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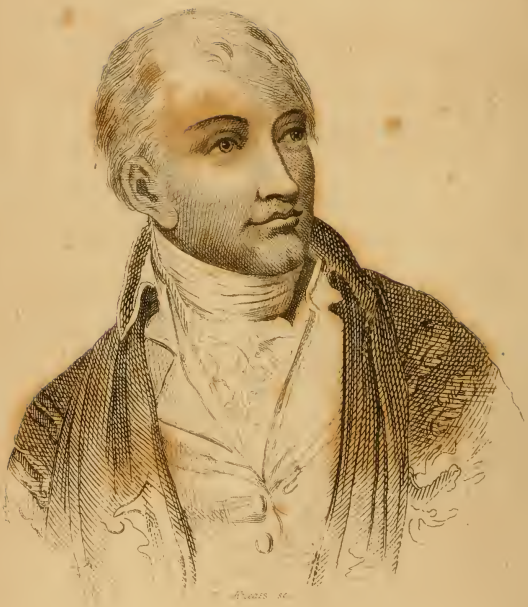

The Hon.ble Spencer Perceval.

THE

LIFE

AND

ADMINISTRATION

OF THE RIGHT HON.

SPENCER PERCEVAL;

INCLUDING

A COPIOUS NARRATIVE

Of every Event of Importance, Foreign and Domestic, from his Entrance into Public Life, to the Present Time;

A

DETAIL OF HIS ASSASSINATION,

&c. &c. &c.

WITH

THE PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SUDDEN OVERTHROW

OF THE

REMAINS OF HIS ADMINISTRATION.

&c. &c.

AND

A DEVELOPMENT

OF THE

DELICATE INVESTIGATION.

BY

CHARLES VERULAM WILLIAMS, ESQ.

SPES ULTIMA CECIDIT.

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INTRODUCTION.

THOUGH in this account of Mr. Perceval's administration of public affairs it has been the chief object of the compiler to suppress all party feelings, in order that events should justify or condemn their authors, yet as consequences have ocurred since Mr. Perceval's decease, naturally resulting from the system he pursued, the reader will probably trace the acts of a succession of years, all uniformly tending to produce an era, which, with respect to the country at large, is without any precedent.

Notwithstanding the general sympathy first expressed at Mr. Perceval's untimely fate, it seems the fall of the Man rather than that of the Minister has been most deplored; this is evident from the subsequent refusal of so many eminent characters to act with his friends, though solicited by the first authority in the kingdom.—Thus, since his demise, most of his measures have already been openly or tacitly condemned.

The immense drains upon the country at large (and Mr. Perceval's budget for this year was to have added Two Millions to the taxes) for the support of the war in Spain, amounting to Twenty Millions a year, with a diminished prospect of success; while the Orders in Council shut us out of almost every port in Europe and America, have alienated the hearts of nine-tenths of the people from *public measures*, if not from *public men* :—hence, brooding in se-

cret, over calamities apparently irremediable, the spirits of revenge, rapine, and assassination, have stalked abroad in open day-light; and, instead of being dreaded and detested as heretofore, seem to be viewed by the people with levity and indifference, if not with secret satisfaction: as if the shocking devastations they have produced, were only a just retaliation upon those, whom it is supposed are daily heaping distress upon *public* bodies equally with *private* individuals.

On this ground, it has been observed, that "every crime has its *shade;* and that even assassination, the greatest of all crimes, so universally condemned, has its *distinctions*, which lessen, in the general estimation of mankind, the enormity of its guilt!" Further, with respect to Mr. Bellingham, whose part has been so fatally conspicuous in the life of Mr. Perceval, it has been observed,

that, if he had been one of those political assassins recommended by some of the venal prints; or, if, on the other hand, "he had been engaged by France or America to exterminate the man, whom they consider (no matter how erroneously) as the great obstacle to peace, there would then have been no difference of opinion respecting the atrocity of a doctrine so diabolical by its practical effects on the first minister of the country." And yet the unfortunate man who could deliberately devote himself to certain death, and his children to the chance of infamy and want, rather than suffer the love of life to soften his resentment, though an acute sufferer, was perhaps not many degrees more so than hundreds of his survivors, who, like him, have experienced the sad reverses of a declining commerce.

The thoughts on the sudden overthrow of

Mr. Perceval's administration, are derived from facts alone, and require no support from any party in or out of power.

In the development of the Delicate Investigation, much new light is thrown upon that transaction, and the public are now put upon their guard against any of the impositions that have appeared in print, pretending to detail particulars which never existed but in the imagination of the writers.

The most important of the correspondence between Marquis Wellesley, the Earl of Liverpool, Mr. Canning, and others, we have included in this Work. This strange negociation has assumed a different shape almost every day. The parties, it has been observed, " have been twisted and divided and united again in all possible forms; but up to the 28th of May (nearly three weeks since the death of Mr. Perceval), no concordant body had been made up of them!"

The last reports on the subject were, that Marquis Wellesley had retired and given up the task of forming a Ministry to Earl Moira. It is certain, that the state into which the Country has been thrown by the sudden assassination of the prime minister, is singularly awful and alarming; it is still hoped, that by the more auspicious interference of Divine Providence, the calamities which seem to be threatened by the disunion of the parties, may yet be averted, and harmony once more restored to our divided councils.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND ADMINISTRATION

OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SPENCER PERCEVAL.

MR. PERCEVAL, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, was descended from a very ancient family; and it has been mentioned as a remarkable circumstance concerning them, "that their ancestors, for more than a century, had been engaged, in some shape or another, in public affairs, but chiefly in collecting the revenues of the sister kingdom." The first of them who went to Ireland was John, Lord Lovel: this was at the request of Richard II.

But as the minds of men, in general, love to dwell upon the memory of departed worth, or fallen greatness; and as it may be particularly gratifying to the numerous

admirers of the late Premier, to trace the long line of his ancestry, be it recollected, that the Perceval family originally sprung from Robert, a younger son of Eudes, Sovereign Duke of Brittany. Having been transplanted into Normandy, they were possessed of the Castle of Yvery at the Conquest, and invested with the office of hereditary butler of the duchy. Two of the family, Robert and Roger de Yvery, accompanied William I. to England: from the former of these, the late Earl of Egmont was supposed to have been descended. The latter of them, with one Richard D'Oily, another invader, afterwards mutually divided between them several of the English estates, obtained either by marriage or by the sword.

Ascelin Gouel, called also Gouel de Percheval and Gouel de Yvery, was surnamed Lupus, whence the English title of Lovel was taken; he engaged in the petty wars of Normandy, in consequence of a quarrel with the Earl of Breteuil, who wished to punish his younger brother William, for ravishing a woman at Pacey, a town belonging to him.

Robert, his eldest son, in 1119, took arms against King Henry I. with other malcontents, and was deprived of his lordship of Yvery in consequence of his rebellion, after which he remained a loyal subject.

His next brother, William Gouel de Percheval, surnamed also Lupellus, or the Little Wolf, who inherited the lordship of Yvery, engaged in arms against the king; but his party being beaten at the battle of Thurold, he was taken prisoner by a peasant, whom he bribed with his arms to let him escape. Having been shaved, he reached the banks of the Seine, where, being destitute of money, he was obliged to give his shoes to the boatman, in consequence of which he returned home barefooted.—It was he who afterwards completed the castle of Kary, in Somersetshire, and, with other barons, armed it against King Stephen.

To him succeeded Henry Lupellus, and his brother William, whose nick-name was softened into Lovel. The son of the latter, John, second Lord Lovel, was summoned to Bristol, in the 41st of Henry III. to attend the king into Wales; and John, third

Lord Lovel of Tichmarsh, was summoned to Parliament in the 28th of Edward II.

John, Lord Lovel, seventh of that name, was a Knight of the Garter; and was first *with* the barons against the king, and afterwards with the king, *against* the barons! He was the first of the family employed by Richard II. who, as mentioned before, sent him twice to Ireland.

Francis, Lord Lovel and Holland, also perceiving that his father had lost considerably by his attachment to the house of Lancaster, courted the favour of the house of York, and in the 22d of Edward IV. was created a Viscount, appointed Lord Chamberlain of the Household, Constable of the Castle of Wallingford, and Chief Butler of England. He afterwards fled from the battle of Bosworth, and went to Ireland in the service of Lambert Simnel, the counterfeit Duke of York, for which he was attainted in the reign of Henry VII.

The male branch of the family, however, was still continued by William, Lord Lovel of Morley, till his son Henry, being killed at Dixmude, it became extinct: on this

Alice, his sister, succeeded to the Baronies, &c., which, together with the hereditary office of Lord Marshal of Ireland, she conveyed to her husband, Sir William Parker, Knight, Lord Morley in her right. Their lineal descendant and sole male heir was Sir Philip Parker à Morley Long, Baronet; whose sister, Catherine Parker, became the wife of John, first Earl of Egmont, and mother to the late Earl.

Richard Perceval, Lord of Sydenham, born in 1551, was a man of extraordinary parts, which, in the early portion of his life, were equalled at least by his indiscretion; but having become accidentally acquainted with Lord Burleigh, he employed him in several important transactions; and it was he who decyphered a dispatch from the court of Spain, giving the first regular intimation of the Armada. Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, on this account, nominated Richard Perceval Secretary to the Court of Wards in England; and he was sent to Ireland twice, with the view of extending its powers there. In 1616 he was nominated Registrar of that Court. His son, Sir Philip, succeeded him, and obtained a reversionary

grant of his office, with his father's estates, estimated at £4000 per annum, besides £60,000 in stock, &c.

This knight sided with Charles I. and lost nearly the whole of his fortune during the troubles; but when no longer able to oppose the Parliament with success, he yielded to the stream of power and opinion: for in 1641-2 he was appointed Commissary-General of the Irish army, with a salary of £3 7*s.* 6*d.* per day. In 1642, being Providore-General of the Horse, he began to be considered at Oxford as a "round-head;" and in 1644, accepting the offers made him by Pym and Holles, he became a member of the *Rump* or Long Parliament; and, dying in 1647, was buried by the order, and at the expence of that body.

Sir John Perceval, his eldest son, having acquired the esteem of Henry Cromwell, this obtained for him a restoration of his estates; and as he had profited by all former changes, with one single exception, so on the Revolution he was created a baronet.

In 1662 he was restored to the place of Registrar of the Court of Wards, and successively to other places of honour and emo-

lument. Sir John Perceval, his son, obtained a variety of lucrative offices in Ireland.—Sir Edward, his grandson, is said to have sustained a loss to the amount of £40,000 during the disorders there, subsequent to the Revolution of 1688. Sir John Egmont, his brother, who became the first Earl of Egmont, went to Ireland with the Duke of Ormond, in 1704; and in 1732 was appointed President under the Charter for peopling the Province of Georgia.

Dying of a paralytic affection in 1748, he was succeeded by his eldest son John, second and late Earl of Egmont, and father of the late Right Honourable Spencer Perceval. His lordship died in 1770; and had by his first wife five sons and two daughters, and by his second three sons and six daughters.

The Right Honourable Spencer Perceval was born at his father's house in Audley-street, Nov. 1, 1762.—He was named after his uncle Spencer, his father having married Catherine Compton, sister to the eighth and late Earl of Northampton. The father of the late Premier died also of a paralytic stroke, when his son was only eight years of

age; but having a house at Charlton, near Greenwich, young Mr. Perceval was brought up there. At a proper age he was removed to Harrow School, and from thence to Trinity College, where one of his progenitors had been educated, with Henry, son of Oliver Cromwell. Mr. Perceval was then a contemporary with the Hon. L. Saville, afterwards Earl of Scarborough; the Hon. L. Dundas; and Messrs. Garnett, Rippon, Lefevre, Owen, Thornton, &c.

Mr. Perceval having obtained the degree of M. A. this shortened the road to the bar, as he was soon entered a Bencher of Lincoln's-inn. He began his professional career by accompanying the Judges on the Midland Circuit, on which he was opposed to Mr. Serjeant Vaughan, and first distinguished himself on the trial of George Thomas, of Brackley, in Northamptonshire, for forgery, against whom he was retained as counsel; Mr. Law, now Lord Ellenborough, was on the other side.

But though Mr. Perceval continued to practise in the Courts of King's Bench and Chancery, it was upon a very limited scale; he was, notwithstanding, considered as a

person in the way of promotion—as it was not long before he was appointed Counsel to the Admiralty; and, at the age of thirty-seven, obtained a silk gown. His own University also paid him a high compliment, by nominating him as one of its two counsel.

From this period (1799) his professional preferments were rapid; for in 1801 he succeeded Sir W. Grant, then Master of the Rolls; and in the following year became Attorney-General, in the place of Sir Edward Law, now Lord Ellenborough, and Chief Justice—and here he remained stationary until he was necessarily removed, in consequence of the Talent Ministry being admitted into power under Mr. Fox and Lord Grenville, in 1806. This, of course, for a while, threw Mr. Perceval into the ranks of the opposition.

It has just been observed, that Mr. Perceval, very early in life, was looked upon as a rising character. This opinion might have originated in his zeal, as well as in his ability; for, while a young man at the bar, he is said to have spoken of all those who differed with him with a certain degree of

asperity, and at times to have treated the assertors of popular rights as *Jacobins*.—More practice, and a mature age, certainly dulcified his expressions, though his principles ever remained the same.

As the practice of Mr. Perceval was never very extensive, neither in Chancery, nor in Westminster-Hall, it is not surprising he should determine altogether on a parliamentary life. With Mr. Pitt, though so ardent an admirer of his eloquence, as to place himself in the gallery whenever he spoke, he had but little acquaintance. At Cambridge, Mr. Pitt had been a Johnian; but he was Mr. Perceval's senior by three years, and retired from the University before Mr. Perceval's name was entered: however, he recommended himself most effectually to the notice of that celebrated orator, by means of a political pamphlet, in which the son kept up the family pretensions to literature; and exhibited that taste for composition, which had induced Horace Walpole to insert the name of the Earl of Egmont in his "Catalogue of Noble Authors." The object of Mr. Perceval's pamphlet, which had the good fortune thus to please Mr. Pitt,

was to prove, that an impeachment did not abate by a dissolution of Parliament—a doctrine highly constitutional.

A fortunate event, in consequence of family connections, gave Mr. Perceval an opportunity of gratifying his most sanguine wishes, in furnishing him with an opportunity of displaying his prowess and patriotism in St. Stephen's Chapel: for, on account of the death of his uncle by the mother's side, in April, 1797, a vacancy for the representation of the borough of Northampton took place, as his first cousin, Lord Compton, by succeeding to the Earldom, of course vacated his seat. He and Mr. Perceval had both been Trinity men, and nearly of the same standing.

As the influence of the Comptons had long been very considerable, particularly since their residence at Castle Ashby, Mr. Perceval, who had been nominated Deputy Recorder, was accordingly, by the exertion of the same influence, returned one of the Members, and continued to be a representative for Northampton till the day of his death.

Some persons, when speaking of this gentleman since his death, had said, that he

had given up a lucrative practice, and that he reluctantly relinquished that profession for the service of his country. Mr. Whitbread, when the question was before the House, as to the manner of rewarding Mr. Perceval's services, remarked, "that his career was his own choice. He was bred to the Bar; he afterwards obtained a seat in Parliament; he then quitted the Bar from choice—not being called on in the first instance to abandon his profession. The fact was, that several eminent offices in the law had been offered to Mr. Perceval, which he declined, choosing rather to continue in political life."

Like many aspiring men, Mr. Perceval did not commence his parliamentary career with a set speech, but contented himself the first time he spoke with saying a few words in support of Mr. Pitt, who, on June 2, 1797, had brought in a bill, in consequence of the commotions at the Nore, "for the better prevention and punishment of traiterous attempts to excite sedition and mutiny in his Majesty's service." On this occasion Mr. Perceval suggested a mode for avoiding delay, and for conciliating all parties, by de-

nominating the offence felony, but within the benefit of clergy; he also proposed that there should be a discretionary power, either of transportation or imprisonment, both of which amendments were adopted.

On the 4th of January, 1807, having uniformly supported the minister, he also supported in a long and able speech "the assessed tax bill," but principally by replying to Mr. Hobhouse, who had spoken against it.

He began, after a short preface, by replying to what had been advanced by Mr. Hobhouse in opposition to it, and contended, "that he, not Mr. H. was 'pleading the cause of property,' by supporting the measure, which was to protect it. It had been contended," he added, "by an honourable baronet (Sir Francis Burdett), that the application of the money would enable ministers to carry on a war against liberty; but if the present war was a war against liberty, it was that species of liberty against which, he trusted, we should ever bear arms—it was against the importation of French liberty into England. The period too, at which this observation was made, was precisely that, when preparations were making for the invasion of this country by an army, bringing with it in its train all the ruin of French reform and French principles; yet this was the time chosen for declamation against perseverance in the war,

which we are also told by the same authority, was continued from an apprehension that such a form of government would arrive in France, as by the contrast should render Englishmen dissatisfied with that under which they lived.

"When he saw those gentlemen, who had now reassumed their seats (the opposition), absent themselves from the House, he had at first supposed they did so, lest they should disturb the unanimity of that assembly. When he conceived their motives to be such, he felt astonished at seeing them return to give a dissenting vote on the present occasion.

"In respect to the measure now under consideration, it was the urgency of the times which constituted its leading feature. It was not in our power to choose a peace—the enemy would give none. It did not remain with us to sheath the sword, but with them; for until we had evinced ourselves disposed to shew all the meanness of concession to the propositions first brought forward, the Directory was not prepared to state its ulterior terms of degradation, unless our government had been base enough during the negociation at Lisle, to have conceded those terms of peace which a victorious army would have thought itself entitled to have dictated in the centre of the metropolis, it is not likely that one could have been obtained.

"But it had been urged, that the present war

was unnecessary, unless as far as it was essential to the continuance in office of the present administration. If this was the case, we were to suppose that it was possible that a negociator was to be found on the other side of the House. We had learned from the speeches of the Directory, that we were to pay the price of our own subjugation; we had also heard, that they (the opposition) would introduce reform, or else they should be liable to the objection of having deserted their friends. Supposing, then, that a change of administration were to take place, and that the right honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. Fox) were to come into power, on what terms would he be willing to form a part of administration? He had already declared, he would not come in without a total fundamental and radical reform in Parliament; and he begged the House to attend to those most chosen, dangerous, and alarming words.

"If the right honourable gentleman were our negociator, it was probable, indeed, that peace might be obtained, since one of the wishes of the French, that of seeing him in power, would be thus gratified. He begged gentlemen would attend to the words of the enemy, when professing friendship for this country, and they would see nothing in them favourable to a peace, on practicable terms, but that all they implied was, that they had a party in this country.

"If the House agreed with him in their opinion

of the necessity of continuing the war, the only question, as relating to the present measure, then was, whether it would be considered as prudent to raise a large proportion of the supplies for the service of the year, within the year? As he had heard no argument against this, he must suppose that the house had coincided with him in opinion. It had been admitted by the honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) that this would have been a good measure if it had been adopted at the beginning of the war; and he supposed, that this admission proceeded from an idea, either that the increase of the funding system was injurious to posterity, or that the interest of it was too great for the country to bear; in either case it seemed to him evident, that an addition of two hundred millions of debt rendered it necessary to have recourse to some other plan; and that the only question to be considered was, whether any other manner of raising money promised to be attended with better success than that now proposed?

"It had been said, that the people now began to question whether, if the enemy came, they could do worse. Did the people ask this, and was any one unprepared with an answer? If he was, I will furnish him with one—the enemy would not assuredly act better towards us than they have done towards their own subjects. Let men of a certain rank recollect how they treated those in their station; let the shopkeeper, now said to be

afraid of the direct operation of the present tax, think what must have been the effect of a forced loan; let every man recollect, that rising in regular proportion until they reached the sum of 9000 livres, when they took one half, each income was reduced to the standard of about 180*l.* few being left a larger sum than that for their avowed expences; yet the present measure of assessments has been said to be worse than any that had ever been adopted by Robespierre; nay, it has been put in competition with the total confiscation of property." He concluded with an apology for occupying so much of the time of the House, "on a subject respecting which there ought to be no difference, as no reasonable person could, he thought, hesitate in agreeing, that Parliament did right in calling for large and liberal supplies, proportioned to the ability of every man to contribute."

This speech was heard with great attention, and followed by Mr. Sheridan, who replied to several parts of it, and, at the same time, observed, "that this was a speech of great ingenuity and considerable vehemence."

Various matters of importance were brought forward this session in the two Houses of Parliament, viz. the question of the abolition of the slave trade, in which Mr.

Perceval was peculiarly interested; the poor laws; the Hampshire petition; the expulsion of a member; Lord Henry Petty's finance bill; Mr. Windham's military bill. The Hampshire petition, in particular, produced, on the 18th of February, a very long debate, brought on by Mr. A. Smith, who observed, that the influence of government in Hampshire was greater than in any other part of the kingdom, and that it had been used to oust a gentleman who had served the country for fourteen years with diligence and fidelity.—The degree of ministerial influence in the case of elections, of which this petition complained, and which had been put in practice under the administration of the *Talents*, as they were called, roused Mr. Perceval, who said—

"He was not surprised these servants of the Crown should abandon all the professions they had made before they ascended the seat of power. He had indeed indulged a faint hope that they would have met the question with a manly fortitude; yet instead of courting examination, they eluded research, and plainly proved that they were afraid of enquiry. Whatever might be the result of the debate, the country, he was convinced, would not be satisfied without a full discovery of the whole plot

against their liberties. As to the Secretary of the Treasury, he considered him merely as an agent in the business. As to his being a freeholder, if this were allowed to be an excuse, ministers would easily find freeholders of every county in the kingdom to subscribe their official letters. But, was such a practice to be defended? Was this the conduct to be vindicated by your pretended reformers? By reformers who wanted only power to put their fine plans into execution; and when in power resorted to every method they had previously complained of. When they were out of power, the House heard repeated complaints of the influence of administration, but no instance was adduced; now it is broadly exposed, but no redress is to be obtained; but the mask would soon be thrown off, and the deformity of their conduct would be exposed."

However, on the question being put, Mr. Perceval, not being then in office, was in the minority, only 57 being for it and 184 against it.

Lord Howick's Catholic Question was brought forward on the 5th of March, 1807.

"This Mr. Perceval considered as one of the most important and dangerous measures that had ever been submitted to the judgment of the legislature. Not the measure merely, but the system on which it was founded, excited in him the most

formidable objections. Where are we to stop, if this is granted? The Protestant interest ought to be maintained in Ireland. From the arguments used to-day, the Reformation might seem to be only a convenient political measure. The incongruity in the law might be great in *theory*, but was it so in *practice?* The presbyterian in Scotland is sacrificed just as much as the catholic of Ireland, yet when had either suffered the penalties of the act? He denied that a catholic having obtained a commission in Ireland, was liable to penalties in England: the Union sanctioned the act, and if after all inconvenience did actually occur, the annual indemnity bill completely covered the case. We must look also to the inconvenience to the service. One soldier would go to a methodist chapel, another to a presbyterian meeting, a third to a Roman catholic church: and the inconvenience would be greater still in the navy. If this evil is suffered to increase, that would ultimately be obtained from the weakness of parliament, which its wisdom would be desirous to withhold."

There can scarcely be the least doubt, but that, joined to Mr. Perceval's abilities, his zeal against catholic emancipation was the cause of his being put at the head of the new administration, which soon followed the speech we have just recorded, and was evi-

dently brought on by the conduct of Lord Howick and his colleagues in office, towards his Majesty. His Lordship, it is generally asserted, obtained a reluctant consent from the Sovereign to introduce a bill into the House, similar to that passed in Ireland in 1793, respecting the catholics. In the interval between this consent, and the second reading of the bill, which certainly was not exactly the same as that in 1793, *the royal mind was much agitated*, and certain persons were frequently seen at Court, who were not friendly to the then existing administration. To widen a breach already made, was not difficult; the royal exceptions to the bill were insurmountable. The ministers, who had raised this alarm, would willingly have withdrawn the obnoxious bill; but this was not sufficient. They were required to pledge themselves that they would not hereafter agitate the question; but as to this they would not consent, they were dismissed, and in a great measure rendered ridiculous to their opponents and the country at large.

Here we may behold Mr. Perceval at the pinnacle of power, and trampling, as it

were, upon the necks of his enemies. No small portion of bickering took place in both houses; but in each of them the ex-ministers were completely defeated. In these disputes the public took very little share, a few addresses and petitions excepted, being brought forward upon the old question of No Popery!

On one side it was contended the King could do no wrong; and on the other, the ex-ministers insinuated that the King had done wrong, in demanding a pledge from them which their honour and their oaths as privy counsellors forbade them to give.

At this interval too Mr. Perceval's elevation was increased in proportion as the late ministers were depressed, for at this inauspicious moment all their former sins and political misdeeds were brought into remembrance. They were reminded that one of their first acts on coming into place, was to pay Mr. Pitt's debts; that they then passed an act allowing Lord Grenville to hold the Auditorship of the Exchequer together with the place of First Lord of the Treasury; they admitted the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench to have a seat in the Cabinet; and they made

Mr. Pitt's income tax tenfold more oppressive than he ever intended it. Their language on the Hampshire election, and their conduct in another at Westminster, belied all their former sentiments and opinions of ministerial influence; but above all, they eulogized Mr. Pitt in a most extravagant manner, just as some of Mr. Perceval's opponents have panegyrized him; in fine, Mr. Perceval could not possibly have had a stronger recommendation upon his outset in public life than the inconsistency of his predecessors.

Mr. Perceval seems at all times to have paid a particular attention to matters of finance, and to have exercised his abilities almost on every subject connected with the revenue, particularly in December, 1798, when he defended Mr. Pitt's new scheme for collecting the assessed taxes.

In 1800 he evinced his regard for religion and good morals, by expressing his full conviction that something ought to be done by the legislature to amend and alter the law as it stood against adultery. A few days after, he spoke at great length on the "Monastic

Institution bill," during which he very judiciously remarked,

"That it was the spirit of the catholic persuasion to make as many converts as possible; indeed it was the principle of every religion to a given extent, but emphatically so of this, and therefore while we were talking of kindness to the catholics, and while we expected gratitude from them for such kindness, we ought not to be surprised if that gratitude consisted in their endeavouring to convert the whole nation; nor should we be angry with them for such an attempt, as they believed they could not obtain for us a greater blessing than to make catholics of us all; but it was our business to be on our guard against such a spirit, since it was utterly inconsistent with that of our constitution.

"Notwithstanding he would not say a word against toleration, as there was not a man in England who had more esteem for it than himself. This, however, did not compel him to lay aside all precaution against the possible effects of the overgrowth of popery in this country. He should not wish to see a hair of a man's head hurt on account of his religious opinions; but that did not compel him to think catholics were the best subjects in this country."

In 1803 Mr. Perceval interested himself, very highly to his credit, on the discussion of

the clergy non-residence bill; he liked not the lax manner in the wording of some of the clauses, and reprobated the principle of depriving the parishioners in every part of England of the advantages of a resident clergyman. He also declared that he considered "pluralities as a great grievance," and thought the discretion of granting exceptions should be vested in the bishops.

Mr. Perceval became Solicitor General in 1799, an early period for an office of such importance, and in 1802 he was appointed Attorney General, which office he held during a period of three years and ten months.

When Attorney General, it need scarcely be said, that he was a strenuous advocate for the union of Ireland. During Mr. Addington's administration, he warmly defended the bill for correcting abuses in the Navy, when some warm altercation took place between him and Lord Temple, on account of the latter's entering into a new career of opposition.

At length, after the demise of Mr. Pitt in 1806, Mr. Perceval had the mortification to see Mr. Fox and Lord Grenville come into power; but as their measures were very far

from meeting with his cordial approbation, the circumstance of their continuing in office only a year, a week, and a day, was of course rather matter of exultation to him than regret.

In April, 1807, it was thought highly expedient by the sovereign to dismiss this redoubtable administration, and Lord Sidmouth, as President of the Council, now gave place to Earl Camden; Lord Erskine, as Chancellor, to Lord Eldon; Lord Holland, as Privy Seal, to the Earl of Westmorland; Lord Grenville, as First Lord of the Treasury, to the Duke of Portland; Earl Moira, as Master General of the Ordnance, to the Earl of Chatham; Viscount Howick, as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, to the Right Hon. George Canning; and Lord Henry Petty, as Chancellor and Under Treasurer of the Exchequer, to the Hon. Spencer Perceval, with other inferior removals. So high were our hopes now raised respecting foreign affairs, that in consequence of this change of administration, the late King of Sweden, and some of our allies, were given to understand, that more vigorous measures

would be adopted than those acted upon by their predecessors.

In fact, every eye was fixed upon the coasts of the Baltic. There it was generally supposed on this side of the water, the destinies of Europe were to be decided. "The genius and resources of the north, it was said, were brought into conflict with those of the south." The mighty contest lay between Alexander, Emperor of Russia, and the Kings of Prussia and Sweden, on the one part, and the Emperor of France and the King of Italy on the other. Scarcely ever had there been so eventful a crisis. It was thought that the young Gustavus, with the aid both of a subsidy and troops from England, might march an army through the Lower Saxony from Dantzic and Colberg as far as Hamburg, which, aided by insurgents in Hesse, Hanover, and the Prussian dominions, might pass the Elbe, and establish a war in the centre of Germany for the annoyance of the French.

In the meanwhile all the principal places in Prussia Proper being secured, the French Emperor was pursuing the conflict with the Russians in Eastern and Polish Prussia.

Though placed at so great a distance from France, such was his vigilance in providing for his troops, that, as at the present period, on the great roads between the Rhine and the Vistula, hundreds and thousands of carriages were every where to be seen going or returning from Thorn and Warsaw; while, from all the countries between France and Poland, being under the power of France, provisions and often recruits were drawn.

Notwithstanding the severity of the season, which it was probably thought the French could ill sustain, the campaign, which the Russians were determined should keep open all the winter, was gallantly supported by their enemies. The affairs of Hoff and Deppen occurred in February, 1807; but the battle of Eylau, which was the most bloody of any, took place likewise on the 7th and 8th of that month. After this sanguinary contest, though the main body of the Russians were forced to fall back eighty leagues from the Vistula, the French Emperor either did not think it prudent, or was not in a condition to hazard another battle, nor at that juncture to proceed to Koningsberg, though the French soldiers were within sight of

the steeples of that place. But if possession of the field of battle be any proof of victory, at Eylau this certainly belonged to the French, who, after the Russians had retreated, leaving the wounded in their hands, remained seven or eight days on the ground they occupied during the action. While this ardent struggle on the part of the Russians and Prussians continued, in which all the strong places were falling successively into the hands of the French, a subsidy of 500,000l. had been granted by our court; but though repeated and earnest application was made, no troops were sent from England till it was too late; and these, consisting only of 8000 of the German legion, which were landed at Rugen, were too few in number to effect any real service.

The French next turned their attention to Swedish Pomerania, where the King of Sweden had arrived to animate his army by his presence; but his efforts not being crowned with success, the whole of the province, with Stralsund, and the Isle of Rugen, after much fruitless opposition, fell into the hands of the enemy.

The first session of parliament in 1807,

was much occupied with the subject of the last year's negociation with France, during which Mr. Whitbread expressed his full conviction that the chief of the French government was desirous, and the ministers of France sincere in their wishes for peace; that an opportunity had been lost of making peace upon terms both honourable and advantageous; that the negociation had been broken off by the government of this country prematurely and unnecessarily; and that with greater prudence and candour, and a little more patience, skill, and address on our parts, we should have found France ready to grant such terms as his Majesty's ministers ought to have accepted.

Mr. Perceval, from a review of all the circumstances connected with the negociation, concluded, that the enemy were never seriously desirous of peace, and that ministers were dupes to the artifices of the French government. He lamented that a man of Mr. Fox's great talents and incorruptible mind, had been betrayed into a private and confidential correspondence with Talleyrand. He declared his firm conviction that no peace could take place with

France, at least such a peace as would be worthy of the acceptance of this country, so long as the force and counsels of that country were directed by two such men as Talleyrand and Buonaparte.

But notwithstanding the grounds which the new ministers could thus boast of for exultation, Mr. Perceval exhibited no symptoms of the least consciousness of this nature; though Mr. Canning, one of his new colleagues, after recapitulating the arguments used on the state of Ireland, ended with a threat "that whatever might be the result of that before them, or a series of motions, the new ministers would keep their places." "The changes in the councils of the King," he said, "did not arise from themselves, but from their predecessors; and if necessary, an appeal would be made to the people." This threat called up Lord Henry Petty, who spoke vehemently against such language; however, after a debate which lasted till half past six in the morning, his Majesty's dismissal of his ministers was approved of by a majority of thirty-two, in favour of their successors.

But relative to a dissolution of parliament,

Mr. Canning's menace was well understood: each party prepared, and a universal canvas immediately took place. Excepting the Westminster election, in which Messrs. Sheridan, Cockrane, Elliot, Paul, and Burdett, respectively figured, the rest passed off in the country without much contest. Liverpool, however, rejected the elegant historian of the House of Medicis, because he voted with Mr. Perceval against the slave trade, and took the advantage of this, and the cry of "No Popery," to excite the mob against him. At Cambridge University there was also a most violent struggle, which ended in the ejectment of Lord Henry Petty, the Ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer. A similar defeat attended Lord Howick, who stood for the county of Northumberland, after having figured at the hustings in a very long speech; but here it seems his lordship was no longer acknowledged as that Mr. Grey, who early in life had such strong pretensions to popular favour: Lord William Russel also lost Surry.

On the 27th of April, 1807, the parliament had been prorogued by the following speech, in which, if as usual the minister's sentiments

are to be considered as the most prominent, Mr. Perceval could have had no reason to blush; but on the contrary, from what was then said relative to the Catholics, it was impossible, upon the ground of consistency, to expect he could deviate from the plan with which he set out in public life.

"MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

"We have it in command from his Majesty to inform you, that his Majesty has thought fit to avail himself of the first moment, which would admit of an interruption of the sitting of parliament, without material inconvenience to the public business, to close the present session: and, that his Majesty has therefore been pleased to cause a commission to be issued under the great seal for proroguing the parliament.

"We are farther commanded to state to you, that his Majesty is anxious to recur to the sense of his people, while the events which have recently taken place, are yet fresh in their recollection.

"His Majesty feels that, in resorting to this measure, under the present circumstances, he at once demonstrates, in the most unequivocal manner, his own conscientious persuasion of the rectitude of those motives upon which he has acted; and affords to his people the best opportunity of testifying their determination to support him, in every exercise of the prerogatives of his crown which is

conformable to the sacred obligations under which they are held, and conducive to the welfare of his kingdom, and to the security of the constitution.

His Majesty directs us to express his entire conviction, that after so long a reign, marked by a series of indulgences to his Roman Catholic subjects, they, in common with every other class of his people, must feel assured of his attachment to the principles of a just and enlightened toleration, and of his anxious desire to protect equally, and promote impartially, the happiness of all descriptions of his subjects."

"GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

"His Majesty has commanded us to thank you in his name, for the supplies which you have furnished for the public service. He has seen with great satisfaction, that you have been able to find the means of defraying in the present year, those large but necessary expenses, for which you have provided, without imposing upon his people the immediate burden of additional taxes.

"His Majesty has observed with no less satisfaction, the inquiries which you have instituted into subjects connected with public economy; and he trusts, that the early attention of a new parliament, which he will forthwith direct to be called, will be applied to the prosecution of these important objects."

"MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

"His Majesty has directed us most earnestly to recommend to you, that you should cultivate, by

all means in your power, a spirit of union, harmony, and good will amongst all classes and descriptions of his people.

"His Majesty trusts, that the divisions, naturally and unavoidably excited by the late unfortunate and uncalled for agitation of a question, so interesting to the feelings and opinions of his people, will speedily pass away; and that the prevailing sense and determination of all his subjects to exert their united efforts in the cause of their country, will enable his Majesty to conduct, to an honourable and secure termination, the great contest in which he is engaged."

Immediately after the election, it was stated in the newspapers that Mr. Perceval had written letters to all the members of his party, desiring their earliest attendance, as matters of the greatest importance would be brought forward; on which it was asked, "Pray who is this Mr. Perceval that writes such letters? Is Mr. Perceval King of the country? Has not the King called his parliament together, and have not the Speaker and the House the exclusive right of interfering with the appearance or non-appearance of their members?" However, as we now behold Mr. Perceval invested with full powers, firmly seated on the Treasury

Bench, he is henceforth to be considered as influencing, controuling, or assenting to all measures of public import; accordingly, the new Parliament, which he was so anxious to assemble, was opened by a commission, on the 26th of June, with the following speech.

"*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

"We have it in command from his Majesty to state to you, that having deemed it expedient to recur to the sense of his people, his Majesty, in conformity to his declared intention, has lost no time in causing the present Parliament to be assembled.

"His Majesty has great satisfaction in acquainting you, that since the events which led to the dissolution of the last Parliament, his Majesty has received, in numerous Addresses from his subjects, the warmest assurances of their affectionate attachment to his person and Government, and of their firm resolution to support him in maintaining the just rights of his Crown, and the true principles of the Constitution; and he commands us to express his entire confidence, that he shall experience in all your deliberations, a determination to afford him an equally loyal, zealous, and affectionate support, under all the arduous circumstances of the present time.

