CANNING'S
SPEECHES

Francis Lieber.

SELECT SPEECHES

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE GEORGE CANNING;

WITH

A PRELIMINARY BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH,

AND

AN APPENDIX,

OF

EXTRACTS FROM HIS WRITINGS AND SPEECHES.

EDITED BY ROBERT WALSH.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY DESILVER, THOMAS & CO.
STEREOTYPED BY L. JOHNSON.
1836.

10,466

ENTERED according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1835, by
Key and Biddle,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

STEREOTYPED BY L. JOHNSON,
PHILADELPHIA.

ADVERTISEMENT.

ALL the Speeches in this collection were revised by Mr. Canning. The London edition of his Speeches consists of six octavo volumes, the first of which contains a copious and authentic memoir of his life. It was originally the design of the American editor to furnish an entirely new biography, more minute and comprehensive, with critical notes on the oratory and political career of Mr. Canning. But he has found the proper execution of this plan impracticable, consistently with the limits of this publication, and the paramount object of including all the master-pieces of the orator, and the specimens which form the Appendix. He has added to the speeches adopted, some of Canning's early writings, and remarkable passages of the other principal speeches. The matter preferred is thought to be that which, from various considerations, is most eligible for the American meridian. Mr. Canning frequently took part in the debates on the Catholic question, and always with signal superiority of eloquence and liberality of sentiment. A sufficient specimen is given in this volume of his powers and feelings on that subject. A consummate lawyer might be proud of his argument on the Roman Catholic Peers' bill, which is indeed admirable through-

out for dialectics and style; but an extract from it has been deemed enough. He treated the questions of free trade, the corn laws, and currency, and others merely economical, with unsurpassed ability and effect; in all discussions of strict party and personal politics, he was without an equal. His election and dinner speeches, which are separated in our volume from his parliamentary efforts, possess as much merit of every kind as any of his productions, and transcend altogether any similar effusions extant in print. The void which he left as an orator and debater has not been supplied.

A principal object with the American editor and publishers is to put within the reach of the youth of this country, who must or may become public speakers, the best models of oratory which Great Britain has furnished within the last half century. The same models include so much of the political history of the period, and possess a literary excellence so rare, that they will be deemed an important acquisition by all Americans of general and refined studies. Canning's Speeches hold the first rank among them, and are therefore first given. Those of Wyndham, Huskisson, Mackintosh, Brougham, Peel, and others, alike distinguished, will be issued in the same form and upon the same plan, in case the present volume should win that diffusive favour and patronage to which it would seem to be entitled.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

George Canning was born in London, on the 11th of April, 1770. His family was ancient and respectable. It was originally from Warwickshire in England, but his branch of it had been long settled in Ireland, where the manor of Garvagh, in Londonderry, had been granted by James I. to an ancestor. His father was a gentleman of considerable literary acquirements, and had been called to the bar after studying in the Middle Temple, but his marriage with a dowerless beauty so displeased his parents that he was cut off from the property of which he was the rightful heir. A bare allowance of £150 a year was all that was given him, and this he was unable to increase sufficiently to render himself comfortable. He was unsuccessful in his profession, his tastes and talents rather inclining him to poetry and polite literature than to the unattractive studies of the law. He abandoned it, and became a wine-merchant, but died in April 1771, a year precisely after the birth of his son, before he had effected his extrication from the difficulties in which he was involved. Mrs. Canning being thus left destitute, was obliged to exert her talents and accomplishments for the maintenance of herself and child, and went upon the stage. Her success was not brilliant, but it was adequate to give her an independent support. She married a second time, Mr. Hunn, an actor, and soon became again a widow.

The early education of Mr. Canning was superintended by his guardian and uncle, Mr. Stratford Canning, an eminent London merchant, who died a short time before Mr. Canning went to the university. His scholastic and collegiate expenses, however, were defrayed from a small estate in Ireland, bequeathed to him by his grandfather, who, at the urgent request of his grandmother, was induced to make a settlement upon him, which, although insufficient as a provision for life, was ample as a fund for education. His first academic instruction was received at Hyde Abbey, whence he

was sent to Eton, between twelve and thirteen years of age, and placed in the remove at once as an oppidan. There he soon became conspicuous for the elegance of his Latin and English poetry, as well as for the easy flow and propriety which distinguished his prose compositions. His contemporaries at Eton describe him as a boy possessed of great quickness in apprehending whatever he undertook to learn; of a frank, generous, and conciliatory disposition; and of a bold, manly, unflinching spirit: qualities admirably calculated to render him popular in a public school. Although he evinced a superiority of intelligence over his companions, there was nothing precocious in his ascendency, or fallacious and forced in his talent. He possessed great natural capabilities, and these he improved by the most sedulous and successful cultivation. He laboured hard, sensible that with faculties such as his, nothing would be denied to labour. His assiduity was rather increased and stimulated than diminished, by the consciousness of his power; and the success which crowned him was not more the triumph of genius than the patient result of persevering industry. The lead which he took when a boy, he maintained throughout the intellectual emulations of youth, and through the sterner struggles of ambitious and unyielding manhood. At fifteen years of age, he was one of the most distinguished scholars at Eton, and joined with others of his school-fellows in producing a literary work of high classical repute, entitled the *Microcosm*, the publication of which commenced in 1786. Its appearance forms an epoch in the history of the school. It introduced an improved taste for classical composition, and kept alive the spirit of a generous rivalry, which led to the formation of permanent and worthy friendships. Mr. Canning was its avowed editor, as well as its ablest and most popular supporter. The essays which he contributed were signed "B," and evince a remarkable facility and happiness of expression, together with a vein of sprightly and well-tempered satire.

In 1788, when in his eighteenth year, Mr. Canning left Eton, and was entered at Christ Church College, Oxford. The fame of his talents had preceded him to the University. There he fully sustained, and even enhanced, his high reputation. Continued habits of persevering industry imparted solidity to the elegance

of his atttainments. He won several prizes by compositions, the pure Latinity of which received high and merited commendation from the heads of the University. Here also he contracted some intimacies with eminent men, which endured as long as he lived, and were productive of the greatest advantage to him. Of these, perhaps the most important, so far as relates to his subsequent destiny as a public man, was the friendship which he formed with the late Earl of Liverpool, then Mr. Jenkinson.

On obtaining a bachelor's degree, Mr. Canning entered himself a student of Lincoln's Inn, and took chambers there; but he studied the law rather with a view of understanding the principles of the Constitution, than of practising it as a profession. It was whilst he was a student that his acquaintance with Mr. Sheridan, who had previously noticed him as a promising school-boy, ripened into intimacy. The assertion, however, that this distinguished personage was related to him, seems to be entirely a mistake. During the same period also, he greatly augmented the reputation as a speaker which he had acquired at Oxford, by frequenting several private debating societies. It was to the celebrity which he thus obtained, that he owed his introduction to Mr. Pitt. The minister having heard of his talents, communicated to him through a private channel, a desire to see him—a summons with which Mr. Canning readily complied. Mr. Pitt proceeded immediately on their meeting to declare to Mr. Canning the object of his request of an interview with him; which was, to state that he had heard of Mr. Canning's reputation as a scholar and a speaker, and that, if he concurred in the policy which Government was then pursuing, arrangements would be made to facilitate his introduction into Parliament. After a full explanation between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Canning, of the feelings of each on all the important public questions of the moment, the result was, on Mr. Canning's part, the determination to connect himself politically with Mr. Pitt; and on the part of Mr. Pitt, the offer of a seat in Parliament. He may have confided this to Mr. Sheridan, or possibly may have consulted him; but even the assertion, so frequently made, that Sheridan's advice mainly influenced him in this important step, is sustained by no competent authority. This acquiescence in the proposal of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Canning's friends

knew to be consistent with his previously avowed and conscientious conviction, as, when he had no motives of interest to sway him in adopting that conviction, and very strong ones to dissuade him from it, he had uncompromisingly expressed it in the Whig circle in which he principally moved, and by which, in the ordinary course of events, it was natural he should expect to be introduced into Parliament.

It is alike important for the truth of history, and due in justice to the fame of Mr. Canning, to state, that his opinions respecting the French Revolution were formed, and his principles determined, long before a prospect presented itself of his becoming acquainted with Mr. Pitt. It is true that his early associates were, for the most part, persons of Whig principles; his uncle, who superintended his education, was an avowed Whig; and his own writings and speeches at the University, breathe warm sentiments in favour of those liberal principles with which the name of that important political party in the state has been identified. The French Revolution, however, was a prodigious event in the history of the world, and was not to be dealt with according to any settled principles, by which Whigs and Tories had hitherto been discriminated in this country. By the leaders of both parties, at its commencement, it was approved; for it is an historical truth, that favourable sentiments towards the French Revolution were at first expressed, not only by Mr. Fox (whose generous nature expanded into a love of freedom in every clime, and prompted him to hail, with enthusiastic ardour, the first efforts of a mighty people, rising in the just assertion of their invaded liberties,) but by Mr. Pitt, whom few persons will suspect of a too sanguine temperament, or of any dangerous ebullition of feeling in favour of freedom—he too hailed the French Revolution in its origin; and declared his conviction, "that the present convulsions in France must, sooner or later, terminate in general harmony and regular order. Whenever the situation of France should become restored, it would prove freedom rightly understood—freedom resulting from good order and good government; and, thus circumstanced, France would stand forward as one of the most brilliant powers in Europe; she would enjoy that just kind of liberty which he

venerated, and the invaluable existence of which it was his duty, as an Englishman, particularly to cherish."

