it is sufficient for Mr. Burke, that their doctrines, unless so qualified, could not be produced and defended before the lawyers and statesmen of the country.

could not be produced as doctrines worthy to be recognised by, and to be a part of the constitution of England.

The next question that remains is, What reply was made to the Whig managers by the defenders of Sacheverell? How were the doctrines of resistance, thus stated and limited, received? were they controverted? Far from it; when *they* modified, they were at once admitted. And therefore, when thus modified, they may be considered as the constitutional doctrines of the realm.

But the interest of the trial does not cease here, for Dr. Sacheverell, having fortified his own doctrines of passive obedience by the authority of the Church of England and the most able divines and prelates from the time of the Reformation, a very large field of disquisition was opened, and the question was very solemnly considered, whether passive obedience had, or had not, been the doctrine of the Church of England and of its most able and learned divines.

The grounds to be taken by the reasoners on the Tory side were obvious: quotations were to be produced from the proper authorities, to show that the doctrines of passive obedience had been laid down, and without any exception; that such had been the ordinary practice of our divines, and that the doctor only followed their example. This was done.

But the Whig prelates and lawyers contended, that rules of duty, like those of civil obedience, could only be taught by the Scriptures (and therefore by the church and its divines) in *general terms*, and that exceptions in *extreme cases*, like those of the Revolution, were necessarily *implied* from the very nature and common reason of the case.

And what was *now* the ground taken by the doctor's counsel? The *propriety* of this reasoning, and of this view of the case was admitted by the doctor's counsel.

Now as this solution of the difficulty, however reasonable, and however *acted* upon by the divines of the Church of England themselves, had never before been publicly *stated* and *admitted*, as the *proper theory* on the subject, some *advance* must be considered as having been made on this occasion, (and one favourable to the general principles of civil liberty), and in a quarter, where, of all others, it is most desirable to find it.

There was another very important topic started on this remarkable occasion. The doctor was accused of maintaining, that the toleration granted by law was unreasonable, and its allowances unwarrantable.

This led to an assertion of the doctrine of toleration by the Whig managers.

The defence of the doctor's counsel, the very able Sir S. Harcourt and others, was such an admission of the principle in *theory*, and such a mere quibbling and special pleading with respect to the point of fact, that the general doctrine of toleration must be considered as having become, on this occasion, like the qualified doctrine of resistance, the regular and constitutional doctrine of the land.

I have mentioned these particulars from a hope of inducing my hearers to believe, that this trial will afford them abundant matter for amusement and instruction, even though the particular question of the doctor's criminality be, or be not, considered.

The circumstance, also, which I have just adverted to of the reference made by the great political moralist of our own times, Mr. Burke, to this very trial, in one of his celebrated productions, and that at the distance of a century, may serve, I think, to remind you of the importance of history and of historical documents, and the necessity there is, that those who would wish to be statesmen, should in the first place be conversant with the occurrences that have taken place in our own country, the reasonings to which they have given rise, the principles which they seem to have established.

The speeches, as they are reported in the trial, appear probably in a much more concise and condensed form than that in which they were delivered; and though they have thus gained something in manliness and strength, they have, no doubt, lost much in eloquence and grace; yet they are, on the whole, very creditable to the talents of the speakers, particularly the reply of Sir Joseph Jekyll.

I must make one observation more to recommend these remarkable proceedings to your examination.

The great characteristic distinction of this period of our history is the Revolution, is the interest our ancestors took in it, the manner in which it was understood, the changes of

its success or failure. And the Revolution is still the great characteristic feature of our constitution and government—it must ever remain so.

And when the inhabitants of this country are indifferent to the subject, they will probably soon arrive at a state of permanent political degradation; sooner or later at a total loss of those honourable English feelings, that love of freedom, and that jealousy of power, by which they were before so happily distinguished.

But to conclude the subject. From this celebrated impeachment of Sacheverell, two good effects followed; first, that there now exists upon record a full assertion of the great principles of civil and religious liberty, made in the presence of all the authority, dignity, and wisdom of the realm, and to every practical purpose, an admission and acknowledgment.

Secondly, that though the impeachment in this important respect answered the purposes of the Whigs, as patriots and lovers of the constitution of their country, and as far as posterity was concerned, it by no means answered their purposes as leaders of a party.

The doctor became the object of the most ridiculous idolatry, and they themselves and their politics were precipitated to their decline and fall.

This impeachment, therefore, became in this manner an example, which never has nor can be forgotten, to show the risk that is always run, of exalting into importance an author and his writings by public prosecutions; of giving fame and popularity to the one, and circulation and influence to the other.

Now this effect thus produced is a good effect, for the restraint, that ministers and attorney-generals are thus laid under, on the mere point of prudence and policy, operates most favourably for the liberty of the press. That liberty would be soon destroyed, and entirely at an end, if every writing or pamphlet that must necessarily appear a libel in a court of law, was to be instantly seized upon, and dragged to judgment, by those who are bound from their office to defend the established order of the community. Such men are always tempted, from their situation, however amiable they may individually be, to urge the rights and extend the limits

of authority too far. It is very happy, that from the experience of this and other similar prosecutions, the wisdom of leaving publications, if possible, unnoticed, has become a sort of maxim which is seldom departed from, but by petulant, narrow-minded men—men who are mere lawyers, and who, it is to be hoped, on such occasions, mean well, for this is the only merit they can plead.

But in the next place, the scenes that ensued during and after the impeachment are mortifying, but instructive lessons, to show the nature of what is called a *popular cry*: more especially when the interests of religion can be made to form a part of it. The great mass of the nation, always right in their sentiments, but not so in their *opinions*—never, when the slightest patience or precision is necessary, meant, no doubt, when they were patronising Dr. Sacheverell, to support the church and the monarchy, and so indeed they every where declared, with the most persevering vociferations; and for this purpose, they made bonfires, and addresses, plundered the residences and pulled down the meeting-houses of the Dissenters: but instead of supporting all this time the church and the monarchy, it is but too plain that they were only endeavouring, however unintentionally, to vilify and destroy those sacred principles of civil and religious liberty, without which the church would scarcely deserve the attribute of Christianity, or the monarchy, of government.

A few years afterwards, Dr. Fleetwood, the more enlightened and civilized Sacheverell of the Whigs, published four sermons, and prefixed a sort of political dissertation.

“I have never failed,” said this divine, “on proper occasions, to recommend, urge, and insist upon the loving, honouring, and the reverencing the prince’s person, and holding it, according to the laws, inviolable and sacred; and paying all obedience and submission to the laws, though never so hard and inconvenient to private people; yet did I never think myself at liberty, or authorized to tell the people, that either Christ, St. Peter, or St. Paul, or any other holy writer, had, by any doctrine delivered by them, subverted the laws and constitutions of the country in which they lived, or put them in a worse condition with respect to their civil liberties, than they would have been had they not been Christians.”

Of the different constitutional questions that arose in this reign, the next that I shall select, as fit more particularly to engage your attention, is that of the Protestant Succession.

On this subject of the Protestant succession, there is a very curious essay in Hume. You will see a reference and some account of it in the note book on the table.

Somerville has given a dissertation upon it at the end of his history, which seems reasonable and satisfactory.

His conclusion is this: "that there was no plan to defeat the succession, either concerted or agreed to by the Tory ministers collectively."

It was, however, most happy for the civil and religious liberties of England, that the opinions of the majority of the nation were, on the whole, at the time sound, and particularly on the question of Protestantism. No Tory minister could therefore depend upon the popularity of any measure in favour of the Stuarts; and could still less depend upon the favour and assistance of the queen, who very fortunately (though she loved her brother, and wished the restoration of her house) had no taste for political enterprise, and was most sincerely attached to the Protestant faith.

After all, the queen died most opportunely. The cause of the Revolution was of such importance to England, I had almost said to human nature, that it is not possible to survey these very critical times without something of anxiety, approaching to a sort of terror; certainly not without being struck with that remarkable good fortune which has so often distinguished this country with respect to its civil and religious liberties.

In appreciating the danger to which the Revolution and the Protestant succession were exposed, we naturally think of the intrigues of the exiled family, and of the court of St. Germain's. We turn therefore to the second volume of Macpherson's original papers; but though they must be looked at, and though they occasionally present matter of importance, on the whole they disappoint expectation. There is so much that appears difficult to understand, and so much that appears not worth understanding, that a reader labours on with renewed disappointment, and continued weariness.*

* Readers may now look at the *Life of James II.*, lately published; and the *Stuart Papers*, now at Carlton House, no doubt, would exhibit sufficient

principles and feelings can still be comprehended by ourselves and are, in many respects, not at all different from our own. It is important, because the prevalence of France in the politics of Europe was the question at issue abroad, and the success of the Revolution, the question in suspense at home; no greater could well occur. We see, unhappily, in our own times, what has been the result of the ascendancy of that military nation; and if the queen had found means to restore her family to the throne, and if the Revolution had failed, the world had been deprived of one salutary example, almost the only one, the example of a great national effort—the Revolution of 1688, made, and successfully made, in resistance to arbitrary power, in defence of civil and religious liberty; and been deprived, too, of the no less salutary example of a nation, happy and prosperous for a whole century, to a degree, beyond all precedent in the history of mankind; and this, not on account of any particular indulgence of nature to its soil or climate, but chiefly on account of the constitution of its government; chiefly, because while the executive power was sufficiently strong, the people were not without their due share in the legislature; and neither the monarch nor the aristocracy armed with any powers inconsistent with the honest industry and virtuous independence of the lower orders.

I must observe while I am concluding, that it will require more than ordinary attention to understand the interior politics of this reign.

The Whig and Tory parties, though at a great distance from each other at their extreme points, were almost connected with each other by intermediate trimmers and shufflers of every description. Men of very discordant principles were often mixed up in the same cabinet. The queen was a decided Tory, and was always anxious to collect, or retain, as many Tories around her as possible. Marlborough and Godolphin were originally Tories, but were obliged gradually to depend more and more on the Whigs, from the nature of the contest in which they were engaged. Harley and Bolingbroke were at first the friends of Marlborough, and employed by him. On one account or another, it is impossible for you to understand the reign, unless you, in the first place, note

down the different Tory and Whig parliaments, the different struggles between the queen and her ministers, and compare them with the measures of government at home, and the negotiations for peace and the military movements abroad. You will not do this so readily as you may suppose, and till it is done, a great air of confusion will hang over the whole scene.

Since I wrote this lecture, the *Life of the Duke of Marlborough* has been published by Mr. Coxe, and what I have just recommended as a necessary labour of some toil and difficulty, is become comparatively easy and agreeable. The movements of the Whig leaders are not yet, as I conceive, properly explained; they will probably be made more intelligible by the expected history of Sir James Mackintosh, but in the mean time, and indeed at all times, it will be impossible to appreciate the politics of the reign of Anne, without the study of this very welcome, entertaining, and valuable work of Mr. Coxe.



NOTES.

I.

Duke of Marlborough.

I CANNOT avoid remarking that this illustrious man never had the advantage of a liberal education; his son, indeed, the hope of his house, was admitted at this university; was cut off in early life, and is buried in King's Chapel; but he was himself removed at the age of twelve from the care of a clergyman, introduced to the patronage of the Duke of York, and from the first initiated in all the pleasures and political intrigues of what was then a very unsettled and licentious court; and though this education might certainly furnish the fine understanding of Marlborough with that quick insight into human character, and that thorough knowledge of the world, as it is called, for which he was so distinguished, it may surely be affirmed that the school in which he was thus bred up, even from his boyish days, was not likely to elevate his mind to a comprehensive view of the real interests of mankind, or to exalt his feelings above that love of personal consequence, which is so strong a principle of action in men of rank and fortune, and which it is only for letters and philosophy properly to soften and subdue.

It may be natural for those who, like ourselves, are participating in the advantages of a regular education, somewhat to overstate its influence in fitting men to be statesmen and the benefactors of their species. Such happy effects are not always visible in our young men of rank and consequence; but many seeds must be sown to raise one flower so precious, and it may at least be said that men who have not liberalized their sentiments, and enriched their minds at the proper season of advancing manhood by meditation and intellectual pursuits, and who, on the contrary, have put on early the harness of the world or of official situation: such men, it may surely be said, are found invariably to fail on all great occasions—on all occasions where objects of national policy are intermixed with the great interests of human nature, where wisdom is required, and not cunning; and where the most generous magnanimity is, as on such occasions it always is, the soundest prudence.

II.

Commercial Treaty with France.

ANOTHER subject that excited a considerable ferment in the nation was the commercial treaty that had been attempted with France at the conclusion

of the treaty of Utrecht. The principle of the treaty was to open the trade between the two countries, by removing as much as possible the reciprocal duties. But the merchants and trading companies took the alarm. The public opinion, by the assistance of the Whigs, overpowered the influence of the ministers, and the bill by which the eighth and ninth articles of the commercial treaties were to be sanctioned, was lost.

The arguments which prevailed on this occasion were, that in 1674 a committee of the most able merchants had considered the nature of our trade with France; and that it appeared, we lost every year a million of money by it.

Again: that we should lose our trade with Portugal by the preference given to the French wines; and that the trade to Portugal was invaluable.

These reasonings proceeded upon the supposition that no trade with any country was beneficial, unless we exported to that country more value in goods than we imported, and consequently received the difference in money; which was considered as the measure of the profit, and was called "having the balance of the trade in our favour." But the whole of this principle of the balance of trade has been shown by Adam Smith to be a mistake.

It was also argued, that since our Revolution the French had set up the woollen trade, and no longer took our woollens, and we had set up the silk trade, and no longer took their silks; and the inference was, not that both nations had done very unwisely, had each very improperly endeavoured to contend with the natural advantages of the other; and that the sooner a mistaken rivalry of this kind was at an end the better. But the inference was this, that England had thus saved and gained vast sums of money, and had employed an infinite number of artificers, who would be reduced to beggary if the importation of French goods were allowed, because the French had their work done for less money, and consequently would sell their commodities cheaper (Cob. 1212).

I mention these particulars for the sake of recommending to your attention, as I have before done, the study of political economy, the writings of Adam Smith.

Statesmen and nations may be distinguished for their knowledge of the grand leading principles of civil and religious liberty, but they *might* also be distinguished for their knowledge of the great leading principles on which their agriculture and manufactures, their commerce, foreign and domestic, depend. Their progress, however, in the last subjects of reflection has been less than in the former; for it so happens that the first impressions and most natural conclusions of the mind on all such questions are erroneous. The public, therefore, always have been, and must always be expected to remain, liable to the most serious misapprehensions of their ultimate interests in affairs of this nature. In our own country, however, since the publication of *The Wealth of Nations*, our statesmen, and all persons of regular education, have been rendered totally inexcusable if they no longer understand the real principles of that production and that commerce, internal and external, which occupies so much of their thoughts and contributes so much to their enjoyments.

It is quite necessary to observe, that those who are more particularly engaged in the business of our prosperity, our merchants and manufacturers, are little fitted by the habits of their lives for the comprehension of those abstract principles, distant views, and ultimate conclusions in which the science of political economy so peculiarly abounds; and it belongs more particularly to those who are men of influence and education to endeavour to comprehend, explain, and circulate the reasonings of philosophers on these important subjects. They who engage, either in private or public, in such mentorious labours, will find reason enough for the exercise of their patience, and will often receive the greatest obstruction from those very persons who might have been expected, from the occupations of their lives, to have been both able and willing to furnish them with every possible assistance. But as the progress of knowledge on these subjects has now been for some time distinctly visible, all such more intelligent men have full as much reason to be encouraged as any of their fellow labourers in the service of mankind.

III.

Hanover Papers, and Bolingbroke's Letter to Windham.

THE Hanover Papers for 1711 are interesting, as are the Stuart Papers for 1712, containing (among other particulars) the calumnies that were then propagated against Lord Somers, Prince Eugene, Duke of Marlborough, &c. &c.

The greatest difficulty with which the Pretender had to struggle, seems to have been his religion. The scheme in contemplation was, if possible, to have called him over in the lifetime of his sister, Queen Anne, and in this manner, to have gradually introduced him to the throne. The Hanover Papers of 1713 are somewhat curious, so are the Stuart Papers of 1714.

To each of these sets of papers there is a sort of dissertation prefixed, which may be always read.

In the course of these papers, the merit of Harley appears (340, 379); he seems to have been considered by the agents for the Stuarts, as never entitled to their confidence; and it is on this darkness and hesitation, and the probability that it arose from a secret wish to serve the House of Hanover, that the chief part of this merit must be left to depend.

After these papers have been consulted, Bolingbroke's letter to Sir W. Windham should be read, not merely as a curious document from a most celebrated man, relative to the most important concerns of this period, but as one of the classic productions of our literature, and as the best specimen of an exculpatory narrative that can be found in our language. No better model can be offered than this, to those who would wish to form a style of all others the best fitted for statesmen, whether speaking in the senate or writing in the closet; the best fitted, because it is of all others the most adapted to convey information to the man of business, and delight to the man of real and matured taste: nothing superfluous in the ornaments, nothing unmeaning in the expressions; the whole clear, natural, and easy, moving

on with a rapidity which never slackens, and a spirit which never languishes, and scarcely suffering the reader for a moment to reflect on the exact truth or propriety of the matter that is delivered.

IV.

Life and Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough.

THIS publication contains a detail, chiefly of the duchess's merits with the queen; but it is still not without reference, and sometimes important reference, to the opinions of the times, and the changes that took place; and it is valuable as giving incidentally a general notion of the intrigues of the court of Anne, during a very singular era of the English history.

The style and thoughts indicate a clear, rapid, able mind, and are those of one bred in courts, and used to the world and its business. It is not favourable to King William, still less to Queen Mary, and shows very strongly the bias of Queen Anne's mind to the opinions and principles of the Tories. On the whole it is not long, sometimes important, and always entertaining.

V.

Protestant Succession

"WHAT party," says Hume, "an impartial patriot in the reign of King William or Queen Anne, would have chosen amid these opposite views," views, which he states, "may perhaps to some appear hard to determine."

In the old edition of these essays (the edition of 1754) may be found the following sentence, which involves a consideration which would have enabled any such impartial patriot to determine, without all the difficulty which Mr. Hume supposes. "For my part," says Mr. Hume, "I esteem liberty so valuable a blessing in society, that whatever favours its progress and security can scarce be too fondly cherished by every one who is a lover of human kind."

This paragraph Mr. Hume afterwards thought proper to expunge; thinking, perhaps, that it would appear but a literary flourish, coming from a writer who was considered as the apologist of the Stuarts, or losing, perhaps, as he grew older, that quickness of sympathy by which sentiments in favour of liberty are so happily rendered dear to us in all the earlier stages of our existence.



LECTURE XXV.

ANNE—UNION OF ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND.

THE great domestic event by which the reign of Anne was distinguished was the union of the two kingdoms of England and Scotland. I am very desirous to recommend this subject to your diligence and reflection.

I will make a few observations, and endeavour to convey to you some general idea of the interest which belongs to it.

England has been connected with Scotland, with Ireland, with America. In each of these relations a sort of termination and crisis has at last taken place. In Scotland we adopted the measure of an union under the immediate apprehension of a rebellion; in Ireland, after a rebellion, which had but too nearly torn the two countries asunder; in America the rebellion was successful, and we lost the country for ever. We have still another country with which we are connected on the other side of the globe, the immense continent of India.

The political questions that arise from the connexion of nations with each other seem to me among the greatest that history or that human affairs can ever present to you. Such connexions of different nations have often occurred, and will never cease to occur, in the annals of mankind. Spain has been connected with Portugal; both kingdoms with South America; France with America and the West Indies; the House of Austria with the Netherlands and Italy. By proximity of situation or by colonization kingdoms have been, and always will be, vitally dependent on the conduct of each other. The duties that hence arise are often very difficult, the best systems of policy not obvious. Happy would it have been and would it still be for mankind, if something more of good sense and good feeling either had been or could

yet be introduced into the cabinets of their rulers, and into their own misguided understandings and selfish minds.

It is very true that when philosophy has exhibited all its reasonings and exhausted all its efforts, it is very true that the most serious difficulties will still remain on subjects like these; that the interest of connected nations cannot be entirely reconciled, nor their separate wishes be gratified. Nations must often be reduced to compound with evils, and at last to make such sacrifices as are necessarily accompanied with mortification and regret; but it is for political wisdom to encounter and reconcile men to these evils, to proclaim aloud that on these occasions nothing has happened at variance with the common necessities of our imperfect state.

The misfortune is, that nations can never submit to the circumstances of their situation in time, or with any grace or good humour. Human life, however, at every turn, and in every stage of it, is continually requiring from us a wisdom of this melancholy cast. It is the great discipline to which the Almighty Ruler of the world has subjected us through all the successive changes of our state, and all the affecting relations of our domestic feelings, from infancy to the grave. On all such occasions, on the small scale of our social connexions, and in what relates to ourselves, we submit to necessity; we compound, we balance, we understand what is our best wisdom, and we endeavour to practise it; the father expects not that his son shall for ever remain dependent on his kindness, and moulded by his directions; men with their inferiors, neighbours with each other, act always on a system of mutual sacrifices, reciprocal duties, and interchanged offices of sympathy and good will.

But on the larger scale of the intercourse of nations, particularly of connected nations, the same moral truths, though equally existing, are not so obvious, and when apparent, not so impressive. We are, therefore, fretful, ill-humoured, outrageous; we contend against reason, philosophy, and nature itself; forget the great rule of doing to others as we would they should do unto us: and after wasting our blood and treasure to no purpose, we at last sit down faint and exhausted, abandon our vain projects only because it is impossible to pursue them, and then leave it to the reasoners of a

succeeding age to show how egregious has been our folly, and how blind our fury.

The leading principles that belong to subjects of this nature have been introduced to the notice and to the assent of the more intelligent part of mankind in two different modes, by experience and by the reasonings of philosophers.

When nations are connected with each other, they can find causes of offence and hostility in three different points: in their religion, their laws and customs, their trade and manufactures.

Now experience has tolerably well taught mankind (however slowly), that with respect to the two former, toleration is the best and only policy; that it is best to suffer colonies or inferior nations to retain their own particular creeds and rites and ceremonies in religion, and their own particular modes of administering justice in civil or criminal matters; that improvements may be proposed to them, but not enforced; that till they can be properly enlightened, they must be left to indulge their own particular notions.

But on the last question, of trade and manufactures, the world is entirely indebted to the labours of the French writers on political economy, and to the works of Hume and Adam Smith. It is from these two last distinguished masters of political science that this country more particularly has acquired any enlarged views which it possesses on such extensive and difficult subjects; and an acquaintance with their doctrines is indispensably necessary before we can approach any such questions, as the unions of kingdoms or the management of colonies.

To illustrate this part of my subject: a reader of history will see all the statesmen of Europe, from the first period of the existence of statesmen, proceed upon the supposition that nations could only be enriched by what is called the balance of trade; i. e. if England has sent to Portugal a greater value of manufactures than she received of wine, that Portugal must pay the difference in bullion, and that this bullion was the measure of the advantage which England derived from this trade. Mr. Hume has an essay on the balance of trade, and another on the jealousy of trade; and, after successfully combating the natural reasonings of mankind on

these subjects, he concludes thus:—"I shall, therefore, venture to acknowledge that not only as a man, but as a British subject, I pray for the flourishing commerce of Germany, Spain, Italy, and even France itself. I am at least certain that Great Britain and all those nations would flourish more did their sovereigns and ministers adopt such enlarged and benevolent sentiments towards each other."

Now it is to be observed, that no reasoner would at this time of day think it necessary to say that "he would venture to acknowledge"—the labours of Hume and Smith have been so far successful; and he would not "venture to acknowledge," but he would affirm without hesitation. It is now admitted that the whole doctrine of the balance of trade is a mistake, and that nations are necessarily benefited by any commercial intercourse, of whatever kind, provided it is not artificially produced by the mere operation of laws or any species of extraneous necessity and force.

We have now, then, an adjustment of the whole of the case. What difficulty, it might be said, can remain? If nations are to be connected together, let the one allow to the other its own religion, its own laws, and the most free and unrestrained imports and exports; what cause of contention can remain? Let the supreme legislature be the same; and the countries being thus in every respect identified, the interests of both will be entirely served and secured, and every thing that philosophy can prescribe, or human affairs admit of, be at once accomplished.

But the conduct and even the reasonings of mankind have on all such occasions been widely different, and the result has been at all times fatal to their happiness.

We will take the simplest case, that of a mother country and her colonies. The religion has been here generally the same, and laws and customs similar; in these points there was little room for mistakes. But in questions of trade and commerce greater opportunity for errors was afforded, and the mistakes committed have in fact been very numerous and important. The most narrow jealousy, the most blighting systems of superintendence and control, have been continually exercised; no market allowed to the colonies till the supposed interests of the mother country were first secured; no manu-

factures to be imported, nor even to be used, but those that came from the land and labour of the parent state; and if ill-humour in the colonies was the consequence, troops were to be sent, and a policy, ultimately injurious to both countries, was to be supported by force.

In other cases that have occurred, cases of connected nations, as the real difficulties have been greater, the mistakes have been still more multiplied and fatal. For instance:—

Two nations may be completely connected together by proximity of situation, and yet be, by fortune, placed under different governments; England and Scotland, for instance: each kingdom possessing an independent sovereignty, and therefore each strongly affected by all those associations of national dignity and ancient renown which are so immediately derived from the noblest and best feelings of our nature. This is the most difficult case of all. Nations thus situated are of all others the most unfortunately situated, particularly the inferior nation; and what a reasoner would even now, at the present day, propose, would, in a case like this, be accompanied with the most intolerable difficulties,—difficulties such as the worst passions and the best passions of our nature would equally conspire to render almost insurmountable.

In the first place, nations so situated will be in a state of eternal hostility with each other; not only of hostility, but of petty warfare; and they will not only have their own quarrels to adjust, but the inferior state will attach itself to some third state for the benefit of its assistance; and thus become the tool of the one, and the victim of the other.

For evils like these, the first remedy that might be attempted would be a federal union; that is, each country to retain its own legislature, but both to have the same king or executive power. This sort of federal union took place by the union of the two crowns of England and Scotland under our James I. The same was in later years understood to be the situation of England and Ireland, but admitted by our government only at a very late period. Now this alteration, this federal union, will be on the whole beneficial, but not a remedy. In the first place, the two legislatures may disagree, and it will always be, therefore, the labour of the

superior or more powerful country to influence by bribes the legislature of the inferior, to render all such disagreement impossible; and this will be the source of eternal indignation to all the intelligent and independent men of the state that is thus corrupted and ruled.

Again: the inferior country (meaning by superior and inferior the more or less powerful) will appear to itself of less consequence than it was before. It will see its nobles and its aristocracy move away to the seat of government, its rents follow them; its agriculture and manufactures will seem deprived of their natural encouragement and protection; dissatisfaction, jealousy, hatred, will be deeply felt; and as the inferior country will always compare itself with its more fortunate neighbour, such unhappy effects can never cease.

In the mean time the superior country will exercise no arts of conciliation, and adopt no measures of general policy. It will draw a fence around its own trade and manufactures; admit the inferior state to no markets, no colonies, no sources of affluence which are within its own influence; neglect the laws of the inferior state, corrupt its statesmen, perhaps interfere with its religion, and in short exhibit an abuse of power in every possible mode and direction.

Of this situation of things the natural crisis is either a sort of civil war and a total rupture, or the application of a new remedy, the measure of an incorporating union.

This last would have been always the best expedient, but it would not have appeared so to those concerned. The superior state would have conceived that it was thus called upon to give away its affluence, and injure the sources of its own prosperity; the inferior, that it was to lose its sovereignty, independence, and dignity; see its nobles and aristocracy resort to the capital; and feel most of the evils which have been already mentioned, as inseparable from a federal union, without any adequate return. A century would probably elapse before time had produced its happy effects on both kingdoms; and, depriving the one of its insolence, and the other of its unreasonableness, put each into possession of all the benefits which nature, from their different soil and climate, evidently intended for both.

Of principles like these, and of situations like these, we see

a full ~~circum~~plification, as I have already intimated, in the relative history of Scotland and England. Nothing can be more ~~afflicting~~ than the evils of the first situation, that of entire *independence* of each other. Tyranny, injustice, lawless ambition in the superior state, as in the instance of our Edward I., on a large scale; on a smaller, devastations, cruelties, unceasing alarm, malignity, and revenge, as in the instances of the border laws and the border wars. Nothing can be more dreadful than both these consequences, particularly the latter, the border wars. Never sure was the art by which poetry is distinguished, the art of withdrawing the repulsive and presenting the attractive parts of a picture, displayed in a manner so striking, as in reconciling to our imagination, as the great minstrel of the north has done, the marauders and moss troopers, the inroads and outrages of these unhappy times.

These evils of eternal warfare and ferocious depredation could not but be deplored even by our fierce ancestors at the time; and through the whole history of England and Scotland there seems to have been a series of negotiations, with an intent, if possible, to terminate such calamities by an union of the two crowns.

The marriage of the two royal families was frequently proposed; sometimes the union of the two kingdoms. But after all, the union of the crowns took place not till the reign of our James I., a late period; and the union of the kingdoms not till the reign of Queen Anne. It was then only accomplished by force and fraud; so incurable are the bad passions, so impracticable are sometimes the good passions, of our nature; so perverse are the selfish interests and temporary reasonings of mankind.

Having proposed these general principles to your consideration, I must now endeavour to draw your attention to the more particular circumstances that attended the union.

There was a book published by Defoe; it has been lately republished, and a life of the author prefixed.

The name of Defoe is already familiar, and even dear to us, though not on account of his book on the union, but of a work that to the writer himself might perhaps have appeared

at the time of far less splendour and importance, the romance of Robinson Crusoe.

We turn, therefore, in the first place, to the Life of Defoe, prefixed to his work, with no little impatience and curiosity; not, indeed, thinking of the union so much, as of our early acquaintances, the shipwrecked mariner and his man Friday. But we must be content to hear of the politics and pamphlets in which Defoe was engaged, and to learn nothing of what is far more interesting to us, nothing of the original materials and composition of that attractive production, which has given to its author immortality, and to the hours of our childhood those sensations of eager interest and innocent delight which may even now be remembered with envy and regret.

In the book of Defoe, the life given of him should, however, be read; and there is a preface, which should also be looked over.

There is a general history, too, of the unions that were at different times attempted prior to the reign of Anne; and this part of the work is very illustrative of the remarks that have been made.

The point more particularly to be adverted to is the union that was attempted, in 1604, by our James I.; a monarch whom it must be confessed we are not much in the habit of respecting, but who, on this occasion, almost realized his own amusing pretensions, and displayed a decisive superiority over his parliament and his people in the mysteries of his state-craft, as he called it, or in a knowledge of their best political interests and ultimate happiness.

But this part of the subject (and for the general purposes of instruction it is an important one) is executed in far the most complete manner by Mr. Bruce, who, when the question of an union with Ireland came under the consideration of his majesty's ministers, was employed by the late Duke of Portland to make a report on the union of England and Scotland. In this work, which is worth reading, there is a review not only of the leading facts in the histories of the two countries which led to the union of the two crowns, but a review of the union that was really proposed by James I., with the reasonings in England and Scotland on the subject, and the causes of the failure of the measure. We have a speech of

the great Bacon on the subject, and another by James, which are in the second volume; the volume containing those documents on which the Union is founded.

I must also refer you back to the debates which are given in the first volume of Cobbett. You have here not only Bacon's speech but an account of the objections insisted upon by some of the members of the commons; and there are here given three speeches by the king: one to introduce the union, another to hasten it, a third to explain the former; all of which are perfectly worth reading, and will appear (to those who make due allowances) highly creditable, not only to the disposition of the king, but to his powers of mind. The speeches alluded to, particularly Lord Bacon's, are deserving of attention, not only on account of their subject, but as illustrative of the state of the human mind and of the reasonings of the orators and statesmen of this period—their distinctness, gravity, and classical learning—their heavy manner, strange and pedantic perplexities, and weighty matter.

But the nations concerned in these discussions were at a wide distance; the English more particularly were jealous, illiberal, and unreasonable, and it is to them rather than to the Scotch that the failure of the project is to be imputed.

Cromwell and his officers, more accustomed to dispose of difficulties, soon dispatched the business of an union by a few words in an ordinance, giving thirty members to Scotland, as its part of the general representation, enacting a free intercourse of goods, and abolishing all vassalage and superiorities. This ordinance, short and expeditious as it may be, is very creditable to its authors, for the important points are seized upon, and the last regulation respecting vassalage and superiorities might have been copied with great advantage in the time of Anne, while, on the contrary, these national evils were confirmed.

But this sort of union of the two kingdoms was of course dissolved when the dynasty of Cromwell was swept away. A very laudable attempt was made in the time of Charles II., but the circumstances of the times were very unfavourable, and the English were neither sufficiently disposed to share their trade, nor the Scots to obliterate a part of their parlia-

ment. The measure was repeatedly recommended to the houses by Charles, and commissioners appointed, conferences held, proposals interchanged and discussed, but nothing effectual could be accomplished.

William was well disposed, both from the elevation of his temperament, and the sagacity of his understanding, to make every effort to heal the divisions and consolidate the strength of the island. Defoe relates, that his Majesty told him, "he had done all he could in that affair, but that he did not see a temper in either nation that looked like it;" and then added, after some discourse, "that it might be done, but not yet."

William was continually engrossed by the political situation of Europe, which required his time and presence not only in the cabinet but the field; and when any abatement is to be made from the character of this illustrious prince, it is in the government of Scotland that the exceptionable part of his conduct is to be found.

William was guilty, on some account or other, of the common fault of those who have to manage a connected country—the fault of confiding in statesmen who know, as it is thought, the nature of the country, and how to transact its business, but who know not a far more important mystery—the art and the value of mild government.

William was himself unfortunately too much occupied to teach it to them, or rather to find ministers of another school. The result was, that the differences between the two countries, under his reign, were rather increased than diminished. There is a chapter in Defoe descriptive of the state of public affairs in both kingdoms; and explanatory of the circumstances that at length made an union not only desirable, but necessary. It is not long, and should be read.

In Mr. Bruce's work there is an account of the revival of the plan of union during the reign of William, and again in the first years of Anne, with the events and circumstances that prevented its adoption for some time.

This part of the work is very deserving of attention; but neither of these works will give the reader a sufficient idea of the crisis that had at length taken place. This crisis had been occasioned partly by harsh, bad government on the part of England, and partly by the difficulties and evils which

were inseparable from the very situation of the two countries. As this is one of the most instructive parts of the whole subject, I must call your attention to it very particularly.

A good general idea may be formed of this crisis from the history of Belsham, but Laing must also be looked at, so also must the appendix to Cobbett's Debates; for Fletcher of Saltoun is a most important character at this particular period, and his speeches and motions in the Scotch parliament may be seen in this appendix to Cobbett more readily than in his works, or in the authorities from which the appendix is taken, books that may not always be met with.

I have hitherto forbore to mention the history of Somerville only that I might at last mention it as a regular and full statement of the whole subject, which must be read, and that more than once, as quite necessary to the full comprehension of it.

The books I have mentioned, Defoe, Bruce, Belsham, Laing, the appendix to Cobbett and Somerville, will be sufficient, taken together, but none of them singly; each writer, as is often the case, doing more justice to some parts of the subject than is done by his fellow-labourers, and no part of the subject being without its curiosity and instruction. The crisis I have just alluded to was this; you must observe it.

The crown of England, on the demise of Anne, was to be transferred from the Stuart to the Protestant line: but as Scotland was not exactly obliged to adopt the views of England, and was competent to dispose of her own crown in whatever manner she thought best, the present was the moment, in the apprehensions of Fletcher and the Scotch patriots, for some decisive effort to be made in favour of their country; the moment when an opportunity was offered to assert their rights, and either to be independent, and have a king of their own, or to make such provisions for its commercial interests, and such alterations in its constitution, that even if the king were the same, its counsels should no longer be guided by the English ministry, and Scotland be no longer neglected, as they thought, insulted, and sacrificed on every occasion to her more powerful neighbour.

It is the struggles of men acting with views like these, and in times like these, that form the most interesting and instructive portion of this subject of the Union.

These, however, are not to be found in Defoe, nor in the work of Mr. Bruce, nor sufficiently in Belsham, nor even in Loring, but they may be seen in the appendix to Cobbett's Debates, where the speeches and motions of Fletcher of Saltoun may be easily found.

It is quite necessary that you should form some notion of Fletcher of Saltoun, the complexion of his mind, the nature of his views, the description of his eloquence. Men like Fletcher of Saltoun, the same in kind, though different in degree, are always existing in society; they are always to be found armed with more or less ability and influence in every inferior country; criticising the conduct of the superior country; explaining, discussing, and aggravating its oppressions; brooding over the wrongs and insults of their native land, and warmed and exasperated to madness, by a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of the two kingdoms; the wretchedness and poverty of the country they love, and the affluence and happiness of the country they hate. Ready, therefore, to propose or adopt any system of policy or line of conduct, if it seem (however slightly) to remove from their eyes that odious dependency which they consider as the obvious cause of all the evils they deplore. Men of this character should be studied by statesmen; but statesmen and men in authority are very apt entirely to neglect and even despise them and their efforts, and very often to confound them with others, daring and bad men, who have all their faults, but who have not their virtues; others with whom they are frequently associated, and into whose company and even friendship they are but too easily hurried by their own enthusiasm, and still more often driven by the violent measures and insulting menaces of the rulers of the superior country. The nature of every thing human is so mixed and blended, the good with the evil, that we are not to be surprised if we should find, that it is to men of this description, to men of these ardent and irregular minds, that society has been indebted, imperfect as are their characters, and doubtful and dangerous and calamitous as are very often their projects, for many of its favourable changes. There is a certain impracticableness in their temperaments and superficial dogmatism in their understandings, with a certain fearlessness as well as generosity in their dispositions, by which they may be known; but with all thei

faults they would not be perhaps ill described by the expressions of the poet, while, giving not only a character, but, as he conceived, a most honourable character of the English nation :

Stern o'er each bosom Reason holds her state,
 With daring aims irregularly great;
 Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
 I see the lords of human kind pass by;
 Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band
 By forms unfashioned, fresh from Nature's hand,
 Fierce in their native hardness of soul,
 True to imagined right, above control. *

Such was the celebrated Fletcher of Saltoun, and as his country was the inferior country; as England had conducted herself with the usual harshness, ignorance, and illiberality of the superior country, and as the times in which he lived happened to be of a critical nature, his powers were called forth, his heart was animated, and his genius was kindled. He became the hope, the pride, and the director of a small but popular party, and neither regarding England nor France, nor the Protestant succession, nor the succession of the House of Stuart, but in relation to the interests of Scotland; it was to that Scotland, his poor, oppressed, unfortunate, native country, to its prosperity, happiness, and glory, that he dedicated every passion of his soul, and every faculty of his being.

Among the patriots must be mentioned Lord Belhaven, whose speeches contain much more of what is properly denominated eloquence than those of Fletcher, and who would, in the eyes of posterity, have eclipsed even Fletcher himself, if his patriotism had been as pure and unsuspected. This was, however, not the case. He was understood at the time to have been piqued by the court of England, and was believed to have held correspondence with the exiled family of the Stuarts.

Fletcher and the patriots had no sooner perceived that the court of England had an object which must at all events be accomplished—the proper adjustment of the succession to the crown, that the king of the two countries might be the same—than they instantly set about forming provisions for the interests of Scotland, and they proposed what they called an Act of Security.

From the clauses, Nos. 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12,—(I will read them immediately)—which you will find in Cobbett's Appendix, vol. vi., it will be readily seen that this intended act was of no ordinary nature. It is sufficiently descriptive of the crisis I have spoken of. It was meant, and it was indeed avowed by Fletcher in his speeches to be meant, to effect the following consequences (see page 25, Appendix to Cobbett):—“They are not limitations,” said Fletcher, “upon any prince who shall only be king of Scotland, nor do they any way tend to separate us from England, but they are calculated merely to this end, that so long as we continue to be under the same prince with our neighbour nation, we may be free from the influence of English counsels and ministers; that the nation may not be impoverished by an expensive attendance at court, and the force and exercise of our government may be, as far as is possible, within ourselves, by which means, trade, manufactures, and husbandry will flourish, and the affairs of the nation be no longer neglected, as they have been hitherto. These are the ends to which all the limitations are directed, that English counsels may not hinder the acts of our parliaments from receiving the royal assent; that we may not be engaged without our consent in the quarrels they may have with other nations; that they may not obstruct the meeting of our parliaments, nor interrupt their sitting; that we may not stand in need of posting to London for places and pensions, by which, whatever particular men may get, the nation must always be a loser, nor apply for the remedies of our grievances to a court where, for the most part, none are to be had; on the contrary, if these conditions of government be enacted, our constitution will be amended, and our grievances be easily redressed, by a due execution of our own laws, which to this day we have never been able to obtain.”

The clauses that I have mentioned, Nos. 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, ran thus, after a prefatory enactment with respect to the parliament, a convention of estates for the purpose of securing the execution of the clauses. The first was this:—

“1. That elections shall be made at every Michaelmas head court for a new parliament every year; to sit the 1st of November next following, and adjourn themselves from time to time till next Michaelmas; that they choose their own

president, and that every thing shall be determined by balloting in place of voting."

The fifth was,—“ 5. That a committee of thirty-one members, of which nine to be a quorum, chosen out of their own number by every parliament, shall, during the intervals of parliament, under the king, have the administration of the government, be his council, and accountable to the next parliament; with power, in extraordinary occasions, to call the parliament together; and that in the said council all things be determined by balloting in place of voting.”

“ 6. That the king, without consent of parliament, shall not have the power of making peace and war, or that of concluding any treaty with any other state or potentate.”

“ 7. That all places and offices, both civil and military, and all pensions formerly conferred by our king, shall ever after be given by parliament.”

“ 8. That no regiment or company of horse, foot, or dragoons be kept on foot in peace or war, but by consent of parliament.”

“ 9. That all the fencible men of the nation, betwixt sixty and sixteen, be, with all diligence possible, armed with bayonets and firelocks, all of a calibre, and continue always provided in such arms with ammunition suitable.”

“ 12. That if any king break in upon any of these conditions of government, he shall, by the estates, be declared to have forfeited the crown.”

It is true that the act thus proposed by Fletcher never passed the Scotch parliament exactly in these terms. But it is, notwithstanding, a very sufficient exemplification of the species of reasoning that was then prevalent, and of the temper of the times. The same may be said of different limitations proposed by the same patriot, which were only overruled by eleven voices.

But it is now necessary for me to add, that an Act of Security really was carried by Fletcher and the patriots, in the more important particulars not different; it was carried by the assistance of the Jacobites and other opponents to government.

This act, though short, has with great stupidity been omitted by Defoe, because, says he, it may be found in the

Scotch statute book; nor is it, as it ought to be, in Cobbett's appendix, at least, not given in its express words, and as it was left at last to stand.

The substance of it is given by Laing; the act itself may be found in one of the pamphlets of the day, entitled "An Account of the Proceedings of the Parliament of Scotland," in the Trinity Library. The clauses were debated each as if they had been separate acts, and some of them may be seen in this detached state in Cobbett.

Indeed the greatest part of the book I have just mentioned, in the Trinity Library, is copied out into the appendix of Cobbett; and though the Act of Security which was at last voted by fifty-nine voices, is not there given in express words, as it should have been, still the student may see in Cobbett the clauses that were proposed and debated, one by one, and will be tolerably well apprised (though not so readily or easily as he might have been) of the particular provisions and meaning of the act.

You will easily see that it is such an act as could not be agreeable to the government or people of England; such an act as made the connexion between the two countries frail and slight; such an act as tended to rob the superior country of most of the advantages that were supposed to result from the connexion between them.

After first mentioning that, on the death of the sovereign, "the sitting parliament, or the last parliament, were to assemble and offer the crown on the conditions of the claim of right," a claim analogous to our Bill of Rights, the act goes on to say "that the monarch is not to be the successor to the crown of England, unless that in this present session of parliament, or some other ensuing parliament, there be such conditions of government enacted and settled, as may secure the honour and sovereignty of his kingdom; the freedom, frequency, and power of parliaments; the religion, liberty, and trade of the nation, from English or any foreign influence, with power to the said meeting of the estates to add such further conditions of government as they shall think necessary, the same being consistent with those enacted in this or any other session of parliament during her majesty's reign; and further, it is hereby especially enacted, that the same persons

shall not be capable, in any event, for the king and queen (i. e. to be king and queen), in both realms (that is, Scotland was to have a new king, not the English king), unless a free communication of trade, the freedom of navigation, and the liberty of the plantations be fully agreed to and established, by the parliament and the kingdom of England, to the kingdom and subjects of Scotland," &c.

And again,—For the purpose of destroying all English influence during the interregnum, it was ordained that all commissions granted to the officers of state, lords of treasury, &c. should, by the decease of the king or queen reigning, become null and void. It was enacted also, that the whole Protestant heritors, and all the burghs, shall forthwith provide themselves with fire-arms for all fencible men, &c.; "and the said heritors and burghs are hereby empowered and ordained to discipline and exercise their said fencible men," &c. &c.

After this formidable act another was passed to declare that the prerogative of declaring war and peace should be exerted by the sovereign, with the consent of the estates.

This was for the purpose of leaving Scotland at liberty to engage, or not, as she thought best, in the continental wars of England.

The English ministry had therefore now to determine whether they should advise the queen to assent to this act, and make it law, or refuse her assent; risk a total breach with the parliament of Scotland; receive no more supplies, and have the act returned upon her in different shapes, if the parliament was sitting; perhaps have the country in a state of rebellion on the very first opportunity, if the parliament was dissolved. Such was the crisis I have been speaking of.

We here see, distinctly shown, what is sometimes the effect and what is always the tendency of harsh government, co-operating with the real difficulties which the case of connected countries necessarily involves.

Now, the next question I would ask is this, whether any provision short of those in the act that passed, or even short of the limitations first proposed by Fletcher, and which I first read, would be sufficient properly to secure the ends proposed? It is very true that these limitations first proposed would have

gone nigh to convert the monarchy of Scotland into a sort of republic with a stadtholder or president at its head; at all events, they would have formed a sort of experiment, to show with how little power in the monarch a mixed government might be carried on.

But what is the conclusion of the whole? Surely this—the care, circumspection, and kindness with which the ministry of a superior nation should carry on the government of any inferior and connected nation.

- We may here see plainly what men of intelligence and strong feelings are constantly thinking, while a cabinet is despising their country, its interests, and its opinions. The truth, and the whole truth, is here fully displayed.

One word more in the way of narrative, and for the same purpose of attracting your notice to the whole.

The English minister, Godolphin, in the absence, as he thought, of every other alternative, at last advised the queen to give the royal assent to this Act of Security, and it was accordingly passed. Wharton, his political opponent, now triumphed. “I have now then,” said he to quote his own expression, “I have now the treasurer’s head in a bag.” Godolphin was probably much of the same opinion, and even the English nation, unfeeling as they had been to the interests and happiness of Scotland, and selfish and stupid as they were, and always will be, to the claims and merits of every other nation, when their own trade to their colonies, and their own manufactures are concerned, could at length, and for once in this critical emergence, perceive that sacrifices must be made, and at all events that such questions as had lately been agitated in Scotland, nearly amounting to a revolution and a civil war, must be avoided.

There seemed no other way of attempting to avoid them but by an union of the two kingdoms, complete and entire; and in this manner the English nation, as well as the English ministry, were at last rendered no longer the coy and supercilious parties with whom Scotland had before to treat, but the ardent proposers and claimants of a measure, without which, as they represented, and truly represented, all chance for the tranquillity and prosperity of both countries was at an end.

I stop to observe, that when the Act of Security was known

in England, a *retaliating act* was passed by the English parliament; i. e. a proper spirit, as it was called, was shown, and the breach in fact made wider, and the crisis more dangerous. This sort of spirit, or rather of folly, on such occasions is always shown. What was the result? Before the Scotch parliament could be brought to treat of the union *at all*, the English parliament were obliged to repeal their act.

The point of interest that next presents itself is, *how* the union was carried.

This is a part of the subject which cannot be contemplated without pain. It was carried by force and fraud. The victories of the Duke of Marlborough left England with a strong military force at her disposal; and the Duke of Hamilton proved at last a traitor to his country; so did others. This foul name must belong to him, and must always more or less belong to all men who on great public occasions pursue even the right measure *only* because they are corrupted, who act upon any motives but those of the good of their country. Men may mistake the interests of their country; this is very pardonable; they cannot engage to be wise, but they may to be honest. It is of no consequence in what manner the bribe that makes them otherwise is administered; a place to their friends, a purse thrown to themselves, or a coronet to their descendants: the business is the same; and this deflection from virtue, this sacrifice of principle, is in no way to be distinguished from the acts of dishonesty, from the mere picking and stealing, of the vulgar, but that there is no personal risk incurred by the great, and that the consequences are far more important to society.

This part of the subject is painful on another account.

The union was a measure clearly conducive to the happiness of both kingdoms. The English ministry and nation had been thoroughly frightened, and they therefore made the terms of the union as reasonable and as advantageous, as they could, the better to preclude opposition.

It is, therefore, very melancholy to observe, in the first place, that a great nation like England could never adopt a proper system of policy *before*, and never behave with proper liberality and prudence, till both were extorted from her by the ungenerous motives of selfishness and fear.

It is again very mortifying to observe how little the affairs of nations are affected by the influence of any calm and deliberating wisdom. The real merits of the measure seem to have had but little effect with the generality of those concerned; a sort of opposition resounded from every quarter. The meanness, ignorance, and cowardice of it are instructive.

We shall have our religion, said the Presbytery of Scotland, destroyed by the bishops in the English house. How can our sixteen peers oppose them?

The church, said the English bishops, on the contrary, the church of England will be swept away, as it has before been, in the time of Charles I., by this new influx of Presbyterians.

Our manufactures will move away to the poor country where labour is cheap, said the English artists.

We shall be ruined, said the Scotch, by the superior articles of the English, if they are allowed to bring them into our markets, how can we contend with their advantages of skill and capital?

What security for our country or our constitution, said the Scotch politicians, when the union has been once made? We have only forty-five members in the one house, and sixteen in the other; how can these oppose the whole English legislature? We are destroyed, and that for ever.

What will become of us, said the English, when this new northern hive is allowed to swarm and settle upon our country and upon our houses of legislature? These are invaders that are hungry, intelligent, and servile; neither post nor place will be left for any of us.

"The prostrate south to the destroyer yields
Its purple harvests and its golden fields."

Such are always, on great occasions like these, on subjects of great national concern (unions of kingdoms, for instance; treaties of commerce, treaties of peace, abolitions of slavery), such are always the contracted, wretched arguments and pretences which men make use of when they affect to debate, and are in fact not debating, but thinking only of themselves and their own supposed interests.

On this subject of the union, the speeches of Lord Bel-

haven have been always adverted to. They are highly deserving of our perusal. They are rich with the proper beauties of eloquence, and very creditable to his age and nation. His celebrated speech you will of course examine; it has great merits, but appears to me, if for a moment I may digress, merely to allude to a point of taste, objectionable in its original conception. It endeavours to accomplish two ends: first, the entire rejection of the union, be the terms what they may; secondly, its rejection on account of the terms.

These objects are too much intermixed and united; eloquence, more especially eloquence of the character of Lord Belhaven's, should attempt some one great object, and entirely carry it, or entirely fail; it should throw all its force on the enemy, and carry every thing by storm, or instantly retire; not descend to all the manœuvres and forms of a regular engagement. The speech, too, begins with images and ends with reasonings. It comes full and majestic down its course, and then squanders itself in many channels, and seems to disappear as it proceeds to its termination. There can be no greater fault than this.

But I haste to call your attention to the speech of Mr. Seton, as well as that of Lord Belhaven. Seton spoke in favour of the union. The speeches are very different in their character as well as their import.

And now I must digress for another moment, to observe, that eloquence and wisdom are by no means the same thing. They are sometimes united, but not necessarily; perhaps never when eloquence is the *mere* gift of nature rather than the slow result of nature and art conjoined. A ready supply of glittering language and an ardent conception, i. e., a fertile imagination, and quick feelings, united to a retentive memory—these are together quite sufficient to make an orator, but by no means to make a wise man; to make a speaker or even a leader in a popular assembly, but not necessarily a statesman. Amplification, for instance, is the great business of eloquence, while the first occupation of wisdom is to reduce every thing, if possible, to its original elements. The one distinguishes not, examines not, hesitates not, reflects not; the other is cautious, scrupulous, precise,

patient, and deliberative. Enthusiasm is the soul of the one, calmness the essence of the other.

I would recommend the speeches of Mr. Seton and Lord Belhaven, not only as very remarkable speeches on a very great occasion, and therefore as subjects of history, but as very finished specimens of the difference which I conceive to exist between wisdom and eloquence, and therefore fitted, if this distinction be just, to illustrate a truth of very ordinary application, and therefore of some value in human life.

I have omitted, when speaking of Fletcher, to mention that those who meet with his works should look at his account of a conversation concerning a right regulation of governments for the common good of mankind. It is in the repulsive form of dialogue, but it is the best exhibition of his political views, and on the whole the best of his works.

After all, Fletcher had the fault which so often belongs to men of strong feelings and earnest thought, when they meditate on the improvement of the affairs of the world—he was not sufficiently practical. He had brooded over the contests and ambition of the nations of Europe, over the vices and follies of a great metropolis; he had satisfied himself that Scotland, in a state of separation from England, would be perpetually involved in bloody and destructive wars; and, if united, must of necessity fall under the miserable and languishing condition (such are his expressions) of all places that depend on a remote seat of government.

His plan for the remedy of these evils was to divide Europe into different portions, each adequate to its own defence, and accommodated by forts and capitals for the purpose, but not fitted for schemes of offence and aggrandizement. In England and Scotland were to be formed, in the mean time, about a dozen capital cities instead of one overgrown capital like London; by which means all the benefits, as he conceived, of our present metropolis would be secured, and its serious evils avoided. But without mentioning the very indispensable advantages that result from the concentration of so much of the affluence, genius, and intelligence of the people into one point, advantages which seem never to have occurred to him, it seems sufficient to observe in a few short melancholy words, that the great difficulty on all occasions of projected

improvement is to form a plan that is practical; and that he who proposes what cannot possibly be expected to take place, does nothing; does worse than nothing, for he makes the very cause of improvement ridiculous.

The particular temperament of Fletcher's mind, his disposition to attempt what he thought just rather than gain the good which was possible, the common mistake of virtuous reformers, operated, as it will always do, most unfortunately for himself, and all those whose interests he could have wished to promote. If he and the patriots had made their bargain, and consented to support the measure of the union in case certain conditions were complied with; if they had submitted to turn to the best account this experiment for the improvement of the situation of both countries, there can be no doubt that the twentieth article, respecting all hereditary offices, superiorities, &c. &c., might have been materially modified, or perhaps, as in Cromwell's wiser ordinance, made directly the reverse of what it was left to stand; that the twenty-first article also might have been modified; and by these means the system of vassalage and the representation of Scotland might not have been left in a state only fitted in succeeding times to disgrace the legislature and injure the best interests of both kingdoms.

What in the mean time he attempted failed. The very Act of Security which he carried, became, as he might have foreseen, the very reason why the English were determined at all events to carry the union. The union became a direct consequence of the dilemma to which the two kingdoms were thus reduced, and we can conceive no sensations more keen and intolerable than were those of Fletcher and the patriots, who were now to find every labour of their understandings defeated, and every passion of their hearts disappointed.

Before I conclude this subject, I must mention that the remainder of the book of Defoe, that is, the greater part of it, is a formal account of the articles of the treaty of Union, and the discussions which took place. But these discussions can now only interest or instruct, as specimens of the details and reasonings of men of business, when the commercial and ordinary concerns of nations are to be settled by treaties and mutual concessions. They give us also some insight into the

relative state of the commerce, laws, and manufactures of the two countries at the time. But the pages of Defoe are on the whole formal and dull, and there is not even as good an account of the tumults at Edinburgh, as might have been expected, though what is given forms one of the most interesting parts of the work.

There is the same sort of formal, official representation of the union, and its attendant circumstances and debates, in Mr. Bruce; but with respect to both publications, it is to be observed, that from those who are employed by cabinet ministers to forward a great measure, like Defoe, or to report a great measure, like Mr. Bruce, it is only information of a particular complexion that can be expected.

With respect to the consequences of the union, a considerable time elapsed, as will always be the case in such circumstances, before those happy effects took place which the measure was so fitted to produce. For this part of the subject I must refer you to Laing, who is indeed too concise and too general in this very interesting part of his work, but who is an intelligent writer, and who at least gives more information on the point than others.

The history of Scotland becomes, about the time of the Revolution, interesting to mankind, for it becomes connected with the Revolution in England, an event in which the best interests of human nature were deeply concerned. If Scotland had not sufficiently sympathized with England, if William had not been acknowledged, and if afterwards the Protestant line of succession had not been established in both parts of the island; if a civil war had ensued, and if the hardy and enthusiastic Jacobites of the north had been joined by their affluent and powerful neighbours, the Jacobites of the south, the exiled family might at last have been restored, the Revolution might have failed, and been a standing example for the generous and brave in every age and country, of the difficulties which attend all enterprises for the liberty of the people; enterprises alike accompanied, it would have been said, with disappointment and ruin, whether attempted by Hampden and the patriots in the time of Charles, or by Lord Somers and King William in the reign of James.

Happily an issue so deplorable was escaped, but the manner

in which it ~~was~~ escaped gives an importance to this period of the history of Scotland which I think may well claim your attention, and which might, I must also think, have deserved the labours of Dr. Robertson. The subject, however, devolved upon Mr. Laing, and his very respectable history, particularly the second volume, I cannot but request you to peruse.

I am hastening to my conclusion, but I must take this my only opportunity to say, in a few words, what I have to offer with respect to this interesting country of Scotland. Its history will of course be read in Dr. Robertson, and as his work is one of the most early books that is put into our hands, it must be read anew, for it is read before it can be understood. The history indeed presents a turbid and repulsive scene, which would have been little known to the inhabitants of this country, and still less to the readers of the continent, if the picture of it had not been drawn by so masterly a hand, and if a ray of softer and more attractive light had not been shot athwart the gloom by the beauty and sufferings of the unfortunate but not faultless Mary.

Those difficulties with which Dr. Robertson had to struggle, arising from the rude nature of the documents from which his history was to be drawn up, and which necessarily constitute so much of the merit of the work, cannot well be known by an English reader, but they may be distantly comprehended from the account of his life by Dugald Stewart, which should on this and many other accounts be read. Much of this sort of merit belongs also to Mr. Laing. By the labours of the two the public are put into possession of the whole of the history of Scotland that is important to us, and are furnished with what is valuable in those original materials which no philosophic diligence or taste for historical inquiry would ever have induced readers on this side the Tweed to estimate or examine for themselves.

The first part of the history of Scotland is discussed only in a rapid and general manner by Dr. Robertson. The real subjects of his work are very properly the Reformation, Elizabeth, and Mary. At the close of the whole there are a few pages by way of conclusion that are highly worthy of your meditation; but to these must be added the first one hundred pages of the third volume of Millar's Account of the English

government, for these supply what cannot be so well found elsewhere, philosophic remarks and information on the constitution and government of Scotland.

The student cannot fail to keep in mind the history of the legislature and parliaments of his own country while he is reading those of Scotland.

The fortunate manner in which our own parliament fell into two houses, and remained not, as in Scotland, united in one house, again presents itself to our observation and its consequences to our reflection. The peculiarity in the Scotch parliament of the lords of articles is also remarkable, and in its history full of instruction.

On the whole, Scotland, as a country, has not been fortunate. May her subsequent prosperity reward, however late, the intelligence and courage by which her sons are distinguished!

She was placed, from the first, in proximity with a powerful state; a situation most unfavourable. For a long series of years she had her monarchy and her aristocracy, but though they were directly opposed, and each abated the tyranny of the other, unhappily no other power in the state ever seemed to exist. The people were nothing. Even the union of the two crowns in the person of our James I. was unfavourable to her liberties; and it was not till the Revolution in 1688 that the interests of the people began to be considered: a late period this in the history of Europe.

In the general struggle and contests that accompanied the Reformation, that Christian church, the Presbyterian, which, after the greatest calamities and the exercise of the most elevated virtues, she at last acquired for herself, as what she thought best, though not without its own very important merits, had been long distinguished for harshness, fanaticism, and intolerance. The union of the two kingdoms in the reign of Anne improved her condition in all these respects, but improved it slowly. Her system of law ever was and has still remained tedious, inconvenient, and expensive; her system of representation wretched. The consequences of such a system have been but too inevitable. While her moral and political writers are of the most enlightened, bold, and generous cast, and are only accused of pushing the principles

of speculation and inquiry too far, her practical statesmen and politicians have been in general remarkable chiefly for their selfishness and servility; and the same union of the two countries which has added strength and range to our philosophy, fervour to our poetry, and spirit to our arms, has certainly not been favourable to the political morality, and therefore not favourable to the civil liberties of England.



LECTURE XXVI.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

HAVING delivered to you what I have to offer on the subject of the union of Scotland, we must now return to the history of England, which we left at the accession of George I. The first object that claims our attention is the violence of the Whigs on their restoration to power. Of this violence, among the most durable monuments must be mentioned the articles of impeachment against Oxford, Bolingbroke, and Ormond, and the report of a Committee of the House of Commons commissioned to collect and examine such documents as were connected with the peace of Utrecht. This report and these articles become interesting from the great events to which they relate, and the distinguished characters, whose private integrity and political reputation are concerned—Prior, Bolingbroke, Oxford; and lastly, their accusers, the great leaders of the Whig party, Walpole and others.

It must be confessed that these documents are much degraded by the foul insinuations and expressions of virulence which they contain; but suppose these terms of virulence, these serious accusations made by the Whigs undeserved, there will still remain a very heavy weight of blame to be endured by the Tory leaders. They might not merit the title which they sometimes received of “the Frenchified ministry;” they might not have been guilty (I use the language of their Whig opponents) “of forming, without regard to the honour or safety of her late Majesty, maliciously and wickedly, a most treacherous and pernicious contrivance and confederacy to set on foot a dishonourable and destructive negotiation,” &c. &c.; but they were too much disposed to secure themselves in power, and to make a peace at all

events, as a means to accomplish that end; they were too ready to make a peace with or without their allies; and their conduct was thus rendered not always wise, and sometimes even dishonourable.

In the writings of Mr Coxe you will see the opinion of a very regular and respectable historian, and it is entirely against the Tory ministry. He is even more decided, and more disposed to reprobate their conduct in his late work, "On Spain and the Princes of Bourbon," than before; that is, the more he has read and examined, the more unfavourably he thinks of them. The war of the Succession and the peace of Utrecht cannot indeed be properly estimated without a reference to his works, particularly his last work, on Spain. I conclude, from the general tenor of his expressions and manner, that he is prepared to say that Europe is at this moment suffering, and has never ceased to suffer, from the unpardonable faults and mistakes of the Tory ministry of Queen Anne.

We thus arrive at that particular period of our history which may be described under the general term of the era of the administration, or at least of the influence and administration of Sir Robert Walpole. It is important because the Brunswick family were establishing themselves, during this interval, upon the throne of these kingdoms, and because in their success were involved the concluding fortunes of the Revolution. This great and happy renovation or assertion of the free principles of our mixed government had been with difficulty accomplished by the illustrious William. The splendid victories of Marlborough threw a glory around the Whigs, the party which he at last espoused; and for some time seemed to set at a distance all hopes of a counter-revolution in favour of the Stuarts; but these hopes had so revived about the close of the reign of Anne, and it was an experiment so novel and unpromising to bring a new race of princes from Germany to rule the kingdom, ignorant of its constitution, and even of its language, that a very considerable interest belongs to this part of our history from the uncertainty that on this account still hung over the issue of the great struggle that had been made for our liberties.

The merit of Sir R. Walpole has been always understood

to be the transcendent merit of having most materially contributed to establish the present family on the throne, or, in other words, of having rendered at last triumphant the great cause of the Revolution of 1688.

This is the first and great interest that belongs to these times, and to the character of this minister. There are, however, other subjects of curiosity connected with this era. It was still the classic age of England: The events and characters belonging to it are still illustrated in the immortal writings of Pope, of Addison, of Bolingbroke, and Swift. The parliamentary leaders were men of distinguished ability; Walpole, Pulteney, Shippen, Sir William Wyndham, Lord Hardwicke, Lord Carteret, Lord Chesterfield; and it was towards the close of the same era, that first arose the great orator of England, the first Mr. Pitt, who was afterwards destined to realize, on many occasions, even the splendid visions which have been given of the eloquence of Demosthenes by the enthusiastic admiration of Longinus.