"We are commanded by his Majesty to inform

you, that his Majesty's endeavours have been most anxiously employed for the purpose of drawing closer the ties by which his Majesty is connected with the powers of the Continent; of assisting the efforts of those Powers against the ambition and oppression of France; of forming such engagements as may ensure their continued cooperation; and of establishing that mutual confidence and concert so essential under any course of events to the restoration of a solid and permanent peace in Europe.

"It would have afforded his Majesty the greatest pleasure to have been enabled to inform you, that the mediation undertaken by his Majesty for the purpose of preserving peace between his Majesty's Ally, the Emperor of Russia, and the Sublime Porte, had proved effectual for that important object: his Majesty deeply regrets the failure of that mediation, accompanied as it was by the disappointment of the efforts of his Majesty's squadron in the sea of Marmora; and followed, as it has since been, by the losses which have been sustained by his gallant troops in Egypt.

"His Majesty could not but lament the extension of hostilities in any quarter, which should create a diversion in the war so favourable to the views of France; but lamenting it, especially in the instance of a Power with which his Majesty has been so closely connected, and which has been so recently indebted for its protection against the

encroachments of France, to the signal and successful interposition of his Majesty's arms.

His Majesty has directed us to acquaint you, that he has thought it right to adopt such measures as might best enable him, in concert with the Emperor of Russia, to take advantage of any favourable opportunity for bringing the hostilities in which they are engaged against the Sublime Porte, to a conclusion, consistent with his Majesty's honour and the interest of his ally."

"*Gentlemen of the House of Commons*,

"His Majesty has ordered the estimates of the current year to be laid before you, and he relies on the zeal of his faithful Commons to make such provision for the public service, as well as for the further application of the sums which were granted in the last Parliament, as may appear to be necessary.

"And his Majesty, bearing constantly in mind the necessity of a careful and economical Administration of the pecuniary resources of the country, has directed us to express his hopes that you will proceed without delay in the pursuit of those enquiries, connected with the public economy, which engaged the attention of the last Parliament."

"*My Lords and Gentlemen*,

"His Majesty commands us to state to you, that he is deeply impressed with the peculiar importance, at the present moment, of cherishing a

spirit of union and harmony amongst his people: such a spirit will most effectually promote the prosperity of the country at home, give vigour and efficacy to its councils, and its arms abroad; and can alone enable his Majesty, under the blessing of Providence, to carry on successfully the great contest in which he is engaged, or finally to conduct it to that termination which his Majesty's moderation and justice have ever led him to seek, a peace—in which the honour and interests of his kingdom can be secure, and in which Europe and the world may hope for independence and repose."

In the House of Commons, the Address was moved by Lord Newark, and seconded by Mr. Hall, both being echoes of the speech, the latter ending with a commendation of that great and lamented statesman, Mr. Pitt, who had weathered the storm; and he called upon those Ministers who had lately quitted the helm, to abandon all spirit of mutiny, and to join in navigating the vessel, and guiding her to a port of security. During this debate, the late Ministers being charged with the disasters in Egypt, in consequence of our attempts to seize Alexandria and Rosetta, Lord Howick said, "No man could lament those disasters more than he

did; but what did Ministers mean by inserting the paragraph relative to it in the speech? If ill success," he said, "in an expedition, was an argument against a Ministry, what shall we say to the memorable achievements at Ferrol, Corsica, and the Helder?"

The new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Perceval, vindicated the dissolution of Parliament, and replied to the observations on the inconveniences to the public, which, he said, when compared with the arguments in favour of the dissolution, sunk to nothing. The conduct of the late Ministers he assimilated with that of Mr. Pitt on a like question, and declared it to be his firm opinion, that no farther concessions to the Catholics were desirable. However, though several members spoke for an Amendment to the Address, in order to express their abhorrence of the first act of a set of men, who, they conceived, by reinstating Lord Melville, had recalled to his Majesty's Councils profligacy and corruption, there appeared to be for the Address 300, and for the Amendment only 155. In the House of Lords the Address was carried without a division.

Passing over our disasters in Egypt, in the Archipelago, and at Buenos Ayres, over which Mr. Perceval and his friends could have no controul, we may observe, that among the more fortunate results of the employment of the British arms, the taking of Curacoa, on the 1st of January, 1807, with very little resistance, might be enumerated. This was a considerable help to our commerce, which now began to feel the effects of the Berlin Decree, notwithstanding the counteraction arising from our Orders in Council.

In the British possessions in the East Indies, it was still acknowledged, that a latent spirit of discontent and alarm had existed ever since the horrid massacre at Vellore: the cause of which interfering with the religious opinions of the natives was frivolous and fatal—as it probably produced the repulse of the British arms, after two most desperate attempts on the almost impregnable fortress of Burtpore, together with the obstinate resistance of Dundie Khan, at his fort and fortified garden at Comana.

In returning to take a view of the state of affairs in Europe, it will appear, that the

impolitic expedition to Copenhagen eventually added Denmark to the list of our most determined enemies, among whom, after the peace of Tilsit, we numbered Austria, Russia, Prussia, and the Ottoman Porte.

Early in the year 1807, it seems that the British Cabinet had adopted the resolution of compelling Denmark to declare against France; and for this purpose a naval and military armament, consisting of about 25,000 men, and a fleet of nearly thirty sail of the line, with other vessels, to the number of ninety pendants, were some months in preparation.

It was not till the 14th of August, 1807, that the British fleet unexpectedly appeared between Elsineur and Helsingborg on the other side. A division of the fleet, under Commodore Keats, had been previously detached to the Great Belt, with instructions to allow no military force whatever to enter Zealand; and, from the manner in which his vessels were stationed, the communication between Zealand, the adjacent Isle of Funen, and the main land of Holstein, Sleswig, and Jutland, was cut off. The British army followed the main body of the fleet to

the Sound, Lord Cathcart being commander in chief of the land forces, and Admiral Gambier commanded the fleet.

But as negociation was to be tried previous to hostilities, Mr. Jackson, who had resided several years at Berlin, as envoy from this country, was selected, and repairing to Copenhagen, he was instructed to use every argument in his power to bring the Prince Regent to terms of friendly accommodation; or, in plain terms, to induce him to consent to the delivery of the Danish fleet into the possession of the British Admiral, under the most solemn stipulation that it should be restored at the conclusion of the war between this country and France. Proposals thus degrading being rejected, the army landed without opposition on the morning of the 16th of August, and on the evening of the 2d of September the British land batteries and the bomb and mortar vessels opened such a tremendous fire upon the city of Copenhagen, that a general conflagration was thought to have taken place.

On the night of the 3d, our fire was slackened; but on the 4th it was resumed with so much vigour and effect, that the next

morning a trumpeter appeared at the British out-posts, with a letter, proposing a truce. On the 8th of September a capitulation was signed, and the British army took possession of the citadel, dock-yards, and batteries. The Danish vessels captured being rigged with the utmost dispatch, the whole fleet was safe in the British ports before the end of October. After the capitulation had been signed by both parties, Mr. Jackson made a fresh attempt to negociate with the prince of Denmark, as did also a Mr. Merry, but with neither would the Danish government hold the least communication. These attempts, however, sufficiently prove that the authors and advisers of this extraordinary expedition indulged in the unparalleled weakness of believing, that the conciliation of the Danes was still possible, notwithstanding what had happened.

Among the various apologies made for what was called the *immorality* of the Danish expedition on the part of England, it was alleged, that the court of Denmark had a secret understanding with France. But that this was far from being founded is proved from the circumstance, that while

scarcely a single cannon was mounted on the ramparts of Copenhagen, nearly the whole of the Danish forces, about thirty thousand men, were collected in Holstein, at least to make a show of defending their continental possessions, or protecting their commerce, and which conduct had some time before occasioned the French Emperor, when the deputies that waited upon him from Hamburgh made some allusion to the Danish sovereign, to say, "Let that little prince take care of himself." Still, whether the Danes would not have been ultimately induced to declare themselves on the part of France, can scarcely admit of a doubt.

But though the allies of France upon the continent were exposed to the predatory incursions of England, the French gave the ton; and in the kingdom of Westphalia in particular, the government and civil employments were administered exclusively by Frenchmen, and even the Napoleon code established in its courts. To such an excess was this complaisance carried, that in one of the numbers of the Westphalian Moniteur the French are called "La noblesse du genre humain," *the nobility of the human*

race. For the purpose also of restraining and excluding English commerce, French troops now first began to line the whole coast of Holland, the borders of the Elbe, &c. Even the Dutch fishing-boats were ordered not to put to sea without having in each a soldier to watch their proceedings; but as Louis Bonaparte had not nerve sufficient to carry these severe measures into execution, he was eventually compelled to abdicate his crown and kingdom.

In Bavaria, as well as Westphalia, the population able to bear arms were organized into national guards, and drilled and trained with the greatest diligence and activity.

The treaty of Tilsit was scarcely concluded, before the French Emperor is said to have resolved upon availing himself of circumstances for the subjugation of Spain and Portugal. On the 31st of October, 1807, all the members of the different councils of state being assembled, a declaration by the king of Spain was read, of a discovery that his son, the prince of Asturias, had formed a conspiracy for dethroning him. He had been surprized, it is said, in his own apartments with the cyphers of his corres-

pondence; but while some persons believed this accusation, others looked upon the pretended conspiracy as the fabrication of the Prince of Peace, Don Emanuel Godoy, for the purpose of removing the only obstacle that then stood in the way of his audacious ambition. However, on the 5th of November, the prince having written to his royal father and mother, a royal edict was addressed to the governor of the council of Castile, declaring, that the voice of nature having disarmed the hand of vengeance, the king had been moved by pity, and the intercession of the queen, to pardon his penitent son, who had given information against the authors of the horrible design in contemplation.

After the peace of Tilsit, as the French Emperor demanded that the court of Lisbon should shut the ports of Portugal against the English, with other severe restrictions; to enforce a compliance it was necessary to obtain leave of Spain to send a large French army through that kingdom, to act in concert with the Spanish armies. This inducing the prince of the Brazils to ship himself with his court for South America, on the morning

of the 29th of November, the Portuguese fleet had not left the Tagus when the French, with their Spanish auxiliaries, under General Junot, appeared upon the hills. In the meanwhile, such reluctance had been shewn on the part of the court of Lisbon either to depart, or to believe that the enemy were so near, that had they not been prompted by the British Ambassador and assisted by a British squadron, it is probable all their preparations would have been too late. By way of precaution, as soon as the French had entered Lisbon, the inhabitants were disarmed, and prohibited from assembling together to the number of more than ten at a time; cannon were also planted in all the streets and squares. On the part of the British it was now thought necessary to secure the valuable island of Madeira, on the condition of its being restored to Portugal on the conclusion of a general peace.

But the conduct of the ministry not only embroiled us this year with the Danes, but with the Americans also, in the affair of the Chesapeak; a vessel belonging to the United States, from which the British Admiral

Berkeley conceived himself authorized to take four seamen, under the pretext of their being British. This vessel was also stated to have been "disabled from service, with the loss of a number of men killed and wounded." This circumstance at that time excited the observation on this side of the water, that "the dominion of the seas, if exercised without any regard to natural right or to natural justice, is an act of hostility, not so much against *man* as against the *Author* of the *Universe;* whom we cannot reasonably suppose ever intended it for a mere theatre of *blood-stained victories*, rather than a grand link to unite in friendship and peaceful commerce the interest and prosperity of distant nations."

But although the feelings of the Americans on this occasion were warmly expressed, their government exercised the utmost degree of prudence and deliberation. They confined themselves merely to the demand of an *express disavowal of the act* by the government of Great Britain, and an unqualified surrender of the officer or officers by whose orders it was perpetrated, to the justice of the States. It will, notwithstanding, appear

extraordinary that several years elapsed, during which a succession of accredited negociators were employed on the part of Great Britain, without coming to any conclusion upon this or any other subject in dispute between us and the American States!

This year, 1807, saw a new constitution given to Poland, instead of any more dismemberments; and this so contrived as to strengthen the French interest upon the continent.

The king of Sweden also, who had been held up as one of our invincible champions, was this year compelled to surrender Stralsund and the whole of Pomerania to the French under Marshal Brune. A declaration of war on the part of England soon followed, and the Russians in return imposed an embargo upon all British ships in their harbours. This new rupture gave much cause for recrimination on the part of France.

"Russia," the Moniteur observed, "had vainly expected to see an army of 40,000 English, not in the month of July but in April, landed at Stralsund or Dantzic, to co-operate with her. Has

England furnished these troops? Was she able to do it? If she answers in the negative, she had little reason to make so great demands upon her allies; but her ministers were wanting in inclination, they calculated the results of war at so much per cent. they think only of profit, and the fields of Poland presented nothing but danger and glory."

This accusation is similar to one made before, namely, "that the English weigh or calculate upon every ounce of blood shed upon the Continent."

When speaking of the apprehensions of the Sepoys, it should have been added, that these appeared to have been but too well founded; for an order being issued to oblige the native troops at Vellore to wear a drummer's cap, and that the mark of the cast on their forehead should be taken off, their upper lip shaved, &c. some Sepoys being punished for resistance was the cause of the European barracks being surrounded, &c. &c. It was to little purpose that vengeance was soon executed upon the poor deluded offenders; but it was highly creditable to the humanity and prudence of the government that a proclamation was issued soon

after, from Fort St. George, assuring the native troops in the most solemn manner, that the respect which had hitherto been shewn to their religion and customs should be in future continued, and no interruption given to any native, whether Hindoo or Mussulman, in the practice of his religious ceremonies.

This concession, at a time when the French Emperor was known to be cultivating a good understanding with the court of Persia, was politic, as well as humane. An ambassador from that distant quarter, with a suit of nearly fourscore persons, had this year been received with great satisfaction at Paris; and it was stated that a military survey had been made by the French Emperor's directions, extending from Constantinople to the shores of the Indus.

This year the abolition of the slave trade was followed by the establishment of the African Institution, for the purpose of introducing the arts of social life in a quarter of the globe so long the seat of oppression, ignorance, and barbarism.

The celebrated Orders in Council, which have operated so forcibly in the destruction

of the remains of our trade, in consequence of the re-action which they have produced in France and America, were the results of the eventful year 1807; for on the 11th of November three Orders in Council were issued in the name of his Britannic Majesty, by the first of which the ports of every country is declared in a state of blockade from which Great Britain is excluded. All trade in the produce or the manufactures of these countries is deemed illegal, and the vessels employed in such trade are liable to seizure, unless such neutral vessel shall be going direct to, or from, a British or neutral port to some free port in the enemy's colonies, or the British colonies, laden with such articles as it may be lawful to import into such free port.

The second Order provides,

"That no exportation from the ports of the united kingdom, of the produce or growth of France, Spain, &c. that may have been legally imported, shall be permitted to be exported, but upon condition that the parties so exporting shall enter into proper security that they will export, within a limited period, one-third of the tonnage of such goods in British manufactures, or colonial produce, the said produce of France to be subject

to such duties upon exportation as may hereafter be directed."

The third Order directs,

"That no purchase of British prize ships by neutral subjects from the enemy, shall, after the present notification, and during the present war, be considered as valid in a British Court of Admiralty, but that any vessel so purchased shall be liable to confiscation. The documents granted by French agents in neutral ports, known by the name of 'certificates of origin,' are no longer to be allowed; and all neutral vessels in possession of them are to be seized wherever met with."

The futility of these orders, as to their purpose of causing the enemy to relax in his restrictions, or sue for a peace, was foreseen by several judicious and dispassionate observers, from the moment they were promulgated.

Among the first grievances arising from these mutual restraints upon commerce, it appeared from a report of one of the committees of the West India Planters, that sugar had at length sustained such a degradation, that instead of paying the planter 18 per cent. he was not reimbursed for his capital, and the necessary expences incurred upon it, while the duty demanded by government increased, as the price became lessened to the

consumer. On the part of the Americans, one of the first steps produced by our Orders in Council, was the prohibition of the departure of their vessels, which terminated in what was called the non-intercourse bill.

The Berlin decree was only a counterpart of the system previously established by England. It commenced by stating,

"That England had ceased to observe the law of nations, that she considers every individual as an enemy who belongs to a hostile state, and makes prisoners not only of the crews of ships of war, but also of the crews of merchant vessels. That she seizes and condemns the property of individuals not at war with her, and extends her blockade to places not fortified, and to whole coasts and whole kingdoms." Under these circumstances it further states, "That it is a right conferred by nature to oppose to an enemy the weapons he employs against you, and to fight him in the same manner in which he attacks."

Our Orders in Council manifestly produced the Milan decree on the part of Napoleon, and dated from that city Dec. 17th, 1807, by which to excite universal resentment against the British Government, it was decreed,

"That every ship, to whatever nation it may belong, that shall have submitted to be searched

by an English ship, or to a voyage to England, or that shall have paid any tax whatever to the English government, is thereby, and for that alone, declared to be *denationalized*, to have forfeited the protection of its King, and to have become English property."

It was further expressed that every ship that sails from the ports of England, or those of the English colonies, and of the countries occupied by English troops, is good and lawful prize, and that these measures, only resorted to in just retaliation of the barbarous system adopted by England in its legislation similar to Algiers, shall cease to have any effect with respect to all nations who shall have the firmness to compel the English government to respect their flag, &c.

In the course of this year we heard of a singular proceeding on the part of the French Emperor, relative to the Duchy of Mecklenburgh. The Duke of Mecklenburgh it was urged by the French Minister, Bourienne, was invested with a command in the Russian Army, and in other respects having an immediate interest with Russia; therefore as the Cabinet of St. Petersburgh had, contrary to all right, and even without

the least pretext, violated the independence of the Ottoman Porte, in making itself master of the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia, by way of retaliation the French Minister at Hamburgh was charged to declare,

"I. That it is the will of the Emperor and King, on account of the assistance which this country has afforded to his enemies, that it shall be considered as having made a common cause with them.

"II. That the future and ultimate fate of Mecklenburgh will depend upon the conduct which Russia shall observe towards Moldavia and Wallachia."

To return from our foreign to our domestic connections:—much business had been done in parliament with little opposition. Among the most important transactions were the remuneration voted to Dr. Jenner, for his useful plan of vaccination. Mr. Whitbread's parochial poor bill was stopped in the Lords, as was also the reversionary place bill. The Irish insurrection bill, and Mr. Sheridan's famous speech on the state of Ireland, were also among the affairs of the greatest interest.

Lord Grenville introduced the subject of the late negociation into the upper house, and conceived it would be of the same opinion

with him, that the peace was prevented entirely by the disposition of the enemy, and that every assistance ought to be given to the King, to prosecute the war with vigour and effect. He still thought the country, besides the obligations it was under to its natural allies, was bound to see that the interests of the elector of Hanover were not neglected: the great point of the French, it was evident, was to separate us from our allies. Large offers were made to detach Russia from England; yet we were to hold Malta, next the Cape of Good Hope, then India, afterwards Hanover. For these we were to give up all our conquests made upon the enemy and his allies; to cede Sicily, and confirm the French in the possession of Dalmatia. Lord Sidmouth, with the fallacious view of the future offering us better terms, dwelt upon a probable reverse of the fortune of Buonaparte. In the Commons, it should be observed, Lord Yarmouth rose to refute a charge gone forth among the public against him, under the sanction of a great name. The negociation, he said, he believed owed its origin to Mr. Fox. At the commencement of it were some points which could

not be committed to paper. This reason it seems induced Talleyrand to look out for a safe person, and he fixed upon him with a stipulation, that there should be no writing upon the subject, that the bond between France and Russia might not be dissolved in case the negociation should fail. As he had been chosen by Talleyrand to bring a verbal message to England, that choice led to his return with the answer. He said he wished a person better qualified had gone, but if he had he would not have been allowed to remain twelve hours in Paris, without producing his full powers. On his arrival he communicated his message, stating actual possession as the basis of the negociation; and this basis, he said, was actually allowed in the second note to Lord Lauderdale. The noble lord concluded his observations by saying, "that if Government had wished for a written document, they ought to have sent him as a minister, not as a post-boy."

It was well known that a treaty between France and the Russian Minister D'Oubril, was on the tapis, but in the event of its being concluded Lord Yarmouth had no kind of instructions how to act, nor had he

any instructions to come away at the time; therefore the arrival of Lord Lauderdale, who was appointed to succeed him, gave him no pain. "Terms," said he, "of a glorious peace were then proposed (by the French), but they were refused, and the negociation was broken off, not for India, or any other British object, but on account of Sicily and Dalmatia."

About this time a circumstance occurred which shewed that a denial of all indulgence to the Catholics never entered into Mr. Perceval's plan of government:—On the bringing in the bill for the education of the poor, Mr. Whitbread declaring himself favourable to a liberal interpretation of the word *toleration*, the Chancellor of the Exchequer deprecated the idea, that he wished to withhold instruction from the Catholics: yet he could not but look with a jealous eye on so distinguished a mark of public favour towards them, as the support demanded for Maynooth College. He had opposed this grant in the last parliament, but was unwilling to do it now, lest his opposition might be construed into spleen, by making this the only exception to the grants of the last par-

liament. Was it, however, prudent to double the number of popish priests educated at the college? Was this the way to extend the Protestant religion in that country? Only a hundred protestant clergymen were there educated annually, and they proposed to educate four times that number of popish priests. If the establishment was thus to be encreased, government ought, he thought, to have some hold on it, in some shape or another, that they might at least know that they were not nourishing in their bosom a society of Jesuits. Lord H. Petty contended for the necessity of the measure, and ridiculed the idea of allowing such a seminary, and then compelling the priesthood to allow our system of education. The college was sufficiently under the controul of government, as the act required that the college should be visited once in five years by five visitors, among whom were necessarily the Lord High Chancellor and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The comparative statement of the two endowments was not placed in the proper light. Trinity College, Dublin, was one of the richest endowments in the world; but were

it not so, that was no reason that the interest of the Catholics should be wholly neglected.

Mr. Foster, member for the University of Dublin, approved of the erection of Maynooth College, as an excellent substitute for that of St. Omer. The propriety of doubling that establishment might be called in question. The excellent system of education, established in Trinity College, Dublin, had induced many Catholics to send their sons to that College. Its religious moderation was well known, and had been eminently displayed during the late cry. It was a protestant garrison in a land of catholics; but it would not join in any unfair cry against that body, and by the prudence of this system it would greatly assist in removing religious animosity. Mr. Dillon read a statement of sinecure livings in Ireland, by which it appeared that the catholics paid one-tenth of their property to the clergy for doing nothing, and he recommended to the house to take the state of tithes into their consideration. The Chancellor of the Exchequer assured the house, that the attention of government would be early directed to the state of glebe

houses, and sinecure livings. A measure would be introduced for reducing the opulent livings, and out of their abundance making an allowance for poorer curates. He regretted much, that the late government had not paid more attention to the church of Ireland.

The last sentiment roused up Lord Howick, who totally denied the charge brought against the late government, which he challenged the Chancellor of the Exchequer to prove, and adverting to the conduct of Mr. Foster, in bringing in the bill without proper documents, he charged him with levity. Mr. Foster retorted upon the noble lord, that in charging him with levity his lordship had shewn both levity and ignorance. Colonel Barry was against the continuance of such a grant in future, and disapproved of the wanton and unprovoked asperity of the noble lord. Dr. Duigenan denied that the late administration had been attentive to the interests of the protestant religion in Ireland. So far from it, they had resisted a bill, introduced by him, to enforce the residence of the clergy, with the approbation of several archbishops and bishops. Lord Howick would not allow this to be any

proof, as they might have the utmost regard for the protestant religion without entering into the doctor's views. Mr. Grattan was for the measure, which was agreed to; and thus it was observed, "the catholics cannot complain of a nation, which contributes so much more to the support of their religion, than it does for that branch of the protestant religion, which is not so repugnant to the established church, and so numerous in this country. The methodists require nothing from the state; and the privilege of erecting a college seems to be as much as dissenters of any kind can desire, or sound policy approve."

The speech with which parliament was prorogued on Friday, August 14th, expressed his Majesty's regret at the unfortunate issue of the war upon the continent, and alluded to the immense extension of the power and influence of France, as reasons for our perseverance in the contest, and as the means of giving the character of honour to any future negociation, and arriving at the prospect of a permanent peace.

About the latter end of September, 1807, Government thought proper to publish a

Declaration in his Majesty's name, relative to the affair of Copenhagen, under the idea that he owed to himself and to Europe a frank exposition of the motives which dictated the late measures in the Baltic; the principal ground of this is stated to have been the information that his Majesty had received the most positive information of the determination of the present Ruler of France to occupy with a military force the territory of Holstein, for the purpose of excluding Great Britain from all her accustomed channels of communication with the continent, and of availing himself of the aid of the Danish marine for the invasion of Great Britain and Ireland, &c. &c.

The French Moniteur of September 21, it was observed, had anticipated almost every argument in this Declaration.

In the course of October, 1807, we learnt, that by a Proclamation dated Memel, it was announced, that in pursuance of the peace concluded at Tilsit, Prussian ports must not only be shut against English ships, but all trade and commerce between Prussia and England must cease. This measure it was confessed would have been adopted before, if

several Prussian ships had not been lying in English ports, while others laden with provisions for Prussia were at sea. Not even a neutral bottom coming from English ports or colonies could any longer be admitted into the Prussian ports; and the execution of this Proclamation was enforced in the most rigorous manner.

On the 6th of November an instrument published by the Prince of Denmark at Rendsburgh, prohibited any trade or commerce between his subjects and those of Great Britain, under very severe penalties, even though carried on by the means of a third person or party. Portugal also was this year compelled to shut her ports against us, though evidently with the greatest reluctance, and as the Prince Regent expressed it, "he had acceded to the cause of the continent, by uniting himself to the Emperor of the French and to his Catholic Majesty, in order to contribute as far as it might be in his power to the acceleration of a *maritime peace*."

However, as the Prince and the Court of Portugal chose rather to retire to the Brazils under British protection, than re-

main in his own country either as a subject or as an ally of France, it was not astonishing that we should be told so soon after from the French Moniteur, "that the House of Braganza had ceased to reign." As to the advantages that were supposed would accrue to us from this transportation of the Portuguese Court to South America, they were evidently over-rated. Besides an alliance between us and the Brazilians, it was thought it would have been in our power to regain in the way of trade, what we had lost by our misconduct at Buenos Ayres.

The last measure of importance adopted by our Government in 1807, was the publishing of his Majesty's Declaration, in answer to that of the Emperor of Russia, dated Petersburgh, October 20. This Declaration sets out by saying, his Majesty was not aware of those secret engagements which had been imposed upon Russia in the conferences at Tilsit. The King, on the contrary, hoped his Imperial Majesty would have extricated himself from the embarrassments of those new counsels and connections which he had adopted in a moment of despondency and alarm, and that he would

have returned to a policy more congenial to the principles he had so invariably professed, more conducive to the honour of his crown, and the prosperity of his dominions.

His Majesty deeply lamented the extension of the calamities of war, but observed that if the Peace of Tilsit was indeed to be considered as the consequence, and the punishment of the imputed inactivity of Great Britain, he could not but regret that the Emperor of Russia should have resorted to so precipitate and fatal a measure, at the moment when he had received distinct assurances that his Britannic Majesty was making the most strenuous exertions to fulfil the wishes and expectations of his ally.

His Majesty did not refuse the mediation of the Emperor of Russia after the peace of Tilsit, although the offer of it was accompanied by circumstances of concealment which might well have justified his refusal. The articles of the Treaty of Tilsit were not communicated to his Majesty, and specifically that article of the treaty, in virtue of which the mediation was proposed. It was further urged against Russia, that the complete abandonment of the interests of

the King of Prussia, presented no encouraging prospect of the result of any exertions which his Imperial Majesty might be disposed to employ in favour of Great Britain. In answer to the assumed inviolability of the Baltic sea, and the reciprocal guarantees of the powers that border upon it, said to have been contracted with the knowledge of the British government, it was replied, that however his Majesty might at particular periods have forborne, for special reasons influencing his conduct at the time, to act in contradiction to them, such forbearance could never have applied but to a state of peace and real neutrality in the North; and his Majesty most assuredly could not be expected to recur to it after France had been suffered to establish herself in undisputed sovereignty along the whole coast of the Baltic sea, from Dantzic to Lubeck.

It was also asked, that even if a mediation by means of Russia had taken place, and a peace had been the result, and that peace guaranteed by his Imperial Majesty, could his Britannic Majesty have placed implicit reliance on it after having seen the Emperor of Russia openly transfer to France

the Sovereignty of the Ionian Republic, the independence of which his Imperial Majesty had recently and solemnly guaranteed?

As to the expedition against Copenhagen, his Majesty felt himself under no obligation to offer any atonement or apology to the Emperor of Russia: his Majesty's justification of this expedition, it was said, was before the world.

The requisition of the emperor of Russia for the immediate conclusion of a peace with France, was represented as extraordinary in the substance, as offensive in the manner, and the Emperor of Russia was reminded, that the last negociation between Great Britain and France was broken off upon points immediately affecting, not his Majesty's own interests, but those of his Imperial Ally, the Emperor of Russia. Therefore his Majesty would neither understand nor admit the pretension of the Emperor of Russia, to dictate the time or the mode of his Majesty's pacific negociation with other powers.

His Britannic Majesty also availed himself of the present opportunity to proclaim

anew those principles of the Maritime Law, against which the Armed Neutrality under the auspices of the Empress Catharine was originally directed, and against which the present hostilities of Russia were denounced: these principles his Majesty asserted it was his right and duty to maintain against every confederacy whatever. They had at all times contributed essentially to the support of the maritime power of Great Britain, and were become incalculably more valuable and important at a period, when the maritime power of Great Britain continued the sole remaining bulwark against the overwhelming usurpations of France, the only refuge to which other nations might yet resort for assistance and protection, &c.

On the 21st of January, 1808, the Parliament was opened with a speech delivered from the throne by commission. The speech entered into a justification of the measures that had been adopted since the last meeting, was very prolix, and drawn up with more than usual attention to style. The Commons were again addressed with full confidence in their loyalty and public spirit to raise supplies, but at the same time en-

couraged with the hope that very little would be added to the public burdens. Both houses were again assured, that the war is really a just and national war, as it was purely defensive; and that nothing was wanted on the King's part but a secure and honourable peace: Providence was also again invoked to make the struggle successful and glorious to Great Britain.

The Duke of Norfolk suggested an amendment to the address, proposing that the unqualified approbation of the Copenhagen business should be omitted. In this amendment Lord Sidmouth concurred, and brought many arguments to prove that the attack on Copenhagen was unjustifiable: and he observed, that our wars from the revolution were founded upon the principles of upholding the law of nations, and this was particularly the case with the war begun in 1793. A deviation from this principle could not be admitted. He could not subscribe to that monstrous policy which induced us, because we apprehended danger from a gigantic power, to commit such an act of injustice, and follow the same course as had been pursued by that power.

Lord Aberdeen approved of the Copenhagen business, and maintained that the principles of our maritime rights must be universally asserted or not at all.

Lord Grenville could not give any approbation of the Copenhagen business till the proper documents were laid before the house on which that melancholy affair could be justified. Last of all, he adverted to Ireland, and strongly recommended the concession of the Irish claims, that the whole empire might be firmly united against the common enemy. Two amendments to the address, brought in by Lord Grenville, as also that proposed by the Duke of Norfolk, were negatived.

In the House of Commons the address was moved by Lord Hamilton, who stated, with great energy, the critical situation of the country, in which faint-heartedness and listlessness would inevitably lead us to ruin. He praised Mr. Perceval and the rest of the Ministers to the skies, and was seconded by Mr. Ellis.

Lord Milton reprobated the rejection of the mediation by Russia, and lamented that

nothing in the speech appeared to indicate a disposition for the restoration of peace when it was practicable. He asserted, that the Copenhagen business was, *primâ facie*, an unprovoked act of aggression.

Mr. Ponsonby hoped that England would never bow her head to France; and he was convinced that if she were now to stoop she would never be able to rise again. He was sorry to observe, that no notice had been taken of Ireland in the speech; and he gave notice that if Ministers did not produce the documents on the Copenhagen business he should move for them himself, or introduce the subject in some other shape for regular discussion.

Mr. Milnes vindicated the Ministry through thick and thin.

Mr. Whitbread reprobated the Copenhagen business, and declared, that for his part he would rather have the Danish navy in the Danish ports, manned with Danish sailors and their hearts with us, than all the ships they possessed in their own harbours, and the hearts of the population, as it now is to a man, against us. He could not give the

ministers credit for getting off the court of Portugal to their trans-atlantic possessions, and he lamented the want of a disposition for peace. He hoped the people would continue to press forward with petitions till Ministers were forced to make peace, or the government was placed in the hands of others who would agree to it. Yet he would sooner see the country perish, than witness a peace dishonourable or insecure.

Mr. Canning asserted, that as to Russia, there was sufficient to justify Ministers in what they had done, and he was ready without documents to meet the discussion on that subject. She had offered to mediate, but she had neither the temper nor the power to do it, for at the time she professed to be the sworn protector of Europe, she was the slave of France by the treaty of Tilsit. As to the unfortunate affair of the Chesapeak, no time was lost on the investigation, and it appeared that an act had been done without authority, and an answer to this effect was returned. As to the affair of the Chesapeak, he said, reparation was voluntarily offered to the Americans, but unfortunately in the mean time other inci-

dents occured, which still continued to be matter of discussion. The late Orders of Council were assuredly matters of the highest importance, but they were made necessary by the conduct of the enemy. We had the right to make retaliation; and we cannot look forward to a permanent and honourable peace, but from our naval superiority. Lord Henry Petty and Mr. Bathurst each opposed Ministers, but without any new argument.

Mr. Windham reprobated the Copenhagen business in the strongest terms. He had much rather that Buonaparte possessed the fleet, than that we should acquire it at the price of our honour, and the national degradation. The ships we had thus obtained were perishable, the enmity of a power once friendly to us would never decay, and our national disgrace would be eternal. The Chancellor of the Exchequer declared, that Ministers had no written document respecting the secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit; but they had a communication of the substance of these secret articles from the most unquestionable authority. Mr. Sheridan was very severe upon Mr. Perceval, ob-

serving that we did not attack the fleets of Russia, whom Ministers could consider no otherwise than as a principal, but we fall foul upon Denmark, who at any rate was but an accessary. Afterwards we apply to Russia to mediate between us and Denmark, when we had committed an outrage beyond all possibility of a reconciliation. Such, he said, were the absurd measures pursued; and in the mean time Ireland was neglected, without any attempt to reconcile that much injured country, on which subject he pledged himself to bring forward an early motion. The Address, however, passed, without a division.

On the next day, the Report on the Address was brought up in the Commons, when Mr. Macdonald expressed his disapprobation of it, on account of the affair at Copenhagen. Mr. Hibbert lamented the want of disposition to negotiate for peace, which he thought was desired by all parties, who were heartily tired of this fifteen years struggle.

Mr. M. A. Taylor reprobated the Copenhagen business, and related some facts relative to the Yorkshire petition for peace, which he stated to have been delivered, not

so much against the war, as the Orders of Council, which, in the opinion of the petitioners, supported the efforts of the common enemy.

Mr. Yorke thought it was absurd at this day to talk of abstract principles of right, when they were disregarded by the enemy; and thought the government of the country could not be carried on, unless the House reposed some confidence in the speech of his Majesty: he therefore cautioned them against pressing for the disclosure of information which came from secret sources.

Mr. Windham said, he was so old-fashioned as to think rascality on the part of an enemy not a sufficient ground for us to violate the principles of honesty. Such a depravity in the national character he looked upon as a dreadful symptom, and forerunner of future ruin. The support given to bad principles in that House and in the country was impolitic and unjust. Too little importance he thought attached to the preservation of the national character; and that the ruin of the country was not a greater evil than the extinction of our reputation.

In the House of Lords, the Copenhagen

business was brought forward on the 8th of February, 1808; their Lordships having been summoned for this purpose by the Duke of Portland. He opened the debate by observing, that it was not his intention to call for any papers which would be dangerous or inconvenient to grant; but even Ministers must wish to stand acquitted in the eyes of Europe, from the imputation of a violent and unprovoked attack on a neutral, a friendly, or a defenceless power. It had been stated, that the attack was grounded on actual information, that Denmark was to be dragged into hostilities against us, and that Ministers had documents to prove it. It was, therefore, the business of the House to call for such documents, and to pass judgment on a full view of the case. Violence of an extraordinary kind had been used, and great scandal to the governors and the nation had been incurred, from which nothing but imperious necessity could acquit them. He then moved for certain papers, &c.

Lord Wellesley opposed the motion as superfluous, which he thought evident from three different points of view.—1st. The evident design of the French Emperor to draw

the Court of Denmark into his plan of universal confederacy against England—2d. The means he had to accomplish this object—3d. The danger attending the accomplishment of this object, and the necessity of taking the strongest measures to secure our safety. His Lordship's conclusion from a long chain of reasoning was, that the Copenhagen business was justifiable and absolutely necessary.