In the general exultation which the French Revolution, at its first burst, awakened, even among the temperate advocates of well regulated freedom, throughout Europe, Mr. Canning, with a mind fresh from the contemplation of those heroic achievements in the cause of freedom, which "raised up the Greek and Roman name with such a lustre," sanguinely participated. This admiration, however, was limited to the principle of the necessity of adjusting the inequalities of the political condition of France—of correcting its abuses—and of remodelling and invigorating the institutions which a long series of acts of misgovernment had enfeebled. Mr. Canning's opinions respecting the French Revolution, however, had undergone a change previous to his acquaintance with Mr. Pitt, and it was *that* change which led to his connexion with Mr. Pitt, and to his determination not to connect himself politically with the Whig party. This determination was strengthened by the course which Mr. Fox and others of the Whigs took about this time, and which produced the separation between Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey, on the one side, and Mr. Burke and Mr. Windham, on the other; and perhaps the most intelligible and most correct explanation of Mr. Canning's determination not to connect himself with the Whig party, but to attach himself to Mr. Pitt, is to state, that his decision was formed upon the same grounds which induced the Duke of Portland, Lord Spencer, Mr. Windham, Mr. Grenville, and those who acted with them, to separate from Mr. Fox, and take office under Mr. Pitt, and at the same period of time, though independently of them, and without any concert.

"It is questionable," says Mr. Moore, in his Life of Sheridan, "whether, in thus resolving to join the ascendant side, Mr. Canning has not conferred a greater benefit on the country, than he ever would have been able to effect in the ranks of his original friends. That party, which has now so long been the sole depositary of the power of the state, had, in addition to the original narrowness of its principles, contracted all that proud obstinacy in antiquated error, which is the invariable characteristic of such monopolies; and which, however consonant with its vocation, as

the chosen instrument of the Crown, should have long since *invalidated* it in the service of a free and enlightened people. Some infusion of the spirit of the times into this body had become necessary even for its preservation, in the same manner as the inhalement of youthful breath has been recommended by some physicians to the infirm and superannuated. This renovating inspiration the genius of Mr. Canning has supplied. His first political lessons were derived from sources too sacred to his young admiration to be forgotten. He has carried the spirit of these lessons with him into the councils which he joined, and, by the vigour of the graft, which already, indeed, shows itself in the fruits, bids fair to change altogether the nature of toryism."

Thus Mr. Canning entered into public life, the avowed pupil of Mr. Pitt. He was returned to Parliament, in 1793, for the borough of Newport in the Isle of Wight. During his first session, however, he preferred being a mere listener and learner, to making any effort to display his eloquence. It was not until the 31st of January, 1794, that he ventured to open his lips. The subsidy proposed to be granted to the King of Sardinia was the subject of his maiden speech, which sustained, without materially enhancing, the reputation that he had acquired.

The Address on the King's Speech, at the opening of the Parliament, in 1795, was seconded by Mr. Canning, the mover being Sir E. Knatchbull. His speech on this occasion, contains some specimens of eloquence. Mr. Pitt, it is said, spoke of it in the circle of his private friends, and of the admirable address with which it was delivered, as an indication of even greater abilities than fame had awarded to him.

A short time previous to the dissolution of Parliament in the spring of 1796, Mr. Canning accepted the office of Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs to Lord Grenville. The next session he was returned for Wendover. During the session of 1796 and 1797, he chiefly confined his attention to the immediate and laborious duties of his office.

On the 20th of November, 1797, the first number of the Anti-Jacobin Review, or Weekly Examiner, appeared. Of this work Mr. Gifford was the Editor, and Mr. Canning the most popular contributor; Lord Seaford, Mr. G. Ellis, Mr. Frere, were also

understood to be powerful supporters of it. The object of the Review was to attack, by ridicule, the principles which were then so disastrously predominant in France, and which active efforts were making to introduce into England. To this the Anti-Jacobin served as a successful check. The pieces attributed to Mr. Canning were characterized by a vein of light, sportive, and satirical humour. "The Knife Grinder," the more elaborate and serious satire of "New Morality," and "The Elegy on the Death of Jean Bon St. Andre," are among the most admired poetical contributions. The exclusive merit of them, however, does not belong to Mr. Canning; indeed it is almost impossible to distinguish the portions which appertain to each author, as most of the poems were joint compositions; and as Mr. Canning avowed none of them, none of them can properly be cited as his. Although he did not authorize the assertion of his claim to any particular piece, he did not disavow his connexion with the work, nor did he show a disposition at any time to retract any of the sentiments contained in it. He adhered constantly to a declaration which he made in Parliament in 1807, "that he felt no shame for the character or principles of the Anti-Jacobin; nor any other sorrow for the share he had had in it, than that which the imperfection of his pieces was calculated to inspire."

From his entrance into Parliament, and even before it, Mr. Canning contributed his most assiduous and earnest endeavours to the glorious effort of redeeming humanity from the disgrace, and the British nation from the deep dishonour of the Slave Trade. He was one of the "fearless and faithful few," who resisted the powerful interests opposed to the abolition of this nefarious traffic, at a period when there was the greatest merit—because there was then the greatest difficulty—in resistance. At the outset of Mr. Canning's public life, the Slave Trade was openly and boldly upheld as a source of social strength—as a legitimate and necessary means of national wealth. The abolitionists were libelled as fanatical enthusiasts; amid misrepresentations of motives, and calumnies of conduct, however, he fought the good fight, side by side of the benevolent Wilberforce, and lived to rejoice with him, and with the other good men engaged in the same cause, at the triumph they had achieved in the cause of afflicted humanity.

The consummation of this great work of comprehensive benevolence did not take place until 1824, when, under Mr. Canning's auspices, the Slave Trade Piracy Bill was passed, which made this horrible system of man-stealing a capital felony. Not contented with the abolition of the Slave Trade, Mr. Canning was engaged—and it was among the last of his legislative efforts—in devising safe, politic, and efficient measures for the gradual abolition of slavery itself. To no cause was he more anxiously and usefully devoted.

The union of Great Britain and Ireland was propounded to the English Parliament in 1799. In the discussions upon this most important subject, Mr. Canning took a prominent part. His speeches manifest his conviction that great and substantial advantages would accrue to both Ireland and England from the measure, and show, also, as do those of Mr. Pitt, that Catholic Emancipation was held out in terms too plain to be mistaken as an inducement to the Irish. Many long years elapsed before the promise thus made was performed, and imputations of the most discreditable kind have been cast, in consequence, upon the two statesmen; but, although they may not have acted with sufficient energy afterwards, there is no evidence that they were insincere in their conduct. Mr. Canning was a constant advocate of the claim, and its ultimate triumph was doubtless owing greatly to his exertions. The ground on which he supported it was that of expediency, and not of abstract right.

In July, 1800, Mr. Canning was married to Miss Joan Scott, daughter and co-heiress of General Scott, the elder sister having married a short time previously the Marquis of Titchfield, now Duke of Portland. This alliance was highly advantageous to him. The society of the lady rendered him happy; her fortune made him independent, gave weight and authority to his talents, and facilitated his advancement to those high stations in the Government of the country, to which, by the exercise of those talents, he had vindicated his qualifications.

Early in 1801, the disappointment of Mr. Pitt, in all his efforts to induce the King to confirm the expectation which had been held out to the Catholics of Ireland at the era of the union, led to the resignation of that minister and the dissolution of his

administration. Several poetic effusions, decrying the administration of Mr. Addington, who succeeded Mr. Pitt as Premier, were erroneously attributed to Mr. Canning. With the exception of the song "The Pilot that Weather'd the Storm," which he wrote for the first meeting of the Pitt Club—an association which he was mainly instrumental in forming—none of the poetical pieces on political subjects that appeared at this period, are ascribable to his pen.

Until the dissolution of Parliament in 1802, Mr. Canning pursued a sort of neutral course. He abstained altogether from parliamentary effort, with the exception of his motion concerning Trinidad. He could not reconcile it to his opinion, to support Mr. Addington, although Mr. Pitt gave him his aid, and wished his friends to do so likewise. But on the other hand, having obtained his seat through Mr. Pitt's influence, he did not think it right to oppose Mr. Addington in Parliament. After the dissolution, however, when he acquired a seat by his own means, he engaged in an active opposition. On the renewal of hostilities with France, he supported Mr. Pitt's policy of vigorously prosecuting the war; but even in reference to this policy, he carefully distinguished between the measures and the men who recommended them to Parliament, and more than once pretty intelligibly suggested that, to give due efficacy to these measures, it was expedient that the execution of them should be entrusted to other hands.

On the 12th of October, 1801, the ratifications of the preliminaries of peace which were the basis of the definitive treaty of Amiens, were exchanged in London between Lord Hawkesbury and M. Otto. In the discussions which took place in reference to those measures, Mr. Canning interfered no further than by a slight allusion to the preliminaries, in the exordium of a speech on the cultivation of the island of Trinidad, a subject to which he had devoted his early attention, with a view of promoting his favourite measure, the abolition of the Slave trade.

In 1803, Mr. Canning supported a series of resolutions, moved by Mr. Patton, containing aggravated charges of misconduct against ministers. In his speech on this occasion, he declared, in no equivocal terms, that the ministers were unworthy the confi-

dence of the country, and incapable of administering its affairs. This speech is also remarkable, as being the only one pronounced by him in opposition to Mr. Pitt. It was calculated, however, rather to conciliate than to displease his friend, by the deference with which he differed from him, and the manner in which he pointed him out as the person best qualified at that crisis, to occupy the place of Mr. Addington.

The part which Mr. Canning took in the ensuing session of Parliament, on the motion for inquiring into the conduct of the Irish government, evinces the same deep interest that pervades all his speeches in questions connected with the misguided policy pursued towards that country.