Of the different topics that occur in the perusal of this part of our history, several are very striking, and there are some that can never lose their importance—the Septennial Bill, the South Sea scheme, the Peerage Bill, the rise and progress of the sinking fund, the national debt, the secret and open efforts that were made to restore the pretender, the long peace that was maintained between England and France, the struggles of the great Tory, Whig, and Jacobite parties, the views and language of each; the concerns of Ripperda, Atterbury, Bolingbroke; and considerable entertainment, and very rational entertainment, may be derived from such particulars as have come down to us, of the character and manners of the two first monarchs of the House of Brunswick, and more particularly of Queen Caroline, not to mention such anecdotes as remain of the German favourites and mistresses, by which these reigns were so unfortunately disgraced.

Such is a slight and general view of the attractions that this era of our history presents to those, who would wish reasonably to amuse their leisure, or usefully to employ their diligence in historical pursuits.

It happens, too, that the whole is put immediately within

the reach of every reader, by the labours of Mr. Coxe. His *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole*, in the first volume, give an authentic account of the views and situation of that minister from time to time, and of the measures that were the result. The two succeeding volumes contain the documents on which most of the representations contained in the first are founded. In the preface is given a reference to other great works connected with this subject—Boyer's *Political State*, and others. These works are voluminous, and seldom to be met with but in particular libraries in London (in the British Museum, for instance). In addition to the work of Coxe, we have also accounts of the public debates in the lords and commons, and we have Tindal's *History*.

On the whole, therefore, I would recommend to my hearers to take the modern publication of Belsham, and to read it in conjunction with Coxe; then to refer occasionally to the two volumes of the correspondence of Coxe, and to refer continually to the parliamentary debates which may be read in Cobbett.

Tindal's *History* is valuable, and should be looked at when the subject is important. Smollett's work is a rapid performance, but not worthy of its author. Smollett was a man, not only possessed of a strong vein of coarse humour, but one of laborious activity and of a powerful mind, fitted therefore to succeed in a literary enterprise. On this occasion, however, it is understood that he was only desirous, and only employed, to draw up a narrative on the Tory side of the question. It was his fate, as it has been but too often the unhappy fate of men of genius, to be obliged to convert literature into a means of subsistence.

On the whole, Coxe's book and Belsham's, with a reference to some of the principal debates, will be sufficient for the general reader. The preface to Coxe's work, and the notes, will give sufficient information to those who think it necessary to investigate to the utmost the whole, or any particular part, of this period of our annals.

It will be found often entertaining and instructive, to turn over the leaves of the *London Magazine* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Publications like these, when they can be had, give the manners and opinions living as they rise, and seem

to have been the precursors of the more ample and regular annual registers, which will hereafter afford so endless a field of amusement and inquiry to the philosophic readers of history.

I have hitherto said nothing of the continental politics of these times. They may be studied in Coxe, not only in his *Life of Sir Robert Walpole*, but in his second work, the *Life of Sir Robert's brother, Horace Lord Walpole*. Were Europe now what it once was, I should recommend them to be so studied very attentively, but I know not that such attentive study can now be thought very necessary. The intrigues and negotiations connected with them were complicated and tedious. They were the subjects of great controversy; Pulteney and the opposition contending, that the interest of Britain was sacrificed to Hanover: Walpole and his brother insisting, that the interest of Britain was steadily pursued. The volumes of Coxe afford ample opportunity to those who wish to study this part of the general subject, and two or three of the pamphlets he alludes to, will be found in all collections of pamphlets relating to these times, and may be looked at.

The chief reason why I should wish the continental politics and the documents connected with them to be considered, is, that they are a good study to a statesman, because courts, and cabinets, and ministers, and ambassadors are much the same at all times, with the exception of any such extraordinary crisis as has occurred during the opening and progress of the French Revolution; consequently, they who wish to know how they are to comport themselves, the chicanery they are to meet with, the acuteness and fine talents which they ought to possess (a point which our young men of family do not always consider, when they propose themselves for diplomatic situations), they who wish to know the caution with which they must proceed, when they act as ministers of state or ambassadors, may here find their lesson, and better given, perhaps, than in any other historical records that can be mentioned, because the documents furnished by Coxe are authentic, and many of them of a confidential nature. In this way then, and for this purpose, they may be studied to advantage.

The great subjects that are before the student are, as usual, the state and progress of the civil liberties of the country, of the religious liberties, and now more than ever, its commercial prosperity, under which head must be included the new system of a regular national debt, with all its consequences.

And first, with respect to the state and progress of the civil liberties of the country.

The great point, and that which I have mentioned as giving a predominant interest to the whole, as forming the more peculiar merit of Walpole, is, that he secured the House of Hanover on the throne. In this every thing that concerned the civil and religious liberties of the country may be considered as involved, for if this had not been effected, the experiment of the Revolution had failed, and with it the great cause of both.

But in other respects, the civil liberties of the country were partly progressive, and partly not. Thus, for instance, they were progressive, because the speeches from the throne always proceeded upon principles favourable to the liberties of the subject; some of them remarkably so; you will see specimens of them in the note book on the table. No harsh measures were insisted upon; the excise scheme was given up, entirely upon the grounds of the expediency of mild government; Sir Robert Walpole declaring, and to his immortal honour declaring, that though his opinion remained the same, he would not be the minister who should carry on any measure of this sort by force. Not only in England, but in Scotland and in Ireland, proper attention was shown to public opinion, by this wise, and, in this respect, very virtuous minister. Publications of great spirit, ability, and virulence, continually issued from the press in opposition to his administration; yet the liberty of the press was, by the minister, not violated. It even appears that Sir Robert had his own writers in regular pay, who, as well as Lord Hervey and his brother, addressed the public in his defence, and that a continual appeal was thus made to the community in a way very well fitted, notwithstanding all that may be said of faction and party, to advance their improvement and political happiness.

Particulars of this nature are very favourable specimens of

this minister, and of the progress of the civil liberties of the country.

There are others not so. The Septennial Bill had been carried, and yet place bills during the era of his power were always rejected. Again: when each new parliament met, the decisions on controverted elections were made, not so much upon the merits of the case, as upon the party principles of the candidate; and because Sir Robert was the minister, and could therefore carry all such questions in favour of his own friends, no effort was made to remedy so obvious and so fatal a defect in the constitution.

But it is impossible for the student to form any proper estimate of the progress and state of the civil liberties of the country, during this period, without adverting to the debates that took place in the houses of parliament, and to these therefore I must direct your attention.

I must observe, however, once for all, that the exact point of the propriety, or impropriety, of the reasonings of our ancestors, is not so much the question itself, as what was the spirit, and what the notions, which were then thought constitutional and worthy the adoption of Englishmen. These may be right, though their application may be wrong. What the inhabitants of a free country should endeavour to attain is, to preserve in purity and vigour those feelings and those principles which did their ancestors honour, and then afterwards shape and direct them to the accomplishment of proper objects, as circumstances require.

What I would therefore propose to the student is, to take the debates, and observe those subjects which are more evidently of a general and constitutional nature. Let him consider what was, on such occasions, the language of our patriots and statesmen, and he will then derive a general impression from the whole, which cannot possibly be conveyed to him by any other means.

Let him take, for instance, the question of the Mutiny Act. The speeches in the House of Commons are, it is true, not given, but he will see that the question of death (that is, death to be inflicted by the military, not the civil power) was only carried by two hundred and forty-seven to two hundred and twenty-nine; and when he follows the bill, as he must

in all cases do, to the House of Lords, he will there see a debate, and he must in this case, as in all others, mark well the protest.

The articles of war may be found in Tindal's History, and should be read.

Again: let him observe by all means the debates that took place, when the number of the forces for each year came to be voted. This subject should be pursued from volume to volume. The debates were always interesting, characteristic of the times, of the constitutional notions of our ancestors, and of the leading speakers of the houses. In the course of one of these debates, Shippen, the famous Tory, or rather Jacobite member, was sent to the Tower. In one of these discussions there is a very good speech from Mr. Jefferies.

In the lords, too, you will find the debates on this subject (the subject, in fact, of a standing army) well worthy that great assembly, and the protests sometimes very good.

Again: in these debates of the two houses, during the era before us, the subject of pensions and places often occurred, and the proceedings that took place should always be noted.

A great jealousy on this subject was considered, in these days, as patriotic; I say patriotic, because these bills were contended for by the opposition; and an opposition, whatever may be thought of their real opinions and views, must at least endeavour to distinguish themselves by an apparent attachment to such measures as awaken the honest approbation of the community. Of this character, therefore, must have been thought their efforts to diminish the influence of the crown. These efforts were made in motions, to address his majesty to retrench unnecessary pensions; and, in bills, to limit the number of placemen in the House of Commons. What the court thought of such efforts may be collected from the expression of George II., a patriotic monarch, but irritable man, with narrow views, and who therefore honoured one of these with the appellation of "that villanous bill." Bills of this sort sometimes succeeded in the commons, but always failed in the lords, Sir Robert thinking it his best policy to stifle them there. The debates must be read in the different volumes. The first speakers interfered, and their speeches continually illustrate the nature of our constitution.

In the lords, the debates on these occasions were, in general, very good, the protests sometimes remarkable.

In one of these debates, Dr. Sherlock, then Bishop of Bangor, expressed himself in terms that seem to have produced a very great sensation at the time:—"That an independent House of Commons was as inconsistent with our constitution, as an independent, that is, absolute king."

It may be remembered, that Dr. Paley, in his chapters on the British Constitution, conducts his reasonings pretty nearly to the same conclusion.

I would more particularly refer you to the debate that took place in the lords, in March, 1739: all the great speakers interferred. I am not aware that I could produce from any of these volumes, a specimen of calm and perspicuous reasoning so beautiful, as the speech delivered on this occasion by Lord Carlisle.

It is to be observed in debates like these, that arguments are often brought against the provisions of a bill, by those who are unfavourable to the very principle, and who would equally argue against all provisions, to the same effect, be they what they might. The first point, therefore, to be considered in reading such debates is, whether the principle is made out to be just and constitutional. The next (and to us an inferior, though still an important consideration) is, whether our ancestors contrived the provisions of these bills with legislative skill; and though this may or may not have been the case, the original principle and intention of the bill may still be right, and worthy of the attention of posterity.

One great question that gives interest to these times, and to the debates of these times, was the Septennial Bill.

Originally the parliament had no precise limit of duration; one sat in Charles the Second's time for seventeen or eighteen years.

William III., however, was induced at last to consent to the Triennial Bill, which limited the duration to three years. To enact, therefore, the Septennial Bill, was to diminish the extent of the victory which the popular part of the constitution had obtained, and the measure has therefore been always made a matter of reproach to the Whig party. In this reproach, when I first gave lectures, more than twenty years

ago, I concurred, unwillingly indeed; for to the Whigs of the last century I then believed, and I shall always believe, we owe all the constitutional blessings we enjoy: but I have since satisfied myself, from what I understand of the nature of the Stuart Papers, and what I have learnt from other sources, that the measure of the Septennial Bill was necessary to the maintenance of the Brunswick family on the throne, and that a general election at the time could not have been ventured upon.

It is to be observed also, that the Triennial Bill had been enacted but twenty years before, and was a fair subject of revision.

The speeches, however, of Shippen and others are worthy of attention; and particularly the speech of Sir Robert, in the year 1734, when the repeal of the Bill was brought forward, and when he placed his argument on the fair and right ground, that the Septennial Bill had improved the constitution, and prevented it from being too democratic*.

One of the most striking circumstances in the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, was the conduct of the nation on the subject of the excise scheme. It was a very striking exemplification of the constitutional jealousy which animated our ancestors at this particular period. The minister found himself at last obliged to abandon his measure, and the opposition to the bill owed its success entirely to the sensation that was excited in the community on that general ground of constitutional jealousy. "Liberty, property, and no excise," was every where the cry, and the cry that triumphed. The sentiment, whether in this instance judiciously applied or not, did the community honour. It was a sentiment received from earlier times, and was then, even in its application on

* On this subject, when I first delivered these lectures, I dwell at some length, summing up first in favour of triennial, afterwards of quinquennial parliaments; but this was in the reign of George III. The question has been fundamentally altered by the passing of the Reform Bill. The difficulty now is, not to keep the representative attentive to the wishes of his constituents, but to keep him from being a delegate.

Again: the only means by which the king can maintain his consequence in the system of the constitution, is, his power of dissolving the parliament, a power which would be materially, and now dangerously, interfered with by short parliaments.

this occasion, neither so unreasonable nor so unnecessary, as by some may have been pretended. Summary convictions before commissioners or justices of the peace, without the intervention of juries, were very properly considered by Englishmen at all times as a subject of alarm and aversion. Equally so, and with equal justice, the entry of a king's officer into the dwelling of a private man by day or by night at his pleasure. That every Englishman's house is his castle has been always a favourite maxim in this happy island; "and when I speak of a castle," said once the great orator of England, Lord Chatham, he who loved to produce and cherish these honourable feelings of his country, "I speak not of a mansion, the abode of some potentate or baron, surrounded with fortifications and towers, and garrisoned with soldiers, but I speak of a tattered and wretched hovel, the dwelling of some labourer or peasant, which the wind and the rain can enter, but the king *cannot* enter."

We may ourselves be obliged to submit to the necessities of our situation, and be satisfied to obtain revenue in the best manner we can, but the notions of our ancestors should never be forgotten; still less should it be forgotten, that among many other unhappy effects that accompany a system of taxation, one, and not the least, melancholy, is, the tendency that every such system has to destroy more or less, as it is more or less urged, the free spirit, the free laws, and the free men of every regular and civilized community.

We are not, therefore, in my opinion, to read with indifference such sentiments as were then delivered by several members of the house, and we are to pardon men, even if they forget themselves a little, when their feelings are honourable, and the free constitution of a great nation excites their anxiety and alarm. I must refer you to these debates: I had made extracts for the purpose of reading them to you, but I am obliged, for want of time, to omit them.

It will, however, be an eternal honour to the memory of Sir Robert Walpole, that when his friends wished him to persevere, to despise what they, no doubt, called popular clamour, and show that government was not to be awed, this reasonable minister thought it more becoming to give way, to pay respect to public opinion, as he forfeited no moral duty

by doing so, and not to suppose, that government has no other and no better attributes under which to be presented to the community, than those of force and terror.

I would now wish to draw your attention to another subject, one connected with the character of Sir Robert Walpole, with the history of these times, and with the history of our constitution; I mean the manner, or rather the means, by which Sir Robert Walpole so long conducted the administration of government in this country. These means it was always objected to him by his opponents, were bribery and corruption, the power of the purse: such is the phrase continually occurring in the writings of Bolingbroke. This representation is considered by Burke as unjust: he considers Sir Robert as having ruled by party and family connexions. On the whole, the student may fairly suppose this celebrated minister to have ruled by the powers of his own sound and clear understanding, the effect of his amiable and social qualities; and in conjunction with these, by what is called the influence of government, no longer appearing, as formerly, in the palpable and offensive forms of the prerogative, but in the natural and peaceful agency of all the posts and employments under the disposal of the crown, in a highly prosperous and civilized state of society.

This influence, it is to be observed, is not at all inconsistent with the agency of the party and family connections mentioned by Mr. Burke. Sir Robert Walpole availed himself of both; so have other ministers. The one is, indeed, to a certain extent, connected with the other; for it is by this influence of posts and places, that a minister can be assisted in attaching to himself party and family connexions, and they their dependants.

The first inquiry therefore to be made by the student, as a reader of history, is, how far this influence was, or was not, favourable to the country during the times of Sir Robert Walpole.

On the one side, i. e. the objectionable nature of this influence, he will consider how fruitless were the efforts of the opposition to advance the interests of the popular part of the constitution; that the place bills were all lost, and so of every other attempt to the same end.

But on the other side he must consider, how steadily was maintained the influence of the Hanover family on the throne, i. e. the cause of the Revolution, which, as I cannot too often repeat, was the real and great question, exceeding every other in importance, not only to the constitution, but even more especially to this popular part of it. Such, indeed, was the very critical nature of this period, the preposterous wishes of the Jacobites, the unfortunate opinions of the Tories, and the disadvantages under which the two first monarchs laboured, resulting partly from their situation, and partly from their own faults, that it is for the student to consider very carefully whether it was at all desirable that the influence of the government should have been less than it was during this particular era, and whether Sir Robert's talents, qualities, opinions, and the means of influence which, as minister of the crown, he possessed, did not conspire most happily at this particular juncture, for the preservation of the liberties and interests of these kingdoms. This is the question which it is for him to consider, not for me to determine; and this is what I beg leave to remind him, is the sort of contemplative and critical manner in which he is to read the history of this, and as much as possible, the history of every other country.

But when this question has been determined, and it must be determined, I think, in favour of Sir Robert, another yet remains, how far this influence has been subsequently too great, i. e. not merely during the administration of Sir Robert, which is the first question, but through the periods that have succeeded, which is entirely another.

And, in the first place—this question, too, is one partly of historical fact, and must be borne in mind by the student as he descends through the remainder of our history. In the mean time, however, and the better to furnish the student with the principles which he is to apply to the characters and events of our history, it is at this point of his progress that I would propose to him the perusal of some of the writings of Lord Bolingbroke. Lord Bolingbroke is one of the classics of our literature; but he was also one of the great political characters of this period, the opponent and inveterate enemy of Walpole; and his personal qualities and his writings (his

political writings, which are all I am now concerned with), may be said to be in reality subjects of history.

His Dissertation on Parties, and (out of deference to the opinions of others who admire it) I must also mention his Patriot King, will, I conceive, be quite sufficient for your perusal.

From Lord Bolingbroke's Dissertation on Parties, I would next recommend you to turn to the works of Mr. Burke; to his "Thoughts on the present Discontents," particularly the latter part. These compositions of Lord Bolingbroke and Mr. Burke seem to me connected together; for instance, we have said that Sir Robert governed this country by his personal qualities, and by party and family connexions, in conjunction with the influence of the crown. To this system of government Lord Bolingbroke objects. But it is explained and commented upon, and defended by Mr. Burke.

Again: Lord Bolingbroke conceives the proper effect of the Revolution to be defeated by the powers of corruption which every minister has since enjoyed, and which he derives from the crown.

Mr. Burke thinks, with Lord Bolingbroke, that this influence of the crown is, and may be too great, but he views the subject in a new and different light, and in fact conceives that this influence of the crown can now be only opposed in practice by those very party connexions which it is the object of Lord Bolingbroke's Dissertation to discountenance and destroy. This is a very curious question, and one which can never be without its interest while our free and mixed constitution survives.

There is an air of freedom and purity of principle about such sentiments as are uttered by Lord Bolingbroke (not indeed the most exemplary of characters himself), well fitted to captivate the minds of men of virtue and public spirit. Corruption is the great topic of his lamentations and invectives; his great hope is a House of Commons that in some way or other shall be elevated above all sinister views; the members of which, unlike the members of any other body that ever appeared in society, are to be influenced by no consideration but the mere merits of the question before them. Views of this kind are always very animating and attractive

to those who, like Lord Bolingbroke, can write or speak beautiful sentences, or think they can, and to misty a youthful patriot, whose heart is sufficiently good, and understanding sufficiently somnolent, to dream over the visions of superficial or designing men. Statesmen of any sense or experience look not for such prodigies; they know, as Mr. Burke has observed, what stuff all supernatural virtue is made of; and when the corruption of parliament is represented as the beginning, middle, and end of all our grievances and calamities, they only see in a talker of this kind an artist who knows not the nature of his materials, or a future courtier at present in disguise; they know that men are in public, as in private life, some good, some bad, and that to depend on the *unmixed personal* virtue of men in the formation of a government, as a principle and a foundation on which to rest the public weal, is puerile and ridiculous in the extreme; that in a constitution, as in a machine, the question always is, does it work well? and finally, that there is no hope that it should do so, unless the great leading interests, and selfish passions, and *ordinary* virtues of our nature are so mingled, and opposed, and directed, as in the result to operate pretty steadily to the advancement and security of the public prosperity; that unless this is done, nothing is done, and that this is done in a most remarkable manner, notwithstanding all its anomalies, in the British constitution. Something is indeed said when useless places in the disposal of the crown are pointed out, and it is proposed to abolish them; remove temptations from men, and you will contribute to make them more virtuous, but nothing can be a more miserable waste of public talents in the speaker or writer, or of public virtue in the patient hearer or reader, than these vague and flowing harangues on the subject of corruption. There are seasons, indeed, when they may fall innocent on the ear, but there are *other* seasons when writings or speeches of this kind are clearly of the nature of sedition; and become perfect treason to the practical liberties and prosperity of the realm; they may be at one time the mere mewlings and wailings of the cradle (such they appear to me), they may be at another the thunders and lightnings that issue from the tribune.

These observations will I hope not be found unreasonable

by those who read the works of Lord Bolingbroke, and at the same time observe the world around them. They were made by me many years ago, and succeeding years have but confirmed them. His Dissertation on Parties is, on the whole, too long; it will often feel tedious. The same may be said of all his political works, with the exception of his letter to Sir William Wyndham, which is a perfect model of writing or speaking to any statesman or man of the world.*

With respect to the religious liberties of the country, they must be considered as materially advanced during the reign of George I. They had much declined during the latter part of the reign of Anne. The Occasional Conformity and Schism Bills, which were then passed, had shown the connexion that exists between civil and religious liberty, by showing that the same Tory ministers, whose opinions were unfavourable to the one, would be equally unfavourable to the other.

But it is the glory of the reign of George I. and his Whig advisers; it is an eternal honour to the memory of the king, that his first minister, Lord Stanhope, came forward and proposed all the relief and kindness to those who differed from the establishment, which the temper of the community could then be brought to bear, and that they would have done more, if to do more had been in their power. The Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts were repealed, and though the clauses in the Test and Corporation Acts for excluding dissenters from civil employments were suffered to remain, it had been the original intention of the king and his ministers to have repealed these restrictions also.

The question of the Test was agitated during Sir Robert's administration, but Sir Robert, though favourable to its repeal, could not venture to make it a measure of government.

The debates are worth your perusal, and the proceedings of the legislature with regard to the Quakers were very creditable to Sir Robert and the country.

The circumstance that occurred most favourable to the

*I must observe, as I leave this subject, that positive bribery was practised by Sir Robert, and by other ministers, both before and after his time; by Lord Bute, I believe, the last. Lord North used to job the loans. Mr. Pitt put an end to this disgraceful practice.

Whatever may be said to the disparagement of our patriots and statesmen, the standard of public virtue is materially elevated in modern times.

religious liberties of the country was, that about this period of our history we ceased to hear of the convocation—the ecclesiastical parliament. Men of the ecclesiastical profession, however respectable or venerable in their individual capacities, have never met in bodies, but they have become examples of any thing but toleration; and this must necessarily be the case, without any particular fault of theirs, from the mere operation of the most established principles of our common nature. But it is on this very account that any change which has a tendency to remove public concerns of this nature from their particular management to the interference and therefore more equal management of statesmen, must be esteemed materially conducive to the interests of religious liberty.

I must not now be mistaken; I speak not with the slightest disrespect of men like these, nor do I speak of them in the regular exercise of their clerical duties. I speak of them when meeting in an ecclesiastical parliament, or in large bodies “*interpretando accedunt*.”

Proceeding on in the general survey of our present subject, we may remark that Sir Robert Walpole was a man of good temper and good sense, and therefore not disposed, while minister, to countenance any harsh or offensive measures towards those who differed from the national church. But he can scarcely be considered to have advanced the cause of religious liberty otherwise than by having kept the language, and as much as he could the practice, of the government at all times tolerant and mild.

The commercial prosperity of the country must be considered as having greatly advanced during this period, from the accession of George I. to the rebellion of 1745. The merits of Sir Robert Walpole have in this respect been rated very high; they are stated to be very great by Mr. Coxe. The subject is treated at pages 163, 164; and an unpublished treatise by Dean Tucker is quoted in Sir Robert's favour. Tucker is very good authority; and, on the whole, the claim of the minister to our praises must be admitted.

But distinctions must be made, such as I apprehend will be found reasonable, whether we are speaking of Sir Robert Walpole in England, or of Colbert in France, or of any other minister, or prince, or government, who are endeavouring to assist the prosperity of those committed to their care.

In the first place, the merit of every man, and of every body of men, must be estimated with a reference to the times in which they lived. Since the administration of Sir Robert, a new system of political economy has been regularly presented, and successfully presented, by Adam Smith, to the consideration of the rulers of mankind; and we have a right to blame those ministers of our own age, who seem ignorant of its principles, though not on this account the ministers of former times.

The good sense of Sir Robert on particular occasions, enabled him to discover the science of human prosperity; but no enlarged views on the East India question, for instance, on the question of Ireland, or of any other of this nature, appear to have made a part of his ordinary habits of reflection.

“He was not,” says Burke in his masterly character of him, “a genius of the first class, but he was an intelligent, a prudent, and a safe minister.”

This praise, and this abatement of it, we shall find just, even when surveying him as a minister sincerely interested in the commercial advancement of his country. This intelligence, this prudence, still enabled him, without the assistance of the more divine influence of genius, to see and to provide for the interests of a commercial nation; without anticipating the system of Adam Smith, he could, by the operation of his own excellent understanding, perceive that he should assist the prosperity of his country effectually by clearing away, as much as possible, the duties and impositions by which he found our commerce incumbered and impoverished. It is said that he found our book of rates the worst, and left it the best in Europe—a most important eulogium. We have here merit, and of a most solid nature; a man in a high station going through minute details and tedious, disgusting examinations, and exerting his patience, his industry, and his talents in a sort of silent and obscure drudgery, where, though they were exerted highly to the benefit of the community, they could not be exerted with that eclat to which they most assuredly were entitled.

But his panegyric must not stop here. He not only did every thing in his power, and according to the lights which

he then possessed, for the emancipation of our commerce from vexatious interruptions and impolitic charges, but above all, he was the anxious friend, not only of order and mild government at home, but of peace abroad. This is his commercial panegyric, the highest and the best that any minister can aspire to. Men will better their condition, i. e. the prosperity of their country will advance, without the assistance of the state, if their exertions are only not interrupted, and their labours not destroyed, by the interference of laws at home, and the calamities of war abroad. Political economists require no more from princes, or ministers, or cabinets, or houses of assembly, than *that* praise, which they so seldom deserve, the praise of being very cautious how they suffer themselves to be involved in war, of being very cautious how they destroy, in a few years or months, what no efforts of theirs will repair in ages.

With this part of our subject is connected the consideration of the finances of England during this period, the measures of Sir Robert to improve them, and the claim which he has on this account to the approbation of posterity.

You will find materials on which to exercise your judgment in Coxe and the debates.

His great merit as a minister of finance has in fact been already stated; for *he* best assists the finances of a country who best assists its prosperity, the source from which revenue is to be derived. But in the official part of his duty, his talents as a man of business seem to have been acknowledged, and may now by posterity be taken for granted. The good sense which he displayed through the whole progress of the affair of the South Sea scheme, from its first origin to its final settlement, is alone sufficient to immortalize him. Great credit has been always given him for the measure of the sinking fund. He has incurred much censure for his opposition to the scheme of Sir John Bernard.

You will, I hope, be induced to consider these and other particulars of the same kind. They occupy a part of the debates of the two houses, of the pages of Mr. Coxe, of Sir John Sinclair's work on the revenue; and to all of these I must refer.

It is from materials such as I have mentioned in the course

of this lecture that I think an estimate may be formed of the period we are now considering, and of the merits of Sir Robert Walpole.

The Reminiscences of his son, the late Lord Orford, should also be looked at. They are short and entertaining.

The London Magazine, and the Gentleman's must be consulted when any particular point in the history of this period is to be discussed. They may even be looked at in conjunction with more regular histories. The times are very faithfully reflected in these passing mirrors. Specimens are here to be found of the most noted publications of the day; essays occur, and often of great merit, on constitutional subjects; and some even on the subjects of political economy. The poetry of Swift and Pope may be seen in extracts adorning these pages, like the verses of the meanest of their contemporaries. Here may be noticed the first efforts of the strength of Johnson. We have the deaths, the marriages, the literary productions, of many whom we *have* heard of, and of many whom we do not hear of, and who little thought to be so soon forgotten; and if a walk in Westminster Abbey could occupy the mind of Addison, I see not why the student may not resort, for similar purposes of amusement and improvement, to these brief chronicles—these fleeting sketches of life and its concerns—these striking images of the transitory nature of every thing human.

Other considerations will occur to him: comparing these periodical journals with our own, it will appear to him, as I conceive, that society was less advanced, but that politics were then, as they ought always to be, a subject of great interest to the inhabitants of these kingdoms; and that although the manners were less refined, and even less decent (as evidently appears from the complexion of humorous pieces, particularly those in verse), still that the great qualities of the English character were such as they have been always supposed, and were on the whole creditable to our country.

Notices of these times, and of the great characters by which they were distinguished, may be obtained from the works of Lord Chesterfield. A character of Sir Robert Walpole is very properly extracted by Mr. Coxe from the writings of

Mr. Burke, sketched with great accuracy of outline and strength of representation.

The accusations against Sir Robert Walpole, such as they were urged by his opponents in and out of parliament, in speeches and pamphlets, were these:—his fruitless negotiations, his destructive treaties, his subsidies with a view only to his majesty's foreign dominions, his votes of credit, his misapplication of the sinking fund, his discountenance of all proper measures for paying off the national debt, his disinclination to prosecute the Spanish War in the West Indies with the necessary vigour, and, in a word, his putting a country, taxed, burthened, and almost exhausted, to all the annual charges of war, whilst he deprived it of the possibility of reaping any of its advantages by remaining in all the inaction of peace. Finally, that it was during his administration, and from the influence of his politics, that France became powerful and Austria declined.

Such were the accusations urged against Sir Robert, and enforced and adorned by the splendid talents of men like Bolingbroke, Pulteney, Shippen, and Sir William Wyndham. These accusations may become very properly subjects of your reflection. They are obviously open to much explanation and discussion; several of them such, as a system like Sir Robert's was necessarily exposed to—a system of preventive and defensive politics.

Lord Orford claims for his father, what cannot, I think, be denied him, the praise of sound judgment, strong abilities, fortitude, calmness, patience, humanity, an easy pleasantry, sound patriotism, and a steady attachment to the family on the throne. These are very great, of very useful, or very agreeable qualities. I see not how they are to be refused to the character of Sir Robert. When these are considered in conjunction with the reasons that are mentioned by Burke for the praise which he so deliberately weighs out to him, the observation of Mr. Belsham may, I think, be accorded to: that "a man, upon the whole, better adapted to the station which he occupied, or better qualified to discharge the various and complicated duties of it, could nowhere be found."

In the note book on the table you will see a character of

Sir Robert by Hume, which appears in one of the early and now scarce editions of his essays.

I have now laid before you all I have to offer on those general subjects which are connected with the administration of Sir Robert Walpole.

But there is one to which I have not yet adverted, and which you will find fully detailed in the note book on the table—the origin and progress of the dispute with Spain. I cannot here go into the merits of this question; but nothing could be more humane and reasonable than the views and feelings of Sir Robert. I certainly wish to attract your attention to it, because among the great lessons of history one of the most important is the policy, the justice, the duty of the love of peace.

But what truth so obvious as the desirableness of peace? Why insist upon an obligation which has only to be understood—and admitted—and which is understood as soon as it is proposed?

The fact is, that the duty is assented to, but not acted upon. It is with the doctrines of peace as with the doctrines of toleration—men honour them in their words, not in their conduct; and, with loud protestations of the respect they bear them, are never easy unless they are violating them, never easy unless they are gratifying their irritable passions, and subjecting every one around them, in the one case to the superiority of their theological knowledge, and in the other to the terror of their arms.

This subject, therefore, of the dispute with Spain, you will do well to study. You may do it with convenience in Coxe; look also at the debates.

You may in this manner see, if you please, what your ancestors were on this occasion, and what you yourselves will probably be on all similar occasions. None of you can think ever to possess understandings more brilliant or more improved than were those of Pulteney, Sir William Wyndham, Lord Chesterfield, Lord Carteret; and it can only be by taking warning from their mistakes that you can hope to be more wise. I must again repeat that I could wish to attract your attention to these proceedings. I could wish to induce you to draw general conclusions in favour of moderate counsels, pacific sentiments, calm reasonings, and dignified for-

bearance, on all occasions of our differences with foreign powers, on all occasions when any such momentous interest as the shedding of the blood of man can be at issue.

I must entreat you to observe how impossible it was for the minister, Sir Robert Walpole, to state the truth, and the whole truth, without rendering his hearers and the nation quite clamorous and outrageous; how impossible to state the case of Spain. I must entreat you to consider whether it is not always thus; I do not mean in our own nation exclusively, but certainly in our own, very particularly. I must entreat you to observe the popularity that then belonged to all warlike sentiments—the violent and offensive terms in which the Spaniards were spoken of on every occasion; and you will then consider the free nature of our government, the ease with which popular sentiments are circulated, and how readily, in the progress of a quarrel, either of the parties, though right in the origin of the dispute, may become wrong and at last the real aggressor, from the very insulting and overbearing manner in which redress may be claimed.

Certainly important lessons may be drawn from these proceedings by the inhabitants of this country; and I must now finally observe, as I have before mentioned, that such lessons, in every free country like this, may be very safely drawn, for in any such country there is no chance of any improper tameness or pusillanimity. In any such country personal courage will always be the indispensable requisite of every man, and the counsels of such a country will always be of a warlike, violent, and unjust, rather than of a reasonable, pacific, and equitable nature. The danger is always on that side; and not only the philanthropist, but the statesman, in such a country as ours, can seldom be better employed than in countenancing and propagating, by every means in his power, a love of peace, habits of caution, patience, and good temper, habits of real magnanimity; for what, after all, is magnanimity but the union of such qualities with the fearlessness of danger?

Having thus endeavoured to direct your thoughts to these transactions, and to what I conceive the proper inferences to be deduced from them, I must make one observation more. I have hitherto mentioned the conduct of Sir Robert, during the progress of this dispute with Spain, only to praise it; a

more painful task remains. I must dismiss it with endeavours to hold it out to you as a proper subject, in one respect, of your censure.

In the course of these discussions Sir Robert had not done the Spanish cause justice; he had not told his own country the whole truth. (This I have already observed.) His excuse might be, and it may be admitted, that this was not the way to procure peace; that there was no chance for peace but his own continuance in power. Yet his patience, his good temper, his reasonableness, his exertions, great and meritorious as they were, in the cabinet and in the senate, were all unavailing. He found them to be so. In defiance of every effort he could make, his eloquence, his influence, his management, his sacrifices of every kind, the event turned out to be, that the two nations were hurried into a war, and that he had no comfort left but that of having strenuously laboured to prevent so fatal a termination of their differences.

There is even more than this to be considered. It appears that the king was eager for the war; that Sir Robert was counteracted by the cabinet, blamed by many of his personal friends, reviled by the nation. The question, therefore, which is asked by Coxe should be asked by every reader,—Why did he not resign? Why did he not endeavour to make some impression upon his countrymen by throwing up his emoluments and his honours? This argument, at least, they could not but have felt. Why was not his own honest fame as a statesman, and his character with posterity, as dear to him as they ought to have been? Why did he not refuse his sanction to a system of conduct which he thought precipitate, violent, and unreasonable?

It cannot be necessary, it cannot be proper, that a minister should have recourse to so strong a measure as the resignation of his office on light grounds and at every turn. Others are to have their opinions as well as himself; mutual concessions and sacrifices may be made by honourable men faithfully co-operating in the administration of a government. But when points of principle in themselves sacred, when questions of importance, like the alternatives of peace and war are at issue, then indeed it is not possible for a man of intelligence or spirit to proceed longer in his doubtful path amid the

blended confines of right and wrong ; he must no longer assent to what he does not approve. He can discharge no more necessary duty to his country than to avow his opinion and act upon it. It may be that his opinion is right, and a salutary effect may be produced. But on every supposition, one good will at least be attained—he will give an example of public virtue.

The path of honour is always the path of wisdom ; and they who survey the situation of Sir Robert from the moment that he suffered himself to be persuaded by the king to continue in office (for he had the merit of proffering his resignation), will see no reason to call in question this great and universal maxim of human conduct. Sir Robert retained his place but two years, his place rather than his power, without comfort to himself or advantage to his reputation. Life itself he retained but a few years longer ; what, then, were his gains in return for the mortifications he endured ?

It is difficult, indeed, for men properly to engage in the affairs of mankind without being deeply interested in them. It is still more difficult to be thus interested, and at the same time to view them from that commanding height, and with those sentiments of philosophic criticism with which they will come at length to be surveyed by posterity. Yet such is the magnanimity, such the comprehensiveness of judgment which are, and which ought to be, expected from the rulers of mankind, and it is therefore with no pleasure that we observe the character of Sir Robert so strongly marked by the great fault of all statesmen—an inordinate love of power ; that we observe him clinging to office, till he was torn and driven from it, and even in his fall, casting on it that longing, lingering look which was unbecoming him as a man of spirit, and unworthy of him as a man of virtue.

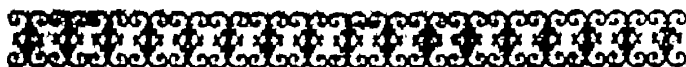
It is with no pleasure that we afterwards see him depressed and uncomfortable, because when he was no longer the minister of the crown, no longer the centre round which the business of the empire revolved, he necessarily became an individual visited, like other individuals, only by those who cherished him for his amiable and social qualities, or who respected him for his talents and his virtues.

Every attention appears to have been paid to him by those

whose good opinion he had been accustomed to regard; and what then are we to think of the account that is given of this celebrated statesman in the decline and fall of his power and of his life; or rather, what instruction can we hence derive for ourselves?

If, indeed, as appears to have been the case, his residence seemed to him a solitude; if, indeed, he had little taste for literary occupations, and expressed himself to this effect to a brother statesman who was reading in his library; if he wished for a resource that would have alleviated, as he said, many tedious hours of his retirement; if, indeed, it was found (as we are told by Mr. Coxe) that to him who had directed the helm of government in England, all speculative opinions appeared dull; if to him who had drawn all his knowledge from practice, all theory appeared trifling; if to him who had long been the dispenser of wealth and honours, a wide difference appeared between the expressions of those who approached him from motives of personal kindness, and the homage which had formerly been paid him by those who had courted him from motives of self-interest; if this difference mortified and stung him; if every thing, as it is said, seemed uninteresting to a man who, from the twenty-third year of his age, had been uniformly engaged in scenes of political exertion; if such be indeed the portrait of this fallen statesman, as presented by his biographer, *well* may it become those of you who hear me; those who are gifted with faculties according to the ordinary measure, and those of you who are intrusted with the yet higher privileges of superior talents, alike to consider how inestimable are those habits of literary occupation, and of rational curiosity, which are not only competent under every change of fortune to administer, even to men of common minds, the blessings of dignified activity and contented cheerfulness, but when they are found united to the possession of great natural endowments, can accompany men in their fall, from the highest offices of the state to the obscurest depths of their retirement, and transfer a man like Bacon, though ruined and disgraced, from the cabinet of a prince to that high eminence and vantage-ground of philosophy and truth, where kings from their humbler thrones might gaze upon him with reverence.

I must even venture to urge reflections of this nature still further; and without meaning for a moment to intrude upon the more sacred privacies of the character of Sir Robert Walpole, I cannot but take occasion from the facts as they appear, to request you to consider how constantly exposed to concussions and to overthrow, will assuredly be the happiness of every man who directs his thoughts *too exclusively* to the objects of ambition; who, amid the business of mankind, may have habituated himself too much to disregard that still more important concern which yet awaits him, and amid the interests and anxieties of those who crowd around him for his patronage, has suffered himself to be harried away and occupied till he becomes but too insensible of that yet more important connexion which he is permitted to hold, not only with his fellow creatures in this world, but with the Creator of the Universe himself; and which, when those crowds retire and his power is no more; when the more noisy and impetuous calls of duty are hushed; when the claims of mankind seem to part away from him on every side, will open at once to him an object of never ceasing and even far superior anxiety and care, and leave him to the more exclusive and undisturbed enjoyment of that silent piety which should never have been banished from the meditations of his heart, and which whether in health or in sickness, in his elevation or in his fall, will best explain to him the merits of his active life, and the meaning of his earthly grandeur.



NOTES.

I.

“SIR ROBERT WALPOLE, prime minister of Great Britain, is a man of ability, not of genius; good-natured, not virtuous; constant, not magnanimous; moderate in the exercise of power, not equitable in the engrossing of it. His virtues in some instances are free from the alloy of those vices which usually accompany such virtues; he is a generous friend, without being a bitter enemy: his vices in other instances are not compensated by those virtues which are nearly allied to them; his want of enterprize is not attended with frugality. The private character of the man is better than the public; his virtues more than his vices; his fortune greater than his fame. With many good qualities, he has incurred the public hatred; with good capacity, he has not escaped ridicule. He would have been esteemed worthy of his high station had he never possessed it; and is better qualified for the second than for the first place in any government. His ministry has been more advantageous to his family than to the public; better for his age than for posterity; and more pernicious by bad precedents than by real grievances. During his time trade has flourished, liberty declined, and learning gone to ruin. As I am a man, I love him; as I am a scholar, I hate him; as I am a Briton, I wish his fall; and were I a member of either house, I would give my vote for removing him from St. James's, but should be glad to see him retire to Houghton Hall, to pass the remainder of his days in ease and pleasure.”

The above character of Sir Robert appears in one of the early, and now scarce editions of Hume's *Essays*.

A character much more masterly and just is given by Mr. Burke, in his *Appeal from the new to the old Whigs*.

The beautiful lines of the poet are well known.

“Seen him I have, but in his happier hour
Of social converse, ill exchanged for power;
Seen him uncumbered by the venal tribe,
Smile without art, and win without a bribe.”

II.

I HAVE mentioned the speeches from the throne; and will give a specimen of them. In the speeches of George I. are found the following expressions:—

“As none can recommend themselves more effectually to my favour and countenance than by a sincere zeal for the just rights of the crown and the liberties of the people, I am determined to encourage all those who act

agreeably to the constitution of these my kingdoms, and consequently to the principles on which any government is founded.

“To gain the hearts and affections of my people shall always be my first and principal care. On their duty and loyalty I will entirely depend; they may as surely depend on my protection in the full enjoyment of their religion, liberty, and property.

“You will make it your business to promote that perfect harmony and confidence between me and my people, which I most earnestly desire, and on which our mutual happiness entirely depends.”

The dignified language in which George I. addressed his people in 1722, when in expectation of a rebellion, has been properly remarked by one of our historians.

“Had I, since my accession to the throne, ever attempted any innovation on our established religion; had I in any one instance invaded the liberty and property of my subjects, I should less wonder at any endeavours to alienate the affections of my people, and draw them into measures that can end in nothing but their own destruction.

“But to hope to persuade a free people, in full enjoyment of all that is dear and valuable to them, to exchange freedom for slavery, the Protestant religion for Popery, and to sacrifice at once the price of so much blood and treasure as have been spent in defence of our present establishment, seems an infatuation not to be accounted for.”

One of the most singular circumstances that occurred during the reign of George I. was the introduction of the Peerage Bill by the ministers of the crown. This project originated in motives not the most creditable either to the favourite Sunderland or the monarch—inordinate ambition in the one, and mean jealousy of his son and successor in the other; but it produced some noble passages in two of the king's speeches, which would have been indeed precious if they had obtained a place there on any better occasion.

“I have always looked upon the glory of a sovereign and the liberty of a subject as inseparable, and think it is the peculiar happiness of a British king to reign over a free people. As the civil rights, therefore, and privileges of all my subjects, and especially of my two houses of parliament, do justly claim my most tender concern, if any provision designed to perpetuate these blessings to your posterity remains imperfect, I promise myself you will take the first opportunity,” &c. &c.

And again;—

“If the necessities of my government have sometimes engaged your duty and affection to trust me with powers of which you have always with good reason been jealous, the whole world must acknowledge they have been so used as to justify the confidence you have reposed in me. And as I can truly affirm that no prince was ever more zealous to increase his own authority than I am to perpetuate the liberty of my people, I hope you will think of all proper methods to establish and transmit to your posterity the freedom of our happy constitution, and peculiarly to secure that part which is most liable to abuse.”

This last extract is given by Coxe.

In the speeches of George II. expressions are always found on every proper occasion that intimate the desirableness of confidence and harmony between the people and the executive power, and that the interests of the two are inseparable. They should be looked at even on this account, if on no other.

"I heartily wish," said the King, in his first speech, "that this first solemn declaration of my mind in parliament could sufficiently express the sentiments of my heart, and give you a perfect and just sense of my fixed resolution by all possible means to merit the love and affection of my people, which I shall always look upon as the best support and security of my crown.

"And as the religion, liberty, property, and a due execution of the laws, are the most valuable blessings of a free people, and the peculiar privileges of this nation, it shall be my constant care to preserve the constitution of this kingdom, as it is now happily established in church and state, inviolable in all its parts, and to secure to all my subjects the full enjoyment of their religious and civil rights."

The speech of the year 1734, preparatory to the dissolution of the parliament, has been noticed by Mr. Coxe. If it was intended to do away any impressions that might have been made on the public by the speeches and writings of the adversaries of the minister, representing him as having planned a regular system of oppression, it was certainly well fitted for its purpose, for no speech could be more worthy of an intelligent monarch and an upright minister, addressed to a free people.

"The prosperity and glory of my reign," says his majesty, "depends upon the affections and happiness of my people, and the happiness of my people upon my preserving to them all their legal rights and privileges, as established under the present settlement of the crown in the Protestant line. A due execution and strict observance of the laws are the best and only security both to sovereign and subject; their interest is mutual and inseparable, and therefore their endeavours for the support of each other ought to be equal and reciprocal; any infringement or encroachment upon the rights of either is a diminution of the strength of both, which, kept within due bounds and limits, make that just balance which is necessary for the honour and dignity of the crown, and for the protection and prosperity of the people. What depends on me shall, on my part, be religiously kept and observed, and I make no doubt of receiving the just returns of duty and gratitude from them. I must in a particular manner recommend it to you, and from your known affection, do expect, that you will use your best endeavours to heal the unhappy divisions of the nation, and to reconcile the minds of all, who truly and sincerely wish the safety and welfare of the kingdom.

"It would be the greatest satisfaction to me to see a perfect harmony restored among them, that have one and the same principle at heart, that there might be no distinction, but of such as mean the support of our present happy constitution in church and state, and such as wish to subvert both. This is the only distinction that ought to prevail in this country, where the interest of king and people is one and the same, and where they cannot subsist but by being so.

"If religion, liberty, and property, were never at any time more fully

enjoyed, without not only any attempt, but even the shadow of a design to alter and invade them, let not those sacred names be made use of, as artful and plausible pretences to undermine the present establishment, under which alone they can be safe.

"I have nothing to wish but that my people may not be misguided; I appeal to their own consciences for my conduct, and hope the Providence of God will direct them in the choice of such representatives as are most fit to be trusted with the care and preservation of the Protestant religion, the present establishment, and all the civil and religious rights of Great Britain."

Even in the king's speech of 1737, after the murder of Captain Porteous at Edinburgh, and other circumstances of very great and just offence to the minister and the executive power, the expressions made use of were only the following, perfectly reasonable and dignified, and worthy of the minister, and of the sovereign of a free people.

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"You cannot be inconsiderable, what just scandal and offence the licentiousness of the present times, under the colour and disguise of liberty, gives all honest and sober men, and how absolutely necessary it is to restrain this excessive abuse, by a due and vigorous execution of the laws: defiance of all authority, contempt of magistracy, and even resistance of the laws, are become too general, although equally prejudicial to the prerogative of the crown and the liberties of the people, the support of the one being inseparable from the protection of the other. I have made the laws of the land the constant rule of my actions, and I do, with reason, expect in return, all that submission to my authority and government, which the same laws have made the duty, and shall always be the interest, of my subjects."



LECTURE XXVII.

1810.

LAW—MISSISSIPPI SCHEME. SOUTH SEA
BUBBLE, &c.

DURING the period which we have been lately considering, a remarkable connexion of amity and good offices took place between the two rival countries of England and France.

On the death of Louis XIV. the Duke of Orleans became, or rather made himself regent; the Duke of Bourbon succeeded; then came Cardinal Fleury. It is the era which comprehends the administration of the three that must engage our attention.

The writers that we must read or consult are the following: the *Memoirs* of the Duke de St. Simon; the concluding volume of D'Anquetil's *Louis XIV. sa Cour, et Le Régent*; *Memoirs* of Duclos; *L'Histoire* of Lacretelle.

All these works may be read with ease and advantage; but any one of them may be sufficient for the era which it embraces. The topics are in all the same. St. Simon is the groundwork of all the rest, and Duclos' book is in its manner the most agreeable and the most generally read: but the truth is, that the whole, in whatever author read, presents to the view little to occupy the philosophical reader of history.

We have the intrigues of ministers and courtiers at home and abroad; a scene displayed lively and striking, and even necessary to the comprehension of the history of Europe at that time.

But we have no alterations in the constitution of France, and indeed little concern expressed on the subject. Even in those instances which are fitted to convey instruction to a statesman, the historians may be said to desert us: they write

memoirs; they please and entertain us; but are either unable or unwilling to do more; and they enter into no minuteness of explanation, or criticism, on subjects that to posterity must surely appear of far more importance than those which they discuss.

Our own Charles II. is made to revive in our memory in the person of the regent, the Duke of Orleans, and Clarendon in the virtuous and faithful St. Simon; but the regent is more outrageously debauched than Charles, and St. Simon, brought up in an arbitrary court, cannot have the views and feelings of Clarendon.

It may be observed, however, that the ill success of St. Simon, in his very laudable efforts to reform his master, are well fitted, in a moral point of view, to offer edifying lessons, if any were wanting, of the danger of self-indulgence, the fascination of bad habits, and, whatever we may think of the celebrated doctrines of free-will and necessity, of the impossibility which every man will find of altering his character at his pleasure; that is, the absurdity, in the first place, of indulging himself in courses of folly and vice, and of then supposing that, whenever he thinks proper, he may begin to be virtuous and wise.

Very different was the fate of the regent; favoured by nature with superior gifts of fancy and of understanding, with no malignity in his disposition, and well calculated to receive the love and approbation of mankind, it was in vain that he often resolved to make some reasonable efforts to deserve both; to exercise some self-control; in a word, to be virtuous. He was bound down to the earth by the chains of his long established associations; that is, in common language, by his bad habits. Dubois and his mistresses always prevailed over his better reason; and the kind and honourable counsels of St. Simon were sounds that were no sooner heard, than they were swept away from the sense, or rather were never properly heard at all amid the unholy revelry of his impieties and abominations.

He died immaturally of an apoplectic fit; for at last he could not even exercise self-control sufficient to take proper steps for the security of his own life, and his favourite medical attendant Chirac remonstrated with him on this occasion,

as vainly as had done before his virtuous counsellor, St. Simon.

“The most amiable of men in society,” says one of the historians; “full of genius, talents, courage, and humanity, but the worst of princes; that is, the most unfit to govern.”

This is, however, too favourable a portrait of the regent; one more minute and exact is given by Lacroix, and that with great force and beauty of colouring.

This is the prince to whom Pope alludes—

“A godless regent, tremble at a star.”

He was one of those licentious men, who, as sometimes happens, believe nothing but what no one else believes; for instance, astrology and magic; and St. Simon mentions a recital given him by the regent, of some images shown him in a mirror descriptive of future events, which I cannot but confess are quite inexplicable. St. Simon had nothing to say, but to request him not to have any more communication with the powers of darkness.

On the subject of the parliaments you must consult Duclos. It is an important subject, but one, that if you endeavour regularly to study, you will find intolerably tedious, and at last but unsatisfactory.

This resistance of the parliaments at last grew to be formidable to the monarch, and at length ended in the late tremendous revolution. The word parliament must be therefore a most interesting word, whenever we can observe it in the memoirs or histories of France.

But the student, while adverting to the history of France, will at length be conducted to the financial schemes of the celebrated John Law; and the appearance which this speculator and his projects make, is well calculated to awaken our curiosity. Some of the particulars mentioned are of a ludicrous, others of a grave nature; but they all indicate, and even if they were some of them exaggerated, the very existence of them, as anecdotes belonging to the times, would still indicate a state of the public mind and of the country, very highly deserving of our attention. I will mention some of them.

Law, from an obscure individual and a foreigner, had

become the first man of consequence in such a kingdom as France. Voltaire says, that he saw him going through the gallery of the Palais Royal, followed by the first clergy and nobility of France, who were paying their court to him—dukes and peers, marshals and bishops.

Again: it was about Law that the English Ambassador, Lord Stair, differed with his own court; and the result was, Lord Stair's recall.

Of a less grave nature are anecdotes of the following kind: That a woman of fashion contrived to have her carriage overturned to take the chance of his running to her assistance, and affording her an opportunity of thus becoming acquainted with him. That another lady, finding all regular expedients vain, went with her chariot and servants, and set up a cry of fire near the house where he was dining. Again: such was the ferment, and such the fury of speculation excited in Paris, that a poor man who had a hump-back made a livelihood by standing in the place where the bargains were made, and converting his infirmity into a sort of writing desk.

Anecdotes like these may be thought only entertaining, but in another stage of Law's financial system, three men were, in the confusion and pressure of the crowd, actually killed.

Soon after the whole scheme had fallen into ruin, it happened that a conflagration had destroyed half the town of Rennes, and that Marseilles and part of Provence were visited by the plague. When the bishops of the different dioceses of France were exhorted by a circular letter from the regent, to make efforts for the assistance of the sufferers, the Bishop of Castres replied, "that all the efforts he could make had only produced one hundred pistoles in money, and five thousand livres in paper: that the inundation of this last sort of currency had done more mischief in his district than all the flames could have done in Bretagne: that it was of no consequence that the houses were not reduced to ashes, if there remained nothing of all that was necessary to their existence but what was fit only to be thrown into the fire.

"What revolution," continues the bishop, "has not been produced in six months by this paper money, in fortunes that

appeared the best established; it is impossible to comprehend without seeing, or to see without the most lively sorrow, the effects that have taken place. There is an end with us to all commerce and labour and confidence and industry: even friendship and charity are no more. These are not exaggerations," &c. &c.

Particulars like these are surely curious, when they appear on the face of history as the result of the philosophic speculations of an individual like Law: one who had left his own country in search of a better, and was then brought forward to attempt his experiments in one of the first kingdoms in Europe. But all who hear me must be very conscious that finances, and paper money, and stockjobbing, are sounds not unknown to ourselves; and it is very possible, that if one of the purposes of history be instruction, these transactions may afford us some lessons, not without their importance. We may consider ourselves, as a nation, very intelligent and experienced, but it must be noted, that the regent who adopted the schemes of Law was a man of very brilliant talents. Law was, certainly, a person of no ordinary cast; and it does not necessarily follow, from the failure of his schemes, that he meant originally to deceive. The French people are inferior to none in quickness and sagacity; yet was there produced on this occasion in France, what Smith declares to be the most extravagant project, both of banking and stockjobbing, that perhaps the world ever saw; and it is certain that the most serious and extensive confusion and distress were the consequence.

Having made these observations with a hope of recommending these transactions to your attention, I now proceed to consider what means can be found for gratifying any curiosity which you may happen to entertain on the subject.

I am sorry to be obliged to confess to you some disappointments with respect to this point.

I have not found it possible to comprehend what was the exact theory of Law in his banking and Mississippi schemes, from any of the historical writers of France. This projector and his projects are both mentioned by Voltaire, who lived at the time; but he gives no detail, and attempts no philosophic analysis, either of the system or its success. If we turn to the Memoirs of St. Simon, a contemporary also, he gives no

assistance whatever. Duclos, in like manner, affords no proper information; nor does even Lacroix, though he has a chapter dedicated to the subject; nor do the writers of the French Encyclopædia. Adam Smith, unfortunately, gives no account of it, "because," says he, "it has been so fully and clearly explained by M. Du Verney," a work which I have never been able to procure.

But we have another treatise in our own language, on political economy, which, though eclipsed by the more enlightened and profound work of Smith, is still a work in many respects deserving of attention; it is particularly so on the present occasion—I allude to the book of Stuart—Stuart's Political Economy. Stuart gives a regular account of the system of Law; and as the whole is concise, and yet, as I conceive, satisfactory, I not only recommend it to your study, but it is upon this book, I confess, that I depend for furnishing you with proper knowledge on the subject.

Law was a man of a contriving, speculating mind, one who had his fortune to make; and who, after in vain proposing his financial schemes to his own country, Scotland, and to other countries, at last settled in France, and succeeded in getting a bank established in Paris by the regent's authority, in May, 1716.

This bank seems to have been founded on the common principles; circulating notes, and cash reserved to pay them, when occasionally presented. As he was a man of great address, with a fine person, and every attractive quality, both himself and his bank seem to have prospered most completely. No common success, however, could satisfy him; his ambition was unbounded. Unfortunately, too, he thought himself possessed of a secret for making a kingdom rich; and his dreams therefore of personal aggrandizement were, probably, of the most unlimited extent and splendour. His secret was this:—He held, that by increasing the circulating medium of a country, you increase its prosperity, and that therefore you were to supersede the use of the precious metals, and issue paper money to any requisite extent.

Now it happened at the time, that the finances of France were in a most deplorable state of embarrassment; and it happened also, that the regent was a man

talents, and alike fitted to comprehend, and to be seduced, by the reasonings and promises of any new and extraordinary system: Law and he were therefore made for each other. The finances were low, and Law had riches to bestow; this was all the regent wanted. Law was an insignificant individual, and the regent could furnish him with all the authority of government; this was all that Law wanted. Their operations were therefore soon begun.

In the first place, to Law's private bank was united, in September, 1717, a great commercial company—The Mississippi Company, which was formed by subscriptions in the usual manner. And in the second place, on the first of January, 1719, Law's private bank, which had now flourished for three years, was converted into a royal bank.

But it will be naturally asked, what were the foundations of this new royal bank, and what of this Mississippi company? What were the funds, and what the security?

With respect to the new royal bank, its notes were always payable in money. The security must have been Law's personal security and the faith of the regent: and it was the great art and anxiety of this projector to make his bank notes preferable to the coin of the country; so that *though* coin *might* be legally demanded from him, in point of fact it never *would* be demanded from him. In this he greatly succeeded for a considerable time.

With respect to the Mississippi Company, they were to have an exclusive trade to Louisiana: they were to have the farming of the taxes, and other privileges, and therefore there appeared ample income for their dividends; and the profits of their trade might be considered as indefinite.

It was settled, that the shares of the company could only be purchased by bank paper, not by coin. The more, therefore the shares were wanted, the more were the bank notes called for to purchase them. Law and the regent had the fabrication of both—of the shares and of the bank notes. Shares therefore were created, and notes were issued to answer the demand of the public.

Every man seems to have supposed, that the profits of Law's company were to be indefinite; all eyes were fixed, it must be supposed, upon Louisiana, and the revenue to be

derived from farming the taxes and other privileges, resulting from his connexion with the regent.* It seems scarcely credible, but the fact was, that such was the rage for buying and selling shares, and for gambling in these concerns, that the counting and recounting of hard money would have been a process too tedious and slow; and even this circumstance gave a preference to the paper money—to the bank notes. The hopes and fears of the individuals concerned, and the various modes of managing the company's shares and the notes of the bank by Law, gave occasion to all that stock-jobbing, and those strange occurrences, some of which I have alluded to, and which have been transmitted to us even in the records of history.

The system flourished while the public thought of nothing but of procuring the bank notes with which to buy the shares. While this was the case, Law could answer occasional demands on his bank in gold and silver, and the shares of the company kept continually rising.

Such was the state of things through the whole of the year 1719, till the end of November. But in the course of the preceding month of August, Law had promised a very large dividend on the shares of the Mississippi Company; he then increased the number of shares to an excessive degree. He also issued the bank notes profusely; and continued to do so, till before the end of May in the next year, 1720, he had, in fact, increased this issue to a most preposterous extent.

For some time it had been suspected by many, that the profits of the company could not be such as the holders of the shares had expected; that therefore there was no real foundation for the edifice that had been erected: the circulation, too, was overloaded by the paper-issue. Early, therefore, in the year 1720, the whole system evidently tottered. From the first, the parliament of Paris had constantly resisted Law, and all his schemes and operations. For some time it had been necessary to make use of the assistance of government forcibly to support his projects; and at last a false step that was made on the 21st of May, 1720, produced a run upon the bank, and as he could not find gold and silver to pay his bank notes, the whole system fell at once into disgrace and ruin.

It may be said, therefore, to have flourished from January, 1719, to the month of December; during that month, and the first month of 1720, to have declined; and to have expired at the end of May, 1720.

Such is the general description that may be offered of these transactions.

We may now, perhaps, enter a little into some particulars. Some questions occur. What could be the design of the regent, a very able man, in adopting this scheme? What were his ends? What did he suppose his means?

To these questions, the answer, according to Stuart, seems to be this:—The state was indebted two thousand millions of livres capital, at an interest of four per cent. His wish, therefore, was, to take advantage of the disposition the public were in, to buy the shares of Law's trading company; to transfer the debts of the state from himself (the regent) to that company; to become *himself* a debtor to Law's company, and not to the public; to pay the company a *smaller* interest than he did the public creditors; and by this *difference* to relieve the state.

But the operation by which all this was to be effected, was sadly circuitous; so it will appear to you, and scarcely intelligible. It was this:—The regent was, in the first place, to coin bank notes at his royal bank, and with these was to buy the shares of the company; in this manner to keep up the price of those shares: the company were then to lend him the bank notes they had thus received, at a low interest; with these bank notes he was to pay off the state creditors. After this process he remained, it is true, with the shares in his hand; but these shares he was to sell to the public, and get rid of them: from the public he was to receive bank notes once more, and as these were the notes of his own bank, *these* he was to burn. And the result of the whole would then have been, that the public creditor would have stood with one of the company's shares in his hand, instead of one of his former claims on the state; and would have been left to find his interest, no longer from the regent, but from the dividends of the company. The regent, or the state, would in the mean time have remained debtors to the bank for the notes, which the bank had lent, but would have had less

interest to pay than before; to say nothing of the gain which might have been made by a lucky sale of the shares: and these were the advantages which the regent, it is probable, expected.

The shares were therefore raised in round numbers during the early parts of the year 1719, from two hundred thousand to six hundred and twenty-four thousand. The bank notes were coined during the whole of the year 1719, and more particularly during the earlier parts of 1720, till they mounted up from fifty-nine millions to nearly two thousand seven hundred millions of livres: and when the whole system failed at the end of May, the regent was found holding four hundred thousand of the six hundred thousand Mississippi shares; and the public were in possession of (that is, there had been paid away) twenty-two hundred millions of the twenty-six hundred millions of bank notes.

The whole scheme therefore failed; for the regent was answerable for these twenty-two hundred millions of bank notes that were out, just as he had been before for the billets or debts of the state; and he had four hundred thousand shares in his hands, which he had not been able to dispose of. He could not get a sufficient number of the bank notes back; he could not transfer the public debt from himself to the company, as he had hoped to do.

In the event, therefore, after the run on the bank, and in the course of the remainder of the year 1720, he gave up the whole scheme; settled his accounts with the company by burning their shares, or their debt to him, and annihilating part of his own debt to them, and he returned to the old system of providing funds for paying the interest of the bank bills outstanding, which were no longer to be negotiable, and to be destroyed at the end of the year.

The result of the whole arrangement was, that he had to pay fifty-three millions for interest on the national debts, instead of eighty millions per annum, as he had before done, so that a certain advantage was gained; but himself and his administration were covered with disgrace, and his great agent and adviser, Law, narrowly escaped with his life.

Now though these were the facts, and though such were the intentions of the regent and the meaning of the scheme,

it does not follow that the regent, as has been sometimes thought, or even Law himself, meant to defraud the public.

The regent must have conceived, that he had furnished the company with a large revenue: first by the interest which he was to pay them for their loan of bank notes; secondly, by the exclusive advantages of trade; and thirdly, by the advantages of farming the taxes, which he had allowed them. In this manner they appeared furnished with an income perfectly adequate to discharge the dividends on their shares.

He and Law might both have persuaded themselves that by the paper system which they had introduced, they had so increased the wealth of the state, that the interest of money would and ought to fall, and that he therefore, as a debtor to the public, might, without injustice to the public, pay less interest than before.

The only question is, whether improper arts and dishonest practices were used, to raise the value of the shares, for on *their* sale all depended.

There is one fact extremely suspicious. In the middle of the year 1719, the year of the system, the company promised a dividend, far disproportioned to any rational expectations that could be formed of their means. Why they did so, has never been properly explained; and the company must be left with the imputation of, at least, most unpardonable delusion, if not direct dishonesty. It was at this moment, it may be remarked, that the financial scheme we have mentioned from Stuart, appears to have been brought into action. In August, the company obtained the general farming of the taxes from the regent; and while they promised this extraordinary dividend on their shares, they agreed to lend the regent one thousand six hundred millions at three per cent. Three hundred thousand shares were created in the next two months of September and October; and in December, 1719, and the first five months of 1720, two thousand millions of bank notes were created, but in the last of these five months, in May, the bank stopped. All these facts connected, seem to be best accounted for by the explanation of Stuart. The dividend was promised, which raised the value of the shares; a large number of shares were created to be purchased; and again, a large number of bank notes were struck off and paid away to

the public creditor, who was thus furnished with the means of buying the shares. All this runs smooth; but the question is, upon what grounds this large dividend was promised; a question, it is to be feared, which neither Law nor the regent could have properly answered.