Lord Hutchinson, who had been with the Russian armies during the last campaign, and was frequently closeted with the Russian Emperor, could find no justification of the expedition against Copenhagen in the speech of the noble Lord, Wellesley. He had completely failed in proving, that Zealand could not have effectually been defended, even if the French had seized Holstein and Jutland. He was of opinion, that the defence of Zealand was perfectly practicable against the whole French army. He had been engaged in an important mission, on which it was necessary for him to speak, as partial extracts had been communicated from his dispatches, and he was held out as giving opinions which he never advanced.

He could speak to certain facts. The Russian army in Poland never amounted to more than seventy thousand men, with the exception of two detached divisions, amounting to thirty thousand. The French troops were estimated at a hundred and four or five thousand. The loss of the Russians after the battle of Friedland amounted to forty thousand men, eighteen hundred and ninety-eight officers, and twenty-nine generals. He was then convinced that Russia was under the necessity of making peace; and he observed, that the Emperor of Russia was sincere in his desire to mediate between this country and France; and at all events, that the relations of peace and amity might have been preserved between this country and Russia. The Treaty of Tilsit was signed on the 7th of July. On the 23d of August he had a conference with the Emperor of Russia, to whom he confirmed an opinion advanced by him of the necessity of peace, and declared himself bound publicly to avow it, which he should do as long as he lived. His Lordship then stated, that the Emperor declared his sincere and anxious wish, that England should make peace, as it was his

interest, and that of Europe and England, that tranquillity should be restored to the world. His Lordship replied, that sufficient time had not been given for the offer of mediation, and that no one in England would accept of peace, but on conditions reasonable and honourable. His Majesty replied, that time was no object, as we might take three or four months to accept or reject his mediation, but his anxious desire was for peace; the terms for which, he had no doubt, were such as his Lordship would esteem to be highly reasonable and honourable.

His Lordship allowed, that the result of the Copenhagen expedition did materially change the relations between Great Britain and Russia, and gave rise to sentiments of a very hostile nature at the Court of Petersburgh. Here his Lordship detailed another conversation with the Russian Emperor on the 4th of September, 1807, when the Emperor declared, that the language of the Prince of Denmark had always been explicit and uniform: that he had maintained for many years a system of neutrality, in which he was determined to persevere, and that no

consideration should ever induce him to depart from it. His Imperial Majesty added, that he was sure no connection existed between the French and Danish governments, previous to our attack on Copenhagen. He stated the great concern which this unjustifiable aggression had given him: the French had never done any thing so strong, and it justified every thing they had done, or might do hereafter. Such proceedings put an end to all the relations by which nations conducted themselves towards each other; and in the most peremptory language, tone, and manner, his Majesty said, that he would have satisfaction—complete satisfaction—for this unprovoked aggression. As to the victory of Eylau, Lord Hutchinson declared, it was no victory to the Russians, who were generally unsuccessful, and unequal to the French, in generals, in discipline, and every requisite, except courage.

Lord Erskine reprobated the Copenhagen business in the strongest terms. The fleet we had stolen, he said, he would rather we had met on the ocean filled with Frenchmen, than to be covered with the disgrace which now attaches to the nation. We,

who entered upon the war with France as conservators of political morality, were in the end its most flagrant violators.

The Earl of Buckinghamshire did not think the necessity of the attack had been shewn, or its policy proved.

Lord Moira could scarcely persuade himself, that he was in a British House of Lords, when he heard such sentiments advanced, and an action casting an indelible stain on our character was considered as a matter of mere speculation. We have now, said he, lost all our moral advantages, and there is no longer a rallying point for the oppressed. The government had lost all credit for fortitude and magnanimity, if sixteen sail of the line could put it into such great fear for its existence.

Lord Hawkesbury contended, that the whole might be referred to a first principle, equally belonging to nations, that of self-preservation, to which no limits but those of necessity could be assigned.

Lord St. Vincent gave it as his opinion, that it was much easier to invade England from Boulogne, than Zealand from Holstein.

Lord Grey thought the honour of the nation had received a mortal stab, and did not allow that Lord Hawkesbury had in any point justified the conduct of Ministers.

The curious case of the Admiralty Droits was brought before Parliament in the beginning of this year. To comprehend these it is necessary to understand, that in a state of war, captures from the enemy are indisputably the property of the captors; but in a state of peace, property may be seized by order of the Crown, to which the captors have no right, as in the case of the Dutch frigates in 1807, and the Spanish frigates the year before. The amount of property thus seized is unknown, as is likewise the application of it, a few cases excepted. Sufficient evidence was, however, brought before the House of Commons, that the Duke of York and the younger Princes had received grants of money to a very considerable amount, out of this fund. When the propriety of this practice became a question, it was urged, that a King might commit acts of hostility, merely for the sake of increasing his own private property, whilst the nation must be at the expence of sup-

porting the hostility such acts may produce. Sir Francis Burdett, in taking up this subject, moved for papers relative to the amount of this property and its application, which led to a slight discussion on these Droits of the Admiralty as they are called. His request was only granted in part; for though the amount of the property inquired after was ascertained, the application of it was still unfathomable.

An imperfect hope of peace was brought within the view of the nation in the commencement of 1808, in consequence of overtures being made to our government by France, through the medium of the Austrian minister, Prince Stahremberg, founded upon the pacific dispositions of his Britannic Majesty, expressed in an official communication to the Austrian government in November, 1807. This ended in a communication from our ministry to the Prince, informing him, that as he could not enter into any explanations in the name of the French government, or afford any assurances by which that government would be bound, his Britannic Majesty could not give any authority to the

Prince de Strahremberg to speak in his name to the government of France.

A few days after receiving this answer, the Austrian ambassador demanded and received his passports. The emperor of Austria, in an official declaration published at Vienna in February, expressed his wishes for the arrival of that moment, when the Court of London, sensible of its true interests, should with calmness and justice judge of and compare the situation of England with that of the other powers. This offer on the part of the Emperor, was imputed by the war party here merely to his subserviency to the French ruler, and of course its failure made little impression.

Much about this time, as if every means within the reach of diplomacy was to have been brought forward at once to harrass our administration, the King of Spain issued a decree against England, complaining of the abominable attack made upon the four Spanish frigates in 1806, sailing under the full assurance of peace. That atrocious aggression was now deemed a sufficient motive for an open rupture, consequently the Spanish monarch, in conjunction with his intimate

ally, the Emperor of the French and King of Italy, had declared the British isles in a state of blockade, in order to see if that measure would reduce the British cabinet to abdicate its supremacy over the ocean, and conclude a solid and desirable peace; he therefore adopted all the measures of his ally.

Early in 1808, Sir Sidney Smith published a declaration, dated off Lisbon, declaring that port and the Tagus in a state of blockade, in consequence of their being in possession of the French. The weakness of the King of Spain, in admitting French troops to pass through his territory to Portugal, began to appear more and more undeniable; for, on the 13th of February, 10,000 French arrived before the gates of Barcelona, which they entered without opposition, the Spanish governor being given to understand they were only to halt two or three days in order to refresh themselves. They however took possession of the citadel and fortress of Montjuick.

To deny that intrigues were made use of to increase the breach between Charles and his son Ferdinand, to induce the former to resign and get both into the hands of the

French at Bayonne, would be folly in the extreme. Charles IV. at length formally abdicated his throne; and when this monarch and his son came to Bayonne, it appears that their mutual crimination and recrimination furnished the French Emperor with an objection to any accommodation, on the ground that, consistent with his interests and his means for opposing England, neither of them were fit to reign. The unhappy Ferdinand, though he dined with the French Emperor on the day on which he reached Bayonne, had not long returned to his residence before General Savary waited upon him to declare, in the name of his master, "that the Bourbon dynasty should no longer reign in Spain, and that it should be succeeded by the family of Buonaparte." This determination was coupled with a requisition that Ferdinand should, in his own name, and in that of all his family, renounce the crown of Spain and the Indies in favour of the Emperor of the French. This, however, he could not be prevailed upon to do till the 5th of May, 1808, when the King his father, the Queen, and the Prince of Peace, were all present before the French Emperor. Then,

all the party being seated, excepting Ferdinand, the father ordered him to make an absolute renunciation of the crown, under pain of being treated, with all his household, as an usurper of the throne, and a conspirator against the life of his parent. This was acceded to in all due form on the 10th of May, and the father lost no time in informing the Spanish nation, in a Letter to the Supreme Council of Castile, "*that he had abdicated all his claims upon the Spanish kingdoms in favour of his friend and ally the Emperor of the French*, by a treaty which had been signed and ratified; in which it was stipulated, that the King, Queen, and Prince of Peace, should preserve their respective ranks in France, with such of their servants as shall choose to follow them, and that the Imperial Palace of Compeigne shall be at the disposal of King Charles during his life; that a civil list of 80,000,000 reals shall be allotted to the King, and the dowry of the Queen at his death, shall be 2,000,000. To the Infantas of Spain the annual sum of 400,000 livres was to be secured, and the King gave to Napoleon his personal landed property in Spain in exchange for the

Castle of Chambord. To Ferdinand, the Prince of Asturias, the Emperor ceded the domain of Navarre, with an annual sum of 400,000 livres of *appanage* rent, with a further rent of 600,000 livres. The newly appointed King, Joseph Bonaparte, arrived at Bayonne about the middle of June; but all the pains, as well as the force used to impress the Spanish nation with favourable views of the change that had taken place, were unavailing. Ferdinand was proclaimed, at several places, by immense numbers, encouraged by the clergy and nobility. A Supreme Junta, and Inferior Juntas, were established at various places, all of whom insisted that the abdications of Charles and Ferdinand could not be free, encompassed as they were by every species of artifice. Soon after this, with a view to the accomplishment of their ulterior views, the Junta of Seville issued in the name, but without the least authority from Ferdinand, the following proclamation of peace with England and Sweden.

"The Supreme Junta of this principality, declares a general peace with England, and at the same time the closest alliance with that nation,

which has, with the greatest generosity, offered all the succours and assistance that have been asked of her. They also declare peace with Sweden, and order that all our ports shall be open to the vessels of both nations, and that this royal resolution be communicated to all the justices of the principality."

On the part of England, this insurrection in Spain was hailed as the most auspicious and happy event that could possibly have occurred. No fears were now entertained of reducing the increasing power and influence of France, and least of all of wresting Spain from the grasp of their enemy. The Junta of Asturia dispatched two noblemen to England, and other deputies were also sent from other quarters, to inform our government that the inhabitants were engaged in making every warlike preparation to oppose their invaders, so that nothing but panegyric upon the Spanish patriots was to be heard from one end of the kingdom to the other. Arms, ammunition, and clothing being what were principally wanting, these were supplied in great abundance; and as the ports in the Bay of Biscay were in the hands of the Patriots, these supplies were transmitted with the greatest facility.

About the same time an Order of Council was issued for taking off the blockade of the Spanish ports, those excepted which were in the hands of the enemy. All the Spanish prisoners in our hands were also released and sent home, the more to insinuate ourselves into the good graces of our new allies.

Attached to a degree of bigotry as the Spaniards have ever been to the Papal See, it was with some degree of surprize, at this juncture, that we learned the French Emperor's determination of seizing the greatest part of the Pontiff's territory, namely, Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, and Camarino, to unite them for ever to the kingdom of Italy, principally because "the temporal sovereign of Rome had refused to make war against England." To this and other charges, his Holiness replied in a document of considerable length, in which assertions were made relative to the pretended rights of the church, and its spiritual head, which could only have been expected in the dark ages.

But to return to the affairs of Spain: so anxious were the people of Cadiz to obtain English assistance against the French squadron in that port under Admiral Rosilly,

even before it was officially known there that the British government would lend its aid, that the former applied to Admiral Purvis, then at Gibraltar, who immediately sailed to co-operate with them. The French Admiral proposed to quit the Bay, and to make other concessions if this was not acceded to; but as nothing less than unconditional submission would be heard of by the Spaniards, after an unequal engagement of three days with the batteries on shore, he surrendered five sail of the line and a frigate. The death of Don Solano at Cadiz followed soon after, with the battle of Baylen, and the surrender of the French army under Dupont; which, with the obstinate defence made by the inhabitants of Saragossa under Palafox, naturally dispirited the enemy, while the hopes of the patriotic party were raised to a pitch of enthusiasm; but at Saragossa, as well as at many other places which fell into the hands of the French, the ardour of their opponents was compelled to give way to superior discipline and military skill.

Indefatigably solicitous to raise obstacles to the growing power of France, in every quarter of the world, while these affairs were

going on upon the Peninsula, according to a convention agreed upon between his Britannic Majesty and the King of Sweden, it was agreed that Britain should pay to the latter the sum of 1,200,000l. sterling, in equal instalments of 100,000l. per month, to be appropriated to the support of an additional number of Swedish troops, beyond what the revenue of that kingdom was able to maintain, as well as to equip such a part of the Swedish navy as might be deemed necessary, particularly its flotilla.

Early in 1808, even before the season of the year had rendered Finland fit for opening the campaign, a Russian army of 40,000 men crossed their own frontier, and proceeded as far as Helsingor, without opposition, which, when it was made by the Swedish forces under Count Klingspor, was ineffectual, in consequence of the inferiority of his numbers. Abo, the capital of Swedish Finland, was soon taken; Biorneberg, a strong place, was also captured, after the Swedish army had sustained a considerable loss in its defence. Sweaborg soon followed in submitting to the invaders; and one of the most extraordinary articles of its capitulation, expressly stipu-

lated, that the numerous galleys and the flotilla there taken should be restored to Sweden, after the conclusion of a peace, in the event that England should also restore to Denmark the fleet which she took last year.

Too late to afford our Swedish ally any effectual assistance, the British government dispatched Sir John Moore, with about 10,000 men, to the Baltic: these troops, it is understood, were never employed, owing to the difference of opinion between the British general and his Swedish Majesty, which arose to such a height, that this weak monarch would have arrested Sir John Moore if he had not escaped in a cart to Gottenburgh, which vehicle was waiting at a short distance from Stockholm, and belonged to Mr. Johnson the messenger. This occurred in the afternoon of Wednesday the 29th of June; when the British general, being in the habit of a private gentleman, first visited his apartments at Gottenburgh to ascertain whether his papers had been safely conveyed on board the Victory, which being done, he proceeded alongside that ship, disguised as he had travelled from Stockholm. Soon after this a Russian fleet of thirteen sail of the

line besides frigates, were chased by the Swedish Admiral and two line-of-battle ships, under Sir Samuel Hood and Captain Martin, who succeeded in burning one of them after an action of twenty minutes, and compelling the rest to take refuge in the port of Rogerswick. Unhappily for the Swedes this short campaign terminated in the cession of Finland to the Russians, and the annexation of it to Russia for ever.

In Spain, though most of the maritime places were in the hands of the English and the patriots, yet as the capital was in possession of the French, and as King Joseph had arrived at Vittoria, the new constitution of Spain being settled and approved by the Junta of Bayonne, he there published a proclamation promising to govern according to the laws, the nation which Providence had confided to him. The better to secure the affections of his new subjects, the persons he chose to fill the principal posts in the civil and military departments of the state, were selected from the most ancient and respectable families of the grandees. Many persons also, as well as corporate bodies, being convinced that nothing was so well calculated to save their

country from the horrors of war as the cordial reception of their new monarch, were solicitous to pay him their respects as he passed.

At Burgos a triumphal arch had been erected, where, soon after his arrival, his Majesty gave audience to the Archbishop, the Chapter, the Intendant, the Consulate, and a number of other persons. And having taken up his residence at the Archbishop's palace, which adjoins the cathedral, he went to see that ancient edifice, where he was received under a canopy with all the solemnities usually observed with respect to royal personages.

On the 26th of June, when King Joseph reached the capital, the Royal Council of Castile sounded aloud their panegyric on his moderate views; he having waved his universal right over the public revenues, by making a distinction between those of the crown and that of the state.

It must be confessed, that this kind of conquest over the affections of the Spaniards, and the peaceable possession of the capital by the French, was soon interrupted in consequence of the surrender of Dupont and

his army; as nine days after, viz. on the 31st of July, the new king and all his adherents, conceiving themselves no longer in safety, were compelled to leave it.

But though a great number of persons of all descriptions continued in open arms against the French in the provinces, particularly in Valencia, Andalusia, &c. a report of the War Minister of France imputed the want of success to "English gold and the agents of the Inquisition, who were afraid of losing their authority, and to the influence of the numerous tribes of monks in Spain, who dreaded reform." And the question is then asked, will your Majesty permit England to be able to say, "Spain is one of my provinces; my flag, driven from the Baltic, the North Sea, the Levant, &c. rules in the ports of Spain?" No, never, Sire: to prevent so much shame and misfortune two hundred thousand brave men are ready to scale the Pyrenees, and chase the English from the Peninsula." The probability of meeting the English at length, and fighting them man to man, was held up as no small advantage, in making them also

feel the evils of a war of the dangers of which they were ignorant, having only caused it by their gold.

But if the situation of the French in Spain in 1808 was rendered thus uneasy and critical, in Portugal it was still more so, in consequence of the British fleet, whose constant and vigorous blockade caused the inhabitants of Lisbon to feel all the calamities of famine. Trade also being at a stand, and scarcely any of the merchants either paying or accepting bills, it was not strange that the populace were often impelled to acts of tumult and outrage. Soon after this, as the Spaniards and English had seized Oporto, and all the northern provinces were in a state of insurrection; and as Sir Arthur Wellesley had arrived from Cork with an army of ten thousand men to co-operate with Admiral Cotton against Lisbon, General Junot found sufficient employment in preparing for his own defence. Before Sir Arthur effected the landing of his men, he received advice from the British Government that five thousand men under General Anstruther were proceeding to join

him, and that above ten thousand under Sir John Moore would soon after be dispatched for the same purpose.

The British General's chief object was to have attacked the posts of the enemy stationed along the coasts, but for want of co-operation on the part of the Portuguese he was obliged to give this up.

On the 12th of August, 1808, the British army reached Lyria; and on the 15th, the advanced guard came up, for the first time, with a party of the French at Oviedos. A slight action took place, occasioned by the eagerness of the English troops, who however were obliged to desist from their attack, and retire with some trifling loss. A detachment of British riflemen also, who pursued the enemy within three miles of Brilos, escaped with much difficulty from being entirely cut off.

On the 16th, the British army halted at Caldas, and on the following day the French were driven from all the hills in front of Roleia, but conducted their retreat in good order; and the deficiency of number in the English cavalry was the reason that the enemy sustained but small loss; that of the

English on this occasion was gazetted, in killed, wounded, and missing, as consisting of twenty-eight officers, and four hundred and fifty-one non-commissioned officers and privates.

On the day following the above battle, the British army proceeded to Lourinha, to protect the disembarkation of the troops under General Anstruther; but the French general, Junot, knowing that further reinforcements were expected from England, resolved, notwithstanding the repulse of a portion of his army on the 17th, to renew his efforts to compel the British to retire before fresh succours should arrive. With this view he quitted Lisbon with nearly the whole of his troops, and proceeded on his march to Vimiera. Sir Arthur Wellesley had made himself master of a fine position, but intended to march towards Mafra on the morning of the 21st, and thereby turn the position of the French divisions under Generals Loison and Laborde. This, however, he was prevented from doing by the arrival of Sir Harry Burrard at Macera Bay on the preceding evening. Sir Harry was prompted to this measure under the

idea of waiting for a reinforcement under General Ackland; but, on the night of the 20th and on the morning of the 21st, the French troops were seen in motion by the British centinels, in such a manner as to leave no doubt of their intention to attack; Sir Arthur accordingly made every necessary preparation to meet it.

The village of Vimiera stands in a valley; at the back, and to the northward and westward of this little town, there is a mountain, whose western point extends to the sea, while the eastern is separated by a deep ravine from the heights, over which the road passes that leads from Lourinha. The greatest part of the English infantry, with eight pieces of artillery, were posted on this mountain, under Generals Hill and Ferguson. The riflemen under General Fane, and the brigade of General Anstruther were posted on a hill to the east and south of the village, entirely commanded by the mountain upon which Generals Hill and Ferguson were placed. The cavalry and reserved artillery were stationed in the valley between the hills on which the infantry were posted, flanking and supporting Ge-

neral Fane's advanced guard. As soon as the French appeared, as it was obviously their intention to attack the advanced guard and left wing of the British, the latter changed their positions to meet and repel them. Major-general Ferguson's brigade was immediately moved across the ravine to the heights on the road to Lourinha, with three pieces of cannon; he was followed successively by Brigadier-general Nightingale with his brigade, three pieces of cannon, and two other brigades. These troops were formed on the heights to the right and left of Vimiera.

The attack of the enemy commenced in several columns upon the whole of the British troops, on the height to the southward and eastward of the town, and notwithstanding the fire of the English riflemen, they advanced close to the 50th regiment, by whose bayonets they were checked and driven back. In the church-yard also, where a small body of troops were posted, a further engagement took place, in which the French were repulsed; and while one column advanced against the British left, another body endeavoured to break through

the right wing, but were repulsed at the point of the bayonet by the 95th, supported by the second battalion of the 52d, which, by an advance in column, took them in flank. But after General Anstruther advanced to attack the enemy, the contest on the height was long and desperate, till at length the French gave way, and retired in great confusion, leaving behind them seven pieces of cannon, and a number of killed, wounded, and prisoners. They were pursued by a detachment of British cavalry, but from the enemy's superiority in this respect, the English, after having suffered severely, were obliged to return. It is sufficient however to say, that the enemy failed in all his attacks, and that though their loss was very considerable, that of the English, according to their own return, amounted in killed, wounded, and missing, to no more than 800 men!

After a victory so glorious, it appeared most unaccountable that Sir Hew Dalrymple, who had quitted his station at Gibraltar to take the command of the British army in Portugal, and arrived at Cintra, should listen to a proposal made by Junot, by a

flag of truce, for the evacuation of Portugal. An armistice which was likewise agreed upon, directly after the battle, did not appear less astonishing than any event of the war. This general, however, who must be supposed to have been the best judge of passing events, urged, "that many circumstances of a local and incidental nature" had great weight in deciding his resolution. The great importance of time, he also observed, which the enemy could easily have consumed in the protracted defence of the strong places they occupied, if terms of convention had been refused them, was decisive as to the measures he then adopted, to put an end to the campaign in that quarter.

But as the convention of Cintra stipulated that the French under General Junot were not to be considered as prisoners of war, but that all the individuals composing it were to be transported to France, with their arms and baggage and the whole of their private property, the nation at large, particularly the capital, felt highly indignant. They had flattered themselves that nothing short of surrendering at discretion

could be granted to an enemy completely vanquished. The Portuguese, likewise, could not see the enemy retire unmolested with all his plunder, without extreme mortification, so that the measure was as much condemned in Portugal as in England; at length when the French were ready to set sail in the transports provided for them, they were detained, till they had restored whatever could be proved to have been unjustly taken from individuals, or from the public buildings in Portugal. The city of London in this case made themselves remarkably conspicuous, but in the answer to their remonstrance transmitted to his Majesty, they were very civilly reminded, "that they ought to concern themselves with their own affairs." However several county meetings followed, but with no other effect than that of shewing their own weakness, and the comparative superiority of the weight and influence of their opponents in the Cabinet, and the Grand Council of the nation.

The events that immediately succeeded were by no means calculated to excite very sanguine hopes of speedy success in Spain or

Portugal, for on the 26th of October, when the French Emperor went to the Palace of the Legislative body, he remarked it as a distinguished favour of that Providence which has constantly protected the French arms, that passion had so far blinded the English counsels that they abandon the defence of the seas, *and at last produce that army on the continent.* "I," added he, "depart in a few days to put myself in person at the head of my army, and with God's help to crown the King of Spain in Madrid, and to plant my eagles on the forts of Spain." An answer, in terms similar to this speech, was returned by the Legislative body: "Sire," say they, "the hand that has led you by miracle to the summit of human grandeur, will abandon neither France nor Europe, which yet for so long a time stands in need of you."

The meeting of the Emperors of France and Russia took place on the 27th of September at Erfurth, but though it was said this interview had for its object a general restoration of peace to Europe, the particulars of what passed have never been clearly ascertained. Soon after this Imperial con-

ference a Russian and a French messenger were dispatched to England with offers of a pacific nature, which were rejected for no other reason than because no terms could then be consistently listened to on the part of the Court of St. James's, that did not include in them the evacuation of Spain and the restoration of Ferdinand; and in the Declaration published by our Government on this occasion, it was stated, "With astonishment as well as with grief his Majesty has learnt that the universal Spanish nation is described by the degrading appellation of *the Spanish Insurgents*. The Emperor of Russia also stigmatizes as 'insurrection' the glorious efforts of the Spanish people, in behalf of their legitimate Sovereign," &c.

To return to the war, the island of Capri on the coast of Naples had been some time held by the English; but about the beginning of October, 1808, an expedition was fitted out at Naples under General Lamarque, and other officers, consisting of sixty transports, having on board one thousand five hundred men, with a frigate, a corvette, and twenty-six gun-boats. But though the

English were apprized of the enemy's approach, a vivid and incessant fire from the British musketry did not prevent the disembarkation of the enemy; however, after getting on shore, as it was necessary to make themselves masters of the height of Anacapri, which commands the island and all the forts which defend it, the French soldiers accomplished that object by climbing up the bye ways which seemed impracticable, being intersected with ditches and intrenchments, and defended by two battalions of the Royal Maltese regiments, who were made prisoners of war, and carried to Naples. In the end, however, all the English were compelled to surrender to the French, notwithstanding relief was in sight. For once this conquest was effected more by the activity of their marine, than the valour of their land forces.

On the 4th of November, 1808, the French Emperor set out from Bayonne to take the command and direction of his army in Spain. At this time the army of Estremadura, with the expected assistance from England, under Generals Sir John Moore and Sir David Baird, opposed itself to the

French. The army of Blake was estimated, before the junction of the Marquis Romana, at twenty-three thousand men. The combined armies of Castanos and Palafox at nearly sixty thousand, and another corps at twenty thousand men. Previous to the French Emperor's arrival at Vittoria, several spirited actions had been fought by his generals, and Blake's army wholly routed.

The naval transactions of 1808 were not of their usual importance; the Rochefort squadron, eluding the vigilance of the British, entered Toulon, while Sir John Duckworth, who was in search of them, proceeded to the West Indies. Sir Edward Pellew destroyed four Dutch ships of war in Griesse harbour, in the island of Java.

On the 5th of July the Turkish ship of war Badere Gaffer, of fifty-two guns and five hundred men, was captured by the Seahorse frigate, Captain Stewart. In November also his Majesty's ship the Amethyst, of thirty-six guns, Captain Seymour, fell in with the Thetis French frigate, which she captured, after one of the most sanguinary contests ever known.

The year 1808 was further remarkable

for the death of Lord Lake, that of Dr. Hurd, Bishop of Worcester, and Lord Liverpool; with the destruction of Covent Garden theatre by fire, and for the laying the foundation stone of the new theatre, by his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, on the 31st of December, the last day of the old year.

The month of February, 1808, was much occupied by the trial of General Whitelocke. The footing which had been made on the banks of the river of Plate, by Sir Home Popham and General Beresford, was to be secured and extended by subsequent armies, and General Whitelock sailed to take the command of these in 1807. The cause of his defeat appeared plainly to have arisen from his pursuing measures ill-calculated to facilitate the conquest of Buenos Ayres. It appeared that whilst Liniers, a known Frenchman, was filling the post of commander-in-chief in that quarter, the minds of the Spaniards were so much inflamed against us, as almost to produce a general detestation. General Whitelocke was so presumptuously confident of his own success, that among other articles he had the

audacity to demand of the Spaniards the surrender of all persons holding civil offices in the government of Buenos Ayres, as prisoners of war, which only tended to produce and encourage a spirit of resistance to his Majesty's arms, which proved fatal to the undertaking.

Though previously to his attack upon Buenos Ayres, on the fifth of July, 1807, he was informed that the enemy meant to occupy the flat roofs of the houses, he ordered the muskets of the troops to be unloaded, and no firing to be permitted on any account, even while they had to march through the principal streets of the town, by which they were unnecessarily exposed to destruction, without the possibility of making effectual opposition.

Although it was in his power, the general did not even make any effectual attempt, by his own personal exertion or otherwise, to co-operate with, or support the different divisions of the army under his command, which after having partly accomplished the object, was left without further orders.

Another charge against him, was, that in the treaty that he entered into, and finally

concluded with the enemy, he acknowledged that "he resolved to forego the advantages which the bravery of his troops had obtained." The advantages he mentioned in his dispatches, cost him about 2,500 men, in killed, wounded, and prisoners. In his treaty it was observed, "he had shamefully surrendered all his advantages, totally evacuated the town of Buenos Ayres, and consented to deliver to the enemy the strong fortress of Monte Video, at that time sufficiently garrisoned and provided against attack."

In consequence of these charges, the general having returned home in 1807, on Thursday, January 28th, 1808, a Court Martial commenced its sitting at Chelsea Hospital, and continued by adjournment till Tuesday, March 15th, 1808, when he was found guilty of the whole of the charges brought against him; the court adjudging, "that the said Lieutenant General Whitelocke be CASHIERED, and declared totally unfit and unworthy to serve his Majesty in any military capacity whatever." This sentence the King was pleased to confirm.

The effects of the Convention of Cintra,

and the unexpected turn of affairs in favour of the French in Spain, gave rise to many strong reflections in this country. "We would," says a political writer of the day, "willingly shut our eyes to what has been passing in November, 1808. The French cooped up in a narrow space all the summer, not attacked when they were few in number, are now triumphantly spreading themselves over the whole country. What a contrast to their state six months ago! Let any one take a map, and mark out the situation of the French even three months ago. Let him reflect on the number of our ships, and the number of our soldiers, and then ask this plain question, 'If Buonaparte had had the same number of ships and men in England, and the people of Spain in an insurrection, how long would he have permitted the French to remain in repose? Would he not have landed, if necessary, the whole army of England, between Bilboa and St. Sebastian, and marching from the shores of Biscay to the Mediterranean, have cleared the country of the French, and secured the passes of the Pyrenees against their return?' But the resources of Spain and Britain have been frit-

tered away, while Buonaparte, acting with judgment, firmness, and resolution, has carried his point."

The session of parliament was this year, 1809, opened on the 19th of January. The speech stated that his Majesty had called them together in perfect confidence that they were cordially prepared to support his Majesty in the prosecution of the war, which there was no hope of terminating safely and honourably, except through vigorous and persevering exertion.

His Majesty, they were informed, had directed copies of the proposals for opening negociations at Erfurth, and of the correspondence which took place thereon, with the governments of France and Russia. His Majesty, it was said, was persuaded that both houses would participate in the feelings he expressed when it was required that he should consent to commence the negociation, by abandoning the cause of Spain which he had so recently and solemnly espoused. His Majesty had renewed to the Spanish nation, the engagements which he voluntarily contracted at the outset of its struggle. With respect to Portugal, though he contem-

plates with the liveliest satisfaction the deliverance of the kingdom of his ally from the presence and oppression of the French army, he most deeply regretted the termination of that campaign, by an armistice and convention; of some of the articles of which, his majesty felt himself obliged formally to declare his disapprobation.

The aid to the King of Sweden, which was to be continued, was mentioned, and it was also observed, "that Monarch derives a peculiar claim to his Majesty's support, for rejecting any proposal for negociation, to which the government of Spain was not to be admitted as a party."

The address was, as usual, an echo to the speech; and after some debate, which related principally to the mode of carrying on the war, was agreed to without amendment or division.

One reason why the debates in the two houses, on the opening of the session, had so little interest attached to them, was, that the leaders of opposition had manifested such eagerness to embark in the cause of Spain, without having a competent knowledge of the real state of affairs in that

kingdom, that the principal difference between them and their opponents, rested merely on the mode in which the war had been, and should be carried on. But the intelligence which arrived very soon after the opening of the parliament, produced a material change in the sentiments of some of the members: Lord Auckland declared, "he considered the Spanish cause as hopeless." Lord Milton, in answer to Lord Castlereagh, instead of sending more troops to Spain, wisely recommended, "that we ought rather to shut ourselves up within ourselves, content with a force sufficient for our country, and repel the enemy should he choose to attack us."

The event of our expedition to Spain was but too fatally anticipated; even in one of the French bulletins, "that circumstance," it was observed, "must furnish materials for a fine opening speech to the English parliament. The English nation must be informed that her army remained three months in a state of inaction, while it was in their power to assist the Spaniards: that its leaders, or those whose orders they executed, had been guilty of the extreme folly of mak-

ing a movement forward, after the Spanish armies had been destroyed; that, in a word, it entered upon the new year by running away, pursued by the curses of those whom it had stirred up to resistance, and whom it was its duty to support. Such enterprises, and such results, can belong only to a country that has no government. Fox, or even Pitt, would not have been guilty of such blunders. To contend against France by land, who has 100,000 cavalry, 50,000 horses for all sorts of military equipment, and 900,000 infantry, were, on the part of England, carrying folly to the utmost extreme; it is, in fine, to administer the affairs of England just as the cabinet of the Thuilleries would wish them to be administered."

These bitter sarcasms of the enemy, though treated with contempt at the time, were but too fatally verified. The report of the Convention of Cintra, the appearance of which had been anxiously expected by some persons, was so deficient in the first instance, that his Majesty sent it back for revision; for as it altogether omitted noticing the principal points the framers of it were expressly required to take into consideration, viz. the

armistice and the convention. The court reassembled, and by their amended report it appeared that members were of different opinions; three members approved of the former, but disapproved of the latter, and one, Lord Moira, disapproved of both. The court, however, were unanimous that no further military enquiry was necessary, and the whole of the blame was thrown upon Sir Hew Dalrymple, whilst the thanks of the house were procured for Sir Arthur Wellesley!

About this time the speech of the President of the American Congress arrived in town, with the very fair offer to the British Government to take off the existing embargo, if Great Britain would repeal its Orders in Council, so far as they related to America; this proposal, as it might have been expected from the temper of the administration, was not accepted.

But to return to our affairs in Portugal:—on the 24th of January, 1809, a gazette extraordinary was published, containing dispatches from General Sir David Baird, dated Ville de Paris at sea, January 18th, confirming the report of the death of the

much lamented General Sir John Moore, who fell in the action with the enemy, on the 16th of the same month, and by which we learnt that the French army attacked the British troops in the position they occupied in front of Corunna, at about two o'clock in the afternoon of that day. Sir David himself received a severe wound in this action, which was long and obstinately contested. The command of the army devolving upon Lieutenant General Hope, his dispatches, which were written on board the Audacious, contained such particulars of this action which government thought proper to publish by authority. He stated that about one in the afternoon of the 16th, the enemy, who in the morning had received reinforcements, and had placed some guns in front of the right and left of the line, was observed to be moving troops towards his left flank, and forming various columns of attack at the extremity of the strong and commanding position, which, on the morning of the 15th, he had taken in the immediate front of the British.

This indication of his intention was immediately followed by the rapid and deter-

mined attack upon the division which occupied the right of our position, when this first effort of the enemy was met by the Commander of the forces, and by Sir David Baird, at the head of the 42d regiment, and the brigade under Major General Lord William Bentinck. Very soon after a severe wound had deprived the army of Sir David's services, Sir John Moore, who had directed the most able disposition, fell by a cannon shot. The troops, not dismayed at the irreparable loss they had sustained, by the most determined bravery not only repelled every attempt of the enemy to gain ground, but actually forced him to retire, although he had brought up fresh troops in support of those originally engaged.

The enemy finding himself foiled in every attempt to force the right of the position, endeavoured by numbers to turn it. A judicious and well-timed movement, which was made by Major General Paget, with the reserve, which corps had moved out of its cantonments to support the right of the army, by a vigorous attack, defeated this intention. The Major General, having pushed forward the 95th (rifle corps) and

first battalion 52d regiment, drove the enemy before him, and in his rapid and judicious advance, threatened the left of the enemy's position. This circumstance, with the position of Lieutenant General Frasier's division (calculated to give still further security to the right of the line), induced the enemy to relax his efforts in that quarter.

They were, however, more forcibly directed towards the centre, where they were again successfully resisted by the brigade under Major General Manningham, forming the left of General Baird's division, and a part of that under Major General Leith, forming the right of the division. Upon the left, the enemy, at first, contented himself with an attack upon our picquets, which, however, in general maintained their ground. Finding, however, his efforts unavailing on the right and centre, he seemed determined to render the attack upon the left more serious, and had succeeded in obtaining possession of the village through which the great road to Madrid passes, and which was situated in front of that part of the line. From this post, however, he was soon expelled, with considerable loss, by a

gallant attack of some companies of the second battalion 14th regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel Nichols; before five in the evening, we had not only successfully repelled every attack made upon the position, but had gained ground in almost all points, and occupied a more forward line than at the commencement of the action, whilst the enemy confined his operations to a cannonade, and the fire of his light troops, with a view to draw off his other corps. At six the firing entirely ceased. The different brigades were re-assembled on the ground they occupied in the morning, and the picquets and advanced posts resumed their original stations.