The conduct of France, in the early part of the year 1803, threatened the immediate end of hostilities. His apprehension was excited by the military and naval preparations carried on in the ports of Holland, which led to the adoption of additional precautions on the part of England. The posture of European politics at this period, is fully exhibited in Mr. Canning's speech on the negotiations with France. The opposition to the existing administration, and the public distrust in their measures, increased with the increasing difficulties of the country. On the 3d of May, 1804, Mr. Addington resigned. Consequent upon his resignation, an ineffectual negotiation was carried on to form an administration including the chiefs of the three political parties, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and Lord Grenville. At length an administration was formed, in which Mr. Pitt resumed the premiership, and Mr. Canning was appointed Treasurer of the Navy. As such, he was obliged to vindicate his own conduct in some transactions referred to in the tenth report of the Navy Commissioners, during the impeachment of Lord Melville for misconduct whilst holding that office. Throughout, the inquiry proved that he was free from stain.

The death of Mr. Pitt on the 23d of January, 1805, was soon followed by the dissolution of the administration of which he was the head. In the changes incident to the introduction of the Whig party into power, Mr. Canning was succeeded by Mr. Sheridan in the office of Treasurer of the Navy. After the death of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Canning acknowledged no leader, as he stated in his

speech, in 1812, to his constituents at Liverpool, when he took occasion to express the veneration in which he held the memory of that statesman, and the emulous fidelity with which he was determined to imitate his conduct and abide by his principles.

To the Whig administration,—of which Mr. Fox was the real head, although he had chosen the post of Secretary for Foreign Affairs, on account of the facilities with which, he presumed, it would present him in bringing the negotiations with France to to an amicable conclusion, Mr. Canning became the most active and leading opponent. He commenced a series of severe attacks upon their conduct and measures, in his opposition to the appointment of Lord Ellenborough, the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, to a seat in the Cabinet. Of the expediency and impropriety of this appointment there can be no doubt; and indeed it was excused at the time at which it took place, on no better plea than the necessity of making the great talents of that nobleman available for the defence of the administration. Mr. Canning also gave a very earnest and effective opposition to Mr. Windham's celebrated *Limited Service Bill.*

In April 1807, on the dissolution of the Whig ministry, in consequence of the difference between the King and the principal members of it upon the bill introduced into Parliament by the latter "For securing to all His Majesty's Subjects the privilege of serving in the Army and Navy," the Duke of Portland was entrusted with the formation of a new administration, and to Mr. Canning were given the seals of the Foreign Office. He thus, for the first time, became a Cabinet Minister. In a speech delivered soon afterwards upon Mr. Brand's motion relative to the changes of administration, he made a full explanation of the motives of his conduct, and of the circumstances under which he accepted office at this period.

The season in which the new ministry came into power, was one of unexampled difficulty. Just after the battles of Austrelitz and Jena, Buonaparte may be said to have arrived at the summit of his power. Sweden was then the only ally of England. Denmark professed neutrality; but the overgrown power of France, and the subserviency which Denmark might feel it her interest to pay to a power whose victorious arms she could not resist, ren-

dered her neutrality, if not insincere in its profession, at least doubtful as to its continuance. The apprehension of this, or rather the assurance which the English Government obtained, that Denmark was included in a confederacy formed by Napoleon of all the naval powers of Europe against England, was the motive assigned for the expedition against Copenhagen, which was undertaken with Mr. Canning's sanction, and is supposed to have been projected by him. His speeches on this subject are mentioned in terms of the highest commendation by those who heard them, but they are reported less satisfactorily than his discourses on any other important question.

On Mr. Canning also, as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, devolved the most active, important, and responsible portion of the duties connected with the glorious eruption of a spirit of national independence in Spain. For his services, at this all-important crisis in the mighty struggle, for the deliverance of the nations of Europe from the dominion of France, Great Britain and Spain, all Europe, indeed, owe him a debt of lasting gratitude. To him belongs the merit of the policy that aimed and directed the blow which Lord Wellington so efficaciously struck, and the credit of having supplied by the vigour of his measures in the cabinet, the means which enabled that distinguished Captain to complete the series of achievements which have immortalized his name. To this portion of his career. Mr. Canning ever afterwards referred with sentiments of pride and exultation. In allusion to it on one occasion in Parliament, he declared, that "if there was any part of his political life in which he gloried, it was, that in the face of every difficulty, of every discouragement and prophecy of failure, his had been the hand which had committed England to an alliance with Spain, to an alliance with a country robbed of her Government, and writhing, for the time, under the fangs of the Conqueror."

During the long course of diplomatic negotiation which the state of the relations of England with the Continent, in the years 1807 and 1808, imposed on that Government, Mr. Canning was the official organ by whose pen the communications were made. His state papers furnish the most unequivocal proofs of the solidity, clearness, and high culture of his mind. His answer, espe-

cially, to the joint application of the Emperors Alexander and Napoleon, at Erfurth, to England, to put an end to the horrors of war, was written with superior talent.

His letters, also, to our minister, at the Court of St. James, Mr. Pinckney, and his despatches to Mr. Erskine, the English minister at Washington, in relation to the difficulties between the two countries which grew out of the affair of the Chesapeake, and the restrictions upon neutral trade which England had enacted, are cited as master pieces of diplomatic correspondence. But, whatever the mere ability of the writer, the tone of them was too harsh. The sarcasm and rebuke which he seemed to have studied, were fitted to excite an angry and resentful spirit in the American Government and people.

In the inquiry into the conduct of the Duke of York, which engrossed the attention of Parliament and of the public, in the early part of the session of 1809, Mr. Canning concluded the debates by a speech of great length and ability, in defence of the Duke. The ingenuity and acuteness with which he commented on various parts of the evidence, indicated how successful he might have been, had he pursued the profession of the law.

The descent upon the island of Walcheren, which soon afterwards engaged the attention of Parliament, and was the object of such severe animadversion, is understood to have been planned and projected by Lord Castlereagh; but as the matter was submitted to the cabinet, and approved of by it, Mr. Canning shared in the responsibility of the measures connected with that unfortunate enterprise. He disclaimed, however, all participation in the responsibility of having approved of the retention of the island. The decision, indeed, respecting this point, was taken after Mr. Canning and Lord Castlereagh had resigned.

The cause of the resignations of those ministers was a misunderstanding between them which occasioned a duel on the 21st of September, 1809, in which, after two shots, Mr. Canning was slightly wounded in the thigh. He was confined to his house for a time, but was sufficiently recovered to attend the levee on the 11th of October, and resign the seals of the Foreign Office. At the same time Lord Castlereagh resigned those of the War Department.

The Duke of Portland, the Premier, having resigned as well as Mr. Canning and Lord Castlereagh, a new Cabinet was formed, at the head of which was placed Mr. Percival, who united in himself, as Mr. Pitt and Mr. Addington had done before him, the offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. To this administration Mr. Canning gave no active opposition, but he steadfastly adhered to the principles of which his political conduct had hitherto been regulated respecting the policy of England in vigorously prosecuting the mighty struggle in which she had been engaged with France. In the year after his resignation, public attention was principally occupied by the discussion of the Regency Resolutions, occasioned by the alienation of the mind of the King; and in this he took a very earnest part.

In the course of the ensuing session, 1811, Mr. Canning made his celebrated speech on the report of the Bullion Committee, one of the most powerful specimens on record of chaste and argumentative eloquence. That portion of it which is intended to prove the depreciation of the Bank of England notes—a position broadly and pertinaciously denied at the time by men of the highest public stations—is practical, perspicuous, and unanswerable. The subject of finance was one on which it was not customary with Mr. Canning to make any particular effort, as he had not devoted much attention to it; but determining to make himself master of it, he succeeded in a manner to justify a common remark amongst those of his friends who had the advantage of familiar access to him, that no man so promptly, and with so much effect, directed the powers of his mind to any new subject foreign to his pursuits. The speech contains most of what has ever been urged in Parliament by speakers who take the side of the Bullionists, stated in the best manner, and recommended by all the captivating attractions of just sentiment, polished style, and copious and cogent illustration.

The assassination of Mr. Percival in the Lobby of the House of Commons, on the 11th of May, 1812, by a fanatic named Bellingham, broke up the ministry of which he was the chief; and Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning were commanded by the Prince Regent to form a cabinet. Their negotiation to do so, however, failed, as did also that of Lord Moira, who was next directed to

make the attempt. The task was then entrusted to Lord Liverpool, who made an offer to Mr. Canning, accompanied with an intimation that he was at liberty to retain and express his well-known sentiments on the Catholic Question; but he deemed himself bound to refuse, because the Earl's government then professed to oppose, as a Government, the removal of the Roman Catholic disabilities. Highly creditable as was this conduct to his consistency, it is yet to be regretted that, by declining office in 1812, he lost one of the most glorious opportunities ever presented to a minister of England, the opportunity of presiding over the foreign relations of the country during the period wherein all those important and momentous events occurred, which crowded into a few years the revolutions and changes of an age.

In the discussion of the renewal of the East India Company's Charter, which took place in the year 1812, the conduct of Mr. Canning was highly gratifying to the merchants of Liverpool. His services to the public interests on this occasion, were chiefly rendered out of Parliament—in communications with the parties most interested in and conversant with the subject, and in a close attendance in the Select Committee, which went into an examination of evidence at great length. He approved of proffering such a renewed Charter to the company as would at once secure to them part of their exclusive privileges, and give them time and opportunity to prepare themselves for the loss of the whole.