Lastly, with respect to the failure of the system. Stuart thinks that this failure was owing to the order given on May "the 21st, that the bank bill should only go for half its numerical value. He considers the credit of the bank as good, all through the months of January, 1720, February, &c. down to May. "The French nation," he says, "had been accustomed to diminutions in the value of the coin; by these they neither were, nor could have been alarmed; indeed, such depreciations of the coin had been always urged by Law and the adherents to his system, as arguments to show the superiority of paper. When, however, it was publicly declared, that the paper money should be subject to diminutions too, contrary to the original terms of the bill, and the engagement with the public; and when it was thus seen that the paper, which had no value in itself, could not even boast of the value to be derived from good faith, that is, was in fact left without any value at all, the consequence was sure to be what immediately took place, that the public would rush forward to get for it any value that could be found in silver or gold."

All this must indeed be allowed. The failure of the system was an inevitable consequence of such an edict as that of May.

The question, however, that remains behind is, what could tempt or force the regent and Law to issue such an edict? This must, I think, be accounted for, not by saying with Stuart, that it was a mere blunder, for it was an impossible blunder; but by saying that it was an expedient which they had recourse to (a vain expedient, no doubt), for enabling their bank to struggle through the difficulties which are always the consequence of an over-issue of paper.

Law certainly had an idea that paper was fitter than the precious metals to become the money of a state; and he had even thought that money, that is, in this instance, that paper was wealth to a country, in the proper sense of the word

wealth; that is, was industry, trade, production, prosperity, in every meaning of these terms, because he thought it caused them. With these ideas he might have filled the imagination, if not betrayed the understanding of the regent, and both might have thought that in a country like France, a proper exercise of the authority of the state would carry them through all difficulties, till at length all the common prejudices on this subject of money being removed, the new medium might have its full circulation and influence, and the system be left without any further interference of government, to stand on its own merits. The paper was therefore issued without fear, to an enormous extent.

But in the mean time, the real nature of things could not be altered. It was not possible that the shares of the company should advance so high, and the public not begin to perceive that they had advanced beyond their value; it was not possible that the paper money should be so increased in quantity, and the numerical prices of things not increase also, and that foreigners should not therefore bring their goods, receive for them paper, turn the paper into cash, and then carry the cash out of the kingdom; it was not possible that the disappearance of the coin should not create alarm, notwithstanding the edicts of the regent, and the letters and reasonings of Law; it was not possible that all annuitants should not find their stipulated incomes less valuable, as the medium they were paid in became less valuable, that is, was more multiplied; it was not possible that the small part of every society, which may be called the sober reasoning part, should not be much struck with the sudden fortunes, the restless speculations, the extravagant enthusiasm, the violent agitation that every where prevailed, that they should not themselves doubt, and at last teach others to doubt of the solidity of a system unphilosophic in itself, and which, after all, had to depend on the profits of a commercial company, and the good faith of the regent. It was impossible, on these and other accounts, that gold and silver money should not at length be preferred to paper of whatever promise or description; and the whole merit, and meaning, and success, of Law's system depended upon a contrary supposition—the preference of the bank paper to the precious metals.

These are all consequences that were, and must ever remain, inevitable when an excess of paper money has been, on whatever account, introduced into the circulation of a country; and the only real grounds of astonishment are, how the system existed so long, and how Law could succeed in the manner he did, in persuading the public of the value of the company's shares, and the solidity of the bank notes.

On the whole, the failure of the scheme seems to have been owing to two great causes: first, a change of the public opinion with regard to the probable success of the mercantile project; and secondly to the over-issue of paper.

While the demand for shares continued, the bank notes were thus employed and absorbed, and though there might be a general excess of circulation visible in all the proper tests of an excess, still there might be no positive distinction made by the French people between notes and specie. But the moment the demand for shares ceased, the demand for notes ceased with it; and the distinction between the notes and specie immediately began to take place.

The famous edict of May, which had been occasioned by circumstances like these, only brought on a crisis which was from the first, sooner or later, inevitable, and was sure to be, when it did take place, totally unmanageable.

This system has been always looked upon as a system of mere fraud, and Law as a mere projector and impostor. It has been always thought that the short account of the whole is, that he deceived the French nation, and that the only instruction to be derived from these transactions is, the disposition of the public to the folly and guilt of gambling and stock-jobbing; the caution with which governments should listen to projectors; the hesitation with which the public or individuals should embark in schemes of wide extent and rapid profit.

Without meaning to controvert positions like these, the undeniable maxims of experience and good sense, it may be added, I conceive, that these transactions afford other lessons not less valuable, though not so obvious—I mean the circumspection with which the expedient of paper money should be used, the caution with which governments should listen to those whose systems proceed upon any other supposition with respect to their paper-issues, than that of their being freely

and not less shocked by the convertibility of the paper into the precious metals, the mistake which the public commit when they trust themselves to any systems of credit which require the slightest assistance from authority; which connect, in the way of mutual assistance, the great commercial and banking concerns of individuals with the government of a country and the finances of a state; the probability there is that men will outstep the proper bounds even of justice and honesty, much more of general prudence, when they can make, as they suppose, money at pleasure. It is lessons of this sort that ought also to be drawn from these transactions, because they are lessons of still greater importance to commercial nations, and because all such communities are far more likely to be ignorant and transgress in these points, than in speculations and stockjobbing, not to say that the consequences are far more extensively and irretrievably ruinous.

The infatuation that was exhibited through the whole of the transactions in which Law was concerned was by no means confined to the French nation. By a coincidence singular enough, the year 1720 was marked in our own history by the folly of what was called the South Sea Bubble. This subject I conceive also to be deserving of your consideration. I will make a few remarks, and leave it to your examination.

There is an account of it, as there is of the French Mississippi Scheme, in Anderson's History of Commerce; but you will better understand it by a reference to Coxe's History of Sir Robert Walpole. You may read his narrative and explanation in two chapters of the first volume, and then the letters from Mr. Thomas Broderick in his second volume. The observations of Stuart in his Political Economy, must by all means be referred to, and then Cobbett's Parliamentary History will do more than supply the rest. There are a few observations in Sinclair's History of the Revenue which should be read.

The South Sea Company owed its origin to Harley. He incorporated the national creditors into a company; the debts due to them by the state, became their stock, about ten millions; and he appropriated certain duties to the payment of their interest. He effected this art this arrangement by

giving them an exclusive trade to the South Sea or the coast of Spanish America.

The South Sea bubble was but a preposterous extension, some years afterwards, and a sort of caricature of the scheme and bargain now described. The debts of the nation were in the year 1719 at a greater than the current interest of the time, some of the debts were redeemable; that is, might be discharged by paying the principal; others were irredeemable, or could not be paid off without the consent of the creditors. The scheme, therefore, of the ministers and the company was this. (I will express myself not in technical, but in the most popular terms I can find.) That the company should have an exclusive trade to the South Sea, and therefore be enabled to get rich, and to pay large dividends on their shares; that the national creditor should be thus induced to change his security, give up his claim on the public, and with it buy one of the company's shares, the company was to pay a certain interest on their stock, besides the occasional profits on their shares, and the nation was to pay the company a certain sum to enable them to pay this interest and all expenses.

Of this arrangement the advantages to the nation were to be, that the whole debt, redeemable and irredeemable, was to be put into a new state—a redeemable state; that is, a state in which it might be at length paid off, and in the mean time, the interest paid was to be at a more easy rate than the original bargain admitted of.

Another advantage was to be this; the nation were to receive from the South Sea Company a douceur for allowing them to make this new bargain; more than seven millions, for instance, was to be received.

The original national creditor was to have his advantage in becoming a proprietor of the South Sea stock, and in sharing all the profits which were to result from their exclusive trade, the management of their concerns, &c.

It is more difficult to understand what was in the mean time to be the advantage of the company itself. It was of this nature:—Government was to pay them five per cent. for seven years at a time when money was not worth so much, and when, therefore, the company could not be under the necessity of paying so much to their own creditors, the dif-

fortune would be so much positive gain. An allowance was to be made them for the management of the new stock, which, in consequence of the bargain, was now to be added to their old original stock; and finally, great profits were expected to arise from their exclusive trade. Such were to be the advantages of the company; but it must be observed that the stock of the company was itself expected to rise; and it did rise, so high, for instance, as to three hundred pounds per cent.; that is, a person was to give the company three hundred pounds money before he could be rated a proprietor of one hundred pounds in their books; that is, a holder of one hundred pounds stock.

A national creditor therefore brought his claim for three hundred pounds on the nation to the company, and was in return constituted the owner only of one hundred pounds of their stock; that is the company accounted with him on the supposition of owing him only one hundred pounds; but in the mean time they accounted with the nation as having paid off, on the part of the nation, a debt to their creditors of three hundred pounds; the difference was to be their profit, a difference that depended on the rate at which the South Sea stock sold.

My hearers will now comprehend the manner in which the national creditor might give, in the progress of these transactions, not only his three hundred pounds (national debt) for one hundred pounds South Sea stock, but his one thousand pounds national debt for one hundred pounds stock, if the stock ever rose, as in reality it did, to one thousand pounds per cent.; and they will also see, that if the stock did not afterwards pay him the interest which his one thousand pounds before had done, how he might be more or less injured; and if the company's stock, for which he had paid his one thousand pounds, became worth little or nothing, how he might be entirely ruined, losing his national stock, and getting nothing in return. You will now also see what buying and selling might ensue, while the stock was varying, and how all the later holders, when the stock began to fall, would be the sufferers; and again, that if the original holders of the South Sea stock (the directors and others) sold out stock while it was rising, they, and afterwards even those they

sold to, might become rich; and if they made use of any arts or deception to raise the stock, for the purpose of selling it, such as promising a great dividend, &c. &c., they then cheated those to whom they sold their stock.

The next point to be considered is this; the manner in which the bargain was made with the company by the nation, and the terms agreed upon. The ministers originally intended to have given the South Sea company a good bargain; it had even been settled that particular persons were to be considered as holders of stock beforehand. The stock, it was foreseen, would soon rise, and the holders were to receive the difference on the sale of it. If the stock did not rise, the whole was to be considered as a nullity; and in this manner distinguished personages in the state were engaged to forward the scheme from the prospect of this probable advantage.

This was the first piece of iniquity, and indeed the most striking, that was afterwards proved.

But unfortunately it happened, that when the minister brought forward the plan in the House of Commons, having made his speech and been duly seconded, in the midst of a long pause, which he seems very unskilfully to have suffered to take place, Mr. Broderick rose, and most unexpectedly proposed that the nation should offer the scheme to the bank of England as well as to the South Sea company, and have the benefit of the competition. The minister stood pale and puzzled, and it was found in vain to resist so equitable a proposition.

The result was that the two companies, the Bank and the South Sea, proceeded to bid against each other, and the South Sea company at last succeeded, by undertaking the scheme on terms most preposterously disadvantageous to themselves: disadvantageous to a degree that could not but cause the ruin of those who were ultimately to abide by them.

The present is a very remarkable instance of the manner in which a competition may be sometimes carried to extremes. Sir Robert Walpole, who seems almost the only man left in possession of his understanding on this occasion, in vain remonstrated against the project, and declared the whole to be founded on mistake and delusion. Such proved to be the fact. The profits of the South Sea trade never enabled the

directors to pay such profits on the shares, that is, such dividends, as were expected. The value of the shares at last fell almost to nothing.

But, in the mean time, the first and most obvious lesson that is afforded by these transactions is no doubt the excess to which the passions of avarice and hope may be carried, the extraordinary effects of sympathy on large bodies of mankind, the inaccessible blindness in which the understanding may be left, when exposed to such powerful principles in our nature as these undoubtedly are. The whole scheme failed, because there neither was nor could be any trade to the South Sea, or to any sea, sufficient to pay adequate dividends on a stock purchased so dearly.

Among reasoners of a certain description, Swift and Mandeville, for instance, it is a very favourite fancy to throw mankind into two grand divisions, the knaves and the fools, on the right and on the left—themselves, no doubt, standing at a due distance in the middle. On this particular occasion, Sir Robert Walpole and a few others might have been not a little justified in some sweeping arrangement of the kind; and there are particulars appearing even on the face of history which may afford the most captivating entertainment to all such reasoners as I have mentioned, the scoffers and satirists of mankind, the insulters and deriders of our imperfect nature.

In Anderson's History of Commerce, and in Cobbett's Parliamentary History, may be seen a long list of schemes which were offered to the public by different projectors, some of them ridiculous enough, and forming altogether a striking specimen of the nature of the times. Look at them; they will entertain, and ought to instruct you. I will mention one of them. A proposal, after many others, at last appeared "for carrying on an undertaking of great advantage, but nobody to know what it was." The scheme was for half a million, and every subscriber, upon *first* paying two guineas, as a deposit, was to have one hundred pounds per annum for every one hundred pounds subscribed. It was declared that in a month the particulars were to be laid open, and the remainder of the subscription money was then to be paid in. A more complete specimen of impudence than this can scarcely be conceived.

It may be necessary to mention that the projector actually received, in one forenoon, deposits for one thousand shares, that is, he received two thousand guineas; but it cannot be necessary to add, that in the afternoon he moved off, and neither the guineas nor the projector were ever heard of more.

It was probably on this occasion that one of those deriders, whom I have just alluded to, amused himself with putting out an advertisement in one of the weekly prints (two or three sheets of the newspaper were then generally dedicated to the advertising of these projects), and the advertisement was to apprise the public "that at a certain place, on Tuesday next, books would be opened for a subscription of two millions, for the invention of melting down saw-dust and chips, and casting them into clean deal boards without cracks or knots."—Anderson, 103.

There was one difference between the South Sea scheme and the Mississippi scheme in France, which cannot but have been already observed by my hearers. In England there was no national bank connected with the project; the Bank of England stood aloof; there was no attempt to banish the precious metals from the currency of the country; the wealth of many individuals was left to rest, if they chose it, on paper and delusion, but it was not intended to enrich the country by the mere substitution of paper for gold and silver: an important difference this, which resolves the whole of our South Sea bubble into a mere specimen of folly or fraud on the one part, and ignorance or ridiculous gambling on the other.

When it began to be seen that there neither were, as I have mentioned, nor could be, any profits arising from the South Sea trade, or arising from any other source, sufficient to justify the rise of the stock, or to enable the company to pay the dividends which they had promised, their stock fell rapidly, notwithstanding every effort that could be made in its support; and all the silly people who had awaked from their dreams had no alternative but to vent their rage on their deceivers, and to call aloud for vengeance on the boundless ambition and avarice, as they called it, not of themselves, but of the directors and others, their agents and accomplices, the rogues, the parricides (I quote the words made use of in a

variety of different petitions to parliament), the traitorous, perfidious, &c. &c., betrayers, plunderers, robbers of their country, the monsters of pride and covetousness, the cannibals of 'Change Alley, who lick up the blood of the nation, &c. &c.

Now these are complimentary terms very natural for those to use who find themselves ruined by their own credulity; but as the law cannot well attempt to protect good people from the consequences of their own folly, it was not found possible, by any regular process of legal punishment, to pursue with due pains and penalties these nefarious contrivers of what, in the language of the committee of the House of Commons, was called "a train of the deepest villany and fraud hell (that is, I suppose, the Stock Exchange) ever contrived to ruin a nation."

A scene therefore followed, not very creditable to a great and civilized nation. The houses of parliament showed, no doubt, that they were not partners in these swindling transactions; but they showed, at the same time, a great disregard to all the niceties that should be observed in the administration of penal justice. They made the directors bring in an account of their property and estates, talked over the different proportions of guilt that belonged to each individual, and then, in a loose and summary way, fined them at their pleasure, dedicating almost the whole of the two millions private property which they possessed to the assistance of the sufferers.

"Instead of the calm solemnity of a judicial inquiry," says Mr. Gibbon, whose grandfather was a director, "the fortune and honour of thirty-three Englishmen were made the topic of hasty conversation and the sport of a lawless majority."

As an obvious and general remark, it must be mentioned that these popular tempests of vindictive justice should always be most carefully watched and resisted by intelligent men. But I must also remark, that there seems, on this occasion, no notice to have been taken of the guilt of a particular description of persons, who might little suspect their own criminality, I mean a part of the members of the House of Commons themselves, more particularly the gay, thoughtless sons of peers or opulent commoners, who had under-

taken to be legislators before they had made themselves men of business; who had given their votes, no doubt, for schemes of finance of the nature of which they probably knew nothing, and were contented to know nothing; and who had failed in their clear and bounden duty, the duty of being the honest, the laborious, and, I must add, the well-informed protectors of the public. The scheme would never have taken place, if the House of Commons had been properly intelligent, if it had been even intelligent enough to admit of being enlightened, but it was not. Sir Robert Walpole reasoned in vain.

I quit this subject by repeating briefly that Anderson's account is worth considering, but that a very good note by Stuart, in his Political Economy, must by no means be omitted. The narrative of Coxe, in his first volume, which is collected from every different source of information, will be the most intelligible and complete exhibition of the whole to the general reader; but the letters of Mr. Broderick must be read, as containing the sentiments of a person living at the time, a member of the house, and making his observations on all that was passing within and without doors.

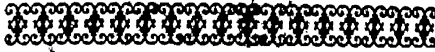
The Parliamentary history of Cobbett is very full on this occasion; all the regular documents are preserved and given; but there is so much technical language used, that they will be often tedious, and at the same time very difficult to comprehend. They must be read in conjunction with Stuart and Coxe, and indeed there is a good narrative furnished along with these debates, borrowed from Tindal; but the great misfortune is, that the speeches of Sir Robert Walpole are not come down to us, or at least not properly given. The most instructive portion of the whole would have been found in the speeches and reasonings that took place whilst the scheme was in agitation; while Sir Robert was remonstrating, for instance, against the acceptance of the proposals of the South Sea Company; a general description only can be found of what was probably a most reasonable speech, highly creditable to him as a statesman. The introductory speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have been also very instructive; and again, the debates that ensued when the bubble burst, and the house was proceeding to punish the directors, and was endeavouring to rescue the nation from its

calamities. But on these most important occasions the debates are all either more or less deficient, and the assistance that is afforded by the private letters produced by Coxe is quite trifling.

The first report of the proceedings of the South Sea Company may be looked at. The result of the whole is contained in ten of the resolutions of the House of Commons, and will give some idea of the swindling practices that took place. The remaining documents soon become little more than an inquiry into the particular guilt of individuals, and to us, at this distance of time, lose their interest; but what minutes remain of the proceedings in the house are worthy of observation. The last two-thirds of Mr. Aislable's second defence before the lords contains a curious account of the whole affair; and, whether Mr. Aislable was or was not as reasonable as he pretends, gives a very just description of at least the follies of others.

The manner in which the concerns of all parties were adjusted may be best understood from Anderson; and, in the first place, from the report of the address of the house itself, drawn up by Sir Robert.

Much loss must have been suffered by those who last entered into the scheme, and much dissatisfaction was expressed. All parties were made very properly to abide by the consequences of their folly. The seven millions, indeed, which the nation was to receive from the South Sea Company was at length necessarily remitted, but the nation found its original engagements converted into new engagements of a more advantageous nature; and though the scheme was in every respect wretchedly managed, some advantage was derived from it, and the public creditors no longer received an interest disproportioned to the interest, at which money could at the time be borrowed.



NOTES.

The great French work of Fourbionois is the most regular treatise on the system of Law. Here will be found all the history of the system, and all the violent and unjust measures that were adopted to support it; but the detail is difficult to understand, and after passing many hours over it, more than I can expect others to do, I can only advise you, in the first place, to study well the chapters of Stuart.

The treatise which Law addressed to the parliament of Scotland is short, and may be met with; it explains his objections to the use of the precious metals, and the manner in which he would have converted the whole fee-simple of the land into circulating medium. Scotland and every other country was, he conceived, suffering from the want of circulating medium, which was all that he thought was necessary to its prosperity. Commissioners were therefore to be appointed to issue paper money on land security, &c.

There is a certain portion of truth in Law's notions, sufficient to deceive him, as it had deceived many others; for while money flows into a country by the fabrication of paper money, the effect is beneficial; it is beneficial while the money continues to flow, no longer; for every man during this interval receives a full return for any effort in industry that he can make; the quantity of circulating medium has been increasing, while he was making this effort, and he therefore receives more than he would otherwise have done.

But the moment the tide stops, this high remunerating price stops also; and every opposite consequence arises; and stop it must, if artificially produced.

The whole subject is very well explained by Hume in his Essay on Money.



LECTURE XXVIII.

GEORGE II. PELHAM. REBELLION OF 1745, &c.

WE left the English history at the close of the administration of Sir Robert Walpole; the next era that I will propose to you is the interval between that event and the peace of 1763.

To this era we turn with some curiosity. We have heard much of the events by which it was distinguished; much of the great statesmen and lawyers by whom it was adorned. The nation, in the mean time, as we may judge from the effect, must have made a great progress in its commerce, agriculture, manufactures, and literature: in its general opulence, and general intelligence. Of all these things we are somewhat eager to know the history.

But on this occasion we meet with a severe disappointment. We find the history written only by Smollett; and we learn, upon inquiry, that the work was drawn up as a Tory history (agreeably, however, to Smollett's principles), because a bookseller, in the exercise of his trade, had perceived that such a history would obtain a sale.

Belsham's History is but short; and though a work of more merit than is generally allowed, not written in a manner, even in these earlier volumes, sufficiently calm and dignified. The Annual Registers do not begin till the year 1758; and the London Magazine and Gentleman's Magazine comprehend some of the materials of history rather than a history itself. Above all, we have no authentic debates. In four volumes is comprised every thing of this kind that can now be offered to our notice. Under the feigned names of the Roman senate and the senate of Lilliput, some of the speeches of those who took a part in the debates were published in the London and Gentleman's Magazines; but at length even this

imperfect and mutilated information was denied. The public were prevented from knowing the arguments and views of their statesmen, not only by order of the lords, the hereditary protectors of the community, but by the commons, the very representatives of the community; and there is for some time, in the debates of both houses, a total chasm and blank. After all that we have heard of the eloquence of Murray and of Pitt, nothing can be more grievous than our disappointment in this part of our general inquiries.

I have already noticed to you the very strange ignorance of the real nature of this subject, shown by the House of Commons on a former occasion, and even by such a man as Pulteney, while the leader of opposition. It is now better understood. And as, on the one hand, every reasonable man will see that the houses of parliament should always have the right of excluding strangers when they think fit; so, on the other, it is equally clear that this right should be exercised as seldom as possible—by no means so often as men of violent and arbitrary dispositions would think desirable. You who hear me will, I trust, if any of you should ever sit in parliament, be very careful how you interfere with the publicity of the debates; in other words, how you presume to assassinate the talents of your country, stifle the free spirit of its constitution, and destroy the instruction of after ages.

On the whole it will appear, from all the particulars I have mentioned, that we have no very good means of appreciating what I may call the fair, open, regular politics of the country. We must judge, as well as we can, from the events that took place, the measures carried by the different administrations, the general characters of those that composed them.

We are allowed a slight glance into another part of the general subject, the intrigues and cabals of the times. The Diary of Dodington, Lord Melcombe, has been published. It is generally amusing, and sometimes important: amusing, because it gives some idea of the way in which public men of more talents than principle usually reason and act, and of the way, too, in which they are treated by ministers and those who want their services at the cheapest rate; important, because it gives some idea of Mr. Pelham, the Duke of Newcastle, and other distinguished men of the times, and

above all, because it affords the only insight we can as yet obtain into the education and manners of his present majesty when young, as well as into the characters of those who were around him, his tutors and governors, his friends the Earl of Bute, Prince Frederick his father, and the Princess Dowager.

The public can seldom reach any knowledge of this peculiar kind. Those who are usually about a court are unfit to make any proper use of their advantages, and indeed they seldom try. The slightest particulars, therefore, are eagerly seized and meditated upon by every philosophic reader of history; and this book of Dodington must by no means be neglected.

With Dodington may be read a book that has been lately published by Lord Holland—the *Memoirs of Lord Waldegrave*, from the year 1754 to 1758. The book is very deserving of perusal, as it affords us the observations of a very sensible man on the occurrences that passed before his eyes, while in the confidence of George II. and the governor of the late king. It somewhat disappoints the reader, for more might have been expected than is found on the subject of the young prince, the princess dowager, and Lord Bute, though valuable hints are given; and on the political principles of Pitt, Mr. Fox, and others; but the book must be read, and will be read, as well as the preface and the letters of Mr. Fox (afterwards Lord Holland), with entertainment and instruction. Characters are given, and well drawn; the style is very easy, clear, and idiomatic; the style of a polished man, rather than of a scholar, accustomed to the company of people of rank and talents.

The general conclusion from the whole is very unfavourable to all the statesmen concerned; that they contended rather for power than for the prevalence of any political principles; that they constituted factions in the state rather than parties: great constitutional principles were, however, sometimes at issue, though apparently not felt and considered to be such at the time. Lord Waldegrave himself seems to have had no very enlarged or proper ideas of our constitution; to have been a man with no political views himself, and attributing none to other people. I conclude my notice of this work by observing, that a mistake may be made with regard to the

princess dowager; she was entitled to the affection and respect of the young prince, the future king, as his mother. The question is, whether she was or was not converting her maternal influence into a means of political power, and whether she was or was not ambitious to rule, by the assistance of Lord Bute, and rule on Tory principles. But to return to the point of history at which we set out.

The labours of Mr. Coxe do not exactly close with the Life of Sir Robert Walpole. He has also published memoirs of Sir Robert's brother, the first Horace Walpole. And it is to these we must have recourse when we first turn to the era which we are more immediately considering.

I will now proceed to advert to some of the more particular occurrences of this interval from 1743 to 1763, in the order in which they appeared.

In the first place, I have already mentioned, and must again mention, the intrigues that took place on the fall of Sir Robert. They are worth your consideration. A general notion of them may be formed from Coxe's Life of Sir Robert, favourable to him no doubt; but the fact seems to be, that all the parties concerned in these transactions had their follies and their faults; the public perhaps the least so, but even the public was not without them, as will be seen when we are considering those of their statesmen.

Pulteney, for instance, seems to have made, when in opposition, a very improper declaration that he would never take office. A public man may certainly propose himself as a sort of inquisitor of all other public men; but on one supposition, that he takes no favours from any administration; this is a necessary proviso. He then may occupy a very elevated situation, and deserve and obtain the applauses of his country, for this is a sort of merit that is very great, and is intelligible. But men of talents, as well as good sense and honesty, may even more materially contribute to the service of their country, by going into office, and advancing its interests, foreign and domestic, civil and religious, by becoming such ministers as the former (the men of honesty and good sense), may safely patronise. This is a merit of a still higher nature, and for a virtuous and intelligent statesman to exclude it from his view is in fact to abandon the government of a country to every

presumptuous, self-interested man that will undertake it. Pulteney, however, seems to have attempted to adhere (when power was within his reach) to the ill-judged declarations which he had made when in opposition; and when it was his business to form an administration, he seems to have entertained the unreasonable expectation, that he could still keep his consequence without being seen in any one responsible situation or post; not in opposition; not in office; not even as a neutral critic; but merely as a commoner made into a peer; placed calmly to survey the proceedings of the administration he had constructed, without any means of influencing their movements; without any duty to discharge to the public; i. e. in other words, without any right to receive their praises.

What was the result? He had scarcely finished his negotiations with the court when he found too late that he had attempted impossibilities. He was almost insulted with his insignificance, even by the Duke of Newcastle. He was so mortified as to have meditated a renewal of his opposition. This indeed would have crowned his mistakes; and he is said, in the agonies of his shame and disgust, to have trampled the patent of his peerage under his feet.

The most edifying part of these transactions is the view which Pulteney had himself formed of his plans and situation. "If," says he, "avarice, ambition, or the desire of power had influenced me, why did I not take (and no one can deny but I might have had) the greatest post in the kingdom? But I contented myself with the honest pride of having subdued the great author of corruption; retired with a peerage which I had at three different periods of my life refused; and left the government to be conducted by those who had more inclination than I had to be concerned in it. I should have been happy if I could have united an administration capable of carrying on the government with ability, economy, and honour."

Public men are not to indulge themselves in dreams like these: they are not to suppose that they subdue a bad minister, or a set of bad men, unless they do their best to form a better administration; unless they hazard their own characters, and embark their own labours in a new system: bad

ministers and bad measures are not so readily cleared away and disposed of. Pulteney knew very well, no one could know better, the discordant materials of which the opposition had been composed; and it was his business, as the great leader and soul of the whole, by disinterestedness, openness, and an adherence to the great constitutional points for which he had contended, to have united as many of them as possible, and to have made no bargain with the court that could leave the reasonable part of the public any cause of complaint.

On all occasions like these, great difficulties must be experienced. The jealousies, suspicions, and rivalships by which a party is secretly agitated, while openly united in opposition to a minister, break out when the victory is once accomplished. The leaders cannot possibly satisfy, or even silence, the preposterous expectations, more particularly of those who have little real merit to boast. But Pulteney seems not even to have done what might have been expected. He left the court in possession of the important offices in the cabinet. The Duke of Newcastle was to be secretary of state; Lord Hardwicke remained chancellor; Lord Wilmington was suffered to slide, as it was called, into the post of first lord of the treasury; and the result of the whole was, that the alteration of measures, as well as of men, for which he had before appeared so anxious, never did, and indeed never could take place; for how were the measures to be altered but with the men?

Melancholy to his own personal feelings were the consequences. Every term of reproach and indignation, all that could be suggested by the agreeable pleasantry of Sir Hanbury Williams, and the more elevated effusions of the muse of Akenside, were levelled at his character and fame; and the hissings of the public every where pursued the peer, the new made peer, who was now thought but the tool of a court, corrupted and corrupting, though so late, the patriot who had animated his countrymen by his generous efforts against the baseness of corruption, and charmed the House of Commons by the liveliness of his retorts, and the vigour of his arguments.

There can be no doubt that Pulteney was not so deserving of reprobation as was supposed at the time, or long after. In

this, and in all other cases, we are to take the most natural solution of the phenomena; and in judging of the conduct of men in difficult and critical situations, it is quite idle to exclude the supposition of occasional folly and mistake.

Pulteney seems himself to have meditated a defence, and to have afterwards devolved the task, and pointed out the proper materials to his friend, Dr. Douglas, the truly venerable Bishop of Salisbury. * * *

But on his death, General Pulteney, for reasons that can scarcely have been sufficient, destroyed all his papers, as if the conduct of distinguished men were not, in fact, the property of the public; their example, if good; their warning, if criminal or mistaken; finally, as if silence was not an indirect confession of a bad cause.

The fault of the court in these transactions seems to have been a want of generosity, and even of common gratitude to their protector—to Pulteney. The objects of the court were to disunite the opposition, to form an administration on the Whig basis, and to save Sir Robert Walpole from a public impeachment, if possible; at all events, to save his life.

In the two last, Pulteney was quite ready to agree with them. He was himself a Whig, and loved the constitution founded on Whig principles. He was not, he said, “a man of blood; and had always meant, by the destruction of the minister, the destruction of his power, not of his person.”

But, alas for human weakness! he had an unfortunate wish for a peerage, a still more unfortunate dislike to office. These circumstances placed him sufficiently within the power of the court: and as there was therefore no need of either duping or deceiving him, or of representing him as duped or deceived, why was the Duke of Newcastle to insult him? What need for the king to break his word with him in the affair of Sir John Hinde Cotton?

All this was a species of conduct in the court not only ungenerous, but, as is always the case, unwise as it was ungenerous. Courts seem on such occasions to justify the reproaches of their enemies, and to teach mankind that every negotiation with them is to be a mere contest of intrigue and trick, of baseness and cunning; so that men of openness and honour are to suppose them unfit to be dealt with, and unsafe

to be approached. Nothing can be more unfortunate for the country, and for the court itself, than that notions like these should ever appear to be countenanced by facts.

The public, lastly, were not without their blame on this occasion. Their faults were their natural faults: violence, precipitation, unreasonableness. They overlooked, in the first place, the merits of Sir Robert; considered not the difficulties of his situation; that he had to support the Brunswick family on the throne; that he had done so; that he might not be without his faults, but that at least this was his merit, and one to which no other could be put in competition: that with Jacobites and Tories to oppose him—many who would have dethroned the Hanover family, more who would have suffered it to be dethroned—he was left to depend not merely on the intelligence and purity of his measures, but obliged to fight his battle by the natural influence of the posts, and places which belong to our establishments; and which he was to distribute among the great families of the country, so as to throw a weight of influence in one scale, to be opposed to disaffection in the other.

This is delicate ground on which I am now treading; this ground of the influence of posts and places, and even of positive money, according to the custom of those times, offered and received. I am well aware of it. But the era of which I am speaking, was one which cannot be brought into comparison with any other: and in this situation of things, to suppose, as the public did, that Walpole was to answer with his life for what they supposed his malpractices; to imagine that he was the great author of all ill, and that patriotism and purity waited only the signal of his fall to rise into splendour, and to receive universal homage; for the public to suppose all this, was surely to be, as I have already intimated, violent, precipitate, and unreasonable: in other words, was, according to their measure and opportunity, to have their follies and faults as well as their rulers.

A further insight into these curious transactions, which the more they could be known, the more edifying they would be, cannot now be obtained. We have the known facts, the debates, and the pages of Mr. Coxe, drawn up after consideration of such private papers as now exist. Mr. Walpole, it

appears (Sir Robert's brother) destroyed all the papers of the minister. "The enemies of Sir Robert Walpole seemed desirous," says Mr. Coxe, "to impute to him alone all the measures pursued during his continuance in office: apprehensions were justly entertained that orders might be issued by the committee of secrecy for seizing the papers, not only of the minister himself, but even those of his brother. Mr. Walpole, therefore, went down to Wolterton, and burnt numerous papers, particularly a great part of the private correspondence between himself and his brother.

It is to this life of Mr. Walpole, afterwards Lord Walpole, by Coxe, that I must continually refer you, in conjunction with the common histories.

Lord Carteret next appears on the stage—a man of genius and ambition. He soon became a great favourite with the king; and he had talents that could throw a splendour round any measures that he proposed or defended.

You may begin with this twenty-fourth chapter of Coxe's Walpole; and you will receive much entertainment and information on subjects that belong to this period:—the divisions of the cabinet; the relative abilities and political views of the leading men, particularly of Lord Carteret on the one side, and of the Pelhams on the other.

On the whole, however, the scene displayed through these chapters is not very pleasing. The Pelhams overpowered Lord Carteret, who had the favour of the king; but their system of politics turned out to be too nearly the same with his. At this period, the great point that could alone divide the opinions of patriotic and intelligent men, was, our system of continental interference. George II. as it may be supposed, thought chiefly of Hanover, and was ready to push the system to any extreme. Lord Carteret, a daring, ambitious, able minister, was ready to indulge him in all his plans and prejudices. Had the Pelhams resolved to adopt different views the contest would *then* have been one of a grave, interesting, constitutional nature; one, in which it would have been very fit that both the monarch and his favourite should have found themselves unable to proceed, from a want of the assistance of the House of Commons and of the public. But though Mr. Pelham had himself very reasonable opinions on the subject of the continent, very different from those of Lord

Carteret, he was obliged, or induced, to give way to his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, who had been, in like manner, obliged or induced to give way to the king.

The king, therefore, after all prevailed. The result was, and the only result, that a Hanover system of politics was carried on by the king and the Pelhams, and not by the king and Lord Carteret: that is, the government was in the hands of ministers more constitutional and more reasonable for the management of home politics, but less fitted to engage with effect in the politics of Europe.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle at last took place. It is well described by Mr. Coxe, page 359. "The terms of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle," says he, "were highly favourable to the maritime powers, as France relinquished all her conquests in the Low Countries, for the restitution of Cape Breton. The House of Austria was alone dissatisfied with the dismemberment of Silesia and the country of Glatz, which was guaranteed to the King of Prussia; with the loss of Parma and Placentia, which were settled on Don Philip, and the cession of some districts in the Milanese, to the king of Sardinia.

"Thus, after an immense expense of blood and treasure, ended a war, in which Great Britain and France gained nothing but the experience of the strength and power of each other. France perceived the riches and perseverance of Great Britain to be much greater than she imagined; and Great Britain became sensible, that the power of France, acting in the Low Countries and in her own neighbourhood, was irresistible. The commercial disputes between Spain and Great Britain in the West Indies—the great object of the war—seemed to have been relinquished, and only specified in the treaty for form's sake; while each of these nations, though mutually weakened, found themselves in the same condition as before the war. The sober, sensible part of the English nation, began to speak with reverence of Sir Robert Walpole's pacific administration; and those who had been his greatest enemies seemed at a loss to account for the reasons why the war had been undertaken.

You will see reason, I think, to assent to these representations of Mr. Coxe.

As we proceed in the subsequent chapters of his work

similar intrigues for power continue to appear: Frederick, the Prince of Wales, the father of the present king, had his party in opposition to the court; and though Pelham, Fox, Pitt, and Murray were ranged under the banners of administration, the prince's party was clearly gaining ground, when he unexpectedly died in 1751. The want of proper elevation of understanding and sentiment in the Duke of Newcastle, gave endless scope to the jealousies and intrigues of the different leaders of different parties; and when Mr. Pelham, the effective minister, died in 1754, a new scene was opened of contest between Fox, afterwards Lord Holland, and Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham. Pitt was, however, too magnanimous and able, to please either the Duke of Newcastle or the king. Fox, who loved money, though profuse and dissolute in his youth, was, on the whole, a better courtier, and being less worthy of success, obtained it.

These times cannot now be more easily or better understood than by reading these chapters of Coxe. Other particulars will be found besides those I have alluded to: that Mr. Pitt, for instance, never spoke the invective against Horace Walpole which is attributed to him; that the kingdom, from want of vigour in the cabinet, had a narrow escape from Marshal Saxe and a French invasion; that the life of Lord Chatham, as published some years ago, is superficial and inaccurate, drawn from newspapers and party pamphlets, interspersed with a few anecdotes communicated in desultory conversations by Earl Temple.

Particulars of this kind may be found in the text and in the notes of this work—this life of Lord Walpole. The great wish of Lord Walpole seems to have been, to have persuaded the English king and ministry to form a strict alliance with Prussia. He laboured the point by every effort in his power, private conversation, and a written memoir. He seems not to have sufficiently appreciated the difficulty of combining Austria and Prussia in a common system of politics; nor the improbability of bringing forward, with success, any power but the House of Austria, to oppose the monarchy of France.

The Walpoles, however, must be thought right in the main point of their politics—their endeavouring to persuade Maria

Theresa to yield to the injustice of the king of Prussia at first, the better to enable them to make a combination for her against the power of France, which was evidently become a most formidable enemy both to the liberties of Germany and of Europe.

They were also right in another point—that any contest with France would certainly be followed by another contest on English ground, for the crown of these realms; i. e. by an invasion from the pretender. Sir Robert Walpole lived to see his long and constant prediction just fulfilling.

On the whole, the proper system of foreign politics was sufficiently plain, that France was becoming too strong; that Prussia was interested in the Germanic liberties, and might have been prevailed upon to be at least neutral; and Austria, as the natural enemy of France, to be brought forward in open opposition. But Hanover, not England, and not Europe, was unfortunately the object—the great point at all events to be secured. Foreign expenses and entanglements, to an endless extent, and of an inextricable nature, were the consequence; a consequence that must be considered as the price which the nation paid for the establishment of her civil and religious liberties, and the establishment of the Brunswick family on the throne, on the principles of the Revolution in 1668.

As another object deserving your attention may be mentioned the rebellion of 1745. You will see the history of it in Smollett. It has been professedly treated by Home, the author of the beautiful tragedy of Douglas. It is also noticed by Lacretelle; and it is always amusing to observe what foreigners say of us. Smollett, himself a Scotchman, was deeply affected by the cruelties that are generally understood to have followed the defeat of the Highlanders at Culloden. This seems the most material point of difference between his account and that of Home, who passes over this part of his subject in silence, very improperly; for it is on occasions like these, that history should exercise its awful censure, if blame has been incurred; and as the charge has been made, it should have been either confirmed or refuted. It is not very promising to see a history of the rebellion in 1745, dedicated to the reigning sovereign; and the silence of Home must be

considered as an indirect acknowledgment, that the severities exercised on this occasion were more than were necessary, and therefore such as deserved reprobation.

The cause of humanity must not be violated, even by those who have been hazarding their lives in the defence of the free government of England; still less by those who are sitting in its cabinets.

Since I last read this lecture, a book has been published—Memoirs of the Rebellion of 1745, by the Chevalier Johnstone, who was aid-de-camp to Lord George Murray, and assistant aid-de-camp to Prince Charles. It should be looked at, particularly the introduction, which is sensible and important. The notes are always good. The great impressions left on the mind of the reader are, that the rebellion was in reality more formidable than he may have supposed; the cruelties of the Duke of Cumberland and of his agents more disgraceful. The author endeavours also to persuade his readers, but I think in vain, that the battle of Culloden was less decisive, and the talents and character of Prince Charles more totally unworthy of the enterprise, than he may have imagined. The last half of the book is occupied with the author's adventures and efforts to escape; they are often curious, and sometimes descriptive of manners. The author ends his memoir in something like despair, at the approach of old age and beggary. The MS. was originally in the Scotch College, and is now at Longman's. It is not very flattering to our national character, to be obliged to conclude from the Stuart Papers, now in possession of his majesty, that so large a part of the English aristocracy invited the prince into England; that much the same conclusion may be drawn from the Culloden Papers, lately published in 1815. This is noticed in a note to the present work.

But these are particulars not to be forgotten when we are considering the merits and demerits of the Whigs of the last century, and of Sir Robert Walpole; those too of their opponents—the Tory and Jacobite leaders—Shippen, Sir William Wyndham, Lord Bolingbroke, and even of Pulteney.

I have now again another postscript to add to my lecture; for, many years after writing what I have just now delivered,

I have just seen an article in the Quarterly Review, of June, 1827, on Mr. Mackenzie's edition of the works of Home, as I understand, by Walter Scott. I am such an idolator of this extraordinary writer, that nothing can be so gratifying to me, as to perceive that the representations thus made, are abundantly strengthened and confirmed by every thing he says. The article cannot be as gratifying to you as it has been to me; but it has a reference to other literary characters, as well as to Home, and you will find it, in every respect, very entertaining.

The work of Home was not entirely such as might have been expected from one, who was not only an actor in the scene, but the author of a tragedy like Douglas, elegant enough to have pleased on the French stage, and yet affecting enough to succeed on ours. The History of the Rebellion was a work which had been meditated so long, that it was delivered to the world too late—when the writer was no longer what he once was. But I recommend it to your perusal, because it has all the marks of authenticity; possesses, I think, more merit than is generally supposed; treats of a very remarkable event in our history; and is, after all, entertaining, and not long.

I do not now detain you with the narrative of this enterprise, which even in the history will not occupy you for many pages.

The points of it are shortly these:—the pretender landed almost alone in one of the desolate parts of Scotland; with difficulty got a few chiefs to join him; obtained possession of the town, though not of the castle of Edinburgh; defeated one royal army that came to dislodge him: pushed on to what he considered the disaffected parts of England, the northern counties; shaped his course for the capital, and actually reached Derby in his way to it. His followers, or rather some of the leaders, then despaired of the enterprise, and forced him to retreat. When he had returned to Scotland, a second royal army was defeated at Falkirk; and at length, in April, 1746, about nine months after his first landing, his Highlanders were regularly encountered at Culloden. They were first sustained in their attack, and afterwards chased from the field by the veteran troops of the

Duke of Cumberland. The pretender then became a fugitive, and was hunted from place to place: and though a reward of thirty thousand pounds, in a manner not very worthy of an English cabinet, had been set on his head; and though he was transferred from the care of one Highlander to another, during several weeks, not a man could be found among these hardy children of tempests and poverty—these magnanimous outcasts of government and nature, base and unmanly enough either to assassinate or to betray. He at length made his way to France, like his ancestor, Charles II., after sufferings and escapes almost incredible.

There are parts of this story which you will find very interesting in Home:—the commencement of the enterprise; the transactions that took place at Edinburgh while the rebels were approaching; the intended night attack previous to the battle of Culloden.

Some disappointment is, however, experienced by the reader, when he comes to the adventures of Charles after his final defeat. They are not given either in a very clear or very interesting manner. There are a few papers in the appendix which make some amends.

But there are some particular topics connected with the enterprise which I could wish you would make the subject of your reflections. For instance: who, and what could be the men who could thus crowd in a moment around the descendant of James II., defeat a body of regular troops, throw England into confusion, and march within a hundred miles of the metropolis? These Highlanders ought surely to appear to the student a very extraordinary description of men: they certainly were so. Some account of them is given by Home: and of late a more full and regular account by Mrs. Grant. From this work, or even the critique on it, in the *Edinburgh Review*, and from the history of Home, you will be able to explain to yourselves the singular political problem (for such it is) to which I am now endeavouring to direct your future consideration.

I will allude to a circumstance or two. When Charles first reached the Highlands, in a small ship, with no other means than a few muskets and about four thousand pounds in money, and proposed to some of the chiefs to march to

England and dethrone George II, heroic as were their natural sentiments, they resolutely declined all share in so wild an undertaking. Charles talked to two of them who had come on board his vessel; he persuaded, argued, and explained; and as he walked backwards and forwards on the deck, he was overheard by a Highlander, who had come on board with his leader, and who had no sooner gathered from the discourse that the stranger was the Prince of Wales, and that the chief and his brother refused to take arms, than his colour went and came, his eyes sparkled, he shifted his place, he grasped his sword. "And will not you assist me?" said Charles, who had observed him. "I will, I will," said Ronald; "though no other man in the Highlands should draw a sword, I am ready to die for you." "I only wish that all the Highlanders were like you," said Charles. Without further deliberation the chief and the brother, the two Macdonalds, declared that they also would join and use their utmost endeavours to engage their countrymen to come forward in his cause.

Now such was the first extraordinary step in this extraordinary enterprise. Another remained. Lochiel, then the head of the powerful clan of the Camerons, was yet to be gained over. He was coming to Charles to give his reasons for not joining him—reasons, as he had told his brother, which admitted of no reply. "But that is of no consequence," said his wiser brother. He was no doubt very right; they certainly admitted of no reply, and had received none when urged to the prince. But as the conference was closing, Charles, in his despair, declared that he would erect the royal standard even with the few friends he had; proclaim to the people of Britain that Charles Stuart was come over to claim the crown of his ancestors—to win it, or perish in the attempt. "You, Lochiel," said he, "who my father has often told me was our firmest friend—you, Lochiel, may stay at home, and learn from the newspapers the fate of your prince." "No," said Lochiel, "I will share the fate of my prince, and so shall every man over whom nature or fortune has given me any power."

It is a point agreed amongst the Highlanders, that if Lochiel had persisted in his refusal to take up arms, the

other chiefs would not have joined the standard of Charles; and the spark of rebellion must have instantly expired.

Such were the chances and turns of elevated sentiment on which this enterprise depended; such were the grounds on which these bands of brothers were to descend from their mountains, at every step they took incur the penalties of treason and death, lift up their eyes and gaze unappalled on the colossal power of England!—never pause for a moment to contrast the simple target and claymore of Scotland with her mighty lance and ægis—the artillery at her feet, and her fleets in the distance; but at all events precipitate themselves forward, and ask from their chief no question but—“Was it his will?” and from their prince no signal but—“Did he lead?”

It may be doubted whether the history of the world ever exhibited a stronger instance of the triumph of heroic sentiment over the calmer suggestions of reason. But when our first impression of surprise and indeed of admiration is passed away, we must look upon this as a very striking instance to prove the indispensable necessity of the general diffusion of political knowledge among all ranks and descriptions of men. A mistake was now made merely from the want of political knowledge; and on this account, and on no other, brave men were to perish in the field, and the great cause of civil and religious liberty was to be endangered to the utmost, the cause of the Revolution of 1688, the cause of England and of mankind, and endangered by the most noble and generous of men. I say, endangered to the utmost; for had the northern parts of England been as magnanimous in sentiment as they, too, were mistaken in opinion; had they been, like the Highlanders, not only ignorant and misled in their political notions, but generous and fearless in their characters, it is scarcely too much to affirm that the rebellion of 1745 would have been successful, the Brunswick family driven from our land, and freedom would have lost her boast (a boast so cheering to a philosophic mind), that she, too, had placed a monarch on a throne, and, in England at least, was had in honour in palaces and courts.

The sentiment on which the Stuart family had to depend, from the first, was merely an over-statement of an acknow-

ledged principle in political science, the principle of hereditary right. It was this sentiment, and this alone, that now armed the clans of Scotland in their cause, and so prejudiced Wales and the northern counties of England in their favour.

I will not insult, as some seem ready to do, the memory of these heroes of the Highlands (for such they were) by supposing that either plunder or power was their object; far higher and more noble were the feelings of their hearts. It was loyalty to the chief in the follower; it was loyalty to the prince in the chief; it was in *all* the indefeasible nature, as they supposed, of hereditary right, that made the cause of Charles Stuart, in their opinion, the good cause and the true, whatever might be its issue, however discountenanced and abandoned by the time-serving sycophants of the Lowlands and of the south.

“The king shall have his own again,”

was the language of the popular ballads of the time. The same sentiment has been caught by the poet of Caledonia, in his Chevalier's Lament:—

“His right are these hills, and his right are these valleys,
Where the wild beasts find shelter, but I can find none.”

It is impossible not to respect men who could thus devote themselves, from principle, to an unprotected adventurer like Charles. It may be useful for us to meditate upon these examples of elevated sentiment, that we may catch a portion for our own hearts of the divine flame which we are admiring. But we must be admonished, at the same time, by examples like these, that heroism in the sentiment, and generosity in the feeling, are not *alone* sufficient; that these are the lights, which “though lights from heaven, *may* lead astray;” that principles, however elevated, must be properly estimated, their bounds ascertained, their value compared with that of other principles, and, in a word, that sentiment alone must not actuate the many till it has *first* been shown its course and taught its limits by the superintending power of the understanding.

What spectacle was ever seen like that before us? The children of poetry, gallantry, and song—of hardiness and

—of courteousness and truth—rushing from the free air and simple pleasures of their mountains, to fight the battles of what?—of arbitrary power! to bleed in defence of whom?—of the representatives of civil and religious tyranny! to perish, and for what end?—that they might destroy the fair fabric of the constitution of England!

It pleased a Higher Power, in his overruling mercies to these kingdoms, to order it otherwise; to decree that they should *not* succeed. They paid the forfeit of their delusions and mistakes: they lay slaughtered on the plain of Culloden; they were hunted down by their conquerors amid their native wilds; they perished, and their cause has perished with them. So perish the memory of their faults! Their high and noble qualities survive, for they have descended to their countrymen, the heroes of our own days, the heroes who carry terror into the legions of France, and who have at length found a cause where the muse of history may tell their achievements without a blush, and record their virtues without a sigh.

When we reflect on the character of these inhabitants of the Highlands, it is not very agreeable to observe the want of prospective wisdom that was shown by our English cabinets. The exiled family of the Stuarts had belonged to Scotland; there had been a rebellion in their favour in 1715; and it was always the maxim of Sir Robert Walpole, that on the event of a French war another would take place.

Was no effort, therefore, made by the legislature to counteract this disposition of the Highlanders to insurrection? Could nothing have been attempted? Could not their generous and active qualities have been converted to the benefit, as they had been to the injury, of the state? A mechanic requires a fulcrum, an artist a rude material; he asks no more; his ingenuity and labour are to do the rest. Were there, therefore, in the character of the Highlanders no opportunities for the science of a statesman? no fulcrum, and no rude material?

These are questions that should occupy your thoughts while you read the events of this rebellion; and before you consider what might have been done, I will mention what really was done, in the way of legislative provision.

The Highland clans, you will observe, were not all disaffected: far from it. There were Whig as well as Jacobite clans. The government, therefore, of George I. issued out its orders to disarm the Highlanders. This is always a very favourite measure of lazy and arbitrary, and I may add, ignorant legislators. They seize the arms, and leave the hearts of a people to be seized by others. But what was the result? The common one—that the well affected gave up their arms at the time appointed, and the rest concealed them, or took some subsequent opportunity of providing themselves afresh.

At last Duncan Forbes, the president of the Court of Session, seeing a war with Spain approaching, and aware of the consequences, in the autumn of the year 1738 (more than twenty years after the first rebellion) proposed that government should raise four or five regiments in the Highlands, appoint an English or Scotch officer of undoubted loyalty to be colonel of each regiment, and name all the other officers from a list which he gave in, and which comprehended all the chiefs and chieftains of the disaffected clans. He had no doubt, he said, that these men would serve well against the enemy abroad, and even, in fact, be hostages for the good behaviour of their relations at home.

That this at least should have been one of the expedients resorted to long before, is sufficiently obvious; but what was the event? Sir Robert Walpole said it was the most sensible plan he had seen, summoned a cabinet council, laid it before them, recommended it strongly, and then, what was the difficulty? Why, every other member of the cabinet was against it, because opposition, they said, would exclaim that Sir Robert Walpole was raising an army of Highlanders to join the standing army and enslave the people of England. The plan was, therefore, laid aside, and Sir Robert, and probably the cabinet, with the fear of a rebellion constantly before their eyes, did nothing. They had done nothing for twenty years before, when any expedients of the kind might have been tried with a good grace and with a proper chance for success.

What impolicy! we cry, and justly. But this is not a field in which our English statesmen, at least our English cabinets, have much displayed their legislative wisdom. More than a thousand years before the Revolution of 1688, the Romans

could conceive that "the Barbarians should consume their dangerous valour in the service of the state." No policy so obvious, and though it was abused by the later emperors of Rome, in a very extraordinary state of the world, to their injury, seems so easy to be modified and properly adapted to the circumstances of any critical case; yet no hint either of ancient or modern policy seems ever to have reached our legislators. Lord Chatham, who, with all his faults, had that elevation in the character of his mind without which no minister can ever be great, made it his boast (and it was an honest boast) that he had been the first to take advantage of the noble qualities of the Scottish nation. "I was the first minister," said he, "who looked for merit, and found it in the mountains of the north. I called it forth, and drew into your service a hardy and intrepid race of men; men who, when left by your jealousy, became a prey to the artifices of your enemies, and had gone nigh to overturn the state in the war before the last." His example stands alone. Nothing is ever done by cabinets in the way of conciliation or timely and prospective wisdom; they live upon expedients, and provide only for the day that is going over them.

But, before I conclude this lecture, I would wish you to cast one glance more on this remarkable rebellion. I would wish you to consider once more the character of the Highlanders, and the romantic nature of this enterprise in its commencement and progress, and then turn to the melancholy contrast exhibited by the people of England at this singular crisis. I do not say that associations were not formed; that volunteers were not collecting; that the nobility and gentry were not in alarm and in motion. But what is, on the whole, the simple fact, as it has been stated with his usual point and acuteness by Mr. Gibbon? "That Charles and his followers marched into the heart of the kingdom without either being joined by their friends, or opposed by their enemies."

But how, it may be asked, could such a strange fact as this take place? From national apathy, or disaffection, or pusillanimity? Whence could it arise? The first answer to this question must be, that the nobility, gentry, and yeomanry of the country were not prepared for an inroad of this kind; they had not been taught by their rulers to expect it, nor directed

to learn the use of arms, and accustom themselves to military exercises.

But what need, it will be replied, of the use of arms and military exercises? Why did not the country rise, as one man, to beat back invaders that were as insulting from their numbers as their designs? Four or five thousand men marching against the people of England! to give away their crown and destroy their civil and religious liberties! This question, after all, can best be answered by the comparison of the English and Highland character at the time. The Highland character had remained the same; but the English character had been materially altered by the influence of commerce and manufactures, and half a century of peace and prosperity. There was intelligence, literature, industry, affluence, civilization, in England; but there was no ardour of sentiment as in Scotland; no visions of the imagination, no traditional poetry, and no national music; no spirits in the mountains, and the ghosts of no heroes in the clouds; no poverty that walked erect and familiar into the castle and the hall; no links of genealogy that united the hovel and the palace. Little had been heard of these things in England during the last century, though much had been heard of the value of estates, of the balance of trade, and of profit and loss.

I speak not to depreciate the labours of the manufacturer, the value of commerce, or the progressive blessings of successful industry in the towns or in the country; but I certainly do speak in order to represent to you that, as I have before observed, how necessary is the frequent exercise of the understanding to save men from the delusions of their feelings; so I must now observe, with no less anxiety, how necessary is the influence of sentiment, as well as reason, of the elevated sensibilities, as well as the prudent dispositions of the mind, to the perfection of the human character; more particularly of the human character when found in any highly commercial and manufacturing and prosperous community; that, without these sensibilities, wisdom and science may be of no avail to the individuals of a great nation; and their opulence be wrested from them and be only an incitement to the enterprises of their invaders; that the romance of sentiment, as it would

be thought of the Royal Exchange of London, must not be mistaken from the fact, that the land should perish as Holland has done, surrounded with the riches of its commerce and its wealth, but no longer the Holland whose Philip and the Spanish infantry were defeated, and Louis and the armies of France successfully resisted. You will easily trace out, on the one hand, the various and inestimable blessings which result from commerce and manufactures, from the successful exertions of industry, and the increasing opulence and independence of the inferior orders of the community. But you will easily see, on the other hand, that the virtue of personal courage, and all the high qualities that belong not merely to the character of the soldier, but even of the patriot, have a tendency to decline in a nation as it advances in its commerce and manufactures; as it makes, in short, greater progress in the science of affluence; that is, as those men every where multiply and spread themselves, who are more exclusively occupied in the mere pursuit of gain.

How the sentiment may still be kept high in the community, while upon of this, I admit, very useful description are every where increasing in their numbers and influence; how these men are themselves to be properly elevated in their minds, while they are so exclusively occupied with their bargains and their markets, the article they are to produce, and the price they are to receive; how this can be effected, I may not have here any leisure to inquire; but I may at least say this, that it cannot be done by pressing hard on the democratic parts of the constitution, or that it cannot be done by preventing the education of the lower orders. I should rather say that it can only be done by means exactly the reverse; by keeping the poor man as enlightened, that is, as susceptible of a sense of duty and generous feelings as the nature of his imperfect condition will allow; and by accustoming every man to interest himself, and by calling him out to interest himself in the concerns of his country: that is, to think as highly of his own political importance as the peace of that country, as the safety and respectability of the executive power, will possibly admit.

Supposing you now to pass on from this rebellion in 1745, you will reach the peace in 1748; then arrive at a delicious

period so tranquilly that interested for several short years, and thus at last be connected to the great war which was raging when his present Majesty, George III. ascended the throne. This war was concluded by the peace of 1763.

On the subjects of these wars, their causes, and their events, you will find information in the common histories of the times. I have already insisted (perhaps to a degree of tediousness) on the principles by which questions of this nature ought to be judged.—“*Justa bella quibus necessaria.*” It remains but to observe that the question of the proper boundaries of the French and English settlements of North America was not accurately determined, when it might have been, at the peace of Aix la Chapelle in 1748, and that the subsequent war was marked by those successes which must for ever attest the heroism of which the inhabitants of these islands can be made capable, and attest, at the same time, the genius of that great minister, the first Mr. Pitt, who was called by the people, rather than by the monarch, to draw forth the energies of his country.

And now it must be further observed, that this was the very people who had suffered the Highlanders to march to the centre of their kingdom to give away their empire to the Stuarts; that afterwards without a murmur suffered a secretary of state, Mr. Henry Fox, to bring over Hessians and Hanoverians for their defence; and that gave occasion to Dr. Brown, in his *Estimate of the Times*, to represent them as degraded and lost in effeminacy and luxury.

At the summons, however, of Mr. Pitt, they started from their trance, such is the importance of the government of a country, and they shamed the secretary who had insulted, and confuted the author who had libelled them; they did so by defeating their enemies in every quarter of the world. The truth is, that ministers like the first Mr. Fox, and writers like Dr. Brown, were not fit, the one to call forth the powers of a great civilized nation, nor the other to estimate its character.

They who rail against the luxury of the times are in fact declaiming against the growing prosperity of the country. The most refined of men may be the most brave—they generally are so. It was not by luxuries that the Roman and

Greece, which fell, as has been commonly supposed; but by defects in their civil polity, and by the gradual and consequent decay of that spirit of freedom which, when it existed unimpaired, preserved them safe from every invader. Luxuries are not fatal to a people, but as the possession of them supposes a large mass of the community employed in furnishing them by their industry, i. e., employed in the pursuit of gain, and therefore exposed to great debasement in their natural sentiments, and the loss of their military spirit. But if this debasement be counteracted by such expedients as I have mentioned, by diffusing, as widely as possible, the benefits of education, and by keeping the constitution of the country as free as the security of society will allow, that is, by giving every man some interest in his own character, some feeling of personal duty, and some sense of political consequence and right, then assuredly it will follow that never will there be wanting to that community men of high sentiments and military spirit, those who are to lead, and those who are to follow, not merely to the defence of their native land, but to every enterprise that can be pointed out to them of honourable danger.

These are, however, subjects which may not be entirely without their difficulty either in theory or in practice; but of their importance it is needless to speak. I have at least presented them to your curiosity, and offered my own view of them, and I proceed to other matters. You will find some sensible observations respecting them in the fourth volume of Millar; and finally, the defence of our island by the resident natives of it, its industrious and commercial population, has much occupied the parliamentary debates of our own times.

Having thus noticed the national wars before and during the administration of Mr. Pitt, I must leave you to read the events in the regular histories. The different hopes and fears, and the various emotions of mortification or triumph by which the public were agitated, will be best seen in the magazines of the time; and the events and leading particulars from the year 1758, in the Annual Register. I do not longer detain you with allusions to enterprises and successes which can never cease to be interesting to the reasonable pride, as well as natural curiosity, of every English reader.

Such are the more obvious topics to which the history of this

era will lead you. The intrigues of different parties on the fall of Sir Robert, and afterwards; the rebellion of 1745; the two great wars; the peace in 1748, and the peace in 1763.

We have Coxe, Dodington, Lord Waldegrave; we have the common magazines and the histories to refer to; from the year 1750, the Annual Register. But I have already intimated that when we look for parliamentary debates, our mortification is extreme. No names so great as those of Lord Hardwicke, Lord Talbot, Lord Mansfield, Mr. Pitt. The latter commanded by his eloquence the attention of the House of Commons, the affections of his countrymen; and at last that eloquence enabled him (according to the phrase then current) to take the cabinet by storm. Yet it is not till all these wonders had been accomplished, and till the breaking out of the disputes with America, that the debates afford us any adequate specimens to enable us to comprehend his extraordinary powers. Of the silver-tongued Murray there is still less; but in the course of the four volumes of Debrett's Debates, from the year 1743 to 1768, a few speeches and imperfect debates appear, which should be read not only on account of the speakers, but the subjects. The debate on Lord Hardwicke's clause to be added to the Treason Bill in 1745; the corresponding debate in the commons, more particularly a debate in the commons on a motion for annual parliaments, in January 1745, which was only lost by a majority of thirty-two (viz. one hundred and forty-five to one hundred and thirteen); Lord Hardwicke's speech on his Bill for abolishing the hereditary Jurisdictions in Scotland; debates on the Mutiny Bills; the reasons that were urged for the Bill to naturalize foreign Protestants; the discussions that arose on the subject of a national militia; on the Marriage Act; the debate on the Jew Bill, and on its repeal; the debate, or rather Mr. Pitt's speech, on the peace of 1763; the proceedings in the case of Wilkes; the motion and debate on general warrants.

These are parts of Debrett's four volumes that will more particularly furnish you with general principles and materials for reflection.

The legislature, on the whole, seems to have been growing more liberal and tolerant as the century advanced; the public to have been far behind them.

Of the Pelham administration less can now be known than could have been expected. The best account of their measures and views may be collected from Smollett, who was at least a contemporary historian and a man of talents.

With some slight exceptions; they always showed themselves friendly to the principles of mild government. They were tolerant, peaceful, prudent; they had the merit of respecting public opinion; and though they were not fitted to advance the prosperity of their country by any exertions of political genius, they were not blind to such opportunities as fairly presented themselves. They were quietists, but meant well; they were disinterested, did good service to the House of Hanover, and their administration is honourably remembered; but Mr. Pelham unfortunately died in 1754, and the duke, his brother, was deprived of his assistance when it was more than ever indispensable to him. The scene was becoming stormy, and great difficulties were to be encountered; the duke, therefore, and his adherents gave way to Mr. Pitt, and very properly assisted with their votes the minister who obtained their counsels.