Notwithstanding the decided and marked superiority which at this moment the gallantry of the troops had given them over an enemy, who from the numbers and the commanding advantages of his position, no doubt expected an easy victory, the General did not, on reviewing all circumstances, conceive that he should be warranted in departing from the fixed and previous determination of the late commander of the forces to withdraw the army on the evening of the

16th, for the purpose of embarkation, the previous arrangements for which had already been made by his order, and were in fact far advanced at the commencement of the action. The troops quitted their position about ten at night, with a degree of order that did them credit. The whole of the artillery that remained unembarked, having been withdrawn, the troops followed in the order prescribed, and marched to their respective points of embarkation in the town and neighbourhood of Corunna. The picquets remained at their posts until five on the morning of the 17th, when they were also withdrawn with similar orders, and without the enemy having discovered the movement.

Though the whole of the army was embarked with an expedition that has seldom been equalled, the enemy pushed his light troops towards the town soon after eight o'clock in the morning of the 17th, and shortly after occupied the heights of St. Lucia, which command the harbour; but the disposition of the Spaniards being good, the embarkation of the last brigade, under Major Generals Hill and Beresford, were commenced and completed in the course of

the afternoon. General Beresford having explained to the satisfaction of the Spanish Governor of Corunna, the nature of the British movement, all the wounded that had not been previously moved, embarked before one in the morning.

Circumstances, the general acknowledged, produced the necessity of rapid and harassing marches, which had diminished the numbers, exhausted the strength, and impaired the equipment of the army. To these disadvantages might be added those more immediately attached to a defensive position, which the imperious necessity of covering the harbour of Corunna for a time, had rendered it indispensable to assume.

A supplement to the Gazette extraordinary, published on this occasion, contained a dispatch from Rear Admiral de Courcy, which stated in general terms, that in the vicinity of Corunna, the enemy had pressed upon the British in great force; and that the British, though triumphant, had suffered severe losses. Sir John Moore received a mortal wound, and Sir David Baird lost an arm, and that several officers and many men had been killed and wounded. The great

body of the transports lost their anchors and ran to sea without the troops they were ordered to receive; in consequence of which there were some thousands on board the ships of war. Several transports, through mismanagement, ran on shore, two were burnt, and five were bilged.

Notwithstanding the most favourable glosses put upon this disastrous event, the historian had a melancholy task to perform. The British had retreated before the forces of Buonaparte, and had for a short time taken refuge in Corunna, but not being competent to keep the place, the enemy were left triumphing in their leader's prediction, "that he would in a short time oblige the English to take refuge in their ships; and thus, at the termination of this ill-fated campaign, the north and the middle of Spain were left in the sole possession of the enemy.

Never was the opinion of Lord Moira on the conduct of the war in Spain felt more forcibly than at this mournful period. His Lordship contended, that a large force should have been sent to the foot of the Pyrenees, when the French were weak in that quarter, which would have given an opportunity to

Spain to bring forward its troops and defend those important passes against future invasion, whilst they hemmed in the enemy that had already entered. The fate of the brave but unfortunate General Moore, however, received a tribute of acknowledgment from the enemy, "that he was a clever and sensible man, to whom it was impossible to impute the folly of the plan of the campaign."

How exceedingly unpleasant any remarks upon the affairs of the peninsula were taken by the ministry in any quarter to which they were not compelled to attend, was evident from the manner in which the address of the city of London upon the convention of Cintra was taken. But as truth is the child of time, when an address of thanks was moved in the Upper House, it called up Lord Erskine, who, as a privileged person, could there contradict the flimsy representations of newspapers, and even London gazettes, with impunity. He said,

"Was it possible to deplore the loss of friends whom we loved, and of men whose lives were precious to their country in a most awful crisis, without lamenting in bitterness that they were

literally *immolated* by the ignorance and folly of those who now wished to cover their own disgrace, by the just and natural feelings of the public, towards men who had died for their country? But for their immortal renown it would have been better for them, certainly much better for their country, to have shot them upon the parade of St. James's park, than to have sent them, not to suffer the noble risk of soldiers, and in a practicable cause, but to endure insufferable, ignoble, and useless misery, in a march to the very centre of Spain, when they who sent them knew that Buonaparte had above an hundred thousand men before them, so as to render attack not only impracticable, but retreat only possible by the noble and unparalleled exertions which that House had assembled to commemorate. And what sort of a retreat? a retreat leaving upon the roads and in the mountains of Spain *from eight to nine thousand of our brave men dying of fatigue*, without one act of courage to sweeten the death of a soldier! What could then be a more disgusting and humiliating spectacle than to see the government of this great empire in such a fearful season in the hands of men who seem not fit to be a vestry in the smallest parish."

Earl Grosvenor also asserted in the House of Lords, that the retreat to Corunna was so rapid, and the privation of the troops so great,

that officers were obliged to walk without shoes or stockings, and the army was nearly in a state of mutiny, occasioned by their sufferings.

From the contemplation of these and similar objects, the ministry were at length, happily for themselves, relieved by the investigation of the charges made by Mr. Wardle in the Commons against his Royal Highness the Duke of York, as Commander in Chief of the army. Mr. Wardle was member for Oakhampton; he was formerly a major in Sir W. Wynne's regiment of fencible cavalry, when upon service in Ireland. This serious business was brought forward by Mr. Wardle on Wednesday, February 1st, when the honourable gentleman stated in his place in the House, that he had ordered a general list of witnesses to be transmitted to the Commander in Chief, thus giving his Royal Highness every advantage in his power, and the means of knowing the grounds on which he meant to proceed. He offered himself as an accuser of the Royal Duke on grounds that had come to his knowledge, and from reports which ought not to pass unnoticed in that House. He then alluded to what had

dropped from the Hon. Mr. Yorke on the preceding Friday, who then asserted his belief, "That there existed a conspiracy of the most atrocious and diabolical kind against his Royal Highness, founded on the jacobinical spirit which appeared at the commencement of the French revolution." Much, Mr. Wardle observed, had been said of jacobinism, much of the licentiousness of the press, and of a conspiracy against the family of Brunswick; but he had taken up no reports circulated through the medium of the press, nor employed the press in his accusation of the Royal Duke. He then took upon himself to prove by evidence unquestionable, either at the bar of that House, or before any other tribunal, that pecuniary transactions to an enormous amount did take place, the very discovery of which led to the breach between the Commander in Chief and the lady whom he should call to their bar, who was then under the protection of his Royal Highness. The first witness he called was Dr. Andrew Thynne, to prove the charge relative to the exchange of Col. Knight with Col. Brooke; in fact, Mr. Wardle brought forward five cases on which

his charges were founded, viz. that of a Mr. Tonyn, who paid Mrs. Clarke five hundred pounds on being gazetted as a major. This sum was paid to a silversmith, in part of plate for the establishment of herself and the Duke of York. From these it was inferred, that Mrs. Clarke possessed the power of military promotion, that she received pecuniary consideration for it, and that the Commander in Chief was a partaker in the benefit arising from it. A Major Shaw, it appeared, agreed to pay a thousand pounds to Mrs. Clarke for the place of Deputy Barrack Master at the Cape of Good Hope; but on some failure on his part, and complaint to the Duke on that of Mrs. Clarke, Major Shaw was put upon half-pay, so that the lady's influence extended to appointments on the staff. As to Col. French's levy, it transpired that Mrs. Clarke was to have a guinea on the bounty of each man raised for this corps in 1804 and 1805, and the sale or patronage of a certain number of commissions; and from a loan, said to have been in agitation, it was inferred that Mrs. Clarke had the power of increasing the military force of this country. The case of a Captain Maling was curious; he was

appointed to an ensigncy, then to a lieutenancy, and afterwards to a captaincy, though during the whole of this progress he remained a clerk in an office without seeing any service. Another point referred for further consideration, when the business was first brought before the Commons, was the establishment of an office for the sale of commissions, and the disposition of places in church and state. The sketch of these instances of corruption only in outline, it was observed, began to stagger the opinions of some of Mr. Wardle's opponents, who at first, under the pretence that infamy must certainly attach somewhere, either to the accuser or accused, evidently thought to intimidate Mr. Wardle: this called up Mr. Wilberforce, who very properly rebuked the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Attorney General for their manner of treating the witnesses, which he called brow-beating them. The examination of Mrs. Mary Anne Clarke went to prove that she resided in Gloucester place, in a house belonging to the Duke of York, in 1805; that she then lived under the protection of his Royal High-

ness. She admitted that she had grounds of complaint against the Duke of York; and that she told his counsel, Mr. William Adam, in a letter, that if he did not pay her annuity regularly she would expose the letters of his Royal Highness. She admitted, in the course of her examination, that she was in the habit of frequently seeing Colonel Wardle, and that she had reluctantly communicated to him the substance of what she had stated at the bar of the House, and that she was displeased at being compelled to come before that assembly.

As soon as the evidence was closed, and which seemed strongly against his Royal Highness, it was said that the Duke, justly considering his character deeply affected on the present occasion, thought it necessary to take some notice of the proceedings of the Commons: he accordingly addressed the following letter to the Speaker:

"SIR, Horse Guards, Feb. 23, 1809.

"I have waited with the greatest anxiety until the committee appointed by the House of Commons to enquire into my conduct as Commander in Chief of his Majesty's army, had closed its

examinations, and I now hope that it will not be deemed improper to address this letter through you to the House of Commons.

"I observe with the deepest concern, that in the course of the inquiry my name has been coupled with transactions the most criminal and disgraceful, and I must ever regret and lament that a connection should ever have existed which has thus exposed my character and honour to public animadversion.

"With respect to my alleged offences, connected with the discharge of my official duties, I do in the most solemn manner, *upon my honour as a prince*, distinctly assert my innocence, not only by denying all corrupt participation in any of the infamous transactions which have appeared in evidence at the bar of the House of Commons, or any connivance at their existence, but also the slightest knowledge or suspicion that they existed at all.

"My consciousness of innocence leads me confidently to hope that the House of Commons will not, upon such evidence as they have heard, adopt any proceeding prejudicial to my honour and character; but if, upon such testimony as has been adduced against me, the House of Commons can think my innocence questionable, I claim of their justice that I shall not be condemned without trial, or be deprived of the benefit and protection

which is afforded to every British subject by those sanctions under which alone evidence is received in the ordinary administration of the law.

"I am, Sir, your's,

"FREDERICK."

"*The Speaker of the House of Commons.*"

Notwithstanding all the attempts made to weaken the charges brought against his Royal Highness, and the failure of Mr. Wardle to carry the motion he made on summing up the evidence, "That his Royal Highness ought to be deprived of the command of the army," and subsequent motions calculated to acquit him of *personal corruption*, the Royal Duke found it necessary to wait upon his Majesty at Windsor, where, after a long audience, he tendered him a written resignation, which his Majesty was graciously pleased to accept, and Sir David Dundas was thought a proper person to be appointed as his successor.

The Duke probably did not feel altogether satisfied that a majority of eighty-two members of the House of Commons had acquitted him of *connivance* in Mrs. Clarke's

business, and he might probably think that the two hundred members who had voted him guilty, although a minority in the House of Commons, spoke the unequivocal sense of a very great majority of the people out of doors.

By way of return to Mr. Wardle and his friends, Lord Folkstone, Sir Francis Burdett, and others, the address of thanks, begun by the city of Canterbury, to the member for Oakhampton, was followed by similar addresses from boroughs, cities, and counties, one and all breathing the same spirit of detestation of corruption and zeal for the administration of the government and the public money according to the principles of the constitution. This example in England extended to Scotland and Ireland.

A motion of the highest importance, grounded on recent events, was brought forward in the House of Commons, on the 17th of April, by Lord Folkstone, for the appointment of a committee, to enquire into the existence of corrupt practices in the state, as the purchase and sale of commissions, and the issuing letters of service. The necessity of this committee he urged from the late

discovery of various abuses, which proved that corruption had gone on upon a settled system, the whole of which ought to be completely exposed, and proper remedies applied to prevent the ruin of the country by the continuation of such abuses. The Chancellor of the Exchequer saw no necessity for such a committee; for were it efficient he would ask, ought the House to enquire into all the abuses which had taken place during the last half century? What effect, he asked, could such a proceeding have, except to increase the ferment in the public mind? but Lord A. Hamilton was convinced, that the most certain way to increase the discontents of the people was to stifle enquiry into those abuses, the existence of which no man now could be obstinate enough to deny.

Lord Henry Petty objected to the extent of the trust to be delegated to the Committee. Such an inquisitorial power, he thought, should be exercised only by the whole House. Mr. Whitbread acknowledged, that a ferment did exist, and an indignant feeling pervaded the public on this occasion; it was therefore desirable to know through whose means persons obtained situations in the

army, the church, and other public establishments. Mr. Tierney was offended that notice had not been given of a motion, which, he contended, amounted to an arraignment of the whole of his Majesty's government, as guilty of corruption in every one of their various departments. Mr. Ponsonby, Sir J. Anstruther, Mr. Wynne, and Mr. Canning, expressed a decided disapprobation of the motion; and, though a long debate ensued, on a division, 30 votes appeared for it, against it 178, making a majority of 148.

That several members of the opposition should resist an enquiry so salutary as this proposed by Lord Folkstone, excited no small surprise; but the coalition of sentiments and feelings on this subject, between the right honourable leader of the *Ins*, and the right honourable leader of the *Outs*, was remarked, as being similar to the famous coalition recorded by Hudibras:

> "This shews how perfectly the Rump
> "And Commonwealth, in nature jump."

And yet, at the moment these objections were making against enquiry, by the supporters of Administration, fresh instances of

iniquitous peculation was crowding to view: a motion made by Sir Francis Burdett, which he justly termed "a scandalous job," relative to some land contiguous to Chelsea Hospital, made it appear, that in a grant to Colonel Gordon, one of the friends of the Duke of York, he obtained a lease of a piece of land for £50 a year; for which land, with the exception of a quarter of an acre, the public had paid £5000.

A Committee of Finance, instituted for the purpose of investigating abuses in that department, having brought forward their Fourth Report about this time; to this Report the attention of the House of Commons was solicited by Mr. Ord: it detailed the conduct of the Commissioners for the Sale of Dutch Prizes, viz. Messrs. Crauford, Brickwood, Chatfield, Baxter, and John Bowles. By Mr. Ord's speech it appears, they kept no regular account of the monies that came into their possession. They had charged a commission of five per cent. on the gross proceeds of property, amounting in four years to £80,000. It was by the first transaction that they secured a commission of £25,000; and this conduct they had

adopted, after the violent abuse which John Bowles had launched against all those who had neglected to give fair returns under the income tax. It further appeared, that the Act appointing these Commissioners required they should lodge their money in the Bank of England; yet, on the contrary, they had kept large sums at their private bankers: that, although they held balances in their hands at one period amounting to £. 200,000, and during the whole of the latest period never less than £. 50,000, when Mr. Pitt applied at a time of great public difficulty for £. 50,000 on account, they, although they had at that time £. 190,000 in their possession, informed the Minister they could afford him no assistance. Mr. Ord, after characterizing the neglect of the Pitt Administration "an encouragement to abuses, and a bounty to roguery," moved sundry resolutions, reprobating such neglect as leading to the most prejudicial consequences, declaring it to be a violation of the obvious duty of the Government. To these statements Mr. Perceval was led to reply, "that he was prepared without any notice from the honourable gentleman, to communicate the

measures that were *about to be taken* by Government," and then recommended him to withdraw his motion.

After a short discussion, including an excellent speech from Mr. Whitbread, charging the Commissioners with gross prevarication in their evidence before the Committee, and endeavouring to withhold from the public the real state of their criminal conduct, the previous question was put and carried, and another motion passed of a more gentle nature, in which, although the conduct of the Commissioners was censured, the Administration, which had so long winked at that conduct, was simply charged with having omitted to notice it!

In this debate, as it appeared that Mr. Rose being suspected by Mr. Whitbread as having a leaning towards Mr. John Bowles, and a partiality for his writings, he assured the Hon. Gentleman, that he had never read any of his thirty pamphlets, though he would allow that they were regularly laid on his table.

The war between France and Austria, which was supposed would operate so much to the relief of Spain, and had been pre-

dicted so long before-hand by the ministerial writers, actually broke out in the spring of 1809.

In the pompous Manifesto published on this occasion by the Emperor of Austria, he complained of the manner in which the Articles of the Treaty of Presburg were carried into execution; of a passage demanded by France for her troops from the Venetian States to the Provinces on the east coast of the Adriatic; of the insults offered to the *Sacred Head of the Church; &c.* But the true secret of the Emperor's complaints certainly transpired in the avowal expressed in the same document, "that the security of the Austrian empire could not be sought in an insulated state." His majesty then invites all surrounding states to assist him, and endeavours to animate them by assurances. "A happier lot," he says, "awaits you: the liberty of Europe has taken refuge under our banners; and your brothers in Germany, yet in the ranks of the enemy, long for their deliverance. *Our* assistance is your last effort to be saved. *Our* cause is that of Germany. United with Austria, Germany was independent and happy; it is

only through the assistance of Austria that Germany can receive happiness and independence."

From these indications and corresponding circumstances it was evident, that the Austrian war of 1809 had for its basis the principle of all the coalitions, which have been formed for these twenty years past. In fact, the emperor's ministers acknowledged, that he very unwillingly, and only as an act of necessity, signed each of his different treaties of amity with France.

The official documents published by France, like those of the Emperor of Austria, contain a variety of complaints mingled with a number of truths. "The horrible expedition against Copenhagen," and the "British Orders in Council," for instance, were reprobated in very strong terms. But the manner in which the Emperor of Austria commenced the war, afforded the best proof of his regard for the principles of justice, and the independence of States.—The King of Saxony and King of Bavaria had reason to complain, that without a declaration of war, and without any previous explanation, their territory was invaded. In fact, the lat-

ter was compelled to leave his capital, which was for a time in the hands of the Austrians.

The Emperor of France, in one of his bulletins, recommending to the Bavarians to give minute and faithful accounts of the acts of wanton cruelty committed by the Austrians, the invaders of their country, added the extreme probability, that it would be the *last* insult Austria would be able to offer to the allies of France. Scarcely a week had elapsed after the arrival of Napoleon at the head of his army, when brilliant and repeated victories had routed nearly one half of the Austrian forces, and made 40 or 50,000 prisoners. The victor triumphantly addressing his soldiers, told them, that before the expiration of a month they should be at Vienna. This promise was made on the 24th of April. In little more than a fortnight, viz. on the 12th of May, it was realized—the Emperor with his victorious army took possession of the Austrian capital.

After a series of victories and good fortune almost unprecedented, the victorious career of the French Emperor was for a short time arrested, owing, as the French

bulletins stated, to an accidental breaking down of their bridges by the swelling of the Danube. The Austrians, on this account, were represented in England, as having obtained a brilliant victory; and nothing but congratulations was heard of among the advocates for the war, on the supposed charm of the French Emperor's invincibility being broken. On this account, a sudden frenzy seemed to have seized upon all the journalists under ministerial influence, as well as some of their opponents.

An interval of some weeks in the operations of war was so new to the French, that many persons began to think some negociation was on foot between the contending parties; still the delusion that had seized on all the public writers, with few exceptions, continued till the arrival of a fresh bulletin, which announced, that the reparation of the bridges and the preparations of the French were nearly completed; but when the battles of Enzendorf and Wagram were announced, then "How unstable is the ground of all human hopes! how impotent the grasp of all human expectation!—It is with heartfelt grief, &c." were some of

the exclamations used as prefaces to the astonishing catastrophe that had taken place. It appeared, that on the 5th of July, at day-break, after several movements had taken place in the French army for passing the Danube, every one perceived what had been the project of the Emperor Napoleon, who was then with his whole army arranged in order of battle at the extremity of the enemy's left, having turned all his entrenched camps, and rendering his works useless, obliged the Austrians to abandon their positions, and come and offer him battle on the spot that was convenient to him. The great problem which had puzzled so many was thus resolved—and without passing the Danube on other points, without receiving any protection from the works he had raised, he forced the enemy to fight three-quarters of a league from his redoubts. From that moment the greatest and happiest results were foreseen. Enzendorf was cleared of the Imperialists. Count Oudinot surrounded and carried the Castle of Sacksengang, forcing 900 men in it to capitulate. The Emperor then caused the whole army to spread itself along the immense plain of Enzendorf,

where the enemy was every where overwhelmed, and the field of battle covered with his remains. Strongly alarmed at the unexpected progress of the French army, the Archduke put all his troops in motion. The details of this battle would not interest the reader, who is only curious to know the result: this was, on the part of the French, the taking of ten pair of colours, forty pieces of cannon, twenty thousand prisoners, including between three and four hundred officers, and a considerable number of generals, colonels, and majors. All the enemy's wounded, twelve thousand in number, fell into the hands of the French.

Some of the French columns were engaged so near to Vienna on this occasion, that the people covered the turrets, steeples, and roofs of the houses. The Emperor of Austria left Wolkersdorf on the 6th, at five in the morning, where from a tower he had also a view of the field of battle. The Austrians retreated in the utmost disorder, and an armistice was agreed upon between the two Emperors at Zraim, on the 12th of July. This armistice led to the peace which buried all the hopes of those who reckoned

upon any further diversion in favour of England upon the Continent.

Thus it was that the French Emperor answered the proud language of the Austrians; and thus all the resources of their favourite general, the Archduke Charles, were cut off, he being obliged to retreat into Bohemia. Even from this period it was easy to see, that the affairs of Spain must finally take their colour from those of Austria.

We might now advert to the famous Walcheren Expedition, the promise of which, as a matter of diversion, excited strong hopes of success on the part of the Austrians in their renewal of hostilities with France, and which were bitterly disappointed: but for the numbers who perished in those unhealthy marshes, and almost in the presence of a few thousands of the enemy. Leaving the Lords Chatham and Castlereagh to account, we must in future confine ourselves more to the measures of Mr. Perceval as a Statesman, in order that we may have ample space for a particular detail of the final overthrow of his adherents, who vainly attempted to administer the affairs of the coun-

try, after they had lost their head on the 11th of May last.

The year 1808, in fact, was pregnant with misfortunes to this country; but in none more than in Spain and Flushing: however, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer met the Parliament, we were still told, that vigorous exertions would lead to the termination of the war with safety and honour. Happily for Ministers, the attention which would otherwise have been fixed upon them was soon drawn off, by the exposure of the celebrated Mrs. Clarke, and the conduct of his Royal Highness the Duke of York, in January, February, and March, 1809. And yet, after all the evidence which had been brought forward, the Chancellor of the Exchequer thought that the House should previously come to a decision on the question, whether the Duke was guilty or not guilty of corruption; and begged them to recollect who it was they were endeavouring to turn out, almost the first subject in the kingdom. If the charge should be substantiated, the proper mode would be to carry up their accusation to the House of Lords, and proceed to an impeachment. It would be severe, in-

deed, to cast upon his Majesty a task which the Commons themselves would not undertake to perform. The House had two courses to pursue; the first to see whether the charges were proved, and then to enquire what proceedings ought to be adopted. The one was a judicial, the other a discretionary question. The guilt, if any, must appear from the evidence; and the principal in it was Mrs. Clarke, who appeared to him to be perfectly incompetent. This he endeavoured to prove by an examination of her evidence, and after entering into a long detail on this and the other evidence, he was interrupted by strong cries for adjournment. Acceding to the wishes of the House, he begged leave to submit his view of the case, shortly, to the House, in the shape of resolutions, on which he would, at a future opportunity, dilate; these were, that there was no just ground to charge the Duke with personal corruption, or criminal connivance at abuses, in his capacity as Commander in Chief. If this should be acceded to, he should propose an Address to the King, with this resolution, and noticing the important services performed by the Commander in

Chief, in his department. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, not content with this, declared his belief on his soul, that there was not in the kingdom an individual so able as the Duke to perform the duties of his office.

The address, proposed by him, stated, that the House has seen the exemplary regularity and method in which business is conducted in the Duke's office, and the salutary regulations introduced by him, some of which were intended to prevent the very abuses complained of; but it feels great concern that a connection should have existed, exposing the Duke's character to public calumny; and that frauds should have been carried on, with which his name has been coupled, of a most disgraceful and dangerous tendency. The regret of the Duke, on this connection, was a great consolation to the House, which is confident that he will keep in view the uniformly virtuous and exemplary conduct of his Majesty, since the commencement of his reign, and which has endeared his Majesty to all his subjects. The House adjourned, and the discussion was carried on for several nights. The Chancellor of the Exchequer resumed the debate, and

made a very long legal speech on the evidence, in which he was supported, and nearly with the same arguments, by the Attorney-General.

After several nights' debate, the House came to a vote on the 15th of March, and the first division was, whether they should proceed by Address, or by Resolution, when there were

For the address - - - - -	199
For proceeding by resolution -	294
Majority against the address -	95

The next vote was

For Mr. Wardle's motion - -	123
Against it - - - - - - -	361
Majority	244

On the 16th Sir Thomas Turton proposed an amendment to Mr. Perceval's resolution, purporting, that there were grounds to charge his Royal Highness with a knowledge of corrupt practices, with connivance at them, and consequently with corruption.

For this amendment - - - -	135
Against it - - - - - - -	334
Majority	199

The next vote was for Mr. Perceval's original motion,

For it - - - - - - - - - -	278
Against it - - - - - - - -	196
Majority	82

The farther discussion of the question was adjourned to the 20th, and in the interim the Duke of York resigned his command. The resignation was communicated to the House by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in which he stated the Duke's very unfounded opinion, that he was acquitted from all corrupt motives, and all participation or connivance at corruption, but that he gave way to the public opinion, drawn on him by the charges, however ill founded. Upon this Mr. Bathurst proposed this resolution—that while the House acknowledges the beneficial effects of the Duke's services, they had observed, with the deepest regret, that in consequence of a connection, most immoral and unbecoming, a pernicious and corrupt influence had been used in respect to military promotions, and such as gave colour to the various reports, respecting the knowledge of the commander-in-chief, of these transactions. Sir W. Curtis seconded the motion. Lord

Althorpe proposed, instead of it, that as the Duke had resigned, no farther proceedings should be now adopted against him. On this an amendment was proposed, that the word *now* should be left out, when the House divided, there being

For its insertion - - - - - -	112
Against it - - - - - - - -	235
Majority -	123

Thus ended these proceedings, as far as the Duke was concerned, the enquiry having produced far more than its proposers expected; and the ministers and the Duke were completely defeated.

Soon after this Lord Castlereagh was convicted of a fact by his own evidence, "of which, though no one acquainted with the world had the least doubt; yet the proofs had never before been exposed in so convincing a manner to public inspection."

The motion brought forward with this view, by Lord A. Hamilton, concluded by proposing the following resolutions.

"First, that it appears to this House, from the evidence on the table, that Lord Viscount Castlereagh, in the year 1805, he having just quitted the

office of President of the Board of Controul, and being then a Privy Counsellor and Secretary of State, did place at the disposal of the Earl of Clancarty, a member of the said Board, the nomination of a writership to India, for the purpose of thereby procuring the said Earl Clancarty a seat in this honourable House.

"Secondly, That it was owing to a disagreement among other subordinate parties to the transaction, that this corrupt negociation did not take effect.

"Thirdly, That Lord Viscount Castlereagh has been, by the same conduct, guilty of a violation of his duty, of an abuse of his influence and authority, as President of the Board of Controul, and also of an attack upon the purity and constitution of this House."

In his Lordship's defence he admitted of the main facts, but pleading unintentional error, he said he looked back with great personal regret at his having any connection with Reding the borough jobber, or trafficking broker. In fine, Lord Hamilton's motion was negatived by 216 noes to 167 ayes. Mr. Canning moved an amendment stating, "That it is the duty of the house to maintain a jealous guard over the purity of election; but considering that the attempt of Lord Castlereagh to interfere in the election of a

member has not been successful, the House does not consider it necessary to enter into any criminal proceedings on the subject." This amendment was carried, and another made by Mr. Wynne negatived, because it proposed, "That the House were the more confirmed in their opinion by the regret expressed by Lord Castlereagh for his misconduct."

On the second reading of the Bill for preventing the sale of offices, Lord Folkstone openly charged the Treasury with trafficking for boroughs; he said "What he stated was matter of public notoriety. It was even understood that previous to every election an office was opened in the Treasury for the purchase of seats in Parliament, which again were sold to others of more or less interest and ability, who again, in proportion to their possession of these qualities, paid a higher or lower price for their seats." Mr. Creevy confirmed the statement of the noble Lord, and referred to any one of the right honourable gentlemen opposite to him, who had at any time filled the situation of Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Whitbread stated, That it was well known in that House, and out of

it, that there were members who represented nothing but their own money; that there were some who were not even then free agents; but that there was occasionally such a thing as conscience in the transaction, which forced them to abandon both their seat and their money too. If the right honourable gentleman really entertained any doubt of the purchase and sale of seats in Parliament, he had only to turn to his near neighbour, Lord Castlereagh, and learn what they had done in Ireland, where one million and a half of money had been taken out of the pockets of the people to pay for the purchase of boroughs. It was impossible, he said, for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to consider these circumstances, without feeling that *in one way or other an end must be put to this system, or it would put an end to them.* Mr. Maddock's motion for enquiry into the sale of an Irish Borough was negatived, there being a majority of 235 in favour of the accused Minister!!!

In the mean while, as a check to disgrace at home, the Ministry had to boast of the success of their measures in that of our arms abroad—Lisbon, as well as Oporto and the

North of Portugal, had been cleared of the French, while their Emperor seemed to have been checked, at least for a while, by the breaking of his bridges on the Danube.

In June, 1809, when Mr. Curwen's Motion for a Reform in Parliament was discussed, Mr. Perceval roundly asserted, "That he saw no reason for any reform, and that the people were more united against reform than upon any other question, because they thought it unnecessary. He denied that tumult or bribery would be lessened." He would not allow that the House had thought any reform necessary, and it would raise the plan into too much importance to give it a moment's farther consideration. On a division of the House the majority against reform was 59 against 15.

It was the fate of Mr. Perceval's friends to render themselves in a great measure ridiculous, by their dissension, particularly in the duel between Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning, whom the former evidently caught tripping in a little political duplicity, "totally contrary to the old principles of English honour."

Soon after this, the illness of the

Duke of Portland compelled him to resign, and the two duellists, though not struck out of the list of the Privy Council, felt it most decorous to withdraw. At this period the whole management of the public affairs rested with the two lawyers, Mr. Perceval and Lord Eldon. To strengthen themselves, the first thing they did was to send letters by express to Lord Grenville in Cornwall, and Lord Grey in Northumberland, requesting them to assist in the new Ministry, which the resignations of Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning had made necessary: Lord Grenville came to town, but Lord Grey contented himself with returning a very spirited reply, "that he would not condescend to act in concert with men, whose measures he conceived to be fraught with mischief to the kingdom." Lord Grenville finding he could have no personal access to the King, declined any farther discussion. Thus disconcerted, however, Mr. Perceval became First Lord of the Treasury; and the public attention was once more diverted by the measures taken for the celebration of the Jubilee, in commemoration of the fiftieth year of his Majesty's reign; which, with the liberty granted to the dis-

turbers of the performances at Covent Garden, during the winter of 1809, commonly called the O. P.'s, from their advocating the continuance of the old playhouse prices, might have given strangers a wonderful idea of the happiness and liberty of the people of England. In the meanwhile, the gallantry of our troops, and the skill of their commander, as exhibited at Talavera, added no small triumph to the advocates for the war in the peninsula of Spain.

The speech which opened the session of January, 1810, regretted the unavailing efforts of the Emperor of Austria against the ambition and violence of France, and stated, that though the war was undertaken by that monarch without encouragement on the part of his Majesty, every effort was made for the assistance of Austria consistent with the support of his Majesty's allies, and the welfare and interest of his own dominions.

The principal ends of the expedition to the Scheldt were admitted as not having been obtained; but the trade and revenue of the country were represented as being highly satisfactory.

The prosecutions entered against Mr.

Perry of the Morning Chronicle, and Mr. Gale Jones, for libels, did no honour to the liberality of government in the year 1810.

Two subjects of union in foreign countries this year caused some people to be very much disunited at home: the first was the marriage of the French Emperor with the Princess Louisa, Archduchess of Austria, and the second the preliminary steps for the annexation of Holland to France. In consequence of this design, the French Emperor made offers of peace, the acceptance of which would have induced him to suffer Holland to have remained separate from France; but these offers were such as Mr. Perceval and his co-administrators could not accept!

About this time, however, a circumstance occurred in this country, relative to which it was then remarked, "that all thoughts of foreign powers had been absorbed at home by a more powerful consideration,"—by the grand point at issue between the House of Commons and the People of England. The House of Commons claim privileges—the people contend for their rights. The great champion for the latter is Sir Francis Burdett, and he has acted in such a manner as to

bring down upon himself the furious vengeance of the parties who are battling to obtain or to preserve their places. A curious circumstance has occurred in consequence of a debate at a speaking club, and which first arose from Mr. Yorke's enforcing the order for excluding the public from the gallery of the House of Commons; this was seized as a subject of debate; and the question proposed was, whether it was a greater outrage on the public feelings, than the speech of another member on the liberty of the press? Mr. Yorke called it a breach of privilege, and quoted, most perversely and entirely contrary to its obvious and designed meaning, a clause in the Bill of Rights, allowing to members of parliament freedom of speech without liability of being impeached or questioned for his conduct in any court whatsoever. Mr. Gale Jones, the author of the question, was summoned before the House, where he acknowledged the fact of writing the paper in question, but expressed his contrition at having offended the House. Not content with the humble apology thus made, Mr. Yorke, professing sovereign contempt for

the opinions in the paper, and the medium of discussion, moved that the author should be sent to Newgate; to which, without a dissentient voice, the House agreed.

Sir Francis Burdett was not in the House at the time, but he soon after recalled its attention to these violent proceedings, by moving, after a very admirable speech, proving that the House had gone beyond its powers, that Mr. Gale Jones be discharged. The success he met with was exactly what might be expected: fourteen voted on his side, and a hundred and thirty were against him. Soon after, Sir F. Burdett, in an admirable letter to his constituents, stated the whole law on this question to them, and left no shadow of doubt in the minds of all constitutional men, that he was perfectly right in his argument. This letter, a Mr. Lethbridge, the member for Somersetshire, called a libel upon the House, and read several passages with which he was exceedingly offended; such as these—Whether our liberty should lie at the absolute mercy of a part of our fellow-subjects, collected together by means which it is not necessary to describe?—If they have the absolute power of imprisoning and releasing, why

may they not send their prisoners to York jail, as well as to a jail in London?

The discussion of the question was deferred, notwithstanding every effort of the minister, for a week, when the resolutions of Mr. Lethbridge, that Sir F. Burdett's letter was a libel on the House, and that he was guilty of a violation of its privileges, were read, and an animated debate took place, when Sir S. Romilly distinguished himself, by not allowing the publication to be a libel, or to intrench upon the privileges of the House. In doing this, he referred to the original cause of the whole, namely, the commitment of Mr. Gale Jones; and gave strong and convincing reasons for doubting the legality of the right of the House to commit for libels.—Mr. Perceval, on the contrary, was for punishing, what he called one of the grossest attacks ever made upon the character and privileges of the House.—General Mathew expressed a sentiment much more congenial with the feelings of the country, as he declared his entire coincidence, not only in every expression in the publication complained of, but in the whole political conduct of Sir F. Burdett; and

in one point he most particularly concurred with him, namely, that the House had not a leg to stand on.—The question was carried that Sir F. Burdett was guilty of a libel; and then Sir Robert Salisbury made his name known, and it will hereafter be distinguished by his moving that Sir F. Burdett be committed to the Tower. In this vote concurred one hundred and eighty-nine persons, and against it one hundred and fifty-two.—The Speaker soon after signed the warrant for commitment, and most extraordinary scenes were the consequence.

The vote of the House was soon spread abroad in the metropolis, and consternation and indignation filled the minds of all. Looking on Sir F. Burdett as a man of high honour and integrity, as having advanced nothing but what was founded on the law, and knowing that, by the truths in his speeches, he had excited the utmost envy and jealousy, and every malignant passion in the breasts of the borough-mongers, they looked up to him as the martyr of political liberty. His own constituents were particularly hurt on this occasion; a requisition was prepared, and the signature of many hundreds affixed before

noon of the Friday, for a meeting to take the proceedings of the House into consideration. Numbers went to the House of the Baronet, and all were in expectation that he would be seized that day. The Baronet was at Wimbledon when the vote passed, and came to town on horseback at his usual time in the morning, where he found a letter from the Serjeant, to which he replied, by appointing the next day, between eleven and twelve, for an interview. The Serjeant, however, came in person between five and six in the afternoon, when he saw Sir Francis, who told him that he would not obey the warrant, but resist force by force. The Serjeant, not having force enough with him, prudently retired, and informed the Speaker of the House of Commons, who seemed to be as much at a loss as the Serjeant, and the night passed without any seizure: but not without several outrages committed on the houses of persons who had made themselves obnoxious by the parts they had taken in the late proceedings.