At the close of the session of 1812, Parliament was dissolved, and at the general election which ensued, Mr. Canning was invited to become a candidate for the representation of Liverpool. The manner of the invitation, the success which crowned him in the first arduous contest, in which the pride of victory was enhanced by being obtained over so formidable an opponent as Mr. Brougham, and the connexion which he at this time formed with Liverpool, and which continued for many years to be a source of reciprocal pride and honour to the constituent body and their representative, Mr. Canning always regarded as among the most glorious events of his public life. Not the least gratifying circumstance in the transaction was the similitude between it and the manner in which Mr. Burke became the representative of Bristol. The history of Mr. Canning's connexion with Liverpool, consists of a series of

successive and increasing triumphs. He stood four times as a candidate, and was each time elected with an opposition that progressively diminished at each contest. On the first occasion he had four antagonists, and his majority over the one nearest to him, Mr. Brougham, was 500. The second election took place after his appointment to the Presidentship of the Board of Controul, in 1816; he was returned after a struggle of three days, by the retirement of his opponent, Mr. Leyland, whose name, indeed, had been set up by the hostile party in spite of his declaration that he was not desirous to serve. At the third, in 1818, some curious electioneering manœuvres were resorted to by his opponents, but they were signally defeated; and at the fourth, in 1820, there was scarcely the shadow of opposition. On every occasion on which he visited Liverpool, the most flattering marks of attention were lavished on him. Public dinners, aquatic excursions, and costly entertainments were given to welcome him. A club was instituted in honour of him called "The Canning Club." This friendly intercouse between the parties, subsisted without interruption from the commencement of their connexion in 1812, until its close in 1822. On his expected departure from England, to assume the Government of India, in the latter year, a valuable piece of plate was presented to him by his constituents; and a deputation from the associated commercial bodies of the port, waited on and presented him an address, expressive of the high sense they entertained of the services which he had rendered to them, during the period that he had been their representative in Parliament. After his death, the inhabitants of Liverpool further testified their admiration of him, by a liberal subscription for erecting a monument to his memory.

In 1814, Mr. Canning was appointed Ambassador to the Court of Lisbon. The last speech which he made before repairing thither, was on "Foreign Treaties," It contains a proud retrospect of the events of the great struggle which, by the entrance of the British army into the south of France, and that of the combined forces into the north, after the decisive battle of Leipsic, seemed about to be brought to the most triumphant conclusion, as well as an eloquent and exulting congratulation of the House and the country on the glorious results of the perseverance and spirit

of the British people. The main cause of Mr. Canning's going to Lisbon was the dangerous illness of his eldest son, for the preservation of whose life a trial of the climate of that city was recommended by the physicians. To his acceptance of the embassy, however, objections were made on the ground, in the first place, of his consenting to receive a situation subordinate to Lord Castlereagh, and, in the second, because the salary and allowances were, it was asserted, far beyond the requisite expenses. It was even contended that the contingent event, the return of the Royal Family of Portugal from the Brazils, for which the embassy was provided, was in reality never contemplated, and that the whole transaction was "a job," instituted to provide a comfortable retreat for him, and conciliate his support of the existing Government. These charges were preferred in no qualified terms by Mr. Lambton, in a speech introductory to a motion on the subject. To these Mr. Canning made an eloquent and indignant reply, in which he repelled the unworthy imputations thrown upon him, in a manner that brought conviction to every mind. He was also accused of prolonging his sojourn there beyond the period that there was any ascertained ground for his continuing it. This he answered in a speech to his constituents at Liverpool, in 1816, by stating the fact that he did not continue in a public capacity up to the period of his leaving Lisbon, but had, six months previously, resigned, on learning the Prince Regent's determination not to return immediately to his European dominions.

Mr. Canning's return to England was in the early part of the year 1816. During his absense, the battle of Waterloo had put an end to the career of Napoleon. He stopped a few days at Bourdeaux on his way home, and received a splendid public entertainment from the merchants of that place. Shortly after his arrival in England, a vacancy occurred in the Presidency of the Board of Controul, by the death of the Earl of Buckinghamshire, to which, on the intimation of the Prince Regent, Mr. Canning succeeded.

In the session of the Parliament of 1817, the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill and the Seditious Meetings' Bill were passed, in consequence of the agitation and disaffection that pervaded the country, growing out of the distress which was the natural result

of the long protracted war just concluded. The prominent part which Mr. Canning took in effecting the passage of those bills, rendered him very unpopular with the Opposition, who deemed such extraordinary measures stronger than the case demanded; and on several occasions attacks were made upon him in consequence, the severest of which was put forth in the shape of an anonymous pamphlet shortly after his speech on the Indemnity Bill in 1818. Some remarks also of Sir Francis Burdett in relation to him, in a letter addressed to the Chairman of a Reform dinner, had nearly occasioned a duel; but the matter, fortunately, was satisfactorily adjusted.—The speech of Mr. Canning at the opening of the session of 1819, contains a powerful commentary on the proceedings and character of the violent meetings which were held throughout the country, particularly the one at Manchester, which was dispersed by the yeomanry with the loss of several lives. During the session six bills, having for their object the repression of the prevalent disaffection, were earnestly supported by Mr. Canning, and passed, though with great opposition.

In January, 1820, George III. died; and George IV. had scarcely ascended the throne, when a fresh subject of agitation was created by the arrival of Queen Caroline in England. Mr. Canning was indebted to her for many acts of civility and kindness, and he had been a party to the advice given to her by her friends in 1814, which she had followed, of residing abroad. When, therefore, it was resolved to institute an inquiry into her conduct, he resigned his place as President of the Board of Controul, deeming himself bound both by gratitude and the circumstance of his having been her adviser on a somewhat similar inquiry in 1805, to abstain from bearing the share which his ministerial duty would have assigned him in promoting the prosecution. His conduct on this occasion, according to universal consent, was marked by the most perfect correctness and delicacy of feeling.

On his retirement, a letter was addressed to him by the Directors of the East India Company, which furnished a flattering tribute to his talents and integrity; and at a meeting of the Court of Proprietors of the Company, a resolution was unanimously passed, concurring in the sentiments conveyed by the Directors to him,

and emphatically expressive of their high admiration for his abilities, and their grateful sense of his services.

Early in the Spring of this year, Mr. Canning sustained a severe domestic calamity in the loss of his eldest son, George Charles Canning, in the nineteenth year of his age. The following beautiful epitaph was written by the afflicted father, and inscribed upon an elegant monument in the burying ground of Kensington:

"EPITAPH.

"GEORGE CHARLES CANNING,
"Eldest Son of
"The Right Honourable GEORGE CANNING, and JOAN SCOTT, his Wife;
"Born April 25, 1801.—Died March 31, 1820,

"Though short thy span, God's unimpeach'd decrees,
Which made that shorten'd span one long disease,
Yet, merciful in chastening, gave thee scope
For mild, redeeming virtues, Faith and Hope;
Meek Resignation; pious Charity;
And, since this world was not the world for thee,
Far from thy path removed, with partial care,
Strife, Glory, Gain, and Pleasure's flowery snare,
Bade Earth's temptations pass thee harmless by,
And fix'd on Heaven thine unaverted eye!
Oh! mark'd from birth, and nurtured for the skies!
In youth, with more than learning's wisdom, wise!
As sainted martyrs, patient to endure!
Simple as unwean'd infancy, and pure?
Pure from all stain, (save that of human clay,
Which Christ's atoning blood has washed away!)
By mortal sufferings now no more oppress'd,
Mount, sinless Spirit, to thy destined rest!
While I—reversed our nature's kindlier doom—
Pour forth a father's sorrow on thy tomb."

During the two subsequent years (1821–22) Mr. Canning took little part in public affairs. He visited France and Italy with his family, but resided principally at Paris, where, free from the tumult of party, he moved in the chief circles of literary and polished society which that capital contains. At this time, he saw much of Chateaubriand, with whom he formed a friendship,

which some differences of a political nature afterwards interrupted. He left Paris in 1821, expressly for the purpose of attending Parliament, in order to support the Bill for the Removal of Roman Catholic Disabilities. His speeches in the year 1822, on Lord John Russell's motion for Reform, and on his own measure for the relief of the Catholic Peers, are among the most finished specimens of his eloquence. At the time of their delivery, he was on the eve of his departure for a foreign destination, and they were manifestly elaborate efforts, intended to be parting admonitions to his country on the two great questions of which they treat.

In the early part of 1822, the Directors of the East India Company had chosen Mr. Canning to fill the situation of Governor General of Fort William, in the Presidency of Bengal, the seat of the Supreme Government of British India. Previous to his intended departure, he paid a farewell visit to Liverpool, where public entertainments on a scale of the most munificent hospitality were given to him, besides a valuable piece of plate. Just, however, as he was about to embark, the death of the Marquis of Londonderry created a vacancy in the office of Secretary of Foreign Affairs; and the public eye was immediately turned towards Mr. Canning as the person best qualified to fill it. The expression of public sentiment was responded to by the King; and, early in September, on the return of the latter from Scotland, where he had been on a visit at the time of Lord Londonderry's death, the Seals of the Foreign Office were presented to Mr. Canning.

The war subsequently waged by France against Spain, for the purpose of re-establishing the throne of Ferdinand on the ruins of the Cortes, was meditated by her at this period, and urged by her representative, M. de Montmorency, in the Congress of Verona then just assembled, upon the different Powers. England was the only one which objected to the proposed interference, the instructions communicated by Mr. Canning to the Duke of Wellington being, to declare "that to any such interference, come what may, His Majesty will not be a party." The speeches which Mr. Canning made in the session of 1823, the first in laying before Parliament the diplomatic papers relative to the negotiation on

the state of affairs between France and Spain, and the second at the close of a debate on the same subject, are alike remarkable for the clearness with which he explains all the intricacies of a very complicated subject, and the ability with which he applies to individual cases the great principles of national law, and the eternal ones of public justice. There has rarely been an occasion on which the anxiety of the English public for a full justification of a great measure, involving the national interests and honour, was so completely satisfied and allayed, as on the propriety of the policy pursued by Mr. Canning in reference to this subject.

In this year, also, the recognition of Spanish American Independence by England, a movement which was planned and effected by Mr. Canning, shed a lustre upon his name which the friends of freedom will never allow to be extinguished. A formal communication, however, of the circumstance, was not sent to the foreign ministers accredited at the Court of St. James, until 1825. In it he stated, "that in consequence of the repeated failures of the applications of His Majesty's Government to the Court of Spain, relative to the recognition of the independent States of Spanish America, His Majesty had come to a determination to appoint Chargés des Affaires to the States of Colombia, Mexico, and Buenos Ayres; and to enter into treaties of commerce with those respective States on the basis of the recognition of their independence."