The administration of this minister of the people, the first Mr. Pitt, is now known only by the conquests which he either achieved or planned. What passed in the houses of parliament has not come down to us; it was probably of little importance. Opposition was silenced not only by a sort of union of parties, but by the popularity of Mr. Pitt and the successes of the war. The secretary, as it has been said, with one hand wielded the democracy of England, and with the other smote the House of Bourbon. The monarch himself, George II., seems at last to have become a convert to his merits, and to have joined, however late, in the applause of the public. The monarch, however, George II., died; and this great minister, on the accession of his present majesty, George III., to the throne, soon felt the ground, as he said, tottering under him. On the first opportunity he was displaced, and Europe, that had only seen two successful war ministers during the century, Marlborough and Mr. Pitt, alike in their fame, and alike in their fall, must have thought that in our extraordinary island the surest method of losing office was to display the talents that deserve it; and that to fill St. James's with murmurs and dissatisfaction, it was only

necessary to make the world resound with the triumphs of our arms.

The lecture that you have just heard was written more than twenty years ago, with such assistance as was then within my reach; but I can now refer the student to more ample information, which has lately appeared, chiefly derived from the indefatigable labours of the late Archdeacon Coxe, to whom all readers of history are so deeply indebted. In the year 1829 were published his *Memoirs of the Pelham Administration*, a posthumous work, drawn up under circumstances which add a sentiment of melancholy tenderness to the respectful gratitude with which this most valuable writer must ever be regarded.

Such sentiments will be confirmed by a very sensible article in the *Quarterly Review* for October, 1833, where the merits of the author and the man are properly stated, neither of which, as it had always struck me while I have been a reader of history, were sufficiently estimated by the public.

I have now then only to refer the student to the work I have just mentioned, and to request that he will depend on this regular and authentic account of an important period in our annals, not only while he wishes to know the transactions that belong to it, but the characters of the ministers and parliamentary leaders by which it was distinguished. In no other way can he derive a proper idea of the merits of Mr. Pelham, Lord Hardwicke, and above all, of the Duke of Newcastle, whose vanity, and some defects of character exposed him to the ridicule of wits and satirists, and have hitherto obscured (but need no longer obscure) his real merits both as a statesman and a man. He was neither without his talents nor his virtues, as the public at present suppose.

I must guard you against the historical publications of the celebrated Horace Walpole. Look for entertainment in them, if you please, and you will not be disappointed; but give him not your confidence: indeed you will soon see from his lively and epigrammatic style of invective that he cannot deserve it.

Finally, I must mention to you that a very full and entertaining account of the Rebellion in 1745 was drawn up by Mr. Chambers of Edinburgh, and now makes two very interesting volumes in *Constable's Miscellany*.



NOTES.

I.

Highlanders.

THE work of Mrs. Grant might, with great advantage, be compressed into half its present size. What is told is not told in a manner sufficiently simple, nor is there enough told. Mrs. Grant pours out the sentiments and images of a warm heart and ardent mind, till they overpower the reader and lose their effect. Too favourable an idea of the work, though a work of merit, would be formed from the Edinburgh Review.

* The points to be observed in the character of the Highlanders seem to be, according to this account by Mrs. Grant, their national spirit, language, habits, poetry, traditions, genealogies, their attachment to their chief, and their superstitions.

That they are warlike, musical, poetical, tender, melancholy, enthusiastic, superstitious, religious; that they are patriotic, secluded themselves and excluding others, connecting and associating themselves familiarly with death, and with the immaterial world, seeing those they loved in the clouds, in dreams and in visions, skilled in the art of conversation from the necessity of living with each other, unfit for manufactures, highly moral, careful not to make imprudent marriages, courteous, and, in a word, exhibiting all the virtues that result from living in the presence of each other.

II.

October, 1839.

I MAY recommend to others, what I have just had so much pleasure in reading myself, the History lately published by Lord Mahon. All that need now be known of the era, to which we have been adverting, from the peace of Utrecht to that of Aix-la-Chapelle, will be there found. It is on every account to be hoped, that his lordship will continue his historical labours.



LECTURE XXIX.

PRUSSIA AND MARIA THERESA.

WE have been now long occupied with the English history. I did not wish to break through the different links by which the different parts are connected together; but in the mean time we have entirely turned away from the continent, and even from France. To the French history I will advert immediately; but in the mean time I will call your attention to the continent. While reading the works of Mr. Coxe, you will have been continually summoned away in this manner, and I can no longer forbear adopting the same course.

The truth is, that our progress has long since brought us within the view of a personage so celebrated during the last half century, that for the present I must leave the histories both of France and of England, and I must endeavour to furnish you with proper materials for the appreciation of the striking events with which he was connected, and of his own very extraordinary talents and character. I allude to the King of Prussia.

I must in the first place observe, that as France and England were actively engaged in hostilities with each other, as they took a part in the politics of Europe, and were connected with the great wars in which the King of Prussia was engaged; some general view must be obtained of those hostilities and of those politics, that their relation to the measures of this military sovereign may be understood. As a preparative, therefore, to this subject of Prussia, I must propose some short general history; and I therefore mention, as adequate to this particular purpose, the History of Belsham—his reign of George II.

With respect to the King of Prussia, the great features of his life are,—

1st, ~~His accession of the territories of the young queen,~~
 Maria Theresa, on the death of the emperor, her father.

2ndly, The seven years' war.

3rdly, The partition of Poland.

It is to the two former that I shall at present allude, as the latter belongs to times of a more recent date than I shall be able, as yet, to approach.

In considering the subjects of history, I have always made it my business, first, to inquire for works in our own language; those being the most likely to be placed within your reach.

I have therefore to mention, that a view of the reign of Frederic has been published by Dr. Gillies, another by Dr. Towers. A short account is given of Frederic, by Dr. Johnson; and we have Memoirs of the Court of Berlin, by Wraxall. Of each in their order.

The work of Dr. Gillies I can in no respect admire. There appear some good observations about the king's military genius, and there are some incidents mentioned of a general nature, which I do not observe in other English works. On the whole, I can only recommend it to the student, when he wishes to learn what can be said in the praise or defence of Frederic. Gillies appears to me only a warm panegyrist, and on this occasion, neither an historian nor a philosopher.

Before I proceed to other English or any foreign works on this subject, I must observe, that the following appear to me the points to which the student must most particularly attend, in considering the merits of Frederic:—1st, The justice, or injustice, of his original attack on Silesia. This very valuable province he wrested from the House of Austria, taking advantage of the unprepared situation of the young queen, Maria Theresa, on her first accession to the throne. This was an injury and an outrage which could never be forgiven by her; and if this was an act of ambition, and if to this all his subsequent contests with Austria may be traced, it is he who is responsible for all the calamities that ensued. 2ndly, Frederic endeavoured, by the interference of his personal vigilance and wisdom, to nourish the prosperity and advance the happiness of his subjects. His measures and his success form, therefore, the next division of the subject. 3rdly, Frederic was a man of wit and literature; and we can

never, in considering the character of this monarch, forget his personal qualities. What, therefore, was Frederic to his scholars and men of science, whom he called around him? and what to his generals and companions in arms? This is the third division of the subject; and such are the points which must be always kept in mind by those who read the history of Frederic. He was one of the sovereigns of Europe, and a great military hero; he endeavoured to be the father of his people. Lastly, he was a man of talents, fond of society, and disposed to be the patron of the wits and philosophers of his age.

All these points, and the character and merits of Frederic in every respect, appear to me to be well understood and represented by Dr. Towers; a writer who has, like Gillies, undertaken to give the English public an account of the life and reign of this renowned monarch. He has fulfilled the promise which he gives in his preface, and he has not been induced, by the splendour which surrounded his hero, to vindicate his actions when they were repugnant to justice and humanity. He has given references to authorities, which Gillies has very improperly omitted; and it will be found that every topic of importance connected with this extraordinary character, is touched upon. Proper diligence has been exerted, and reasonable observations are made; so that the work may be recommended as giving a correct general idea of all that there is to be known, and as pointing out to the reader the proper sources of more minute inquiry. The book may not be written with any peculiar strength or ability, but it is unaffected and sensible, sufficiently concise, and adequate, I conceive, to all its purposes. The great events are detailed; the campaigns described; anecdotes given of the king, and the great military characters that surrounded him; and the reader is dismissed with an impression very favourable to the talents, at least, of Frederic, as a commander of armies, and as a prince placed at the head of an arbitrary monarch, but not favourable to him in other respects.

To this impression, as far as it is favourable, little will, I think, be added by further inquiries into other books.

It was with the king as with the image in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, to borrow the compliment of Voltaire to

Targot, when in the gout; "the head was of gold, but every other part, of a very inferior quality." Something, therefore, may be subtracted from the general impression left by *Towers*. We may learn that the king's policy was not always enlightened, and that his talents, eminent as they were, did not save him from the mistakes of the times in which he lived. But it is impossible from *Towers*, or from any book or treatise, to learn how to regard Frederic with any sentiments of kindness. He is often great, but never amiable; perhaps with the single exception of his behaviour to his friend and favourite philosopher, Jourdan.

There is a short account of Frederic by Dr. Johnson, which was first printed in the *Literary Magazine*, in the year 1756, and is therefore only a fragment. It should be read, because whatever Dr. Johnson writes must necessarily entertain and instruct. It is written with the usual decision and vigour of his biographical compositions; but it was never continued, and was probably not a work of much deliberation or labour.

Coxe's *House of Austria* must be diligently read, to understand the politics of Frederic's opponents; but of this work I shall speak more hereafter.

When other books, English and foreign, have been read, the two volumes of *Wraxall* may be looked at—the *Memoirs of the Court of Berlin*. They will be found very entertaining, and they will sometimes amplify, and sometimes revive, the views and opinions respecting Frederic and subjects connected with him, which the student may have collected from prior reading.

Such are, I think, our English authors; I must now advert to the writings of the continent. I shall confine myself to three authors—Thiebault, the King of Prussia himself, and Mirabeau.

And first, with respect to the five octavo volumes of Thiebault. You will see an account of the work in the *Edinburgh Review* for October, 1805. Thiebault was a man of letters, sent to Frederic from Paris, at his desire. Having read the work myself, and first put down my own observations, I afterwards found most of them confirmed by the *Review*, and very few that had not been there anticipated.

Occurring, therefore, to two different minds, they are probably the observations that naturally arise out of the subject. There is a slight passage or two, in which the reviewer, who is always most at ease when he is severe, appears to me to have indulged his particular genius a little too far. For instance; there is no need of supposing that Frederic did not feel most sensibly, in the common import of the words, the execution of his friend De Catt. But on the whole, I subscribe sufficiently to the sentiments and opinions which the reviewer has delivered respecting Frederic, and recommend them to your attention. I must even depend on your reading this Edinburgh Review for October, 1805; my lecture will otherwise want one of its component parts.

It is very natural to wish to see the interior of the life and character of any of those personages who are distinguished in history. It is on this account that Thiebault's volumes should be consulted. A very fair portion of this sort of information is given by Dr. Towers; but those who wish for more, must read Thiebault. His Recollections, indeed, as he calls them, seldom rise to the dignity of history; but they are always agreeable, often instructive, occasionally very interesting.

In the first volume we have a good representation, not only of the king, his talents, his opinions on every subject, his conduct to those around him, but of Thiebault himself. A general estimate of the merits of Frederic concludes the volume, which is on the whole the best of the five (the first). It should by all means be read; it will be read with great pleasure. On the whole, therefore, the first volume, and several parts of each succeeding volume, will either occupy or instruct the reader very agreeably.

Frederic is, however, himself an author, and the student will scarcely be excused if he does not read those parts of his works that are of an historic nature.

The most curious point to observe in these productions of the king, is the deceitfulness of the human heart. The king talks of the rage for conquest, the folly of ambition, the waste of human life, as if he had not been himself one of the most striking specimens of this sort of atrocious character that appears in history.

But his account of his campaigns should be looked at. Though not cold and formal, it is concise, striking, rapid; the work, as well of a statesman and of a man of letters, as of an accomplished warrior; and therefore deserving, in different parts the attention, not only of military men, but of all who hope to distinguish themselves on the theatre of the world. I had made large references to them, but omit them from want of time.

I now proceed to another view of his character.

Frederic having tried the powers of his genius, in laying waste the labours of man, and in diminishing the population of his provinces, was next seen to undertake a task more difficult, one in which the leaders of armies and cabinets have not hitherto been equally successful; the task of nourishing the industry, increasing the numbers, and raising up the prosperity and happiness of those they govern.

In this enterprise, however, as in the other, the king seems to have exerted himself with his usual energy and activity; and we are bound to consider, as far as we are able, the movements of his mind, as we before did of his armies; the wisdom of his counsels, when his ambition had taken the right direction, and was occupied in labouring to create, not destroy.

To many, this part of the general subject may not be so entertaining as those I have hitherto mentioned; but students must endeavour to instruct themselves as well as search for their amusement; and by those who would deserve the high character of statesmen or men of reflection, such portions of reading must be sought for rather than avoided.

It happens that a work was composed and entirely dedicated to this division of our subject by Mirabeau, the celebrated Mirabeau of the French Revolution. As he was the son of the marquis who is so distinguished amongst the French economists, it was natural for him, while resident at Berlin, to turn his attention to the situation of Prussia, and to the efforts which the king had made for the re-establishment and furtherance of the prosperity of his dominions. The monarch had in fact laboured to this effect, but rather after his own particular manner, as one used to threaten and command, as a monarch rather than as a philosopher; and therefore the work of Mirabeau, which is drawn up according to the

principles of the modern system of political economy, is generally occupied in finding fault. But it is interesting and valuable, even from its very nature, even from the circumstance of its being a critique, by a disciple of the new school of political economy, on the labours of a statesman of the very highest natural talents, proceeding upon the principles of the old. It may be said, indeed, that we cannot now follow the author of this work through all the laborious investigations which he exhibits. This may be admitted: but when proper allowance has been made for this consideration, abundant matter will remain to which no such objection can be offered, and quite sufficient to satisfy the reader even in those particulars in which the representations of Mirabeau cannot now be examined. When the results at which he arrives are such as might, on general grounds, be expected, it seems unnecessary to hesitate about their propriety, or to deny him his conclusions. *

The work of Mirabeau (Mirabeau on the Prussian Monarchy) embraces every topic that can excite your curiosity or need occupy your reflection with respect to Prussia or its monarch, its agriculture, its commerce, its military system, the efforts of the king on these subjects, and on its laws, its systems of education, and many others. Mirabeau, while criticising the labours of Frederic, naturally throws out his own opinions on all the important concerns that can interest a statesman; and as a study for a statesman and a political philosopher, I recommend it to your attention. You cannot expect to accede to the views of a man of licentious, daring mind like this, but you may consider his work as a study, as a lesson in political science. Many observations are made in these volumes respecting the nature and strength of the Prussian and Austrian monarchies, that might have taught some most useful lessons to our own ministers and to those of our allies at a subsequent period, during the late great revolutionary wars with France.

The first book of Mirabeau's work may at least be read, and the general conclusion or summary of the whole. The general impression from these two will be, that the work is the work of a statesman, and deserves the study of a statesman, and the student may then determine whether he will or

will not consult the intermediate volumes. I have drawn up lectures on this work of Mirabeau, but omit it, for it would be tedious to some and unnecessary to others. The note book on the table may, however, be consulted.

But, to form a proper estimate of the character of Frederic and of this period of history, it is necessary that the student should acquaint himself with the situation and merits of his great political opponent, Maria Theresa. It is in this manner only that the real odiousness of Frederic can be at all understood; and a more disgusting picture of what is called the ambition of princes cannot be easily pointed out than was exhibited in the conduct of this celebrated monarch; at a moment, too, when he had just begun to reign himself; when he was himself only about the age of thirty, and when the queen was young, in the full possession of every female attraction, and summoned, amidst all the inexperience of three-and-twenty, without a counsellor of ability near her, to undertake the administration of the dominions of the house of Austria.

A very sufficient idea may be formed of this very interesting part of the general subject by a reference to the work of Mr. Coxe. The subject may be considered as opening in the sixteenth chapter, about the close of the life of the emperor Charles VI., the father of Maria Theresa. An account is given of the situation of the European powers; and in the seventeenth, of the young King of Prussia, and of his father, Frederic William, with the death of the emperor. In the eighteenth chapter, Maria Theresa ascends the throne of her ancestors; possessed, it seems, of a commanding figure (I quote the words of Mr. Coxe from different paragraphs), great beauty, animation, and sweetness of countenance, a pleasing tone of voice, fascinating manners, and uniting every feminine grace with a strength of understanding and an intrepidity above her sex. But her treasury contained only one hundred thousand florins, and these claimed by the empress dowager; her army, exclusive of the troops in Italy and the Low Countries, did not amount to thirty thousand effective men; a scarcity of provisions and great discontent existed in the capital; rumours were circulated that the government was dissolved, that the Elector of Brunswick was hourly expected

to take possession of the Austrian territories: apprehensions were entertained of the distant provinces; that the Hungarians, supported by the Turks, might revive the elective monarchy; different claimants on the Austrian succession were expected to arise; besides, the Elector of Bavaria, the Elector of Cologne, and the Elector Palatine, were evidently hostile; the ministers themselves, while the queen was herself without experience or knowledge of business, were timorous, desponding, irresolute, or worn out with age. To these ministers, says Mr. Robinson, in his despatches to the English court, the Turks seemed already in Hungary, the Hungarians in arms, the Saxons to be in Bohemia, the Bavarians at the gates of Vienna, and France was considered as the soul of the whole. The Elector of Bavaria, indeed, did not conceal claims to the kingdom of Bohemia and the Austrian dominions; and, finally, while the queen had scarcely taken possession of her throne, a new claimant appeared in the person of Frederic of Prussia, who acted with such consummate address and secrecy (as it is called by the historian), i. e. with such unprincipled hypocrisy and cunning, that his designs were scarcely even suspected, when his troops entered the Austrian dominions.

Silesia was the province which he resolved, in the present helpless situation of the young queen, to wrest from the house of Austria. He revived some antiquated claims on parts of that duchy. The subject is discussed in different writers, and in the notes of Coxe. The ancestors of Maria Theresa had not behaved handsomely to the ancestors of Frederic, and the young queen was now to become a lesson to all princes and states of the real wisdom that always belongs to the honourable and scrupulous performance of all public engagements. Little or nothing, however, can be urged in favour of Frederic. Prescription must be allowed at length, to justify possession in cases not very flagrant. The world cannot be perpetually disturbed by the squabbles and collisions of its rulers; and the justice of his cause was indeed, as is evident from all the circumstances of the case, and his own writings, the last and the least of all the many futile reasons which he alleged for the invasion of the possessions of Maria Theresa, the heiress of the Austrian dominions.

young, beautiful, and unprotected; but inexperienced and unprotected.

The common robber has sometimes the excuse of want; he little, in a disorderly country, may pillage, and, when resisted, murder; but the crimes of men, even atrocious as these, are confined at least to a contracted space, and their consequences extend not beyond a limited period. It was not so with Frederic. The outrages of his ambition were to be followed up by an immediate war. He could never suppose that, even if he succeeded in getting possession of Silesia, the house of Austria could ever forget the insult and the injury that had thus been received; he could never suppose, though Maria Theresa might have no protection from his cruelty and injustice, that this illustrious house would never again have the power, in some way or other, to avenge their wrongs. This war, therefore, even if successful, was not to be the only consequence; succeeding wars were to be expected; long and inveterate jealousy and hatred were to follow; and he and his subjects were, for a long succession of years, to be put to the necessity of defending, by unnatural exertions, what had been acquired (if acquired) by his own unprincipled ferocity. Such were the consequences that were fairly to be expected:—what, in fact, took place!

The seizure of this province of Silesia was first supported by a war, then by a revival of it, then by the dreadful seven years' war. Near a million of men perished on the one side and on the other.

Every measure and movement of the king's administration flowed as a direct consequence from this original aggression; his military system, the necessity of rendering his kingdom one of the first-rate powers of Europe, and in short all the long train of his faults, his tyrannies, and his crimes.

We will cast a momentary glance on the opening scenes of this contest between the two houses.

As a preparatory step to his invasion of Silesia, the king sent a message to the Austrian court. "I am come," said the Prussian envoy to the husband of Maria Theresa, "with safety for the house of Austria in one hand, and the imperial crown for your royal highness in the other. The troops and money of my master are at the service of the queen, and can-

not ~~fall~~ of being acceptable at a ~~time~~ when she is in want of both; when she can only depend on so considerable a prince as the King of Prussia, and his allies, the maritime powers and Russia. As the king, my master, from the situation of his dominions, will be exposed to great danger from this alliance with the Queen of Hungary, it is hoped that, as an indemnification, the queen will not offer him less than the whole duchy of Silesia."

"Nobody," he added, "is more firm in his resolutions than the King of Prussia; he must and will enter Silesia; once entered, he must and will proceed; and if not secured by the immediate cession of that province, his troops and money will be offered to the electors of Saxony and Bavaria."

Such were the king's notifications to Maria Theresa.

Soon after, in a letter to the same Duke of Lorraine, the husband of Maria Theresa, "My heart," says Frederic (for he wrote as if he conceived he had one), "My heart," says Frederic, "has no share in the mischief which my hand is doing to your court."

The feelings of the young queen may be easily imagined, powerful in the qualities of her understanding, with all the high sensibilities, which are often united to a commanding mind, and educated in all the lofty notions which have so uniformly characterized her illustrious house. She resisted; but her arms proved in the event unsuccessful. She was not prepared, and even if she had been, the combination was too wide and powerful against her. According to the plan of her enemies, more particularly of France (her greatest enemy), Bohemia and Upper Austria, spite of all her efforts, were likely to be assigned to the Elector of Bavaria; Moravia and Upper Silesia to the Elector of Saxony; Lower Silesia and the country of Glatz to the King of Prussia; Austria and Lombardy to Spain; and some compensation to be allotted to the King of Sardinia.

It was, therefore, at last necessary to detach the King of Prussia from the general combination by some important sacrifice. The sufferings, the agonies of the poor queen were extreme. Lord Hyndfort, on the part of England as a mediating power, prevailed on the helpless Maria Theresa to abate something of her lofty spirit, and make some offers to

the king. "At the beginning of the war," said Frederic, "I might have been contented with this proposal, but not now. Shall I again give the Austrians battle, and drive them from Silesia? You will then see I shall have better proposals. At present I will have four duchies, and not one. Do not, my lord," said the king, "talk to me of magnanimity; a prince ought first to consult his own interests. I am not averse to peace, but I expect to have four duchies, and will have them."

At a subsequent period the same scene was to be renewed, and Mr. Robinson, the English ambassador, who was very naturally captivated with the attractions and spirit of Maria Theresa, endeavoured to rouse her to a sense of her danger. "Not only for political reasons," replied the queen, "but from conscience and honour, I will not consent to part with much in Silesia. No sooner is one enemy satisfied than another starts up; another and then another must be contented, and all at my expense."

"You must yield to the hard necessity of the times," said Mr. Robinson.

"What would I not give, except in Silesia!" replied the impatient queen. "Let him take all we have in Guelderland: if he is not gained by that sacrifice, others may be. Let the king your master speak to the Elector of Bavaria. Oh! the king your master! Let him only march! Let him march only!"

But England could not be prevailed upon to declare war. The dangers of Maria Theresa became more and more imminent, and a consent to further offers was extorted from her. "I am afraid," said Mr. Robinson, "some of these proposals will be rejected by the king." "I wish he may reject them," said the queen. "Save Limburgh if possible, were it only for the quiet of my conscience. God knows how I shall answer for the cession, having sworn to the states of Brabant never to alienate any part of this country."

Mr. Robinson, who was an enthusiast in the cause of the queen, is understood to have made some idle experiment of his own eloquence on the King of Prussia; to have pleaded her cause in their next interview; to have spoken, not as if he was addressing a cold-hearted, bad man, but as if speaking in

the House of Commons of his own country, in the assembly of a free people, with generosity in their feelings and uprightness and honour in their hearts. The king, in all the malignant security of triumphant power, in all the composed consciousness of great intellectual talents, affected to return him eloquence for eloquence; said his ancestors would rise out of their tombs to reproach him if he abandoned the rights that had been transmitted to him; that he could not live with reputation if he lightly abandoned an enterprise which had been the first act of his reign; that he would sooner be crushed with his whole army, &c. &c. And then, descending from his oratorical elevation, declared that he would *now* not only have four duchies, but all lower Silesia, with the town of Breslau. If the queen does not satisfy me in six weeks, I will have four duchies more. They who want peace will give me what I want. I am sick of ultimatums; I will hear no more of them. My part is taken; I will have all Lower Silesia. This is my final answer, I will give no other. He then abruptly broke off the conference, and left Mr. Robinson to his own reflections.

The situation of the young queen now became truly deplorable. The King of Prussia was making himself the entire master of Silesia; two French armies poured over the countries of Germany; the Elector of Bavaria, joined by one of them, had pushed a body of troops within eight miles of Vienna, and the capital had been summoned to surrender. The King of Sardinia threatened hostilities; so did the Spanish army. The Electors of Saxony, Cologne, and Palatine, joined the grand confederacy; and abandoned by all her allies but Great Britain, without treasure, without an army, and without ministers, she appealed, or rather fled, for refuge and compassion to her subjects in Hungary.

These subjects she had at her accession conciliated by taking the oath which had been abolished by her ancestor Leopold, the confirmation of their just rights, privileges, and approved customs. She had taken this oath at her accession, and she was now to reap the benefit of that sense of justice and real magnanimity which she had displayed, and which, it may fairly be pronounced, sovereigns and governments will always find it their interest, as well as their duty,

to display, while the human heart is constituted, as it has always been, proud and eager to acknowledge with gratitude and affection the slightest condescension of kings and princes; the slightest marks of attention and benevolence in those who are illustrious by their birth or elevated by their situation.

When Maria Theresa had first proposed to repair to these subjects, a suitor for their protection, the gray-headed politicians of her court had, it seems, assured her that she could not possibly succeed; that the Hungarians, when the Pragmatic Sanction had been proposed to them by her father, had declared that they were accustomed to be governed only by men, and that they would seize the opportunity of withdrawing from her rule, and from their allegiance to the House of Austria.

Maria Theresa, young and generous and high spirited herself, had confidence in human virtue. She repaired to Hungary; she summoned the states of the diet; she entered the hall, clad in deep mourning; habited herself in the Hungarian dress; placed the crown of St. Stephen on her head, the scimitar at her side; showed her subjects that she could herself cherish and venerate whatever was dear and venerable in their sight; separated not herself in her sympathies and opinion from those whose sympathies and opinions she was to awaken and direct; traversed the apartment with a slow and majestic step; ascended the tribune from whence the sovereigns had been accustomed to harangue the states, committed to her chancellor the detail of her distressed situation, and then herself addressed them in the language which was familiar to them, the immortal language of Rome; which was not now for the first time to be employed against the enterprises of injustice, and the wrongs of the oppressor. "Agitur de regno Hungariæ," said the queen, "de personâ nostrâ, prolibus nostris et coronâ; ab omnibus derelicti, unice ad inclutorum statuum fidelitatem, arma et Hungarorum priscam virtutem, confugimus*."

* "The business before you," said the queen, "affects the kingdom of Hungary, our royal person, our issue, and our crown; deserted on all sides, it is to the illustrious attachment of the states, to the arms and the long tried valour of the Hungarians that we now fly for assistance."

To the cold and relentless ambition of Frederic, to a prince whose heart had withered at thirty, an appeal like this had been made in vain; but not so to the free-born warriors, who saw no possessions to be coveted like the conscious enjoyment of honourable and generous feelings; no fame, no glory, like the character of the protectors of the helpless, and the avengers of the innocent. Youth, beauty, and distress obtained that triumph which, for the honour of the one sex, it is to be hoped will never be denied to the merits and afflictions of the other. A thousand swords leaped from their scabbards, and attested the unbought generosity and courage of untutored nature. "Moriatur pro rege nostro, Mariâ Theresâ," was the voice that resounded through the hall—"Moriatur pro rege nostro, Mariâ Theresâ." The queen, who had hitherto preserved a calm and dignified deportment, burst into tears (I tell but the facts of history). Tears started to the eyes of Maria Theresa when standing before her heroic defenders; those tears which no misfortunes, no suffering would have drawn from her in the presence of her enemies and oppressors. "Moriatur pro rege nostro, Mariâ Theresâ," was again and again heard. The voice, the shout, the acclamation that reechoed around her, and enthusiasm and frenzy in her cause was the necessary effect of this union of every dignified sensibility, which the heart can acknowledge and the understanding honour.

It is not always that in history we can pursue the train of events, and find our moral feelings gratified as we proceed: but in general we may. Philip II. overpowered *not* the Low Countries, nor Louis, Holland; and even on this occasion, of the distress and danger of Maria Theresa, we may find an important, though not a perfect and complete triumph. The resolutions of the Hungarian Diet were supported by the nation; Croats, Pandours, Slavonians, flocked to the royal standard, and they struck terror into the disciplined armies of Germany and France. The genius of the great General Kevenhuller was called into action by the queen; Vienna was put into a state of defence; divisions began to arise among the queen's enemies; a sacrifice was at last made to Frederic, he was bought off by the cession of Lower Silesia and Breslau; and the queen and her generals, thus obtaining

a ~~king~~ from this able and enterprising robber, were enabled to direct, and successfully direct, their efforts against the formidable hosts of plunderers that had assailed her. France that with her usual perfidy and atrocity had summoned every surrounding power to the destruction of the House of Austria, in the moment of the helplessness and inexperience of the new sovereign, France was at least, if Frederic was not, defeated, disappointed, and disgraced.

The remaining pages of Coxe, to the end of his volume, are not less worthy of perusal. The administration of Maria Theresa occupies the greater part of it; and the interest that belongs to a character like hers, of strong feelings and great abilities, never leaves the narrative of which she is, in fact, the heroine. The student cannot expect that he should always approve the conduct or the sentiments that but too naturally flowed from qualities like these, when found in a princess like Maria Theresa, a princess placed in situations so fitted to betray her into violence and even rancour; a princess who had been a first-rate sovereign of Europe at four and twenty, and who had never been admitted to that moral discipline to which ordinary mortals, who act in the presence of their equals, are so happily subjected.

That the loss of Silesia should never be forgotten; the King of Prussia never forgiven; that his total destruction would have been the highest gratification to her, can be no object of surprise.

The mixed character of human nature seldom affords, when all its propensities are drawn out by circumstances, any proper theme for the entire and unqualified praises of a moralist; but every thing is pardoned to Maria Theresa when she is compared, as she must constantly be, with her great rival Frederic. Errors and faults we can overlook when they are those of our common nature; intractability, impetuosity, lofty pride, superstition, even bigotry, and impatience of wrongs, furious and implacable, all these, the faults of Maria Theresa, may be forgiven, may at least be understood. But Frederic had no merits, save courage and ability; these, great as they are, cannot reconcile us to a character with which we can have no sympathy: of which the beginning, the middle, and the end, the beginning and the

essence, was entire, unceasing, insatiable, concentrated selfishness.

I do not detain my hearers with any further reference to Maria Theresa. She long occupies the pages of history. The interesting and captivating princess; the able and still attractive queen; the respected and venerable matron; grown pensive by long familiarity with the uncertainty of fortune, and sinking into decline amid the praises and blessings of her subjects. From the books and memoirs which I have mentioned, every particular may be drawn which can be necessary to enable you to form your own estimate. Indeed all the relevant and important observations connected with her history and her character will be furnished you either by Coxe or by Towers, or lastly, by the King of Prussia himself.

I must now say a word, and but a word, on the wars of this particular era. Mr. Coxe, who prides himself on the military part of his history, may be consulted with respect to the Seven Years' war. Of all others this war has been the most celebrated from the variety of its events, the military science displayed, and above all, the extraordinary efforts of military genius exhibited by the King of Prussia. They who wish to pursue the subject further than I can conceive necessary to any but professional men, may refer to the book of General Loyd, a work of character, and dedicated to the consideration of this part of the subject. Archenholz you will see quoted by Coxe, and it is, I understand, a work of great authority on the continent.

I have not adverted to a most important part of the history of Frederic—the partition of Poland; for I cannot yet conveniently approach times so near our own. But I may mention that my hearers will hereafter be referred by me chiefly to the Annual Register for 1771, 1772, 1773. The account there given is supposed to be drawn up by Burke. After all, the situation of Poland was such as almost to afford an exception (perhaps a single exception), in the history of mankind, to those general rules of justice that are so essential to the great community of nations.

I speak this with great hesitation; and you must consider the point yourselves. I do not profess to have thoroughly considered it myself. There has lately appeared one of Sir

James Mackintosh's valuable articles in the Edinburgh Review on the subject of Poland; and you will in him always find a master of moral and political science worthy of every attention you can bestow.

I have now mentioned all the books I consider necessary for your information. There are others which I do not think necessary, but which you may be led to consult from their connexion with Frederic. I allude more particularly to parts of his own works; his correspondence with the wits and philosophers of the day, more especially with Voltaire, whose reception, adventures, and final escape from the court of Prussia become almost a serious part of the history of the monarch.

They who wish to know the nature of the speculations and religious opinions of Frederic, and the restlessness of his spirit of proselytism, may find matter enough for either their amusement or instruction in the Memoirs of Thiebault. They will, at the same time, be not a little entertained by observing the invincible patience, the sevenfold shield of prudence and reserve, under which the attacks of the monarch were sustained by Thiebault, the most wary of dependants, and the most calm of observers. But with respect to the king's correspondence with Voltaire, as I am thus obliged to allude to it, as well as to the works of Frederic himself, I cannot but recommend it to the student to hesitate and pause before he ever presume to wander over the writings of these celebrated men, or indeed visit at all the unhealthy regions of French literature. Of course I do not speak of the great dramas, or of the grave or of the important works to be found in it. What I now say must be interpreted reasonably: I speak of the lighter works and of those that profess chiefly to entertain; and speaking of such parts of the French literature, I would recommend it to the English student to prepare himself for the climate and company he will there meet, by first acquainting himself, and that most thoroughly, with the excellent authors that dignify the literature of our own country. Johnson and Paley, Locke and Butler, immediately occur as the great masters of moral, metaphysical, and religious instruction—Locke, the votary of truth, and Paley, the very genius of good sense. Others might be mentioned, if this were the proper place to advise, or

if I were worthy to be the adviser on subjects so important. But some advice is necessary, and some preparation is necessary, before this department of very fashionable reading (the French literature), is entered upon. Ground must be secured upon which the great bulwarks of the understanding and the heart must be first erected and their foundations deeply laid. Already, and ere we have yet descended to the still more modern parts of history, we have been brought into contact with Voltaire and Frederic, and the wits and philosophers of their school. Whatever may be the merit, and whatever may be the praise—the praise of genius undoubtedly, which cannot be denied to many of the popular writers of the French nation, it is not, I think, too much to say that the general effect of their works is always to withdraw the mind from that sound and virtuous state in which our own writers have left it. In the conversation and correspondence of Frederic, the student will find much of what is well fitted to give him intellectual pleasure, and much also, I fear, that can have no tendency but ultimately to destroy all intellectual pleasure whatever. He will find, for instance, elegant literature; liveliness and good taste; wit; sententiousness; knowledge of human nature and of the world; interesting allusions to men who have made a figure in it; but he will also find impudent ridicule, gross ribaldry, systematic irreligion, and a sort of unceasing, inveterate hostility exercised on subjects and names that the student himself has always been accustomed (and very properly) to consider with sentiments of seriousness and reverence.

These are but mixed and opposite ingredients to be presented to a reader in the same work. How are we to hope that the mind, that the youthful mind, is to be only improved by the good, and not injured by the evil?

It is therefore with no little satisfaction that I can assure my hearer that he need not approach these volumes as a reader of history. There is in them little or nothing of an historical nature. The correspondence with Voltaire, which is the most likely to attract your notice, begins with the time when Frederic was under the displeasure of his father, and finding refuge from his tyranny in the pleasures of study and the consciousness of his own improving talents and

possessing knowledge. Voltaire was his idol, and Frédéric (the presumptive heir of the Prussian monarchy, and evidently possessed of an inquiring and powerful mind) might very naturally be in turn the idol of Voltaire. The praises, however, that are interchanged between the two correspondents soon disgust the modest and reasonable temperament of an English reader, and they never cease more or less to disgust, from the first opening to the last page of the correspondence. In one shape or another these compliments constitute a large portion of the whole; observations on literature, and railings against superstition, the remainder; and by superstition is always meant the Christian religion. The meritorious part of Voltaire's letters consists in the protestations that he does not fail to make against wars—protestations that are not at all relished by the king. The king confined himself to general declamations against the stupidity and folly of mankind; observations that come with no very good grace from a man who never turned their stupidity and folly to any purposes but those of bloodshed and destruction, for the sake of his own personal aggrandizement. The talents of the king are no doubt very clearly seen in these letters, and he seems at last to write to Voltaire with all the freedom and decision of one who was his equal in intellectual powers, not his pupil. But it is in no other way than as an exhibition of literary talents that these letters can be of use to any reader. Politics are never mentioned but in a slight and superficial manner. The historian, even the speculator on human nature on the larger scale, can glean but little; nothing of any consequence about the first invasion of Silesia; little about the seven years' war; little but this, that the king was evidently pressed to the utmost, and that he became at last quite sullen and fierce, as the dangers of his situation gathered more and more gloomy around him. Even of his amusing quarrel with Voltaire the symptoms only appear, not the particulars, and that but in two letters. The correspondence afterwards continues, almost as if no quarrel had happened; the two wits were, from their talents and a coincidence of sentiment on certain important points, quite necessary to each other; and, in a word, from the whole of the intercourse that subsisted between these celebrated men, I know little of an edifying

nature that can be offered to the consideration of the student but this, that the regard which they expressed for each other before they met, though originating in the proper sources of regard, personal merit and kindred talents, was still of too extravagant a nature to be properly secured from uncertainty and disappointment. Now this is in itself edifying, for this I conceive will always be the case. Friendship, between men, when it deserves the name, is the slow growth of mutual respect, is of a nature calm and simple, professes nothing and exacts nothing; is, above all, careful to be considerate in its expectations, and to keep at a distinct distance from the romantic, the visionary, and the impossible. The torrid zone, with its heats and its tempests, is left to the inexperience of youth, or to the love that exists between the sexes; the temperate, with its sunshine and its zephyrs, cheerful noon and calm evening, is the proper and the only region of manly friendship.

But if there be nothing to edify in the correspondence of the king, nor even in those parts of Thiebault, which exhibit his speculative and religious opinions, there is much in his example that is of a most injurious nature. Frederic will be seen in the common course of these historical narratives living a life of activity and duty, at least of exertion and usefulness, as he believed, to his people, and dying at a very advanced age tranquil and unmoved, not indeed with the hope and humble confidence and pious anticipations, but certainly with all the composure, of a religious man. In all this there is nothing to edify, there is much to mislead the mind. The airy gaiety and carelessness of scepticism is never without its attraction to the light-heartedness of youth. Fearlessness, and courage, and tranquillity, in scenes the most appalling, the field of battle or the bed of death, extort from us our involuntary respect, whatever be the person or the cause. The example of Frederic may therefore be well fitted to have its influence, and that influence one of a very unfortunate and melancholy kind; it may appear to recommend to our choice the fascinations and privileges of scepticism.

But scepticism, it must be remembered, is one of those spirits that change their guise as we advance along in their company. This is the fiend "that expects his evening prey."

Extraordinary men like Frederic, long conspicuous in the eyes of mankind, and knowing themselves to be so; long habituated to the exercise of self-command in seasons of the most imminent danger, may be constant to the last, and never lose that composure and fortitude which have so uniformly through life elevated them above the level of their fellow-creatures. Their reward is of this world, and they obtain it. But what is this to the rest of mankind? what is it to us common mortals? what is to us the example of Frederic? His example is nothing, and his opinions are nothing, and his death-bed is nothing.

Placed as we are, not on thrones and at the head of armies, and to be gazed at by mankind, now and in future ages, but in the midst of our own unnoticed rounds of amusements and of business, of pleasures and of pains; amid temptations and duties of an ordinary nature; growing to maturity for one short season; flourishing for another; fading, decaying, visibly dying away for a third; while, in the mean time, we at least are well aware that somewhere or other resides some stupendous Intelligence, in whose presence we thus revolve through the appointed vicissitudes of our being, and whose Almighty will is then once more to be exercised upon our fate in some unknown manner, in some new situation, that is as yet impenetrably removed, beyond what is therefore to us the affecting, the anxious, the awful moment of our dissolution;—what is to us the example of Frederic? His example is nothing, and his opinions are nothing, and his death-bed is nothing; they are nothing, they are worse than nothing.

I have made these observations on French literature, and on the sceptical writings of distinguished men, but nothing that I have now said must be interpreted in any manner unfavourable to the great interests of truth, or the rights of free inquiry. Still less must it be supposed that men are to sit in judgment on the religious opinions of each other, and decide on the salvation of particular men, of Frederic for instance, or Voltaire. To his own master must each individual stand or fall, and to him alone be responsible for the use of those faculties and opportunities with which he has been entrusted. Men must also be allowed the publication of their opinions, if this be done with decency and seriousness,

for the learned can have no right to say that they are in possession of the truth, still less can the unlearned, unless every grave man can offer his opinions, be they what they may, though not to the multitude, at least to grave men like himself. Such are the principles which I conceive to be fundamentally necessary to the proper cultivation of religious truth, and of all truth. I must not be supposed for a moment to entertain the slightest wish to disturb or violate them: but when all this has been admitted, distinctions may still be made between different descriptions of literature, different systems of opinion, and different modes of religious inquiry. And when we are made thus casually to approach, in the course of our historical reading, a very particular department of modern literature, and in reality the most awful subjects that can be presented to our thoughts, it may be competent for me, it may be necessary, to compare and contrast, at least in the passing manner I have now done, the great body of the more entertaining, popular, and modern French writers with our own, and to require that the one should be well examined and digested, and *that* before the other be even at all looked at, the more so because the human mind, when adverting to serious, to moral, and religious subjects, is unhappily affected, particularly in early life, by many other considerations besides the just and salutary impressions of reason and of truth.

Such are the books and memoirs to which I would wish to refer the student, while he is endeavouring to appreciate one of the most distinguished characters of history, and the events with which that character is connected. The mass of reading I have mentioned is very considerable—Gillies, Towers, Thiebault, Frederic's own account of his political transactions, Mirabeau, and Coxe; and to these I have added a very amusing work by Wraxall—his *Memoirs of the Court of Berlin*.

But the general reader may, I think, be satisfied with Towers and Coxe; though much of Thiebault, of the account of Frederic, and of Mirabeau, ought, I think, to be added by those who would fit themselves for the high character of most of intelligence and of statesmen.

But I must also mention, that by the general reader, and

by every reader, the account that is given of Thibault's book in the Edinburgh Review for October, 1836, should also be considered. It is always my wish to occupy as little of your time in this place as possible, and never to offer you imperfectly, what you may easily read properly delivered to you by the author himself. For these reasons I do not now stop to lay before you many of the observations which had occurred to me on the subject of Frederic, because I really have found them anticipated by the Edinburgh reviewer. I depend, however, upon your reading them in the Review, otherwise my lecture will want a part which I should have supplied myself, and without which it will be, even in my own conception, most materially defective. I must confess, too, that my dislike of Frederic would be thus disappointed of its gratification. This dislike is so great, that I can even bear to throw him, without compunction, as I now do, to the mercy of these northern tormentors.

NOTES.

Mirabeau's Work on Prussia.

WHAT I advise the student to do is to look through the pages of Mirabeau, and from the midst of the details, pick out the general remarks with which they are accompanied. These remarks are of general application, and may therefore be valuable to the student, whatever may be the statements in the midst of which they appear. I will give a short specimen of what I mean.

Certain details, for instance, are gone into with respect to some successful efforts made by the king to restore the population and prosperity of Pomerania; and then the general remark is the following:—"But be that as it may, clear away the waste land, make the air wholesome, augment the means of subsistence by a perfect freedom of all industry and commerce, and leave every thing else to Nature; call in no strangers (the favourite measure of Frederic), your own people will increase fast enough if you allow them the proper means of subsistence. But if, on the contrary, you will scarcely let them have air to breathe in, grind them down by feudal services of day labour and slavery, clog their industry, and choke and smother their commerce, your population must be kept down to the point which the weight of your chains determines; and vain is your gold, and your invitations to strangers to come and colonise."

Now this is a remark perfectly just and applicable to every possible case and situation of society.

Again, in another place (p. 389), the general remark is this:—"It is not the plenty of the circulating medium, or money, that enriches a people: it is the absence of all those systems, and all those oppressions, that can indispose men to labour: the humanity, the policy, which prevents a state from tearing away from the people their money as soon as they have earned it. If you take from people their gains to pay your taxes and impositions, direct and indirect, how can they have a surplus with which to make improvements or better their condition? What must become of your agriculture, and the population that belongs to it?"

Observations of a like general nature will be found with respect to the sale; to the proper circulation of property, its transfer, for instance, from nobles, who ruin themselves by extravagance, to those who accumulate fortunes by their industry and economy. So again, with respect to the Jesuits, and the difficult problem of managing the province of Silesia, almost equally divided between the Catholics and Protestants (the Catholics being at least not more than four to three).

It is not, however, necessary to have the mind so much monopolised by the artificial agricultural system, by the system of his father. A town and its manufactures may enrich the neighbouring country by awakening and rewarding its industry; and such has been the progress of things in the history of the world. It does not at all follow that for the establishment of manufactures you must inevitably withdraw from a country the capitals that would be necessary for its agriculture. If it be indeed contended by Mirabeau that the natural progress of affluence is in the contrary direction, and that agriculture is the first and great point to be secured; that manufactures and splendid towns are properly the *effect*, rather than the *cause*, of prosperity (as will hereafter be seen in America, though this has not been the course in Europe), no objection need be made to his positions. But on this subject the partisans of the opposite systems seem each so occupied by the particular advantages they have in view, that they are scarcely willing to hear each other, or allow the mutual benefits which the commerce of the towns and of the country, i. e. which manufacture and agriculture are so fitted mutually to interchange, multiply, and consolidate.

The management of the poor comes likewise in review; and Frederic's notions as well as Mirabeau's may be considered in these volumes.

That Frederic is wrong, there can be no doubt; but when Mirabeau arrives at his concluding remark, it appears to be that work ought to be offered for all who demand it. But I fear that this is the great difficulty of the case. The difficulty might be encountered, might be even submitted to, i. e. the community might think it good policy to employ people at a loss, rather than not have them employed at all. But the difficulty is itself, I conceive, insuperable. The notions of our own legislators, in the famous statute respecting the poor in the time of Elizabeth, were the same as those of Mirabeau. The overseers were expected to *find* work, that is, I fear, whether it could or could not be found.

The second book (that which is contained in the second volume) contains, towards the close, observations by Mirabeau of the same reasonable nature as before. The general conclusion is, that Frederic, after all, did not increase the population of his dominions. On the whole, the second book is very well worth reading.

The third book relates to the agriculture and natural productions. Here, as before, it is the general observations for which I should wish the student to look out. Such may occasionally be found. The book, however, is principally occupied in details, and the student will not have the patience to read it. The same may be said, in general, of the fourth book, on manufactures. The details cannot now be appreciated, but the general observations may; particularly the introduction, in which are laid down, very properly, on the principles of Adam Smith, those causes which impede, and those which promote, the progress of manufactures—liberty of every sort, moral, religious, physical; the general encouragement of science and knowledge. On the contrary, he protests against all exclusive privileges, all prohibitions on the export of the raw material, and on the export of the manufacture. He protests against all imposts on foreign manufactures, all advances to manufacturers in the way of capitals, &c. &c.

Observations such as these are of a general nature; they are not so thinly scattered over the fourth book as over the third. Linens, silk, and many articles give occasion to them. The fifth book is dedicated to commerce, and is opened by very striking remarks. A proper testimony is paid to our own great writer, A. Smith, and to Monsieur Mauvillon, the philosopher to whom, as I have already mentioned, Mirabeau has in this work been so much indebted.

The system on which Mirabeau proceeds is the modern system—of perfect freedom; and the mistake of supposing that the prosperity of a country depends on the favourable balance, as it is called, of trade, &c.

There is, however, some inaccuracy, I conceive, or at least looseness of statement, in the general position which he lays down, that commerce does not enrich a nation as it does the individuals who carry it on. Merchants who carry it on are of two sorts—those who buy and sell on commission for other people, and those who are themselves entirely interested in their sales and purchases. It is only the last description to which the term of merchant philosophically applies. And with respect to these last, the observations of Mirabeau do not exactly hold; the interest of these last and of the country is the same. Does the merchant, for instance, bring from another country an article which he sells at home at a great price? The event shows how much his own country wanted the article: i. e. that he could not have been better employed either for his own interest or the interest of the community. Does he, on the contrary, lose by his venture? This shows that his own country did not want the article; and he could not have been worse employed.

In other points Mirabeau's observations seem just, that every thing in a state is in reality commerce. The labourer traffics and sells his physical strength or intellectual powers, the farmer his produce, the manufacturer his goods to the merchant, the merchant to the consumer, &c. He holds, however, and very properly, that the internal commerce is the great mark of the happiness of a community, which may be carried by that internal commerce to the greatest extent, and its exports and imports be comparatively trifling; i. e. its happiness, its internal health and strength may, if fortunately situated; but not, it must at the same time be observed, its external force or influence. The case supposed is not likely to exist, but it is no doubt possible; that is, it is not contrary to the nature of things. In this book will be found a very regular attack on the system of the balance of trade; and Mirabeau proceeds, as Smith would have done, to censure the various companies and monopolies which Frederic had the impolicy to allow, or to establish; among others the bank royal, to which Mirabeau makes forcible objections; and he finishes, as he began, with striking and just remarks on commerce, merchants, and agriculture, the relative and absolute value of which, in these concluding pages, he seems to state with proper discrimination.

The result is, according to Mirabeau, that the merchant in Prussia, as well as the manufacturer, is possessed but of a tottering existence; that he is a sort of being springing up from the expectation of some assistance to be

received from the monarch, or violently produced by the mere necessity which a man feels to make some attempt or other to gain a livelihood.

The sixth book is dedicated to the consideration of the revenues and expenses of Prussia. It opens with stating and explaining the rights and claims which belonged to the king, derived to him from feudal principles. Some good observations follow on the subject of the coin of a country, and on taxes in general. On the subject of taxes, the particular notions of the system of the economists appear. Mirabeau is decidedly against all indirect taxes; i. e. taxes drawn in the way of custom-house and excises, where the consumer pays the whole in the ultimate price, without being aware of it.

His arguments appear to me not very satisfactory. The case of England occurs to him; his expressions are remarkable. "Cite not to me," he says, "the case of England, as you are continually doing; for not to mention the terrible consequences with which these indirect taxes threaten her prosperity and her liberties, are you not aware that the civil freedom which every man enjoys in that country, remedies, atones for, and bears up against every evil and disadvantage? That England (thanks to her situation and constitution) is no example on this occasion. Can you, will you, give your own subjects the immense advantages which England enjoys?" Such are the words of Mirabeau. Our civil freedom, he evidently supposes, is the vital principle which enables the state to bear up against all its infirmities and diseases.

Frederic's own ideas on taxes are justly considered by Mirabeau as not very distinct or profound. He created monopolies—the worst of all taxes, and then used to say, towards the close of his life, "Why should any one complain? I have never, through the whole of my reign, imposed a new tax."

Again: a terrible sort of board, consisting of French financiers, was formed for managing the excises. Every evil followed. After considering these evils, "Such," says Mirabeau, "have been the fruits of the administration of the rights and claims of Frederic; and who can survey this melancholy picture," he continues, "without being overpowered by compassion for the people of Prussia? without being overcome with indignation at the writers who have dared to vaunt and hold up to admiration the system of Frederic? Let them not profane, with their unworthy incense, the tomb of an hero—one who was great enough to admit of our allowing him to have been deceived without any diminution of his glory; and who was too great not to make it necessary to unveil his faults, lest they should acquire an authority under the shadow of his great name."

Mirabeau's remarks on the military force and resources of Prussia were very striking, and might have taught us, as I have already mentioned, in later times, important lessons. There is a sort of prophecy of the movement of Buonaparte before the battle of Austerlitz.



LECTURE XXX.

GEORGE III.

IN a late lecture, I endeavoured to conduct you through the history of the remaining part of the reign of George II., the intrigues that took place on the fall of Sir Robert Walpole, the merits of the Pelham administration, and of the ministry of Lord Chatham. And I more particularly proposed to you such subjects (the Rebellion of 1745 and others, drawn partly from the events of the time, and partly from Debrett's Debates), as I thought best fitted to supply your minds with proper materials of philosophic and political reflection.

But before I proceed to our next subject, the Reign of his present Majesty, I must observe that as you read our history drawn from the Revolution to the present time, more especially as you read the debates in parliament, you will be repeatedly called upon to exercise your opinion upon reasonings and public measures, that relate to our national debt, to taxes, excises, and topics of this nature; and it is desirable, as a preparation for such reading, that you should acquire some notion, as soon as possible, of the nature of a national debt and its consequences; in short, become acquainted with the great subjects of political economy.

I should therefore be well pleased, if I could refer you to some book or treatise, where elementary explanations respecting such subjects might be found; but I know of no such book or treatise. The great work of A. Smith is not an elementary book, very far from it; and your best chance of understanding it, is to read of each chapter as much as you can, then go to the next chapter, and so on; and when you have got to the end of the book, begin the book again; and you will at length comprehend the whole sufficiently for any general purpose.

I have lately seen a treatise by Mr. Boileau, which I hoped I might have recommended to you on this occasion; but I do not think that it will be found either more simple, or more intelligible, than A. Smith's original work, from which it is avowedly borrowed.

Since I wrote what I am now delivering, I have met with a book lately published—*Conversations on Political Economy*. This appeared to me the elementary book that was wanted; and though there is a doubtful point or two in the more profound parts of the science, which is, I believe, rather mistaken, still the work seemed to me a work of merit, and fitted for your instruction. In this opinion I found Mr. Malthus, and Mr. Pryme, our own lecturer on political economy, concurring, and therefore I think myself authorized to recommend it to you.

I cannot detain you with observations on political economy; I do not lecture on political economy, and there is one of the members of our university who does; and who, I am sure, from the purest motives of endeavouring to do good to his fellow-creatures, has been, for some time, soliciting your attention to these most important, but grave and somewhat repulsive subjects. Still, as the plan of my lectures is to assist you, if I can, in reading history for yourselves; and as it is quite necessary to the proper comprehension of history from the time of the Revolution, that you should have some proper notion, of at least the nature of a funded debt and of loans, and that immediately, I will begin this lecture by a few observations on the subject; and by securing your minds, as far as I am able, from some of those mistakes and misapprehensions, that are to be met with in conversation, and even in books and pamphlets, which undertake to instruct the public. I shall be well employed indeed, if I thus apprize you of the importance of what may be considered as a new science in the world, the science of political economy. I will begin with the most common misapprehension of all.

Property in the stocks being continually bought and sold, and passed from one to another, a continual circulation, as it is called, of money is kept up; and by the practice of funding it is supposed that we have, in fact, fabricated to ourselves a species of factitious wealth, which answers all the purposes, and procures to us all the advantages of so much real wealth.

The easiest reply I can make to this popular error is, by shortly stating, what the nature of the funds really is. The whole mystery is no more than this:—A minister wishes to borrow a million, we will say, for the equipment of an armament; he borrows it therefore from those who have the money unoccupied, and he engages that the nation shall give them a proper interest for their money for ever. Their names are therefore written in public books, with the sums they have lent; and these records of the transactions are the funds. The books are kept at the Bank, where the interest is paid by the government; and these records give each person who belongs to them a right to receive such and such sums of interest from the public for ever: and these records may be broken into pieces, and transferred from one to another. But this, and nothing more is done, when stock (as it is called) is bought or sold.

Money is brought out of society, if I may so speak, and given by the person who buys stock, to the person who holds it; i. e. who holds one of these rights or records; and he, after parting with his record, returns with the money into society: and so far the money has circulated—it has been given from one man to another; but there is no fabrication of money, or of factitious wealth. The funds are not *money*, they only represent money—they represent money that has been long ago spent; but being the records of these original loans, and therefore giving to their owners a claim on the nation to receive interest for ever, they have no doubt in themselves a value, and may be therefore continually bought and sold; and this has given occasion to all the mystery and confusion that has been noticed.

A more dangerous error is this:—It is continually affirmed that the greatest part of the money which is borrowed for a war is paid away to our artisans, our soldiers, and sailors, at our dock-yards or manufactures, head quarters, &c. &c. That it never travels out of the island; that it is never lost by the state; that it only passes from one hand to another: and that except when the money is paid out of the kingdom to our soldiers abroad, or our allies, we are as rich as before. This mistake, indeed, the writers on political economy will enable you to avoid; for you will see them make a distinction between productive labourers and nonproductives labourers,

which you will of course have to consider. There are certain difficulties introduced into this part of the subject by a particular school of reasoners; but the distinction is sufficiently sound for our present purpose, and for all intelligible purposes. I shall proceed upon it.

Suppose we were all soldiers and sailors, i. e. nonproductive labourers, there would evidently be no one to feed and clothe us. To this preposterous state of ruin we therefore approach, the more soldiers and sailors we raise. The money that is given to them, and for them, is only the medium by means of which food and clothing, arms and accoutrements, are transferred to them from those who produce these articles. It is not meant to say that soldiers and sailors are useless, for they defend us; or that they deserve not what they receive, for they receive but little. All that is urged is, that they can produce nothing themselves, and that they must necessarily consume part of the produce of those who do; and that consequently, the more of them we are obliged to maintain for any purpose, whether of offence or defence, the poorer we shall be, and the less able to become rich. It is not therefore true, because the money is paid away to our soldiers, sailors, public officers, &c., and never goes out of the island, that *therefore* we are not the poorer. And in the former case, that of subsidies, loans, &c., when the money obviously does go out of the island, then indeed it is allowed by all, that we are poorer.

In these two cases, therefore, the matter is clear, and I shall dismiss them.

Still some further explanation must be given of the manner in which we bear our extraordinary loads of taxation. Certainly there must be some truth in the popular notion, however vague, that the money raised by taxes never goes out of the kingdom, and that therefore we are not poorer.

I must, therefore, now propose to your thoughts a distinction which you must recollect; it is this: the money originally lent from time to time by different monied men to government is always to be carefully set apart in your minds from the money that is afterwards paid every year by the nation as the interest of it. The money originally lent, which the funds are the records of, is money that has been taken from the capital

of the country; all this is, therefore, positive loss; it has been spent; the soldier and his ammunition, the sailor and his ship of war, have at length disappeared and are annihilated. These were what the money produced; they are gone. The money has been spent, therefore; we have it not; and if it had not been so spent, we *should* have had it; it would have been left in society to be added to our capital, and thus left to increase our means of production or gratification. Here is, therefore, a distinct loss, continually measured and exhibited by the amount of the national debt. The only good that remains is the existence and affluence of those manufacturers that have been employed in furnishing our soldiers and sailors with their food, clothing, and implements of war; all the rest is loss. But the same cannot be said of the interest that is every year paid in consequence of it.

You must now consider by whom this interest is paid, and to whom.

It is paid more or less by every man in the kingdom to the annuitants or shareholders who originally lent the principal. The interest, then, is paid by one part of society to another part of the same society. We have not here an annihilation and total destruction of any thing purchased, as in the former case. The money is not spent in soldiers and sailors, in gunpowder and implements of war, in provisions for their support in foreign countries; it is not spent on objects which immediately perish without producing any thing but our defence. The money is now given by society to certain annuitants, and this money may be said not to travel out of the island, and in that sense not to make us poorer. The very annuitants themselves pay their full share to the taxes, i. e. they themselves pay a part of that money which they are afterwards themselves again to receive back as their interest; receive in their dividends at the Bank.

All this is true, and may contribute to explain to you the manner in which we pay so much every year, and yet survive our expenses.

But you are by no means to suppose that the quantity of our taxation is a matter of little or no consequence. You are not to conceive, as is generally done, that because the interest does not go out of the island, that it is, therefore, of no

consequence how much is drawn from the public. It is still a matter of great importance what quantity of money is every year levied; for, to drop for the present our former language of productive and unproductive labourers, and to adopt language of the most ordinary nature,—What is the case before us? The money is taken from one person and given to another. Now I may take the money from one person and give it to another, and the money may never go out of the island; but it is of great consequence who is the person I take it from, and who is the person I give it to. The person I take it from may, and indeed must be, in the main, one who lives by his industry; I must be, therefore, very careful what I take from him, though I give it to his neighbour and fellow-citizen; for otherwise I may materially affect his prosperity—that is, as he is an industrious man, the prosperity of the country.

The quantity taken is a most material point. I may require from him *so much*, that I may injure, dispirit, distress, and at length ruin him; and all this, though the money never goes out of the island, and is only paid from one to another.

This leads me to say one word on the subject of taxes.

The most useful observation which I can make to you is this: that all taxes are paid by men out of their *income*; and, therefore, whether a person be a rich man or a poor man, but more especially in the latter case, his situation may be made, by taxation, to vary downwards from cheerfulness and affluence to uncomfortableness and privations, then to penury and ill-humour, and at last to wretchedness and sedition.

A system of taxation may be prevented, by different causes, from visibly producing these very ruinous effects; but it always *tends* to produce them, and always *does* produce injury to a certain extent. Though its full operation be concealed, the weight is not the less in one scale because it is overbalanced by opposing weights in the other. The prosperity of a nation under a great system of taxation may be very striking and very progressive, yet that progress is not, in the mean time, the less restrained and retarded by the secret operation of the load which it drags after it.

But to conclude; as you read the history from the Revo-

lution, you will indeed see the national debt continually increasing; and you will observe, in the debates in parliament, repeated prophecies that the debt must soon destroy us, that the practice of borrowing cannot go on, that the taxes are already intolerable, &c. &c.

As no such effect has taken place, you may be tempted to despise all such prophecies and their authors, and will then have to despise the first patriots and statesmen which our country has produced, and such a writer on political economy as Hume.

You will therefore observe, that, in the first place, it is the monied interest who lend money to a government—those who have money, for which they are satisfied to receive no more than the interest. This description of men, if I may use so violent a metaphor, is continually from time to time thrown off from the great circulating wheel of the *national prosperity*—of the *national prosperity*, you will observe; and, therefore, if the national prosperity declines, they will not be found.

In the second place, you will observe that it is from the produce of the land and labour of the community that the interest is to be paid. This interest, therefore, depends also upon the prosperity of the country. If therefore, as before, that prosperity declines, the interest cannot be paid as it has been before; not, without greater injury and distress.

It happens that the prosperity of England since the Revolution has never ceased to be progressive, and this for many reasons which could not have been foreseen, and therefore to an extent which could not have been expected. Loans on this account have been continually made, and the interest continually paid. Yet neither are our statesmen nor our philosophers to be accused of mistaken principles. It does not follow, because a loan was made last year, that it can be made this year, nor the contrary. The whole is a question of prosperity, and therefore not a little of mere fact and experiment at the time when the loan is wanted, and the interest to be paid; whether there exist at the time those who have money to lend, whether they have arisen in society in consequence of their successful industry; and again, whether there exist a sufficient number of individuals in society who can

pay fresh taxes out of their income, that is, whether the new income wanted can be paid.

The canker, however, of a state is taxation. We may remember, therefore, what Swift says to those who were continually looking for his death:—

“ My good companions, never fear,
For though you may mistake a year,
Though your prognostics run too fast,
They must be verified at last.”

And if Hume were still alive (who is always referred to as a false prophet), he would probably not be induced, by anything that has happened since he wrote, either in France or this country, to withdraw his observation, his sally of melancholy pleasantry, “That princes and states, fighting and quarrelling amidst their debts, funds, and public mortgages, reminded him of nothing but a match of cudgel-playing fought in a china-shop.”

At the close of the late lecture, we arrived, as I have observed, at the accession of George III. to the throne, and at the unexpected dismissal of the great war minister, Mr. Pitt, to make room for a nobleman at that time far less known either in Europe or in England, the Earl of Bute.

The reign has been in part written by Mr. Adolphus, I am given to understand, upon much better sources of information than any other writer has yet enjoyed. No reign can be properly written till the sovereign is no more, and it is possible that important materials for the future historian will hereafter be produced; but in the mean time the history of Adolphus will naturally be received into your studies, and must be mentioned and even recommended by me; and it therefore became my duty to direct my own perusal to this history; and ascertain whether it was necessary to accompany my recommendation with any particular remarks.

I had not proceeded far, before I met with the paragraph which I shall now read to you. You will be so good as to mark well every word it contains. You will find it a solution of all the material phenomena relative to cabinets and ministers that have distinguished this memorable reign. The passage in Adolphus is this:—

“ The last two monarchs being foreigners, and opposed by a native prince, who had numerous adherents, as well among the people as in some of the most illustrious houses, confided a large portion of their power to a few distinguished families, in order to secure possession of the crown. These families, strengthened by union and exclusive influence, became not only independent of, but in many respects superior to, the throne. Swayed by a predilection for their continental dominions, the first two sovereigns of the House of Hanover incurred severe animadversions from the members of opposition; and the necessity of frequent justifications rendering them still more dependent on the leaders of the ministerial party, reduced them almost to a state of pupillage.