The next day passed without a seizure; for it afterwards appeared, that the Serjeant was completely puzzled with his warrant, as was the Privy Council, which had a long de-

bate on the subject, and much more so the Attorney General, who gave an opinion that made every thing more doubtful than before. At one o'clock, however, on the Saturday, a very strong detachment of the guards marched to Sir F. Burdett's house, and completely occupied the ground before it; upon which he wrote to the Sheriff, who came, and removed the guards, who took stations to the east and west of the house, leaving the whole space before the house free. The house fronts the Green Park, and there strong detachments of the foot guards were placed, and troops and artillery were marched from all quarters into town. It is supposed that, with the volunteers, the armed force put in motion upon this occasion, about doubled the number employed in the Walcheren Expedition. Sunday passed without a seizure; but on Monday morning the whole space before Sir F. Burdett's house was again occupied by the military, who extended themselves both ways to a great distance in Piccadilly, so that at ten o'clock there was no passage; and about that hour a gang of Bow Street runners and House of Commons' officers got into the area, broke open the

house, rushed up stairs, opened the hall door, and let in the military; so that, to Sir F. Burdett's apartment, the whole space was occupied by an armed force. The Sergeant, with his warrant, entered the room where Sir Francis was sitting with his lady, brother, and children, and on his refusal to obey the warrant, a great number closed round him, whilst he called in vain in the King's name for protection; they hurried him down the stairs, through the hall, into a hackney coach, when, preceded and followed by a large body of troops, he was conveyed to the Tower. Multitudes had got to Tower Hill before them, and when the carriage was seen, the shouts of "Burdett for ever!" rent the skies. After the usual ceremonies, Sir Francis was received by the governor at the gate, and conducted to the apartments prepared for him, being two rooms up two pair of stairs, in a small house on the parade.

A dreadful scene now took place in the neighbourhood of the Tower. The military fired in several quarters upon the multitude; wounded a great number, and some have died of their wounds. Three coroner's inquests have already been taken: one was declared

to be justifiable homicide, one wilful murder against a soldier in the Life Guards, and one murder against a soldier in the Life Guards, but this last murder was perpetrated in the liberties of Westminster. There can be no doubt but that the military received some slight provocation, both in Westminster and in the city: but the question must occur to every one, what business had they in either place?

The account of these proceedings was laid before the House of Commons in the evening, when the Sergeant was examined as to the leading facts; the meeting of the Privy Council was established, the names of the persons attending it recorded, the consulting of the Attorney General made known, and his opinion was read. The whole was ordered to be printed for the use of the members. Sir Francis's letter to the Speaker was read, in which he persisted in denying the legality of the Speaker's warrant; but it was referred for consideration to the next night, when, after some debate, the House very prudently determined not to enter into any resolution upon it. Every thing was quiet in the metropolis, and it was evident that the

civil power was perfectly competent to have preserved the peace of the city.

The commitment of Gale Jones was the original ground of the whole disturbance; and Sir Samuel Romilly, agreeably to a notice he had previously given, moved for his discharge; but that he might not irritate the feelings of the House, did not enter into the legality of the commitment, but argued in favour of his motion, on the ground that the prisoner had suffered a punishment more than adequate to his supposed offence. In this opinion he was ably supported; but a formidable obstacle presented itself, of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer eagerly availed himself, namely, that the custom of the House required a petition from the prisoner for a release, with an expression of sorrow for his offence, and Mr. Gale Jones had not presented a petition. To this it was observed, that he had already made ample apology, and how could he know, as that apology had not been taken, what other he could possibly use? But Sir Samuel Romilly stated his own opinion very properly on the subject, that he would sooner rot in a jail than petition, or make another apology. The majo-

rity, however, did not concur with him, and Mr. Gale Jones remained a prisoner till the prorogation of Parliament.

On the day after this debate was the meeting of the city of Westminster, when it was supposed that upwards of twenty thousand persons were assembled in the Palace Yard, who conducted themselves with the utmost regularity. Motions were made and seconded by two most respectable householders, in large lines of business, who, in their speeches, gave a succinct account of the late proceedings and the grounds on which their motions were founded. These resolutions passed unanimously, not a single dissentient voice was heard, nor an opposing hand raised. The whole assembly felt and concurred in every expression. The tenor of them was an entire approbation of Sir F. Burdett's conduct; the agreement to a petition to the House of Commons, and to a letter to be sent to their beloved representative. The petition stated how sensibly the City felt the indignation offered to it in the person of their representative, for a letter which ought to have induced the House to reconsider the subject of commitment, in which they

were, in their own cause, prosecutor, judge, jury, and executioner. It called for the release of their representative, and adjured the House to endeavour with him to reform the representation, whose necessity was pointed out by the conduct of Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Perceval, in jobbing for seats, and by the acknowledgment of practices at which the Speaker said our ancestors would startle with horror and indignation. The letter to Sir F. Burdett expressed their affection and attachment to him, and their approbation of his conduct in strong and animated terms.

Lord Cochrane presented the petition in the afternoon to the house, when some members were very indignant at its being styled also a remonstrance; they were offended also at the commitment of Sir Francis being termed an indignity to the city; they felt most poignantly the bitter truths conveyed on the jobbing for seats in Parliament; and they were very eager that the petition should not be received. Others more prudently examined the petition clause by clause, and in vain looked for the means of rejecting it; and it was observed by Mr. Canning, that however distressing the petition might be to the

feelings of the house, it would be better to let it rest on the table, as the rejection of it would only be the means of occasioning another meeting, and another petition, in which the same propositions would be conveyed in still more offensive terms. At last the petition was permitted to be laid on the table.

The letter to Sir F. Burdett was presented to him by the High Bailiff, and he returned to it a most spirited and animated answer, in which he urges the absolute necessity of a reform in parliament, that the kingdom may not be in complete vassalage under borough-mongering sovereigns, and groan under the curse of Canaan, that of being the slaves of slaves. He also sent a letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons, in which he informed him of his intention to bring an action against him for his warrant; and this letter was read to the House, and ordered to lie on the table.

But the idea of public murders and popular insurrections, were soon diverted by a most mysterious transaction in St. James's palace, in which Seillis, a servant to the Duke of Cumberland, was found on his bed with his throat cut from ear to ear. The

Duke likewise was said to have received several wounds in his hands, face, sides, &c. and did not appear in public for some time after.

The trial of Mr. Cobbett, in June, 1810, for a libel on the German Legion, excited a great deal of interest. Some of the Cambridgeshire militia, it seems, having been mutinous, were flogged by these foreigners. Mr. Cobbett was found guilty of libelling them, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment in Newgate, and to pay a large fine.

The liberation of Sir Francis Burdett from the Tower, in June, 1810, was an event of too great importance to be passed over without due preparation. His constituents in Westminster took the lead on this occasion, and proposed that he should be carried back from the Tower in solemn parade, the procession being formed in a very different manner from that which conveyed him into confinement. Every thing was arranged for this purpose, and the breaking up of parliament was expected with the utmost impatience. With the King's speech ceased the power of the House of Commons over Sir Francis; but on the prorogation being made known

to him by the governor, Sir Francis Burdett left the Tower quite privately, going down the water a little distance, and then taking his horse for Wimbledon. A very great assemblage of people was collected on Tower-Hill, with the view of seeing the procession, which went through the streets with banners and appropriate mottoes: but great disappointment was excited at the hero of the day not being there. The people, however, were pleased at the liberation of their great friend, and gave him credit for the motives that led him to privacy instead of an ostentatious appearance of triumph. In the evening an illumination, to a very considerable extent, took place. It was a satisfaction to all reflecting minds, that the peace of the metropolis was not, on this occasion, at all disturbed, and the people showed, that they could *hold to the laws*, and that no military force was wanting, as in many countries, to preserve public order.

The painful task of announcing the capture of Almeida by the enemy, in the month of August, 1810, was soon effaced by the battle of Busaco, in which Lord Wellington's defeat of the enemy was complete, and

his loss comparatively trifling. The capture of the islands of Bourbon and Amboyna, which transpired soon after, was of a description to raise the spirits of the nation.

But in November, 1810, the malady which had fixed upon his Majesty early in October, could no longer be concealed. After the unwelcome intelligence had been announced, preparations were made for issuing daily bulletins at St. James's and the Mansion House. From these, though nothing satisfactory, or explicit, could possibly be obtained, it was impossible the public could long remain ignorant of the nature of the King's complaint, for time produced the developement of the whole mystery.

With this state of his Majesty's mind the ministers must be presumed to have been acquainted long before it was laid before the public; and it might have justified them in proceeding to remedy the defect in the regal authority without any delay. The question naturally recurs, in what manner, and by whom it is to be remedied? A regency was obviously necessary; in whom is this to be confided? The public would naturally look up to the Prince of Wales upon such an oc-

casion; and it seemed to be the general opinion, both in and out of doors, that an application should be made to him to take upon himself this office. An interview, it was said, had been requested by the Minister, but this was declined by the Prince; and the purport of it was conveyed in a letter, of which the papers gave with confidence the substance, and added, that the princes of the blood had united in a remonstrance against his Royal Highness being fettered by any conditions on coming into the office. To this the ministers made a respectful reply, urging their duty to the crown, which caused them to see things in a different light; and in fact, if the occurrences took place as represented, there seems nothing preposterous in the proceeding. The interference of the princes was not called for, nor could they claim any peculiar privilege on this occasion above that of any other subject. The Prince declined with great dignity to make any reply as to the main question, till the proposition came fairly before him from the two Houses.

A difference of opinion prevailed in the Houses on the mode of filling up the va-

cancy, whether by bill or by address, but it was determined to be by bill, and to follow as much as possible the precedent of 1788. The whole of this proceeding depends on a fiction. It supposes, that an act of the two Houses, sanctioned by the king's seal, affixed by a person acting under their authority, shall have the weight of an act of parliament.

The Minister, in one of his vaunting speeches, suggested that no inconvenience would follow from the adjournments, or the delay in filling up the vacancy, as in the case of issues of money or execution of orders, what inferior officer would dare to disobey the orders of the cabinet? But this high language in the end did not prove so decisive as was expected; for in a very important point the cabinet found itself mistaken, and England was seen to contain an inferior officer, who knew his duty, and would be guided by his oath, and not by the opinions of others, on what it might be their interest to exact. A large sum of money was wanted for the public service, and this is drawn by proper checks, countersigned by different officers, and whose duty it is to fol-

low the rules prescribed in a matter of so great importance. The King's seal was naturally wanting; and when the order came, its informality was evident; and Mr. Larpent, with true honour and the old English spirit, refused to let it pass in this improper manner through his department, nor could Lord Grenville, as auditor, suffer the issue without decisive authority upon the subject. In consequence of this resistance, the Minister was obliged to come to the two Houses for their assistance, and a vote was passed by them to take off the scruples in the officers.

On the meeting of the Houses on the 30th November, a report of the physicians on the state of the King's health was brought up in both Houses, and in the lower House the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in hopes of the King's amendment, moved for the further adjournment of a fortnight, and if none appeared, that then the Houses should proceed to fill up the chasm in the royal authority. This was opposed by Mr. Whitbread on the ground of the impropriety of delay, but justified by Mr. Yorke. Mr. Ponsonby went more at large into the grounds of opposition,

declaring his intention of dividing the House upon it, and moving for a committee to examine the physicians.—Sir F. Burdett reprobated in very apt terms the pretended delicacy of many gentlemen, who forget that delicacy must give way in great affairs of moment.—Mr. Wilberforce declared, that after balancing the matter in his mind for a considerable time, he could see no harm in the adjournment, and should therefore vote for it. Some other members spoke, and on a division, there appeared for it two hundred and thirty-three, and against it one hundred and twenty-nine. In the House of Lords a similar adjournment was moved and carried. Lord Grenville winded up a speech against it with a school-boy quotation, but the Duke of Sussex made a deep impression on the House by the reasons which he gave for resisting the adjournment, namely, that it was more consistent with the constitution to adjourn only from day to day; and secondly, because he wished to ascertain in whose care the King was to be placed, and that in case of recovery the royal authority might be restored to him pure and unimpaired.

On the 13th of December the Houses met

again, and in the House of Lords it was agreed that a committee should be appointed, and in the House of Commons one was fixed on to examine the physicians, after which it adjourned to the 17th, when a very voluminous report was brought up and ordered to be printed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave an outline of his plan for filling up the chasm in the regal branch, and moved a call of the House to take it into consideration on the 20th. The examination of the physicians pointed out the species of insanity under which his Majesty laboured, held out hopes of recovery, but could not ascertain its early removal. Above all, it brought to light various periods in which his Majesty had been in similar situations, and matter sufficient for very serious investigation, and due regulation of those persons who are supposed, when they issue orders by the King's authority and with his signature, to have received them from him. At the meeting of the House the Chancellor of the Exchequer brought forward three propositions: the first, declaring the incapacity of the King to perform the royal functions; the second asserting the right of the House to

supply the defect; and the third pointing out the necessity of devising some means that the royal assent should be given to a bill on the exercise of the royal authority during the King's indisposition. On each of these he dilated at considerable length, making the proceedings of 1788 his precedent, according to which, the Prince of Wales was to be regent under certain restrictions, and the Queen to have the care of the King's person.

On the second resolution being put from the chair, Sir F. Burdett declared, that he could not assent to it, as it spoke of the Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons of the United Kingdoms, lawfully, fully, and freely representing all the estates of this realm. This was contrary to truth, and it was notorious that instances of corruption had been proved of that House, in which a hundred and fifty peers had great influence in the election of its members. In 1688, the City of London, the respectable gentry throughout the country, who had sat in parliament, were called in a convention parliament to settle the great interests of the nation: now a house, of which he gave some

strong features, summing up its titles in the name of the Walcheren Parliament, without any appeal to the people, their constituents, usurped power for themselves. On the subject of the King's illness it appeared, that the people had been deceived, and that ministers had dared to carry on the government while the executive was incapacitated. He should therefore enter his solemn protest against the whole of the proceedings, as miserable shams and pretences, as aiming a mortal stab at the constitution of the country, and making an oligarchical House of Commons, varnished over with forms to govern the country. The second resolution was then read, and passed, with the dissent of Sir Francis, but without a division.

On the third resolution being put, Mr. Ponsonby objected to it, denying the right of the Houses to command the Chancellor to apply the King's seal to an act, and then to consider it as having the royal sanction. They were agreed as to the person of the Regent, but differed on the mode, to which he objected more than to the limitations; and he moved, that an address be presented to his Royal Highness, praying him to take

the royal functions upon him during the King's illness.—Mr. Canning preferred the precedents of 1788 to those of the restoration and revolution, and spoke in ridicule of Sir Francis Burdett, as he wished to call in the assistance of the Lord Mayor and Common Council to settle the regency.—Lord Temple followed the same course as Lord Joselyn; but Mr. Adam strenuously resisted it.—Sir Samuel Romilly considered the resolutions as inconsistent with each other. In one, the right of the Lords and Commons to fill up the vacancy is asserted, and yet that vacancy being acknowledged, the royal assent to a bill was to be procured, to which his Majesty could give no assent. The will of the Lords and Commons can in no wise be construed into the King's will, nor can they by any means legislate for the nation. As well might a set of men in common life make a contract for a man under insanity, then employ a person as his solicitor to affix his seal and signature to the deed. In fact, the personal presence of the King, or of a commission signed by him, was essential to every act of legislation, and if the Houses could dispense with this in one case they might in others; they

might make war or peace, or any thing else, and say such was the King's pleasure. This mode of legislation was fraudulent, and inconsistent with that open and manly character which ought to characterise every act of the legislature.—Mr. Whitbread spoke with great animation in favour of the proceeding by address, which the House rejected, there being for it 157, against it 269.

On the next day the report of the committee was brought up; and, on the second resolution being read, Lord W. Russell objected to it as unnecessary, and to the calling on the House to vote abstract propositions. He therefore moved the previous question, in which he was supported by Sir Francis Burdett, who said, that it became the proposers of the resolution to shew in what its necessity consisted. Necessity implies the want of an alternative, but here there was an alternative. He agreed also with the noble lord in condemning abstract propositions, as the introduction of them tended only to fill the journals with a chaos of inconsistencies. The way of duty in the present case is clear and plain. In addressing the Prince we do not usurp a disputed

power, but exercise our undoubted right: we adhere to the sound principles of the constitution, by keeping within the sphere of our own rights and duties. A gentleman had been facetious in his remarks on the corporation of London, and the recovery of his powers of pleasantry might be acceptable to the house. The gloom, occasioned by the deaths at Walcherence, might well have restrained him; for the miseries of that disgraceful expedition, in which he had been convicted as having acted with a colleague whom he had denounced as unfit and inefficient, were enough to suspend his drolleries, especially as he must reflect that there never was a minister in this country so much deserved impeachment. But this gentleman might have recollected, that the corporation of London was an important body in our history; and it little became him to despise the city of London, who had not thought it beneath his dignity to meet at a city tavern a set of jobbers and contractors, whom he entertained with speeches on affairs of state. A learned gentleman seemed to argue, that there was a law beyond the law, a constitutional something, to be

found only in the practice of parliament: to this he could not assent; he could take law as it was found only in the acts of the legislature, not in the practice of different parts of it. A constitution means nothing but certain things established, and to talk of a law beyond the law was to talk of things in the air. To the assertion then in the resolution he objected, as assuming a right not belonging to them, and to the proceeding upon it as making the House part of the crown, and thus violating the first principle of the constitution.—Mr. Lamb contended that the House had the right of supplying the defect, and cited the proceedings of the Long Parliament. He allowed the defects in the representation; but though they were not removed, the House was the legal representation. But the house could not make itself the King to assent to its own act, and he should therefore oppose the bill as illegal. —Mr. Stephen contended that the proceedings in 1788 ought to be viewed as a complete precedent, and he concluded with so fulsome a panegyric on the Sovereign for fifty years of virtues, as required no comment from any other speaker.—Mr. Wynne

observed that if the Houses could, at this time, by their own power, declare the royal prerogative suspended, then pass an act to render their own legislative powers complete, they may do so at any other time when the King is in perfect health.—Mr. Wilberforce said that the high character of the Prince of Wales was no reason for investing him with unlimited power. His present conduct did him eternal honour, as he looked like a good subject of the realm to parliament to provide for the deficiency.

Mr. Grattan asserted the plan of ministers to be repugnant to the constitution in two ways, first, as assuming an executive authority on the part of the two houses, and again, as it went to legislate without the royal assent. The proceedings of 1788 were no precedent, as they had not passed into an act. Sir John Newport was surprised, that Mr. Stephen, representing an Irish borough, had not condescended, in his love for the precedent of 1788—9, to look to the conduct of the Irish parliament, which was more simple, avoiding all fiction and fallacy, and preventing unnecessary delay. Including a recess of four days, nine days only elapsed

between the message of the Lord Lieutenant and the adoption of an address to the Prince. —Mr. Elliot asked, what power the House had of punishing the Chancellor if he should refuse the seal to this monstrous act.—Mr. Perceval replied at length, asserting that he would not defer doing that, which the interest of the country might require, though such acts might belong to the executive power, and even require the sign manual. He would not risk a mutiny in the army or navy for want of money, because the letter of the law could not be complied with. Would the officers of the Exchequer refuse the order of the Treasury? They could not refuse compliance, though they might protest against the authority; and he would act upon his own responsibility, regardless of the result.—Mr. Whitbread asked whether it was to be endured, that a Chancellor of the Exchequer should invest himself with powers subversive of every constitutional principle? should assume the controul over the public purse, apply the public money when and how he thought proper, and on a pretended responsibility, trample upon that throne which he is sworn to support,

and which he is, by his very actions, now crumbling into the dust. The day of enquiry may come, and the tone of this night will call on every one to examine past actions with a scrutinizing eye.—After a few words from Mr. Adam and Mr. Perceval, the House divided on the previous question, there being for it 15, against it 98.

After long, tedious, and very uninstructive debates, it was agreed in both Houses, that they should become a regular parliament, which was done by a commission formed under the great seal, opening the parliament by a similar commission, when the King does not appear in person. This being done, the two houses determined, that the vacuum in the royal power should be filled up by bill, not by address; and for the purpose of framing this bill, certain resolutions were passed in the Commons, and carried to the Lords, which, after a slight alteration, were returned to them, and were meant to be the foundation of a bill for vesting the royal power, with certain limitations, in the Prince of Wales; and the care of the Royal Person with certain privileges in the Queen.

Previously to the framing of this bill, a

deputation of Lords and Commons waited on the Prince and the Queen to lay before them the resolutions of the two Houses, as far as belonged to each, to which a favourable answer was given by both. The Prince, in a very dignified manner, declared his acceptance of the trust confided to him; and at the same time made some delicate allusions to the manner in which it had been conferred. In consequence of this assent, the House of Commons went into the discussion of the bill produced by ministers, which contained a vast variety of clauses; of which the following is the substance:—

"The Prince of Wales to exercise the Royal Authority, subject to Restrictions.

"Present Appointments to remain until the Regent declares to the contrary.

"Upon his Majesty's recovery, and declaration of his pleasure to resume his authority, this act to cease, and no act done under it afterwards to be valid.

"Any acts, orders, appointments, &c. previously made or done under it, to remain until countermanded by his Majesty.

"No act of the Regent to be valid, unless done in the name of his Majesty, and according to the provisions of the Act.

"Regent to take oath to administer the law according to the Act.

"Regent to be deemed a person holding an office in trust, and to take the oath, and make the declaration relating to such persons, before the Privy Council.

"Regent to be restrained from granting Peerages, or *summoning Heirs-Apparent, or appointing to Titles in abeyance, until after a given time.*

"Regent to be restrained from granting Offices in Reversion, or for longer period than during pleasure, except those which are by law granted by life, or during good behaviour; and except pensions to Chancellor, Judges, &c.

"Regent not to be impowered to give the Royal Assent to any Bill to repeal any Bill for varying the order and course of succession to the Crown.

"The Regent *to reside in Great Britain, and not to marry a Papist.*

"Care of his Majesty's person, and appointment of a suitable part of his Household, to be vested in her Majesty. Her Majesty to be assisted by a Council.

"Her Majesty's *Council to meet some day in April next*, and on the 1st day of every *third* month after, and declare the state of his Majesty's health, a copy of which shall be transmitted to the President of the Privy Council, and published in the London Gazette.

"Her Majesty's Council may examine the Physicians in attendance on oath.

"Her Majesty's Council to notify his Majesty's recovery by Instrument sent to the Privy Council.

"The Privy Council to assemble and enter said Instrument.

"After such Instrument his Majesty may, by Sign Manual, require the Privy Council to assemble.

"If his Majesty, by the advice of such Privy Council, so assembled, shall signify his pleasure to resume the personal exercise of his Royal Authority, a Proclamation shall be issued accordingly.

"Such Proclamation, countersigned by of the said Privy Council, together with the other proceedings, to be sent to the Lord Mayor, and the present Act to cease.

"In case of the death of the Regent, or of her Majesty, or of the resumption by the King—Parliament, if prorogued, or adjourned, to meet and sit, or if dissolved, the Members of the last Parliament to meet and sit again.

"Parliament so met, not to sit longer than months.

"In the case of the death of her Majesty, the care of his Majesty's person to be vested in her Council."

At this time it appeared that no alteration was to be made in the cabinet, for as soon

as every thing was settled for placing the reins of government in his hands, the Prince announced, in a letter to the Minister, his determination not to change the ministry. This was very specifically declared to be owing solely to the irresistible impulse of filial duty and affection, which led him to dread, that any act of the Regent might, in the smallest degree, have the effect of interfering with the progress of his Sovereign's recovery. In the conclusion he refers to the embarrassing situation in which he was placed, which he could not reconcile to the genuine principles of the British constitution. Mr. Perceval, in a very awkward manner, expressed the readiness of himself and colleagues to do every thing in their power to give satisfaction to *your* Royal Highness, *your* being used for his throughout the whole of the answer, regretting at the same time the difference of opinion on the subject of the restrictions.

One of the first acts almost of the Regent, after his being sworn-in in due form before the privy council, was to receive the address of the Lord Mayor and Common Council of London upon the occasion; and as he on

the same day held a council, all the ministers of state were present, when it was read in a very solemn manner. The address was partly condolence, and partly congratulation, accompanied with those truths unwelcome to the ears of ministers, in which a great majority of the nation heartily concur. Among the grievances enumerated, was specified, "the present representation in the Commons House of Parliament, which was termed a ready instrument in the hands of the minister for the time being, whether for purposes of nullifying the just prerogatives of the crown, or of insulting and oppressing the people, and a reform in which representation is therefore absolutely necessary for the safety of the crown, the happiness of the people, and the peace and independence of the country."

To this address the Regent returned a kind and dignified answer, assuring the city that he should esteem it the happiest moment of his life, when he could resign the powers delegated to him into the hands of his sovereign; and that he should always listen to the complaints of those who thought themselves aggrieved.

The parliament was formally opened on the twelfth by a speech from the Prince Regent, delivered by lords commissioners, which contained sentiments of sorrow for the calamity which occasioned his Royal Highness to make the address, the sense of the difficulties of the situation, and his confidence in the assistance of the people. It stated the successes of our arms in the east, the defence of Sicily, the exertions of our troops in Portugal, and for the defence of the peninsula. Hopes also were entertained of an amicable termination of the difficulties between this country and America. The defalcations in the revenue were noticed, and confidence expressed in the liberality of the Commons for farther supplies. The whole concluded with ardent prayers for the restoration of the King's health.

A slight debate took place in both Houses, and, in the House of Lords, the address, as usual an echo of the speech, was passed unanimously. In the Commons, Mr. Ponsonby, agreeing with the speech, reserved to himself the right of exercising his judgment on the topics contained in it as they should arise.—Sir F. Burdett descanted, with great

justice, on the long delay that had taken place, in settling the executive government, in which at last they had made a governor without entrusting to him the power of government. The dissatisfaction of his Royal Highness was too evident from his not meeting the Houses, and on this topic Sir Francis was happy in his allusion to Sir John Falstaff and his ragged regiment, comparing the ministry to the latter, and uniting with him all sides of the House in a temporary acquiescence in the justice of his description. He complained also of the neglect of the old practice of giving the members of the House an opportunity of knowing the subject on which they were to decide, by reading the speech the night before at a private meeting.

In the course of the month of March a statement was made in several of the public papers that, from events which succeeded it, seems to have been nothing more than a clap trap to catch a portion of public applause; as follows.

"We are sure that the public will participate in the pleasure which we feel in stating the following anecdote of the Prince Regent, which has been

communicated to us by a correspondent of known respect:—

"Last week the Chancellor of the Exchequer submitted to his Royal Highness a military arrangement, in consequence of the death of Lord Cardigan, to which he trusted to be honoured with the Prince Regent's approbation.

"Earl Harcourt to be Governor of Windsor Castle, in the room of Earl Cardigan, deceased.

"Gen. Charles Craufurd to be Governor of the Military College, at Marlow, in the room of Earl Harcourt.

"The Prince Regent signified his entire acquiescence in the appointment of Earl Harcourt to Windsor castle; he knew it would be perfectly agreeable to his Majesty; and he had reason to believe that he had designed him to be the successor of the Earl of Cardigan.

"The Prince also expressed the high respect which he entertained for the talents and services of Gen. Craufurd. He had high claims on the gratitude of his country; and the country had not been unmindful of his claims. His Royal Highness said, that, to the best of his recollection, Gen. Craufurd had a pension of 1200*l.* a year, on his own life and that of the Duchess, his wife. He had a regiment of dragoon guards, and he was the Lieutenant-Governor of Tynemouth—bringing him, altogether, above 3000*l.* a year; and, therefore, he must hesitate in adding to these appoint-

ments, while so many other gallant officers had not an equal provision.

"Mr. Perceval strongly urged the General's high merits—and besides, begged leave respectfully to state to his Royal Highness, that his claims were powerfully seconded by his son-in-law, the Duke of Newcastle—*whose support in parliament was most essential to his Majesty's administration; perhaps was of more consequence to them than that of any other individual.*

"The Prince Regent, in answer to this argument, made a declaration to the following purport:—'Sir, I did not expect such a reason to be assigned; but I am not sorry that it is so in an instance like the present, when it enables me to make known my resolution without disparagement to the gallant officer in question. I repeat that I have a high respect for his merits, which have met their reward; but I must tell you, once for all, that I never can, nor will, consent to bestow any place or appointment, meant to be an asylum or reward for the toils and services of our gallant soldiers and seamen, on any person, on account of parliamentary connection, or in return for parliamentary votes. This is my fixed determination, and I trust I shall never again be solicited in the same way.'

"The Minister bowed and took his leave."

The news of the retreat of Massena from

Santarem for some time filled the advocates for the war with the most eager expectations; but these were considerably lessened when it was understood, that he had effected this masterly movement in such a manner, as to prevent the English from obtaining any essential advantage over him. Still the thanks of both Houses were very properly voted to Lord Wellington for his defence of Lisbon, and his subsequent conduct with respect to Marshal Massena. The battle of Albuera, which soon followed, only tended to add to our former triumphs, notwithstanding it was allowed with respect to the enemy, that "his overbearing cavalry crippled all our operations, and with his artillery saved his infantry, after its route."

When the Parliament was prorogued in July, the Prince Regent's speech contained a short abstract of its proceedings, and a very strong compliment to Lord Wellington and the Ministers, for so successfully maintaining the national interests, and the glory of the British name.

At length the day for the splendid fete, which gave delight to some and umbrage to others, was appointed for Wednesday,

July the 19th. Carlton-house was opened about 9 at night, to the numerous persons of distinction who had been honoured with cards of invitation. Soon after nine o'clock the company began to arrive. The illustrious family of the House of Bourbon entered through the gardens about ten, when they were ushered into the Privy Council Chamber, where the Prince Regent was sitting under a crimson canopy of state, surrounded by the officers of his household, who, on their approach, immediately rose to receive them. The French sovereign was introduced by the Earl of Moira as Comte de Lisle, and her Royal Highness the Duchess d'Angouleme by the Duchess of York, and the French princes by Lord Dundas. They were received not only with the utmost respect, but every mark of affectionate regard. From this grand ceremonial the Illustrious Strangers retired into the sky-blue satin room that adjoined. The Prince Regent now passed through into the grand saloon, which was most brilliantly illuminated, and paid respects to the nobility, &c. crowded and assembled, in his most graceful and truly fascinating manner. It would be

a difficult task to describe, in terms adequate, the effect produced by the profusion of magnificent objects, which, at every glance, conveyed an exalted idea of national grandeur and the fine arts, cherished in a state of perfection. The apartments were decorated with splendor perfectly new. The palace was a scene of enchantment, and every elegant female, clad in the attire of her native country, appeared the Armida. The Conservatory was one of the most distinguished objects in the splendid arrangement. The building, of the Gothic order, appeared to be the most perfect and beautiful specimen of that style executed in modern times. Between the pillars candelabras were suspended 12 feet above the ground, each presented four brilliant patent burners, which spread a breadth of light not easy to describe. The interior struck the beholder with astonishment. The grand table extended the whole length of the Conservatory and across Carlton-house, to the length of 200 feet.

Along the centre of the table, about six inches above the surface, a canal of pure water continued flowing from a silver foun-

tain, beautifully constructed at the head of the table. Its faintly waving, artificial banks, were covered with green moss and aquatic flowers; gold and silver-coloured fish were by a mechanical invention made to swim and sport through the bubbling current, which produced a pleasing murmur where it fell, and formed a cascade at the outlet. At the head of the table, above the fountain, sat his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, on a throne of crimson velvet, trimmed with gold. The throne commanded a view of the company. The most particular friends of the Prince were arranged on each side. At the back of the throne appeared Aurolea tables, covered with crimson drapery, constructed to exhibit, with the greatest effect, a profusion of the most exquisitely wrought silver gilt plate, consisting of fountains, tripods, epergnes, dishes, and other ornaments. Above the whole of this superb display appeared a royal crown, and his Majesty's cypher, G. R. splendidly illumined.

The supper was the most superb in spectacle and arrangement that perhaps ever was exhibited in this country. The state

table of the Prince Regent was ranged along the Conservatory, the west end of which (being the head) was hung semi-circularly with a crimson silk ground, covered with transparent muslin, drawn into a variety of apertures, for the splendid display of numerous gold vases, urns, massy salvers, &c. embossed by admirable workmanship, and the whole surmounted by a most superb ancient urn, captured in the reign of Elizabeth from the Spanish admiral who commanded what was so presumptuously styled the "Invincible Armada." The service of this table was in gold. Adjoining to this were tables running through the library and whole lower suite of rooms, the candelabras in which were so arranged that the Regent could distinctly see and be seen, from one end to the other. Along those tables the royal family of England, and that of the Bourbons and the nobility, were seated, conformably to their respective ranks. On the right hand of the Prince Regent was placed the Duchess D'Angouleme, on his left the Duchess of York. From the library and room beyond branched out two great lines of tables under canvas far into the gardens,

each in the shape of a cross, all richly served with silver plate, and covered with every delicacy that the season could possibly afford. When the whole company was seated, there was a line of female beauty, more richly adorned, and a blaze of jewellery more brilliant than England probably ever displayed before.—The grand circular dining-room, in which the knights of the garter were recently entertained, excited particular admiration by its cupola, supported by columns of porphyry, and the superior elegance of the whole of its furniture and arrangements. In this room were marble busts of the late Mr. Fox, the late Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Moira, and Earl Grey; and in the centre was a lustre of an immense size and most dazzling brilliancy.—The library and the council-room displayed the greatest taste. The latter was appropriated to dancing, and the floors chalked in a beautiful style. In the centre appeared G. R. III. with the crown, supporters, and blazonry. The external decorations were equally grand and pleasing. Bands of music were stationed in the tents on the lawn of Carlton-house, and when dancing commenced, the gay throng

stepped over floors chalked with Mosaic devices, and moved through thickets of roses, geraniums, and other fragrant sweets, illumined by variegated lights, that gleamed like stars through the foliage. In the course of the night a brilliant display of fire-works took place, which gratified an immense body of spectators.

The dancing commenced about 12 o'clock, in the grand Council Chamber, in two lines, which were divided by a crimson cordon; but not more than five or six couple danced in each set. At three o'clock supper was announced by the striking up of three bands of grand martial music stationed in the gardens. The Prince Regent, bowing gracefully to the several personages of the Bourbon family, preceded them to the royal table in the Conservatory, being followed by the Comte De Lille and the Duchess D'Angouleme (handed by the Duke of York), by the Dukes D'Augouleme, Berri, Prince of Orange, and the Dukes of Clarence, Kent, Cumberland, Cambridge, Sussex, and Gloucester. Except the great officers of state, none under the rank of duke and marquis with their ladies, could have place there, so

that earls, countesses, and those of subordinate degree, took their places indiscriminately at the other tables, all of which were amply supplied with every thing in season, and the richest wines, fruits, confectionary, &c. &c. Chairs for 2000 were placed, but that number being found insufficient, recesses were soon provided, so that all were amply supplied. The Prince Regent and his illustrious guests rose from table at half-past four, and returned to the gold saloon in the same order that they descended. All the rooms were soon re-filled, when dancing was renewed; and the sun being well up, the blended lights of day and night gave the whole scene new features, which compensated by a fuller display of the variegated colours of female dress, for any little drawback that might have been sustained in artificial complexions.

Dresses.—All that art, taste, and expence could command, for personal decoration, had been in requisition for this night. The ladies all wore new dresses of English manufacture, principally white satins, silks, lace, crape, and muslins, ornamented with silver; head-dress ostrich feathers and diamonds.

The short Grecian waist appears to be again revived. The gentlemen wore court dresses, and naval and military uniforms, covered with a profusion of gold lace. The Prince Regent was dressed as a field marshal (as was also the Duke of York) with his hair in a long queue, the cordon blue, and a superb brilliant star, a large diamond loop and button in his hat and feather, and wearing a sabre, the handle and scabbard of which were richly studded with jewellery.

There were present at this splendid entertainment 14 dukes, 15 duchesses, 15 marquisses, 16 marchionesses, 98 earls, 85 countesses, 39 viscounts, 21 viscountesses, 107 lords, and as many ladies of the same rank, besides barons, counts, admirals, ministers of state, generals, aldermen, &c. &c.

It was impossible, where the invitations were extended to such a number, to avoid many irksome and painful mistakes: preferences without reason, and omissions by oversight; etiquette rigorously adhered to in one case, and innocently departed from in another; but all this was natural in an establishment where the thing was new, and the number of guests so unprecedented. It

is allowed on every hand that his Royal Highness's motive was most generous and patriotic. He was desirous of reviving the almost dormant spirit of the metropolis, and of giving a spur to the relaxed branches of national industry. In the absence of his Majesty's court, and in the want of all foreign vent for the labours of our artisans, it was an object nearest the Prince's heart to animate the manufactures of the country, and to set all those who administer to the splendours of fashion to work.—The distinguished guests did not begin to leave Carlton-house before six o'clock on Thursday morning, and the whole had not departed at eight, at which time the guards were taken off duty. The crowd of people in Pall Mall, from day-light until nine o'clock, was immense.

The Duchess of Bedford, on her return from the fete on Thursday morning, in alighting from her carriage at her house in Hamilton-place, dropped a diamond worth 500 guineas, but it was afterwards found on the staircase.

The plate used at the fete at Carlton-house was removed on Thursday, since which a number of persons have been admitted with

tickets to view the arrangements in the house and gardens.