It was in the course of the session of 1823, that Mr. Canning, in his answer to Mr. Brougham, evinced an irascible temperament, and betrayed the little control which he had in forbearing from the most vehement expression when exasperatedby a disreputable imputation being cast upon him. The circumstances out of which it arose were these: On one of the frequent discussions which took place relative to the affairs of Spain, Lord Folkestone, in a speech of unqualified condemnation of Mr. Canning's policy on this question, accused the Foreign Secretary of "truckling to France." Mr. Canning replied to him in the debate of the same evening, and, after assuring the noble Lord that he would never truckle to him, pronounced upon the speech of Lord Folkestone, and the manner of its delivery, a sentence of the bitterest invective that perhaps ever escaped him in Parliament. "The Lacedæmonians,"

said he, "were in the habit of deterring their children from the vice of intoxication, by occasionally exhibiting their slaves in a state of disgusting inebriety. But, Sir, there is a moral as well as a physical intoxication. Never before did I behold so perfect a personification of the character which I have somewhere seen described as 'exhibiting the contortions of the Sybil without her inspiration.' Such was the nature of the noble lord's speech."

On a subsequent evening, 17th April, 1823, during a conversation in the House of Commons, which preceded the discussion of the Catholic Question, Mr. Brougham pronounced a severe philippic against the Foreign Secretary, in which, after insinuating very intelligibly that Mr. Canning, on accepting office, had entered into a compromise with Lord Eldon to postpone and waive the consideration of the Catholic Question, he added, "And is it the Right Hon. Gentleman then who talks of not truckling to my Noble Friend (Lord Folkestone)—*he*—who has himself exhibited the most incredible specimen of monstrous truckling, for the purpose of obtaining office, which the whole history of political tergiversation can furnish." At this moment, Mr. Canning, whose changing features for the few preceding minutes were developing the deep agitation of his mind, rose, and said emphatically, "Sir, that is false." This abrupt and most unexpected interruption entranced the House for some moments in amazement. Mr. Brougham was restrained by his friends from leaving the House immediately. The Sergeant-at-Arms was summoned to attend—a motion was made and withdrawn, that Mr. Canning and Mr. Brougham should be taken into custody—explanation succeeded to explanation—but all that followed the interruption by the Right Honourable Secretary—the moment of intense interest—was but as "the pattering of rain after a thunder storm." The fury of the bolt was spent—and with its exhausted rage expired the awe and the interest awakened by the shock. The result was, that, after mutual and suitable explanations on both sides, Mr. Canning and Mr. Brougham, with perfect propriety and honour to themselves, in the estimation of the House and of the country, agreed "to think no more about the matter."

One excuse, and one only, may be suggested for the conduct of Mr. Canning on this occasion—namely, the spirit-stirring pro-

vocation to intemperate retort which was conveyed in the language—and even less in the language than in the manner of Mr. Brougham. The sarcastic tone—the vehement gesture—the deep and disdainful denouncement expressed in the whole of his delivery of this passage of his speech, cannot be contained within the limits of any description.

During the sessions of 1823, 1824, 1825, and 1826, the consideration of the Abolition of Slavery came under frequent discussion in Parliament. On this question, Mr. Canning advocated a middle and mediatorial course between contending parties—the advocates of the extreme principles of immediate abolition on the one side, and of perpetual slavery on the other. He pledged the House of Commons to resolutions for the gradual Amelioration of the Condition of the Slave Population in the West Indies; and in several speeches, especially in a most eloquent one on the 16th of March, 1824, he developed his own views and those of the Government on this momentous measure.

The embarrassed state into which the currency of England was put in 1825 by the failure of numerous and extravagant speculations in which a vast capital had been embarked, engaged the attention of Parliament at its meeting. Mr. Canning with his wonted ability, pursued the course of its variation, exposed the nature of the embarrassments, and propounded the expediency of the measure adopted by Parliament for relieving them. The session of 1826 passed over without any business of momentous interest to call forth the powers of Mr. Canning, with the exception of the question of the currency, and the discussion on the Silk trade. His speech in support of Mr. Huskisson's measure relative to that important branch of our manufactures, though short, was remarkably effective. To the above exception should be added an important speech of Mr. Canning on a motion of Mr. Brougham, pledging the House early in the ensuing session to take into its most serious consideration, such measures as might be calculated to carry into effect the recommendation of the Government and of the House of Commons to the Colonial Legislatures, to ameliorate the condition of the Slaves in the Colonies.

At the close of the summer of this year, Mr. Canning paid a visit to his friend, Lord Grenville, at Paris. He was received in

that capital with all the demonstrations of respect due to his great talents, his lofty fame, and eminent station. The French ministers, the most distinguished members of the nobility and of the higher classes of society in Paris, invited him to sumptuous entertainments; even the court rules of etiquette, which forbade a subject to dine in company with the royal tenant of the Thuilleries, were dispensed with in his favour, and Mr. Canning had the honour, to use the technical phrase, of dining with the King and Royal Family of France. The daily press of Paris noticed his movements, and the unassuming and frank affability of his address conciliated towards him marked respect wherever he went.

In the Parliament of 1826 Mr. Canning made the speech on the affairs of Portugal, which is deemed the master-piece of his eloquence. It was occasioned by the circumstance of the Portuguese Ambassador in London, the Marquis de Palmella, making a formal application to the English Government for military assistance to repel from Portugal the elements of strife with which Spain was menacing that kingdom, in consequence of her hatred of the constitutional form which then subsisted. The English Government being pledged both by ancient and modern treaties to the defence of Portugal, a message from the King was presented to both Houses of Parliament, expressing his confidence that they would enable him to maintain good faith with his ancient ally. It was in moving the Address in reply to this message, that Mr. Canning made his celebrated speech, in which he clearly described the various obligations by treaty into which England had entered with Portugal, and enforced their observance. Its eloquence and power elicited a high eulogy from Mr. Brougham, in which he declared his reliance "on those sound, enlightened, liberal, and truly English principles; principles worthy of our best times, and of our most distinguished statesmen, which now govern the Councils of this Country in her foreign policy, and inspire the eloquence of the Right Honourable Secretary with a decree of fervour, energy, and effect, extraordinary and unprecedented in this House—unprecedented (I can give it no higher praise) even in the eloquence of the Right Honourable Gentleman." Troops were sent to Portugal, and the result of the measure fully vindicated its propriety and wisdom.

This was almost the last important measure which Mr. Canning originated during the time that he presided over the foreign policy of his country. But, besides the measures which he may be said to have accomplished by the influence of his personal authority, as falling within the sphere of his immediate duties, many important changes and improvements, during the period that he was leading minister in the House of Commons, were introduced into various branches of the commercial policy, as well as into the practice and structure of the judicial system of England. These measures, as far as regarded the commerce of the country, were recommended to Parliament by Mr. Huskisson, to whom Mr. Canning conceded "the undivided glory" of them, whilst he avowed his readiness to share the responsibility of sanctioning and approving them. The principle of all these measures was the change from the restrictive system of former times, to one of an enlarged, liberal, and comprehensive character.

On the 17th of February, Lord Liverpool experienced an attack of apoplexy so severe as to preclude all hope that he would ever recover strength for the efficient discharge of his ministerial functions. The public eye in consequence was directed towards a successor to him in his high office; but as long as a possible hope of his recovery remained, the King's personal regard for him, as well as that of all his colleagues, induced a postponement of any new appointment. The utmost anxiety prevailed in the public mind in reference to the subject. Rumours and speculations of all kinds were rife; but amid the contending influences and claims of persons, the most prevalent and popular expression of feeling was decidedly in favour of Mr. Canning. His political experience, his talents, the dominant influence which he had exercised for some time in the Cabinet, all pointed him out as the person whose pretensions were the most potent. The public expectation was not disappointed. On the 12th of April, suspense was terminated by the motion of Mr. Wynn in the House of Commons, "that a new writ be issued for the Borough of Newport, (Isle of Wight,) in consequence of Mr. Canning having accepted the office of First Commissioner of the Treasury." The announcement was received with loud cheers by the House.

When the King first laid his commands upon Mr. Canning to

form an administration, he enjoined upon him the placing of some one in Lord Liverpool's situation, professing that statesman's opinions on the Catholic Question—a requisition with which he thought that a due regard to his own claims to the Premiership, and to the ascendency of those councils in matters of policy to which he was pledged, would not permit him to comply. He accordingly declined the royal invitation, and tendered his own resignation of office, to afford the King an opportunity of constructing a Cabinet united in opposition to the Catholic Question. After several interviews, however, between the monarch and the minister, the condition which prevented the latter from undertaking the task of forming an administration was removed, and its construction was left to his own unfettered action.

His difficulties, however, did not end here. Within twenty-four hours after his appointment to be First Lord of the Treasury, seven of his colleagues—the Duke of Wellington, Lord Eldon, Lord Bathurst, Lord Melville, Lord Bexley, Lord Westmoreland, and Mr. Peel—resigned their respective offices. The reason which they gave for this proceeding, was the policy which Mr. Canning would introduce into the administration in reference to the Catholic Question, of which they had always been the opponents; but allegations were thrown out that motives of rivalry and ambition had also actuated their conduct, at least that of the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel, the two most prominent seceders. The members of the former Cabinet who remained with Mr. Canning, were Lord Harrowby, Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Robinson, and Mr. Wynn. It was a fortunate circumstance for the new minister, that the embarrassment in which he was placed occurred on the eve of the Easter recess, so that the interval of a fortnight was afforded him, to supply the places that had been vacated, and to complete the necessary arrangements for the formation of an Executive Government. Of this period of customary suspension from public business, ample and advantageous use was made. Negotiations were opened with the leading members of the opposition, between whom and Mr. Canning a daily approximation in principle in almost all measures relating to the commercial, internal, and foreign policy of the country, rendered the formation of a league of friendship and co-operation a task of easy perform-

ance. At the meeting of Parliament most of the vacancies were filled up, though some of them, it was understood, were only occupied provisionally. The explanations of Mr. Peel and Mr. Canning on the breaking up of the former ministry, and the difficulties which had obstructed the formation of a new one, excited great attention throughout the House, and throughout the country; and both were generally deemed full, explicit, and satisfactory.