“ But the new king (George III.) being exempt from foreign partialities, ascending the throne at a period when the claims of the exiled family were fallen into contempt, was enabled to emancipate himself from the restraint to which his ancestors had submitted. The Earl of Bute formed the plan of breaking the phalanx which constituted and supported the ministry, and of securing the independence of the crown, by a moderate exertion of the constitutional prerogative. This plan in itself was well conceived and necessary, but the Earl of Bute was not a proper person to carry it into effect. He was not connected, either by blood or by familiar intercourse, with the leading families in England; he was not versed in the arts of popularity, nor used to the struggles of parliamentary opposition; and his manners were cold, reserved, and unconciliating. Prejudices were easily excited against him as a native of Scotland, and he could only oppose to a popular and triumphant administration, and a long established system, such friends as hope or interest might supply, and the personal esteem of the king, which was rendered less valuable by the odium attached to the name of favourite.”

I must confess that it was with some pain that I first read this remarkable paragraph, and not without some surprise.

I that the system here described had been really the system of the reign. I had always indeed conceived; and that it had been so censured by Mr. Burke, so early as the year 1770, I was well aware. But certainly I had not expected to see the system avowed by any one, writing, as it is understood,

on the very best authority, still less *defended* by one who proposed to himself the character of an historian of England. Yet such is the fact.

I cannot assent to the propriety of the opinions and principles of this writer, and yet I have no other history, at least, this is the most regular history that I have to offer you for your future study.

The history of Belsham is a work (as I have already mentioned) of more merit than would at first sight be supposed. But in the year 1793, after the breaking out of the French war, it loses the character of history, and becomes little more than a political pamphlet; and through the whole of the reign of his present majesty, it is so written that it must be considered as a statement, whether just or not, but certainly only as a statement on one side of the question; and must therefore, at all events, be compared with the statement on the other side, i. e. with the history of Adolphus.

On every account, therefore, I must present to you the work of Adolphus, and leave it to its influence on your minds.

But if this (which I have just read) be the paragraph with which it opens, if these be the principles on which it is written, and if the system just described be one which he conceives was reasonably recommended to the sovereign, I have no alternative but to state what I apprehend to be very serious objections to these principles and to this system; and I must do so, however disagreeable may be the discussion (as it certainly is) into which I must thus be drawn.

The leading transactions of the reign, prior to the dispute with the American colonies, could furnish me indeed with no reflections of a more pleasing nature than can this paragraph of Adolphus. You will read them in the history, and you must be left to *read* them, not *hear* them from me; they scarcely fall within my province. But the principles of the system on which this or any other reign is conducted, really come within the description of the more appropriate topics of a lecturer on history. And I shall therefore, on the whole, make the ensuing lecture a mere comment on the paragraph I have read. And I have only further to observe, that while you are considering such points as will necessarily pass in

review before us, you will in reality be considering the most delicate, curious, and critical questions that belong to the English constitution.

To return, therefore, to the paragraph I have just read. In the first place, I should hope that there is a certain air about the plan itself (as described by Adolphus), a certain want of proper sentiment that would, to youthful minds like yours, be not very congenial. I will speak of the necessity of it hereafter, but "in limine," and on the first view of it, what is it?

The two first monarchs of the Brunswick line, it seems, confided a large portion of their power to a "few distinguished families." But why? In order to secure possession of the crown. A very adequate reason, no doubt; and if they in consequence succeeded in their wishes, neither the people of England, nor any princes of that Brunswick line, should readily forget their obligation.

Again:—swayed, it seems, by a predilection for their continental dominions, the two first sovereigns of the House of Hanover incurred severe animadversion from the members of opposition, and the necessity of frequent justification, rendering them still more dependent on the leaders of the ministerial party, reduced them almost to a state of pupillage; i. e. I fear, the leaders of this ministerial (then the Whig) party, not only supported their sovereigns, but did so considerably at the hazard of their good name; not only supported them as sovereigns of England, but as Electors of Hanover; indulged them even in their predilections for their continental dominions, and had such merit with their sovereigns in consequence of the sacrifices they thus made, that these sovereigns could not avoid acceding to any wishes they expressed, and any measures they proposed.

This may be indeed the case; but if it be, it is no very good preparation for the statement which Adolphus immediately subjoins. "The new king," says he, "being exempt from foreign partialities, and ascending the throne at a period when the claims of the exiled family were fallen into contempt, was enabled to emancipate himself from the restraint to which his ancestors had submitted. The Earl of Bute formed the plan of breaking the phalanx," &c. &c.

The new king might be enabled by these circumstances (no doubt), but was the Earl of Bute therefore justified in advising him thus to emancipate himself? So much for the original conception of the plan, which Mr. Adolphus has thought well conceived. But was, indeed, this plan so necessary as he states it to have been? You must consider this for yourselves.

You are supposed to be now reading that part of the history of England which bears upon this particular point. What was the pupilage to which George I. was reduced? Did the Whig families presume to thwart him in his expensive treaties and entangled intrigues, to secure the great objects of his policy, the possession of Bremen and Verdun; i. e. (as he thought) the prosperity of his *electoral* dominions? Far from it. Did not they consider their acquiescence as the price of his favour, or rather as the price that was to be paid for the expulsion of the Stuarts and the Revolution of 1688? Did not the Whig ministers and their sovereigns think the power and prosperity of each necessary to the best interests of the other? Was there more of pupilage and dependence in this connexion, than are always to be found in the connexion of men who are bound to each other by an interchange of benefits in support of laudable objects?

What are we to say of Sir R. Walpole? Is not the great fault of Sir Robert at all times a too great anxiety for the personal favour of his sovereign; a too great readiness to make sacrifices to obtain it; an almost puerile terror of losing his place, when George II. began to reign, and had dismissed him with an intention of making Sir Stephen Compton minister; an unwillingness to lose it to the last moment of his administration, when Pulteney became triumphant?

George I. seems to have had no difficulty in keeping his favourite minister Lord Stanhope, in power. His courtier, the Earl of Sunderland, was always of far more consequence in the state than he deserved. Sir R. Walpole obtained not the superiority which he always merited, till his rivals were dead, or had been disgraced by the South Sea scheme. Sir Robert was, from the mere apprehension of losing his place, obliged to suffer his own personal enemy, and the enemy of

his king and country, Lord Bolingbroke, to return. All the terms he could make with the sovereign and his mistress were, that this dangerous man should not appear again in the House of Lords. What is there here of pupilage in the sovereign? The influence of Sir R. Walpole arose from his own personal merit; first, with the House of Commons; and, secondly, with Queen Caroline, who assisted him: not in managing the House of Commons, and thereby controlling the king; but in managing the king, and therefore in appearing to that house as the man who was honoured with his confidence and favour.

The only two instances in which the wishes of the sovereign were thwarted, were, when the Pelhams overpowered Lord Carteret, though the avowed favourite of his master, and when Mr. Pitt was admitted into office, though personally disliked by the king.

In the former of these instances, the Pelhams were more approved of by the country than their rival Lord Carteret; they were known to be less ready than he, to go every length which the king might wish in the politics of the continent. That they afterwards made too great sacrifices to him in these points, particularly the Duke of Newcastle, more than they could well justify to themselves, only serves to show how important they thought the king's favour, and how necessary to their continuance in office.

In the last instance, of Mr. Pitt, was not the real objection to him the superiority of his merit? That he was conscious of his high talents, and had not the servility of those who have nothing but servility to depend upon. Yet, in the event, did not even Mr. Pitt submit to the German system of politics, when he became himself a minister? Contrary to all his former opinions, repeatedly avowed with all the fervour of his eloquence, did he not declare that this system was a mill stone round his neck, with which he entered into office? For what reason did he suffer it to remain there, but because he found the court too powerful?

You will therefore consider, as you read the history, how far the Whig families, or ministers, did become (as Adolphus insists) not only independent of, but in many respects superior to the throne; and, again, even admitting the fact, how far

they were likely to continue so, at the accession of his present majesty.

The plan, however, of Lord Bute for their subjugation, as it would have been called, when once conceived, was without much difficulty carried into execution.

Mr. Pitt's power was founded on his superior abilities, and the high opinion of the public; that of the Duke of Newcastle, on his family and political connexions: both were attached to the principles of Whiggism.

But Mr. Pitt despised the duke, and the duke hated and feared Mr. Pitt. Mr. Pitt was unfortunately too conscious of his own superior talents; overbearing and unaccommodating, even to his distinguished relative, Lord Temple. It was no difficult matter, therefore, for the king, first, to drive Mr. Pitt from office; then the Duke of Newcastle; then Lord Rockingham, who came in as a Whig minister, without Mr. Pitt; then Mr. Pitt, who came in as a Whig minister, without Lord Rockingham. And so to manage the mistakes, the feelings, and the virtues of all concerned, as to destroy the confidence of all parties in themselves and in each other, and by the aid of such men of talents as were ambitious, and of such men of property and connexion as were inclined to the court, to continue for ten or twelve years, a sort of running fight with the Whigs and their principles, till the ministry of Lord North was found sufficiently stable and accommodating to serve all the purposes and gratify all the wishes of the patrons of the new system. And it was not necessary to proceed farther in the way of experimental administrations, to determine the least possible quantity of Whiggism by which the business of the country could be conducted. But are these proceedings (the consequences of this new system) in reality deserving of the approbation of any intelligent historian of England?

It is not to be supposed that the new system was much relished by the nation (at that time sufficiently near the Revolution and the rebellion of 1745 to be fond of Whiggism), or at all relished, more particularly by the metropolis (always the most enlightened part of every community). The young monarch and his court became suddenly unpopular: his levees were disturbed by petitions, that talked of the princi-

ples that had seated his family on the throne; and the mob delivered their particular sentiments on every occasion, after their own violent and tumultuous manner.

I do not enter into the detail of these occurrences, that so unhappily marked the opening years of his majesty's administration. But it is necessary to say, in a word, that they did no credit to the new system, or to its advisers.

It is easy to talk of sedition and faction; the licentiousness of the people; the ignorance and the brutality of the mob of a metropolis. They who see a monarch, amiable and respectable in his nature, in the full exercise of every private and domestic virtue, ascend his throne in the bloom of youth, amid the shouts and applauses of his subjects; and then, without any national calamity, or rather amid the highest national prosperity, suddenly cease to be the object of admiration; find his palaces resounding with complaints, his courts of justice with prosecutions for libels, and his highways with uproar—they who can think that such general terms as "faction," "sedition," "licentiousness," are a sufficient solution of such phenomena, may pride themselves, if they please, on their loyalty, as they might, with equal reason, on their sagacity. But philosophers and statesmen are not likely to acquiesce in reasons so superficial, and will not be quite so ready to suppose, that, in a time of public and exterior prosperity, every thing can be going wrong in the *interior* of a community, unless some mistakes of a very unfortunate nature have been made by those, who are intrusted with the management of its concerns.

But to return to the new system, and to the original necessity on account of which it was adopted. One final illustration of this necessity may be offered in a few words.

"The Earl of Bute," to use the words of the historian, "was not a proper person to carry this plan into effect; not connected, either by blood or by familiar intercourse, with the leading families in England; not versed in the arts of popularity and not used to parliamentary opposition; a native of Scotland, with nothing to oppose to a popular and triumphant administration, but such friends as hope and interest might supply, and the personal esteem of the king." These are the words of the historian: but what has been the result?

Such has proved to be the influence of the crown, that is, so totally unnecessary has been this new plan of government, that his royal pupil has never found it necessary to submit to the calamity of a Whig ministry but for three short years (strictly speaking not so often), at three different intervals, during a reign of half a century.

But to dwell a little longer on the necessity of the case.

Lord Bute must be supposed to have understood the records of the past very differently from what they can now be understood.

Had there ever appeared in these Whig families, in the Walpoles, in the Townshends, and the Pelhams, any opinions inconsistent with the reverence that was due to their sovereign; any improper disregard of the interests of the prerogative; any idle ebullitions of unqualified democracy that could disquiet or displease a monarch of the Brunswick race? The more ardent friends of the popular part of the constitution may indeed think that, with all their merits, the Whig families have had their faults; that they first made, and never afterwards repealed or modified the Septennial Bill; that they sacrificed the interests of England to those of Hanover, as their sovereigns required; that at all times they were quietists rather than reformers. These accusations may be preferred against them by the more ardent friends of the popular part of our constitution; but the friends of the monarchical part had no accusation to offer. Their only semblance of complaint was this, that the sovereign could not *comfortably* rule but by means of the Whig families; that is, could not be independent. Lord Bute should have considered how exaggerated was this sort of statement; should have reflected well on the nature of a limited monarchy; whether the existence of some restraint was not implied in the very notion of it. What restraint, if the facts were coolly examined, could be supposed less than that to which, through the medium of the Whig families, the monarchs of the Brunswick line had been exposed? What restraint more easy to the monarch; what more creditable to the nobility; what restraint on the monarch less likely to debase the minds of the people by filling them with any unreasonable notions of their own importance: what more safe and salutary to all concerned? The truth is, that

there was on the whole no necessity for this plan of Lord Bute—much the contrary; and there was a very serious preliminary objection to it on the grounds of sentiment and feeling; and on the whole, I see not how any one who has meditated on subjects of government can survey the adoption of this new system with any other sentiments than those of the most distinct pain and unequivocal regret.

For it is always to be remembered that it is the spirit with which a constitution is in practice administered, that is the great point of consequence, far more than the letter of the law. It was therefore very properly specified by George II., in his speech at the breaking out of the Rebellion in 1745, that the "*maxims* of the constitution should ever be the rule of his conduct." That sort of discretionary power, which must at every turn be lodged somewhere or other, becomes the safeguard or the enemy of the civil freedom of the community, just as it is, or is not, exercised in a constitutional manner, in favour of the subject. What then is to be the consequence, if every thing is to be administered in that spirit which would be approved of by a monarch and his courtiers, such as monarchs and courtiers, without the slightest disrespect to them, may generally be expected, on the common principles of our common nature, to be found, and gifted with whatever measure you please of natural good sense and benevolence; what is to be the consequence (as every topic that respects either the polity or the affairs of a nation admits at least of a debate) if in every question the king and his friends are to give the tone, and if they who differ from the court side of the question are to be esteemed no longer the friends of their king, and are to be set apart from their fellow subjects as those who are the last to be honoured with the royal favour? i. e. according to the new system of government the last who are to appear in the cabinet, or the great offices of state, or are to become king's counsel, or post captains, or officers of excise or customs, or rise in the army, or receive ecclesiastical patronage, or have chancellor's livings, or be elevated to the bench; to be the last themselves who are to be so promoted; and to find the same system of silent discountenance extended to their relations and dependents, their friends and connexions. In the mean time, no complaint can

be made, and there is no one to accuse. The king has a right to appoint his own ministers and his own officers through every department of the state; one man can discharge an office as well as another; reasons of preference may exist, but of these the constitution has left the king the sole judge. We may say that he is ill advised; that the men preferred are not the best; that they have won their situations not so much by their known merits as by their known servility: all this we may say, and say truly, and the only answer returned will be, that we want the office for ourselves, and perhaps that we are factious and disloyal.

In the mean time, while the country becomes more and more civilized, it becomes more and more difficult for every man to provide for a family without sinking his rank in society. Professions are more and more preferred for the younger branches. The candidates for patronage continually increase; and if no patronage is to descend but through the medium of the king's friends; if none is to be gained but by those who profess and support high maxims of government on every occasion, what is to be the result?

Perhaps a word may not be uttered all this time by the court, or its friends, or its partisans, apparently unfavourable to the constitution of the country; certainly not a word contradictory to the letter of its laws, or the form of its institutions. Government must be supported; who can doubt it? The crown must have its weight in the system; assuredly—if not by prerogative, as in former times, by influence; by posts, places, and even sinecures. The friends of a limited monarchy are not very well prepared to deny this, and speak rather of the measure of these things than of the things themselves; and thus it happens, that well meaning, independent, and even sensible men either adopt, or do not oppose the new system, and do not perceive that the vital principle by which the constitution of these kingdoms, though always in its letter a strong arbitrary monarchy, was heretofore in its practice rendered a benign limited monarchy, and to all essential purposes a free government; that this vital principle is in truth endangered to the utmost; that it must gradually decline, as the new system grows up in strength and maturity, and the event ultimately be the appearance in our own

government of that torpor and general servility which mark a government more or less arbitrary like the old government of France under Louis XIV. All this, or some recoil of a furious nature directly the reverse, from the supposed peril and despair of the case.

Extremes can be right on no side. The king is not to be a cipher in the state; he is to select his ministers and servants from the public men which the country supplies; but it is *the proper exercise of this discretionary power* that is the question before us; and this should become the subject of your reflections as you read the history of this country from the Revolution downwards; for it is this that is the hinge (if I may be allowed the expression) on which the constitution of the country really turns; this proper exercise of the discretionary power lodged by the constitution in the great executive magistrate to choose his ministers and servants; and as it would be one extreme to leave him no exercise of his judgment, or no powers of choice, on the one hand; so is it, on the other hand, *another* extreme to lay down, and have it avowed as a system, that the government shall always be carried on by those whom he or the court think proper to denominate his friends.

Times and circumstances, the nature and characters of public men, must teach their own lessons; a subject of this singular, delicate, and impalpable nature cannot be marked out by the line and the rule; but we may say, and cannot say it too often, that if the only road to honours and power is the mere personal favour of the sovereign, then, that those men alone will be found from time to time possessed of honours and power who are favourable to the maxims of prerogative—to the principles of harsh government; who are very indulgent critics of the measures of ministers; who are very careless auditors of the public expense; who are not made very uneasy by sinecures, jobs, and pensions; who are not very ready to try or punish public defaulters, unless they be indeed the writers of libels; who are, in a word, always unwilling to assist, or rather who are always willing to impede in its operations the democratic part of our mixed constitution. Whether it be by such men and such principles that the constitution of these kingdoms has been saved (not to

speak of our Plantagenets, our Tudors, and our Charles's), but derived from James II., from Lord Bolingbroke, from the Jacobites of 1715 and 1745, and above all, from that silent tendency to deterioration which belongs to every thing valuable among mankind; whether it is to such men and such principles that we are to ascribe the freedom of this country at this moment, must be left to the consideration of those who can push their inquiries beyond the forms of things into their principles and essence; and who will soon perceive that however necessary to every civil polity must be its ranks and establishments, its officers and magistrates, and above all, its great magistrate the king as supreme; that all this is but an inferior and even (if I may use such an expression) but a vulgar part of the whole, for it is what has been accomplished by France and Austria, and every other monarchy in Europe; and that the real and rare, and above all price inestimable peculiarity of our constitution, is that democratic principle which can pervade and influence the whole, and yet not produce (its more natural fruits) confusion, disorder, and folly, but act in perfect consistence with the peace and best interests of the state; and which, whenever it becomes extinct, and can no longer thus influence and pervade the whole (from whatever cause the extinction may take place), a new system that has betrayed the constitution, the necessities of the times which have destroyed its maxims, either or both; whatever be the cause or the system that, in a word, leaves men of talents and property without popular motives of action, will assuredly, sooner or later, leave this great kingdom no longer to be distinguished from others that do, or have existed, on the continent or elsewhere; its lower orders without spirit, its middle ranks without opinions, its public assemblies without weight, and its kings without a people.

Before the Revolution, the favourites of our monarchs were often driven away from the sovereign, fined, imprisoned, or executed; and the democratic part of our constitution, on these occasions, rushed forth (if I may be allowed the expression) to teach the monarchical part its proper duties in its own rude and unceremonious manner. But these were, in fact, more or less, revolutions in the government. It is not thus that we can wish, in our own times, the personal

character of our sovereign to be humbled, or the faults and failings, that may be more or less inseparable from any hereditary wearer of a crown, to be brought before the tribunal, and visited by the direct censure of the community. To set an array democracy against monarchy, and merely to leave the one to correct the mistakes and punish the offences of the other, is no very refined or rational expedient for the management of a state. It is every thing the reverse. It may have been resorted to by men who were hurried on by the torrent of circumstances, like our ancestors in the time of Charles I., or the patriots of Greece and Rome, who conceived they had no other resource against tyranny and oppression; but the politicians of a highly civilized and intelligent country will always consider any open collision in the state as the greatest of all calamities, unless it be the absence of civil freedom itself; and they will therefore look round very carefully to find, if possible, some expedient for the proper management of a community under a mixed monarchical system of government, the representative assembly having the power of taxation, and the king the power of dissolving them.

Now to those who are meditating the subject of a good constitution of government in this elementary manner, an aristocracy would first present itself; and at length an aristocracy with popular feelings would appear, as I conceive, the great desideratum. From such an aristocracy men might be chosen who might be ministers, not favourites; who could sympathize with the democratic part of the constitution, yet be naturally attached to the office and prerogative of the sovereign, might be themselves objects of love and respect to the one, and of kindness and esteem to the other; of confidence to both.

But how is such an aristocracy—an aristocracy with popular feelings, to be found? It could not well be generated by mere institution; none such has ever appeared in the world. A monarch may be easily created; the people we have already; but where is to be found such a cement of the two, as an aristocracy with popular feelings? Set an order of men apart, give them privileges and titles of honour, and you raise up a nobility: but it will only be to leave them

to unite with the sovereign at all times against the public, to render them insolent and unfeeling to their inferiors. The patricians of Rome, the nobles of Venice, even the feudal nobility of Germany and France, none of these are the exact description of men we wish for.

Now I must confess it appears to me, that we were furnished very tolerably with what we could desire, when we had the aristocracy of England such as it existed during the reigns of George I. and George II. Consider it in all its functions, relations, opinions, feelings: a nobility who were graced with privileges and honours; armed with property and power; who had placed the reigning family on the throne, but who had done this on popular principles; who were thus bound to the king, but were also pledged to the people; who were connected with the sovereign by the enjoyment and expectation of titles and offices, and yet united to the people, first, by a common resistance to an arbitrary power, then by common laws, common maxims and opinions, religious and political, mutual respect, common interests of property and security; and were even allied and interwoven into the mass of their fellow-citizens by mingling, through the medium of their dearest relations, in the democratic branch of the legislature. A more favourable situation of things could not well be supposed by the most sanguine speculator on the social union of mankind. The misfortune would undoubtedly be, that even this aristocracy might not be sufficiently jealous of the prerogative of the crown, not sufficiently alive to the claims and rights of the subject. But on the whole, a considerable approach would be made to secure, in a peaceful and steady manner, the main interests of all the constituent parts of the community.

Here we must come to a pause. It is now that the new system of Lord Bute presents itself. It was the very end and aim of this new system to destroy this very aristocracy, at least that part of this aristocracy with which we are at present concerned; that part more particularly distinguished for its more popular principles, receiving confidence alike from the favour of the sovereign, and the approbation and gratitude of the people. Far from turning it to the great purposes to which it might have been applied, far from

bringing it forward to the discharge of all the high and healing offices of which it was capable, it was the immediate effect of the new system to counteract all such purposes, to disregard all such offices, to entertain far other views of the constitution of England, or of the benefits to be derived from any constitution of government; to provide in a manner totally different, for the dignity and happiness of the sovereign, for the respectability of the aristocracy, and for the welfare of the people.

According to the new system, the king was to be as independent of his aristocracy, and not as intermingled as possible in all their interests and sympathies; to be rescued from the necessity of sharing his consequence with any order, or any individuals of that order. He was to rule by men who looked only to the throne, not by the Whig families who had some respect for themselves, as well as reverence for the monarch; and who looked also to the people. He was to choose his ministers, and that entirely as his own partialities directed him; that is, "favourites," under the title of friends, were to be preferred as fit objects of his confidence, to men who had characters and opinions of their own, and who therefore could operate with a salutary influence on his. But this was not all. Great efforts were to be made to accomplish this destruction of the political influence and popular feelings of the Whig families; a miserable system of intrigue was to be entered upon. The least honourable men of each knot, and division of the aristocracy were to be brought over to the court party, the better to destroy all confidence and union among those who remained; to divide, and therefore rule; to degrade, and therefore render insignificant, was the very scheme and essence of the plan, involved in the very supposition of it. And these new converts, these deserters and stragglers from their family and party attachments, from the notions of their ancestors, from the popular sympathies by which they had hitherto been so honourably distinguished, these were the men who were to be associated as friends and familiars to the bosom of their sovereign. The people in the mean time were to lose their former respect for public men, whom they were now to see mutually betraying and accusing each other; and even for the sovereign himself, whom they

were also to see, as far as they could judge, practising upon the mean and selfish passions of his aristocracy.

I confess that it appears to me, a more unhappy expedient than the new system could not well have been devised, for procuring the extinction of every thing rare and precious in the constitution of our government, for destroying the British patriotism of the monarch, the British spirit of the nobility, the British loyalty of the people. Prerogative was to remain, and privilege was to remain, and obedience was to remain; but all these necessary elements of government were to lose their former sympathies, limits, and nature: they were no longer to be what they were made by the Revolution of 1688.

The maxims of a court are not the security of a court; servility is not loyalty; and attachment to civil freedom not republicanism. It may answer well to the designing on each side, to confound principles and characters in themselves distinct. But when proper allowance has been made, and pardon extended to the unavoidable faults and mistakes of public men and private men of every description, of parties and of their leaders, it will always be competent for any one who really understands the mixed and free constitution of this country, if he pleases, to distinguish from each other those who think too exclusively of the king, those who think too exclusively of the people; and those who are not only virtuous, but wise enough to think of the best interests of both. I condescend not to speak of those, who think only of themselves, who have no political principle at all, who mean only to get place or preferment in their profession.

Here I had been accustomed to end the lecture, after I had referred my hearers to Burke's Thoughts on the present Discontents, to other pamphlets of the time, and to the general principles of Lord Bolingbroke's writings, as contrasted with those of Mr. Burke; but in the year 1823, I had been struck with certain appearances that I had observed in and out of parliament, and I from that time always ended the lecture, by subjoining what I shall now read, written, you will remember, in the year 1823.

This new system had a tendency to increase servility in the nation in the way I have suggested; but it did not follow, though it should succeed, as it did succeed in a most unfor-

fortunate manner, still it did not follow, that it should extinguish, in a country like this, the spirit of freedom; the spirit that naturally belongs to the commercial and manufacturing classes, as they rise into affluence and importance. But in this case it will have, undoubtedly, an effect in giving to this spirit, as exhibited in these classes, a more republican tone and feeling. The new system has gone far to destroy the Whig families and their influence. It is possible also that the great events of modern times, that mistakes of the Whigs themselves, that the fickle nature of human opinions, that all, or any of these, may have contributed to the same effect; but any change of this kind will be, to all who love the constitution of their country, and who, I must presume to add, have examined and understand it, a circumstance deeply to be lamented. For a fearful void, an arena that may very easily be covered with tumult and bloodshed, is immediately disclosed when the monarch is set on one side, and the people on the other, and an aristocracy with popular feelings is withdrawn from between them. It can never have been the interest of the people, still less of the crown, to have any alteration like this in our political system. What may not be the fortunes of our constitution, and the experiments to which it may be exposed, if the ancient friends of liberty, the friends of liberty upon the ancient and tried model, are no longer to be treated with confidence and respect?

When Mr. Burke had to defend his country, as he conceived, from the democratic principles of France, it was to the Whigs and their principles, and the Revolution of 1688, that he appealed. Mr. Sheridan, in like manner, with directly opposite opinions, did the same; and it was for the people of England to decide between them. Nothing could be more valuable to a community than to have, at any crisis like this, a common test and standard to which they could refer. Nothing can be so important to a nation already possessed of prosperity and freedom to so remarkable a degree; nothing so important, as a ready means like this, of protecting themselves from the heats and delusions of particular seasons, as a ready means, at all times, of distinguishing from each other the man of speculation and the man of sense.

In a word, they who have proposed and patronised the new

system have been preparing the people of England, more or less, for this species of monarchy which has been represented by Hume as the euthanasia, the natural and tranquil death, of the British constitution; or they have been preparing us, on the other hand, for the influence of those who are desirous to refer every thing to the people, to their public meetings, their resolutions and addresses, their will, in short, and their wisdom, when enlightened by the press, to be produced on every occasion, and to be considered as a specific for every political disease that can approach us. But such an order of things is republicanism, under whatever name it may be disguised.

Such a government may be better for America: by some it may be thought better for England; but it is not the constitution of England, and on this head, at least, let no mistakes be made.

Any effect of the kind now described, might be little in the contemplation of Lord Bute, of those who first advised the new system; of those who have since, or those who, even now, venture to maintain it; but it is no uncommon occurrence in the history of human affairs, to see men, while they are escaping from one uneasiness or restraint, incur evils of an opposite nature, far more disagreeable in themselves, and far more destructive in their consequences.



LECTURE XXXI.

AMERICAN WAR.

I HAVE in my last lecture alluded to the opening of the present reign, and to the new system of government which was then adopted. I do not think it necessary to enter into the discussion of such events as took place. I have proposed to your consideration such observations and principles as will enable you, I conceive, both to explain and judge of them.

The narrative and details, to which you are to apply them, you must yourselves study.

I hasten to the subject which I always proposed to myself as the proper termination of these lectures—the American War.

Prior to the French Revolution, this subject could not have been well presented to you; for the passions that it had excited could scarcely have been said to have properly subsided. But at the very name and sound of the French Revolution, every other revolution and event loses its first, and even proper interest; and we now discuss the measures and administration of Lord North, or the conduct of the American congress, the claim of the right of taxation on the one part, and the resistance to that claim on the other, *almost* with the same impartiality which would be felt by the reasoners of after ages. Such sentiments therefore as occur to me, and as occur to others, I shall lay before you in the most unreserved manner; considering the whole as now become entirely a portion of history, which I may fairly attempt to convert, as I would any other, to the proper purposes of your instruction.

The American War must immediately appear to you a subject of historical curiosity. By the event of that war, an

independent empire has arisen, boundless in extent, and removed from the reach of the arms—secure at least from the invasions of Europe; beginning its career with such advantages as our communities in the old world never possessed; beginning almost from the point, to which they have but arrived in the progress of nearly two thousand years. It is even possible that what England once was, may have to be traced out hereafter by the philosophers of distant ages, from the language, the customs, the manners, the political feelings of men inhabiting the banks of the Mississippi, or enjoying the benefits of society amid what may be now a wilderness, inaccessible to the footsteps of every human being.

Such is the American War as a subject of historical curiosity to the readers of whatever clime or nation. But to ourselves it is even more attractive and important: one half of our empire has been violently rent from the other. We no longer, in case of a war, shut out that long line of harbours from the ships and fleets of our enemies; we no longer let loose the privateers of America upon their trade; we no longer man our fleets with her strong and skilful seamen: all these advantages are no longer exclusively our own; they may even be turned against us. Great Britain seems no longer to overshadow the globe, the west as well as the east, with the image of her greatness. Assuredly at the peace of 1763, the power and empire of this country seemed to the nations, and might have appeared even to the philosophers of Europe, above all ancient, and above all modern fame. To what extent that power and empire might have been carried by the interchange of the natural productions of America, with the manufactures of Britain, by the proper application and sympathy of youthful and matured strength, it is indeed difficult for us to determine; but the subject of the possible greatness of Great Britain did not a little disquiet, as it appears, the speculations of our enemies, whether feeling for their posterity, or attentive to their own advantages.

How then was it, or why that this promising appearance of things was, on a sudden, to cease? How was it that this great empire was to be torn asunder? That France, and other unfriendly powers on the continent, had no longer to dread the united strength of England and America; but

could even please themselves, like Tacitus of old while in terror of the enemies of Rome, with the spectacle of a civil war, and employ themselves in turning the force of the one to the destruction of the other?

You may be told, indeed, in a word, that Great Britain wished to tax America, and that America successfully resisted. But how, may you reasonably think, could such things be? Could not a dispute about revenue have been composed without an open rupture and a separation; without the shedding of blood; without the horrors and calamities of a civil war? And again, if arms were to be resorted to, how could it happen that Great Britain could fail in the contest? That the same power which had just humbled the House of Bourbon should not be a match for her own colonies; should not be able, after overpowering the fleets and armies of the first nations of Europe, immediately to discomfit the farmers and merchants of America? How are such events to be explained? What demon of folly got possession of our councils? What malignant star shed its influence on our arms? Where were our statesmen, and where were our generals?

I conceive, therefore, that there is now before you a very striking subject of historical interest, if you can but abstract yourselves, as you must always endeavour to do, from your present knowledge of the event, and set yourselves to consider what were the principles in action at the time, and what it was natural to expect would be the consequences: comparing, as you proceed in the history, these expected consequences with the real events; reading, indeed, the narrative, but stopping from time to time to gather up the instruction which the facts, thus reviewed, are fitted to afford you.

I will now, therefore, mention the books which you may consult—The history of the American Revolution has not yet been written by any of the great masters of literature; and since the appearance of the French Revolution, I know not that any writer of this description would be properly rewarded by any attention which the public would pay to his work, whatever might be his merit.

Another circumstance is also to be mentioned: he would not find the precise materials he might expect.

The American patriots, when they met in congress to deliberate on the petition to be made to Great Britain, desired with closed doors, and what passed cannot now be known; yet the feelings and reasonings of such men, on such an occasion, would have constituted the most instructive part of the whole dispute.

The same may be nearly said of the debates in our own parliament, which could only have been second in interest to the former. But the result of these debates will extremely disappoint you; it is meagre and imperfect: access to our House of Commons was sometimes altogether denied, and was always rendered, as it appears from passages in the debate themselves, a matter of some difficulty. The consequence was very unfortunate, not indeed to the same extent as in the former case, but still to a degree much to be lamented. Some idea may indeed be formed, from these debates, of the talents of Col. Barré, Sir G. Saville, and even of Burke; some, perhaps, though a most inadequate one, of the powers of Fox; and, on the whole, a general notion of the sort of opposition that was made in parliament to the scheme of coercing America. But no idea whatever, I am satisfied, can be formed of the powers of Lord North, or even of Thurlow and Wedderburne; in short, of the pleasantry, the arguments, and the eloquence by which the ministerial system was recommended (and, successfully) to the approbation of the country gentlemen and the independent members of the lower house of parliament.

I do not say that we have no debates left, and that we have no opportunities of instructing ourselves amid the reasoning of our statesmen and legislators; but I say that they are not at all what we might have expected; and not at all what they should have been in a civilized nation, and under a free government like ours.

We must make, indeed, the best of our materials; and I shall endeavour to do so immediately. But I thought it necessary to apprise you of what I have felt a most disagreeable disappointment when looking round for information

to proceed, with regard to the books you may have recourse to. The first, great magazine of information which

may be mentioned in the Remembrances, a series of seventy volumes, comprehending all the documents relative to the American contest that could be collected at the time by a London bookseller, Alison. Alison, however, was an opposition bookseller; the Remembrances therefore, remembers chiefly such letters, speeches, and publications as serve to display the injustice of the designs and the folly of the councils of Great Britain.

The whole must be examined, thoroughly by all who are to write upon the subject of the American War; but as there is an index of contents, I would rather advise the student to have recourse to this work, when other works have been considered, and when he has become a judge of what is or is not important. What he should look for is, such local and appropriate information from America as cannot find a place in the regular histories he reads. The first volume, containing what are called prior documents, from 1764 to 1775, should be examined: though most of them will have occurred in other places, there are some that would not readily be met with elsewhere. The earlier parts of a contest are always the most instructive.

The history of Gordon, in four thick octavo volumes, will, in like manner, be consulted with best effect, when other accounts have been perused. The author appears to have had access to good sources of information; and the work is an immense assemblage of facts presented to the reader with little or no comment, and with great impartiality. In this instance, as in the former, I would advise you to select from the index such parts as may be important, and you will sometimes be rewarded, though you will often think the account given very short and inadequate to its subject. The first volume is the most curious, as entering more minutely into all the views and reasonings of the American patriots, into all the local politics, contests with the governors, and petty but serious irritations which took place in America prior to the commencement of hostilities. The work, too, is valuable as confirming, by its simple and plain statements, the conclusions which would be drawn from other and better histories respecting very important points—the distresses of Washington, the injurious effects of the depreciation of the

paper money, the vain attempts of congress to encounter them by the operation of laws, &c. &c. On the whole, Gordon's appears to me a history that has been made much use of, though it is in fact superseded by the superior and more concise history of Ramsay.

Jefferson's History of Virginia is always recommended, but it is merely what might be expected from its title, and is little to our present purpose.

Morse's Geography will supply you with information respecting the particular states of America, their history, more appropriate advantages, and separate constitutions. It is a common book, and will be of use.

Franklin's works will be found very entertaining and instructive, particularly part of his life, written by himself, and every thing that relates to America and the subjects of political economy: e. g. his letters to Governor Shirley, which contain the first predictions on the subject of American taxation, so early as 1754; and a remarkable paper printed in January, 1768, where the American case is calmly and well stated, much upon the same principles and in the same spirit with Burke's celebrated speeches; and a letter not less reasonable, of an earlier date, and therefore more important, in January, 1766. This letter was intended to show that the Stamp Act should be repealed, &c. &c. Franklin's very remarkable examination, in February, 1766, before the British parliament, so creditable to him, may be found also in these volumes, with other curious documents, which I have not now time even to enumerate. The powerful understanding of Franklin in the very peculiar circumstances of America, made him a person of such consequence, that every thing relating either to him or his publications becomes a subject of history. The editor of the present work intimates that writings of his have been prevented from seeing the light by the management of particular persons in this country. Since I drew up these lectures, a quarto volume of his correspondence has been published; another is expected. It was agreeable to me to find that his entertaining and instructive letters, as far as our present subject was concerned, only confirmed what I had already written.

You will sometimes see the work of Chalmers referred to

It is an immense, heavy, tedious book, to explain the legal history of the different colonies of America. It should be consulted on all such points. It goes down to the Revolution of 1688. But it is impossible to read it. The leaves, however, should be turned over, for curious particulars often occur, and the nature of the first settlement and original laws of each colony should be known. The last chapter, indeed, ought to be read.

The right to tax the colonies became a great point of dispute. Chalmers means to show that the sovereignty of the British parliament existed over America, because the settlers, though emigrants, were still English subjects, and members of the empire.

Such are the books that may be *consulted*, as in themselves important, and connected with the general subject.

I now proceed to propose to you such a course of reading as may be gone through: first, on a larger scale; next, on a smaller.

In the first place, the debates in parliament may be looked at. Many important documents are there to be met with; and these, and some of the speeches of the celebrated men on each side of the house, should be read. The protest, for instance, in the lords, on the repeal of the Stamp Act, is the best statement I have seen of the views and reasonings of those who *supported* the system of American taxation.

Secondly, there is a History of the American War, by Stedman. Stedman served in the British army during the war.

Thirdly, there is a history of the American contest by Dr. Ramsay, who was himself a member of congress.

Fourthly, some of the letters of Washington to congress, were published.

Fifthly, a Life of Washington, by Marshall.

These I select as books that contain original information, and should be read.

From the pamphlets that have appeared, I select, in like manner, Paine's Common Sense, the tracts of Dean Tucker, two pamphlets by Robinson, afterwards Lord Rokeby, the speeches printed by Burke, and the pamphlet of Dr. Johnson, "Taxation no Tyranny."

They who are not at leisure to examine these books and pamphlets will find the volumes of the Annual Register an excellent substitute for them all. They contain, in the most concise form, the most able, impartial, and authentic history of the dispute which can be found. The account is understood to have been drawn up by Burke, and if so (and there is no doubt of it), the arguments on each side are displayed with an impartiality that is quite admirable.

Lastly, from these works and from others have been drawn up the histories of Adolphus and Belsham. These histories may be read by those who can read no more, but they must neither of them be read separately or without the other. They are drawn up on very different principles:—Belsham, conceiving that the Americans were right in their resistance; Adolphus thinking, certainly wishing his readers to think, that they were entirely wrong: the one written on what are called Whig, and the other on Tory principles of government. The one is, I conceive, sometimes too indulgent to the congress; the other, always so to the English ministry. Belsham I consider as by far the most reasonable of the two in every thing that is laid down respecting the American war. The objectionable passages in Adolphus I found so many, that after taking notes for the purpose, I saw them swell to such a size, that all comment of this kind appeared to me in a lecture quite impossible, and you must learn to comment upon them yourselves, as I have done, by the perusal of better writers. The merit of Adolphus is, that he puts the reader very fairly in possession of the views and arguments of Lord Chatham and others who opposed the system, that, in defiance of them, he himself supports.

I should expect, then, on the whole, that these two, Belsham and Adolphus, and the particular parts of the Annual Register, would at least be read by every one who hears me. Ramsay should next be added: the author is short, and, if possible, much of the fourth and fifth volumes of Marshall. Burke's speeches will of course be read, and any pamphlet that was written by such a man as Dr. Johnson. Lord Chatham was so considerable a personage during this period, that the life of him which has been published, which is at least

the best account of them and his speeches that we have, should by no means be overlooked.

And here I might, perhaps, leave the subject, having endeavoured to excite your curiosity, and pointed out the best means I know, of gratifying it. Aware too, that all proper instruction will be offered to you by the works I have mentioned; the rest must be labour and reflection on your part; and you must become wiser and better on this occasion as on others (a sentiment this I have often expressed to you) by the faithful exertion and virtuous use of the talents and opportunities entrusted to your disposal.

I am, however, not satisfied without attempting to do more than I have yet done; without attempting to assist you in shaping out this instruction into a few distinct and palpable masses. Many of you who hear me may be destined to have influence hereafter; as men of education, you can none of you be entirely without it; and neither the world nor our own island are in a state, as I have before intimated, to admit of any indolence or ignorance on political subjects in those who ought to be the efficient members of the community.

I shall, therefore, in the first place, touch upon the principles and measures of the supporters of the American war on this side of the Atlantic; then; on the other side of the Atlantic. Next, on the conduct of the war itself. In the last, place, on the people of America.

Many lessons may, no doubt, be drawn from each; many more than have occurred to me; many more than I can here conveniently lay before you: what however appear to me of the most importance, I will select and state to you.

North America, as you know, was peopled and civilized chiefly by adventurers from this country; that is, in a word, England was the parent, and America the dependent state. I have already made observations on the connexions of different states with each other; I did so in my lecture on the Union with Scotland. The observations it would be very convenient to me, if I could on this occasion recall to your recollection.

The sum and substance, however, of them was, that, in such a case as this before us, in the case of a mother country

and colonies, an ultimate separation of the two was the result to which the progress of the prosperity of the dependent state naturally tended; that, as in the relation of parent and child, helplessness is to be succeeded by strength, strength by maturity, maturity by independence, so in states and empires issuing from each other, new sentiments and new duties are to arise from the changing situation of the parties; and that it is the business and the wisdom of the parent state, more particularly, to conform without a murmur to those eternal laws which have ordained a constant progress in all things, and which have decreed that nations, like individuals, are no longer to require from youth and from manhood the blind and unconditional submission which is connected with the imbecility and inexperience of the infant and the child; that by skill and forbearance this ultimate separation may be protracted to the benefit of the mother country, but that the separation itself must be always kept in view as an issue at length inevitable, and that the euthanasia of the connexion is an affectionate intercourse of good offices, an alliance of more than ordinary sympathy and sincerity, and a gradual transmutation of the notions of protection and submission, of supremacy and allegiance, into those of interchanged regard and respect, into those of a sense of common interest in the friendship and kindness and growing prosperity of each other.

Such must always be the philosophy of the case when the colonies can ever, by their extent and natural fertility, be advanced into any situation imitating that of the son to the father in the relations of social life. In the one case as in the other, much unhappiness may be caused, much injury may arise both to the parent and to the child, by a want of good temper and compliance with the ordinances of nature; but the wisdom which these ordinances point out is at all times the same, equally obvious and indispensable.

Now the case of America and England was one precisely of this nature. America, in extent boundless, in natural advantages unexampled, removed to a distance from the mother country, how was it possible that the natural tendency of things, in all other cases, should in this particular case of America and England, cease to operate? To what end, in-

deed, or purpose, as far as the best interests of either, or the great interests of humanity and the world were concerned? Why was a great continent, a country of lakes, into which our island might be thrown and "buried; of forests, which might overshadow our principalities and kingdoms; of falls and cataracts, which might sweep away our cities; and of descending seas, to which our noblest streams might in comparison be thought but rivulets and brooks; why was such a country which the God of nature had clothed with all his highest forms of magnificence and grandeur; why was such a country, though in the mysterious dispensations of his providence it was to be raised into existence by an island in the old world; why was it to be impeded in its career by the manacles that were to be thrown over its giant limbs by the selfishness of its parent—why prevented from rushing on in its destined race, to become itself the new world, as Europe had been the old, teeming with the life and glowing with the business of human society, and doubling, trebling, multiplying to an indefinite extent the number of sentient beings, to which our planet may give support; why prevented from journeying on with all the accumulating resources of its independent strength, till the same progress of things which had thus ripened the colony into a kingdom, and a kingdom into the new Europe of the western hemisphere, should have advanced the planet itself to its final consummation, and the labours and the grandeur and the happiness of man, on this side the grave, should be no more.

There surely could be no reason, either on any general system of benevolence or on any practical scheme of human policy, why these great laws of our particular portion of the universe should not be cheerfully acquiesced in by any intelligent statesman, should not be patiently submitted to as a matter of necessity by every practical politician in the parent state. What other hope, what possible alternative, presented itself? Stay the sun in its course, because he has warmed the nations of the Atlantic till they are no longer dependent on our bounty!—arrest the principles of increase and decay, because they no longer appear to operate to our particular aggrandizement! Vain and hopeless efforts! Rather turn the opportunities and indulgences of nature which yet remain

to their best advantage; far better to be grateful to the Author of all good for blessings past and to come, and not from a blind, preposterous, unschooled, and irreverent ambition, first and struggle where it is in vain to contend, and perhaps hurry on, a century or two before their time, all those evils of comparative decline and decreasing power which are now terrifying your imagination; and interrupting all the regular conclusions of the understanding. Protract, if you please, by all the expedients of mild government, the day of separation; but to endeavour to adjourn it for ever, and that by force, is ridiculous, for it is in the very nature of things impossible.

Views of this kind should certainly have presented themselves to our statesmen soon after the middle of the last century. It was not necessary that they should be displayed in their speeches in parliament, or in their conversation in private society. But assuredly they should have been present to their minds when they came to speculate in their closets, and still more when they came to advise their sovereign in his cabinet.

Great caution, and a most conciliatory system of government from England to America, would no doubt have been the result; no high assertions of authority, either in theory or in practice; no search into dormant claims; no statements and adjustments of rights and duties, before uncertain and undefined; no agitation of perilous questions of supremacy and obedience; no experiments of legislation for the exclusive benefit of the parent state; in short, nothing that should disturb that general tendency which may be observed in mankind to retain their habits of thinking and acting (all these would have been in favour of the mother country), long after the reasons in which they originated have ceased to exist.

Had sentiments of this kind influenced the councils of Great Britain soon after the accession of his present majesty to the throne, it is impossible to say how long the two countries might have subsisted in a long established system of generous superintendance on the one side, and habitual confidence and duty on the other. Many think the French Revolution would not have happened, had not the American

preceded it; but at all events the contest between England and her colonies might have been long protracted by a philosophic policy of the kind I have described; we should at least have avoided the folly of an opposite system, and of producing before its time the event we dreaded.

But we must now turn aside from those general views and great laws and principles of nature, which statesmen, amid their humbler details and more minute contrivances for the interest of their communities, ought never to lose sight of, and we must descend all at once to the miserable, mortifying, melancholy facts of our dispute with America.

I will describe this dispute in a few sentences.

We conclude a triumphant peace with the House of Bourbon in 1763. The French are obliged to abandon America, and all Europe is jealous of our present, and apprehensive of our future prosperity; and this happy state of things no sooner takes place, America and ourselves are no sooner in a situation to enjoy and urge to the utmost the prosperity of each other, than what is the consequence? Acts are drawn up by the British parliament to enforce restrictions on the trade of the colonies; to put an end to what was denominated their smuggling trade. The greatest irritation and considerable injury are thus occasioned; the mother country appears no longer the protectress and nurse of their prosperity. This is the first specimen I have to mention of our statesmen, and the next is this:—A resolution is actually formed to draw a revenue from America by the authority of the British parliament, which revenue, however small on its first introduction, might afterwards, when the precedent was once established be increased, as it was very obvious, to any extent which the same British parliament might think proper. This is the second specimen; the rest is in due order. When this measure is resisted by America, as might have been expected, troops are sent from England to insist upon obedience. The sword is actually drawn; from year to year the contest is maintained; our rivals and enemies at length openly join the cause of the Americans, and the result of the whole is, that after a bloody and most perilous struggle, we are obliged to acknowledge the independence of our colonies, and be very well satisfied that we have been able to maintain our own

independence, and support our own national consequence against the world.

But what a drama, what a tragedy, what a long spectacle of impolicy, is thus in a few words described. What solution are we to produce for such miserable infatuation in the most enlightened nation on earth, at the close of the eighteenth century?

"The whole of your political conduct," said Lord Chatham when addressing the ministers of the country in February, 1776, "has been one continued series of weakness, temerity, despotism, ignorance, futility, negligence, blundering, and the most notorious servility, incapacity, and corruption."

"These ministers," said his son, the late Mr. Pitt, at a subsequent period, "will destroy the empire they were called upon to save, before the indignation of a great and suffering people can fall upon their heads, in the punishment which they deserve. I affirm the war to have been a most accursed, wicked, barbarous, cruel, unnatural, unjust, and diabolical war."

Yet were these ministers, the advisers and supporters of this war, as individuals, men of education and ability. Lord North was the delight of every private society which he honoured with his presence, and in the senate appeared in every respect fitted for his situation as far as natural talents were concerned; second to none in the powers of conducting a debate, unrivalled in the possession of a most inexhaustible fund of elegant pleasantry, and of a temper that was always the last to be ruffled, and the first to be appeased. In both Houses they who resisted the impolitic system of American coercion were for several years left on every occasion in the most insignificant minorities, and the war was supported by a clear and ardent majority of every division of the community, with perhaps the exception for some time of a part of the manufacturers and merchants, those who found their trade interrupted, and were afraid of losing what they had lent to the American merchants.

Now, this on the whole appears to me a case well fitted to excite your inquiries. What are the causes that can be mentioned as having produced such unhappy effects on this side of the Atlantic?

I will offer to your consideration such as have occurred to me. I will mention first those that were natural and not discreditable to us, then those that were discreditable.

Of the first kind, then, was a general notion in the English people that their cause was just. The sovereignty was supposed to be in the parent state; in the rights of sovereignty were included the rights of taxation: England, too, was considered as having protected the Americans from the French in the war that had been lately concluded. The Americans therefore, when they resisted the mother country, in her attempt to tax them, were considered on the first account as rebellious, and on the second as ungrateful.

The sentiment, then, of the contest, as far as it was honourable to the inhabitants of this country, originated in the considerations just mentioned. But this sentiment would have produced no such effect as the American war, had it not been excited and exasperated by other considerations which I shall now lay before you, and which were not creditable to us.

These I shall endeavour to illustrate in the ensuing lectures, because they were such as I think you may be exposed to the influence of yourselves hereafter, and their operation can never be favourable to the interests of your country. Of the first which I have mentioned, the supposed right of taxation, I shall now say no more, but shall allude finally to it before I advert to the conduct of the war. The ministers and people of England might neither *mean* to be, nor *be*, the tyrants and oppressors which they were thought by the people of America, but whether they were as reasonable and prudent, or even as well justified in their measures of taxation, much less of coercion, as they supposed, is quite another question.

It is this last part of the general subject, that which is discreditable to us, that I shall for some time more particularly place in your view. I may thus appear to some only an advocate for the American cause. I am not so; but I am anxious to show you the unpardonable mistakes that were made by the statesmen and people of Great Britain, that you may be the better able to avoid such mistakes yourselves.

Turning then, at present, from the causes first mentioned, an opinion in the people of England that the Americans were

passions and ungrateful, and attending to the causes that were less honourable in the sentiment, and that were discreditable to us; and that operated so fatally to the reduction and extermination of the American contest, the first war, I think, a deplorable ignorance or inattention to the great leading principles of political economy.

The result of this ignorance or inattention was an indisposition to listen to the arguments of those who laid down from time to time, and explained the proper manner in which colonies might become sources of revenue to the mother country, not by means of taxes and taxgatherers, but by the interchange of their appropriate products, and by the exertions of the real revenue officers of every country, the merchants, farmers, and manufacturers. This was one of what I consider as the discreditable causes of the war on our part.

Secondly, A very blind and indeed disgraceful selfishness, in the mere matter of money and payment of taxes; this was another.

It was hence that the country gentlemen of the House of Commons, and the landed interest of England, had actually the egregious folly to support ministers in their scheme of coercing America, from an expectation that their own burdens, their land-tax, for instance, might be made lighter, or at least prevented from becoming heavier.

Thirdly, An overweening national pride, not operating in its more honourable direction to beat off invaders, or repel the approach of insult or injustice, but in making us despise our enemy, vilify the American character, and suppose that nothing could stand opposed to our own good pleasure, or resist the valour of our fleets and armies.

Fourthly, Very high principles of government; a disposition to push too far the rights of authority; to insist too sternly on the expediency of control; to expect the duty of submission to laws without much inquiry into the exact reasonableness of their enactments. These high principles of government operated very fatally, when the question was, whether Great Britain could not only claim, but actually exercise, sovereignty over the colonies of America; whether the people of America could be constitutionally taxed by the

parliament of Great Britain, a parliament in which it could have no representatives.

Fifthly, A certain vulgarity of thinking on political subjects; narrow, and what will commonly be found popular notions in national concerns. In these last few words I might perhaps at once comprehend all the causes I have already mentioned. It was thus that men like Mr. Burke, who drew their reasonings from philosophic principles of a general nature, were not comprehended or were disregarded, while the most commonplace declaimer was applauded, and decided the different issues of the dispute.

Such were, I think, the causes (discreditable to us) which, without entering into any metaphysical niceties, may be said in a general manner to have led to the destruction of the British empire in America, as far as the legislators and people of England were concerned. I will recapitulate them, because I mean to illustrate them in the ensuing lectures, on account of what I fancy to be their importance, and I shall illustrate them not by selecting and endeavouring to discuss and decide upon the different arguments and events that this contest produced (this you must do yourselves), but by reading passages from speeches and pamphlets, so as to give you, if possible, in a very short compass, the spirit of the whole; but you must have the causes I have mentioned well infix'd in your memory, that you may continually see the application of what I am reading, for I cannot stay to point it out. The causes, then, that I have mentioned, were (those that were *discreditable* to us, I mean) an ignorance of political economy; a mere blind, disgraceful money selfishness; an overweening national pride; high principles of government; and a certain vulgarity of thinking on political subjects.

Before I proceed, I must stop to observe that it would now be very convenient to me if I could consider you as already acquainted with the facts of this American dispute, but as I know not that I can exactly presume upon this, you will be pleased to remember the following points, which I mention to render more intelligible the illustrations I am going to give of the positions I have laid down.

First then, Mr. G. Grenville proposed to tax America in March, 1764, and in February, 1765, carried his measure to

that effect, the famous Stamp Act. A great sensation was occasioned in America; but in June, 1765, Mr. Grenville went out of office, and the Rockingham administration came in. They repealed the Stamp Act early in the year 1766; but they passed at the same time a declaratory bill, to assert the right of Great Britain to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever.

Here the dispute might to all appearance have terminated, but this ministry being a Whig ministry, was, as Charles Townshend observed, but a lutestring administration, and destined only to last through the spring. In July, 1766, as he had predicted, they were dismissed. He came himself into office, and on some account or other revived the idea of the taxation of America.

During the illness and inefficiency of Lord Chatham, who was the apparent head of the administration, certain duties were laid upon tea, among other articles: this happened in the year 1767. The Duke of Grafton and others then in the cabinet were guilty, not of advising these measures, but, what is the same thing on very important occasions, were guilty of not throwing up their places, when their opinions were overruled. America was again greatly agitated. In 1770, Lord North brought in his bill to repeal these duties; but he retained the duty on tea, that he might thus practically assert the right which Great Britain unfortunately continued to claim, the right of taxing America.

Disturbances followed in the province of Massachusetts—violent disturbances; and General Gage, with a strong military force, was stationed at Boston, where the resistance had been the most outrageous: at length Boston was shut up as a port. This happened in 1774. The Americans hovered round General Gage; the note of preparation of war, as he thought, sounded in his ears. He sent a detachment into the interior, to seize or destroy some military stores, and the first blood was shed in the affair at Lexington, in April, 1775.

In June, 1775, the American intrenchment on Bunker's or Breed's Hill was forced, but not till half the detachment sent on the service lay killed or wounded on the field. Boston was afterwards evacuated. In 1776, General Howe took

possession of New York; and at one interval, the American General Washington seemed scarcely able to maintain before him the appearance of a regular army. But in the autumn of 1777, General Burgoyne and a royal army were totally captured, and this event induced the French to join the Americans early in 1778. Another royal army under Lord Cornwallis, was in consequence captured also, in October, 1781. All idea of conquering America was then, in fact, abandoned, the ministry was at length changed, the peace was made, and the American states were acknowledged independent in 1783.

On the part of the Americans, you will observe that the first meeting of congress was in September, 1774. They issued declarations; drew up addresses to the king, the people of Great Britain, and the people of Canada; then adjourned, and again met in May, 1775. In July, 1776, they declared themselves independent.

Such are a few of the leading facts of this memorable contest.

I will now endeavour to exemplify what I have been laying down. I turn first to the debates of parliament.

It is remarkable enough that the first mention of the Americans, which occurs after the accession of his majesty appears in a message from the king, recommending a proper compensation to be made to them, for their expenses during the great war of 1756; expenses which must therefore have been thought more than proportionate to their natural ability; a message highly creditable both to the parent state and to the colonies. A few pages intervene, and then appear among the ways and means of the session, the unfortunate resolutions of Mr. G. Grenville, in March, 1764, which laid the foundation for the subsequent civil war. In a few words was contained the fatal resolve that tore asunder the empire of Great Britain.

“That towards further defraying the said expenses, it may be proper to charge certain stamp duties on the said colonies and plantations.” Memorable words! This was in 1764; and in a year after, in the spring of 1765, this resolution was formed into a law, which was called the Stamp Act. In his majesty’s speech at the end of the same year, in 1765,

...the same would not occur are those, "That matters of importance have lately occurred in some of his colonies in America." Matters of importance, no doubt! America had revolted!

Mr. Grenville, the original mover of the taxation of America, was now no longer in power; but his speech in defence of the measure, and of his system, still remains; so does that of the first Mr. Pitt, in opposition to both. I shall quote largely from these two; for they contain all the important arguments, and may serve as specimens of the whole subject, and certainly of the reasonings that were then urged on the one side and on the other. The success of Mr. Grenville's reasonings illustrates, as I conceive, the positions I have laid down. It had been contended (you will observe) that taxes might be laid externally, by Great Britain to regulate trade—duties, for instance, on imports and exports; but not internally, to raise revenue.

"I cannot understand," said Mr. Grenville, "the difference between external and internal taxes: this kingdom has the sovereign, the supreme legislative power over America; this is granted; it cannot be denied: taxation is a part of that sovereign power, is one branch of the legislative; it is, and it has been, exercised over those who are not, and who never were represented: the Indian company; the merchants of London; the proprietors of stock, and men of great manufacturing towns; the palatinate of Chester; the bishopric of Durham, before they ever sent any representatives to parliament. . . . Great Britain protects America; America is bound to yield obedience; if not, tell me when the Americans were emancipated The nation has run itself into an immense debt to give them protection; and now, when called upon to contribute to the public expense, an expense arising from themselves, they renounce your authority, insult your officers, and almost break out into open rebellion The seditious spirit of the colonies owes its birth to the factions in this house. Gentlemen are careless of the consequences of what they say, provided it answers the purposes of opposition I have been abused as an enemy to the trade of America; I discouraged no trade but what was illicit, and what was prohibited by act of parliament."

The great orator of England rose in reply. "I have been charged," said Mr. Pitt, "of giving birth to sedition in America; sorry I am to hear the liberty of speech in this house imputed as a crime; but it is a liberty I mean to exercise; it is a liberty by which the gentleman who calumniates it might have profited; he ought to have profited; he ought to have desisted from his project."

"'America,' he says, 'is almost in open rebellion;' I rejoice that America has resisted; three millions of people so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to consent to be slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of all the rest. Why did the gentleman confine himself to Chester and Durham? He might have taken a higher example in Wales; Wales, that was never taxed by parliament till it was incorporated. The India company, merchants, stockholders, manufacturers, these are represented in other capacities, as owners of land, or freemen of boroughs. It is a misfortune that more are not actually represented; but they have connexions with those that elect, they have influence over them, they are all inhabitants of this kingdom, they are virtually represented.

"The gentleman boasts of his bounties to America; are not those bounties intended finally for the benefit of this kingdom?"

"If the gentleman does not understand the difference between internal and external taxes, I cannot help it; but there is a plain distinction between the taxes levied for the purpose of raising a revenue, and duties imposed for the regulation of trade, though some revenue might incidentally arise from the latter.

"The gentleman asks, When were the colonies emancipated? I desire to know when they were made slaves? The profits to Great Britain from the trade of her colonies, through all its branches, is two millions a year. This is the price that America pays you for your protection; and shall a miserable financier come with a boast that he can fetch a peppercorn into the *exchequer* to the loss of millions to the nation?"

"The whole commercial system of America may be altered to advantage. You have but two nations to trade with in

America, would you had twenty ! Let not an English minister become a custom house officer for Spain, or any foreign power.

"In a good cause, on a sound bottom, the force of this country can crush America to atoms; I know the valour of your troops, the skill of your officers; but on this ground, on the Stamp Act, where so many here will think it a crying injustice, I am one who will lift my hand against it; in such a cause your success will be hazardous. America, if she fell, would fall like the strong man; she would embrace the pillars of the state, and pull down the constitution along with her.

"The Americans have not acted in all things with prudence and temper. They have been wronged; they have been driven to madness by injustice. Will you punish them for the madness which you have occasioned? Rather let prudence and temper come from this side:

' Be to their faults a little blind,
Be to their virtues very kind.'

"My opinion is, that the Stamp Act be repealed, absolutely, totally, and immediately; that the reason be assigned, because it was founded on an erroneous principle. Let the sovereign authority of this country be asserted; we may bind their trade, confine their manufactures, and exercise every power whatsoever, except that of taking their money out of their pockets without their consent."

Such is a slight outline of what the greatest of our orators is understood to have delivered on this critical occasion. Now the sentiments, that were popular, and the opinions that were thought wise, were not those of Mr. Pitt, but of Mr. Grenville: and it is on *this* account that I have thought it necessary to endeavour to explain the small views, and mercenary, unworthy, and unconstitutional feelings of the English people and their statesmen at this particular time; holding them up as a warning to ourselves, from a very strong suspicion which, I must confess, I entertain, that on any similar occasion our own views and feelings would be equally wanting in true philosophy, and in proper sympathy

with the genuine doctrines of our own constitutional liberty.

The positions I have laid down are still further illustrated, because it must be observed, that the ministers and people of England had sufficient information, and sufficient warning from a few of the more enlightened members of both houses, and from other sources.

"When the resolution," says Mr. Pitt, so early as December, 1765, "was taken in this house to tax America, I was ill in bed; if I could have endured to have been carried in my bed, so great was the agitation of my mind for the consequences, I would have solicited some kind hand to have laid me down on this floor, to have borne my testimony against it."

This was said by Lord Chatham, I must repeat, so early as December, 1765, not 1775, when the troubles had broken out: and so early as February, 1766, ten years *before* the declaration of independence, Dr. Franklin was examined at the bar of the house, and he declared (I quote from his answers) "that the authority of parliament was allowed to be valid in all laws, except such as should lay internal taxes: that it was never disputed in laying duties to regulate commerce: that the Americans would never submit to the Stamp Act, or to any other tax on the same principle: that North America would contribute to the support of Great Britain, if engaged in a war in Europe."

The whole of this examination is worth reading. The doctor seems to have judged accurately, and to have given the house very seasonable advice on all the critical points which could then have divided the opinions of his hearers; but the advice was vain, and this, I conceive, from the causes which I have enumerated. *

In 1766, the Stamp Act was repealed by the Rockingham administration, the Whig administration; and the dispute in truth put an end to; they were therefore dismissed; and when the idea of taxing America was revived by Charles Townshend, so early as May, 1767, Governor Pownall declared, "that it was a fact which the house ought to be apprized of in all its extent, that the people of America universally, unitedly, and unalterably, were resolved not to

submit to any internal taxation upon them, by any legislature in which they have not a share by representatives of their own election.

"Does the ministry," said he, "mean to impose taxes on the colonies, and force into execution the collection of them? The whole system of the state government and interwoven interest of the colonies is gone too far for *that* to be practicable. We must reestablish our system on its *old* basis." Governor Pownall, it must be observed, had been a governor in America, and always spoke from personal knowledge.