That justice might be done to the British troops after the battle of Barrosa, Mr. Perceval interested himself much to his honour. On Thursday, March 28, 1811, when the Vote of Thanks was voted to General Graham, he touched upon the particulars of that victory—a victory, he said, decided by the bayonet, and proved by the enemy's loss of cannon, of eagles, and of generals, while not a man was missing on our side. That it was not attended with the complete destruction of the French army was owing to the great fatigue of the British, and should rather be ascribed to ill-fortune than to any thing else. Panegyric on the brilliant conduct of the gallant General and his no less gallant army was quite unnecessary, he should therefore move, "That the Thanks of this House be given to Lieutenant-General Thomas Graham, for the distinguished ability he displayed in the contest on the heights of Barrosa, which terminated in the signal and total defeat of a superior force."

Another attempt was made in May following relative to the Catholic question,

when Mr. Perceval stated, that he had then heard, after a long interval, the claim of *right* revived. He would allow the fullest claims of toleration, but the idea of a claim to political power was palpably absurd, and eminently so as coming from the very men who perpetually talked of power as only a trust for the people. If there was any fear that any body of men would use their power improperly, it ought not to be put into their hands. This single proposition made the claim of right to power absurd. He had never put the question on the loyalty and courage of the Catholic, but simply on the probable abuse or use of the power which he would have over the Establishment. He gave the highest praise to the bravery of the Irish soldiers and sailors; but those merits had an inferior connection with the question. The language of the Hon. Gentleman, (Mr. G.) who considered tithes as an oppression, and against the Canon of the Almighty, shewed the spirit of the motion, and of the Catholics. Would not this be preliminary to the abolition of Tithes and of the Establishment? Those gentlemen who had spoken so much of the Irish were not

infallible. Dr. Milner had been the god of their idolatry. He soon became quite the contrary. The same thing happened in their declarations on the Veto. The Irish now would allow it, and now they would not. All this ought to generate some distrust in their knowledge. He loved Christian toleration, not the toleration of Philosophy. The French tolerating Philosophers were atrocious persecutors, and they overturned all establishments. He thought that the more any great sects were brought to an equality of honours, the nearer they were to a struggle. They ought to have subordination, to have peace. It was not to be supposed that the Catholic Petition was more agreeable to the nation, because the public voice was less loud against it than formerly. The reason was, the public fear was less active. When, at a late period, dangerous measures were urged by the legislature, the cry of the nation rose against them. The origin of that cry was imputed to artifice; but the cry exhibited the feeling which would be roused again the first moment that the danger seemed probable. He must vote against the motion.

Mr. Whitbread thought the speech of the Right Honourable Gentleman one of the most inflammatory things he had ever heard. It had false feelings, false principles, and false arguments.

To return to the Prince Regent: some short time before this, Mr. Perceval, adverting in the House of Commons to a former notice he had given, respecting the Household to be provided for the Prince Regent, proceeded as follows: "When his Royal Highness was pleased to signify his determination of continuing in the service of the crown, the persons then carrying on the government, he (Mr. Perceval) felt *that it became his duty to lay the plan of an household before the Regent;* but upon an audience with his Royal Highness he learned, that his Royal Highness remained fixed in a perfect determination of adhering to his former sentiments upon that subject. For the nature of those sentiments his Royal Highness was pleased to refer him to a learned and honourable friend of his opposite (Mr. Adam). By him he had been informed, that from the moment he (Mr. P.) had first communicated his intention respecting the course

meant to be pursued by him respecting the household, his Royal Highness had communicated to that learned gentleman, *his determination not to add to the burdens of the people by accepting of any addition to his public state, as Regent of the United Kingdom!* He (Mr. P.) felt satisfied that neither the House nor the public would have felt any indisposition in contributing to the expence of the due support of the state and dignity of the Prince Regent: at the same time, the country would not be backward in duly acknowledging this instance of self-denial on the part of the Prince; and his Royal Highness could not fail to find that such refusal will, in point of fact, *throw round his character and station more real splendour than could be borrowed from any pageantry however brilliant. That external magnificence calculated to dazzle the vulgar gaze, and catch the giddy admiration of the populace, the Prince did not hesitate to sacrifice to those solid good qualities, which have long since won, and promise to secure to him the affections of the people.* Having stated these circumstances to the House, it was scarcely

necessary for him to add, that it was not now his intention to submit to them any such plan."

Mr. Adam then rose, and confirmed the statement of the Right Hon. Gentleman, remarking—"That he had had long opportunity of becoming minutely acquainted with the views and intentions of his Royal Highness, respecting his domestic economy; and that his determination in this particular instance was but conformable to the principles which had governed the conduct of his Royal Highness."

Upon the return of the Duke of York to office, it was said, "That the retreat of the French armies from Portugal had been received with so much exultation by Ministers, that they imagined they might take what liberties they pleased, and that no insult offered to popular opinion could be too gross. Mr. Perceval seems to glory in having taken this hardy step, in recommending the Duke's restoration to office. May the merit he boasts be long remembered," &c.

The appointment of Colonel M'Mahon to the new office of Private Secretary to the

Prince Regent, also excited a number of severe strictures, and the following among the rest.—

"The appointment of Colonel M'Mahon holds out the Prince Regent, at the very commencement of his office, as incompetent to discharge the functions of it, without such helps as none of his ancestors have ever had, except his immediate father after he had lost his sight. Next, we should wish it to be remarked, how deeply it injures Colonel M'Mahon. That gentleman has been represented as a most meritorious servant of his Royal Master; and yet would this appointment lead one to infer, that the Prince Regent, with one hundred thousand pounds in his hands, allowed him for the express purpose of rewarding such servants, will not give Colonel M'Mahon a halfpenny of it, but fobs him off upon the people (who have received none of his attentions) to provide for him in a new office. The nation is of necessity driven to one of these alternatives, either to suppose that his Royal Highness is a master that will not reward the fidelity of his adherents, though he has means allowed him by his people for that purpose (and that no one surely can credit); or that Colonel M'Mahon is not that faithful friend which he has been represented. This charity, therefore, instead of being one that blesses alike the giver and the receiver, is one that is detri-

mental to both; subjecting them alike to the most injurious, and, we trust, unfounded suspicions. The opinion which we wish to inculcate is, that the Prince is a very beneficent master—Colonel M'Mahon a very deserving servant; and that, on the matter being thus truly represented to them, as they before shewed that they scorned to retain an useless office, they will now also shew that they scorn to burthen the people with a new one. The Prince, indeed, not able to govern the realm without the support of Colonel M'Mahon as his State Secretary, in addition to the three Secretaries of State! How demeaning the insinuation! Why, it is likening his Royal Highness to a bad President at a table who cannot keep his company in order without the help of a Vice."

At length, in February, 1812, the predominating influence of Mr. Perceval and his friends appeared to have obtained its meridian splendour. He had before damped the expectations of his opponents, when dreaming of coming into power, by hinting to them, that the prospect they entertained might not open upon them so pleasantly as they imagined; but when the following Letter appeared from the Prince Regent, the last spark of hope was extinguished, and a

cloud seemed concentrating upon every countenance.

Letter of the Prince Regent to the Duke of York.

"MY DEAREST BROTHER,

"As the Restrictions on the exercise of the Royal Authority will shortly expire, when I must make my arrangements for the future Administration of the Powers with which I am invested, I think it right to communicate those sentiments, which I was withheld from expressing at an earlier period of the Session, by my warmest desire, that the expected Motion on the Affairs of Ireland might undergo the deliberate discussion of Parliament, unmixed with any other consideration.

"I think it hardly necessary to call your recollection to the recent circumstances under which I assumed the authority delegated to me by Parliament. At a moment of unexampled difficulty and danger, I was called upon to make a selection of persons to whom I should entrust the functions of the Executive Government. My sense of duty to our Royal Father solely decided that choice; and every private feeling gave way to considerations which admitted of no doubt or hesitation. I trust I acted in that respect as the genuine Representative of the august Person whose functions I was appointed to discharge; and I have the satisfaction of knowing, that such was the opinion of per-

sons, for whose judgment and honourable principles I entertain the highest respect.

"In various instances, as you well know, where the law of the last session left me at full liberty, I waved any personal gratification, in order that His Majesty might resume, on his restoration to health, every power and prerogative belonging to the Crown. I certainly am the last person in the kingdom to whom it can be permitted to despair of our Royal Father's recovery.

"A new era is now arrived, and I cannot but reflect with satisfaction on the events which have distinguished the short period of my restricted Regency. Instead of suffering in the loss of any of her possessions, by the gigantic force which has been employed against them, Great Britain has added most important acquisitions to her Empire.

"The National Faith has been preserved inviolate towards our Allies; and, if character is strength, as applied to a Nation, the increased and increasing reputation of His Majesty's arms will shew to the Nations of the Continent how much they may still achieve, when animated by a glorious resistance to a foreign yoke. In the critical situation of the War in the Peninsula, I shall be most anxious to avoid any measure which can lead my Allies to suppose that I mean to depart from the present system. Perseverance alone can achieve the great object in question; and I cannot withhold my approbation from those who have honourably dis-

tinguished themselves in support of it. *I have no predilections to indulge*,—no resentments to gratify—no objects to attain but such as are common to the whole Empire. If such is the leading principle of my conduct, and I can appeal to the past in evidence of what the future will be, I flatter myself I shall meet with the support of Parliament and a candid and enlightened Nation.

"Having made this communication of my sentiments in this new and extraordinary crisis of our affairs, I cannot conclude without expressing the gratification I should feel, if some of those persons, with whom the early habits of my public life were formed, would strengthen my hands, and constitute a part of my Government. With such support, and aided by a vigorous and united Administration, formed on the most liberal basis, I shall look with additional confidence to a prosperous issue of the most arduous contest in which Great Britain was ever engaged.—You are authorised to communicate these sentiments to Lord Grey, who, I have no doubt, will make them known to Lord Grenville.

"I am always, my Dearest Frederick, your affectionate Brother,

"GEORGE, P. R.

"*Carlton House*, *Feb.* 13, 1812.

"P. S. I shall send a copy of this Letter immediately to Mr. Perceval."

However, if the Prince's former friends were chagrined, his Highness's dissatisfaction at meeting with a refusal of his gracious offers from the Lords Grenville and Grey, could not be much less than theirs. At least it was an open acknowledgment of that weakness of party, to the consciousness of which, both Mr. Perceval and his friends, at certain intervals, were no strangers.

Perseverance in the system, seems to have been the watch word of Mr. Perceval and his coadjutors; so that with respect to our conduct abroad or at home, innovation appeared to have been as much dreaded in the state as formerly in the church. Neither the progress of our enemies on the continent, nor the alarming insubordination of some of our own counties, the desperation of some, or the distress of others, particularly our merchants, could awaken Mr. Perceval from the fatal lethargy of self-security, till it was too late, when a catastrophe, which cannot be too strongly deprecated in every civilized country, appears to have overthrown the Minister and his majorities.

Monday, May the 11th, 1812, will probably be a day which will never be erased from

our annals. It was a day when the first minister of a great and powerful nation was doomed to fall in a place, which, for its security, might have been chosen before all others, and by the hand of a private individual, whose dark and gloomy purpose, unlike conspirators in general, it seems had never been entrusted to any but his own bosom. The late Mr. Bellingham, whose distresses as a merchant drove him to this daring deed, having been harshly treated in Russia, first applied to Lord Leveson Gower, our ambassador at the time, without effect; and on his coming over to England, thinking Mr. Perceval stood in the way of justice, he was determined to take vengeance in his own hands: the particulars of this alarming and important event we shall now state as briefly as possible.

On Monday, May the 11th, about five in the evening, Mr. Perceval having walked from his house in Downing Street, was entering the lobby of the House of Commons, where a number of persons were standing, when a man, who had a short time previously placed himself in the recess of the door-way within the lobby, drew out a small pistol, and

shot Mr. Perceval in the lower part of the left breast. The ball is supposed to have entered the heart. Mr. Perceval moved forwards a few faltering steps, nearly half way up the lobby, and fell. He was immediately carried to the room of the Speaker's Secretary, to the left of the lobby, by Mr. W. Smith, Mr. Bradshaw, and another gentleman. Mr. Lynn, the surgeon, of Great George Street, was immediately sent for; but, on examining the wound, he considered the case utterly hopeless. All that escaped Mr. Perceval's lips previously to falling in the lobby, was "murder!" or "murdered!" He said no more afterwards. He expired in about ten or twelve minutes after receiving the fatal wound. Several members of both Houses of Parliament went into the room while he was dying; among others, his brother Lord Arden: all of them appeared greatly agitated. There was very little effusion of blood from the wound externally. His body was subsequently removed into the Speaker's house. The deed was perpetrated so suddenly, that the man who fired the pistol was not instantly recognised by those in the lobby, but a person passing at the moment behind

Mr. Perceval, seized the pistol, which the assassin surrendered without resistance, retiring towards a bench to the left. On being asked if he were the villain who shot the Minister, he replied, "I am the unhappy man;" but appeared quite undisturbed. He was taken to the bar of the House, and being identified as the assassin, underwent an examination before Messrs. M. A. Taylor, Aldermen Coombe and Curtis, &c. Though cautioned by Sir J. Hippesley not to criminate himself, he said: "I have admitted the fact—I admit the fact, but wish, with permission, to state something in my justification. I have been denied the redress of my grievances by Government; I have been ill-treated. They all know who I am, and what I am, through the Secretary of State and Mr. Becket, with whom I have had frequent communications. They knew of this fact six weeks ago, through the magistrates of Bow Street. I was accused most wrongfully by a Governor General in Russia, in a letter from Archangel to Riga, and have sought redress in vain. I am a most unfortunate man, and feel here (placing his hand on his breast) sufficient justification for what

I have done." Being again cautioned by Lord Castlereagh that he was not on his defence, he said, "Since it seems best to you that I should not now explain the causes of my conduct, I will leave it until the day of my trial, when my country will have an opportunity of judging whether I am right or wrong." He was then handcuffed, with an assurance that the property taken out of his pocket should be restored next morning. He was conveyed to Newgate between one and two o'clock on Tuesday morning in a coach, escorted by a party of Life-guards—it being thought proper not to send him earlier, on account of a disposition having been manifested by the populace in Lower Palace Yard, to open the coach door and liberate him. He was taken out by the Speaker's entrance, and every precaution adopted at Newgate to prevent his committing suicide.

With respect to the House of Lords, at the time, it seems they had just finished hearing counsel in an appeal case, and were proceeding with the reading of some private bills, when a bustling noise was heard without doors. Presently a cry was heard, "Mr. Perceval shot!—Mr. Perceval shot!" and a

gentleman connected with one of the parliamentary offices, rushed in, and stated to the anxious Peers who surrounded him, that he was standing close by Mr. Perceval in the lobby of the House of Commons, when a pistol was fired at Mr. Perceval, who uttered a cry of "murder," or "murdered," staggered two or three paces, and fell on his side. The officer then came away; but said he believed that Mr. Perceval was dead. Most of the Lords immediately rushed out, leaving only Lord Eldon and two Bishops in the House; and upon their return, after a few minutes private conversation, the Lord Chancellor said, that having just been apprized of a melancholy and atrocious event which had occurred in the lobby of the other House, he should give proper directions to the officers that none go out of the doors without being searched (alluding to the strangers below the bar). After some private consultation, an address to the Prince Regent was agreed upon; but Lord Ellenborough thought they should have some evidence how Mr Perceval came by his death; and for this purpose, Mr. Taylor, a door-keeper, being called, said he saw a pistol aimed and fired at Mr. Per-

ceval, who fell and expired. Earl Radnor then moved a Resolution for an Address to the Prince Regent, "expressive of the horror which their Lordships feel at the atrocious assassination of Mr. Perceval in the lobby of the House of Commons, and pray his Royal Highness would take the speediest measures for bringing the perpetrator of the crime to justice." Earl Grey seconded the motion in a low tone, as if overpowered by his feelings. The motion was then unanimously agreed to, and the address ordered to be presented.

TUESDAY.—The Duke of York presented the answer of the Prince Regent to the Address, declaring that his Royal Highness participated in the sentiments of horror felt by their Lordships at the atrocious murder of Mr. Perceval, and would take the requisite measures to bring the perpetrator to justice. The Earl of Liverpool then delivered a Message from the Prince Regent, stating, that being desirous of marking his sense of the public and private virtues of Mr. Perceval, and of affording relief and assistance to his numerous family and afflicted widow, his Royal Highness recommended a parliamentary provision for them. The Earl

of Liverpool, in moving a corresponding answer, paid an affecting tribute to the memory and virtues of his departed friend; his Lordship said he knew no man possessed of more virtues, or of fewer faults, or more devoid of guile. Earl Grey participated most sincerely in the feelings excited by this deplorable and horrid event, and approved highly of making provision for the numerous family of a public servant.

In the House of Commons, on Tuesday, Lord Castlereagh brought up a Message from the Prince Regent, recommending a provision for the wife and family of Mr. Perceval. His Lordship, in an impressive address, rendered nearly inaudible at times by the acuteness of his feelings, stated that his honourable and lamented friend had fallen a victim to the resentment and revenge of a disappointed individual, while in the zealous and conscientious discharge of his duty. He was happy to state that the crime attached itself to a single individual; that he had no accomplice; and so far the national character remained without a stain. After some just encomiums on the character and disposition of the late Mr. Perceval, his Lordship laid it

down as a principle, that unless there had been some base misconduct on the part of the public servant, it became the duty of the House to extend its protection to such servants, and defend them from public or private malignity. His Lordship then moved an Address to the Prince Regent, declaring their abhorrence of the atrocious act committed within the walls of Parliament, and expressing their willingness to make the required provision. Mr. Ponsonby was anxious to second the motion, and expressed his entire concurrence in the sentiments of the Noble Lord. He bore testimony to the numerous virtues of the late Mr. Perceval, for whose person he entertained a warm affection. Mr. Whitbread sincerely deplored the loss of the Right Hon. Gentleman, whose liberal and unceasing controul of temper he particularly admired. Sir R. Wigram suggested a public funeral, which Lord Castlereagh said would be distressing to the family. Messrs. Canning and W. Wynne shortly spoke, after which the House agreed to hear such witnesses on the Orders of Council as were desirous of returning home before an adjournment of any length took place.

WEDNESDAY.—Sir F. Burdett rose, and in a short speech expressed his detestation of the assassination of Mr. Perceval, and his concurrence in the proceedings of this House. In a Committee on the Prince Regent's message, relating to the provision for Mr. Perceval's family, Lord Castlereagh moved that an annuity of 2000l. should be granted to Mrs. Perceval, and the sum of 50,000l. to be vested in trustees, for the benefit and use of the twelve children of the late Mr. Perceval. His Lordship said that scarcely any property was left behind, and that only arising out of the fortune the widow was entitled to at her marriage. Messrs. Herbert and H. Sumner thought the grant wholly inadequate, and the latter proposed that 7,000l. should be appropriated to each child. Messrs. Wilberforce, Whitbread, Wynne, and Banks, urged the propriety of unanimity—the sum proposed by the noble Lord had the sanction of the family, and it would be better to vote it unanimously, than a larger sum with opposition. The grant of 50,000l. without fee or deduction to the children, was then voted unanimously; but on the motion of Mr. H. Sumner, carried on a division by 136 to

23, the annuity of 2,000l. to Mrs. Perceval, is to descend, on her decease, to the next heir male of the late Mr. Perceval.—Adjourned.

THURSDAY.—About 300 members, dressed in mourning, or with crape round their regimentals, went up with the Address; after the Regent's answer had been read, the House went into a Committee on the Resolutions for providing for the family of the late Mr. Perceval, when Mr. H. Sumner's Resolution was opposed by Mr. Whitbread.—Mr. Lushington, in advocating the Resolution, said, "I saw Lord Arden, the brother of Mr. Perceval, overwhelmed with grief, and his hand placed upon his body, near the part where the fatal wound was inflicted." 'My brother,' he exclaimed, 'you are gone, gone to heaven! but your children'——"His children," replied an honourable Member standing by, "are his country's!" He hoped the declaration would be verified. The Resolution was ordered to be re-committed to-morrow.—Witnesses were examined on the Orders in Council, after which the House adjourned.

FRIDAY.—On the Motion of Lord Clive,

the erection of a monument to the memory of Mr. Perceval, in St. Peter's church, Westminster, at the public expence, was carried by 199 to 26;—as was Mr. Huskisson's Resolution, for granting an annuity for life to Mr. Perceval's eldest son of 1,000l. from May, 1812, to be increased to 2,000l. on the death of his mother.

On Saturday morning the remains of Mr. Perceval were removed from his house in Downing Street, for interment in the family vault, at Charlton, in Kent, where Mrs. Perceval's mother resides. At eight o'clock a great number of noblemen's and gentlemen's carriages were assembled at Whitehall, opposite Privy Gardens. At nine the procession moved from Downing Street, in the following order:—

Mutes and attendants on horseback,
Hearse and Six with the Body,
Six Mourning Coaches, followed by 25 Carriages,
the Carriages of the Cabinet Ministers,
Relatives of the deceased,
his own Carriage, &c.

The procession moved slowly on towards Westminster Bridge. Here the solemnity

of the spectacle was heightened by the tolling of the deep-toned bells of the Abbey and St. Margaret's church. The pause which took place in George Street and Parliament Street, within a few yards of the place where the atrocious murder was perpetrated, gave an opportunity for reflection, and excited in every mind susceptible of grief, the most painful sensations; and the mourners would have been numerous indeed, had not the Members of both Houses of Parliament received circulars, that it was the particular wish of the afflicted family to have the ceremony conducted as privately as possible.

In the first mourning coach was Lord Arden, attended by his chaplain, and another gentleman; in the second were the Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Liverpool, the Earl of Harrowby, and Mr. Secretary Ryder. Among the mourners in the other coaches were Lord Perceval, Lord Redesdale, the Marquis Wellesley, the Earls of Westmorland and Buckinghamshire, Lords Sidmouth, Camden, Bathurst, Castlereagh, Melville, and Messrs. Arbuthnot, Wharton, Croker, Brooksbank, &c.

A party of the City Light Horse attended at

Newington Butts, and accompanied the procession to the church, in order to testify their respect for Mr. Perceval, who was a member, and their treasurer.

The coffin was very superb. The inscription was as follows:—

Right Honourable SPENCER PERCEVAL,
Chancellor of the Exchequer, first Lord of the
Treasury, Prime Minister of England,
Fell by the hand of an ASSASSIN, in the Commons
House of Parliament, May 11, A. D. 1812, in the
50th year of his age; born, Nov. 1st. A. D. 1762.

The trial of Bellingham commenced on Friday, May 15, when the auditors were numerous beyond example. But as the Prisoner's defence embraces the most important part of that proceeding, we shall insert it here, for the purpose of throwing more light upon the conduct of Mr. Perceval and his colleagues in office.

"Gentlemen of the Jury,

"I feel that I am under great obligations to the learned Attorney General for inducing the court to dismiss the objection that was made by my counsel on the ground of insanity; because it is by far more fortunate for me that such a plea

should be determined to be unfounded, than that it should be established. At the same time, I must express my gratitude to my counsel, whose object was certainly most meritorious. That I am insane, I certainly am most ignorant of, and I assure you that I never had an idea of it, with the exception of one instance in Russia, where my insanity was made a matter of public notoriety.—(*The prisoner here appeared much embarrassed, and after a short pause, proceeded.*)—Gentlemen, I beg pardon for thus detaining you, but I am wholly unaccustomed to situations like the present, and this is the first time I ever addressed a public audience; I therefore hope to receive your candid indulgence, and trust that you will pay more attention to the matter detailed than to the manner in which it is delivered. We are now engaged in the investigation of the facts of this most singular affair, and the circumstances under which I am brought (if I may use the phrase), a *compulsive volunteer* to this bar. Do you suppose me the man to go with a deliberate design, without cause or provocation, with a pistol to put an end to the life of Mr. Perceval? No, gentlemen! far otherwise. I have strong reasons for my conduct, however extraordinary; reasons which, when I have concluded, you will acknowledge to have fully justified me in this fatal fact. Had I not possessed these imperious incitements, and had murdered him in cool blood, I should consider myself a monster, not only unfit

to live in this world, but too wicked for all the torments that may be inflicted in the next.

"Circumstances may justify every thing; and I have now to unfold to you a scene of oppression and iniquity which is without a parallel, and which, had not the facts been authenticated by original documents, laid before Marquis Wellesley, as his Lordship can prove, would be utterly incredible. The learned Attorney General has candidly stated to you, that he has not the slightest imputation against my honour or character up to the fatal catastrophe which must be long lamented, and which I regret with the utmost sincerity; none can feel more pain upon this subject than I do, not excepting even the family of Mr. Perceval. I hope I shall be able to make the truth of this assertion distinctly appear, by setting the affair in its true light. For eight years have I now been persecuted on account of circumstances that were mere invention for my ruin; I was driven almost to despair, and I had even a *carte blanche* from the British to right myself in any way I might be able to discover. I have done so. I am now unexpectedly called to judgment, though for the last eight years I have sought judgment and justice from government in vain. Here I stand unprepared with many necessary documents that I have been unable, from the shortness of the notice, to procure, and I am, besides, in a great measure,

without witnesses, which are equally requisite for my vindication.

"It will be necessary for me, gentlemen, to go back to transactions as long ago as 1804, for from that period I may date my misery; and to set the subject in a clear point of view, I shall beg leave to read to you the copy of a petition which was transmitted through my solicitor, Mr. Windle, to the Prince Regent, as long ago as September, 1807. In consequence, however, of not receiving any reply, I took the resolution, under the instruction of counsel, to apply to Colonel M'Mahon on the subject. It appeared, that he had received the petition, but it had been mislaid, and in consequence I sent another, of which, what I hold in my hand is a copy. I will beg leave to read it, that you may be informed of the commencement and progress of this unhappy business in Russia, which gave rise to my applications on this side the water, and which, unfortunately for me, for Mr. Perceval, and for the country at large, have ended in a manner so melancholy and tragical."

The prisoner here read the commencement of his petition to the Regent, and then went on:—

"Lord Leveson Gower also, as I little expected, wrote me word, that by the letter of the Governor, he was precluded from interposing; but that if I would produce vouchers, establishing the truth of my allegations, he would then write

to the governor. Very good! I was now in some hopes of a restoration to freedom and to my family, but I was again doomed to be disappointed. I sent the letters and papers to the procureur, for the purpose of establishing my innocence, and the affair being so grossly impure and so perfectly notorious, the procureur was obliged to report upon them, but from that hour to this moment, I never heard a single syllable from Lord Gower, or from Sir S. Shairpe. Reflect now, gentlemen, if you can imagine yourselves in a state of such accumulated misery, what must have been your feelings, and from thence judge of mine. I had been but recently married to a wife, then only twenty years of age, with an infant at her breast, and pregnant with a second child; yet I was doomed to continue immured in a dungeon for six months longer. (*The prisoner burst into tears; as soon as he was again collected, he proceeded.*) Gentlemen, it so happened, that at this juncture, a new civil governor, Baron Asch, was appointed, and to him I stated the cruel circumstances under which I was detained. He very candidly said, that I was either innocent or guilty: if innocent, I ought to be discharged, and if guilty, I ought to be tried. He took up my cause, for I had no friends beside; I was surrounded by enemies; but he generously stepped forward, and bringing the matter into a court of justice, I obtained judgment against the whole party, including the military governor who

had injured me. I proved the falsity of the charge, and shewed, that the only object of the infernal league was to extort from me a large sum of money.

"On my arrival in Petersburg, I made application to Count Kotzebue, then minister of the interior, and I brought two charges against my prosecutor. Count Kotzebue had the affair investigated in most of the departments at Archangel, and finding my statement accurate, gave me a document which enabled me to bring my case before the Senate. It had previously devolved into the hands of Prince Chatterinsky, minister of foreign affairs, by whom it was laid before the Emperor, from whence it was transmitted to the Senate to be determined according to the law. Just at this period, Lord Gower arrived, and I put the papers into his hands, that they might be laid before the Senate. I produced my complaints before the Senate, but before any decision was had, I found myself arrested on two charges, the one criminal, and the other civil, and I was dragged from my family, thrown again into prison, where I continued for no less a space than two years! These were trials that would bow the proudest head and sink the noblest heart. Think, gentlemen, what I endured; and what was my offence? Nothing: there was not the shadow of proof against me. I was accused, however, of having quitted Archangel clandestinely. Gentlemen, I feel myself so

much exhausted, that I must beg to pause for a few seconds.

"Gentlemen, thus I was again thrown into a dungeon and into despair; without a hope, without a friend! The very day I expected a complete enfranchisement, the very hour I looked for re-established honours and reviving fortunes, I was handed to another prison, because I would not and could not submit to the extortion of 2000 roubles. I was dragged about the streets, with offenders who had been guilty of the most atrocious crimes. I was bandied about from one place to another. I have even passed the very door of the British ambassador, who had refused to listen to my complaints, and who must have been an unmoved and pitiless witness of what would have wrung the heart-strings of other men but to have looked upon. Of what must my heart have been composed, that was the sufferer of this indignity and this torture, to the eternal disgrace of both nations? I applied to Sir Stephen Shairpe again, without success; I was not listened to; I could obtain no redress there. I sought it here, and here in my native country I have been again refused: my fortune and my character have been ruined, and I stand here alone and unprotected by all but the laws of my country. They, I trust, will afford me that which all others have denied.

"I applied constantly to every ambassador for redress, and still I was kept in that miserable con-

dition for six years; bandied from prison to prison, from torture to torture, made a public spectacle of, led through the streets of Petersburgh with a common herd of malefactors. I ask you, gentlemen of the jury, what my feelings must have been? Consult your own bosoms, and there you will find the answer. And all this could not have happened but by the connivance of Lord L. Gower and Sir S. Shairpe. During this period, too, Mrs. Bellingham, then in a state of pregnancy, and one infant in her arms, was anxiously waiting for me to accompany her to England. I could not, and she was compelled to perform that dangerous voyage alone and unprotected, though in a condition so interesting; while Lord Gower saw and permitted so much misery. Oh, my God! what must his heart be made of? Gentlemen, I appeal to you as men, as fathers, as Christians, if I had not cause of complaint.—(*Here the prisoner was much affected, and he burst into tears: after a pause of a few moments, he resumed.*)—Lord Gower committed a first error, in refusing to interfere; and he afterwards persisted in it.—I was the victim. I was imprisoned for eighteen months, by the order of the chamber of commerce, in order that they might extort from me 2000 roubles, which, as I knew I did not owe, I would not pay. I was constantly guarded during this period, and frequently paraded through the streets of Petersburgh, a public spectacle. Finding I was too firm

to bend to their views, they proclaimed me a bankrupt, allowing me, according to the law in Russia, only three months to settle every claim upon me. And such was the eagerness of the chamber of commerce to ruin me, that they employed emissaries to enquire out persons to whom I owed money: their clerks stopped people in the streets, and asked them, 'Do you know Mr. Bellingham? Does he owe you any money? Do you know he is a bankrupt, and that he is going to England with all his property?' and other similar questions. Yet, after all, they were obliged to give a document, testifying, that there were neither claimants nor creditors. These documents I afterwards placed in the hands of Marquis Wellesley, and I call upon the noble Marquis, whom I see in the court, to disprove this assertion, if it be false.

"Under such accumulated misfortunes, nothing but a sustaining Power from above, nothing but the express interposition of Providence, could have preserved me to visit once more my country and my family. None of my friends in England ever expected to see me again. And I beg of you to remember, gentlemen, that all these sufferings were endured through the permission of Lord Gower. It was with his sanction and patronage that I was proclaimed a bankrupt, for without, it could not have taken place; and it was through his connivance that my appeal to justice was never

listened to. During this period I made repeated applications to various ambassadors, and I made a final appeal to Lord Gower before he left Petersburgh, the last time he was there. His secretary informed me his lordship could not do any thing.—Here I pause, gentlemen of the jury, and ask you earnestly to recollect these proceedings: consider, for a moment, what must have been the conduct of Lord Gower and Sir Stephen Shairpe, men clothed with the dignity of the representation of majesty, to suffer a native of their country to remain in prison, enduring such multiplied indignities. There was a transaction, also, which happened during that very period, calculated to shew, in a still stronger light, the manifest injustice of my case. A paltry dispute between two captains was four times laid before the emperor, by Lord Gower, in the course of two months. Gentlemen, while I relate this, I must say it would have been fortunate for me, and it would have been more fortunate for Mr. Perceval, had Lord Gower received the ball which terminated the life of the latter gentleman.

(There here arose a murmur of disapprobation in the court, which appeared to disconcert the prisoner.)

"After I came to England, I presented a memorial to the Marquis Wellesley, and grounded my claims to compensation upon the erroneous letter already alluded to. I received an answer,

in which I was informed that his Lordship could not enter into a consideration of my claims, because of the state of relation in which Russia then stood with regard to this country.—My next measure was to bring a serious charge against Lord Gower and Sir S. Shairpe before the privy council. I did so; and what was the result? an answer from the council office, that their lordships did not find any matter in my case, in which they could interfere.—I then applied to Mr. Perceval, and received an answer, in which I was informed, that the time for receiving private petitions was past for that session; nor, he added, did he think my claims such as could with propriety be submitted to parliament.

"By this refusal I was again reduced to despair. My situation became daily and hourly worse. My property was all sold; my creditors were clamorous; my family was ruined; my mind was in a state of horror. I next applied to the treasury, conceiving, that there I might obtain some consideration for my claims. My pretensions, however, were neglected, and I received a letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, inclosing my documents and negativing my request. My next application was to the fountain of grace itself, to the Prince Regent. It appeared, from Colonel M'Mahon's letter, that my first petition was mislaid, I therefore sent a second, nearly similar to the former.

"Gentlemen, this second petition I forwarded to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, and received an answer from Mr. Becket, secretary to Mr. Ryder, dated the 18th of February, 1812. In consequence of this reply, referring me to the council office, I had the honour of communicating with Lord Chetwynd and Mr. Buller. Upon opening my case to them, and stating my hopes of compensation, Mr. Buller said, I don't know where the money is to come from; and he added definitively, that I had nothing to expect. I asked, why the council refused to attend to his Royal Highness's reference, but could obtain no answer. It was my duty, then, to communicate the affair to the Prince Regent. I had a petition to the parliament drawn out. This I sent to the Prince Regent, requesting that his Royal Highness would order the Commons to take it into consideration. I received an answer from Mr. Secretary Ryder, dated Whitehall, March 9, 1812, in which I was informed, that his Royal Highness had not been pleased to signify any commands respecting my petition.

"Thus deluded by his Majesty's ministers—referred backwards and forwards—bandied about from one to another, obviously for the purpose of evasion, could it be expected I should not feel some degree of indignation? I mention these things as some justification of the crime laid to my charge; it is a duty which I owe myself to do so;

and I shall continue, therefore, to state the facts as they occurred. Finding myself the dupe of the ministers, and not likely to obtain any redress through their hands, I resolved to take justice in my own. I did so. I gave notice at Bow-street against his Majesty's ministers, for not doing me justice. I wrote a letter to Mr. Read, the magistrate, in which I stated that the door of justice had been shut against me; and I added, "if this reasonable request of justice be refused, I shall be obliged to do justice for myself, in which case I shall be prepared to argue the matter before his Majesty's attorney-general, whenever and whereever it may be necessary." To this letter I received an answer that Mr. Read could not interfere; but, as was his duty, especially as was proved by the subsequent melancholy catastrophe, he communicated the matter to his Majesty's ministers. I then went to Mr. Ryder again, by him I was referred to the Treasury for a final decision upon my claims; that final decision I at length received from Mr. Hill, who told me that nothing could be done, and added, that I was at liberty to take any measures I thought proper, and to do, in short, whatever I chose.