Mr. Canning was now placed upon the loftiest eminence to which his ambition could aspire; but never was there a more affecting and impressive verification of the old poet's melancholy ejaculation—'*Oh curas hominum!*'—than his fate afforded. He had reached the pinnacle, but his strength was exhausted in climbing to it—and he reached it but to die. The only political act which signalized his administration, of which he was the chief promoter, was the treaty of London, signed on the 6th of July, combining England, France, and Russia, in a determination to protect the Christians of Greece from the merciless oppression of the Ottoman Porte—an act not unworthy to close the glorious drama of his career. He had also given notice of an intention to move for a Committee of Finance in the next session of Parliament, to be formed on the most liberal and extensive basis, including members of all parties; and had introduced a Bill for amending the Corn Laws, which was defeated in the House of Lords.

Before his appointment to the Premiership, Mr. Canning's constitution had been shattered by illness; his countenance was sicklied o'er with a pallid hue, and his form bent as if under premature old age. The duties and anxieties, therefore, incident to his station, were of themselves sufficient to increase in a serious degree the weakness of his frame; but to these were added the irritation occasioned by perhaps the most disgraceful opposition on record. A character of personal hostility and rancour was given to it, which was well calculated, in his debilitated state, to excite his natural sensitiveness to a dangerous pitch; and the effect which it had upon him was greater than from its intrinsic force, either in intelligence or power of any description, it was entitled to produce. In vain he boldly and repeatedly challenged his adversaries to bring forward some specific proposition on which

the sense of Parliament might be unequivocally pronounced, as to the efficiency of his administration. Open conflict they declined, preferring to persevere in a species of Guerilla warfare—teazing attacks, sudden sallies, and quick retreats.

Little of interesting information can be communicated with regard to the last moments of Mr. Canning, as his fatal illness, from its very commencement almost, was so acute and severe as to overpower the vigour of his understanding.

On Wednesday, the 11th of July, Mr. Canning went to Wimbleton to a Cabinet dinner, at the Lord Chancellor's, where, having made himself warm with exercise, he sat some time under a tree in the open air. The next day he complained of a slight feeling of rheumatism; but it was not till the following Saturday, that it became so serious as to make him keep his bed. He was confined there for nearly a week; but on Friday, the 20th, was sufficiently recovered to be enabled to go to the Duke of Devonshire's villa at Chiswick, which the duke had lent to him for change of air. From that time to the 1st of August, though he was well enough to come occasionally to his residence in London, and to ride out, yet he made little progress towards recovery. On the 30th of July, he paid his last visit to His Majesty, and on the 31st, he came, for the last time, to town, and transacted business for a few hours with several official gentlemen. On his return to Chiswick that evening, he dined in company with some friends, and retired early to bed, from which he was destined never again to rise. On the 2d and 3d he was in very cheerful spirits, and on the evening of the latter day he transacted business with Mr. Herries for three hours. It was about two hours after that gentleman had left him, that he was seized with excruciating pains in the side, which gave the first striking indications to those around him of his alarming condition. Two hours afterwards the medical gentlemen arrived, and he was bled largely. From that time till his death his sufferings were, with few intermissions, so acute, that he could hardly be said to be in the full possession of his faculties. He was, however, at times, tolerably, if not entirely collected; and at those times, as well as in his wanderings, he expressed concern at the inconvenience his illness might occasion to the business of Government, and gave frequent indications that his King and country

anxiously occupied his thoughts. On the Sunday before his death, he remembered the day, and expressed a wish that his daughter should read prayers to him—a duty which he himself, in his busiest moments, never omitted to perform to his whole household, whenever he was prevented from going to church: but a few minutes after he had expressed this wish, the pain, which had for a time subsided, returned with great violence, and with it returned likewise the wanderings of his mind. In the course of the evening of this day, on some religious observation being made by one of the attendants, he declared "his hope of salvation through the merits of his Redeemer, Jesus Christ." The two last days, his strength and his pains diminished in like proportion, and, having been senseless for some hours, he breathed his last, without a groan, a little before four o'clock, on the morning of the 8th of August.

The family which Mr. Canning left, to deplore a loss in which their sorrows shared the sympathy of the nation, consisted of his widow,* to whom he had been united in most affectionate endearment for twenty-eight years; a daughter, married to the Marquis of Clanricarde in 1825; and two sons, one a commander in the navy, and the other a student at Eton.

The funeral obsequies of Mr. Canning, which took place on the 16th of August, were assimilated to those of a private gentleman. The day was peculiarly unfavourable, yet the crowd of persons, anxious to demonstrate their respect for the departed Statesman, was immense. The streets leading from Downing Street, from the late residence of Mr. Canning, were thronged by a dense assemblage of persons, habited suitably to the melancholy occasion. At one o'clock, the funeral procession departed from Downing Street. The hearse, drawn by six horses, and preceded by a marshal, mutes, and pursuivants, were followed by nine mourning coaches, each drawn by four horses; the private carriages of the Cabinet ministers, and the friends of the deceased Premier, closed the *cortege*. Mr. Charles Canning, a youth of fourteen years of age, was the chief mourner. Their Royal Highnesses, the Dukes of Clarence and Sussex, attended to pay their last mark of mourn-

* Mrs. Canning has been recently raised to the peerage, by the title of Viscountess Canning.

ful respect to the minister. The Cabinet ministers, who principally occupied the mourning coaches, also attended as mourners—with the exception of his attached friend, Mr. Huskisson, who was absent at the time in a distant part of the Continent, and Lord Harrowby, who was in Devonshire, and sent an apology for his absence. The other mourners were, the Marquis of Clarincarde, Captain Hunn, Mr. Stapleton, (Mr. Canning's Private Secretary,) the Duke of Devonshire, the Marquis of Conyngham, Lord Seaford, Lord Morley, Lord Howard de Walden, Lord George Bentinck, Mr. Planta, Mr. Denison, Mr. Backhouse, Sir M. Tierney, Dr. Holland, and the other medical attendants of Mr. Canning. The funeral train was received at the entrance to the Abbey, by Dr. Ireland, the Dean of Westminster; a numerous body of political and private friends, who were provided with tickets, formed into two lines along the great aisle, through which the procession passed on its way to the north transept. As soon as the procession reached the place of sepulture, the Foreign ambassadors, the Cabinet ministers, and other mourners, formed a circle round the coffin, whilst the Reverend Dean of Westminster read impressively the burial service.

That Mr. Canning's professions of devotedness to the cause of benevolence were perfectly sincere, his whole life bore ample testimony. He was eminently distinguished by the charities of human nature, and was perpetually diffusing happiness around the circle in which he moved. No man could be more alive to appeals made to his compassion. By his humane interference, he saved the life of one of the Cato-Street conspirators. It is said that, being on a visit at his friend's house, Mr. Ellis, now Lord Seaford, at Seaford, in taking one of his early morning walks, he was caught in a very violent squall, when he was invited into the signal-house on Beachy Head, occupied by a lieutenant in the navy, where every civility was paid him as a stranger, then wholly unknown to the inmates. Mr. Canning, while taking his homely breakfast under this hospitable roof, amused himself with noticing the younger branches of the family, which were numerous. Mr. Canning said to the veteran, "Why do you not send the boy to sea?" How can I afford that?" replied the lieutenant; "I assure you, Sir, it is with difficulty I find the means of filling out their

jackets; would to God I could get him to sea!" "And then," said Mr. Canning, "of what profession are your daughters, how do they employ themselves?—one, I see, is grown up." "Why, Sir, this eldest is astonishingly clever at her needle, and I should like to have her sent to some dress-maker." The stranger guest departed; but in a few days the boy was sent for, fitted out as a midshipman, and is now a lieutenant. The girl was provided with the situation suited to her talents, with a lady in Pall Mall, and is since respectably married. The whole expense was defrayed by their generous morning guest, and the tears of this veteran's family followed him to the grave.

Mr. Canning was the consummate orator of his country and age. He had cultivated eloquence, as a liberal art, with the zeal of a student, and became one of its classic masters. Some may have exceeded him in particular qualities or powers; but he possessed an assemblage of endowments and acquirements which left all rivalry at a distance. He combined the free movement, spirit, and reality of British parliamentary debate, with the elaborate perfection of the *forum* and the *agora*—and the accessary accomplishments and graces of ancient and modern literature.

He had studied, with a quick and congenial feeling, those severe and eternal models—the remains of ancient eloquence. His elegance of expression was fastidious, without weakening its force—his wit was not so elaborately, concentratedly brilliant, as Sheridan's—but it was more prompt, redundant, aud disposable—and, if it may be so said, more logical—whilst his ridicule, inimitably poignant, was ever governed by high breeding and his good taste. Mr. Canning's reading was extensive and various, and his fancy flitted over history, fiction, and external nature, with quickness and felicity—for illustration, citation, or metaphor. He had the tact to discern, and the dexterity to expose, what was weak or ridiculous on the adverse side—the art to push an opponent's simile, or analogy, *ad absurdum*—or to discover grandeur in what was meant for reproach (as in his retort that Porteus, with all the versatility of his shapes, was in every shape the god)—and, in fine, to lay bare, by rigorous syllogism, a fallacy in the envelope of a sophism, or loose phrase.—Who has ever reached him in those

adroit movements, and happy inspirations, which stamp the talent of debate?