"I prophesied," said Colonel Barré, "on passing the Stamp Act, in 1765, what would happen thereon; and I now, in March, 1769, I now fear I can prophesy further troubles; that if the whole people are made desperate, finding no remedy from parliament, the whole continent will be in arms immediately, and perhaps these provinces lost to England for ever." This was in March, 1769, and certainly a very remarkable prediction.

"In February, 1769, the Americans," said Governor Pownall, "do universally, unitedly, and unalterably declare, as I have before told the house, that they ought not to submit to taxation without representatives. The slightest circumstance," he continued, "will now (February, 1769), in a moment, throw every thing into confusion and bloodshed: and if some mode of policy does not interpose to remove this exertion of military power, the union between Great Britain and North America is broken for ever; unless, what is worse, both are united in a common ruin. No military force can assess or collect; it may raise a contribution by military contribution, but this is not government, it is war." And again, "If you attempt to force taxes against the spirit of the people there, you will find, when it is perhaps too late, that they are of a spirit which will resist all force, which will grow stronger by being forced, will prove superior to all force, and which ever has been unconquerable. That spirit which led their ancestors to break off from every thing which is near and dear to the human heart, has but a slight and trifling sacrifice to make at this time: they have not to quit their native country, but to defend it; not to forsake their friends and relations, but to unite with and stand by them in one common union."

They will abhorrate, as sincerely as they now love you. In one word, if this spirit of fanaticism should once arise upon the idea of persecution, these people, whom Great Britain hath to this hour drawn as it were with a thread, and whom it has governed with a little paper and packthread, you will not for the future be able to govern with a rod of iron; and any benefit which this country has derived from that country will be stopped at every source. If it be not the humour of the house to believe this at present, I only beg they will remember that it has been said, and that they are forewarned of it."

The house was impatient, it seems (what are we to say of the folly of such impatience?) while this member of their body, with the wisdom of a statesman, and the spirit of a prophet, proceeded to warn them of their mistakes, and represent to them the conduct which they were bound in justice and in policy to pursue. It was in vain that he concluded with these memorable words: "Resume the spirit of your own policy; do nothing which may bring into discussion questions of right; go into no innovations of practice, and suffer no encroachments on government; extend not the power which you have of imposing taxes to the laying internal taxes on the colonies; continue to exercise the power which you have already exercised, of laying subsidies, impost, and duties, but exercise this as you have hitherto done, with prudence and moderation, and directed by the spirit of commercial wisdom: exert the spirit of policy, that you may not ruin yourselves and the colonies by exerting force."

Mr. Pitt spoke to the same effect, and denied the right of the mother country to tax America.

"There is no medium," said G. Grenville (this was in March, 1769), "we must resolve to exert strictly our revenue laws, or give up our right." "There is a medium," said Mr. Burke, "we have a right to tax them, but the expediency of putting the right into execution should be very evident before any thing of that sort be passed."

In May, 1769, Governor Pownall most wisely moved to repeal the revenue acts in North America. He insisted on the wisdom of the old system, the folly of the experiment of

the new one, that of internal taxation. "And now," said he, "matters are brought to a crisis, at which they never will be again. If this session elapses, with parliament doing nothing, American affairs will perhaps be impracticable for ever." This was in May, 1769.

"You can never govern an unwilling people; they will obstruct and pervert every effort of your policy; their obedience is now at this crisis, at the very lowest point that it will ever be. On the other hand, your power is now at its height. If you endeavour to push them down but a hair's breadth lower, like a spring they will fly all to pieces, and they will never be brought to the same point again."

He argued in vain—for though the house seemed affected by his reasonings, the ministers talked of the late time of the session, and the governor's motion was put off.

In 1770, Lord North moved the repeal of several offensive duties; but retained the tea tax, to evidence the right.

It was in vain that Governor Pownall and others remonstrated that this would leave the merchants of America still in a state of hostility with us, resorting to their non-importation associations; that the *right* of taxation, not the quantity of the tax, was the point of interest to them. "The merchants," he said, "in America and England are the links of the chain that binds both countries together. Whatever we may think of the operation and effect of our sovereign government, *commerce* and intercommunion of our mutual wants and supplies is the real power and spirit of attraction which keeps us united. The operation of this has been, and is at present, suspended. The repeal of the whole of the act will alone take off the suspension, and cement again our union by the best and surest principle; will lead once more again to that happy spirit of government, under which the people knew no bounds to their confidence, and under which government led the people almost by enchantment."

But in whatever point of view this subject could be placed, and on every different occasion, the effect was the same. It was determined to insist on the taxation of America.

In April, 1774, "I know," said Colonel Barré, "the vast superiority of your disciplined troops over the provincials; but beware how you supply the place of discipline by despe-

ration. Ask their aid in a constitutional manner, and they will give it to the utmost of their ability: they never yet refused it, when properly required. What madness is it that prompts you to attempt by force what you may more certainly procure by requisition? They may be flattered into any thing; but are too much like yourselves to be driven. Have some indulgence for your own likeness; respect their sturdy English virtue; retract your odious exertions of authority. The first step towards making them contribute to your wants, is to reconcile them to your government."

Mr. Fox, then a young man, observed, "that if the tax was persisted in, the country would be forced into open rebellion." Lord North, on the contrary, "that we had only to be firm and resolved, and obedience would be the result." The tea duty was therefore insisted upon by one hundred and eighty-two to forty-nine. It was insisted upon for the purposes of sovereignty and revenue—and both sovereignty and revenue were from that moment gone for ever.

Injustice produces resistance, and one coercive measure is sure to be followed by another; the usual progress of harsh government. The province of Massachusetts had resisted, and therefore, in the April of 1774, Lord North brought in his bill for taking away the charter, and introducing a less popular form of government. "The Americans," said he, "have plundered your merchants, burnt your ships, denied all obedience to your laws and authority; yet so clement and long forbearing has our conduct been, that it is incumbent on us now to take a different course." But on the contrary, said Governor Pownall in reply (observe how prophetic was this reply), "I told this house, it is now four years past, that the people of America would resist the tax which lay then upon them; that they would not oppose power to your power, but that they would become impracticable; have they not been so from that time to this very hour? Tell you now, that they will resist the measures now pursued in a more vigorous way. The committees of correspondence are in constant connexion; they will next hold conferences, and to what these committees, thus met in congress, will grow up, I will not say. Should matters ever come to arms, you will hear of other officers than those appointed by your

generous. It will then be, as in the civil wars in this country, of little consequence to dispute who were the aggressors. That will be matter of opinion. It is of more consequence at this moment, so to act, to take such measures, that no such misfortunes may come in the event."

"My lords," said Lord Chatham, in 1774, "this country is little obliged to the framers and supporters of the tea tax. The Americans had almost forgot in their excess of gratitude for the repeal of the Stamp Act, any interest but that of the mother country. This temper would have continued, if not interrupted by your fruitless endeavours to tax them without their consent. I am an old man, and would advise the noble lords in office to adopt a more gentle method of governing America; proceedings like these will never meet with the wished for success. Instead of these, pass an amnesty on all their youthful errors; clasp them once more to your fond and affectionate arms, and I will venture to affirm you will find them children worthy of their sire. If otherwise, I will be among the foremost to move for such measures as will make them feel what it is to provoke a fond and forgiving parent. A parent, my lords, whose welfare has ever been my greatest and most pleasing consideration. The period is not far distant when she will want the assistance of her most distant friends; but my prayers shall ever be for her welfare. Length of days be in her right hand, and in her left riches and honour. May her ways be ways of pleasantness, and all her paths be peace!"

But neither could ministers listen in one house to the excellent sense and local information of Governor Pownall, nor be moved in the other by these affecting appeals of Lord Chatham—by these effusions of a generous and magnanimous spirit, the true and only source of all eloquence, commanding as his. *

I had made many other extracts to the same purport as those now given, but I omit them, for my lecture is already too long.

You will look at the examination of Mr. Penn, at the speeches of Mr. Wilkes, Mr. Fuller, and others, and at the speech of Serjeant Adair, in October, 1775. I can only now refer you to them; the notices I have already taken of the

debates in the houses are sufficiently strong and numerous to indicate how wise and prophetic was the general opinion of those who resisted the measure of coercion and taxation, so long and so unhappily persevered in from the unfortunate dismissal of the Rockingham administration.

And why these prophecies were uttered in vain, and why this system was either originally adopted, or afterwards pursued, with the general countenance of the people of this country, can only, I think, be thoroughly explained, first by a reference to the sentiment which I first alluded to, an opinion that our cause was just, that the Americans were rebellious and ungrateful; and, secondly, very discreditably (to us), by a reference to such causes as I have enumerated, ignorance of political economy, blind selfishness, national pride, high principles of government, and on the whole a certain vulgarity of thinking on political subjects, which if I could prepare your minds hereafter to avoid, I confess, I should consider as one of the greatest objects which these lectures could accomplish.

LECTURE XXXII.

AMERICAN WAR.

IN the lecture of yesterday, I endeavoured to state to you, in the first place, the interest that belongs to the subject of the American War. I next reminded you of the general principles that belong to the subject of nations connected with each other; a parent state and colonies for instance; such general principles as I had submitted to your consideration when I treated of the Union with Scotland. I then enumerated to you the original works which I thought you might consult; then those which you *might* read; then those, lastly, which *must* be read, which are entirely indispensable.

I then proceeded to state to you what had been the causes that, as far as the ministers and people of England were concerned, had led to this important contest.

The first of these causes I stated to be one not in its sentiment discreditable to us, a general notion in the English nation that their cause was just; that the sovereignty was in the parent state; that in this right was included the right of taxation; and that as we had protected the Americans from France, they were ungrateful as well as rebellious. But I then proceeded to state that this sentiment would never have produced the American War, if not excited and exasperated by other considerations.

These other remaining causes of the American War I considered as very discreditable to us; and I first stated them, and endeavoured to illustrate them by quotations from the different speeches of remarkable men at the time in the debates of the two houses.

To-day I mean to illustrate them by a reference to a few of the best pamphlets that appeared. But you will observe,

that to-day, as yesterday, I cannot stay to weigh and contrast the relative merit and value of each argument, nor can I stay to point out the application of what I am reading to the causes whose operation I am anxious to illustrate. This you must do yourselves. I think it therefore best on many accounts, more particularly for the accommodation of those who might be absent yesterday, and at the hazard of appearing tedious to many of those who were present, once more to state what those causes were. Those causes, I must repeat it again and again, were highly discreditable to the ministers and people of this country.

I am compelled to believe, that if similar questions were to come before us to-morrow, we should be not much better or wiser than those who went before us. Now when we read history, we do nothing unless we convert it to some purposes of moral discipline. It seems eternally forgotten, that men, in their collective capacity as nations, may be, and often are, guilty of the same follies, faults, and crimes, that they can commit as individuals in the common relations of social life; that they may be just as ill-humoured, or resentful, or unreasonable, or ferocious, or wicked; that their good or bad passions enter with them into cabinets, and senates, and public meetings, just as they do into drawing-rooms, or studies, or their family dining-rooms. He is not likely to speak a language very agreeable, who either in the one case or the other assumes the office of a censor; but it is the proper office not unfrequently of a lecturer on history, for it is the great office of history itself; and therefore I shall now once more state (that you may in this and the succeeding lectures see the application of what I read) the causes, which I yesterday mentioned as operating so fatally and so disgracefully to the people of Great Britain on this memorable occasion; stated in as few words as possible, they were these:—

The first cause was an ignorance of, or inattention to, the great leading principles of political economy.

Secondly, high overweening national pride.

Thirdly, a mean and unworthy money selfishness.

Fourthly, high principles of government.

Fifthly, a certain vulgarity of thinking on political subjects.

I now proceed to illustrate the operation of these causes by a reference to some of the pamphlets that appeared during this unhappy contest.

One of the most celebrated political writers of the time was Tucker, the Dean of Gloucester. He comes not entirely within the description I have given of the majority of the statesmen and people of England, for he was far superior to most of his contemporaries in the science of political economy. He was a zealous advocate for the system of free trade, and boldly advised that the Americans should be left to themselves, saying very wisely (very foolishly as it was then thought), that we should have the benefit of their commerce, whether they were our colonies or not; for our skill, our industry, and our capital, he insisted, would always give us a preference in every market, and that these were the secrets of our commercial prosperity, not the bounties and drawbacks of the Custom House or the monopolies of colonisation; that the Americans would be our customers, whether independent or not.

Here, however, the superior and the memorable wisdom of Tucker seems to me to have ceased. By one of those strange inconsistencies of which the human mind is capable, the same man, who was penetrating and liberal where the riches of a community were concerned, was narrow and harsh, without elevation and without refinement, where the still dearer riches of a community, the free principles of its government, were brought into question. He would have set free the American states on the genuine principles of the free system of trade, which he had adopted; but on the genuine principles of arbitrary rule, which he had *also* adopted, he would have bound their leaders in chains, and their patriots in links of iron. Of his tracts, which are all worth reading, the fourth was meant to show the wisdom of parting with the colonies entirely, and then making leagues of friendship with them as with so many independent states: a bold idea to be conceived so early as 1766, and very happily contrasted, for the credit of the dean, with the paltry notions on government with which his works abound.

Of the third tract, which is full of the notions I have taken upon me to censure, I will now endeavour to give you a

specimen, as more immediately to our present purpose, and as descriptive, I have no doubt, of the reasonings of most of the people of England at that time.

“What is it you mean,” said the dean, addressing a supposed nephew in America, “by repeating to me so often the spirit of the constitution? According to this spirit, you say that an American ought not to be taxed without his own consent given either by himself or by representative in parliament chosen by himself. Why ought he not? Does the constitution say, in so many words, that he ought not, or doth it say that every man either hath, or ought to have, or was intended to have, a vote for a member of parliament? No, by no means; the constitution says no such thing. But the spirit of it doth. But observe, Magna Charta is the basis of the English constitution. But by the spirit of Magna Charta all taxes laid on by parliament are constitutional and legal taxes. Now the late tax on stamps was laid by parliament, and therefore, &c. &c. is a constitutional and legal tax.

“Let us from the spirit of the constitution come to the constitution itself. The first emigrants who settled in America were certainly English subjects, subject to the laws and jurisdiction of parliament, and consequently to parliamentary taxes, before their emigration; and therefore subject afterwards, unless some legal constitutional exemption can be produced. If you have it, why do you not produce it? The king, you say, granted charters. Could he legally grant such a charter? Did he ever attempt to do it? What have you next to offer? Oh! the unreasonableness, the injustice, and the cruelty of taxing a free people, without permitting them to have representatives of their own to answer for them, and to maintain their fundamental rights and privileges!

“Strange, that though the British parliament has been from the beginning thus unjust and cruel towards you, by levying taxes outwards and inwards—strange you did not discover these bad things before! What a pity that you have been slaves for so many generations, and not know that you have been slaves until now!

“But what constitutional rights and liberties are refused you? You cannot have the face to assert that, on an election day, any difference was put between the vote of a man born

in America, and one here that is England. But the cause of the complaint is this, that you live at too great a distance to be present at our elections. And if you yourselves choose to make it inconvenient for you to come and vote by retiring into distant countries, what is that to us?

"But suppose the colonies are unrepresented in the British parliament; so are six millions at least of the inhabitants of Great Britain. Yet we raise no commotions, but submit to be taxed without being represented, and taxed too, let me tell you, for your sakes. Suppose, however, an augmentation to take place; our two millions represented have five hundred and fifty-eight members, and therefore our six millions unrepresented must have one thousand six hundred and seventy-four, and your two millions, five hundred and fifty-eight also; in all, two thousand seven hundred and ninety: a goodly number truly. O the decency and order of such an assembly!

"But the complaint itself of being unrepresented is entirely false and groundless. We are all represented. Every member of parliament represents you and me in our public interests, in all essential points, just as much as if we had voted for him. But you will say, he will regard that most which will best promote his own interest. It may be so. What system can there be devised but may be attended with inconveniences and imperfections in some respect or other?

"But the inexpediency, you say, and excessiveness of such a tax. Excessiveness depends upon the relative poverty of those who are to pay it. But the fact is, that when we raise about eight millions of money on eight millions of persons, we expect you to contribute one hundred thousand on two millions; that is, we pay twenty shillings a head, and you one shilling! Blush, blush for shame," &c. &c.

"Upon the whole, therefore, what is the cause of such an amazing outcry? Not the Stamp Act; this is a sham and a pretence. You are exasperated against this mother country on account of the revival of certain restrictions on your trade. An American will complain and smuggle, and smuggle and complain, till all restrictions are removed. Any thing short of this is a badge of slavery; an usurpation on natural rights and liberties of a free people, and I know not how many bad things besides.

"Your second grievance is that you are sorely oppressed that you cannot pay your British debts with an American sponge. An intolerable grievance this," &c. &c.

"Your third grievance is the sovereignty of Great Britain. You want to be independent, &c. &c. In short, the sword is the only choice which you will permit us to make.

"I do not think we have any cause to fear the event. A British army will hardly fly before an American mob. Yet I am not for having recourse to military operations.

"In short, if we oblige you to pay your debts, and then have no further connexion with you as dependent states, under the pressures and calamities that would ensue, your deluded countrymen would certainly open their eyes at last, would wish and petition to be again united to the mother country," &c. &c.

Such were the reasonings of the Dean of Gloucester. I will now turn to a pamphlet of another description, written by Robinson, of which the expostulations and arguments were, I conclude, thought at the time as idle and unreasonable, by the generality of men, as the dean's were thought judicious and convincing.

The author writes in May, 1774, just at the time when Lord North had carried his Boston Port Bill, &c. &c.

"These disturbances," says he, "on the one hand, and violent laws on the other, all proceed from our having taxed the colonies without their consent. The right of this measure is in question, as well as the expediency of it.

"The inhabitants of the colonies have, by many and various ways, obtained many and various sorts of property. They have a right to freedom in their governments, and to security in their persons and properties; none are warranted to deprive or dispossess them of these things. These principles are with us common and public, they were the principles of our ancestors, and are the principles which such men as Mr. Locke, Lord Moldsworth, and Mr. Trenchard maintained with their pens, Mr. Hampden and Lord Russell with their blood, and Sidney with both. They are likewise the real principles of our present government, and those on which are established the throne of the king and the settlement of the illustrious family now reigning over us.

"Suppose a person to have in his pocket one hundred pounds, and another to have the right to take it from him and put it into his own pocket, to whom does the money belong?"

"But in the case of the Americans, it is said that the money raised on them is to be employed to their own benefit, in their civil service, military defence, &c. Let me ask, then, who are to determine whether any money is wanted for such purposes, they who pay, or they who take it?—the quantity wanted, how often it is wanted, whether properly laid out? Still they who take it.

"Is this, then, on the one hand, a reasonable ground whereon to throw the mother country and her colonies into the most deadly feuds? Is it not, on the other hand, a proposition inconsistent with the principles whereon our forefathers defended their own rights and properties?"

"Our colonies are content that we should at our pleasure regulate their trade, but deny that we should tax them. Why cannot we content ourselves with the line thus drawn?"

"But may they not in time extend their objections to this also? All the whole of our colonies must no doubt one day fall off from the parent state. But why should we shake the fruit unripe from the tree, because it will of course drop off, when it shall have become in due season fit and ripe for the purpose?"

"There are, no doubt, in all governments, many most important points unsettled and undetermined. It is the part of every prudent ruler to avoid bringing any such critical circumstances into debate.

"This present accursed question, how long was it unknown or unthought of? Who heard of it till a very few years ago? It is now setting at work our fleets and armies," &c. &c.

"The claim of the Americans rests on the present constitution of Great Britain; the great principles of which is, that representation should go along with taxation. But it is said that the Americans are virtually represented. How that should be I know not. These arguments are fitter to raise scruples amongst ourselves at home, than to satisfy the Americans abroad.

"But is there any medium? Must we not either enforce

and in the same spirit and language between Great Britain and Ireland: Why not also between Great Britain and her colonies?

"But it may be told that our debts are heavy and our resources but too nearly as an end; that we have fleets and armies; that in fact the great do every where bear hard upon the little, the strong on the weak. I answer, you cannot force them."

"What expectation can there be of sending from home armies capable to conquer so great a force of men; defending and defended by such a contingent? But are they united among themselves? In the cause of not being taxed by us, it is well understood how much they are so. How can we expect otherwise? They are not unacquainted with the history of the mother country. But what if one or more of the greatest powers of Europe declare war against us? Have France and Spain forgotten the loss of Canada and Georgia? Were the cabinets of Versailles and Madrid united, in council against us, what measure would they push us upon before the very one we are now madly running so upon? Instead of taxing, give them greater liberty and latitude of trade, both to Ireland and to America, including our West India islands. The riches and the treasures of the more distant and dependant parts of our empire cannot fail to flow upon us. We have nothing to do with little jealousies about this trade or that manufacture; freedom of trade is our foundation. This will enrich the centre of empire, and cannot therefore likewise but increase its revenue. The stopping up of the port of Boston, the new laws given Massachusetts Bay, will be received in America as a declaration of war, and depend upon the same issue; it must be by force and conquest if they submit. It is probable that not a month or a year will finally determine this affair. The authors of these measures expect that they will thus bring those people on their knees; but they may find themselves much mistaken in the event. Some say that all the opposition in America originated at home; that it is only the faction of England which catches these notions; nothing testifies a greater ignorance of that country. Let any man please himself in America: imagine himself both, and

...of the ... and ... let ...

...in the general strain of this pamphlet written in April, 1774, and in November of the same year an appendix was added. "Time and events," says the author, "have, in a short space of seven months, too plainly confirmed my opinions." He then goes on to describe the fulfilment of his prophecies; to contrast the language that was held by others with the event, and to recommend that any propositions that might come from congress might be made the ground of a future settlement. He observed, that Charles I. granted ten times more at last than would have satisfied at first, and he predicted that France and Spain would interfere against us, when we were, he said, like a fish in a net, entangled beyond a power of getting free.

These reasonings were addressed to the public in vain.

I will now give one representation more (in addition to Dean Tucker's) of arguments on the other side, such as were probably in the mouth of every man. The celebrated Dr. Johnson, a writer to whom the thoughtful and virtuous part of every community are so deeply indebted, one into whose pages no man ever looked for a single moment without seeing something either to strike or improve him—Dr. Johnson condescended to write a pamphlet, as others had done (Taxation no Tyranny), and his production exemplifies, as I conceive, every position which I have laid down. He was not indeed ignorant of political economy, but on this occasion he disregarded all its principles; and having been originally a sort of Jacobite, and long habituated to lay down in a boisterous manner what are called Tory principles in church and state, the present was an occasion that could not fail to call forth all those particular opinions which so unhappily obscured and betrayed the great mind of this most respectable defender, on every other occasion of the best interests of mankind.

The pamphlet was published in 1775. After some predatory remarks, the doctor arrives at the main point in dispute. "There are those who tell us that to tax the colonies is usurpation and oppression, an invasion of national and legal rights, and a violation of those principles which support the constitution of the British government."

With these premises of his opponents the doctor struggles through many pages. He starts first to him who considers the nature, the rights and the progress, and the constitution of the colonies, it will not be doubted that the parliament of England has a right to bind them by statutes in all cases whatsoever, and therefore to tax them for any end beneficial to the empire. "There are some," says he, "who except this power of taxation from the general dominion of parliament." "For this exception," says he (which by a head not fully impregnated with politics, is not easily comprehended), "it is alleged, as an unanswerable reason, that the colonies send no representatives to the House of Commons." To this his answer is, "that the argument proves too much; that the right of making any other laws, civil or criminal, might be equally denied; that this last power was never disputed; and that the reception of any law draws after it the necessity of submitting also to taxation. That a free man is governed by himself, he continues, is a position of mighty sound, but every man that utters it feels it to be false. The business of the public must be done by delegation; the choice of delegates is made by a select number. Those who are not electors stand helpless spectators. We are all born consenting to some system of government or other; other consent than this the condition of civil life does not allow; it is the delirious dream of republicanism and fanaticism.

"He who goes voluntarily to America cannot complain of losing what he leaves in Europe; he is represented as he himself designed in the general representation. By abandoning their part in one legislature, they have not obtained the power of constituting another. It is urged," says the doctor, "that the Americans have not the same security, and that a British legislature may want some of their property; but the parliament has the same interest in attending to them as to any other part of the nation. We are ourselves as secure against intentional deprivations of government as human wisdom can make us, and upon this security the Americans may venture to repose.

"When they apply to our compassion, by telling us that they are to be carried from the country, to be tried here for certain offences, we are not so ready to pity them as to

...not to be called. While they are in court they are

...When they tell us of laws made expressly for their punishment, we answer that insults and sedition were always punishable, and that the new law prescribes only the mode of execution.

"If frauds in the imports are tried without a jury, they are tried so here; if they are condemned unheard, it is because there is no need of a trial; a trial is the investigation of something doubtful. That the same vengeance involves the innocent and the guilty is an evil to be lamented; but human caution cannot prevent it. To bring misery on those who have not deserved it is part of the aggravated guilt of rebellion.

"When subordinate committees oppose the decrees of the general legislature with defiance thus audacious and malignity thus acrimonious, nothing remains but to conquer or yield: to allow their independence, or reduce them by force; yet there have risen up in the face of the public, men who, by whatever corruptions or by whatever infatuation, have undertaken to defend the Americans, endeavour to shelter them from resentment, and propose reconciliation without submission.

"The Dean of Gloucester has proposed, and seems to propose it seriously, that we should declare them masters of themselves, and whistle them down the wind.

"It is, however, a little hard, that having so lately fought and conquered for their safety, we should govern them no longer. One wild proposal is best answered by another. Let us restore to the French what we have taken from them; we shall see our colonists at our feet.

"It seems determined by the legislature that force shall be tried. I would wish that the rebels may be subdued by terror rather than by violence; that such a force may be tried as might take away not only the power but the hope of resistance. Their obstinacy may perhaps be mollified by turning the soldiers to free quarters; forbidding any personal cruelty or hurt. It has been proposed that the slaves should be set free, an act which the lovers of liberty surely cannot but commend. With fire-arms for their defence, utensils for

husbandry, and settled in some simple form of government, they may be more grateful and honest than their masters.

"Since the Americans have made it necessary to subdue them, may they be subdued with the least injury possible to their persons and possessions.

"We are told that the subjection of America may tend to the diminution of our own liberties, an event which none but very perspicacious politicians are able to foresee. If slavery be thus fatally contagious, how comes it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?"

These few extracts from this celebrated pamphlet may give you some idea of the comprehensiveness of the doctor's mind on such a subject as this; of his notions of government in general, and more especially of the constitution of England; and when authority was to be enforced, of his humanity and of his wit. He seems ready to suppose that people were to be mollified by having soldiers living at free quarters among them, and to be brought to reason by seeing slaves let loose upon them!

Yet who can doubt that Johnson was a man of vigorous understanding; that he was a friend to his country; that he was a wellwisher to the best interests of the human race; that he was a man of humanity and benevolence? Is not he the great moralist of our country? He who has rivalled his own beautiful praise of Addison—"has taught virtue not to be ashamed, and even turned many to righteousness;" yet such is his pamphlet; so coarse in sentiment, so unkind in spirit, so defective in wisdom.

To those who are capable of meditating upon the nature of human feelings and human faculties, I know of no greater lesson than this production affords, of the importance of our political notions; of the necessity there is that they should be always made to refer, at least that they should never lose sight of the popular principles of the English constitution; should be well laid down and bottomed, not only in respect for those who govern, but in tenderness for those who are to be governed, in a deep sense of that equal justice which is to be administered to all human beings, whether near us or at a distance; of that patience and respect with which all those are to be listened to, of whatever climate or condition, who

mark the language of Johnson, or raise the voice of comparison.

Compare with Dr. Johnson's friend Mr. Burke; note the language of each on the same subject, considering at the same time the very eminent qualities that belonged to both, vigour being found in the mind of the one as of the other; comprehensiveness, activity, liveliness, rapidity, the powers of imagination, and all the copiousness of eloquence; no ignorance in Mr. Burke any more than in Dr. Johnson of the necessity of obedience, of order, and of respect for rank and authority; but the one properly impressed at the same time, by whatever means, which the other was not, with a sense of the paramount value of all those great fundamental principles which form the protection of the liberties of England.

What were then the views and reasonings of Mr. Burke? You will see them in the works that are published, though of many of his most brilliant speeches in the House of Commons no idea can now be formed. Those that are published must be your study, and they cannot be too much your study if you mean either to understand or to maintain against its various enemies, open and concealed, designing and mistaken, the singular constitution of this fortunate island. As far as the subject of America is concerned, you should meditate well the *last third* of his pamphlet, entitled "Observations on the late State of the Nation;" then I think his letter to the sheriffs of Bristol; lastly, his two celebrated speeches, and particularly the documents on the proposed secession; the address to the king, &c. now first regularly published in the volumes that have lately appeared of his works.

But it is to his two speeches that you will naturally turn; they were very justly admired at the time, and they are fitted for ever to remain the proper monuments of the wisdom as well as eloquence of this extraordinary man. So early as April, 1774, Mr. Burke made every effort which could be made by a discerning patriot and an interesting orator, to attract the attention of the house to the history of the American dispute, and to clear away, if possible, that most unfortunate tax on tea which Lord North had left standing, practically to indicate the right of the British parliament, and which therefore served only to keep the dispute still alive, and the Americans in a

state of irritation; for it was the practical execution of the fight, and the consequences that might ensue, which were the objects of alarm, not the quantity of the tax.

Mr. Burke describes the manner in which, at the period, it was thought necessary to keep up no less than twenty new regiments, and the hopes that were held out to the country gentlemen, by Charles Townshend, of a revenue to be raised from America. Here began, says he, to dawn the first glimmerings of this new colony system; it appeared more distinctly afterwards. With the best intentions in the world, Mr. G. Grenville brought this fatal scheme into form, and established it by act of parliament. * Mr. Grenville was bred to the law; a science, says Mr. Burke, which quickens and invigorates the understanding, but does not open and liberalize the mind exactly in the same proportion. He afterwards plunged into business, the business of office; men, he adds, too much conversant in office are rarely minds of remarkable enlargement. This observation of Mr. Burke, as well as the former, is most just; and if men of rank and fortune send their sons into public offices, as they seem disposed to do, to become as it were apprentices to their trade, adieu to the race of statesmen; and our great empire will have to be governed not by those who are capable of rule, but by those who ought rather to be their clerks and law agents.

I must be indulged here with one moment of digression. Men who thus begin with the routine of office, and who thus early imbibe all the notions of office, never afterwards get beyond them. They become familiarized with corruption, accustomed to petty tricks, and paltry expedients. Their understandings are narrowed; their feelings blunted; their minds rendered coarse and vulgar; the natural sense of patriotism, and benevolence and honour, is weakened and debased; they mistake their craft for sagacity, their acquaintance with detail for more profound wisdom; and it is scarcely too much to say that they become, through the remainder of their public life, the secret or avowed friends of servility, the destroyers of all public spirit, the enemies of all improvement; and if any crisis of human affairs occurs, the most fatal counsellors, with or without their intention, that their king or their country can listen to. Of all spectacles out of the reach

...to see the representation of a noble or powerful family thrown into an office, to be swayed and bound up by the clerks that preside there, and made to mutilate himself in his opinions and feelings to those whom he ought, from the privileges and advantages of his birth and education, to enlighten and command.

But to return. Mr. Burke then pursues the history of the American dispute; Mr. Grenville's Stamp Act; the repeal of it by the Whig administration of Lord Rockingham; the characters of Lord Chatham and Charles Townshend. These passages in his speech are well known, and I need not further allude to them. "The distinction," he goes on to say, "between external and internal taxes was originally moved by the Americans themselves; and I think," says he, "they will acquiesce in it, if they are not pushed with too much logic and too little sense in all the consequences. Recover your old ground, and your old tranquillity. Try it; the Americans will compromise with you.

"Again and again revert to your old principles; seek peace and ensue it; leave America, if she has taxable matter in her, to tax herself. I am not here going into the distinctions of rights, nor attempting to mark their boundaries. I do not enter into these metaphysical distinctions; I hate the very sound of them. Leave the Americans as they anciently stood, and these distinctions, born of our unhappy contest, will die along with it. They and we, and their and our ancestors, have been happy under that system. Let the memory of all actions, in contradiction to that good old mode, on both sides, be extinguished for ever. Be content to bind America by laws of trade; you have always done it. Let this be your reason for binding their trade. Do not burden them by taxes; you were not used to do so from the beginning. Let this be your reason for not taxing. These are the arguments of states and kingdoms; leave the rest to the schools, for there only they may be discussed with safety.

"But if intemperately, unwisely, fatally, you sophisticate and poison the very source of government, by urging public regulations, and consequences odious to those you govern, from the unlimited and illimitable nature of supreme sovereignty, you will touch them, by these means, to call the sovereignty itself in question. When you drive him hard, the

boar will surely turn upon the husband. If that sovereignty and their freedom cannot be reconciled, which will they take? They will cast your sovereignty into your face. No man will be argued into slavery. Sir, let the gentlemen on the other side call forth all their ability; let the best of them get up and tell me what one character of liberty the Americans have, and what one brand of slavery they are free from, if they are bound in their property and industry by all the restraints you can imagine on commerce, and at the same time are made pack-horses of every tax you choose to impose, without the least share in granting them. When they bear the burthens of unlimited monopoly, will you bring them to bear the burthens of unlimited revenue too? The Englishmen in America will feel that this is slavery; that it is *legal* slavery will be no compensation either to his feelings or his understanding. A noble lord (Lord Carmarthen), who spoke some time ago, is full of the fire of ingenuous youth, and when he has modelled the ideas of a lively imagination by further experience, he will be an ornament to his country in either house. He has said that the Americans are our children, and how can they revolt against their parent? He says that if they are not free in their present state, England is not free, because Manchester and other considerable places are not represented. So then, because some towns in England are not represented, America is to have no representative at all. They are "our children;" but when children ask for bread, we are not to give them a stone. Is it because the natural resistance of things, and the various mutations of time, hinder our government, or any scheme of government, from being any more than a sort of approximation to the right, is it therefore that the colonies are to recede from it infinitely? Are we to give them our weakness for their strength; our opprobrium for their glory, and the slough of slavery, which we are not able to work off, to serve them for their freedom? If this is the case, ask yourselves this question,—Will they be content in such a state of slavery? If not, look to the consequences; reflect how you are to govern a people, who think they ought to be free, and think they are not. Your scheme yields no revenue; it yields nothing but discontent, disorder, disobedience; and such is the state of America, that, after wading up to your eyes in blood, you could only end just

MR. BURKE'S SPEECH

...the tax which we are to be
...my inclination... carries
...all in confusion beyond it."

These observations like these were vain. The majority
against him was very great; the coercive system was adopted,
and a year afterwards, in March, 1775, Mr. Burke made
another, and even more memorable effort in the cause of
conciliation. You will see it in his works; you will guess the
sort of matter, but you cannot, without personal and meditation
of it, image to yourselves the beauty, the propriety, the
profound wisdom of the sentiments and opinions it contains.
"I confess," says he, "I am much more in favour of prudent
management than of force, considering force not only as an
odious, but as a feeble instrument for preserving a people
so numerous, so active, so growing, so spirited as this, in
a profitable and subordinate connexion with us. Force is in
its effects but temporary; you have to exert it again and
again; it is uncertain; you impair your object; the thing
you fought for is not the thing you recover. I do not choose
to consume the strength of America with our own, nor to be
caught by a foreign enemy at the end of this exhausting
conflict: still less in the midst of it. Nor do I choose wholly
to break the American spirit, because it is the spirit which
has made the country. Consider too the temper and character
of the Americans; a love of freedom is the predominating
feature; the people of these colonies are the descendants of
Englishmen; they are devoted to liberty, but according to
English ideas, and on English principles. Now, the great
contests for freedom in this country were, from the earliest
times, chiefly on the question of taxing.

"The colonies draw from you, as with their life blood, these
ideas and principles fixed and attached in this specific point
of taxing." Mr. Burke proceeds further to the consideration
of the government, the religion, the education of the Americans,
drawing from each his general conclusion that they were not
a people that could be coerced. "But again," says he, "three
thousand miles of ocean lie between you and them; no con-
tinuous communication can prevent the effect of this distance in weakening
government. Six, or eight months pass between the order
sent, the execution, and the want of explanation on a single
point is enough to defeat a whole system. But who see you

that should first and foremost, and then the claims of justice? Nothing seems impossible to you than to all nations who have extensive empires. From all these causes a fierce spirit of liberty has grown up. The question is, not whether this spirit deserves praise or blame, but what, in the name of God, shall we do with it. You have before you the object, such as it is, with all its glories, all its imperfections on its head. We are strongly urged to determine something concerning it. I am much against any further experiments. In effect we suffer as much at home as abroad; for, in order to prove that the Americans have no right to their liberties, we are every day endeavouring to subvert the maxims of our own. We never gain a paltry advantage over them in debate, without attacking some of those principles, or deriding some of those feelings for which our ancestors have shed their blood."

I am quoting, you see, Mr. Burke; I am referring to him at great length. Among other reasons that may occur to you, why I do so, there is one more particularly my own, which I must mention to you. It is this: you will remember, that on endeavouring to account for the American War, I brought forward to you as a cause, the prevalence of a certain vulgarity of sentiment in politics. I must own, I consider this as a most important fault. I am certainly very anxious upon this point. There are few upon which, as a lecturer, I can be more anxious; and therefore, in the course of the consideration of this American subject, I had marked down a long list of instances in the speeches and conduct of our ministers, of our country gentlemen, and finally of the public, with an intention of reading them to you, thinking, that, if I exhibited them with comments, you might be the better protected from such mistakes—such vulgar mistakes as I presume to call them—yourselves. But the more I read and reflected upon the two speeches and letter of Mr. Burke, the more I became persuaded that such a detailed exhibition on my part would be unnecessary; for if you read and meditate, and get thoroughly imbued with the spirit of wisdom, which breathes through these performances, you will want neither quickness of sagacity, nor accuracy of sentiment; to observe and feel (as you read the history for yourselves) these very blunders of vulgar politics to which I had alluded; and which, indeed, I find I could not well state to you one by one

with some passages, without a more general acquaintance with the subject, than is in this place, than I can afford, if I may be permitted to confine on this or any other single and more particular point.

On this account then have I dwelt so long on the speeches of Mr. Burke, and it is on this account that I must proceed with some further references and quotations, though I will not detain them much longer.

After discussing different modes of conduct to America, "No way," said he, "is open, but to comply with the American spirit, as necessary, or, if you please, to submit to it as a necessary evil. I am resolved, sir, you see, to have nothing to do with the right of taxation. It is not what a lawyer tells me I may do, but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I ought to do. But the colonies will go further, it will be said. Alas! alas! what will quiet these panic fears which we entertain of the hostile effect of a conciliatory conduct? Is it then a certain maxim, that the fewer causes of dissatisfaction are left by government, the more the subject will be inclined to resist and rebel? It is a very great mistake to suppose, that mankind follow up practically any speculative principle, either of government or freedom, as far as it will go in argument and logical illation. Revenue from America transmitted here! Do not delude yourselves; you never can receive it. For all service, whether of revenue, trade, or empire, my trust is in the interest which America has in the British constitution. My hold of the colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties, which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron. Let the colonies always keep the idea of their civil rights associated with your government; they will cling and grapple to you, and no power under heaven will be able to tear them from their allegiance. But, let it be once understood, that your government may be one thing, and their privileges another; that these two things may exist without any material relation; the cement is gone, the edification is loosened, and every thing hastens to decay and dissolution.

As long as you have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this country as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to our common faith, wherever the

chosen race and sons of England, and this Britain they will turn their backs towards you. The more they suffer, the more friends you will have; the more ardently they love liberty, the more perfect will be their obedience. Slavery they can have any where. It is a weed that grows in every soil. They may have it from Spain; they may have it from Prussia; but till you become lost to all feeling of your true interest and your natural dignity, freedom they can have from none but you. This is the commodity of price, of which you have the monopoly. This is the true act of navigation, which binds you to the commerce of the colonies, and through them secures to you the wealth of the world. Deny them this participation of freedom, and you break that sole bond, which originally made, and must still preserve, the unity of the empire.

“Do not entertain so weak an imagination, as that your registers and bonds, your affidavits and your assurances, your cockets and your clearances, are what form the great securities of your commerce. Do not dream that your letters of office and your instructions, and your suspending clauses, are the things that hold together the great confecture of this mysterious whole. These things do not make your government. Dead instruments, passive tools as they are, it is the spirit of the English constitution, which, infused through the mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies every part of the empire, even down to the minutest member. Is it not the same virtue which does every thing for us here in England? Do you imagine then, that it is the land-tax which raises your revenue; that it is the annual vote in the committee of supply, which gives you your army; or that it is the mutiny bill which inspires it with bravery and discipline? No, surely no! It is the love of the people; it is their attachment to their government, from the sense of the deep stake they have in such a glorious institution, which gives you your army and your navy, and infuses into both that liberal obedience, without which your army would be a base rabble, and your navy, nothing but rotten timber.

“All things, I know well enough, will sound wild and chimerical, to the profane herd of those vulgar and mechanical politicians who have no place among us; a sort of people who think that nothing exists but what is gross and material:

and who, therefore, far from being qualified to be directors of the great movement of empire, are not fit to turn a wheel in the machine. But to men truly initiated and rightly taught, these ruling and master principles, which in the opinion of such men as I have mentioned have no substantial existence, are in truth every thing; and all in all.

“Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom, and a great empire and little minds go ill together. If we are conscious of our situation, and glow with zeal to fill our place as becomes our station and ourselves, we ought to auspicate all our public proceedings on America with the old warning of the church, *Sursus corda!* We ought to elevate our minds to the greatness of that trust to which Providence has called us. By adverting to the dignity of this high calling, our ancestors have turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire, and have made the most extensive and the only honourable conquests; not by destroying, but by promoting the wealth, the number, the happiness of the human race. Let us get an American revenue as we have got an American empire. English privileges have made it all that it is; English privileges alone will make it all it can be.”

Mr. Burke moved his resolution, but the previous question was carried against him, two hundred and seventy to seventy-eight. Well, indeed, might Mr. Burke observe, that a great empire and little minds go but ill together, and that the march of the human mind is slow!

I turn with difficulty from the pages of Mr. Burke; I proceed not to his letter addressed to the sheriffs of Bristol; I make no more quotations; I have made, it may be thought, already too many and too long; but if I can but thus secure your reading these compositions, I could not possibly have occupied your time better, and I have not then made quotations either too many or too long. You are men of education, and should be distinguished hereafter by the elevation of your sentiments, and the comprehensiveness of your views; that is, not a little by the magnanimity, I had almost said, by the considerate good temper of your feelings and reasonings on political subjects; and be assured that your own country, like every other country, will fare well, or fare ill, as such refinement of mind, and elevated kindness of temperament, does, or does not prevail among its rulers. Never was

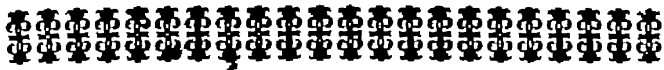
such an absence of it as appeared in this nation during the American war; never was such a display of it, as in the speeches of Mr. Burke, to which I have referred. Here then is your school. It is natural for me to quote at great length from works, which, if successful in producing upon your minds their proper effects, will accomplish for me at once many of the best purposes which I ought to labour most anxiously to attain; for among such purposes the noblest and the first must be, to enlarge your understandings, and to harmonize your feelings to the rights of others, and to the claims of mercy and justice, whatever be the occasion on which they are urged; or the clime or the people from whence they arise.

Mine, however, is on this occasion but a ministerial office; it is to point out to you those immortal-productions, and no more; it is to show you the temple, and to stand at the portal and to persuade you not to pass lightly by and disregard it, but to enter in and survey its columns, and approach its shrine; to pause and to reflect, and to ponder all these things in your heart, that you may hereafter walk forth to the exercise of your duties—some of you, the highest duties which human beings can have to perform—the duties of legislation—that you may come abroad into the world, animated with benevolence, and soothed into a spirit of forbearance and of patience, when exposed to the resistance, which, if you are to labour for the good of others, you must encounter both in friends and foes; better men and wiser men, and purged from the mean and vindictive passions of our nature; for the temple to which I would now direct your steps is, far unlike the sacred groves or venerated edifices of ignorance and superstition—

“Unbrided, unbloody, stands the blameless priest.”

It is a temple of peace, and it is a temple of wisdom. There is no awe, and no terror, and no idol before whose appalling frowns the human victim is to be sacrificed. Scenes and images of this terrific nature should rather be associated with those men who spoke of unconditional submission, of insulted supremacy, and of necessary punishment; who, like the great minister of the vengeance of Spain, the ferocious Duke of Alva, talked of gangrenes that were to be cured by fire

and by sword. Such were not the sounds, such was not the wisdom, which this patriot of the British senate breathed during the whole of this memorable period. Posterity will do him that justice, which but too few of those whom he addressed were capable of rendering him; and however those who come after us may, or may not, differ in their opinion of the effusions of his mind on later occasions, at the opening, and during the progress of the French Revolution, when his genius may be supposed by some to have been sublimed almost into frenzy, by the scenes that in visible presence passed before him, and still more by those that came thronging and terrible upon him in the visions of his listening expectation; however men may, or may not, contest his claim to the character of a *political* prophet (though all must surely consider him as the great *moral* prophet of Europe, at the first appearance of this tremendous event); however these things may be, no intelligent statesman, no meditating philosopher on the affairs of men, will deny to him the praise of clearly discerning, and luminously stating, at the opening of the American Revolution at least, all the human passions that were at work on the other side the Atlantic, and of making every effort which eloquence and wisdom were competent to make, to medicine into peace the unhappy passions which were no less in full operation on *this* side the Atlantic; and though these efforts were unavailing, though a greater power had decreed, that a new empire was now to issue from the far retired recesses of undisturbed forests, and the wide spreading tracts of uncultivated nature, the merit of the statesman must be ever the same; the statesman who, amid the delusions of the hour, could take the same view of the justice and policy of the case before him, which will be taken by posterity; who, amid the menaces of violence and military coercion, which animated the speeches of those around him, could, in the spirit of the angelic choir, speak the words of peace on earth and good will towards men; and, amid the clamours of those who called aloud for unconditional submission and unconditional taxation, could maintain, with all that splendour of wisdom and of eloquence, to which I have directed your admiration—the doctrines of mild government, and the free principles of the constitution of England.



LECTURE XXXIII.

AMERICAN WAR.

YOU will have observed, from the extracts I have produced, that in the course of the debates in parliament, many members appear to have denounced to the ministers beforehand, the folly of their expectations, and the evil consequences by which their measures would be attended.

Such instances of peculiar wisdom in statesmen and in parties, have at other times occurred, and they ought always to be considered as the proper subjects of meditation to those who are ambitious to be hereafter wise and virtuous legislators, or intelligent patriots themselves. It should be asked, how this superior wisdom was obtained, and why it was not successful.

It is sometimes said on these occasions, by those who have nothing else to say, that predictions of this kind are made, not from a spirit of wisdom, but from a spirit of opposition; that the ministers, having taken their course in one direction, their opponents necessarily proceed in the other; that it is the very study and occupation of those who are on one side the house, to contradict the assertions and vilify the measures of those who are on the other; and that all denunciations of ruin and defeat are words of course—the mere terms of declamation and abuse, played off by those who are without, against the garrison within, of a fort which they are endeavouring to storm.

It must be observed therefore, in a few words, that the ministers have the *first choice* of their measures, and if they adopt those which lead to disappointment and defeat, *they* at least are wrong, and the proper objects of public censure, whatever we may say of their opponents. But with respect to these last, that it by no means follows, if the ministers

Have gone to the left, that their opponents shall necessarily turn to the right; because whatever they do, they do, like the ministers themselves, at the hazard of their own characters—at the risk of their credit with wise and good men. They who are out of office can only come into office by rising in the estimation of their sovereign and the public, very often of the public only; and one of the most obvious ways of rising in this estimation is by showing superior sagacity in the concerns of the empire. It must also be observed that what public men, whether in or out of office, must avoid, is the making of predictions. This is what is called, in their own language “committing themselves,” and is never done without the greatest caution and necessity; and, therefore, whenever public men choose to put themselves at issue with the ministers, and hazard predictions, they become from that moment entitled to the praise of superior wisdom or not, just as their expectations are or are not verified by the event. Indeed upon any other supposition the situation of our statesmen would be somewhat ludicrous, and any display of political wisdom would be impossible, if those who advise measures are to have credit when they succeed, and those who predict the folly of such measures are to have no credit when they fail.

The only point on the subject that can now remain seems to be this, whether the prediction has been occasioned, not by superior philosophy or wisdom, but by some particular whim, or passion, or prejudice in the speaker's mind. This is a mere question of fact, and before such an explanation can be received, the case must be made out. This supposition, however, is out of the question, when they who have made predictions are not a few, but many, and not rash or young men, but men of information, character, and experience.

It will always be found that those who not only have predicted, but have predicted truly, have drawn their principles from deeper sources in human nature than their opponents have, have taken their views from more commanding heights, and have been better able to discern the philosophy of the case, and have probably not acquiesced in the popular or first notions of it; that is, in a word, have shown themselves men of greater capacity for the management of the affairs of mankind.

In the case, indeed, before us, these predictions were uttered, not only in the speeches of different statesmen, but in the pamphlets of different writers; and to the latter such objections as we have alluded to are even less reasonable than when applied to speakers in parliament.

I have now stated to you what I conceive to have been the causes that so unfortunately operated on this side the Atlantic to produce the civil war with America. I have endeavoured to illustrate my positions by a reference, first, to the debates of parliament; and, secondly, to the most noted pamphlets that appeared at the time, and more particularly to the speeches, that were afterwards published as pamphlets, by Mr. Burke. I shall now endeavour to illustrate the same positions by a reference to one of the writers of America as well as one of our own; that is, I shall endeavour to make a comparison of the different views that were taken of the same measures and events by the Americans and ourselves; seeking for one in the pages of Dr. Ramsay, and for the other in those of the Annual Register; and I do this to-day, because I wish you to do it for yourselves hereafter. My present lecture I intend to be a specimen of what I mean when I advise you, as I now do, to note well what was thought by the two opposite parties in this dispute, that is, not only by ourselves, but by the Americans. You know the great precept of Christianity, the great maxim of morality, "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you." The more you accustom yourselves to this discipline of your feelings the better. Try it in the subject now before you; you will be the more able and the more willing to do it hereafter on every public occasion that can occur; that is, you will not only be better men in the relations of private life, but, on the larger scale, you will be more rational advisers to your sovereign, or more useful members of the legislature, or more intelligent individuals, when you are to form your estimates from time to time, as you ought to do, of the measures of those who administer the government of your country.

No doubt all comparisons of this kind, of one book and one set of opinions with another, is a process somewhat tedious and repulsive; but you are, I hope, not now to learn the difference between reading and study, between what I

may call *passive reading* and *active reading*, between sitting still to receive from a book the ideas and impressions it may give you, and stopping to reflect upon its opinions, occasionally examine its references, and compare and contrast its estimates and conclusions with those of other writers. It is a process of this last kind that can alone deserve the respectable name of study; but like every other process from which the human character is to acquire the attribute of *merit*, it implies something to be achieved and to be endured; some toil, some patience, some virtue, some valuable quality of the mind or temper to be exercised.

It is indeed the great business of this place to teach men the exercise of their understanding, and to initiate them in the duties and sacrifices by which all intellectual as well as moral improvement must be attained. Those young men have taken a very unworthy and mistaken view of our system, who suppose that they are only taught the sciences, for instance, for the immediate and appropriate value of the knowledge they convey, that nothing more is meant or accomplished. Let any man endeavour properly to pass through our examinations, no matter what be the subject, or whether he be successful or not, he will then have been taught to comprehend what it is to know a subject, and what it is only to be acquainted with it and only to suppose he knows it; and he will feel the benefit of his labours, or of his sufferings, if you please, if he should ever have afterwards to engage in a profession, to take a part in our houses of legislature, to propose a measure on the most ordinary occasion at a town or county meeting, or even to a committee of the subscribers to a public charity.

But I am insensibly travelling out of my more proper province.

The whole business and purport of these lectures, as I have from the first announced, is to assist you in reading history for yourselves; to enable you, as far as I am competent, to turn the materials before you to the best advantage, to some purpose of your present and future improvement. Occasionally, therefore, I must propose to you *tasks* of some labour and exertion. I do so now; but I have reduced it, as I think, to the smallest compass. The books I have selected

are very concisely written, and I will now give you a slight specimen of what they contain, and of what I propose you to do hereafter for yourselves.

You have already seen what were the views of men on this side of the Atlantic; observe now what was thought on the other. I shall proceed, as I have already intimated, to give you some idea of the account furnished by Ramsay; I shall afterwards direct your attention to the Annual Register.

The work of Ramsay is short, and it is the American account. The author was a member of congress, and had access to all the official papers of the United States. He quotes not his authorities, though he proposes hereafter to do so, if it should then be necessary.

The author does not criticise with proper severity the conduct of congress; and he is disposed to palliate the defeats of the Americans in the field, not considering that the more difficult it was to bring militia and raw troops to face the regular armies of England, the greater was the merit of the generals and legislators who succeeded in procuring victory and independence for their country. But with these exceptions, the author appears to give a candid and intelligent account of the revolution he witnessed; and it is impossible for an English student to judge of these transactions without reading this work or Marshall's Life of Washington. In this work, as in others, I would wish you more particularly to note the earlier stages of this dispute. You will find the first chapter, on the settlement of the English colonies, reasonable and good. Proper observations are made on the charters, the nature of the enterprise, and the rights that result from it. The general notion was, according to Ramsay (though I abridge his sentences, for the sake of brevity, I use his words, and shall continue to do so for some time), that the settlers were to have the rights of English subjects, as if they had remained at home; but no such question of right as was afterwards agitated in the colonies and the mother country was ever thought of at the time. On the whole the prerogatives of royalty were but feebly impressed on the colonial forms of government. In some provinces the inhabitants chose their governors, and all other public officers; the legislatures were under little or no control: in others, the crown

delegated most of its power to particular persons, who were also invested with the property of the soil; and in those most dependant on the king, his power over the provincial assemblies seemed not greater than over the House of Commons in England; and from the acquiescence of the parent state, the spirit of our constitution, and the common practice of every day's experience, the colonists grew up in a belief, that their local assemblies stood in the same relation to them as the houses of parliament to the mother country.

The good effects of the free system of colonization were visible in their rapid progress. The colonies obtained their charters, and the greatest number of their settlers, between 1603 and 1688; and the settlers were in general devoted to liberty; the principles of freedom, and even of democratic freedom, were ingrafted and incorporated for ever into their minds from the following circumstances—their extraction, their religion, the books they read, their colonial governments, their distance from the mother country, the general equality of rank, their freehold and independent property, their simple modes of life, the little patronage held by the crown.

Now these are the facts as stated by Ramsay—sufficiently obvious, and facts that could not have been denied at the time; facts that might have been known on this side the Atlantic, and must have been known to those of our public men who condescended to think at all upon the subject. And what was the preparation, I would ask, that these formed for the project of our English ministers and lawyers to exercise over the colonies the right of taxation?

The first symptom of the American dispute appeared so early as 1754; it is alluded to by Governor Pownall in one of his speeches in parliament; it is mentioned by Ramsay. When the French were expected soon to attack America, the governors and principal members of the provincial assemblies met at Albany (in 1754), and proposed that a grand general council should be formed of the members of these assemblies, and that they, with the governor appointed by the crown, should make general laws, and raise money from all the colonies for their common defence. The British ministry proposed on the contrary, that the governors of all the

colonies, with one or two members of their councils, should concert and execute all necessary measures, but draw upon the British treasury, and then be reimbursed by a tax laid on the colonies by act of parliament, i. e. by act of our British parliament.

This plan was not relished by the colonists, any more than the former had been by the ministry: in the one, you will observe, the right of taxation was exercised by America, in the other by England. But the Pelhams, being prudent ministers, did not urge the difference into a regular dispute. Dr. Franklin, it seems, at the time, gave his opinion on the proposition of the British minister; and had the sagacity to anticipate the substance of a controversy, which, in ten years afterwards, began to employ, and for twenty years did employ, the tongues, the pens, and the swords of the two countries. You will find the whole account in the third volume of his works.

In the second chapter of Ramsay, you will find the origin of the dispute in the year 1764 described, and then its progress through the vexatious restrictions that had been at different times enacted, down to the fatal Stamp Act of 1764 and 1765. Proper observations are made on the right of taxation, and on the exercise of it.

The effect of the Stamp Act in America is then detailed with very proper minuteness: the uneasiness, the irritation, the inflammation, the fury, the insanity, that at length appeared. The particulars mentioned are instructive, and they form part of that appropriate and local information which the work contains, and which is so valuable. It is observed that the speeches of Mr. Pitt inspired the Americans with additional confidence in the rectitude of their cause; but the good effect of the repeal of the Stamp Act, by the Rockingham administration, is most distinctly stated. It was no sooner known in America, than the colonists rescinded their resolutions, and recommenced their mercantile intercourse with the mother country: the public and private rejoicings knew no bounds. Ramsay also states that the bulk of the Americans considered the declaratory act (passed at the same time) as a salvo for the honour of parliament, and flattered themselves it would remain a dead letter: unwilling to contend

about paper-claims of ideal supremacy, they returned to their habits of good humour with the parent state. Dr. Ramsay then proceeds to state, perhaps even to exaggerate, the high sounding pretensions, as he calls them, which were the result of this species of victory over the mother country. It is impossible, no doubt, that a mistake in legislation should ever be entirely harmless; but he at length observes, that these high sounding pretensions would have spent themselves in words, had not the idea of taxing America been soon after revived by Charles Townshend. We have now again appropriate information, and a short detail of the disturbances that took place.

On the whole, the minds of the Americans might have been pacified, even after this very injudicious revival of the dispute; but certainly not without an entire disavowal by the mother country of a claim to taxation. The ministers of England, in the mean time, seem to have been little aware of, or little disposed to attend to the sentiments of the people of America. Upon a supposition that it was thought any object to retain America, nothing could be more unworthy of statesmen than the declarations of themselves and their friends, during all the earlier years of the contest.

A third chapter describes the effect produced by the tea tax, and the importation of the article, as well as by the three famous acts, the Boston Port Bill, the Bill for altering the Constitution of Massachusetts, and for removing, if necessary, the trial of capital offenders to Great Britain. These three last laws were considered as forming a complete system of tyranny, from which there was scarcely a chance to escape. By the first, said the Americans, the property of unoffending thousands is absolutely taken away for the act of a few individuals; by the second, our chartered liberties are annihilated; by the third, our lives may be destroyed with impunity. Property, liberty, and life are all suspended on the altar of ministerial vengeance.

The three acts became the cement of the union of all the states of America against Great Britain. These acts were, in the mean time, popular in England; and this is the lesson of instruction which the history offers you: that nations, like individuals, never condescend to stop and examine how far

the arguments and feelings of their opponents may be reasonable and just; and it follows from hence, that men of rank and influence in any community, can never be better employed than in prevailing on their countrymen to pause and reflect: to remember that in every quarrel there must necessarily be two sides, and that it would be a marvellous circumstance indeed, if the one side, i. e. themselves were exclusively in the right.

The fourth and fifth chapters, like the second and third contain appropriate information. America, it seems, was agreed on the general question; but the difficulty was for the inhabitants of the Massachusetts, particularly of Boston, to persuade the rest of the continent to make a common cause with them. The other provinces, says Ramsay, were but remotely affected by the fate of Massachusetts: they were themselves happy, and had no immediate cause for opposition to Great Britain. They had to commence it, and ultimately to engage in war, on a kind of speculation; they were not so much moved by oppression actually felt, as by a conviction that a foundation was laid, and a precedent about to be established, for future oppression. To convince the people that they ought to submit to a present evil to avoid the future greater evil, was the task assigned to the colonial patriots.

This they effected, in a great measure, as it appears, by means of the press, by pamphlets, essays, addresses, and newspaper dissertations; by public and private letters, meetings and resolutions; petitions and addresses to their governors; by associations, and by a well organized system of committees.

“The events of the time,” says Ramsay, “may be transmitted to posterity; but the agitation of the public mind can never be fully comprehended but by those who were witnesses of it.”

But here, and through all these earlier chapters of Ramsay, the question to be asked is this: Whether these patriots could have produced these effects, had they not been assisted by the harsh measures of England? It is possible that they would not have tried; but surely they would not have succeeded, if they had.

"Speaking of the important year of 1774," In the counties and towns," says Ramsay, "of the several provinces, as well as in the cities, the people assembled and passed resolutions expressive of their rights, and of their detestation of the late American acts of parliament. These had an instantaneous effect on the minds of thousands; not only the young and impetuous, but the aged and temperate joined in pronouncing them to be unconstitutional and oppressive. They viewed them as deadly weapons aimed at the vitals of that liberty which they adored: as rendering abortive the generous pains taken by their forefathers, to procure for them in the new world the quiet enjoyment of their rights: they were the subjects of their meditation when alone, and of their conversation when together."

1 Within a little more than a month after the news of the Boston Port Bill had reached America, it was communicated from state to state; and a flame was kindled in almost every breast through these widely extended provinces.

Such are the effects produced, such at all times are the advantages given to the intemperate or ill designing by harsh measures. Let the student, in the name of common sense, as well as humanity, be entreated to pause, and to suspect the approach of folly, or something worse, whenever, in the course of a misunderstanding with other countries, any measure which is called "a measure of vigour" is proposed to him.

"Within four months," says Ramsay, "from the very day on which the Boston Port Bill reached America, the deputies of eleven provinces had convened in Philadelphia, and in four days more there was a complete representation of twelve colonies, containing three millions of people. The instructions given to their deputies were various; but in general they contained strong professions of loyalty and constitutional dependence on the mother country. The framers of these acknowledged the prerogatives of the crown, and disclaimed every wish of separation from the parent state. On the other hand they were firm in declaring that they were entitled to all the rights of British born subjects; and that the late acts respecting Massachusetts were unconstitutional and oppressive. They specified the acts of which they complained; entered

into nonimportation and nonexportation associations; and prepared addresses to the people of Great Britain and the king. They then dissolved themselves in October, 1774, and agreed to meet in May, 1775.

"The declarations and recommendations of congress were no sooner known than they were cheerfully obeyed. To relieve the distresses of the people of Boston, liberal collections were made throughout the colonies; a disposition to do, to suffer, and to accommodate, spread from breast to breast, and from colony to colony, beyond the reach of human calculation—it seemed as though one mind had inspired the whole. In the midst of these sufferings, cheerfulness appeared in the face of all the people: they accounted every thing cheap in comparison with liberty, and readily gave up whatever tended to endanger it. The animation of the times rendered the actors in these scenes above themselves, and excited them to deeds of self-denial, which the interested prudence of calmer seasons can scarcely credit."

The fifth chapter of Ramsay exhibits the American view of the transactions that took place in Britain during the beginning of 1775: this was the critical period of the contest. Great Britain had commenced her measures of coercion, America of resistance; a body of men, the congress, had assembled, who were considered as the organ through which the wishes and opinions of America were to be conveyed; they had exhibited their cause to the British nation, they had petitioned the king. It was now to be seen in the conduct of the houses of parliament whether civil war was to ensue. Unhappily the address of the house, in answer to his majesty's speech declared for coercion, on the 9th of February, 1775. The force in America was to be properly increased. Lord Chatham and Mr. Burke in public, Dr. Franklin and others in public and private, all laboured in vain. "The repeal of a few acts of parliament," says Ramsay, "would at this time have satisfied America. But, confident of victory, the ministers were deaf to petitions and remonstrances. That coercion which put the speediest end to the dispute, it was said, must be eventually the most merciful; and no very long or effective resistance was expected. Very reasonable observations are here made by Ramsay; and he i :

even candid enough to observe, that, unfortunately for both countries, two opinions were generally believed, neither of which was perhaps true in its utmost extent; and one of which was most assuredly false. "The minister and parliament of England," he says, "proceeded on the idea that the claims of the colonists amounted to absolute independence; that a fixed resolution to renounce the sovereignty of Great Britain was concealed under the specious pretext of a redress of grievances. The Americans, on the other hand, were equally confident that the mother country not only harboured designs unfriendly to their interests, but seriously intended to introduce arbitrary government."

There is probably considerable truth in this observation of Ramsay, on this mutual mistake; and it should be a warning to all good and reasonable men to be very careful how they listen, on the breaking out of a dispute, to the asseverations of those who are of an ardent temper.

The sixth chapter of Ramsay is not less interesting than the former. The preparations on each side for the civil war; the jealousy of liberty on the one side, the desire of supremacy on the other—these were cause and effect, and urged both parties, the one to insist on their demands, and the other on submission.