"Gentlemen, I am now coming to a conclusion. I have stated to you a history of my case, in the firm hope that it will prove some justification of the crime with which I am charged. I shall only further trouble you with a defence which, at a late

hour last night, and at an early hour this morning, I drew up. [Here the prisoner read from a written paper, in substance to the following effect:]—Gentlemen, whenever I appear before the tribunal of my God, I shall appear there as innocent of the wilful murder of Mr. Perceval, as they, who, after judgment, are admitted among the angels of heaven. That my arm destroyed him, I allow; that he perished by my hand, I admit; but to constitute felony, there must be *malice prepense*, there must be the wilful intention, and I deny that that has been proved. Unless proved, however, the felony cannot be made out; this you will shortly hear from the bench, and in that case you must acquit me. Recollect, gentlemen, what was my situation; recollect that my family was ruined, and myself destroyed, merely because it was Mr. Perceval's pleasure that justice should not be granted; sheltering himself behind the imagined security of his station, and trampling upon law and right, in the belief that no retribution could reach him. Of that departed gentleman I do not wish to speak with disrespect; I do not wish to say any thing in disparagement of the virtues which he was allowed to possess; and when I speak of him, I speak of him only in reference to myself. In a case so strong as mine, when I demand justice, I demand only my right, and not a favour; I demand what is the birthright and privilege of every Englishman. Gen-

tlemen, when a minister sets himself above the laws, as Mr. Perceval did, he does it at his own personal risk. If this were not so, the mere will of the Minister would become the law, and what would then become of your liberties? As to any malicious intention towards Mr. Perceval, or any desire to injure him, I solemnly avow that it was most averse from my heart. Justice, and justice only, was my object. I was driven to despair, to agony, to ruin, by the conduct of ministers. I gave notice at Bow-street, that if my claims were finally rejected, I would do myself the justice, and that solely to ascertain in a criminal court of justice, whether a Minister of England has a right to refuse justice to a subject of the realm. I have done so; and I again repeat, that the direct refusal of justice, on the part of Administration, was the sole cause of this sad catastrophe; and his Majesty's ministers have now to reflect on their own impure conduct, for an act which has deprived the country of the talents of Mr. Perceval. It is a melancholy fact, that to warp justice on any pretext, or under any circumstances, is the cause of all moral evil: if this position needs any proof, the unfortunate event upon which you are now assembled to decide affords that proof. The cruelty of my case must be obvious to you. If a poor but unfortunate man stops another upon the highway, and robs him of a few shillings, he is deprived of life; but I have

been robbed of thousands by the government; I have been deprived of every thing: I have been imprisoned for years; my wife, my family, have been ruined; and I am now called to answer for my life, because Mr. Perceval chose to patronize iniquity. What must then be the crime of the government towards me? and yet it goes unpunished. Is there any comparison between the two cases? It is a mite to a mountain. I had no alternative but to sink into utter ruin, or to take the melancholy step which I have adopted. I was prompted to it by no *malice prepense:* I was incited by the hope of bringing into court my unfortunate case, without which I knew it never could be promulgated; and I was incited by the desire of afterwards returning to the bosom of my family with comfort and honour. I trust that this serious lesson will operate as a warning to all future ministers, and that they will henceforth do the thing that is right; for if the upper ranks of society are permitted to act wrong with impunity, the inferior ramifications will soon become wholly corrupt.

"Gentlemen, my life is in your hands, I rely confidently upon your justice; I know not what your verdict may be; but sooner than suffer what I have done for the last eight years, five hundred deaths would be preferable. If I am destined to sacrifice my life, I shall meet my doom with conscious tranquillity; I shall look forward to it as

the weary traveller looks for the promised inn, where he may repose his wearied frame after enduring the pelting of the pitiless storm.—Gentlemen, it will now remain between God and your consciences as to what your verdict will be."

Sir J. Mansfield shortly summed up. The prisoner was indicted for the murder of Mr. Perceval, a name dear to every Englishman, *(here his lordship seemed much affected,)* but the jury were to consider it as a case of the meanest subject. The law knew no distinction of persons. They had to decide whether Mr. Perceval died by a pistol shot,—whether the prisoner fired that shot,—and whether he was in a sane mind, so as to know what he was about when he fired?—His lordship concluded by telling the jury, that if the prisoner, *at the time he fired the pistol*, knew right from wrong, he was a fit object for criminal justice.

The jury withdrew for a quarter of an hour, and returned with a verdict of *guilty*.

The Recorder then, in impressive language, pronounced sentence of death on the prisoner, who was ordered to be hanged on Monday, and his body to be anatomized;—

a sentence which he heard with the utmost composure.

The trial lasted eight hours. When the prisoner was put to the bar, he appeared a little affected, but not at all dismayed. He made a profound bow to the court, and was altogether calm and collected. While at the bar he looked at the assembly with a curious eye. He was dressed in a brown great coat, yellow striped waistcoat, and nankeen trowsers. After standing some hours he asked for the indulgence of a chair; the request was granted, and he seated himself, apparently, much at ease. He frequently took up some leaves which were strewed at the bar, which he often handled and smelled. During one of the pauses which occurred, he took an orange from his pocket and ate it.

On Monday morning, May 18th, 1812, (the very day, of the preceding week, stained by his guilt,) the wretched man suffered the sentence awarded by the law. A vast assemblage of spectators witnessed the firmness with which he met his fate; he appeared unshaken in spirit to his last moment. A number of persons in the crowd exclaimed,

"God bless him! God receive him!" &c. He was hurried as it were out of the world, not being allowed above two minutes to remain on the scaffold after he came out of Newgate. And notwithstanding the public opinion was divided to know whether he would be executed before Newgate, in Palace Yard, or at Horsemonger Lane, great numbers of troops were stationed near Smithfield and Blackfriar's Bridge; happily there was no occasion for their interference, though it was evident that by nine tenths of the people, this unfortunate culprit was looked upon more as a meritorious character than a malefactor, to which his pertinacity in refusing to acknowledge the criminality of the action, to his last moments, materially contributed; notwithstanding he had been assailed by magistrates, ministers, and persons of all descriptions for that purpose.

But though it seems Lord Leveson Gower did not come forward when the prisoner was living, to defend his conduct, yet when the man was dead and dissected, the following letter appeared in the public papers, addressed to Viscount Castlereagh, May 17th, 1812.

"Stanhope-street, May 17th, 1812.

"MY LORD,

"It appears upon the trial of *John Bellingham* for the murder of Mr. Perceval, that the prisoner, in his defence, endeavoured to justify that atrocious act on the ground of his Majesty's Government having refused to compensate him for the injuries and oppression he states himself to have suffered in Russia, during the time I had the honour of representing his Majesty in that country. He complained particularly of my conduct, and that of Sir Stephen Shairp, his Majesty's Consul-General, as having sanctioned, by our silence and neglect to interfere in his behalf, the unjust treatment, as he considered it, of the Russian Government.

"I was subpœnaed by the prisoner to attend the trial; I did attend, and expected anxiously to be called upon, to state, upon oath, all I could recollect of the circumstances of his case in Russia. In this expectation, however, I was disappointed; my testimony was not called for; and, after having heard the most serious accusation of gross neglect of duty and want of common humanity, brought forward by the prisoner, against myself and Sir Stephen Shairp, I had not the opportunity afforded me of publicly refuting those charges. Although I am perfectly aware that the assertions of a man, standing in the situation of Bellingham,

can, unsupported by any other testimony, have no weight whatever with the sober and reflecting part of the public, yet I should be wanting, I think, to the interests and honour of the government of this country, as well as to my own character and reputation, if I did not endeavour to do away any possible misapprehension upon this subject, by as ample a statement of the circumstances, as my memory, of transactions which passed some years ago, will allow me to furnish.

" As you, my lord, are at the head of that department, under which I was employed, I conceive it to be my duty to address this statement to your lordship.

" In the year 1805, I remember receiving a letter from John Bellingham, complaining of his being detained in a prison at Archangel, and claiming my protection, against what he conceived to be the injustice of the constituted authorities of that port; I remember that immediately upon the receipt of this letter, I consulted with Sir Stephen Shairp, who agreed not only to write a letter to the Governor-General, requiring an explanation of the circumstances of which Bellingham complained, but also to his own mercantile correspondents, British residents at Archangel, for their opinion of the conduct of the Russian Government towards the complainant.

" It appeared from these enquiries, that Bellingham having been engaged in commercial business

with the house of Dorbecker and Co. pecuniary claims were made by each party against the other, and that these claims had been by the Governor-General referred for decision to four merchants, two British merchants being appointed on the part of Bellingham, and two other persons on the part of Dorbecker. By the award of those arbitrators, Bellingham was declared to be indebted to the assignees of Dorbecker the sum of two thousand roubles. This sum, Bellingham, notwithstanding this decision, refused to pay.

"It also appeared from the communications received from Archangel, that a criminal suit had been instituted against Bellingham, by the owners of a Russian ship, which had been lost in the White Sea. They accused him of having written an anonymous letter that had been received by the Underwriters in London, in which letter it was stated, that the insurance of that ship was a fraudulent transaction; and payment for the loss of her had been in consequence resisted. No satisfactory proof was adduced against Bellingham, and he was acquitted of this charge.—But before the termination of this suit, he attempted to quit Archangel, and being stopped by the police, whom he resisted, he was taken to prison; but was soon after liberated, in consequence, I believe, of a second application to the Governor from Sir Stephen Shairp.

"About this period I quitted Russia, and I have

no recollection of hearing any thing more of John Bellingham, till after my arrival at St. Petersburgh upon my second embassy. He came running into my house one evening, and solicited me to allow him to remain all night, in order to avoid being retaken into custody by the police, from whom he had escaped. I complied with this request, though I could not, upon any ground, assume to myself the power of protecting him from legal arrest. It appeared that the award of the arbitrators of Archangel had been confirmed by the Senate, to which body Bellingham had appealed; and he was in consequence delivered over to the custody of the College of Commerce (a tribunal established for the special purpose of taking cognizance of commercial matters relating to British subjects, and whose authority was recognized in the commercial treaty between the two countries), there to remain till he discharged the debt of the two thousand roubles. This custody was not very strict, for he was allowed to walk wherever he pleased, attended by a police officer belonging to the college. He came frequently to my house, and at various times received from my private secretary small sums of money, to support him during his confinement. Confined as he was by the legal authorities of the country, I could on no pretence make any application for his release; but I remember well, in conversation with the Minister for foreign affairs, expressing my

personal wish that the Russian government, seeing no prospect of recovering the sum of money required from him, would liberate him from prison, on condition of his immediately returning to England.

"Very soon after this conversation, all diplomatic intercourse ceased between the two Courts; and the course of public events necessitated my quitting Russia in the abrupt manner with which your Lordship is well acquainted. I am, my Lord, with great respect,

"Your Lordship's most obedient,

"Humble Servant,

(Signed) "GRANVILLE LEVESON GOWER.

"The Viscount Castlereagh, &c. &c. &c."

That a change in the administration would take place in consequence of Mr. Perceval's death was very ardently wished for and generally credited, none can doubt; for before his remains were well deposited in the earth, some of his former coadjutors began to expose his political weakness: of this class none had more weight than the following paper, which bore the name of Marquis Wellesley's Declaration, and made its first appearance in the Morning Chronicle. The

facts it contains, it must be allowed, are by no means creditable to the memory of the deceased Chancellor, especially those which relate to his new Barrack system and the war in Spain.

"We believe it is no secret in the high political circles, though not generally known. A paper has been read (and indeed we have read it) which states, that the Noble Marquis felt it impossible for him to continue in office, because all his efforts for conducting the foreign department of our affairs with vigour and effect were counteracted and nullified by the influence of Mr. Perceval in the Cabinet.—The war in the peninsula, particularly, was not maintained with that energy which gave a chance to the skill of our commanders, and the gallantry of our troops, to make it successful. And here we may be allowed, by way of parenthesis, to state a fact not mentioned in the paper alluded to, but which has come to our knowledge—that some time ago Lord Wellington stated, that with the aid of a sum of 100,000l. the Spanish government would have been able to raise and equip an army for the defence of Gallicia, which would set free, at an auspicious moment, the whole of the British and Portuguese force, so as to enable him to advance to important offensive operations against the enemy—but Mr. Perceval declared, in the most peremptory manner, that

the state of our resources would not enable him to apply any such *extra* sum to the war in the peninsula. And yet he soon after, in complacency to the prevailing taste at head-quarters, was quite ready to devote double the sum to the raising of extra barracks in the neighbourhood of London, Bristol, and Liverpool. Barracks certainly useless at this time, when there are so few troops in the country, and not very constitutional at any time.—In every thing the Noble Marquis found himself crippled in the discharge of his functions, and in carrying into execution the measures which he conceived to be the best calculated, for the success of the great struggle in which we were involved; and therefore, on the very day when Mr. Perceval proposed to bring in the Bill, for taking off the restrictions from the authority of the Regent, the Noble Lord laid his prayer before his Royal Highness, that he might be permitted to resign. He made known this determination to Mr. Perceval in a letter, which that Right Honourable Gentleman answered in terms flattering to his Lordship.

"The Prince Regent earnestly beseeched the Noble Marquis to continue in place for a time at least (the obvious meaning of which, we suppose, the Noble Lord could not mistake), and accordingly consented to hold the seals; but it was with no little surprise that he learnt that Mr. Perceval had, without communicating the fact to him, and

while he continued, indeed, to observe towards him the forms of outward civility and confidence, made repeated applications to his Royal Highness to nominate a successor to Marquis Wellesley; and had actually, at different times proposed to take his pleasure on the appointment of Earl Moira, of Lord Castlereagh, and of Lord Sidmouth in his room. When this disingenuous proceeding came to the knowledge of the Noble Lord, he renewed his application to the Prince Regent to be permitted to resign.—His Royal Highness at length said, that he should hear his determination through Lord Eldon; and two days after the seals were sent for.—The paper in question concludes with a declaration of the opinion of the Noble Marquis on the very inadequate talents of Mr. Perceval to the station of Prime Minister, though he might possess abilities that fitted him for inferior situations in the State—that the Noble Marquis was resolved never again to act under Mr. Perceval; but he by no means had the desire or ambition to be Minister himself. On the contrary, he would be quite ready to act under others—under such men for instance, as Earl Moira or Lord Holland—nor had he any objection to act with any persons—even *with* Mr. Perceval, but certainly not *under* him.

"We mention the substance of this paper (which has been so long in circulation as to be no longer a secret at the West-end of the town),

because it is fit, when there is talk of public honours and of rewarding the services of Mr. Perceval by a monument, to make known the sentiments of his most able and distinguished coadjutor, on his talents and conduct in office."

This almost death-blow to the political consistency and consequence of the late Chancellor, was almost immediately followed by the publication of the whole correspondence between the Earl of Liverpool, the Marquis Wellesley, and Mr. Canning.

PAPERS

RELATIVE TO LORD LIVERPOOL'S PROPOSAL TO LORD WELLESLEY.

May 17, 1812.

(COPY)—No. 1.

Note from Mr. Canning to Lord Wellesley, inclosing the Minute taken in Lord Liverpool's presence, May 17, 1812.

" Gloucester-Lodge, May 17, 1812.

" MY DEAR WELLESLEY,

" I inclose the Minute which I have taken in Lord Liverpool's presence of the proposal which he was charged to convey to me.

" Ever, my dear Wellesley,

" Sincerely and affectionately your's,

(Signed) " GEORGE CANNING.

" P. S. I shall return a written answer to Lord Liverpool to-morrow."

(INCLOSURE)—No. 1.

Minute of Conversation between Mr. Canning and Lord Liverpool, dated 17th May, 1812.

" Gloucester-Lodge, Sunday, May 17, 1812.

" Lord Liverpool stated to me, that he was commanded by His Royal Highness the Prince Regent to make me the following communication :—

" That upon the melancholy event of Mr. Perceval's death, his Royal Highness being desirous of continuing his Administration upon its present basis, was desirous also of strengthening it as much as possible, by associating to it such persons in public life as agreed most nearly and generally in the principles upon which public affairs had been conducted.

" That with this view his Royal Highness naturally looked to Lord Wellesley and to me.

" That he (Lord Liverpool) was authorized to express the disposition of all his colleagues to act with Lord Wellesley and me, under an arrangement which might be at once consistent with their own honour and duty, and honourable and satisfactory to us.

" That with respect to Lord Castlereagh, it

was fair that it should be distinctly understood, that the situation in which he stands, both in this Government and in the House of Commons, was to be preserved to him.

"That with respect to official arrangements, he (Lord L.) would not have been the bearer of any proposition to me, but one which was understood as comprising my friends. In answer to a question put by me, Lord L. stated, that his colleagues were desirous, that he should be appointed to the office of First Lord of the Treasury; and that this desire was known to the Prince Regent, when his Royal Highness commanded Lord Liverpool to undertake this communication.

"Lord Liverpool added, that he was ready to answer any other enquiry that I might wish to make: or to clear up any thing that he might have imperfectly explained. I said, that I thought it better to receive his communication just as he gave it me; and to defer making any remark, or giving any answer whatever, until I should have communicated it to my friends, Lord Liverpool himself undertaking to see Lord Wellesley.

"I would only, therefore, ask—Whether I was to consider the opinion and policy of the Government as remaining altogether unchanged upon the question relating to the laws affecting the Roman Catholics?

"Lord Liverpool answered, that his own opinions upon this subject remained unchanged; and

that he was not aware that those of his colleagues had undergone any change.

"I then wrote this minute in Lord Liverpool's presence; which he read over, and suggested such corrections as appeared to him necessary for making it perfectly accurate.

"(Signed) GEORGE CANNING."

May 17, 1812.

No. II.

Minute of Conversation between Lord Wellesley and Lord Liverpool, 17th May, 1812.

"Apsley-House, 17th May, 1812,
"quarter past 5, p. m.

"Lord Liverpool came to me immediately after his visit to Mr. Canning, and remained with me for about half an hour. Soon after Lord Liverpool's departure, I received the annexed paper from Mr. Canning*.

"Lord Liverpool's conversation with me was substantially the same as that which is described to have passed with Mr. Canning. Any difference which appeared, arose necessarily from my questions and observations, which were made

* Vide Mr. Canning's Minute, No. 1.

without knowledge of what passed between Lord Liverpool and Mr. Canning. After receiving Lord Liverpool's verbal communication, nearly in the terms stated by Mr. Canning, I enquired, (1st.) what was to be the policy of the Government with relation to the Roman Catholics? To this question Lord Liverpool returned the same answer stated in Mr. Canning's paper to have been returned to a similar question.

"2dly, I observed to Lord Liverpool, that he was apprised of my opinion, that our efforts in the Peninsula had been conducted on an inadequate and imperfect scale, which could not be expected to accomplish the ultimate objects of the war in that quarter: that I had for a long time considered an extension of our system in the Peninsula to be indispensably necessary, and easily practicable: that I was aware of the impropriety (in my present situation) of urging any detailed questions to Lord Liverpool on this point; but, that I mentioned it now, because it must form a principal consideration in my answer to the proposition which he had brought to me.

"Lord Liverpool said, that he did not agree in my opinion respecting the scale of the efforts which we had hitherto made in the Peninsula, which he thought as great as it had been possible to make; that there never had been any limit to our exertions in that quarter, but what arose out of the question of practicability (that is, the

means of increasing and supplying our armies); and that he had never heard any specific plan by which those means might have been carried further, though the subject had been often most anxiously considered in my presence; that circumstances had occurred since my resignation, which did not then exist, and into the particulars of which it would not be proper for him to enter at this time, which might enable Government to extend to a certain degree, the military operations in the Peninsula; and the system of himself and his colleagues would be, as he contended they always had been, to make the greatest efforts in the cause of the Peninsula which the resources of the country rendered possible.

"3dly, I enquired whether all the general constituent parts of the present Cabinet were to remain? He informed me that they were in general to remain. He believed it was known to me, that some of the Members of the Cabinet had been long desirous of retiring, and would be ready, therefore, now to afford facilities to my new arrangement.

"In answer to a question put by me respecting Lord Sidmouth and his friends, he said they were to remain.

"4thly, I stated to Lord Liverpool, that I made no enquiry respecting the proposed distribution and allocation of offices; because that circumstance would not constitute the basis of my

decision upon the proposition which he had brought to me.

"Lord Liverpool observed, that the distribution of offices was a matter open to future adjustment, to be regulated for the honour of all parties.

"5thly, When Lord Liverpool informed me, that *the leading* in the House of Commons was to be preserved to Lord Castlereagh, I remarked, that in any situation which I might ever hold in any Administration, I should feel great obligation to any Member of the Government who would undertake that charge, which *was called the leading* in the House of Parliament in which I sat; although I was fully aware of the great importance which that charge necessarily conveyed to the person who exercised it, and of the great influence which it must give to him in the general Administration and Patronage of the Government.

"6thly, I desired to know, whether all those persons now designated by the name of the "Opposition," were to be excluded from the proposed scheme of Administration.

"Lord Liverpool answered, that no principle of exclusion was intended; but that he was not authorized to make any proposal to any persons of the description which I had mentioned.

"7thly, Considering the course which Lord Liverpool had observed in making this communication, I asked him, whether he applied to me by

command of the Prince Regent, as a part of Mr. Canning's suite? I reminded Lord Liverpool of the constant and unabated exertions which I had made to open every avenue for the return of Mr. Canning to the public service; remarking at the same time, that I never had attempted to press that point beyond the honour and feelings of Mr. Perceval's Administration. I stated, that I could not consider any Administration to be constituted on a foundation of justice towards individual talents and services, or towards the interests of the country, in which Mr. Canning should not hold a high efficient station. But I added, that Mr. Canning was under no engagement to me which could preclude his acceptance of any office which might be offered to him; that, on the other hand, Mr. Canning would certainly make the same declaration with regard to my perfect freedom. Lord Liverpool said, that he had pursued this course of communication, being convinced, that, under the present circumstances, I would not accept office, unless a fair proposal was made to Mr. Canning. I declared to Lord Liverpool, that he was correct in this view of my sentiments towards Mr. Canning; repeating, however, that Mr. Canning and I were perfectly free to act as each might think fit, and that our agreement in many great public principles could not affect questions of mere official arrangement.

"8thly, I expressed my wish to receive this

communication in writing; to answer it in writing; and also to submit my sentiments upon the whole transaction in an audience of the Prince Regent.

"Lord Liverpool informed me, that Mr. Canning would transmit to me a copy of the Minute of Lord Liverpool's conversation taken in his presence, and Lord Liverpool desired me to consider that paper* as the written communication which I wished to receive. I agreed to Lord Liverpool's proposal on this point. I then informed Lord Liverpool, that I would return my answer in writing to that paper. Whatever might be the tenor of my answer, with regard to the great public considerations on which it must be founded, I expressed my hope, that Lord Liverpool would be assured of my sincere personal respect and esteem. I now transmit this Minute to Lord Liverpool, requesting him to insert any correction which he might think requisite.

"(Signed) WELLESLEY."

"May 18, 1812."

"Corrected by Lord Liverpool, and returned to me.

"(Signed) WELLESLEY."

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* Vide Mr. Canning's Minute, No. I.

No. III.

Note from Mr. Canning to Lord Wellesley, enclosing a Letter to Mr. Canning from Lord Liverpool, relative to Lord Castlereagh.

(COPY.)

"Gloucester Lodge, Sunday night,
"May 17, 1812.

"MY DEAR WELLESLEY,

"I have just received from Lord Liverpool a letter, of which the enclosed is a copy. I transmit it to you to be added, according to his desire, to the copy of the minute of his verbal communication of this morning.

"Ever affectionately your's,
"G. C."

COPY in No. III.

Lord Liverpool to Mr. Canning.

(PRIVATE.)

"Fife-House, May 17, 1812.

"MY DEAR CANNING,

"I think, upon reflection, it is due to Lord Castlereagh to state, in writing, what I mentioned to you verbally, that from motives of delicacy he absented himself from the Cabinet, on the oc-

casions on which the subject in your Memorandum was determined.

"I did not, however, make the communication to you, without having reason to know that he would be no obstacle in the way of an arrangement, founded on the principles stated in the Memorandum.

"I will beg of you to communicate this letter to any persons to whom you may communicate the Memorandum.

"(Signed) LIVERPOOL."

"To the Right Hon. George Canning."

Paper relative to Lord Liverpool's Proposal to Mr. Canning, May 17, 1812.

"Gloucester Lodge, May 18, 1812.

"MY DEAR LIVERPOOL,

"I have communicated to such of my friends as I had an immediate opportunity of consulting, the minute, taken in your presence, of the proposition which you conveyed to me yesterday.

"In a case in which I felt that my decision either way might be liable to misapprehension, I was desirous rather to collect the opinions of persons whose judgment I esteem, than to act on the impulse of my own first feelings.

"The result of their opinions is, that by entering into the Administration upon the terms proposed to me, I should incur such a loss of personal and public character, as would disappoint the object which his Royal Highness the Prince Regent has at heart; and must render my accession to his Government a new source of weakness, rather than an addition of strength.

"To become a part of your Administration, with the previous knowledge of your unaltered opinions as to policy of resisting all consideration of the state of the laws affecting his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, would, it is felt, be to lend myself to the defeating of my own declared opinions on that most important question: opinions which are as far as those of any man from being favourable to precipitate and unqualified concession; but which rest on the conviction that it is the duty of the advisers of the crown, with a view to the peace, tranquillity, and strength of the empire, to take that whole question into their early and serious consideration; and earnestly to endeavour to bring it to a final and satisfactory settlement.

"With this result of the opinions of those whom I have consulted my own entirely concurs; and such being the ground of my decision, it is wholly unnecessary to advert to any topics of inferior importance.

"After the expressions, however, with which

you were charged on the part of all your colleagues, I should not be warranted in omitting to declare, that no objection of a personal sort should have prevented me from uniting with any or all of them, in the public service, if I could have done so with honour; and if, in my judgment, a Cabinet so constituted in all its parts, could have afforded to the country, under its present great and various difficulties, an adequately efficient Administration.

"I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of adding, that the manner of your communication with me has entirely corresponded with the habits and sentiments of a friendship of so many years; a friendship which our general concurrence on many great political principles has strengthened, and which our occasional differences have in no degree impaired.

"On the public grounds which I have stated, I must entreat you to lay at the feet of the Prince Regent, together with the warmest expressions of my dutiful attachment to his Royal Highness, and of my acknowledgement for the favourable opinion which his Royal Highness has been graciously pleased to entertain of me, my humble but earnest prayer to be excused from accepting office on terms which, by a sacrifice of public character, must render me inefficient for the service of his Royal Highness's Government.

"I presume, at the same time, humbly to solicit

an audience of the Prince Regent, for the purpose of explaining in person to his Royal Highness the grounds of my conduct, on an occasion on which I should be grieved to think, that his Royal Highness could, for a moment, consider me as wanting either in duty to his Royal Highness, or in zeal for the public service; and of assuring his Royal Highness that my inability to assist in forwarding his Royal Highness's purpose of procuring strength to his Administration, on the plan which has been suggested by his Royal Highness's confidential servants, does not arise from any disposition, on my part, to shrink from the encounter of those difficulties which press, at this time, upon the country and upon the Crown.

"I am &c.

"(Signed) GEORGE CANNING."

No. IV.

Copy of a Letter from Marquis Wellesley to the Earl of Liverpool, transmitting Lord W.'s Reply to Lord Liverpool's Proposal.

"Apsley-House, May 18, 1812,
half-past three, p. m.

"MY DEAR LORD,

"I enclose a paper, containing my reply to the communication which you were so kind as to

make to me yesterday. Although I find myself compelled to decline the proposal which you conveyed, I request you to accept my grateful thanks for the amicable and satisfactory manner in which you communicated with me: and to be assured, that I shall always entertain the most sincere and cordial sentiments of personal respect and esteem for you.

"Believe me, my dear Lord,

"Most sincerely your's,

"(Signed) WELLESLEY."

"Earl of Liverpool."

(INCLOSURE) No. IV.

Lord Wellesley's Reply to Lord Liverpool's Proposition.

"Apsley-House, May 18.

"From the communication received through Lord Liverpool, I understand, that his Royal Highness the Prince Regent has been graciously pleased to signify his desire of strengthening his Administration upon its present basis, by associating me with it, as one of those persons who agree most nearly and generally in the principles upon which public affairs have been conducted.

"From the same communication I also derive

the gratifying intelligence, that all Lord Liverpool's colleagues have authorised him to express a disposition to act with me, under an arrangement, consistent with their own honour and duty, and honourable and satisfactory to me.

"I receive this notification of the Prince Regent's commands with every sentiment of duty and affection, while it affords me matter of just satisfaction, that, to the distinguished honour of such condescending notice from his Royal Highness, is added so high a testimony of the confidence and esteem of all the respectable persons composing his present Administration.

"With all humility towards the exalted authority from which this proposition proceeds, and with the most sincere regard for those through whom it is conveyed, I must, however, declare, that I should have declined it at the first instant of its approach, if motives of deference and submissive attachment had not imposed upon me the obligation of receiving it with respectful consideration.

"The proposition necessarily rests upon a supposition, that I entertain no such difference of public sentiment with the present Administration, as should preclude me from acting with them, under an arrangement compatible with our mutual and respective honour and duty.

"But it appears from Lord Liverpool's candid and explicit statement, that upon the important

question, which regards the laws affecting the Roman Catholics, Lord Liverpool's opinions remain unchanged; nor is he aware, that the sentiments of his colleagues, on that subject, have undergone any change.

"I must therefore conclude, that the policy which has been pursued respecting the Roman Catholics, during the present Session of Parliament, is to be continued without abatement; the general constituent parts of the present Cabinet are to remain unchanged; the highest and most efficient offices in the State, therefore, are to be filled by persons who still conceive themselves to be bound by duty, honour, and conscience, not only to resist any mitigation of the present condition of the Roman Catholics, but even to prevent the consideration of the laws which affect that large portion of the population of the empire.

"I cannot concur in the principle on which the present Administration has conducted this important branch of public affairs; on this point, I have recently expressed the strongest difference of opinion with the present Administration.

"The declaration of Lord Liverpool precludes the hope of any such change in the policy of the present Administration towards the Roman Catholics as could satisfy my judgment. This difference is of the utmost importance: without any other obstacle, therefore, this alone compels me

to decline the proposition which Lord Liverpool has conveyed to me.

"I entertain a confident expectation, that when the Prince Regent shall have considered the nature of this difficulty, he will extend his indulgence to my humble representation, and will relieve me from the pressure of commands, which I could not obey without sacrificing a public principle of the highest obligation.

"These observations comprise a sufficient reply to the communication received through Lord Liverpool. But I deem it to be a duty towards the Prince Regent to declare, that the considerations which induced me, on the 19th of February, to resign the station which I had the honour to hold in his Royal Highness's service, have acquired additional force since that time, and would constitute an insuperable obstacle to my acceptance of any station in the present Administration.

"I originally expressed my desire to withdraw from Mr. Perceval's Administration, because my general opinions, for a long time past, on various important questions, had not sufficient weight in that Cabinet, to justify me towards the public, or towards my own character, in continuing in office.

"My objections to remaining in that Cabinet arose, in a great degree, from the imperfect scale on which the efforts in the Peninsula were con-

ducted. It was always stated to me, that it was impracticable to enlarge that system. I thought that it was perfectly practicable to extend the plan in the Peninsula, and that it was neither safe nor honest towards this country or the allies to continue the present inadequate scheme.

" From Lord Liverpool's statement upon this point, it is evident, that, since my resignation, it has been found practicable to make some extension of the system in the Peninsula; but it is still intimated, that my views are more extensive than the resources of the country can enable the Government to reduce to practice. I however still entertain the same views and opinions, without diminution or alteration; and I am convinced, that a considerable extension of the scale of our operations in the Peninsula, and also an effectual correction of many branches of our system in that quarter, are objects of indispensible necessity, and of easy attainment.

" With such a decided difference of opinion in relation to the conduct and management of the war, my return into a Cabinet composed as the present is, would offer to me no better prospect than the renewal of discussions which have hitherto proved unavailing.

" I learn from Lord Liverpool, that he has received no authority, in forming the intended Administration, to make any proposal to any of

those persons now designated by the name of "The Opposition."

"My enquiry on this point originated in a sincere conviction, (founded upon an attentive observation of the general state of public opinion, and of the condition of the empire,) that no Administration, which shall not comprise some of those persons, can prove advantageous to the Prince Regent, conciliatory towards Ireland, and equal to the conduct of the war on a scale of sufficient extent.

"It has been stated erroneously, that the first act of the Prince Regent upon his approach to unrestricted authority, was to establish Mr. Perceval's administration: but the fact is, that his Royal Highness's first act at that crisis was to dissolve Mr. Perceval's Administration; and to endeavour to form a Cabinet upon a more extended and liberal basis. This endeavour was frustrated at that moment, and the formation of such a Cabinet was represented to his Royal Highness to be impracticable. It has, however, since appeared evident to me, from the discussions and declarations which I have witnessed in Parliament, that his Royal Highness's benevolent intentions on that subject are now perfectly practicable; and that their accomplishment would tend to promote internal peace and tranquillity, and to invigorate the whole system of our external operations.

"Impressed with this sentiment, I should be untrue to his Royal Highness's interests and honour, as well as to the prosperity of the empire, if I concurred in any arrangement of an Administration which did not include a fair and full consideration of this most important point.

"After such a dispassionate consideration, my opinion is, that a Cabinet might be formed, on an intermediary principle respecting the Roman Catholic claims, equally exempt from the dangers of instant, unqualified concession, and from those of inconsiderate, peremptory exclusion; the entire resources of the empire might be applied to the great objects of the war with general consent, upon a full understanding of the real exigency of the present crisis; and concord and union at home might secure ultimate and permanent success abroad.

"(Signed) WELLESLEY."

To the Marquis Wellesley.

"Fife-House, May 19, 1812.

"MY DEAR LORD,

"After the receipt of the paper which you sent to me in the afternoon of yesterday, I should certainly have felt it to be unnecessary and fruitless to trouble you with any further correspondence, if I were not desirous to correct the misapprehen-

sion into which you appear to have fallen respecting my opinions, and those of my colleagues, upon the Roman Catholic question.

"In the communication which passed between us on Sunday, as well as that which I previously had with Mr. Canning, I certainly stated my opinions upon the Roman Catholic question to remain unchanged, and that I was not aware that those of my colleagues had undergone any change.

"With respect to myself individually, I must protest against its being inferred from any declaration of mine, that it is, or ever has been, my opinion, that under no circumstances it would be possible to make any alteration in the laws respecting the Roman Catholics.

"Upon the last occasion on which the subject was discussed in Parliament, I expressly stated that circumstances might arise, in which, in my judgment, some alteration in those laws would be advisable. I have always been desirous of hearing the specific proposition which should explain distinctly, what part of the existing securities it was intended to repeal—what part it was intended to preserve, and what were the new securities which it has been so often declared must be substituted in the place of some of those which are at present in force.

"I have never heard any satisfactory explanation on this point.

"I will fairly own, that in the present state of the opinions and feelings of the Roman Catholics, I do not believe such a project to be practicable, consistently with the attainment of the avowed objects of really satisfying the Roman Catholics, and of affording an adequate security to the Established Church and Constitution.

"Entertaining this opinion, I have felt it to be my duty to continue to resist a Parliamentary Inquiry on that subject, which, in my judgment, could be productive of no other effect than that of alarming the Protestants on the one hand, and of deluding and deceiving the Roman Catholics on the other.

"With respect to the opinions of my colleagues, there are some who entirely agree with me in the view which I have taken of this question; but I am sure it must be known to you, from discussions at which you have been present, that there are others who have always entertained and avowed different opinions from those professed by me upon some parts of this subject.

"You must recollect, that considerations of a very high importance, but which might be only temporary in their nature, induced us all, up to a very late period, to be decidedly of opinion, that it was not proper that under such circumstances the measure should be entertained.

"You may be of opinion that since the month of February last these considerations have ceased

to be in force. But they are still regarded by others as not having lost their weight. Besides the considerations to which I have referred, the conduct and temper which the Roman Catholics have been induced to manifest, the principle upon which the question has been brought forward, the circumstances of Europe at this time give rise to objections which are felt in a greater or less degree by different persons.

"I have thought this explanation due to my colleagues and to myself.

"In one point we are all agreed, that this is not the moment at which the question ought to be entertained, with a view to any immediate practical consequence. I am aware, that in this sense of our duty, our opinions may be at variance with your's; but it is material that these opinions should not be misunderstood, or subject to the interpretation to which my silence might render them liable, if I had not returned some answer to that part of your paper.

"Upon the subject of the manner in which the war in the Peninsula has been managed, I forbear entering into any particulars at present; but I think it material to observe, with respect to my declaration, that since your resignation it had been found practicable to make some extension of the military efforts in the Peninsula, that this has not arisen from any means which were in existence at the time when you were in office, and

which there had been then any indisposition or objection to direct to that object, but it has grown out of events which have subsequently occurred, and which may place at the disposal of Government, means which were at that time unavoidably applied to another service.

"As this letter is merely explanatory, I will not give you the trouble of returning any answer to it; but I am sure you will see the justice and propriety of considering it as a part of the correspondence which has passed between us on the subject to which it relates.

"I am, &c.

"(Signed) LIVERPOOL."

"Marquis Wellesley, K. G."

Copy of Lord Wellesley's Reply to Lord Liverpool's Explanatory Letter of the 19*th May*, 1819.

(COPY.)

"Apsley House, May 21, 1812.

"MY DEAR LORD,

"Although you have had the goodness to dispense with my returning any answer to your letter of the 19th instant, some further observations on my part may perhaps contribute to promote the professed object of that letter, by explaining and correcting whatever may appear doubtful or

erroneous in the course of our recent correspondence.

"When you informed me, that your opinion upon the claims of the Roman Catholics remained unchanged, and that you were not aware of any change in the opinion of your colleagues on that subject, I certainly concluded, that the policy, which has been pursued, during the present session of Parliament, would be continued by the new Cabinet: subsequent reflection satisfies me, that such a conclusion was just and reasonable; nor can I admit, that I have fallen into any misapprehension of that system of policy, when I have described it as consisting, not only in the denial of any present relief to the Roman Catholics, but even a peremptory refusal to consider the state of the law which affects their civil condition.

"Whatever may be the different character or complexion of the opinions of the several Members of the present Cabinet, the practical result has been to pursue the course which I have described, during the present session of Parliament; and your explanation on this point closes with an admission, that you are all agreed to continue the same policy in the present moment.