Mr. Canning not only meditated his speeches, but composed carefully (whether on paper or in his memory matters not) the passages of effect. His exquisite sense of the elegance of style—of the precise value of words—and of oratorical collation and cadence—will be felt and admired in the speeches revised by him—and discerned in those that remain in a state less perfect. His printed speeches, present the orator with more interest and fidelity, than any other published speeches, excepting Burke's, who wrote his for the press—fortunately for posterity and his own fame. Mr. Canning, however, will not be found always equal to himself; but as it is the condition of mediocrity not to exceed, and its privilege not to descend below itself—so inequality is the attribute of genius, from the father of poetry and eloquence down to this day.

Person and delivery are considerable parts of the orator. Mr. Canning's height was of the heroic standard—his form united elegance and strength—his dress was modern, without pomp or foppery—his motions and pace firm and elastic—with a characteristic, individualising disregard of all studied grace. His countenance was moulded in the happiest English style—comely, elegant, and simple—the profile gracefully, rather than strongly defined—the face expressive, and mantling, as he spoke, with the changes of sentiment and emotion—the eye large and full, and if not charged with the lightning's flash, yet beaming with intelligence—the voice strong, flexible, and slightly muffled, so as to impart a softer melody, without affecting its clearness. His port, as he spoke, was sometimes negligent—often admirable—evincing a proud consciousness of the superiority of his cause, or the power of his eloquence. His action, in one respect was objectionable—he wielded his arms alternately and vehemently, without variety or grace, and spoke occasionally with his arms crossed. The first of recent portrait-painters* has represented him in a frock coat, with his arms crossed, on the floor of Parliament. But though the likeness is perfect, the portrait wants historic attitude, aspect, and expression. The artist took the orator who could launch an epigram or a retort—when he might have gone so much higher

* Sir Thomas Lawrence.

Possibly, this negligent action of Mr. Canning was indulged in to avoid the theatricalism of manner with which Lord Chatham was reproached—and which betrayed, too palpably, art and preparation in Sheridan. It had the effect, too, of giving an air of unpremeditated inspiration to his most calculated strokes, and passages of most elaborate splendour. But his delivery, on the whole, was at all times effective, and, with the occasion, impassioned and electrical.

With the sensibility of his temperament, and his order of mind, Mr. Canning must have possessed pathetic power. But the exercise of this is scarcely within the range of the eloquence of Parliament. His sensibility, joined with his delicate sense of personal honour, rendered him impatient, sometimes, of petty outrages in debate—and so gross in their injustice, as to recoil upon their authors—but let them be forgotten.

Had Mr. Canning devoted himself to literature, that of his country must have been adorned by him. In prose, his early compositions, and some unavowed pieces in the maturity of his talent, are worthy of his fame; his state papers remain models in their kind.—His pieces in verse, indicate a resemblance to the genius of Pope. He would have excelled, like that illustrious poet, in polished diction, keen satire, and strong traits of ridicule and character.

SELECT SPEECHES

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE GEORGE CANNING

SPEECHES,

&c. &c.

TREATY WITH THE KING OF SARDINIA.

JANUARY 31st, 1794.

THE first, or (as it is usually termed) the maiden speech of Mr. Canning, in the House of Commons, was delivered in the debate on the motion of Mr. Pitt, "that the copy of the treaty with the King of Sardinia, be referred to the committee of supply." By this treaty, the King of Sardinia engaged to keep on foot, during the whole course of the present war with France, an army of fifty thousand men, to be employed for the defence of his dominions, as well as to act against the common enemy. On the part of His Britannic Majesty, it was stipulated that he should furnish to the King of Sardinia, during the whole course of the war, a subsidy of two hundred thousand pounds sterling per annum. The treaty further bound the King of England, not to conclude a peace with the common enemy, without comprehending in it the entire restitution to His Sardinian Majesty, of all the parts of his dominions, which belonged to him at the commencement of the war. In return, the King of Sardinia was bound to continue firmly and inseparably attached to the common cause, and to the interests of the King of England in this war, until the conclusion of peace between Great Britain and France.

MR. FOX opposed the motion. He conceived it to be very unwise to enter into such a treaty, by which we were to receive nothing, and give every thing. The engagement was a hazardous one, and we had nothing stipulated in our favour, that might be considered as an equivalent. By this treaty, the King of Sardinia was only bound to maintain fifty thousand men, for the defence of his own territories. That the King of Sardinia should keep up such a force, what did we engage to perform? Not only to pay a subsidy of two hundred thousand pounds a year, in aid of maintaining this force, but to restore to him all those territories which the French had wrested from him whilst we were sitting quietly by, boasting of our neutrality. This engagement might reduce us to purchase peace at great sacrifices on our part, in order to make good our engagements with the King of Sardinia, or to subject ourselves to the reproach of a breach of faith, by making peace without obtaining the restoration of his territories. He must peremptorily deny the doctrine, that the treaty being concluded by His Majesty, the proper representative of the country, in all transactions with foreign powers, the House could not refuse to ratify it, without subjecting themselves to the imputation of a breach of faith. If the House was considered as bound to make good every treaty, which by the advice of his ministers he might think proper to conclude, there was a complete surrender of the public purse to the executive power.

Mr. Powys replied to Mr. Fox. He said it was natural for the right honourable gentleman, and those who, like him, opposed the principle of the war, to oppose every measure that could contribute to its success.

Mr. Ryder supported the motion.

Mr. Grey did not consider the treaty, as one calculated to give energy to the war. No former treaty had been entered into, under circumstances nearly similar; and, in his opinion, the epithet "*unprecedented*," as well as the epithets, "absurd and iniquitous," might be justly applied to it. At least, he must hear many more circumstances than had as yet been stated, before he could think that they might not.

Mr. Canning rose, and spoke to the following effect:

Sir,

If I could agree with the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, in considering the question before the House as an insulated and independent question, standing on its own grounds, and to be argued solely on its own principles, I should have sat by contented, while gentlemen, more qualified for such a task, by their opportunities of official information, and by their ability every way greater than mine, had given their answer to the objections urged against the treaty.

I should have sat by, contented with what has already been said by a right honourable gentleman below me, (Mr. Ryder,) who has given to all the objections which have yet been urged, an ample, an able, and, to my mind, satisfactory answer.

But I do much rather agree with the honourable gentleman who has spoken second in the debate, that the question now agitating, is not to be argued on the narrow principle of mercantile precision: that it is not simply an accurate tradesman-like inquiry into the goodness or badness of the bargain which we have made; an inquiry whether we have actually received a fair *quid pro quo;* whether or not we have not been somewhat extravagant in our payment, and suffered ourselves to be over-reached in the transaction; but that it is a great and important question, growing out of, and inseparable from, a great connected, and comprehensive system—the system of general union among the powers of Europe, which has for its ultimate object to prevent the aggrandizement of the French Republic, and to check the principles by which that aggrandizement is sought to be effectuated: and as upon the whole of that system, and upon the treaty before the House, as part of that system, I cannot conceive how any gentleman should have found much difficulty in forming his opinion; so, I trust, that if I attempt to deliver that which I have formed, I shall stand excused from the charge of presumption.

I know but two points, in which the propriety of this, or indeed of any other treaty, can be attacked or need to be defended. 1st, It might be argued, that no such treaty ought to have been

made at all. 2ndly, Being acknowledged to have been proper to be made, it may be contended to be more disadvantageous than any other treaty that had ever been made between the same parties; and that in one of two ways,—either by showing that we had paid a greater price for the alliance, having only an equal necessity for it; or by showing that we paid an equal price for it, having a less necessity. The question is thus to be argued in two different points in view. It is to be first shown that some treaty with the King of Sardinia was proper; and if that inquiry should terminate in the affirmative, it will then be my business to contend, in the second place, that this treaty is equally advantageous, as well as beyond comparison more necessary, than any that has been heretofore concluded between the two states. The discussion of the first general question is easy, as there can be no doubt of the propriety of an alliance between two powers engaged in the same interest, provoked by the same enormities, and contending with the same enemy. Without longer dwelling upon this branch of the subject, I shall therefore proceed to the next topic of investigation.

The honourable gentlemen who has preceded me, has endeavoured to show, that the precedents cited by the gentlemen on this side of the House, differed both in their nature and circumstances from the present treaty. This part of the subject has been already so amply discussed, that I will add nothing to it; and, therefore, without staying to examine the validity of his remarks, I will produce an instance of an alliance with another continental power, which will be found to tally in almost every particular. I mean the subsidy-treaty with the late King of Prussia in 1759. The objections brought by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) against the present treaty; the points wherein he states it to differ for the worse, from every other treaty, which we have ever formed with the same, or any other power, are these:—that the King of Sardinia, at the time of our giving him the subsidy, was actually engaged in a war with France; and that there was no necessity, therefore, for us to have subsidized him, to make him go to war; that the only condition that we expected from him in return for our subsidy was, the defence of his own dominions; and that for this, in addition to the subsidy, we guaranteed to him, not the possession only of that part of his dominions of which he was still possessed, but the restitution of Savoy, the possession of which had actually been taken from him. With every one of these circumstances, do the circumstances of the subsidy-treaty with the King of Prussia, in 1758, exactly tally. The King of Prussia was then in a state of actual war with all the great continental powers: he was actually out of possession of considerable part of his dominions, and nearly overwhelmed by the immense

force employed against him. And did this country treat him as the right honourable gentleman would now wish us to treat the King of Sardinia? No! it was precisely on these principles, stated clearly and at large in the preamble of that treaty, because he was oppressed by powerful enemies, because he was out of possession of part of his dominions, and because he was so exhausted as to be incapable, by himself, of defending the remainder, that we were induced to aid him; an annual subsidy of £670,000 was cheerfully and unanimously voted him; was carried triumphantly through this House, with the loudest approbation of the country.