At Boston, in the mean time, from the year 1768, even from so early a period as 1768, a military force had been stationed by England. "The inhabitants were exasperated against the soldiers, and they against the inhabitants: the one were considered as the mere instruments of tyranny, the other as rioters and smugglers; and there was a constant interchange of insulting words, looks, and gestures. At length, in April, 1775, the sword was drawn; the civil war commenced, and the blood of those who were killed at Lexington, proved," says Ramsay, "the firm cement of an extensive union. The Americans who fell were revered as martyrs who had died in the cause of liberty; resentment against the British burned more strongly than ever: the military arrangements, which had been adopted for defending the colonies from the French and Indians, were turned against the parent state; forts, magazines, arsenals, were seized by the provincial militias; and the Lexington battle

not only furnished the Americans with a justifying apology for raising an army, but inspired them with ideas of their own prowess. The language of the time was, that it was better to die freemen, than to live slaves; our houses, our towns, it was said, though destroyed by the British fleets and armies, may be rebuilt; but liberty, once gone, is lost for ever. The pulpit, the press, the bench, and the bar, severally laboured to encourage the resistance that had been determined upon: religion was connected with patriotism; and in sermons, and in prayers, the cause of America was represented as the cause of Heaven; pastoral letters were written; a day of fasting and humiliation appointed; a league and covenant had been formed in an earlier stage of the contest."

But nothing could apprise the inaccessible confidence of the British ministry how dangerous was the fury of a people, the descendants of republicans and fanatics, whom they were going by very unreasonable and very unjustifiable aggressions, to rouse into action.

After the first conflict at Lexington, and the dreadful storming, which was thought necessary by the British, of the American intrenchments at Bunker's Hill, both in 1775, the next event of very great consequence was the Declaration of Independence, in July, 1776.

You will now observe the arguments that were used; you will see them in the very celebrated pamphlet of Paine (his *Common Sense*); a pamphlet whose effect was such, that it is quite a feature in this memorable contest. You may now read it, and wonder how a performance not marked, as you may at first sight suppose, with any particular powers of eloquence, could possibly produce effects so striking. Without entering into this question, I must ask you to consider what would have been his materials if the government of the parent country had continued *mild* and conciliatory as it was before the year 1763. He endeavours to make out, in the first place, as no doubt he might, that it was better for the continent of America to be an independent nation, than to be dependent on an island three thousand miles off. But when he comes to endeavour to animate the feelings, as he had before attempted to influence the understandings, of his countrymen, what were his words? He writes, you will

remainder, after the commencement of hostilities; he writes for the purpose of procuring the vote of independence, a year after the affair at Lexington and the capture of Bunker's Hill.

(Paine's Common Sense, p. 15.) "Men of passion temper look somewhat lightly over the offences of Britain, and still hoping for the best, are apt to call out, 'Come, come, we shall be friends again, for all this.' But examine the passions and feelings of mankind, bring the doctrine of reconciliation to the touchstone of nature, and then tell me whether you can hereafter love, honour, and faithfully serve the power that hath carried fire and sword into your land? If you cannot do all these, then you are only deceiving yourselves, and by your delay bringing ruin upon your posterity. Your future connexion with Britain, whom you can neither love nor honour, will be forced and unnatural, and being formed only on the plan of present convenience, will, in a little time, fall into a relapse more wretched than the first. But, if you say you can still pass the violations over, then, I ask, Hath your house been burnt? Hath your property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread to live on? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands, and you yourself the ruined and wretched survivor? If you have not, then you are not a judge of those who have. But if you have, and still can shake hands with the murderers, then you are unworthy the name of husband, father, friend, or lover; and, whatever may be your rank or title in life, you have the heart of a coward, and the spirit of a sycophant."

No man, he afterwards declares, was a warmer wisher for reconciliation than himself, before this fatal Battle of Lexington. "Thousands," says he "are already ruined by British barbarity; thousands more will probably suffer the same fate: those men have other feelings than us, who have nothing suffered. I make the sufferer's case my own, and I protest, that were I driven from house and home, my property destroyed, and my circumstances ruined, that as a man, sensible of injuries, I could never relish the doctrine of reconciliation, or consider myself bound thereby."

(Page 21). "There are thousands and ten thousands who

would think it glorious to expel from the continent that barbarous and hellish power, which hath stirred up the Indians and Negroes to destroy us: the cruelty hath a double guilt, it is dealing brutally by us, and treacherously by them. To talk of friendship with those in whom our reason forbids us to have faith, and our affections, wounded through a thousand pores, instruct us to detest, is madness and folly. Every day wears out the little remains of kindred between them and us; and can there be any thing to hope, that as the relationship expires, the affection will increase; or that we shall agree better, when we have ten times more and greater concerns to quarrel over than ever?

“Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the past? Can you give to prostitution its former innocence?—Neither can ye reconcile Britain and America. The last cord now is broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. As well can the lover forgive the ravisher of his mistress, as the continent forgive the murderers of Britain. The Almighty hath implanted in us these unextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes.”

Statesmen should, you see, be very careful how they proceed to acts of positive hostility against the towns or inhabitants of any country with whom they ever intend to be on terms of alliance or kindness. “Never can true reconciliation grow, where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep.” It is of no consequence how unreasonably the sufferers, or their leaders, or their governments may have conducted themselves *before* the quarrel has been urged to acts of aggression like these. Nature, when in affliction or agony, is deaf and blind, and totally insensible to all suggestions of reason, to all considerations of original right, and the laws of war and of nations: it clamours for nothing but vengeance; and men are urged to exasperation and frenzy by the very thought and name of a people, whose soldiers have passed through their country, stabbing their friends and kindred, burning their houses, or violating their wives and daughters.

Dr. Ramsay's observations on the independence of America

must be read: The affair at Lexington, in April, 1775, exhibited the mother country in an odious point of view; yet he thinks for a twelvemonth after, a majority wished only to be reestablished as subjects of Great Britain in their ancient rights. Some of the popular leaders might have secretly wished for independence from the beginning of the controversy; but their number, he conceives, to have been small, and their sentiments not generally known. The coercion attempted by the mother country, he considers as the cause that naturally produced the declaration of independence; and in the short space of two years, nearly three millions of people passed over from the love and duty of loyal subjects to the hatred and resentment of enemies. The people were encouraged by this measure, the declaration of independence, to bear up under the calamities of war; so were the army.

Paine gives the same representation, in his very curious Letter to the Abbé Raynal. "It was this measure that pledged," he says, "their honour; their interest, their every thing; and produced that glow of thought and energy of heart which enabled them to endure the gloomy campaign of 1776." "And no doubt," as Ramsay observes, "if the interference of France was necessary, the declaration of independence was. The one was the price of the other."

The year 1776 was the most important in the contest. In this year the people of America generally took their side. The great mass of the wealth, learning, and influence in all the southern colonies, and in most of the northern, was in favour of the American cause. Some aged persons were exceptions; a few too who had been connected with government; some also who feared the power of Great Britain, and others who doubted the perseverance of America; but a great majority was resolved to hazard every thing. In the beginning of the year 1776, the colonists were farmers, merchants, and mechanics; at its close, soldiers.

The quotations I have thus made from Ramsay, abridging his paragraphs, but retaining his words, will give you a general idea of the feelings and reasonings of the Americans during the different stages of the contest. Bear them in mind, and let us now turn to consider once more the maxim and

feelings of the legislators and the people of England during the same stages of the same contest.

We will refer, as I have announced to you, to the Annual Register. The volumes of this work issued from the press year after year in succession; they are, therefore, the very mirrors of the public sentiment. They exhibit the living state of affairs on each side of the Atlantic as they appeared at each period to some very active and intelligent observer, the writer of this work, whose proper business it was to observe. The author, as I have already mentioned, was Mr. Burke; but the impartiality, with which the arguments and views on each side the question are stated, is marvellous.

Begin, if you please, with the eighth volume, for the year 1765, and with the commercial regulations of Mr. G. Grenville; proceed to the Stamp Act, and you arrive immediately at the most clear indications of very general discontent and resistance all over America. This general discontent and resistance is the first point, and one of great consequence, and this is stated. In the ninth volume you have a description of the ruinous effects of this exercise of the right of Great Britain to tax America; the effects produced upon the trade and the manufactures on each side of the Atlantic. In Great Britain, indeed men appear to have been divided in opinion on the right of taxing America; but on the power of coercing her by the military and naval force of this country there seems to have been no difference of opinion. This point, at this period (in 1765), seems to have been taken for granted.

In 1766, however, the Stamp Act is repealed. It was repealed, because during this interval, and this only, the administration was in the hands of a portion of the Whig party, Lord Rockingham and his friends, who, to their eternal honour, put their theories into practice, their principles of mild government, and showed an attention to the petitions of men, who, whether right or wrong, thought they were in danger of being enslaved. But in the twelfth volume we have new attempts to enforce the right of taxation; we have the tea tax: and in the thirteenth, the arguments on each side of the question. What follows? In the seventeenth volume we have the riots at Boston, the seizure of the *Gaspée* sloop of war by the populace; and in consequence of these outrages,

an act of parliament to shut up the port of Boston; a disposition to carry every thing to extremities on this side the Atlantic; the fatal bill for regulating the constitution of Massachusetts; and even the obsolete act of Henry the Eighth revived and converted, in the most impolitic manner, to the most unexpected purpose, that of bringing offenders in America to be tried, if necessary, in England. But the eighteenth volume opens with observing that the prognostics of the opposition had been all verified; that the effect of these different acts had been all as injurious as possible; and in the second chapter we have in America the ominous meeting of a general congress in September, 1774. The instructions given to the delegates appeared to the editor of the Annual Register, though sometimes violent, reasonable and good. The resolutions that were passed, though indicating resistance, were still of a defensive nature. And we have next their declaration of rights, their petitions and memorials to the king, people of Great Britain, &c. &c. The strong point of their case seems to be, that they considered themselves as left in a state of happiness and prosperity at the peace of 1763, and that their wish was only to be restored to that former state, and nothing more.

In the mean time, on all these important subjects, it is said by the Annual Register that a very general indifference prevailed in this country. Marvellous this, it may now be thought: America had resisted; and there prevailed, it seems, a very general indifference! Our young members of parliament were probably occupied only with their dress, their equipage, and their clubs; our country gentlemen with their game laws, and their expected relief from the land tax: and they all, young and old, in town and out, left the affairs of the nation to those wiser heads, which, they somewhat rashly supposed, must of course be found in the cabinet!

The philosophic views of the merchants and manufacturers, those of them who were not creditors of American houses, and likely to lose their property by the expected rupture, were, it seems, at this period, about the level of the gay and grave triflers I have just alluded to; and as it was thought that a countenance of resolution, if still maintained, would certainly awe the Americans into obedience, there was a kind

of general vote, it seems, that we were to go on, and that the ministry knew best. Prudence in politics was supposed to be like the Christian charity that "hopeth all things, and believeth all things."

The new parliament met in November, 1774. The ministry were indeed reproached with the failure of their predictions, and it was evident that the maze was not only mighty, but that they were all without a plan. Their critics, however, were only seventy-three (the number of opposition), and their admirers (themselves included), two hundred and sixty-four. The peers of the realm were too many of them distinguishable from their inferiors only by their titles. No other claim to superiority was visible. The wisdom of Lord Chatham, like the wisdom of Mr. Burke, was exerted in vain. His assertions and advice should be compared with those of the peers in office who surrounded him in the house. The ministers had taken their ground (in 1774); the supremacy of Great Britain was to be enforced; the Americans could not persevere, as they held, in their systems of self-denial and schemes of nonimportation; they could not, it was said, become soldiers. Franklin, with a petition, was not heard; some of the commercial bodies fared not much better; and the numbers of ministry and opposition in the two houses (the measures of the proportion of reasonableness and unreasonableness in each) were about two to one in the upper, and three to one in the lower. The proportion was better in the upper house on account of the great Whig families found there.

We have next some vacillating conduct of Lord North, and even a kind of conciliatory scheme actually proposed by him in his place, amid the alarm of his friends, and the amazement of all. This was the celebrated occasion when he was upon his legs nine different times to unsay what he had said, because what he had certainly said was found so unpalatable to his friends and supporters. The brighter rays of peace, it seems, that shot athwart his speech, were unwelcome visitants on his own side of the house "the reign of chaos and old night;" and Sir Gilbert Elliot, Wedderburne, and at last the minister himself, were forced to huddle up in fogs and gloom the rainbow tints that might have indicated too soon that the storm was passing away.

But the storm was not to pass away: force was in fact to be tried; and the force determined upon was declared by the opposition to be, as it afterwards proved, inadequate to effect its purpose. We have, in the mean time, very great unanimity in America; the petition from New York, made under very particular circumstances, rejected, as well as Mr. Burke's conciliatory motion, by the British House of Commons. The civil war, therefore, begins in April, 1775. What follows? At the end of the first campaign, at the end of 1775, a regular army, of the most unquestionable discipline and valour, ten thousand men, with all their proper accompaniments of artillery and a naval force, sent out in this impolitic manner to conquer America, had achieved—what? The conquest of Bunker's Hill! that is, had conquered of the great continent of America just as much space as lay covered, at the end of the action, with the dead and the dying.

It was but a cheerless beginning of this unhappy contest to have coals, and faggots, and vegetables, and vinegar, and hay, oxen and sheep, transported three thousand miles across the Atlantic, for the support of the gallant men who were sent to reduce the Americans to obedience. Very lucrative contracts might indeed be made by individuals, and they and their connexions might swell the clamours (they certainly did), in and out of parliament, for the right of taxing America. But all this might happen while the English channel was strewed, as it was strewed, with the floating carcasses of the animals that were continually perishing in the transports, and while the streets of Boston, our military station, were filled with complaints, and its hospitals with sickness.

One effort more was made by congress. About August, 1775, Mr. Penn arrived in London with a petition to the king, subscribed by all the members of congress, and called by the Americans "the olive-branch." In America it might be called, what it was thought, the olive-branch; but darkness and tempest still dwelt on the face of the waters, and there was no resting place for him who bore it. Mr. Penn was informed by the minister that no answer could be returned.

This seems an epoch in the dispute: it should be examined by those who mean to reap the instruction of history. The reasonings of the different parties, and descriptions of men in

and out of parliament, at this particular period—the middle and close of the year 1775—are very remarkable. They will illustrate, I apprehend, the influence of those causes which I have ventured to propose in explanation of the conduct of the mother country; the general ignorance of the real nature of our commercial prosperity; the vulgar notions, on political subjects, into which communities are always liable to fall; and the very high principles of government which people of property and respectability, under any mixed constitution, are always too ready to insist upon.

Many of the first members in opposition (I quote from the Annual Register), both peers and commoners, it was expected, during the session, were more likely to be found in the Tower for treasonable practices, than in their places in the two houses (Sir G. Saville and Lord Rockingham in the Tower!) And Mr. Penn declared at the bar of the House of Lords, that, during the whole of his stay in London, he had never been asked a single question relative to America, by any minister or person in power whatever.

During the first half of the year 1776, the war was, it seems, in England not unpopular. National rights were supposed to be invaded; national burdens, it was expected (ludicrous expectations!) would be alleviated. The expenses of the contest were not yet felt; and the hospitals and fields of battle were at a distance. A general carelessness to the present and the future—perhaps the effects of prosperity—was very observable in the people of England at this time. The declaration of independence had, it seems, in the latter part of 1776, an unfortunate effect. Instead of showing the people how great had been the mistakes of their rulers, it rather tended to unite them in support of men, who had always advised coercive measures, and who insisted, that independence had been the secret object of the American patriots *from the first*. The war was considered as unavoidable, and almost as one of self-defence. The king's speech, the debates in parliament, and the conversations in private society, breathed nothing but accusations against the Americans, approbation of our own conduct, and resolutions to resist rebellion, and chastise ingratitude.

An enlightened reasoner upon the affairs of mankind

would rather have been occupied all this time, in considering how far it might be wise for Great Britain to make the best of a conjuncture of circumstances so unfortunate, and to have attempted some scheme of confederation, or amity and alliance with America, on the principle of acknowledging at once that independence which they had asserted. Such would certainly have been the advice of Dean Tucker, and probably of Mr. Robinson: but a community is generally at fifty years' distance from its real philosophers. The majorities in the two houses, on amendments of a conciliatory nature, were two hundred and forty-two to eighty-seven in the lower, and one hundred and twenty-six to ninety-one in the upper. The opposition about this time seem even to have seceded, and given up their efforts. It is very difficult, no doubt, for men of rank and intelligence to attend with the patience of physicians, and watch over the diseases of the public mind; but the misfortune is, these secessions never awaken any sympathy in the country, and uniformly fail in their purpose. This particular secession, however, gave occasion to a very remarkable composition, which is now regularly published in Burke's works. It was intended as an address to the king on the subject of this secession, or rather on the general subject of American politics. Being addressed to the sovereign, it could neither have the faults, nor some of the particular merits, of Mr. Burke's other compositions. But it is in its matter very weighty; it is very fine, level writing, and quite a model in its way.

The campaign of 1777 was marked by the successes of General Howe, and the misfortunes of General Burgoyne; but the result of two decided victories, on the part of the former, was only the possession of Philadelphia, and as much of the adjacent country as the British commanded by their arms. The result of the misfortunes of the latter was the entire surrender and capture of the royal army.

The general conclusion from the whole was, that the country presented difficulties that were insurmountable, and that the enemy could not be brought to engage without his consent; that the subjugation, therefore, of the continent was impossible.

The English ministers drew no such lessons from these

events; but the French did, and immediately resolved to join the Americans.

The opposition, even before the news of the capture of General Burgoyne had arrived, remonstrated loudly, and with great force of argument, against any further attempts at coercion, but in vain. Their amendments were negatived in the commons, two hundred and forty-three to eighty-six; in the lords, notwithstanding the exertions and predictions of Lord Chatham, ninety-seven to twenty-eight. Interest of money, it seems, rose; the stocks fell; and so did the value of real estates. The country gentlemen looked blank, and perceived that all was wrong; but not knowing how to set things right, acquiesced in whatever was proposed to them; silently indeed, but they acquiesced.

In the opening of the year 1778, Lord North brought in his conciliatory bills, and produced his creed on the general subject of the American troubles. Neither the creed nor the bills were very good, but they were both three years too late. Reproaches followed from Mr. Fox at his tardy wisdom; and his followers and the country gentlemen sat in mixed indignation and despair. Lord Carlisle was afterwards the bearer of this vain attempt at accommodation. It is impossible for either nations or individuals, in the management of a dispute, to have the benefit of two opposite chances. They may be, from the first, moderate, pacific, magnanimous; they will thus secure *certain* advantages, and they will lose *possible* advantages. They may, on the contrary, be haughty, warlike, and selfish; their chances and advantages will then be the reverse of the former. It is impossible to unite the two.

France joined in March, 1778: the ministry and the people of England were furious, though the opponents of the American War had always predicted the event. The only question with these opponents of the war now was, whether America should not immediately be acknowledged an independent power. All idea of the coercion of America must have been now, among reasonable men, at an end. But the ministers waited till another royal army was lost, under Lord Cornwallis; and they had then only to consider, how they could keep the Americans in check, protect the West India

islands, pacify Ireland, and save England itself from the superior fleets of the enemy.

Such was the unhappy situation to which the American contest was at last brought by men who were debaters in parliament, but not statesmen. Their last conciliatory effort reached America in April, 1778. "There was a day," replied General Washington to Governor Trumbull, "there was a day, when even this step, from our then acknowledged parent state, might have been accepted with joy and gratitude; but that day, sir, is past irrevocably."

What I have now delivered to you, borrowing my materials from Ramsay and the Annual Register, will give you some general notion of the instruction to be derived from a comparison of the opinions and feelings of the inhabitants of America, with those of the people of this country at each corresponding period.

This kind of instruction may be still further amplified, by a reference to the memoirs of Gibbon. Look at his private letters, and observe the passages when any mention is made of America. I had extracted several of them, meaning to read them to you, but I forbear, lest I should dwell too long upon a lesson that is, from the first to the last, sufficiently striking.

Of the powers of the mind of Gibbon I need not speak, and I must confess, that the few sentences which appear in his confidential letters, when written by such a man, and when contrasted, as they should be, with what in the mean time was passing in America, appear to me to speak volumes. Gibbon lived in the first society in London, with Lord North and his friends; was a member of parliament, and acquainted, no doubt, in a general manner, with their reasonings and measures. The lively, superficial glance, which he casts upon these momentous transactions, must have been much the same with that of other people of consequence and talents around him; and it is in the same careless, unfeeling, and presumptuous manner, that men in easy circumstances, and men of rank and fortune, are but too often talking, writing, and voting, on all concerns of national policy, not immediately connected with their own personal interests. It is necessary that I should declare to you, for it is on this account that I

must recommend them to your perusal, that a more lamentable inattention than is displayed in these letters of Mr. Gibbon, from first to last, to all the facts, and to all the principles that properly belonged to this great subject of America, one more striking, and if duly considered, one more valuable, cannot be offered for your instruction. I do not quote them, not only for the reasons I have mentioned, but because the letters are every where full of spirit and entertainment, and must, of course, be read by every man of education. I must again and again repeat, that these things are, and ought to be, a warning to us, how we suffer ourselves to be guilty of such faults in matters of national policy, as even the talents of Gibbon did not protect him from: how we are either arrogant, or selfish, with regard to foreign nations; arbitrary in our notions of government, or consenting to the short-sighted, petty, paltry expedients of vulgar politics.

For Lord North on this occasion, a man of fine talents and mild temper, there can be no excuse. He must have been guilty of acquiescing in measures, the general folly of which he must have resolved to shut out from his view. Either this, or he is an example to show that wit and eloquence, and acuteness and dexterity in debate are one thing, while decision, elevation, strength, and clearness of understanding, such as are indispensable in the rulers of mankind, are quite another. He slumbered on, amid the downy pleasures of patronage and social regard; amid shifts and expedients, and discreditable failures, vernal hopes, and winter disappointments; uniformly a year too late in every project he formed, and while he talked of having followed up the system of his predecessors, of not being the original author of a dispute from which he could not disengage himself, and of having pursued the conduct recommended to him by the advice of parliament and the wishes of the nation (the unfair excuses these, the palliatives of bad ministers at all times), he saw the empire gradually dismembered, his administration ending in defeat and disgrace, and his character and fame as a statesman in the opinion of posterity, lost for ever. This is not to pass too harsh a judgment upon him, nor is it to judge after the event; nothing is now known that was not then known, and nothing happened that was not repeatedly pre-

dicted. It was known, for instance, that the Americans were, on their first settlement, republicans; that the Pelhams and the Walpoles, had carefully abstained from stirring the critical question of American taxation; the difficulties and irritations connected with the restraint of the contraband trade of the colonies were also known. The spirit shown on the subject of the Stamp Act, both on its enactment and on its repeal, was a matter of the most perfect notoriety. Lord North, and his predecessors, Lord Grenville and Charles Townshend, had nothing to learn with respect to the influence of posts and places on the minds of men; and it was known very well, that the crown had *no* very extensive or effective influence, arising from its patronage in North America. It was clear, therefore, that the precise *merit* of every measure, and its *agreeableness* to the notions, habits, and interests of the people, were points of the utmost consequence. These ministers were aware, or might have been, that this right of taxation was the particular point on which the Americans were sensitive. Fanaticism, as it is well known, made a part of the national character of America. Its transition from religious to civil liberty was very intelligible; it was part of the instruction even of our own history, in the times of Charles I. It was known that a state of independence from the mother country was (at least might very possibly be) the ambition of many bolder spirits in America: again, that this was even the state to which the prosperity of large and distant colonies naturally tends. Every one was aware, that different opinions existed in America on the justice of the claims of Great Britain; it was therefore the obvious policy of the rulers of Great Britain so to deport themselves, that those, who in America undertook their defence, should have as good a case as possible against the opposite party. All these things were or might have been known and understood, and when all that was requested by the petitions from America was, in a word, only the renewal of their situation at the peace in 1763, only a return to the old system; what are we to say, when we see these petitions disregarded, troops sent to Boston, soldiers hired from Germany to force into submission such an immense continent as America, situated on the other side of the Atlantic!

There is a progress in these things, but it is from mistake to folly, from folly to fault, from fault to crime; it is at least from fault, to the shedding of blood in a quarrel, of which the theoretical justice must have been confessed by every one to have been a matter of some debate, but of which the issue, whatever direction it might take, could not have been well expected by *any one* to be favourable to the real interests of the mother country, if the question was once reduced to a question of arms.*

* I had observed, in the above Lecture, "that for Lord North there could be no excuse;" what excuse there is, I have lately, many years after, had an opportunity of ascertaining. I have seen papers which show, that Lord North, after the affair at Saratoga, from the beginning of the year 1778, made every effort to procure from the king permission to resign. These efforts were continually repeated for a long period, but in vain: the king could not give up the idea of coercing America, and therefore could not part with the only man who was, he thought, fit to manage the House of Commons.



LECTURE XXXIV.

AMERICAN WAR.

IN my last lecture I endeavoured to exhibit to you the different views that were taken of the same measures and events by the Americans on the one side, and by the British ministers and people on the other. I alluded to passages in the account given by Ramsay, and to passages in the Annual Register; these I recommended to your study. I did so because men fail in the management of a dispute, whether as statesmen or individuals, chiefly because they never enter into the particular views and feelings of those to whom they are opposed. Of this fault in mankind no instances can be produced more strong than those which I yesterday exhibited. Paine, the popular writer of America, considered the English nation as one with which no terms were to be kept—as a “hellish nation,” and her soldiers as “murderers,” yet were these soldiers sent to enforce the measures of Lord North, the most amiable of men, who thought the sovereignty lay in the parent state; that in the rights of sovereignty was included the right of taxation, and as far as the moral part of the case was concerned, believed himself perfectly justified in asserting the supremacy of Great Britain. In this opinion he was supported by a decided majority of the English nation in and out of parliament, while the pamphlet of Paine, whatever may be justly thought of the coarseness and fury of such terms as I have mentioned, was universally read and admired in America, and is said to have contributed most materially to the vote of independence passed by congress in 1776. Again, the representations of Ramsay, as well as the known facts, display the violence, with which the Americans reasoned and felt, while the pages of the Annual Register show how indifferent or how ignorant were in the mean time the generality of the English people. These are edifying examples of the

nature of the human mind to those who will reflect upon them, and us such. I yesterday recommended them to your attention: refer to whichever side of the Atlantic you choose, the instruction will be found. I am, however, not speaking to Americans, and it is more fit that I should dwell upon the faults which we ourselves exhibited, more particularly as they lost us half our empire. Certainly there was in England and in her statesmen a total inattention to the particular character, feelings, and opinions of the American people; and to direct your reflection to this particular part, and most important part of the subject, was, as I have already mentioned, the business of the lecture of yesterday. But I meant you also to see at the same time what I conceive to be the great political lesson of the American dispute—the impolicy of harsh government; and this, which is the lesson of the American dispute, is also the great lesson of history. I have never failed to point it out to you. There is an instance of this kind very memorable in the annals of Europe, to which I called your attention in a former lecture: as it bears a certain resemblance in many important points to the case before us, I will now again allude to it, and again request you to consider it; it is the instance of the Low Countries and Spain. It can scarcely be necessary to say that no comparison is intended between the project of introducing the Inquisition in the one case and the Stamp Act in the other; but there is a certain analogy in the want of policy in the two cabinets at these different periods, which is sufficiently strong to be worth your observation; in each case the great question was coercion or not—harsh government or mild.

The lessons of history are neglected by those who are too intemperate to listen to any admonition, from whatever quarter it may come, and by those who have not philosophy enough either to relish historical inquiries, or to separate principles from the particular circumstances by which they may be surrounded.

To mark, however, the common appearance of any great principles in the case that is past, and in the case before us, is to read history with proper advantage; and to see, or not to see, instruction of this kind, is the great distinction between the statesman who may be trusted in critical times, and the

mere man of office, who, in all such critical times, is more likely to injure than to serve his country.

In a former lecture, when alluding to the great struggle between Spain and the Low Countries, as I have already said, I mentioned the analogy in many important points between this great contest and our own American dispute. I have since found, on examining the debates in the commons, that the instance of the Flemings, and their successful resistance to the Spanish monarchy, was not overlooked; it was alluded to by Governor Johnstone, and it is probable that he insisted upon it at some length. I shall make a short reference to the historian Bentivoglio, and take the common translation, that you may not be listening to any representations of mine. You will see the leading points of similarity, I doubt not, without any assistance from me.

“The council of Spain,” says Bentivoglio, “was full of eminent personages; among the rest, the Duke of Alva and the Duke of Feria were in great esteem both with the king and council; these two were of different opinions. Upon a certain day, then, when the king himself was in council to resolve what was to be done, the Duke of Feria spake thus:—‘To provide for the evils with which Flanders is afflicted, it is very necessary first to know the causes, and these without doubt ought chiefly to be attributed to the terror which the inquisition and other edicts have infused into that country. The Flemish have apprehended, and do apprehend now more than ever, to have their consciences violated by such ways, and to undergo all other greater affliction and misery; and this is what has made them fall at last into so many and so heinous outrages. Flanders at present labours under a frenzy of fear, if I may so call it. If the bare name of inquisition hath put Flanders into such commotions, what will that nation do when they shall see themselves threatened with the forces of a foreign army? What fear, what horror, will they then conceive? They will believe that the government of Spain will be by force brought into Flanders; that their privileges will be violated, their institutions overthrown, their faults severely punished, their liberties oppressed by governors, and finally be buried under citadels.

“‘People’s fear doth oftimes degenerate into desperation;

so the Flemings growing desperate, and the nobility cloaking themselves no longer under covenants and petitions, nor the common people falling into slight tumults, but the whole country going into a general rebellion, all may, with one accord, oppose our forces, and not suffer them to enter; and say the Flemish were not apt enough of themselves to make this opposition, will they peradventure want neighbours who will use all means to incite them thereunto? But let it be granted that our troops are suffered to enter, are we any whit the more secure, the country may not alter afterwards, and be troubled? Great punishments must certainly be undergone, and force must divers ways be secured by greater force. The people there will then begin to despair more than ever; they will call punishment oppression, and severity tyranny; citadels, yokes; and garrisons, chains, and fetters; and thus at last they will break out into rebellion and arms. Thus will the war be kindled, nor do I know that it will be afterwards as easily ended as it would have been easy at first not to have begun it. Nature, by the strong situation of seas and rivers, will fight for them; they themselves will fight desperately in defence, as they will say, of themselves, wives, children, and liberty. The opulency of their own country will furnish them with gallant forces, and much more the opportunity of their neighbours; on the contrary, how heavy a burden of war will your majesty be to sustain! Succours at so great a distance will prove very slow, and very costly both by sea and land. The event of war is always uncertain, and fortune, which in other human accidents is content with a part, will have here the whole dominion. If the success prove favourable to your majesty, the victory will be bought with blood, and against the blood of your subjects; but if the contrary should fall out, which God forbid, not only men but states would be lost; and so at last, by too deplorable event, we should be taught how much fair means would have been better than harsh proceedings. It is to these fair means that I exhort you, and that by all means you give over any thought of the other. Every province, every kingdom, has its particular nature, like unto human bodies. One government is proper for Spain, another for the Indies, another for the states in Italy, and so likewise for others in Flanders. Let the Flemish

then be permitted to enjoy their government in Flanders. Free them from all suspicion either of inquisition, foreign forces, or any other more dreadful violence: that one contrary may cure another; so the people's fears ceasing, the contrary commotions will cease. Let the punishment of a few serve for the example of all, that it may be laid where the country will be least exasperated thereby. In fine, clemency becomes a prince: other people are capable of other virtues.'"

But the Duke of Alva thought not so; like the fallen angel of Milton, and like other fallen angels in cabinets and senates,

"His sentence was for open war."

"'To begin,' says he, 'where the Duke of Feria ended, I shall both truly and freely deny that it is in your majesty's power to use clemency, which virtue, ill-used, degenerates into abject servility. How will you endure to receive laws in Flanders instead of giving them? What remains now but that the Flemish, who on all occasions boast themselves to be as well free as subjects, having denied all obedience to the church, may also altogether deny it to you? So a second Schwitzer's commonwealth shall be seen to arise, or rather Egmont, and the other authors of so many base novelties, shall boldly divide these provinces among themselves. The affairs of Flanders now lean this way, and shall we talk of pardon? Shall the church lose its patrimony? your crown so many opulent countries? Is not your authority impugned on all sides by covenants, petitions, and a thousand other perfidious practices? You have heard them sufficiently already in using only fair means. To what end has so long patience and dissimulation served, unless to make the disorders still the greater, and the authors thereof more audacious? My opinion is, that without more delay you send an army into those provinces. Will the Flemish dare to oppose the entrance of your forces? as if it was as easy to raise an army as a conspiracy, and that the rabble rout will be as ready to fight against armed squadrons as they have been to wage war so wickedly against the sacred images and altars. France is wholly on fire with civil war; a woman sits at the helm of government in England. What can be feared from the divided princes of Germany? Moreover,

your case will be theirs; all princes will be concerned in the people's disobedience; the example reaches always to all. Moreover; when ever was your empire in greater power and tranquillity? Your forces will then, without any manner of difficulty, be received in Flanders; and if the frenzy, as it is termed, of fear, but which is indeed of perfidiousness, make the Flemish fall blindly into open rebellion, why ought not your forces hope for all good success against them; yours which will be so just and so potent against theirs, which are tumultuary, managed by abject men; rebels to their God and to their prince? We shall see the rebellion suppressed almost as soon as born, by those which shall now enter Flanders. Doubtlessly there are variety of governments, but there can be no variance in the bond of obedience which is due by the people unto their prince. Subjects are born with this law, and when they go about to break it, it is they that use violence; they receive it not. Your majesty shall not then use force, save only to suppress force, nor sharp remedies, till after having so long in vain used moderate ones. The wound is degenerated into a gangrene; it requires fire and sword.' "

So thought the Duke of Alva, and fire and sword were applied. The result was, that he returned from the Low Countries, as in after times did the generals of England from America, unable to accomplish the subjection of men whom he had despised: men who might have been retained in obedience by the mild counsels of the Duke of Feria; but who could see, in his sharp remedies, as he termed them, nothing but an excess of cruelty and injustice, that dissolved at once all the ordinary bonds of affection and allegiance.

Other instances might be produced from history; the wisdom, the duty of mild government I conceive to be the great but disregarded lesson of all history.

Passing now from the first part of the general subject, the origin of the dispute, the second seems to be the conduct of it.

The student will be already impatient to know how it could possibly happen that the fleets and armies of this country could be successfully resisted by those who had neither; why Howe did not drive Washington from the field; why regular armies of acknowledged skill and bravery did

not disperse every irregular combination of men whenever they appeared; support the governors of the provinces in the enforcement of British acts of parliament, and by the assistance of the loyalists, partly by persuasion and partly by force, assert and establish the sovereignty of the mother country.

Now, to answer this general question, it is necessary to read the history of the American War. The authorities you must more particularly consult are, Washington's Letters, and the Life of Washington, by Marshall; Stedman's History of the American War, and the examination into the conduct of Sir William Howe by the House of Commons, which you will find given in the debates.

I will allude to this general subject of the conduct of the war in the case of Sir William Howe, not only to exhibit to you the proper means of answering to yourselves a very natural question, but for the sake of drawing your attention to other topics perhaps still more important. For instance, I shall refer to the Letters of Washington, and to the Life of Washington, and the extracts I shall produce in the first place will enable you, and can alone enable you, to judge of the merit of Washington himself, the great character of the last century. In the next place, they will still further substantiate several of the points I have already been endeavouring to establish—the faults and follies, I mean, of England: you will see the most constant and extreme distress exhibited by Washington in these letters. The great inference you are to draw is therefore not only how great must have been the want of enterprise in Sir William Howe, but how great must have been the original impolicy and subsequent mismanagement of the quarrel on our part, so to exasperate the Americans that they should think of beginning, of prosecuting, of persevering in a system of resistance under difficulties so serious, distresses so painful, and privations so intolerable.

There are other conclusions to be drawn from these documents—the superiority, I am sorry to say, of regular armies over all and every description of militia: conclusions, too, with respect to the republican character, and those very unfavourable to it; its ridiculous jealousy, its impracticable nature, its coarseness, its harshness. Lastly, you will observe that

while you are reading these accounts of the distresses and difficulties of Washington, you are, in fact, passing over, in your perusal, the materials of the most serious charge that I think can be brought against the American leaders in this dispute, because it is not quite enough that there should be right on the side of those who mean to resist; there should also be a fair, and indeed more than a fair, chance of success. Men cannot be otherwise justified in leading on their countrymen into measures which will be considered by their rulers, or oppressors, if you please, as rebellion, and punished as such by fire and sword. Of all the questions that occur in the whole of this dispute, this seems to me one of the most difficult, whether the very able men who composed the congress (admitting the justice of the cause), did or did not hurry on the resistance of their countrymen at too great a rate, and embark in the fearful enterprise of open rebellion to the mother country, with means far too disproportionate to the occasion. Of this it will be said the actors in the scene were the best, and can be the only judges, and that at least they were justified by the event.

Perhaps not—the difficulties they had to struggle with were all most obviously to be expected; while the causes of their success, some of them (and those very important), were not so: no one, for instance, could have presupposed such a want of skill and enterprise in the British ministers and generals.

On the whole, though the attempt of Great Britain permanently to establish a system of taxation by force was, from the first, not a little hopeless, from the distance and impracticability of the country, and the spirit and unanimity of the inhabitants; and though it was an attempt that could not *ultimately* be successful; still it must be allowed on the other side, that the American leaders won the independence of their country at a much *less* expense of carnage and desolation (long as the war lasted) than they had any reason to expect. But you must consider the books which I have mentioned. In the mean time I will make some references to these authorities, and as much as possible use the words I find in them, as I have before done while adverting to the history of Ramsay. There is a small volume purporting to be Letters

of Washington, and in which are included several to *Mrs. Washington*; these are not genuine. Those Letters which are authentic rest upon the authority of an appeal to Mr. Pinckney, at that time the American ambassador. They do not descend lower than December, 1778; they comprehend but a part of what the editor has collected. On the whole, these letters rather disappoint expectation; they partake too much of the nature of state papers. They were, indeed, addressed to congress, and are written in a manner so calm and sedate, that they give but an imperfect portrait of what we wish to see—the various hopes and disappointments that must have affected the mind of Washington in the course of so singular a contest. They make out, however, two main points: that Washington, while of a temperament on great occasions the most deliberate and reasonable, always considered the cause of America as the cause of freedom and right; secondly, that his difficulties were such as no general was ever before able to contend with, for so long a continuance.

These letters, indeed, stop short at the end of 1778; but these points would only have been more fully displayed, if they had been continued to the end of the contest. Washington took the command immediately after the affair at Bunker's Hill, in 1775; want of gunpowder was the first difficulty, in June, 1775; the defence of lines so extensive is the second; the want of money, engineers, &c. &c. immediately follow; and no dependence, the general officers told him, could be put on the militia for a continuance in camp, or regularity and discipline during the short time they might stay. "In the mean time," says he (July, 1775), "there are materials for a good army, a great number of able-bodied men, active, zealous in the cause, and of unquestioned courage." In August, 1775, he observes, "the enemy, finding us so well prepared, mean to bombard us out of our present line of defence; or are waiting in expectation that the colonists must sink under the weight of the expense, or the prospect of a winter campaign, so discouraging to our troops, as to break up our army." These were, no doubt, the expectations of the British commanders. "Our situation," he says, "in the article of powder, is more alarming than I had the most distant idea of, not more than nine rounds a man."

In September, 1775, he says to congress, " My situation is inexpressibly distressing, to see the winter frost approaching upon a naked army, the time of their service within a few weeks of expiring, and no provision yet made for such important events. The military chest is totally exhausted; the paymaster has not a single dollar; the quartermaster the same; the greater part of the troops are not far from mutiny, upon the deduction from their stated allowances: if there is not more punctuality in future, the army must absolutely break up," &c. &c.

In October, 1775, he says, " Gage is recalled; five regiments and a thousand marines are ordered out; no prospect of accommodation, but the ministry determined to push the war to the utmost." In November, 1775, he says, " As there is every appearance that this contest will not be soon decided, would it not be eligible to raise two battalions?" At the end of November, 1775, he says, " Our situation is truly alarming; and of this General Howe is well apprized: it was the common topic of conversation when the people left Boston last Friday. I am making the best disposition I can for our defence, throwing up redoubts," &c.

Howe was all this time at Boston and Bunker's Hill; Washington not far distant, in an intrenched camp at Cambridge. In December, 1775, he says, " The major part of the Connecticut troops were last Friday going away with their arms and ammunition; we have, however, by threats, persuasion, and the activity of the people of the country, who sent back many of them who had set out, prevailed upon the most part to stay. In January, 1776, he observes to congress, " It is not in the pages of history, perhaps, to furnish a case like ours; to maintain a post, within musket shot of the enemy, for six months together without powder, and at the same time to disband one army and recruit another, within that distance of twenty old British regiments, is more, probably, than ever was attempted." His letter of January 14, 1776, opens thus, " I am exceedingly sorry that I must call the attention of congress to the state of our army, which is truly alarming, &c. &c. Supplies are wanting, and the enlisting goes on so slow, that it almost seems at an end."

His letter of February 9, 1776, was intended to show congress the difference that must ever exist between regular soldiers and all sorts of militia, or men who enlist for a short time, and may leave the army when in presence of the enemy. His observations, drawn from his own experience, must be considered as decisive.* But the jealousy which congress entertained of a regular army was so great, that Washington is obliged to begin and conclude his letter with a sort of apology for recommending it so earnestly to their adoption.

Independence was declared in July, 1776; it is therefore important to remark an expression five months before, in February. "I am entirely of your opinion," says he, "that should an accommodation take place, the terms will be severe or favourable in proportion to our ability to resist, and that we ought to be on a respectable footing to receive their armaments in the spring."

The possibility of conciliation seems here taken for granted; that is, independence was not *then* the idea of Washington, five months before the declaration.

At this very moment (February, 1776), he declares there were two thousand men without firelocks. His letters continue to speak of embarrassments for want of proper supplies through the months that follow; but on the 10th of July, immediately after the declaration of independence, he writes thus: "I trust that the late decisive part congress has taken is calculated for our happiness, and will secure us that freedom and those privileges which have been and are refused us, contrary to the voice of nature and the British constitution. Agreeably to the request of congress, I caused the declaration to be proclaimed before all the army, and the measure seemed to have their most hearty assent, the expressions and behaviour both of officers and men testifying their warmest approbation of it."

The conclusion of his letter is more animated than usual—calmness (that useful but disagreeable quality) was the very essence of his character, was so on all public occasions at least. "The intelligence we have is, that the British look for Admiral Howe's arrival every day, with his fleet and a large reinforcement; they are in high spirits, talk confidently

of success, and carrying all before them, when he comes; I trust, through Divine favour, and our own exertions, they will be disappointed in their views, and at all events any advantages they may gain will cost them very dear, if our troops behave well, which I hope will be the case, having every thing to contend for that freemen hold dear. They will have to wade through much blood and slaughter, before they can carry any part of our works, if they carry them at all, and at best be in possession of a melancholy and mournful victory. May the sacredness of our cause inspire our soldiers with sentiments of heroism, and lead them to the performance of the noblest exploits!"

In August, 1776, before the attack of Howe on Long Island and New York, he considers himself as having ten thousand five hundred men fit for duty, sick three thousand, on command about as many more, in all about seventeen thousand. "These things," he says, "are melancholy. As far as I can judge, I shall have the support of my troops; the superiority of the enemy and the expected attack do not seem to have depressed their spirits."

After the victories of Howe, September 2nd, he writes— "Our situation is truly distressing; the militias are dismayed, intractable, and impatient to return; great numbers of them have gone off, in some instances almost by whole regiments. With the deepest concern I am obliged to confess my want of confidence in the generality of the troops. I have more than once," he continues, "taken the liberty of mentioning to congress, that no dependence can be put on militia. I am persuaded that our liberties must be greatly hazarded, if not entirely lost; if their defence is left to any but a permanent standing army: I mean, one to exist during the war."

His letter of 8th September, 1776, is very important, and contains his ideas on the late and future operations of the war, but it is too long to quote. "We must on all occasions," says he, "avoid a general action, nor put any thing to the risk unless compelled by a necessity into which we ought never to be drawn. The war must be defensive, a war of posts. I have never spared the spade and the pickaxe."

He never did afterwards spare them. The affair at Bun-

ker's Hill had shown what it was to fight from behind intrenchments. The country gave opportunities of this species of defence, and the war was thus protracted by Washington till the irregular and undisciplined troops of America became in time fit to be opposed, in pitched battles, if necessary, to the regular troops of England and Germany. But Washington had no proper powers intrusted to him by the congress. These jealous republicans hazarded their cause to the utmost, rather than give their general the means of saving them from their enemies. This sort of impracticable adherence to a principle is always the characteristic of democratic men and democratic bodies. It is sometimes their praise, but more often their fault. The respectful patience with which Washington waited for the influence of his representations on his constitutional rulers exceeds all description, and certainly far exceeds the patience of those who read his letters. The lowest point of depression was at this moment, December, 1776. But the enterprise at Trenton, where he surprised a part of the British army, and which was the great achievement of the military life of Washington, then followed: the achievement that inspired with some hope the despairing friends and armies of America, and which enabled him to maintain a show of regular resistance to the superior forces of the British commanders. His own account of this affair, December 27th, is singularly modest and concise.

The year 1777 opens with a letter, in which he evidently expects very favourable effects from the ill conduct of the British in the Jerseys. "If what our countrymen have suffered in the Jerseys does not rouse their resentment, they must not possess the common feelings of humanity. To oppression, ravage, deprivation of property, insult has been added. We keep up appearances," says he, "before an enemy double to us in number. Our situation is delicate and truly critical, for want of a sufficient force to oppose to the enemy."

Now it was about this time, and in this situation of things, that the congress expressed to him their wishes (such was their reasonableness) that "he would confine the enemy within their present quarters, prevent their getting supplies from the country, and totally subdue them before they were

reinforced." They do not exactly desire him to step over to London, and send them Lord North and Lord George Germaine in irons, but I really have quoted the very terms in which they expressed themselves.

The good temper of Washington is astonishing. "The enclosed return," says he, "comprehends the whole force I have in Jersey; it is but a handful, and bears no proportion in the scale of numbers to that of the enemy; added to this, the major part is made up of militia. The most sanguine in speculation," says he, "cannot deem it more than adequate to the least valuable purposes of war."

These notices, drawn from different letters (they proceed in the same strain to the end), will give you some idea of the work before us. The letters, you will see, however cold and formal, may serve to afford you a proper notion of the contest, and more particularly of the merit of Washington. You will scarcely be able regularly to read them, though you will easily perceive that they must be read very patiently by any historian of these times, and that if particular points are to be settled they must be referred to. You will remember that I have already announced to you that these letters may supply many more conclusions than such as relate to the merit of General Washington.

But there is another work which you may more readily meet with, the Life of Washington, by Marshall. The work is indeed chiefly compiled from Washington's correspondence, and a life of Washington is of course a history of the American War. To the first volume of this work I have referred you on former occasions. Our present subject begins to be treated in the second volume; it is continued through the next three quartos, but they are not large or closely printed; and as much of the *military* part may be looked at rather than read, they will not occupy you too long. Of the fifth volume I shall speak hereafter.

The conclusions which you will draw from the pages of Marshall you will find much the same as those that you would derive from Ramsay. The more appropriate value of the work consists in the description of the distresses of Washington. You may here, too, gain some idea of the views and counsels of Washington, and the congress, from time to time;

and you may compare them with those of the British generals and statesmen, to be found in other publications. I do not detain you with these considerations, because you will read this work of Marshall more readily than the former work, the Letters of Washington. You will have the same instruction afforded you in a less disagreeable manner.

We will now advert to the history of Stedman. This is the work where may be found the most distinct materials for the censure of Sir William Howe. Stedman evidently thought that the cause was lost by his want of capacity; Stedman served under Howe, Clinton, and Cornwallis; and when the conduct of the war is to be estimated, he must be consulted. But I consider him of no authority on any subject which is not connected with his profession. His account is merely that of a sensible, well meaning, and probably very good officer. He forms no views, is no statesman, and his work should only be considered as offering us a very good specimen of what were probably the opinions and feelings of intelligent officers serving in the British army at the time. But what intelligent officers thought is by no means an uninteresting part of the subject, and I therefore recommend his book. Enter into the military details as much or as little as you please, but gather up his sentiments and opinions whenever you can find them, considering them as the objects of your speculation, not of your confidence.

After these few remarks, I will not occupy your time with any further comments on this particular history. I had prepared many; but if your mind has been properly enlarged by the writings I have recommended, more particularly the speeches of Mr. Burke, you will be sufficiently secure from the misapprehensions, confined views, and arbitrary notions, which were entertained by Stedman; I doubt not, a very respectable officer, but it is quite out of the question to suppose him fit to direct your judgments on such topics as he often decides upon.

But as a man like Stedman, connected with the military profession, was very naturally inclined rather to depend on the exertions of authority, and, to see the propriety of its claims, than to trust to the distant effects of mild government, he is naturally referred to by authors and reasoners like

Adolphus, who, without the excuse of the same profession, have the same arbitrary inclinations and opinions. There are some facts and anecdotes given by Stedman not to be found in others. He has the appearance, too, of being honest, and of speaking freely what he thought. Stedman must be consulted, in his eighth chapter more particularly, by those who would judge of the failure of our arms in the dispute.

It was during the campaign of 1776, and at the close of it, when it was for Sir William Howe to have struck some important blow. The enemy were unable to stand before the British troops in the field; the American army had diminished from thirty thousand almost to three thousand; Washington was scarcely able to maintain the appearance of a regular force; and Stedman insists that the general panic had extended itself from the military to all the civil departments; the congress had retired into Maryland; Philadelphia only waited the arrival of the British army to submit to the mother country; other parts would have done the same; New York was already in Howe's possession. These advantages were neglected, and other material errors, which he states, were in his opinion committed. I cannot enter into the details in this and in other parts of his work. You will consider also his twentieth chapter, where he finds another opportunity of renewing his censures when the general takes leave of his command.

The blame that belonged to the failure of our arms in America became of course a subject of dispute between the general and the secretary of war, Lord George Germaine.

In this question is involved, as I have already intimated, more than the character of either; and they who examine it will be continually led away to the more important question of the original probability of conquering America by any force which it was competent for this country to have sent across the Atlantic. On this account, and on account of many curious particulars which appeared in the course of the examination, I would recommend it to you to consult the debates. The labour will not be great. You will find General Howe, on his return, declaring in the house that he had resigned his command (I quote his words) "in consequence of a total disregard to his opinions, and to his recommenda-

tion of meritorious officers ; that the war had not been left to his management, and yet when he applied for instructions, he frequently could not get them." Lord George Germaine expressed some surprise at so unexpected an attack ; said his recommendations had been complied with, except in three instances, which he explained ; declared that he had always seconded the plans of the general ; and that if the general had not instructions when he called for them, it was because every thing depended on unforeseen circumstances, and it was impossible to send letters every day across the Atlantic ; that the general must necessarily, in many respects, be left to his own discretion.

Perhaps these few words that I have quoted from these two speeches are sufficient to decide, without any further inquiry, the merits both of the general and of the secretary.

If the general on the one hand supposed, that unless he was left entirely to his own discretion, he could overpower Washington and the congress ; or if, on the other hand, the secretary imagined, that while sitting at Whitehall, he had the slightest chance of conquering the continent of America, or even of materially assisting those whom he sent for the purpose, it was evident at once, that neither the general nor the secretary had genius enough to execute, or even properly to comprehend, the enterprise which was before them.

An inquiry took place to satisfy General Howe, and not Lord George Germaine. The general entered on his defence, and insisted that the papers before the house made out for him four points : first, that he supplied the ministry, from time to time, with proper information ; secondly, that he gave his own opinion on what was practicable with the force on the spot, and with such succours as he expected ; thirdly, that his plans were carried into execution with as little deviation as could have been expected ; and, fourthly, that he never flattered the ministry with improper hopes of seeing the war terminated in any one campaign, with the force at any one time under his command.

The general then proceeded to his defence, and the student, as he reads it, will find himself silenced, if not satisfied, and that to a much greater degree than he could have expected. The great question is, why the general did not attempt some

decisive enterprise at the close of the campaign of 1776, about the time of the surprise at Trenton. The general seems always to have respected his enemy more than the student might think necessary: but it would be rather presumptuous to judge for him in this point. Instead of immediately making any important effort, he wrote for a reinforcement of fifteen thousand men and a battalion of artillery. The force could not be sent, and this opportunity (which was in fact a striking one) was lost.

You will see the defence of Lord George Germaine at page 391, the main point of which is, that "he admitted that the general had demanded a large reinforcement of fifteen or twenty thousand men, but that it was after the affair at White Plains, in 1776, when the rebel army was all one as annihilated; and that for his part, against an enemy flying on every side, scarcely a battalion in any one body, and at the head of a victorious, well disciplined army, combined with the information of persons well informed on the spot, and on his own judgment, he thought then, and now, that such a requisition on the part of the commander in chief ought not to be complied with."

Now here appears to me to turn the main hinge of the question between the secretary and the general, and the answer of the secretary seems not sufficient: it was for the general to judge of the quantity of force, not for him; and the better answer would have been, not that he *would* not, but that he *could* not comply with the requisition, and this answer would probably have been the real truth. To have said *this*, however, would have been to suggest to the opposition the incompetence of Great Britain to make a sufficient effort to conquer America at all, and the original folly of attempting it; and this therefore could not be said.

The twelfth volume of debates opens with the examination of Lord Cornwallis and Sir C. Grey. They are very decided in their testimony in favour of Sir William. The evidence of both goes to show the impracticability of the country; and of Sir Charles, to prove the inadequacy of the force which was sent. But he joined late, not till June, 1777.

Lord George Germaine then brings up his evidences, General Robertson, and Mr. Galloway. Much is made to

depend on the evidence of Galloway, by the historian Adolphus; but you will see such conversation taking place in the House of Commons, with respect to Galloway's memory, situation, and other particulars, that you will receive with great hesitation any representations founded on his opinions.

At last you will find that the inquiry suddenly stops short. The general is absent, and the committee breaks up and expires. The general says, the next day, that his absence was no proper reason why it should do so. The two brothers ask the secretary whether, after having heard the evidence, he has any accusation to make. He is silent, and the whole business is at an end; not very intelligibly, or much to the credit of any of the parties concerned—the general, the secretary, or the house.

On the whole the conclusion seems to be, that success could not have been accomplished, unless Howe had been more enterprising, or England more powerful. That America was a country so impracticable and so distant, that, considering the spirit of resistance which had been shown, no reasonable hope could be entertained of ultimately controlling the inhabitants by force of arms.

Marshall, in his Life of Washington, probably speaks the general opinion of intelligent men in America. He conceives that Sir William Howe might, on some occasions, have acted more efficiently, but in doing so that he would have risked much. Victories like those of Bunker's Hill, or that claimed by Burgoyne in September, 1777, would have ruined the royal cause. Howe's system he conceives to have been, to put nothing to hazard, and to be very careful of his troops. "Howe probably supposed," he says, "that the extreme difficulties under which America laboured, the depreciation of the paper money, the dispersions of the army on the expiration of the terms of enlistment, the privations to which every class of society had to submit, would in themselves create a general disposition to return to the ancient state of things, if the operation of these causes should not be counteracted by brilliant successes obtained over the British by Washington."

Now it is very possible that Howe did reason in this manner; but the train of reasoning would have been more

solid, if it had concluded in a manner exactly opposite: for instance, that these causes would not create a general disposition in the Americans to return to the ancient state of things, *unless* he could assist their operation by obtaining some brilliant successes over Washington.

There is a summary account given in the twenty-second volume of the Annual Register: it is full of matter and very concise, though too long to be quoted here. The reader is left to infer, that the force was inadequate, and the ministers were told so; that the country, on the whole, was too hostile and too impracticable, to leave it possible for the army to carry on its operations at any distance from the fleet; that, according to the rules of military prudence, there was no enterprise from time to time, that appeared likely to be attended with success; that so far the fault is clearly with the ministry; that, on the other hand, in the midst of all these difficulties, the general should have seen the necessity of striking some blow immediately, and if he did not choose to risk it, should have resigned his command.

I must now repeat, that I have adverted to this subject on the merits of General Howe, not only to furnish some general answer to one of the first questions which the student will naturally ask, but to remind him, that while he is gratifying his curiosity, he must necessarily place before his view (and that he ought to observe them) two of the most important points connected with the American dispute: Whether, for instance, the original idea of conquering America by force, was ever reasonable on our part; and again, Whether the resolution of the principal men of America, at all events to hazard rebellion against the mother country, was properly justified at the time by their probable means of resistance. Finally, it is in this manner that the student can best be taught, in some degree, to comprehend the extraordinary merit of Washington.



LECTURE XXXV

AMERICAN WAR.

HITHERTO I have alluded chiefly to the origin of this unhappy civil war: the causes of which, as they operated on each side of the Atlantic, you will even now be able, in a general manner, to estimate. Of these general causes, too many of those that operated with us, those that I have enumerated, for instance, may, I think, be held up to the censure and avoidance of posterity. The more they are analyzed, the less can they be respected; and it was very fit, and even desirable, that the haughty and selfish sentiments, the unworthy opinions, by which the people of Great Britain and their rulers were led astray, should not only be resisted, but successfully resisted.

And yet it is not so easy to come to a decision on the American part of the case. The colonies were from the first connected with the British empire. They had grown up under its influence, to unexampled strength and prosperity; a principle was no doubt on a sudden brought forward by the British minister, which might have been carried to an extent, and, if unresisted, would probably have been carried to an extent materially injurious to their liberties; but it had not been carried to any such extent when acts of fury and outrage were committed in the province of Massachusetts; and we assent rather than enter into the reasonings of the Americans. We are surprised and struck with the fervour of their resistance rather than sympathize with it; certainly we do not feel the glow of indignation against the mother country which, on other occasions, of Switzerland and the Low Countries for instance, we have felt against the superior state. That the British nation was wrong, and deserved to be severely punished, must be allowed; but to lose half its

empire, and to have America and Europe rejoicing in its humiliation and misfortunes; and in the fall of tyranny and oppression, is more than a speculator on human affairs (in this country at least) can be well reconciled to. The punishment seems disproportioned to the fault—the fault, however, must not be denied. It was one totally unworthy of the English people, the very essence of whose constitution, its safeguard, its characteristic boast, its principle from the earliest times, the very object of all its virtuous struggles, and for which its patriots had died on the scaffold and in the field, was this very principle of representative taxation. I must now, therefore, recall to your minds my observation, that the causes which led to the American war were not all of them, in their feeling and principle, discreditably to our country. For instance; a particular notion of political right had a great effect in misleading our ministers and people, and hurrying them into measures of violence and coercion. It was of the following nature: all general principles of legislation and national law seem to lead to the conclusion, that the sovereignty must remain with the parent state, and that the power of taxation was involved in the idea of sovereignty. Even Burke seems to have been of this opinion, and the Rockingham part of the Whigs. But this was a point much contested at the time. The reverse was loudly insisted upon by Lord Chatham and his division of the Whigs; that the general powers of sovereignty were one thing, and the particular power of taxation another—that this species of sovereignty, taxation, could not be exercised without representation.

And thus much must at least be conceded to Lord Chatham, that, in practice, this distinction had always existed in the European governments, derived from the barbarian conquerors of the Roman empire. This power of taxation was always supposed to be the proper prerogative of the people, or of the great assemblies that were quite distinct from the wearer of the crown. The granting or refusing of supplies was always considered as a matter of grace and favour to the sovereign—not of duty; and as something with which they were enabled to come (if I may so speak) into the market with their rulers, and truck and barter for privileges

and immunities. But however this original point of the right of taxation being included in sovereignty be determined; whether it be admitted, or not, in the abstract and elementary theory of government, which is the first question; and whether it be admitted, or not, in any ideas we can form of our feudal governments of Europe, which is the second question; still the same point assumed a very different appearance, and became another and a third question, when this sovereign right of taxation was to be practically applied to colonies, situated as were those of America, and by a mother country, enjoying the kind of free constitution which Great Britain at the time enjoyed. The question of taxation, under these circumstances, became materially and fundamentally altered; and for the rulers and people of Great Britain to set up a right, one, if it existed at all, certainly of a very general and abstract kind; and even to carry it into practical effect, without the slightest accommodation to the feelings of freemen, and the descendants of freemen—without offering the slightest political contrivance, the slightest form of representation, by which the property of the Americans could be rendered as secure as is the property of the inhabitants of Great Britain; without the slightest attempt to avail themselves of the colonial governments existing in America at the time; for the rulers and people of Great Britain to be so totally deaf and insensible to all the reasonings and feelings which had dignified the conduct of their ancestors from the earliest period, and which at that moment continued to dignify their own,—was to show a want of genuine sympathy with the first principles of the English constitution, and the first principles of all relative justice; was to show such carelessness of the happiness and prosperity of others, and such haughty contempt and disregard of the most obvious suggestions of policy and expediency, that it is not at all to be lamented, that the ministers and people of this country should fail in their scheme of unconditionally taxing America; should be disgraced and defeated in any such unworthy enterprise. And it is ardently to be hoped, that all nations, and all rulers of nations, and all bodies of men, and all individuals, should eternally fail and be discomfited; and, according to the measure of their offences, be stigmatized

and made to suffer, whenever they show this kind of selfish or unenlightened hostility to such great principles as I have alluded to—the principles of civil freedom, of relative justice, and of mild government.

After having thus considered the original grounds of the war, when I came in the last lecture to advert to the conduct of the war, I pointed out to you the most curious and difficult question which the whole contest affords: whether the American leaders did not hurry into positive rebellion, before they had sufficient grounds to suppose they could resist what was then the greatest empire on earth.

The fact seems to have been, that resistance ripened gradually and insensibly into rebellion. The leaders had incurred the penalties of treason, before they could well have asked themselves to what lengths they were prepared to go. They always debated with closed doors, so that what were their exact views, and the progress of their opinions, cannot now be known. But the strange, incoherent manner, in which both they and the people of America seemed to have supposed that the dispute would be terminated each year, in the course of that year, or the next, is very striking, and shows how little they were aware of the magnitude of the enterprise in which they had engaged. This is true in general; but particular individuals were more wise. Instances certainly did occur, and some are on record, of men who were aware how perilous was the course, which at the opening of the dispute, the patriots were pursuing. "We are not to hope," said Mr. Quincy, to the meeting assembled at Boston in 1774, "that we shall end this controversy without the sharpest, sharpest conflicts. We are not to flatter ourselves, that popular resolves, popular harangues, popular acclamations, and popular vapour will vanquish our foes: let us consider, before we advance to those measures, which must bring on the most trying and terrible struggle this country ever saw."

But on the whole, the general enthusiasm that was excited by this single principle, the fundamental principle of the American controversy, that the parliament of Great Britain had no right to tax them, is quite unexampled in history; and that men should act on the foresight and expectation of

events, just as if the events were present, and should endure as much to avoid the approach of oppressive taxgatherers, as if they were already in their houses, is a perfect phenomenon in the records of the world, and a very curious specimen of that reasoning, sagacious, spirited, determined attachment to the principles of civil liberty, which so honourably distinguished the ancestors of these Americans, the very singular men who flourished in the times of Charles I., and who, whatever may be their faults, did certainly rescue from imminent danger the civil liberties of these islands.

I have hitherto, through all these lectures on the subject of the American dispute, been obliged to direct your attention to the ill effects of harsh government, to the unfortunate nature of high and arbitrary notions, when the interests of mankind are concerned; their civil liberties at home; their sense of relative justice to other states abroad: but the lessons I am now called upon to offer you, through this and the ensuing lecture, are of a different kind; and it will be now my business continually to remind you that though government ought not to be harsh, still that government must exist; and that whatever may be the temptations to which all executive power is exposed, still that somewhere or other executive power must be found, or there will be no chance for the maintenance of justice and right among mankind.

For as we proceed to consider still further the conduct of the American leaders, the principal, and I had almost said the only remaining observation I have to make, is this; that through the whole course of the accounts, as given by the American writers, the reflection that is continually presenting itself is the objectionable nature of the purely republican form of government; the total inadequacy of all forms strictly democratical for the management of mankind, where any management is required; their management, I mean, according to the proper principles of equity and wisdom. I do not think that any sober-minded speculator on government could have ever had much doubt on the subject, yet I conceive that any such doubt will be entirely at an end with those who peruse the volumes of Marshall, or even of Dr. Ramsay; for we are continually led to remark, through every stage of the contest, the want of a proper executive government on the part of the

Americans, and the evils that hence ensued ; and though the case before us is the case of a country at war, where the difficulties must necessarily be not of an ordinary nature, and the executive government ought to be particularly strong, still the conclusion is inevitably transferred to a country in a state of peace, so strong are the instances every where displayed of the impracticable nature of the human character, of the entire necessity that exists in every community for some controlling, superintending, executive power ; some power that shall bind up and bring into proper effect, and reduce to the proper standard of equity and reason, all the divided, dispersed, ardent, and often very ill directed energies of the individuals that compose any society of human beings. Freedom must be enjoyed and men must not lose their nature, and be driven by their keepers like the beasts of the field, but neither must they be so enamoured of self-rule as to admit of no paramount directors and governors. The public rights and privileges for which they should contend, are not the power of self-rule, nor even the immediate and palpable direction of the measures of their government, the great aim and boast of purely republican forms ; but the privileges of peaceful criticism on their government, the power of subsequent censure, the acknowledgment in the rulers of a delegated, rather than an original authority, and a reference of their measures to the interest of the community. These are the points for which they should contend, the points which, as a government is more or less perfect, are more or less accomplished and secured.