"No suggestion is made of the time or circumstances, in which any alteration of this system of policy can be expected; no prospect is afforded of any conciliatory proceeding, which might tend to

open the way to an amicable settlement; and, while a desire of hearing specific propositions of security is professed, the very consideration of the question is denied to Parliament, and is not pursued by any other authority.

"This statement is no misapprehension of the tenor of your explanatory letter; and in such a state of the practical consequences of the united Councils of the present Cabinet, it may be deemed superfluous to analyze individual sentiments.

"This task (however useless with regard to present practice) is required from me, by the strong protest which you have made against any inference to be drawn from any declaration of your's, 'that 'it is, or ever has been your opinion, that *under* '*no circumstances* it would be possible to make any 'alteration in the laws respecting the Roman Ca-'tholics.' To this protest you have added an assurance, 'that upon the last occasion, on which the 'subject was discussed in Parliament, you expressly 'stated that *circumstances might arise*, in which, 'in your judgment, some alteration in those laws 'would be advisable.'

"I confess freely to you, that I had always understood your recorded opinion on this subject in a very different sense: I had supposed, that you considered the disabilities imposed by statute upon the Roman Catholics, not as temporary and occasional securities, against a temporary and occasional danger, but as an integral and perma-

nent part of the Constitution in Church and State, established at the Revolution.

"In this opinion, I had always understood, that several of the principal Members of the present Cabinet concurred with you; and that you felt, in common, an apprehension, that the removal of any important part of this system of restraint would endanger the foundations of the Establishment of our Laws, Liberties, and Religion.

"Viewing in this light your sentiments, and those of the respectable persons to whom I refer, I am persuaded, that I shall not be suspected of intending to cast any reflection upon the honour or honesty of those principles, or of the persons who maintain them.

"I have ever considered those principles to be pure and honest in the minds in which I supposed them to reside; and, while I gave full credit to their sincerity, I lamented their erroneous foundation and dangerous tendency.

"I must further declare, that, from some accident, I did not hear the Statement in Parliament to which you refer, as having been made by you, on the last occasion, in the House of Lords.

"I now, however, understand your opinion to be, that *circumstances may arise*, in which, in your judgment, some alteration would be advisable in the Laws affecting the Roman Catholics.

"I should be desirous of urging the same inquiry respecting *circumstances*, which you have made respecting *securities;* and I should be anxious to hear the specific statement of *all, or any of those circumstances*, under which you would advise any alteration in the Laws respecting the Roman Catholics.

"The explanation which you require, respecting securities, is attainable, only by a full consideration and discussion of the whole subject; and I therefore view the declared intention of resisting the first step towards such a discussion, as an effectual barrier against that explanation, which you consider to be the necessary preliminary to any alteration in the existing Statutes.

"The details of your reasoning on this part of the question, render the prospect of any settlement utterly hopeless: you require a change in the state of the opinions, feelings, conduct, and temper of the Roman Catholics, as a preliminary even to the consideration of the causes of their complaints. But is it possible to expect effectual change in the temper of the Roman Catholic Body, while you refuse even to inquire into the nature of their grievances?

"The repeated rejection of their claim, without any other deliberation, than that which has arisen on the mere question of taking the Petition into consideration, is not a course of pro-

ceeding calculated to mitigate the severity of disappointment.

"Reason and moderation must appear in our consideration of their prayer, if we hope to infuse those qualities into their proceedings.

"You require, also, a change in the circumstances of Europe. Ignorant of the events which may have furnished any hope of such a change, since I had the honour of a share in his Royal Highness's Councils, I must consider the determination to delay this interesting question, until Europe shall have assumed a new aspect, as a virtual negative upon the substance of the claim; and I feel this point with a greater degree of pain, because I am convinced that the continuance of Ireland in her present condition, must protract, if not perpetuate, the present unhappy condition of Europe.

"But, until these preliminaries shall have been established, you declare, that it will be your duty to resist Parliamentary Inquiry; which in your judgment could be productive of no other effect, than to alarm the Protestants, and to delude the Roman Catholics. At the same time, you offer no hope, that the means of relief will be opened by any other authority.

"I cannot understand, through what channel of reason or passion, the Protestants should be alarmed, or the Catholics deluded, by a full and fair consideration of the state of the laws af-

fecting the latter body. Indeed, I cannot conceive any proceeding so likely to remove alarm, and to prevent delusion, as that which appears to you likely to create both.

"You refer to considerations of a '*very high importance*,' which, until a very late period of time, have precluded the executive government and parliament from entertaining this measure; and you suggest, that in the opinion of some persons these considerations have not lost their weight.

"I presume, that you refer to the known sentiments of the most exalted and venerable authority in these realms, on the claims of his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects.

"As your letter seems to bear some reference to the course of my conduct in parliament, and in his Majesty's councils on this subject, I avail myself of this opportunity to explain the motives both of my former silence and of the recent declaration of my sentiments.

"At the remote period of the year 1797, upon the eve of my departure for India, I stated to the late Mr. Pitt my solicitude that he should direct his attention to the settlement of Ireland; and I expressed to him my conviction that Ireland could neither be happily settled nor firmly united to Great Britain, without a concurrent settlement of the claims of his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects.

"The opinions, which I declared to Mr. Pitt, at that time, respecting the substance of those claims, were precisely similar to those which I have stated in the House of Lords, during the present session of parliament.

"It is not necessary to enter into any review of the transactions which passed during my absence in India, with relation to Ireland, or to the claims of the Roman Catholics.

"I arrived from India in the month of January, 1806; and, after one short interview with Mr. Pitt, I assisted in performing the last sad office of following his remains to the grave.

"You are aware, that long before that period of time the '*high considerations*' to which you refer had been fixed in full force; that no attempt to change those sentiments could have been made with any prospect of success; and that the result even of a successful proceeding in parliament would have tended only to produce the most dreadful extremity of confusion.

"You must remember, that I have always lamented (as serious national calamities, menacing the constitution of the monarchy) the reference which has necessarily been made to the existence of those personal sentiments, and the causes which have occasioned that necessity.

"With the warmest sentiments of personal veneration, attachment, and gratitude, my opinion has always been, that the duty of loyalty and

affection towards a British sovereign does not consist in submissive obedience, even to the honest prejudices or errors of the royal mind, but rather in respectful endeavors to remove those prejudices and errors by free advice in council, and by temperate remonstrance in parliament.

"But the time for such endeavours had passed: and I submitted, reluctantly, not to my sense of the genuine duty of a faithful counsellor towards his sovereign, but to the painful, and, by me, irreversible necessity of the case.

"This is a subject of the utmost—of the most perilous delicacy. Your letter has opened it—I will pursue it no farther than to assure you, that when, on the 31st of January, I declared, in the House of Lords, my sentiments respecting the Roman Catholic claims, the necessity which had occasioned my silence appeared to me to have entirely ceased.

"The second point of your explanatory letter refers to the management of the war in the Peninsula.

"Your suggestions are necessarily indistinct with regard to the additional means (which have occurred since my resignation) of extending our military efforts in that quarter. I think I can collect, even from your hints, that although those means are extraneous, the probability of their existence might have been foreseen as the natural

result of instructions which were in progress of execution previously to my resignation.

"But my objection to the system pursued in the Peninsula, at the time of my resignation, was applied to the whole frame and fabric of our permanent arrangements, both in Portugal and Spain, which, in my judgment, must be corrected and extended, not only with a view to the advantageous use of such means as we now possess in the Peninsula, but even of such adventitious and extraneous means as events in other quarters may place at our disposal.

"Believe me, my dear Lord,

"Always your's, most sincerely,

(Signed) WELLESLEY."

The Earl of Liverpool, &c. &c. &c."

That weakness and inefficiency in the cabinet, and their declining consequence in the eyes of the country at large, which had been long suspected, it would seem only waited for the circumstance of Mr. Perceval's demise, as it were, to proclaim it at noonday. It was the inevitable fate of his coadjutors, who had long been distrusted by the *people*, now to be distrusted by the *parliament*

also. Mr. Stuart Wortley, who gave notice of a motion in the House of Commons on Wednesday, May 20, brought this forward the next evening, namely,

"That an humble address be presented to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, praying, that he would be graciously pleased to take such measures as are best calculated to the promotion of a strong and efficient administration."

This was seconded by Lord Milton, and opposed by Mr. Eyre, Mr. Wilberforce, Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Ryder, and other members in the habit of voting with the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, and supported by Sir Francis Burdett, who said that his opinion was, that under the present circumstances no change of men whatever could be productive of any lasting benefit to the state, without a thorough change of measures altogether.—The Honourable Bart. was desirous of taking a short retrospect in relation to the subject now more particularly before the House. We had, within these few years, had administrations very differently constituted. We had had administrations *including*, as was supposed, all the talents of

the country—and we had had administrations *excluding*, as was also supposed, all the talents of the country. We had, for many years, at the head of the government a gentleman of most transcendant abilities, he meant Mr. Pitt, and yet it was a very general opinion, in which he (Sir F. Burdett) could not but concur, that he (Mr. Pitt) was one of those who had brought down on the country the mass of calamities from which it was now found to be so difficult to extricate us. The country had since had at the head of its affairs that Right Hon. Gentleman's no less able opponent (Mr. Fox), but still our situation was not changed for the better. We had had administrations, in short, of every description, and of every character and profession; but still, from the system which had never ceased to be acted on, the evils under which we laboured, instead of being alleviated, had augmented, and our burthens had gone on encreasing and accumulating daily. When he considered all this, he (Sir Francis Burdett) could not agree in thinking that the motion now made by the Honourable Member (Mr. Stuart Wortley), and which he seemed to

regard as a specific for all the evils we suffered, namely, an address to the Prince Regent to form a strong and efficient administration, would have the effect of answering the object in view. He therefore proposed an amendment, namely—Imploring his Royal Highness, in the forming of a new administration, to select men whose chief object should be to apply the resources of the nation to national purposes; who were actuated by feelings of toleration in religious opinions, particularly with respect to the Roman Catholics of Ireland; and above all, who should support such a reform as would ensure to the country, a full, fair, and free representation of the people in parliament.

The Hon. Mr. Ward supported the right of the House to advise the crown as by no means contrary to precedent. As to another point, *weakness in the administration*, it would, no doubt, be a disagreeable task to go from man to man—from office to office—pointing out in what that weakness consisted. This was a task, therefore, which he should spare himself, for it was one *of almost universal feeling*. He was surprized, indeed, that gentlemen should allege that there could

be a doubt on this head, after the loss of Mr. Perceval. They were lately told, such were the talents, such was the popularity of Mr. Perceval, that he was sufficient to make up for every other deficiency. That being the case, he thought it was rather an ill compliment paid by gentlemen on the other side to their departed friend, who had been judged, and justly so, the head of their administration, and the man of most talent among them, that they could venture to go on without any person to make up his loss, and to persevere in the same principles, with means so little adequate to give effect to them. He had been told of an attempt having been made to bring over a gentleman of great talent and eloquence, and also a Noble Marquis (Marquis Wellesley), a member of the other House, to accept of situations in the cabinet:—an attempt, in his opinion, more absurd and more insincere on the part of the present cabinet, which would have been more disgraceful to the Right Honourable Gentleman and Noble Marquis had they accepted of it, than an attempt of a similar nature made in February last! The Noble Marquis and Right Honourable Gentleman

had been invited to surrender their principles, character, and the pledges they had come under; and to subscribe to principles directly hostile to those which they had declared some months ago.

Mr. Ryder thought that in agreeing to the present motion, the House would be acting against one of the most undoubted prerogatives of the crown. After paying Lord Liverpool, the Noble Lord now at the head of the administration, a high compliment, Mr. Ryder said, he was not now a member of the administration, not being a member of the new cabinet. Here, with the view of censuring Mr. Canning, he added, that having said so he must declare, that the offers made to his Right Honourable Friend (Canning) were made with the wish and hope that they would be accepted. He should not now enter into the grounds of the proposition, but he must say, that it was made with perfect sincerity: and as to the motion of which he (Mr. Canning) had given notice, the necessity of it must immediately have ceased on his coming into office, as it would then have become his duty to call the attention of his colleagues to that measure. That

motion, therefore, would not of itself have been sufficient to have prevented him from acceding to the proposition. He was aware that his Right Honourable Friend (Canning) had expressed a recent opinion, that the Catholic question ought to be brought forward as a ministerial measure. If he retained and insisted on that opinion, that indeed would have proved a bar to his Right Honourable Friend's admission into the present ministry. If his Right Hon. Friend would or would not have pressed his newly entertained opinion, he (Mr. Ryder) did not know; but this he did know, that the proposition made to his Right Hon. Friend was made sincerely; and that the government felt extreme regret, on finding that he could not be brought to *strengthen* their administration. As to the efficiency of the Noble Lord now at the head of the administration, he should only say that it had been declared by Mr. Pitt, some time previous to his death, that there was not a man in the ranks of opposition better qualified for the management of public affairs than that Noble Lord in point of talents, integrity, or character, with the exception only of Mr. Fox. As to the

motion now made by his Honourable Friend (Mr. Wortley), he (Mr. Ryder) could not conceive how his Honourable Friend could reconcile it to the votes he had been accustomed to give.

Here Mr. Canning, in reply to Mr Ryder and Wilberforce, drew such a picture of the cabinet as could scarcely fail reminding a reader of Shakspeare, of betraying

"The secrets of the prison house."

In allusion to a member who, in the early part of the debate, moved that the other orders of the day be read,

"I wish," said Mr. Canning, "previously to say a word or two upon the nature of his amendment.—What, Sir, are we come to this? How is an unprecedented motion, shaking the very foundations of the throne—aiming a deadly blow at the prerogative of the crown, inverting the march of the constituent powers of the state, met by the administration? By an amendment, proposing the reading of the other orders of the day—(*Hear, Hear!*) They do not come forward boldly maintaining the principles of the constitution, demanding that such an unheard-of motion shall be deliberately investigated with closed doors, and exclaiming, 'Down with the auda-

cious innovator!'—but they content themselves with very simply moving the orders of the day! This too, be it never forgotten, by a government which calls upon the House and the country to declare that they are strong, efficient, and fully competent to conduct the arduous duties of the state in these most arduous times—(*Hear, Hear!*) This specimen, I think, will be allowed to be a fair indication of what we may hereafter expect from their boasted ability and vigour. The allusion which I noticed as being liable to misconstruction was made in the early part of the speech of the mover of this celebrated amendment, where he stated that I had demanded some concessions of principle as the price of my acceptance of office.

"To refute this assertion, I beg leave to refer him and the House to my recorded opinion. I merely inquired of Lord Liverpool, as a matter of information, whether the policy and sentiments of his colleagues continued the same, and I was answered by my Noble Friend with the candour that has distinguished him in every part of these transactions, as well as through life, that his own opinions upon this grand topic remained unchanged, and he was not aware that those of his colleagues had undergone any alteration. I here once more protest, and protest complainingly, that I have thus been dragged into a reconsideration of the subject, and I hope the House will not

forget that I have been far from seeking the occasion.—(*Hear, hear!*)—When I was thus informed of the settled and confirmed opinions of the head of the Government, honoured with the chief confidence of the Sovereign, and possessing all the influence and authority which that ostensible situation affords, could I doubt for an instant their efficacy with other Members of the Cabinet? Could I hesitate as to their operation upon any attempt at a practical proceeding? My Right Honourable Friend (Ryder) tells me, that if I would have consented to have formed a part of the Administration to be established, the motion of which I have given notice would have been wholly unnecessary. I would ask any rational being what would be the result? I should have moved it in the Cabinet to be beaten there, instead of moving in the Commons to be beaten here; I should consider myself bound rather to move it here, and to be beaten here (*hear!*), and for this obvious reason, that it might appear to the public that the pledge I had given had not been forfeited, and that I had used my best exertions to carry my object into execution. I have never stated an opinion, nor do I hold it, that concessions to the Catholics, unrestricted and unguarded, were either politic or just.—Other honourable men may entertain conscientiously different sentiments, but I am bound only by my own, and those have always been uttered in one direction.

"When my Right Honourable Friend spoke of opinions that I had recently adopted, I apprehend he cannot mean to state that they are such as I have not long held, and such as he has known that I have long held. He says they are recently adopted. I say I have not recently adopted them—I have ever entertained them, but I have often avowed in this House, that on a fair comparison of conflicting duties, while the third branch of the Constitution was hostile to the measure, I thought it better for the country, better for the cause, better for Ireland, and better for the Catholics themselves, that I should raise my feeble shield between the Crown and the question. I felt it my duty at that period not to hazard the peace of the Empire, and the peace of mind of a venerable Sovereign. I maintain then, that the Right Honourable Gentleman has no right to say that these opinions with me are of recent adoption (*hear, hear!*) It is, however, a little too much to expect, that because I then yielded to the conscience of a Sovereign, I should now yield to the convenience of a Minister (*hear, hear, hear!*) For my conduct on this subject I have long laboured under misconstruction and obloquy, and I protest that I would have suffered under it with patience to the last hour of my life, rather than have sown with thorns the pillow of my Sovereign. It is, however, rather an unreasonable expectation, that I should approve of the policy of a Minister because I had sub-

mitted to the irremovable conscience of a King. I should not have been less scrupulous with regard to the sentiments of my late much lamented friend, and shall I now submit to the prejudices of an individual who has succeeded him at the head of affairs, and whose opinions nearly, though not perhaps entirely, coincide with those of the Right Honourable Gentleman now no more? Personal objections to the Noble Lord, I declare I have none; I am actuated by no feeling of rivalry, and with this particular question excepted, I could have no earthly hesitation either in acting with, or under him; but I cannot allow, that the predominance of his opinion shall stifle mine.—(*Hear, hear!*)—I cannot enter the Cabinet, pretending not to know, that the influence of the Noble Lord will be such as to paralize all my feeble efforts there.

"But do I therefore demand concessions to my opinions? None! all I ask is, that the subject shall be fairly and deliberately considered, with a view to the arrival at some practicable conclusion, and that it should be investigated where alone it can be done, with the hope of a favourable result, in the Cabinet. My desire was, not to obtain concessions, but to ascertain to what extent conscientious men in the discharge of a public trust would go; it was to this consummation that my anxiety was directed: I required only that the important topic should be considered—the question demands it—you ought to give it—and I will add, that ere

long you must give it.—(*Hear, hear !*,—As another opportunity will shortly be afforded me of more minute explanation, I have not now attempted more than to free myself from the misrepresentations of which the Honourable Mover, I am certain, and my Right Honourable Friend, I hope, were unintentionally guilty. My Right Honourable Friend (Mr. Ryder) has put to me a most unfair question, but since it has been proposed I will answer it. He inquires whether I have not seen a statement of the opinions entertained by the Cabinet upon the subject of the Catholic Claims ? I have seen it. I do not like to speak in disrespectful terms of any paper evidently the production of great labour and study, but I am conpelled to notice it ; for here, again, I would entreat the House to bear in mind that I have not courted this discussion. I would admit that the abolition of the Jesuits completely exonerates that order, but such a satisfactory pledge of what a Cabinet intended to do, I never saw. Not one of the Members agreed in opinion, and I thought that it would be little consolation that another individual should enter the Cabinet with yet another shade of difference. (*Hear, hear !*) I imagined, before I obtained a sight of the document referred to, that it comprized all the philosophical principles combined, that all the light of abstract reasoning on the question were there concentrated to a point, but, after perusing

it with the utmost attention, I returned it with a note, written in perfect good humour, stating, that as far as I could judge, it appeared to me to be of a controversial nature.—(*Hear, hear, and laugh!*) —Such was the answer, which, in perfect simplicity of heart, I returned yesterday—but to what did it amount? Practically to this, as far as I could comprehend it; but, indeed, it is unfair to impute to the Cabinet any opinion, because, collectively, it has none, and the retrospective influence upon my mind (for I did not see this curious production until after the negociation had been closed), was, that if I had joined this *hortus siccus of dissent*, as Mr. Burke once termed it, we should have formed as beautiful a variety as was ever assembled in so small a collection.—(*Hear, and laughter!*)—But amidst such unprecedented differences, on which side is the influence and authority of Government enlisted? That is the main question; this man may hold a blue opinion, another a white, a third a green, a fourth a yellow, and a fifth a red, but with which of these shades does the sentiment of Government most nearly accord? Undoubtedly this point will be decided by the individual, who, holding the principal office, pre-eminently enjoys the confidence of the occupant of the Throne, and the additional weight he would add to the scale must overbalance the remainder. I could not, therefore, feel that I entered the Cabinet with honour, if I consented to give there a mere barren

solitary vote. I trust, although not very fairly put upon my trial, that my conduct is completely justified in the eyes of the House and of the country.—(*Hear, hear!*)

"To all that has been said regarding the mode in which the overtures were made, I most heartily subscribe; and no man can pronounce a panegyric upon the demeanor of my Noble Friend, which I will not cheerfully second: I have known him for nearly twenty years, and during that period the warmth of my friendship has progressively augmented. I cast no slur upon the motives that influenced him or his colleagues: I believe, nay, I am convinced, that they conscientiously entertain different sentiments. Here I beg, once for all, to state that the point on which we differ is this—not, as has been constantly and studiously misrepresented, whether we shall instantly concede, but whether this be a question which, in the present temper of the times, in the present state of Europe, in the present convulsions of the world; at a period when the public mind is in a ferment, when you cannot dispose of the subject with a wish, or strangle it with a hair, and when you are not able to set it at rest by the strong arm of power, the Government should not do that which is best in my opinion, and next best in the opinion of the present Servants of the Crown, allow it to come before the Cabinet for decision. Thus would the public anxiety be allayed, and those repeated annual discussions, fruitless of any thing but evil,

be once for all concluded. In affirming that the Roman Catholic Claims should not now be agitated, Ministers beg the whole question. I do not say that immediate concessions should be made: all I claim is, that this body of people should be sheltered under the protecting wing of the Legislature: that their case should be placed in the hands, or in the portfolio of the Executive Government. By those means, and those only, can you ensure to Ireland a happy and peaceful summer, and to the Empire, confiding and lasting tranquillity—(*hear, hear, hear.*)

When my Honourable Friend opposite (Mr. Wilberforce) asserts that measures and not men, were to be the main topics of consideration and animadversion, he seems to have forgotten that I, one of the principal actors in the scene which has lately been displayed, have been imperiously called upon for a justification of my conduct; he does not recollect that even my reputation is at stake. He, of all others, is the one who would pay most attention to individual character; he will not say that if you deprive the present race of pigmy men of reputation, you destroy almost every claim they possess to the gratitude of the nation, and make them unworthy of the country in which they were born. On my part I can assert with the most perfect sincerity, that no disposition has been shewn to decline sustaining my share of the burden of the state in these perilous times. My anxiety has been to make them less perilous, but

upon this great question I have seen not only no desire to grant any thing to the Catholics, but not even a disposition that an enquiry should be instituted."

Mr. Ryder explained, and Lord Castlereagh replied, that no pledge had been given to the Catholics; for this Sir John Newport charged him with duplicity towards them, in not fulfilling implied engagements, and for pledges unredeemed. His dirty trafficking for seats in Parliament was mentioned, as also his depriving Ireland of her's.

Mr. Martin, of Galway, supported the motion, and hoped the result of it would be an arrangement that should comprehend other talents and character than were to be met with in the documents that day published, (according to which Mr. Vansittart was to have been Chancellor of the Exchequer, &c.)

Mr. Wortley, in reply, said, he had seldom heard in that House, a speech containing so many unconstitutional assertions as that of Mr. Wilberforce. For himself he had taken care not to pledge himself to oppose or support this or that government. He thought the Noble Lord Castlereagh had failed to prove that all had been done which ought to have been done, to *form an efficient administration.* The House then divided,

For the previous question - - -	170
Against it - - - - - - - - -	174
Majority against Ministers - - -	4

The motion of Mr. Wortley was then proposed and carried without a division.

Thus fell the last supporters of the Percevalian Administration; for though it was apprehended they would endeavour to rally in the House the next evening, it was not thought prudent so to do. On the contrary, the Ministers acknowledged themselves virtually displaced, and signified that an adjournment would be proper only till a new Administration was formed.

PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES

OF THE

DEMISE

OF

MR. PERCEVAL,

AND THE

OVERTHROW OF HIS ADMINISTRATION.

THESE are few and obvious. If the emancipation of the Catholics should take place, the discontent of the people at large will be loud and deep; because, from the low state of *real religion* among us at this period, the nation at large is not prepared for such a

concession. If emancipation should be denied, this will still furnish complaint to a large party, and deprive government of that assistance they might otherwise derive from great and eminent talents. If the Orders in Council should be rescinded, it is probable this measure will not now produce the harvest expected; nor will any reasoning on the subject satisfy the clamour which will keep pace with their continuance, because interested men are seldom open to conviction.

If the war in the Peninsula, according to the favourite views of a Noble Marquis, should be carried on with new and increased vigour, it is evident some other department must be starved. The grand result therefore may be, that the successors of Mr. Perceval, persuading themselves they can conduct the vessel of the state with safety through the stormy ocean which still surrounds us, after a trial *in the same course*, will be compelled to acknowledge their inability to steer with more judgment than he did: for, granting the captain and pilot can regulate all on board, unless they can likewise command the elements, and *say to the proud waves, be still,*

whatever opinion they may form of their own skill and abilities, they must wait the return of a *calm* before they can exert them to advantage. *Peace* only is that *calm* which can insure our safety; but unhappily as yet, there are none of the would-be pilots, that appear able and willing to steer the vessel of the state into that wished-for haven. The question then is, how much longer can we abide the pelting of that pitiless storm which has torn up the deepest foundations, and overturned the most ancient establishments in Europe? Yet, as unanimity among the crew is the best pledge of success, it is hoped that, notwithstanding the difference of their sentiments, we may still be preserved; though this, it should be remembered, is always the most difficult when the exigencies or mistakes of the voyage render it necessary for too great a portion of the crew to be kept upon *short allowance*, or when *too much severity* is used to keep the rest in obedience. If these conclusions be not admitted, then the *Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat*, written upon our foreheads, may be read by our posterity with more regret than astonishment.

DEVELOPEMENT

OF THE

DELICATE INVESTIGATION.

FEW indeed have been the ministers who have distinguished themselves by their literary productions, or whose names have been handed down to posterity by any other medium than their measures in the Cabinet. But this does not appear to have been the fate of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer. One at least of his performances in the closet, equally with those in the Cabinet or the Grand Council of the nation, it seems, will be in a great measure known to future ages by means of A MOST MYSTERIOUS BOOK. This book, the real contents of which have indeed been seen by very few, has been the cause of several attempts to impose something else upon the public, as being "THE SPIRIT OF THE BOOK," and the History of certain transactions between some exalted personages, &c. &c. but

without any ground whatever beyond conjecture founded upon the general knowledge of a disagreement between the parties, &c. We shall now trace these rumours to their source, and, aided by the clue of probability, explore a labyrinth of error and perplexity, till we arrive at a more evident degree of certainty upon the subject, than has hitherto been obtained.

In the year 1806, during the existence of the Talent Administration, it for the first time transpired, that very serious disputes existed between the Prince and his Royal Consort, and that his Majesty corresponded with the Princess upon the subject, and finally issued his command, that an Investigation should take place, and which was accordingly undertaken by a special committee chosen from a certain number of noblemen.

On the part of one of these eminent personages, the whole of this business was conducted by Mr. Perceval, and, when concluded, it was Mr. Perceval that caused the whole proceedings to be thrown into the form of a Book, and two large impressions of them to be printed, notwithstanding every indi-

vidual person engaged in this business was sworn to observe the most inviolable secresy!!!

That it was the object of Mr. Perceval in his proceedings relative to the Book, from its first composition, to secure to himself the high office he filled, can no longer be doubted. In vain was the anxiety of persons expressed for its publication; for from the moment it suited Mr. Perceval's purpose to conceal it, it was determined the public should not be gratified. One or two copies for his Royal Master, as far as Mr. Perceval knew, were sufficient for his purpose. The Book was the stepping stone to the height of the late Minister's ambition, and he saw and availed himself of the moment when any thing he chose to ask could not be denied. The contents of the Book were concealed as a sacred deposit, and Mr. Perceval kept the key; and thus for a while seemed to consider himself a King of Kings!

On this high ground, feeling himself without a rival, which Mr. Perceval could brook as little as any man in power, he went on nearly three years before he attended to

the whispers that some copies of the MYSTERIOUS BOOK were in the hands of several persons. This rising uneasiness, it is supposed, produced the following advertisement.

"THE BOOK."—Any person having in their possession a CERTAIN BOOK, printed by Mr. Edwards, in 1807, but *never published*, with W. Lindsell's name as the seller of the same on the title page, and will bring it to W. Lindsell, bookseller, Wimpole street, will receive a handsome gratuity."—*Times Paper*, 27*th March*, 1809.

Mr. Perceval's fears on this head were not groundless; for several persons, encouraged by the large sums asked by a few holders of the book, came forward; some received five hundred, some eight, and one person fifteen hundred guineas for a copy. In fact, it is supposed, that not less than twenty thousand pounds were expended in buying up and concealing Mr. Perceval's MYSTERIOUS BOOK from the public eye.

But in spite of all these precautions, it was Mr. Perceval's fate to be again visited with dreadful forebodings, in relation to the

Book, only a short time before his decease, when the Bill for making provision for the Princesses was before the Commons. He then sent for every person whom he knew was acquainted with the Book, and expressed his apprehensions that its contents had been improperly divulged. As it might be expected on such an occasion, these persons attested their innocence, and Mr. Perceval either was, or pretended to be, satisfied.

All this, upon which the public may rely, ought to convince them likewise of the little reliance that should be placed upon what has been called "The Spirit of the Book," or any other publication which has pretended to narrate a history of the difference between two exalted personages.

Relative to what has been said in Parliament with respect to this MYSTERIOUS BOOK, we shall refer to what was said respecting the Prince Regent's Message, delivered on Wednesday, March 20th, relative to provision for the Princesses, when referring to the speech of Mr. Bennett, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that

"with regard to the separation of the Royal Persons alluded to, he should say nothing. He might and did lament it as much as any one could, but neither as a Minister, nor in any other character, did he feel himself called upon to say any thing on the subject.—(*Hear, hear, hear!*) As to what had been said respecting the grant of the 10,000l. additional to the Queen, the committee must be aware, that it was entirely of a different nature from that now under consideration. Its object was to enable the Queen to meet expences which she would be likely to incur unconnected in any manner with the Princesses. There was no increase in the Civil List of the Prince of Wales above that of the King, on the contrary, there was a diminution.

"Mr. Whitbread defended his Hon. Friend (Mr. Bennett), from the charge of inconsistency, and thought it most natural, that he should wish to see the Princess of Wales placed in that situation in which he believed every person in the country wished to see her. It was rather alarming to understand from the Right Honourable Gentleman, that if a reconciliation should take place in a quarter where every one must desire it, the Right Honourable Gentleman would have to come down to the House to ask a new grant. There was no impropriety in inquiring as to the situation of the Princess of Wales. The Right Hon. Gentleman had said, that he would state nothing as Minister

on the subject; but the time was, when the Right Hon. Gentleman was not only willing to give information to every subject in the country, *but had a book ready*, which was to have gone not only through the Public of this Country, but through all Europe. *This book*, the Right Hon. Gentleman had *since purchased up and suppressed*, for what reason he knew not. Undoubtedly, as counsel to her Royal Highness, he was in a situation the most natural to be called upon for information, though it was possible he might now remain mute, when he intended to have had ten thousand tongues before. But the Princess of Wales was not only inferior to the Queen in point of real income, but the Queen had the advantage of being also on the establishment with her Husband. The Princess of Wales, on the contrary, was living in retirement, at Blackheath, for as to separation, though he and others had used the word, the public knew nothing more than that she lived in retirement; and now they knew, that if ever matters came on a better footing, a fresh grant of money would be demanded. It had been said, that they might go into the Inquiry on the Civil List after the grant was made; but making the grant under such circumstances, was parting with an advantage to which he could not consent. He should concur with his Right Hon. Friend (Mr. Ponsonby), in voting against the Resolution."

Being further pressed on the subject by

Mr. Tierney, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that

"as to what he was bound to do as far as it affected his own character and conduct, he should always judge for himself. (*Hear, hear!*) He did not know with what view the Right Hon. Gentleman now came forward, but he had no objection to state, that neither in his character as Counsel to her Royal Highness, in which he had important duties to perform, nor as Minister, nor in any other capacity, did he see any means of bringing a charge against her Royal Highness, nor did he entertain any opinion calculated to throw the slightest reflection upon her, and further than this he should not state. As to the situation of her Royal Highness, he had no instruction to propose any additional grant; but if the Right Hon. Gentleman, who now, for the first time, suggested it, could induce Parliament to think favourably of such a measure, he should be inclined, for one, to give that disposition its full effect."

"Mr. Whitbread thought it extraordinary, that the Right Hon. Gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) should recommend parliament to send a message to the Prince. He had stated, that he received no instruction to propose a grant to the Princess of Wales, that was, in other words, he had given no advice to that effect. They had heard the Right Hon. Gentleman state, but a few minutes ago, that no imputation could attach to

her Royal Highness, but he should not forget that she did at one time stand stigmatized, that he was once about to publish in her defence, but that she still remained unvindicated.

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, what he had stated with respect to the Princess of Wales, was, that neither in his situation as Counsel to her Royal Highness, nor in any other character, was he conscious that there existed a ground of charge. He should always be prepared to make the same statement."

Upon this important debate it was observed at the time, that "Mr. Perceval, the *pious* Mr. Perceval, had been the Counsellor and friend of this illustrious, and, we believe, deeply injured personage—he had been the champion of her cause, and the Public Accuser of those suspected of having aimed a blow against her reputation and her happiness—he proclaimed her innocence, and defied her enemies to substantiate a single charge derogatory to her honour—yet the moment he had it in his power to serve her, and prove the sincerity of his former professions, the *religious*, the *pious*, the *moral* Mr. Perceval, passes by his Client with marked neglect—he abandons his friend—the 'illustrious and injured Stranger' is forgotten;

and in the intended arrangements for the comfort and dignity of the Princess of England, the Wife of his Royal Master—the Princess Regent, the future Queen of the British Empire, is not noticed! not even once alluded to in the message from the Throne, though that message was drawn up and presented to the Legislature under the direction of her late Counsellor and friend!—The tear may fall upon the cheek of injured beauty, but the *pious* Mr. Perceval will not stretch forth his hand to cheer the sufferer, lest he should lose his balance, and totter from the seat of power!! In the course of this debate, the reported *Separation*, the *Delicate Inquiry*, and the suppression of *The Book*, were all touched upon. At last, Mr. Perceval—the *pious*,—the *tolerant* Mr. Perceval rose, with, apparently, great reluctance, and coldly declared, '*he could not recollect any thing which it was possible to bring as a charge against the Princess of Wales.*'—Now, this we conceive the important point; for a *total separation* has been much spoken of; and it has been roundly and very generally asserted, that the intended *measure of separation* was closely connected

with Mr. Perceval's continuance in office; but as the Minister cannot bring a charge of criminality, THERE CAN BE NO GROUND FOR THE SEPARATION—and this may ultimately preserve England from much distraction and calamity.

This discussion, it was fondly imagined, would have been the means of bringing before the public the whole of that History which the three great Counsellors of her Royal Highness, an illustrious Duke, the present Lord Chancellor, and the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, thought fit at the time (1806) to print; as the means of her justification.—That the materials which Mr. Perceval printed, were considered as sufficient for her justification, were beyond all doubt.

As to her Royal Highness's debts, it was perhaps in this respect rather illiberal to refer to the fetes and the parties at Blackheath to all the Percevals, and all the friends and favourites of the Percevals, including the Wilsons, &c.; her Royal Highness's liberality in christening presents to the little Percevals, and all their maids, and all their wet-nurses, and all their dry-nurses. It is admit-

ted that at Blackheath her Royal Highness became £50,000 in debt. If, upon an enquiry into the items of that account, it will be found that the family of Mr. Perceval, then her hero, advocate, and champion, helped her to spend it, how does it become him to say that he has no provision to offer for her, and reproach those who consult her rights and the dignity of the Throne with an interested interference, merely because they never partook of her bounty?

Mr. Perceval, who knows right well the author of the mysterious book; Mr. Perceval, the *ci-devant* champion of the Princess of Wales, well acquainted with all the Delicate Investigation; Mr. Perceval, the Prince's favourite, and the Prime Minister of England, admitted in his place in the House of Commons, that her Royal Highness has come pure and untouched out of the fiery ordeal. Why, then, is she not admitted to enjoy, at least, the cold formalities of Court *etiquette*, and the other exterior advantages of her exalted rank? This Court *etiquette* may, no doubt, have no charms for her, but it would infuse life, and health, and spirit, into thousands. Every tradesman in London has felt

the beneficial effects of a Birth-day Ball, or a Drawing-room at St. James's, even at the close of a reign, uniformly remarkable for patriarchal simplicity in the Sovereign.

Then, what a stimulus might be given to the declining trade of this great metropolis by a brilliant Court, amply supplied as it is by the public, under the auspices of a Princess (now pronounced injured) amiable and blameless, and a Prince, always celebrated for taste, magnificence, and splendour.

THE END.