I shall proceed, in the remainder of this lecture, to mention some particulars which may serve to illustrate the remarks I have now made on the necessity of executive government ; drawing them from the American historians themselves, Ramsay and Marshall, more especially Marshall, who, though supposed to lean to the Federalists, is one of the most respectable of men, and, at all events, a sort of representative of Washington.

An English reader, when he comes to the history of the American War, as given by the American writers, hears of nothing at first but fury and resistance to the British ministers ; resolutions to defend the liberties of America ; public meetings, patriotic sacrifices and exertions of every

description; and yet when congress is assembled, an army collecting, and a general appointed, this congress, army, and general, these defenders of their country, and representatives of the public will, meet with nothing but difficulties and distresses; no supplies for the troops, no pay for the soldiers and officers, the paper money issued for the purpose intolerably depreciated, and at last even a mutiny among the troops, and this repeated at different periods of the contest.

But whence could arise all these difficulties? Why did not the congress lay at once the necessary taxes on the people of America, and with the produce of these taxes procure the necessary supplies; or if they issued paper money, why not with the same produce of the taxes keep their paper from being depreciated?

The fact was, that the congress had it not in their power to tax America, and they had no real securities within their reach on which to rest their paper; the different governments of the different provinces of America were all separate and independent of each other; they were all, in truth, separate and independent republics; congress was only a delegation from each province or republic, and was assembled merely for the purpose of considering the situation, of representing the claims, and at last of conducting the resistance of the whole continent; but no powers were given to the congress of taxation; the utmost they could do was to recommend it to the separate provincial legislatures to levy taxes; they could not levy any taxes themselves, and so preposterous was the jealousy in the mind of the Americans of all power, that many years elapsed before any authority existed that could *legally act* for the whole continent. Thus the first thing that reason required to be done was the last thing that could be admitted; no proper executive power could be suffered to exist, and the fortunes of the contest, and indeed of America, after the contest, were put to the most extreme hazard from this very circumstance; and it is this unreasonableness, and this consequent hazard, that become the very lesson which I would now impress upon your minds; for all arose from the want of an executive government.

The congress were in possession of no revenue, and had no

resource but to emit paper money, which was to depend for its payment on the public faith; on the contributions of the different provinces for the liquidation or security of the debt *after* the termination of the dispute: this dispute lasted much longer than was ever expected; new and repeated issues of paper money were resorted to. That the paper, therefore, should after a certain time depreciate rapidly, and at length become scarcely negotiable at any discount, can be matter of no surprise. Washington was in the mean time necessitated to get his supplies from the legislatures of the different provinces in any manner he could. Great exertions were no doubt made, but the anxieties, the mortifications, the apprehensions he suffered, are visible in every page of his letters. So early as 1777, he was obliged even to take by force what he could not regularly get possession of; at another period to try the experiment of receiving, in kind and in bulk, what he had no proper government money to purchase: neither of these expedients could possibly answer. In the mean time the sufferings and privations of the soldiers and officers, even so early as the winters of 1777 and 1778, were most extreme; famine was more than once in the camp, and such exertions and privations must have been fatal to the cause, if the cause had not appeared to the sufferers a struggle for every thing that could be dear to themselves or their posterity.

At no period was this distress of the army urged to a higher point of exasperation than at the time when success on the part of Great Britain seemed no longer possible. In 1780, a captain's pay did not, from the depreciation of paper, furnish him with shoes. It was only at a period so late as 1780 that some relief could be obtained from France by Franklin, and it was not till 1781 that a more regular and effective loan was at last negotiated at Versailles; and you will be led to suppose, if you read the history, that nothing but this last most opportune supply could have saved the American army from destruction. Great dependence was placed by the ministers and people of Great Britain on the effects that must be produced from this depreciation of the paper money. At a subsequent period in our late revolutionary war, great dependence was placed in like manner on the fall of assignats in France. In each case the expectations of our English cabinets were

disappointed. I will digress for a moment on this particular point, on account of its importance.

In all such cases the principle upon which the whole depends seems to be this, whether there is in the country any executive government sufficiently strong to convert the produce of the land and labour of the community to the purposes of the army. Paper money is a species of tax (and a most unfair one), if it depreciates, for any man who touches it loses by it. The question then is, whether, if it should depreciate materially and at last fail, the popular leaders can venture upon more violent expedients; can seize and convert to the purposes of the troops whatever is wanted, which is, in other words, a question of the strength of the executive government at the time. The expectations, therefore, of the English cabinets were, I apprehend, much more reasonable in the case of America than in the case of France.

In the latter (in France) the executive government soon became so strong that life, property, and every thing human was seized upon and disposed of without the slightest ceremony or mercy. France, too, was a part of a continent, not itself a continent. The revolutionary leaders had it therefore always in their power to quarter their armies on the countries of their enemies.

There was little hope, therefore, from the fall of assignats; but in the case of America the executive government was evidently very weak. Far from being able to provide itself, if necessary, with whatever it wanted, it seemed not able to resort to the most common exercise of the powers of all acknowledged governments, the laying on of taxes. Their paper issues of money seemed merely to depend not on any securities prepared for the purpose, but on the good pleasure and proper faith of the community; but this was a very frail foundation on which to rest the fortunes of a military contest with Great Britain.

In every case, I must repeat (for I must repeat my principle), where taxes cannot be laid, or some expedient resorted to of the same nature and effect with taxes, it certainly does not seem possible to carry on any system of resistance against invading armies. It is in vain to say that the food and clothing exists in the country, if the state cannot by some

mode of taxation, or seizure, or confiscation, get possession of them, and convert them to the use of the soldier who wants them. Certainly the pages of the American historians, and the letters of Washington himself, show very plainly how extreme is the hazard, how cruel are the difficulties, to which every cause must be exposed, when the executive government is too weak, when the leaders of the general emotion are not intrusted with proper powers to supply those who fight in the public cause with the proper means of fighting—with tents, with clothing, with ammunition, and food; and when such men, in those ebbings of the spirit and fluctuations of the resolution, to which all men must be exposed who have been highly wrought up by their feelings, when such men have to compare their own forlorn, desolate, helpless, and unworthy situation with all the pride, and pomp, and circumstance which may in the mean time belong to the armies of their enemy. I need not allude further to the letters of Washington, to make out to you the extent and intolerable nature of these privations and difficulties. The truth is, that a considerable portion of the very extraordinary merit of Washington, as I have before stated, depends on this very point, and how he could keep his officers and his men in any tolerable state of good humour, or spirits, or discipline, amid the privations and wretchedness they had to suffer, in such a climate as that of America; how he could maintain even the appearance of an army before an army so accommodated and appointed as was that of England, must appear perfectly inexplicable to those who consider what the human mind is, and what the circumstances were by which not only the courage of the American soldier, but qualities of the mind and temper far more rare than courage, and of more difficult attainment, were tried to the utmost, day after day, and year after year.

Famine, as I have already mentioned, was more than once in the camp. Washington saw his best officers throwing up their commissions; troops that could not be tempted by the enemy to desert were yet in a state of mutiny; all were suffering and all were complaining. If they met the enemy in the field, they were for a long period necessarily beaten; if they kept behind their intrenchments, they had no comfort or

support but the looks of their general, and their consciousness of the high principles of liberty which ennobled their cause: they must, in the mean time, have supposed the congress totally inattentive to their distresses, totally regardless of those brave men for whose wants it was their proper duty to provide. The real difficulties of the case, the real impossibilities which their legislators were expected to accomplish, were not of a nature to be readily explained to their understandings, even if their minds had been in a state of tranquillity, much less when the result of the explanation was to show them that they were necessarily to be left in a state of nakedness and hunger.

But all these difficulties arose, in the instance before us, from the want of a proper executive power in the state; for this is the lesson to which I must now return, and which you must not forget.

There was no executive government to levy general taxes and convert the produce of the taxes to the proper purpose, nor was there any executive government to seize, as in France, on every thing that was wanted, nor any neighbouring nations on which the armies could be quartered.

But this want of a proper executive government was to be exhibited in a still more striking manner than has yet been alluded to.

Those meritorious and gallant men who successfully resisted the British armies were not only paid in a constantly depreciating paper while the war lasted, but they were never, even in the event, and *after* the war had ceased, properly paid their arrears; and the reader has to take up and lay down the subject of these arrears again and again, as he reads the history of Marshall, to peruse the expostulations of Washington to congress, and then ultimately to see the army break up and dissolve, and the general retire to his farm; to see the poor soldier, impatient to revisit his family and friends, dismissed on his furlough with only some slight portion of his arrears; dismissed never after to return to a state where he could demand his right; the reader is to witness all this till his feelings are wound up to such a pitch of indignation that he is ready to execrate and devote to eternal abomination all the legislators and legislative assemblies, the whole country and

continent together, where such base, selfish, faithless ingratitude could be endured for a moment.

It is, however, to be supposed, that no such disgrace to the American name could have sullied the annals of the revolution, if there had existed at the time a proper executive power in the general government, or if it had ever existed afterwards, at any point of time sufficiently near the termination of the war. This is a sort of lesson which, in that abhorrence of all arbitrary rule which I trust will ever animate your bosoms, you must by no means forget.

The English documents which relate to this American civil war show the unfortunate nature of high principles of government. I have stated this part of the instruction to be derived from the dispute already; but from the American documents the conclusion is the very reverse. I am now, therefore, stating this, as before I did the other, and you will draw, I hope, the instruction that is afforded by both.

I could wish that this subject of the paper money of America, and the revolutionary debt, should hereafter occupy your reflection; you will find materials in Ramsay and Marshall. Ramsay gives an appendix on paper money expressly; but the subject is huddled up too rapidly at the end; and the historian, though he resumes it in his history, never does (and from the *date* of his work never could) give the entire detail of it, in a complete and satisfactory manner.

Marshall is more full, but he never properly connects and puts it at once regularly and thoroughly in the possession of the reader. He has a sort of stately, tedious manner, which keeps the mind for a long time in a disagreeable state of suspense, from which it is at the last scarcely ever relieved. I suspect that both writers were not a little ashamed of the facts that lay before them.

I consider these points as on the whole so curious, and so fitted to employ your thoughts, that I shall dwell a little longer upon them; giving you my facts, as nearly as I can, in the very words first of Ramsay, and afterwards of Marshall.

The resolution of the congress to raise an army, in June, 1775, was followed by another to emit bills of credit: for their *redemption* they pledged the *confederated* colonies. More

bills were issued in November, 1775, all on a supposition that an accommodation would take place before the 10th of June, 1776. It was thought however necessary, in consequence of the contract entered into by Great Britain with Germany, for sixteen thousand foreign mercenaries, to extend the plan of defence, and in February, May, and July, 1776, more and more bills were emitted; so that the *first* issue swelled from two to twenty millions of dollars; the paper money circulated for about eighteen months, and to the extent of twenty millions, without depreciation.

Congress made some efforts to borrow, and some to *recommend taxes* to the different states of the union. But from the impossibility of procuring a sufficiency of money, either from loans or taxes, the old expedient of further emissions was reiterated; and the value decreased as the quantity increased.

The depreciation began at different periods in different states, but in general about the middle of the year 1777, and progressively increased for three or four years. In 1777, the depreciation reached two or three for one; in 1778 five or six for one; in 1779, twenty-seven or twenty-eight for one; in 1780, fifty or sixty for one; during the first four or five months afterwards, one hundred and fifty for one, and the circulation only partial; in 1781, several hundreds for one, and many would not take the paper at any rate. It is to be observed all this time, that the paper emissions of the different states, not only of *congress*, but of the different provincial states amounted also to many millions, and, being mixed with the continental money of *congress*, added to its depreciation.

Washington was, after about five years, reduced to the alternative of disbanding his troops, or of supplying them with necessaries by military force.

Now I must here remark, though Dr. Ramsay does not, that after five years the success of the revolution was become *certain*. Had it been *still doubtful*, what, in such a situation, would have been the fate either of the army or the congress? But to proceed.

The next expedient was to call upon the states, in lieu of money, for determinate quantities of flour and other articles

for the use of the army. This was a tax in *kind*, and found on experiment so inconvenient, partial, and expensive, that it was speedily abandoned.

The remaining expedient was to call in the old paper by taxes, to burn it, and then to emit new paper, one of new for twenty of old, under new conditions. But the provincial states could not be brought to consent to this, with sufficient unanimity, nor indeed would they have assented to any financial measure of a general nature that could have been proposed; and on this account, it appears, that for want of some federal head, or executive power, to force the country to submit to the proper rules of equity and reason, and even to the measures necessary for the accomplishment of their own wishes (the success of their own resistance to Great Britain), a crisis followed (so late as the year 1781) which might have been fatal to the cause of the revolution, if relief had not been obtained by the means of France. There was no circulating medium either of paper or specie in the neighbourhood of the American army, a real want of necessaries ensued; the Pennsylvanian line could not, and would not, endure their situation, without pay and without provisions. They were in a state of mutiny; yet these men had not ceased to be patriots, though they could not stand at their posts till they died off by famine. Sir Henry Clinton tried every expedient to bring them over to the British army, but in vain. Washington and the congress, luckily for America, being more considerate than generals and legislators on such occasions commonly are, adopted mild measures; the army was not dissolved, and the revolt was quieted. But what might at length have been the event it is impossible to say. Fortunately new resources had been opened about the time of this crisis so long wished for by the enemies, and dreaded by the friends of American independence. A great deal of gold and silver was at this time introduced into the American states, by a trade with the Spanish and West India Islands; and again by the French army in Rhode Island. The King of France furnished a subsidy of six millions of livres, and was the security for ten millions more borrowed in the Netherlands. The public finances were put under the skilful direction of Mr. Morris, and the public engagements were

made payable in gold and silver. About this time the old continental paper money ceased to have any currency; the money had got out of the hands of the original proprietors, and was in the possession of others, who had obtained it, it may be supposed, at some very high rate of depreciation. To have raised taxes to pay this paper money, at its original value, and thus to preserve the public faith, was now quite out of the question; and the extinction of it seems to have produced no particular sensation; the ill effects produced by the depreciation of this paper money had taken place before. To prevent or retard this depreciation, congress had made different efforts from time to time; they had recommended to the states absurd and unjust laws for regulating the prices of labour, manufactures, and all sorts of commodities; for confiscating and selling the estates of Tories; and they very early recommended a law for making the paper money a legal tender. These laws were all found, of course, to be impracticable; all but the last, of legal tender, which produced, not indeed the effect intended, but that alone which it is fitted to produce—it enabled a man who had borrowed a pound to pay his debt by paper, which, though nominally a pound, was not really worth a pound, nor one half, nor one eighth of the money: i. e. it enabled every existing debtor to cheat his creditor; and those who had to receive annuities, who had money out at interest, widows and orphans, for instance, or the aged, who had retired from business, found themselves reduced to beggary: i. e. the very persons who should, of all others, be under the protection of the state, the innocent and the defenceless, were ruined by it; and such are always the only effects that can be produced by this measure of a legal tender; existing debtors are enabled to cheat existing creditors, nothing more.

The concluding paragraphs of the American historian are remarkable, and should be a warning to those who tamper with the circulating medium of a country. "The evils of depreciation," says he, "did not terminate with the war; they extend to the present hour. The iniquity of the laws estranged the minds of many of the citizens from the habits and love of justice; the nature of obligations was so far changed, that he was reckoned the honest man who, from

principle, delayed to pay his debts: truth, honour, and justice were swept away by the overflowing deluge of legal iniquity. Time and industry have already, in a great degree, repaired the losses of *property*, notwithstanding the war; but both time and the effects of industry have hitherto failed in effacing the taint which was then communicated to their *principles*; nor can its total ablution be expected, till a new generation arises, unpractised in the iniquities of their fathers."

I have been quoting from Ramsay. I will now lay before you a few sentences from Paine's letter to the Abbé Raynal, published in Philadelphia, in the year 1782. I do so, to show you how necessary it is that you should study well the elements of political economy, before you approach any subject connected with the national prosperity; you will otherwise be always liable to be deceived by mistaken writers or speakers, who produce with confidence the first impressions of the mind on these subjects of political economy; which first impressions are, in this particular science, almost always wrong. Paine is a writer as distinguished for the superficial view which he takes of the subjects on which he writes, as for the effrontery with which he proposes, and the ability with which he illustrates his opinions. Indeed, I know no argument so strong against all the democracy which he espouses, as the very success of his own works. I should hope, after what I have read to you from Ramsay, and the unhappy consequences that you see from his account result to helpless, unoffending individuals from a depreciated currency, that you are not now to be imposed upon by the loose, though specious reasonings of Paine. You will, I hope, detect their unfairness and inaccuracy, while I read them; I do not deny that they are plausible; this is rather the reason why I now produce them, that on this subject you may be always particularly circumspect and patient.

"I know," says Paine, "it must be extremely difficult to make foreigners understand the nature and circumstances of our paper money, because there are natives who do not understand it themselves. But with us its fate is now determined; common consent has consigned it to rest, with that kind of regard which the long service of inanimate things insensibly obtains from mankind. Every stone in the bridge

that has carried us over seems to have a claim upon our esteem, but this was a corner stone, and its usefulness cannot be forgotten."

"* The paper money, though issued from congress under the name of dollars, did not come from that body always at that value. Those which were issued the first year were equal to gold and silver; the second year less; the third still less, and so on, for nearly the space of five years; at the end of which, I imagine, that the whole value, at which congress might pay away the several emissions, taking them together, was about ten or twelve million pounds sterling. Now, as it would have taken ten or twelve millions sterling of taxes to carry on the war for five years, and as while this money was issuing, and likewise depreciating down to nothing, there was none, or few valuable taxes paid; consequently the event to the public was the same, whether they sunk ten or twelve millions of expended money by depreciation, or paid ten or twelve millions by taxation; for as they did not do both, and chose to do one, the matter, in a general view was indifferent; and, therefore, what the abbé supposes," says Paine, "to be a debt, has now no existence, it having been paid by every body consenting to reduce it, at his own expense, from the value of the bills continually passing among themselves, a sum equal to nearly what the expense of the war was for five years.

"It is true," he goes on to say, "that it never was intended, neither was it foreseen, that the debt contained in the paper currency should sink itself in this manner, but as by the voluntary conduct of all and of every one, it is arrived at this fate, the debt is paid by those who owed it. Perhaps nothing was ever so much the act of a country as this: government had no hand in it. Every man depreciated his own money by his own consent, for such was the effect which the raising of the nominal value of goods produced. But as by such reduction he sustained a loss equal to what he must have paid to sink it by taxation; therefore the line of justice is to consider his loss by the depreciation as his tax for that time, and not to tax him when the war is over, to make that money good in any other person's hands, which became nothing in his own."

* Paine's Letter to the Abbé Raynal, p. 13.

But the miserable effects of the want of an executive government sufficiently strong, were not here to cease, not to cease with the wrongs of the national creditor. The discontents of the soldiers and officers, which had, in 1781, nearly threatened the ruin of the army of America, threatened, two years afterwards, the very ruin of its freedom. On the approach of peace, in 1783, congress, it was feared, possessed neither the power nor the inclination to comply with its engagements; and the prospect was very melancholy to those brave men who had wasted their fortunes and the prime of their life in unrewarded services. In congress, the business of the army (it was found) advanced slowly, when intelligence of peace had arrived. The army were, as may be supposed, soured by their past sufferings, their present wants, and their gloomy prospects, exasperated by neglect, and indignant at the injustice shown them; and in this sullen and ominous state of things, they were addressed by an anonymous writer, probably some brother soldier who felt his situation (unworthy as it certainly was), more strongly than the situation of his country (perilous as it immediately must be), if its legislature was to be addressed by exasperated men, with arms in their hands, at the close of the revolution. But the writer, whoever he was, could produce on this occasion the "thoughts that breathe and words that burn."

"Yes, my friends," said he, "that suffering courage of yours was active once; it has conducted the United States of America through a doubtful and bloody war; it has placed her in the chair of independence, and peace returns again, to bless whom? A country willing to redress your wrongs, cherish your worth, and reward your services? A country courting your return to private life, with tears of gratitude and smiles of admiration; longing to divide with you that independency which your gallantry has given, and those riches which your wounds have preserved? Is this the case? Or is it rather a country that tramples upon your rights, disdains your cries, and insults your distresses? Have you not more than once suggested your wishes and made known your wants to congress; wants and wishes which their gratitude and policy should have anticipated, rather than evaded? And have you not lately, in the meek language of entreating

memorials, begged from their justice what you could no longer expect from their favour? How have you been answered? Let the letter which you are called to consider to-morrow reply. If this, then, be your treatment while the swords you wear are necessary for the defence of America, what have you to expect from peace, when your voice shall sink and your strength dissipate by division; when those very swords, the instruments and companions of your glory, shall be taken from your sides, and no remaining mark of military distinction left, but your wants, infirmities, and scars? Can you then consent to be the only sufferers by this revolution; and, retiring from the field, grow old in poverty, wretchedness, and contempt? Can you consent to wade through the mire of dependency, and owe the miserable remnant of that life to charity, which has hitherto been spent in honour? If you can, go, and carry with you the jest of Tories and the scorn of Whigs: the ridicule, and what is worse, the pity of the world. Go, starve, and be forgotten!"

Fortunately, the commander in chief, Washington, was in camp, and contrived to pacify the brave companions of his glory, even while he must have been conscious that every word of complaint was just, and while every sentence in this anonymous address must have been a dagger to his own upright heart. He entreated them not to take any measures which, viewed in the calm light of reason, would lessen the dignity and sully the glory they had hitherto maintained.

"Let me request you," he said, "to rely on the plighted faith of your country, and place a full confidence in the purity of the intentions of congress; that previous to your dissolution as an army, they will cause all your accounts to be fairly liquidated, as directed in the resolutions which were published to you two days ago: and that they will adopt the most effectual measures in their power to render ample justice to you for your faithful and meritorious services.

"And let me conjure you, in the name of our common country, as you value your own sacred honour, as you respect the rights of humanity, as you regard the military and national character of America, to express your utmost horror and detestation of the man who wishes, under any specious pretences, to overturn the liberties of our country, and who

wickedly attempts to open the flood-gates of civil discord and deluge our rising empire in blood."

The officers that had been convened, moved by the entreaties and expostulations of their justly beloved and revered commander, resolved unanimously, that the army continued to have an unshaken confidence in the justice of congress and their country, and were fully convinced that the representatives of America would not disband or disperse the army until their accounts were liquidated, their balances accurately ascertained, and adequate funds established for payment.

But the representatives of America, from their inability to manage *the different state legislatures* of the continent, or to get permanent funds placed within their disposal, did disband and disperse the army *before* the accounts were liquidated, *before* their balances were ascertained, or adequate funds established for their payment; that is, the people of America, for want of an executive power to control their own discordant opinions, jarring interests, and selfish passions, were just as insensible as could have been the most unprincipled tyrants and despots of the earth to the proper feelings of humanity and the most sacred obligations of public faith.

It was in vain that congress addressed the different states of the American union. "These debts are to be paid," they said, "first to an ally, who to his arms has added the succours of his treasury, and who to his important loans has added liberal donations, the King of France; in the second place to individuals in a foreign country, who were the first to give so precious a token of their confidence in our justice. Another class of creditors is that illustrious and patriotic band of fellow citizens whose blood and whose bravery have defended the liberties of their country, who have patiently borne, among other distresses, the privation of their stipends, while the distresses of their country disabled it from bestowing them, and who even now ask only for such security for the residue of their claims as their country is now unquestionably able to provide. The remaining class of creditors is composed partly of such of our fellow citizens as originally lent to the public the use of their funds, or have since received transfers from the lenders, and partly them whose property has been either advanced or assumed for the public service."

This address was followed by a very able and affecting letter from Washington; but all in vain. This was in June, 1783. Neither the recommendations of congress nor the counsels and entreaties of this parent, this protecting genius of his country, received, it seems, from the provincial legislatures, the consideration which the public exigence demanded, nor did they meet, as it was called, "that universal assent, which was necessary to give them effect."

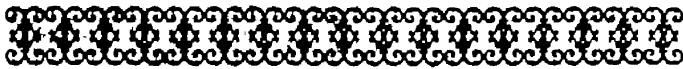
The subject was again taken up in 1786. The revenue system of 1783 was again solemnly recommended by congress to the several states, and they were implored to avoid the fatal evils which must flow from a violation of those principles of justice which it was told them, and truly told them, were the only solid basis of the honour and prosperity of nations. They were implored in vain, and Washington had been obliged, in a letter to a friend, to confess that America was descending from the high ground on which she stood into the vale of confusion and darkness.

At length a new government, the federal government, was formed at the close of the year 1789, to act for the whole continent; to control, on particular occasions and for general purposes, the different provincial legislatures; and when this government was once formed (a proper image of executive power), resolutions were carried (though still with the greatest difficulty) for the funding of the public debt; that is, for providing proper payment for all the creditors of the state, military and civil, foreign and domestic.

The discussions that took place on the subject, as given by Marshall, are remarkable. To endeavour to understand them and reflect upon them would be a very useful exercise to any one who hopes hereafter to interfere, with advantage to his country, either in the criticism or the conduct of public affairs.

To this discussion I can only in this manner allude. I could have wished to have entered into it, and given you some general idea of the difficulties with which the more wise part of the American legislators had to struggle; but I have occupied you very long with the general subject already, indeed too long, as it will be thought by those who do not consider how important in the concerns of mankind are the questions

which have been more or less connected with the observations I have been making—how far the depreciation of the paper currency may be fatal to a national cause, when maintained against a foreign or domestic oppressor; the nature of paper money; the obligations of public faith, public gratitude, national honour; how far communities may be trusted with the government of themselves; the necessity of a strong executive power lodged somewhere or other in every form of government that is to exhibit any proper adherence to the principles of reason, justice, and national faith—in every form of government that is to advance the prosperity, secure the interests, or even protect the freedom of any civilized society among mankind.



LECTURE XXXVI.

AMERICAN WAR.

I SHALL now proceed to lay before you other particulars, which I think may serve to illustrate the subject to which I adverted in my last lecture, the necessity of executive government. I do so because I conceive this to be the great point of instruction that is offered by the history of America, after the first lessons have been given; those that are of a very opposite nature; those which I have proposed to you in former lectures: the injustice I mean, and inexpediency of government too authoritative, of rule too arbitrary such as Great Britain certainly was guilty of attempting to enforce upon her colonies in the beginning of this memorable contest.

Congress was at first only a committee, as I have already noted, an assembly of men, delegated from the different states of the American union. They could only *recommend* whatever measures they thought expedient, they could *enforce* none.

For some time these recommendations were received as laws, but at length you will see, as you read the history (you will have collected even from the notices I have been able already to afford you), how miserable were the effects produced by the want of all proper executive power in the government.

At last a sort of confederation was agreed upon, and the congress was avowedly considered as the head of the whole union, acting for and representing all the different states of the continent. This confederation may be called the second stage of the revolutionary government of America.

But still no proper executive power was given even to this confederation, and nothing could be more unfavourable to the best interests of the country than to leave the confederated

government so weak in executive power, and in fact thus to set up an assembly to act the part of a government, and leave it in the mean time at the mercy of thirteen other distinct sovereigns, each exercising the real powers of government in different provinces of the same country.

Yet such was the fact, and for some years continued to be the fact, in a manner that really exercises not a little the patience and good humour of any one who sits at a distance and reads the history of these events.

To any such person, this celebrated question of the federal government, that is, the question whether there should be a general government for the whole continent, appears, I had almost ventured to say, no question at all; however, it must have agitated America at the time, and continued to agitate America long after. To suffer thirteen republics to arise, to quarrel among each other, to destroy each other's interests, to be incapable of any connexion with the rest of the world, rather than combine the whole, by some general government, into a great community that might, in the progress of things, become a mighty nation, is a proposition so monstrous and extravagant, that I know not how it is to be looked upon as any other than the most important specimen which the history of the world affords of the influence of local feelings, long established associations, and all those partial views and jealousies which in parishes, corporations, and public meetings we see so often occur, and which are always so justly the ridicule and scorn of every intelligent member of the community.

It must be supposed, indeed, out of that common respect which is always due to the opinions of others, that the principles of liberty were, somehow or other, considered as involved in the question: and this was certainly the case. The antifederalists reasoned, for instance, each in their particular state, after the following manner: that the liberties of that state would be endangered by being committed to the guardianship of a general legislature, acting at a distance, and with no particular regard for its criticisms or complaints; that this general legislature must have a president, this president a senate, and that he must even have a court, executive officers, &c. &c.; that, in short, the continent of America

would be exposed to all the calamities (such they thought them) of a king, an aristocracy, a regular army, as in the old governments of Europe.

But if such be their reasonings, as they certainly were, this I hold to be of itself a lesson for all those who love liberty, and who would extend its blessings to their country. Men are not to be pedants in liberty, any more than in virtue. Though they are not to be oppressed by tyrants, they must at least be governed by their fellow-men. The great principles of independence in the heart of man are to be cherished and upheld; but order, prosperity, the purposes of society, must be accomplished. The many must delegate the government of themselves to the few. Control, executive power, must be lodged somewhere; and the question is not, as the friends of liberty sometimes suppose, how the executive power can be made sufficiently weak, but only how it can be made sufficiently strong, and yet brought within the influence of the criticism of the community; i. e. in other words, how it can secure the people from themselves, and yet be rendered properly alive to feelings of sympathy and respect for them, and alive also to the obligations of justice and good faith, and to sentiments of honour.

This, indeed, is a problem in the management of mankind not easily to be solved; but it is the real problem—the proper problem, to exercise the patriotism of wise and virtuous men; and such men are not, from the difficulty of it, to rush headlong into any extremes, either of authoritative, arbitrary government on the one hand, or mere democracy on the other.

It was so late almost as the year 1789, before the people of influence in America could be brought, even by all their experience of the evils of inefficient government, properly to interest themselves in, what was to them, the most important question of all others—the formation of some general government for the whole continent. The confederation, it was seen, came not sufficiently within this description (the confederation to which I have just alluded, and called the second stage of the revolutionary government of America).

The mind of Washington had evidently been long agitated upon the subject. It appears from his letters, that at one

period he was in a state of considerable despair at the situation of his country; and "it was painful to him," he said, "in the extreme, to be obliged to think, that after the war had terminated so advantageously for America, wisdom and justice should be still wanting to its people; that after they had confederated as a nation, they should still be afraid to give their rulers sufficient powers to order and direct their affairs—rulers placed in such very particular circumstances of transient, delegated, and responsible authority.

At length an effort was made, and this effort was ultimately successful. You will see the particulars in Marshall. But the difficulties that opposed themselves are very edifying; a few of these particulars are the following:—

It happened in 1785, that the provinces of Virginia and Maryland had to form an agreement relative to their own commercial interests; and from the settlement of these, they proceeded to propose, to all the states of America, the consideration of their *joint* interests as a *commercial* nation. This at length ripened into a scheme for assembling a general convention to revise the articles of confederation: in a word to form some general government for the continent, not only to comprehend its commercial concerns, but every other concern.

A convention met at Annapolis, but it consisted only of delegates from five states. The result was, a recommendation for another convention at Philadelphia in 1787.

Now the question was, whether this convention would ever meet. If it did meet, whether the thirteen independent states, or republics, would forego the pleasure, and privileges, and pride of separate sovereignty, for the good of the continent, and their own good, properly understood. The probability was, that they would not. In the mean time, the mind of Washington, and of all wise and good men, was in a state of the utmost gloom and anxiety. It was evident that the recommendation for a convention to form a new government should have come from *congress* (from the confederated government already existing), not from any particular state, like Virginia or Maryland; and the convention, if met, could not be considered as a legal meeting. But again, it was sufficiently evident, that if some efficient government

was not soon established, the licentiousness of the people would very soon terminate in perfect anarchy. Hot-headed, presumptuous, ignorant men, were many of them (particularly the young) indisposed to all control whatever, and the critical situation of things was extremely increased by the number of persons who owed money, and who could see no hope or comfort for themselves, but in the absence of all the obligations of order and law.

At length commotions agitated all New England; and in Massachusetts a positive insurrection against all government actually took place. Washington wrote to his friend, Colonel Humphries, "For God's sake tell me what is the cause of all these commotions; do they proceed from licentiousness, British influence, real grievances?" "From the *information* I have received," said the colonel, "I should attribute them to all the three; but it rather appears to me, that there is a licentious spirit prevailing among many of the people, a levelling principle, a desire of change, and a wish to annihilate all debts, public and private."

General Knox said, "that high taxes were the ostensible cause of the commotions, but not the real. The insurgents never paid any, or but little taxes; they see the weakness of government; they feel at once their own poverty, compared with the opulent, and their own force; and they will use the latter to remedy the former. Their creed is (there is always one of some kind or other), that the property of the United States has been protected from confiscation by the joint exertions of all, and therefore ought to be common—ought to belong to all.

A majority of the people of Massachusetts was described by Colonel Lee after the manner of General Knox, as in open opposition to the government. "Some of the leaders avow," says he, "the subversion of it to be their object, together with the abolition of debts, the division of property, and a reunion with Great Britain. In all the eastern states the same temper prevails more or less."

"The picture you exhibit," replied Washington, "and the accounts that are published, exhibit a melancholy verification of what our transatlantic foes have predicted; and of another thing, which is perhaps still more to be regretted, and is yet

more unaccountable, that mankind, when left to themselves, are unfit for their own government. I am mortified beyond expression, I am lost in amazement, when I behold what intrigue, the interested view of desperate characters, ignorance and jealousy of the *minor* part of our fellow citizens, are capable of effecting; for it is hardly to be supposed that the great body of the people can be so short sighted.

But in the midst of all the perturbations of the mind of Washington, the even tenor of its justice never forsook it, and even at this fearful moment, his letter gives a lesson to all the governments of the earth. "Know," says he, "precisely what the insurgents aim at; if they have real grievances, redress them, if possible, or acknowledge the justice of them, and your inability to do it in the present moment. If they have *not* real grievances, employ the force of government against them at once. If this is inadequate, all will be convinced that the superstructure is bad, and wants support. To be more exposed in the eyes of the world, and more contemptible than we already are, is hardly possible."

Such were Washington's sentiments, and in the history you will see that it was found necessary to subdue the insurgents by force. "But the most important effect of this unprovoked rebellion," says Marshall, "was the deep conviction it produced of the necessity of enlarging the powers of the general government, and the direction of the public mind towards the convention (I have just spoken of) that was to assemble at Philadelphia. At last it was declared in *Congress* to be expedient, that a convention should be held to render the federal constitution adequate to the exigencies of government, and the preservation of the union."

This recommendation, which legalized the original scheme, added to the consideration of the rebellion, inclined at length the states of New England to favour the measure: and at the time and place appointed, the representatives of twelve states assembled (Rhode Island was the exception). Washington was elected president, and the doors were closed—an important meeting for America. On the great principles which should constitute the basis of their system, not much contrariety of opinion is understood to have prevailed; but more than once there was reason to fear, that all would have been

lost, by the rising up of the body without effecting the object for which it was assembled. At length the high importance of the union prevailed over local interests; and in September, 1787, the constitution was presented to the consideration of the different states of the whole continent.

But neither the intrinsic merits of the scheme of government, nor the weight of character by which it was supported (Franklin, Washington, and others), gave assurance that it would be ultimately received. Many individuals, it seems, of influence and talents, were desirous of retaining the sovereignty of the states unimpaired, and reducing the union to an alliance between thirteen independent nations. Many thought that a real opposition of interests existed between these different parts of the continent; many could identify themselves with their own state governments, but considered the government of the United States as in some respects *foreign*. Many thought that power must be abused, and were therefore persuaded, they said, that the cradle of the federal constitution would be the grave of republican liberty. Every faculty of the mind was strained on the subject of the proposed constitution to procure its reception or rejection. To decide the interest in question, men of the best talents of the several states were assembled in their respective conventions. So balanced were the parties in some of them, that even after the subject had been discussed for a considerable time, the fate of the constitution could scarcely be conjectured. In many instances, the majority in its favour was very small; in some, even of the adopting states, it is scarcely to be doubted, a majority of the people were in opposition; in all of them, the numerous amendments which were proposed, show that a dread of dismemberment, not an approbation of the system, had induced an acquiescence in it.

At length the conventions of nine (and subsequently of eleven states) assented to and ratified the constitution; and this most important question, on which it was so difficult to obtain unanimity (and which it was therefore so perilous to agitate), was thus at last settled in favour (as it must surely be thought) of America. Washington was unanimously elected president, and on the 30th of April, 1789, delivered his first speech to the senate and house of representatives.

I have given you this slight account of these important

transactions, to induce you to consider them yourselves; and I have expressed myself in the words of Marshall, shortening and selecting different sentences from his work that I might not mislead you by any words of my own on subjects so delicate.

No doubt the impression on my mind has been the critical state of America during this interregnum, between the peace in November, 1783, and April, 1789; the perilous nature of such discussions, and, as I have so repeatedly observed, the paramount necessity of a strong executive government to be lodged somewhere or other.

It may be observed, that I draw my representations from Marshall, who was a friend to Washington, and like him, a federalist; I do so. But not to mention, that there is no greater authority than the opinion of Washington, on any and on every occasion, I must confess it appears to me sufficient that there should have been at the time an anti-federalist party at all. Nothing more can be necessary to show the incurable nature of human dissent; the critical nature of discussions of government; the doubtful contest, which general principles must always have to maintain with local politics; and all this goes to prove the total necessity of that very executive power, to escape from the dangers of which must have been the real aim of all the virtuous part of the antifederalists.

While the new constitution was offered to the acceptance of the different states of America, a book was published, under the title of the Federalist. A few numbers were written by Mr. Jay, a few more by Mr. Madison, three by Mr. Madison and Mr. Hamilton, and the rest by Mr. Hamilton. These papers contain a very calm and enlightened discussion of all the material provisions of the new constitution and the objections that had been urged against them; and the work being one of great merit, and highly creditable to the statesmen by whom it was drawn up, is, of course, represented by an American writer, Mr. Bristed, as the concentration of all political wisdom, ancient and modern. "In depth and extent of political wisdom, &c. &c., it has no superior in all the world," &c. &c. It certainly may be read, even now, by an English statesman with great advantage: such discussions as are alone interesting to America, he will easily distinguish

from the rest, and may pass by; but most of them bear upon corresponding points in the British constitution, and cannot therefore be otherwise than instructive. The great value, however, of these chapters seems to be, the lesson they afford to all who are to engage in the concerns of mankind; for they show, that differences in opinion, of the most unexpected nature, must inevitably arise among them; they show the paramount necessity, above every other virtue, of the virtue of *patience*, to those who would enlighten mankind, or teach them to pursue their own interests. The reader will see in these numbers of the *Federalist*, that the authors of them have found it advisable to exhibit and combat political mistakes, and even political absurdities; to anatomize them, and pursue them through all their consequences, to a degree, and to an extent that could not (*à priori*) have been thought for a moment necessary. And certainly it is continually suggested to the reader, that a strong executive power must be lodged somewhere, to secure reasonable decisions upon questions of general import, and to protect the public from men of furious tempers, selfish views, and perverse understandings, such as must inevitably be found, and often with too great influence, in every community.

In the constitution that was at last accepted and solemnly ratified and carried into execution, a few main points, all of the greatest importance, were happily secured. There were two houses of legislature, not one; the members of the senate were chosen for six years, not two; and there was to be an executive magistrate chosen for four years; the federal system was in express articles established; and the president and the two houses were the legislature of the *continent*.

You are now to observe an illustration of what I have repeatedly laid down in the course of these lectures—that the lamentations of good men on the subject of party are vain; that parties are inseparable from every free government; and you must either have parties with all their good and bad effects, or no freedom of thought or speech, as in Turkey, or any other state where parties are not to be found.

In America, for instance, as you have already learnt, a real difference of opinion existed—the *federalist* and the *anti-federalist*; and this difference was not merely, I apprehend,

of a mere economical nature; whether the continent of America would rise faster in commercial and agricultural prosperity by being divided into thirteen different sovereignties, or by being combined into one. The difference did not, and could not terminate here; it was of a more general and radical nature, and arose from different views in the science of politics. The antifederalists were, and always have remained, men of sentiments more violently republican than the federalists; men who thought mankind might be managed by less of executive authority than the federalists did; and this difference of opinion does, and always must exist, not only in the American, but in every other free form of government; though in America this difference, it must be confessed, is exhibited in a very striking manner, it requiring a very strong passion indeed for democracy, to suppose that the federalist government of America is not, and has not always been, sufficiently republican.

Such, however, I believe to be a reasonable view of the case before us; and you will see the new constitution of America no sooner carried into execution, than the two parties make their appearance in the houses of legislature. One of the first questions that came before them, was that to which we have alluded at such length already in the last lecture—the providing for the public debt of America.

No expedient was possible but that of funding. To fund, however, on the authority of the federal government, was to enlist, it was thought, on the side of the federal system all those who were thus to receive what was due to them, and all others to whom they might ever sell or bequeath their securities; it was impossible, therefore, that such a measure should not be resisted by the antifederalists. They ought, indeed, to have waved their principles in this case, for otherwise it was impossible to maintain the most indispensable obligations of public gratitude and faith. The evils, however, of the funding system, and its undoubted influence in favour of arbitrary government, supplied them with ample materials of honest and even accurate argument, as far as it went, if it had been possible to provide for the public debt in any other way.

So again, in a subsequent stage of the same question, when

a portion of the funded debt was to be made permanent, and not to terminate as the rest was, at the end of twenty-five years, all the former arguments recurred, and were urged with even more earnestness, and indeed weight, than before.

The debates were very animated and long. It will be very improving to you to read the account of them as given by Marshall; and to observe the manner in which this great question, so vital to every principle of American honour, and even honesty, was at length carried. It was carried, to say the truth, by a mere turn of local interest in one of the states, a turn so unexpected, that it might become almost an occasion for laughter and entertainment to those philosophers (and such there are), who can find a topic of amusement in the very trifling and unworthy circumstances, which sometimes influence the most momentous concerns of mankind.—
Πάντα γέλωσ και πάντα κόμισ και πάντα τὸ μηδέν.

The history, in a few words, is this:—A very able report on the subject had been made by the secretary of the treasury, Colonel Hamilton. After a very animated discussion of several days, a resolution was carried, by a small majority, in favour of funding and paying the debt, according to his rational views; i. e. paying the interest, and gradually paying the principal. But soon after North Carolina acceded to the constitution, and its delegates, on taking their seats, changed the strength of the parties; and the question was now *lost* by two voices. Observe now the turn. A bill was brought in for fixing the seat of government, and it was at last agreed that some place should be selected on the banks of the Potomac. The result was not a very intelligible result, even when explained by Marshall—I cannot now stop to give you his explanation; but the result was, that two members representing districts on the Potomac, went over to the other side, and the resolution was now carried, as it had been lost, by two voices.

It is probable these delegates thought the residence of the president and government of America in their province was of great consequence to its interests; and that if the question of the funded debt was not settled in the affirmative, there would ultimately be no president or American government to reside on the Potomac, or anywhere else.

What I have now said will afford you a specimen of the divisions to which the American houses of legislature, even while Washington was president, were necessarily exposed. But every important measure of government, as you will easily see, might very naturally call forth the operation of such fundamental principles of dissent as I have mentioned:—The taxes that were to be laid, whether in the way of excise or not; a national bank, whether it was to be established or not (in this last instance, even the *competency* of the new legislature legally to form a new corporation was denied); and many others; a military establishment, for instance.

Washington did not deny his assent to the bill for regulating this military establishment: but in his diary there was found a note to say, that he thought it inadequate to its purposes, as no doubt it was.

In March, 1791, terminated the first session of congress under the new constitution.

The federal party had prevailed at the first elections; and a majority of the members were steadfast friends to the new system. “Had the legislative assemblies of the new government been uninfluenced,” says Marshall, “by the *previous* divisions of the country, the many delicate points which they were called upon to decide must have mingled some share of party spirit with their deliberations. But in the actual state of the public mind, it was impossible for men not to be much disposed to impute to each other designs unfriendly to the general happiness.”

As yet these imputations did not extend to the president: but divisions had found their way even into his cabinet. Differences had arisen between the secretary of state, Jefferson, and Colonel Hamilton, the secretary of the treasury; all deduced, in fact, from the federal question. All opposition to the measures of government was in the first place levelled at Hamilton, and at the northern members, who generally supported these measures. The natural prosperity and the popularity of the government were in the mean time advancing. But in the state assemblies, especially in the *southern* divisions of the continent, serious evidences of dissatisfaction were exhibited, which showed the jealousy enter-

tained by the local sovereignties of the powers exercised by the federal legislature.

But the president and houses of the federal government (or congress) met again in October, 1791, part of the interval having been very properly employed by Washington in making a progress through the southern states, which were always most adverse to the federal system. The effect of the president's appearance was favourable; but the hostility to the government was diminished rather than subdued.

When congress met, questions still presented themselves that awakened and embittered all the real differences of opinion, that existed between the federalists and their opponents. The topics insisted upon by the latter may be easily conceived; that the public debt had been artificially produced, because the continent had adopted debts which were only due by the several states; that the banishment of coin would be completed by the issue of bank paper; that the funding and banking system afforded effectual means of corrupting the legislative bodies; that the ultimate object of all the system, and of its friends, was to change the present republican form of government into that of a monarchy, on the form of the English constitution; that the representatives of the people on the federal system would be removed at such a distance from their constituents, that they would form the most corrupt government on earth; that taxes and tax-gatherers had already made their appearance, and even an excise; that the salaries of public officers were too high; that the president had levees, and Mrs. Washington evening parties; that the American people were thus to be accustomed to the pomp and manners of European courts.

I quote these passages from Marshall, that your observation may be drawn to this part of his work. A love for civil liberty is so respectable at all times, and when the friends of civil liberty in any country make mistakes, those mistakes are of such importance, and operate so unfavourably to this first of national blessings, that you cannot be too well prepared against the errors into which men may fall on subjects of this nature. You cannot be rendered too expert in detecting the fallacies of popular reasonings on such questions; in seeing the manner in which *statements* may be exaggerated

by feelings, honourable as well as base; the manner in which principles the most noble may be insisted upon with a disregard to *particular* circumstances, till they become subversive of themselves.

The mistakes of those who are friendly to harsh government and arbitrary power are seldom of any fatal effect to their particular cause, for their measures are still only more or less arbitrary; no advantage can commonly be hence obtained against the general cause of arbitrary power; but it is not so with the friends of the liberties of mankind. Do they relax their principles or exertions; are they careless or inert? The ground they desert is instantly occupied by their opponents, and cannot afterwards be recovered. Do they urge their principles and exertions too far; are they too active and impassioned? Their measures lead to inconvenience or calamity, to some injurious disturbance of the political machine, and moderate men join the side of their opponents. Their injudicious attempts to advance the public good are reprobated, and they are themselves accused of factious selfishness, or ridiculed for enthusiasm and folly.

The cause of civil liberty has to depend, not only on the virtues, but on the wisdom of mankind; arbitrary power, only on their necessities. The advocates for the one have always to prove, first, that their own intentions are pure; and, secondly, that their measures are calculated to advance the happiness of the community: the supporters of the other have only to show, that they are securing its peace and order: and thus it happens, as I have so repeatedly intimated in the course of these lectures, that civil liberty is of all things the most perishable and delicate; arbitrary rule, on the contrary, the most hardy and indestructible.

I will encroach upon your time while I farther endeavour to enforce such general reflections as I have already made on the nature of parties, by a further reference to the work of Marshall, and to the characters he gives of the two most important ministers of Washington's cabinet.

These two characters may perhaps serve as general descriptions of the two great parties of America. Mr. Secretary Hamilton had long served his country in the field, and passed from the camp into the congress, where he remained for some

time after the peace had been established. In the first situation he had fully witnessed the danger to which the independence of his country was exposed from the imbecility of government; in the latter, he saw her reputation lost, and her best interests sacrificed, chiefly from the same cause. Having therefore long felt the mischiefs produced by the state sovereignties, he naturally supported the federal government. He had wished the executive power and the senate more permanent, and still retained and openly avowed the opinion, that American liberty and happiness had much more to fear from the encroachments of the great states than from those of the general government. These opinions will become your own, if you should ever read the numbers of his work, the *Federalist*.

Mr. Secretary Jefferson, on the contrary, had retired from congress before the depreciation of the currency had produced an entire dependence of the congress on the local governments: he then filled the highest offices in one of those local governments (Virginia), and about the close of the war went to France, and was there on a diplomatic mission, while the first clear symptoms were appearing, and the first steps were taking of that revolution in France which so agitated the minds of all reflecting men. In common with all his countrymen then in France, Mr. Jefferson took a strong interest in favour of the popular cause, and from his prior habits of thought, the men with whom he associated, and a residence all the time at the court of Versailles, it is not surprising, that the abuses of monarchy should be ever present to his mind, and that he should suppose liberty (even when he returned to America) could sustain no danger but from the executive power. The fears, therefore, of Mr. Jefferson took a different direction from those of Colonel Hamilton, and all his precautions were used to check and limit the exercise of the authorities claimed by the *general* government.

I shall proceed to one feature of difference more. The war left in the American people (very naturally) a strong attachment to France and enmity to Great Britain: this sentiment was universal, and found its way into the cabinet; but Colonel Hamilton thought that no such sentiment should influence the political conduct of America; Jefferson maintained the contrary.

The press was not silent: the *Gazette of the United States* supported the measures of Hamilton and the federal government; the *National Gazette* was the paper of the opposition. These papers arraigned the motives of those they differed from with equal asperity and injustice. The two secretaries, in the mean time, were eternally at variance: the president implored and admonished in vain; he loved the men, he respected them; he had a great, a sincere regard and esteem, he told them, for both: his earnest wish, his fondest hope was, that instead of wounding suspicions and irritating charges, there might be liberal allowances, mutual forbearances, and temporizing yielding on all sides. "Differences," said he, in one of his letters to the attorney general, "in political opinions are as unavoidable as, to a certain point, they may be necessary; but it is exceedingly to be regretted, that subjects cannot be discussed with temper on the one hand, or decisions submitted to on the other, without improperly implicating the motives which led to them; and this regret borders on chagrin, when we find that men of abilities, zealous patriots, having the same general objects in view, and the same upright intentions to prosecute them, will not exercise their charity in deciding on the opinions and actions of each other."

Now from these transactions some general hints may be drawn, and references made to our own politics. It is often said, that those who are in administration have no wish but the emoluments of their office, and that those who are in opposition have no meaning but to get their share. Such are the views often taken by the parties of each other, or rather by the violent men in each party of each other, and sometimes by very sagacious men, as they conceive themselves to be, among the public at large. Yet, in America, we see the same appearances taking place as with us; ministry and opposition; government newspapers and opposition newspapers; mutual suspicions and invectives; ribaldry and rage; discontent and clamour; and, though Hamilton himself and Knox were afterwards obliged to resign their offices, from the inadequate nature of their salaries, the same declamation about the emoluments of office; the phenomena are just the same, and therefore the shallowness of the very elegant solution, that I have just mentioned, of such political occur-

rences in a free government; the supposition that every thing is on each side a mere question of plunder, need not further be insisted upon.

You will now be able, I conceive, even from the few passages I have quoted, to form a general idea of the situation of America during the first sitting of the federal government; and you will, I apprehend, draw the conclusions which I am all along proposing to you, that civil liberty may be endangered not (as in general) from the *strength*, but sometimes from the very weakness of the executive power.

Now in the state of things which has thus, in a general manner, been exhibited to you, the French Revolution took place. You will not suppose that this could be an event indifferent to America; that every thing which assumed the form of executive power in her government should not be shaken to the centre. Happily the first congress, or, if I may so speak, the first specimen of the federal government, was terminated in March, 1793, while Washington could be once more the representative of that executive power; and Washington being not only a man of great ability and patriotism, but, what was of even still greater importance at the time, a man of most sober judgment, America and her government escaped the injurious influence of this most tremendous event.

It is not within the limits I have prescribed to these Lectures, to enter into transactions of this kind: whenever I advance in the course of history so far, that the French Revolution comes in sight, I turn upon my steps, and take some new direction; and this therefore I now do. I do so the more readily, because on the subject of the interference of the French in the concerns of America there cannot be two opinions; but that part of Marshall's work which relates to affairs so critical, cannot, I am sure, be hereafter overlooked by you.

The conduct of Washington, indeed, "great in these moments, as in all the past," remains above all praise; he *persuaded* his country, he *enabled* his country, to stand aloof from the unhappy storm of European politics; he resigned his popularity to accomplish so great an end; and he maintained the constitution over which he presided by a serene and dignified confidence in its merits, and a calm exercise of

its acknowledged powers and authority. He was insulted, he was resisted in his own executive department as the chief magistrate of America by the French ambassador: no intemperate expression, however, escaped him in his official communications, either to his own legislature or to that ambassador. The labours of the press, the enthusiasm of the people, the intrigues of democratic societies, who voted themselves forsooth the guardians of American liberty, the natural sentiments of hatred to England, all were united against the temper and the wisdom of Washington; but he rose superior to them all. He contented himself with steadily maintaining the principles of the laws of nations, and the regulations of his own government: and he then laid an able exposition of his case before the French government, and calmly desired the recall of their ambassador. A new ambassador was sent from France; the clouds grew lighter, the thunders rolled away, and the horizon at length cleared up, discovering the president, left in the same place and attitude by the storm, in which the storm had found him; but the countenances of all wise and good men were instantly turned upon him with the most animated smiles of reverence and love.

Differences, in like manner, of the most serious nature had occurred between the United States and Great Britain; differences which had inflamed, in like manner, to the most intolerable degree, the members of the legislature and the different parties of America.

The president once more listened to the tempest, and, after watching its progress for some time, decided upon his measure. He addressed the senate in the following manner:—

“ The communications which I have made to you during the present sessions contain a serious aspect of our affairs with England; but as peace ought to be pursued with unremitting zeal, before that last resource is contemplated, which has so often been the scourge of nations, and which cannot fail to check the advanced prosperity of the United States, I have thought proper to nominate, and do hereby nominate, John Jay as envoy extraordinary of the United States to his Britannic Majesty.”

Scarcely any public act of the president drew upon his administration a greater degree of censure than this: this censure constitutes a most striking part of his merit. The

result was, that instead of making a war with England, he made a treaty of commerce.

That this treaty should be reprobated, because it had not laid England at the feet of America, cannot be wondered at. In points of this nature all nations are the same, equally selfish and unreasonable. Town and country meetings (not the best judges of such subjects) were every where held: the mind of Washington was unusually anxious, and even disturbed: But, at length, the confidence which was felt in the judgment and virtue of the chief magistrate began silently to produce its proper effect: and though the majority of the house of representatives (the more popular part of the legislature) was against the treaty, a clear majority of the *people* (marvellous to relate) at last declared themselves in favour of it; that is, in favour of prosperity and peace.

I cannot go into the detail of the merits of Washington. In the course of his administration he had to assert the constitutional rights of the executive power against the house of representatives. In the year 1794, he had to issue his proclamations, call forth the militias, and put down by force (every lenient measure having been tried in vain) a positive insurrection in Pennsylvania, and he had continued to maintain the proper exercise of authority, the principles of peace, of national justice, and of civil liberty, till, amid the wild effusions of virulence and folly, he was at last himself accused even of peculation, and of plundering the public in the discharge of his office: it was even thought necessary that the secretary of the treasury should produce his accounts.

The period, however, at length arrived when Washington^r thought he might retire; when the situation of America allowed him, as he conceived, to consult his own inclinations. As the last service he could offer, he drew up a valedictory address, in which he endeavoured to impress upon his countrymen those great political truths which had been the guides of his own administration, and which could alone, in his opinion, form a sure and solid basis for the happiness, the independence, and the liberty of America. This composition is not unworthy of him, for it is comprehensive, provident, affectionate, and wise. You will conceive the topics of it: gratitude to his countrymen for their confidence and support on every

occasion: the necessity and the advantages of the federal system, and of a government as strong as was consistent with the perfect security of liberty. "Liberty," he observed, "was little else than a name, where the government is too feeble to withstand the enterprises of faction, to confine each member of society within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property; that, however useful might be the spirit of party (and he thought it might be useful in governments of a monarchical kind, and to keep alive the spirit of liberty), the contrary was the case in governments purely elective; that of the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality were the indispensable supports; that a volume could not trace all their connexion with private and public felicity; and that, whatever might be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbade men to expect that national morality could prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

He insisted that good faith and justice were to be observed to all nations. "Can it be," said he, "that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue?" Respecting the conduct of America to the nations of Europe, his advice was impartiality, neutrality; to have as little political connexion as possible. It is but painful to observe his description of our European nations. "Why," says he, "entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humour, or caprice?"

"The sentiments of veneration," says his biographer, "with which his address was generally received, were manifested in almost every part of the union. Some of the state legislatures directed it to be inserted in their journals, and nearly all of them passed resolutions expressing their respect for the person of the president, their high sense of his exalted services, and the emotions with which they contemplated his retirement from office."

I must conclude my account of Washington by observing that the behaviour of France made it necessary for America to disturb this great man once more in his retirement, and to place him at the head of her military force. Washing-

ton indeed expected that favourable alteration in the conduct of France which afterwards took place; but he lived not to see it; dying in December, 1799, after a short illness, and resigning his spirit, with a calm and untroubled mind, to the disposal of that Almighty Being in whose presence he had acted his important part, and to whose kind providence he had so often committed in many an anxious moment, in the cabinet and in the field, the destinies of his beloved country. "He was not," he said, "afraid to die."

To the historian, indeed, there are few characters that appear so little to have shared the common frailties and imperfections of human nature; there are but few particulars that can be mentioned even to his disadvantage. It is understood, for instance, that he was once going to commit an important mistake as a general in the field; but he had at least the very great merit of listening to Lee (a man whom he could not like, and who was even his rival), and of *not* committing the mistake. Instances may be found where perhaps it may be thought that he was decisive to a degree that partook of severity and harshness, or even more; but how innumerable were the decisions which he had to take! how difficult and how important, through the eventful series of twenty years of command in the cabinet or the field! Let it be considered what it is to have the management of a revolution, and afterwards the maintenance of order. Where is the man that in the history of our race has ever succeeded in attempting successively the one and the other? not on a small scale, a petty state in Italy, or among a horde of barbarians, but in an enlightened age, when it is not easy for one man to rise superior to another, and in the eyes of mankind—

"A kingdom for a stage,
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene."

The plaudits of his country were continually sounding in his ears, and neither the judgment nor the virtues of the man were ever disturbed. Armies were led to the field with all the enterprise of a hero, and then dismissed with all the equanimity of a philosopher. Power was accepted, was exercised, was resigned, precisely at the moment and in the way that duty and patriotism directed. Whatever was the difficulty,

the trial, the temptation, or the danger, there stood the soldier and the citizen, eternally the same, without fear, and without reproach, and there was the man who was not only at all times virtuous, but at all times wise.

The merit of Washington by no means ceases with his campaigns; it becomes, after the peace of 1783, even more striking than before; for the same man who, for the sake of liberty, was ardent enough to resist the power of Great Britain and hazard every thing on this side the grave, at a later period had to be temperate enough to resist the same spirit of liberty, when it was mistaking its proper objects and transgressing its appointed limits. The American Revolution was to approach him, and he was to kindle in the general flame; the French Revolution was to reach him and to consume but too many of his countrymen, and his "own ethereal mould, incapable of stain, was to purge off the baser fire victorious." But all this was done: he might have been pardoned, though he had failed amid the enthusiasm of those around him, and when liberty was the delusion; but the foundations of the moral world were shaken, and not the understanding of Washington.

To those who must necessarily contemplate this remarkable man at a distance, there is a kind of fixed calmness in his character that seems not well fitted to engage our affections (constant superiority we rather venerate than love), but he had those who loved him (his friends and his family), as well as the world and those that admired.

As a ruler of mankind, however, he may be proposed as a model. Deeply impressed with the original rights of human nature, he never forgot that the end, and meaning, and aim of all just government was the happiness of the people, and he never exercised authority till he had first taken care to put himself clearly in the right. His candour, his patience, his love of justice were unexampled; and this, though *naturally* he was not patient—much otherwise, highly irritable.

He therefore deliberated well, and placed his subject in every point of view before he decided; and his understanding being correct, he was thus rendered, by the nature of his faculties, his strength of mind, and his principles, the man of all others to whom the interests of his fellow creatures might

with most confidence be intrusted; that is, he was the first of the rulers of mankind.

The American Revolution is a great epoch in the history of the world, and nothing but the appearance of the French Revolution, so fitted from its tremendous circumstances and unknown consequences, to sweep away every thing else from the curiosity and anxieties of mankind, could have made men insensible, as they may now be, to an event in itself so striking and important. By the American Revolution the foundations of a new empire are laid, immense in extent, unrivalled in natural advantages, and at a safe distance from the hostilities of the old world; a new empire is to begin its course where other empires have ended, with all the intellectual, moral, and religious advantages, which other empires have only attained during the time that has elapsed since the records of history began. A receptacle is now opened for every human being, of whatever country, and whatever be his disposition or fortunes, opinions, or genius. What is to be the result of such an admixture and collision of all personal qualities and intellectual endowments?

The government too is founded not only on a popular basis, but on a basis the most popular that can well be conceived. It must even be confessed that in America is to be made a most novel and important experiment, and it is this:—with how small a portion of restraint and influence the blessings of order and Christianity can be administered to a large community. It must be observed, indeed, that this experiment is to be made under such particular advantages of a new country as must always prevent America from being a precedent for older states and empires. This is true; yet, to the reasoners of after ages, it will be useful to learn from the event what reasonably may be expected from mere human nature when placed in the *most favourable* situation, and what it is that government may properly attempt to do for mankind, and what not. This I think will hereafter be shown when all the attendant circumstances have been properly balanced and considered. What, however, will be the result?

I am much disposed to offer this subject to your reflections, and therefore, as a conjecture, though an obvious one, I should say (though I cannot allude to what may be said of a contrary

naturé) that the great event to be expected is, that this empire should break up into two or more independent states or republics, and that at some distant period the continent of America may be destined to exhibit all the melancholy scenes of devastation and war, which have so long disgraced the continent of Europe.

This, however, must be considered as the grand calamity and failure of the whole; it can only arise from a want of strength in the federal government; i. e. from the friends of liberty not venturing to render the executive power sufficiently effective.

This is the common mistake of all popular governments: in governments more or less monarchical the danger is always of an opposite nature.

In the mean time, I know not how any friend to his species, much less any Englishman, can cease to wish with the most earnest anxiety for the success of the great experiment to which I have alluded, for the success of the constitution of America. I see not, in like manner, how any friend to his species, much less any American, can forbear for a moment to wish for a continuance of the constitution of England; that the Revolution of 1688 should for ever answer all its important purposes for England, as the Revolution of 1776 has hitherto done for America. What efforts can be made for the government of mankind so reasonable as these—a limited monarchy and a limited republic? Add to this that the success of the cause of liberty in the two countries cannot but be of the greatest advantage to each, a limited monarchy and a limited republic being well fitted by their comparison and separate happiness, each to correct the peculiar tendencies to evil which must necessarily be found in the other.

Successful therefore be both, and while the records of history last, be they both successful! that they may eternally hold up to mankind the lessons of practical freedom, and explain to them the only secret that exists of all national prosperity and happiness, the sum and substance of which must for ever consist in mild government and tolerant religion; i. e. (rationally understood) in civil and religious liberty.

Mark the difference between Europe and Asia. What is it, what has it ever been? Slavery in the one, and freedom in the other.

Take another view more modern and more domestic. Mist is in the valley, and sterility is on the mountain of the Highlands; his land is the land of tempest and of gloom, but there is intelligence in his looks and gladness in his song. On the contrary, vacuity is in the gale, and the laughing light of Nature is in the landscape of the Grecian island; but

“Why do its tenebrous echoes languish,
Mute but to the voice of anguish?”

Yet where was it that once flourished the heroes, the sages, and the orators of antiquity? What is there of sublimity and beauty in our moral feelings, or in our works of art, that is not stamped with the impression of their genius?

Give civil and religious liberty, you give every thing; knowledge and science, heroism and honour, virtue and power; deny them, and you deny every thing: in vain are the gifts of nature: there is no harvest in the fertility of the soil; there is no cheerfulness in the radiance of the sky; there is no thought in the understanding of man; and there is in his heart no hope: the human animal sinks and withers; abused, disinherited, stripped of the attributes of his kind, and no longer formed after the image of his God.

1811.

THE END.