And to him, too, as now to the King of Sardinia, we guaranteed the restitution of those dominions, of which he had been deprived. The difference, therefore, between these two cases, lay only in this: that the subsidy granted to the King of Prussia was £400,000 larger than that now granted to the King of Sardinia; and that the necessity for subsidizing the King of Sardinia now, is (in my mind, at least,) ten thousand times more urgent than that for granting the subsidy to the King of Prussia. For, on what principle could that vote be justified to the people, who were to pay it? On the wish which the then servants of the crown entertained to preserve the balance of power in Europe. But how much stronger are the reasons which the ministry of this day might urge in defence of the present measure! They might with confidence tell the nation, "We require this money, not to support a precarious or ideal balance of power, but to enable us to defend your government, your property, and your lives, against an enemy who is waging a war for your utter extermination! A nation already too powerful, has, by what some are pleased to call a political regeneration, attained to a degree of strength which threatens the subversion of all the existing forms of social union. To avert this catastrophe, the accession of Sardinia is requisite; and she can give effectual aid in so doing."

A noble lord (Wycomb), on the first night of the session, avowed, that he conceived the opinions and practices now prevalent in France to be the beginning of a new system of political principles and conduct throughout Europe. If it be true, indeed, that old principles are giving way so fast, I confess that the notion of the balance of power, does not appear to me to have been so very clearly explained, or so generally understood, as that the people of England would cling by it after abandoning all their other prejudices and prepossessions; or that the poor peasantry, who have been represented this night as having their hard-earned pittance cruelly wrung from them, to furnish the subsidy for the King of Sardinia, would be better pleased to part with it for the support of the balance of power, than in aid of an ally, engaged in common with themselves for the safety, the laws, the religion,

and the liberty of mankind. I cannot, therefore, conceive on what principle any gentleman can argue the present treaty to be disadvantageous, in comparison with that of 1758–9, unless, indeed, it be, that, as it seems to be, the opinion of gentlemen opposite, that the Earl of Yarmouth discharged his embassy to the court of Prussia, so much better for being unpaid, so they might possibly think that the King of Sardinia would fight better if we refused to pay him.

The right honourable gentleman opposite,* (and here I beg to be understood, that when I presume to notice such arguments as I think exceptionable, when they come even from such authority, I do not do so with any intention of behaving to that right honourable gentleman in any other manner than such as might evince what I really feel, the sincerest admiration for his talents, and respect and esteem for his person)—that right honourable gentleman does indeed seem to entertain some such opinion; for he has argued almost as if he thought that the subsidy was a drawback upon the exertions of the King of Sardinia; that he had been well enough disposed at first, both by interest and inclination, to carry on the war with vigour; but that, impose upon him a subsidy, and all his vigour was instantly overwhelmed and extinguished. Nay, the right honourable gentleman went still farther, and proposed that the King of Sardinia, not only should have received nothing at our hands, but that because he happens to be the sovereign of a territory, whose revenues are insufficient to support an adequate military force, we who are wealthy ought to insist upon his subsidizing us; that he should not only fight on by himself, but pay us for looking at him. Till I can subscribe to this doctrine, I shall continue to think that, under the circumstances in which the King of Sardinia stands, it is essentially necessary that we should assist him; and that it is not proposed that our assistance should be afforded to him in a more ample manner than the necessity requires.

With regard to the question which I have at first passed over, the objections to the treaty *in toto*, as if it ought never to have been made, all these objections would ultimately resolve themselves into such as have been urged against the war in general. As I have not yet enjoyed any opportunity of declaring my sentiments upon this subject, I will, if consistent with the rules of the House, offer a few remarks upon it before I sit down, conceiving it to be natural and necessary that I should declare my reasons for approving the commencement of a war which I am supporting in detail, and of which I applaud the continuance and vigorous prosecution.

The war, then, Sir, I cannot consider in any other light, than

* Mr. Fox.

as a war into which we have been forced by unprovoked aggressions on the part of France; nor can I see, as some gentlemen are disposed to do, that these aggressions are the less to be resisted and repelled, on account of the principles by which they are sought to be justified. Distinctions, indeed, have been taken by gentlemen on the other side of the House, between the progress of the arms of France and the progress of her principles. The progress of her arms, it is admitted, it has been, and will always be, our right and our policy to oppose; but we need not, and we ought not, it seems, to go to war against her principles. I, for my part, cannot see such nice distinctions. Admitting that the aggrandizement and aggression of France, must naturally be the objects of our jealousy and resistance, I cannot understand that they become less so, in proportion as they are accompanied and promoted by principles destructive of civil society. I can conceive no reason why the sword, which, if it had been attempted to be drawn by the ancient monarchy of France would have been represented as threatening our prosperity, our rights, our very existence, may be wielded with tenfold force by the arm of republicanism; may be pointed even at our breasts, without endangering our safety or our honour.

But not only is this a war against principles, but against the very best of principles, a war against freedom. This is loudly and confidently asserted, and is to be proved, we are told, from the circumstance of ministers having neglected to interfere concerning the partition of Poland. Had not ministers been actuated by a hatred of liberty on the one hand, and restrained by a love of despotism on the other, they could never have chosen to make war against France, rather than against the powers who had partitioned Poland. The authors of this assertion affect to disregard, or disdain to consider, the comparative distance of France or Poland, the relative importance of the two countries to us, the strength of the confederacy by which the latter was oppressed, and every other circumstance which should guide the discretion or regulate the conduct of every sober politician.

Well, I will put all these considerations out of the question: I will not urge the obvious absurdity of going in search of distant dangers, and overlooking that which knocked at our door; I will say nothing of the comparative disadvantages of going to war with Austria, Prussia, and Russia, without an ally, and going to war against France, with all those mighty powers to aid us; I will even forego the use of the argument to which I have before adverted, the different degrees of urgency and of popularity which there must always be between a war, such as that for Poland would have been, for the sake of the balance of power, and one like that in which we are engaged with France, for our own de-

fence and preservation. I shall pass over all this; I will admit, for a moment, that there was equal necessity, equal call, for our exertions in both cases; and then I will put the argument simply and solely on this ground: if there be two powers, who have equally offended you, and from whom, by war or by negotiation, you must seek redress; if one of those powers, however in other respects odious and wicked in your eyes, cannot, however, be denied to have a settled, a responsible government, with which a negociation may be easily and prudently carried on—while, in the other, however otherwise amiable and admirable, it must be admitted, that there is no such thing, no safe or tangible means of negotiation—does it not seem a most unaccountable perverseness of judgment, which shall say, "Negotiate with that party with which negotiation is impracticable; go to war with that where negotiation would equally avail; negotiate with France; go to war with Austria, Russia, Prussia; take the bond of the beggar, and throw the solvent debtor into jail!"

We have been told that this is a war, into which we have been hurried by clamour and prejudice; in short, that it is a war of passion. If, by a war of passion, gentlemen mean, that it is one contrary to humanity, justice, and sound policy,—that it is a war which owes its origin and support to the indulgence of some blameable propensity in our nature, gentlemen, in establishing this, have undertaken a harder task than they seem to be aware of. They must arraign nature, and confute instinct; for they must prove that self-preservation is a passion, which it is criminal to indulge. But if, by a war of passion, gentlemen understand no more, than that in addition to all the legitimate and cogent causes of war; in addition to the necessity of repelling unprovoked aggression, of succouring our distressed allies, of saving Europe, of preserving ourselves; that, in addition to all this, there are circumstances in this war, which engage and interest the best feelings and sensibilities of our nature: in this sense we might be proud to own, that it is fairly to be called a war of passion; and if from that dignified character it were to be degraded into a war of ambition and interest, it would cease to have in me a warm and zealous defender.

An appeal is made to our prudence; and we are asked, with an air of triumph, what are we to get by this war? Before I attempt to answer that question, I will take the liberty to ask, whether or not that question properly and particularly applies to a war, such as we contend this to be, a war of aggrandizement and speculation? If, indeed, ministers had come down to this House, and said, "We have an opportunity of procuring great and advantageous acquisitions for the country; we may wrest from France some fertile province, or extort from her some valuable branch of her commerce, if you will but support us in a war;"—and if, upon

these grounds, the House had consented to support them: then I grant the whole matter at issue between the House and ministers, —the question which might be most fairly put, as conclusive upon the merits of the war, would be,—Well, what after all, are we likely to get by this war? But, in the present case, it was widely different. We might be proud to say, that in this war, that is not the first question that we asked. I, for one, should be ashamed to defend a war, in which it was the only question that could be satisfactorily answered. Yet, Sir, let not gentlemen run away with the idea that we have gained nothing. Sir, that we have still a government; that the functions of this House have not been usurped by a corresponding society, or a Scotch Convention; that instead of sitting in debate here, whether or not we shall subsidize the King of Sardinia, we are not rather employed in devising how to raise a forced loan for some proconsular deputy, whom the banditti of Paris might have sent to receive our contributions; Sir, that we sit here at all—These are the fruits of the war.

But when neither our reason nor our prudence can be set against the war, an attempt is made to alarm our apprehensions. The French are stated to be an invincible people: inflamed to a degree of madness with the holy enthusiasm of freedom, there is nothing that they will not undertake, there is nothing that they cannot accomplish. I am as ready as any man to allow, that the French are enthusiastically animated, be it how it may, to a state of absolute insanity. I desire no better proof of their being mad, than to see them hugging themselves in a system of slavery so gross and grinding as their present, and calling at the same time aloud upon all Europe to admire and envy their freedom. But before their plea of madness can be admitted as conclusive against our right to be at war with them, gentlemen would do well to recollect that of madness there are several kinds. If theirs had been a harmless idiot lunacy, which had contented itself with playing its tricks, and practising its fooleries at home; with dressing up strumpets in oak leaves, and inventing nick names for the calendar, I should have been far from desiring to interrupt their innocent amusements; we might have looked on with hearty contempt, indeed, but with a contempt not wholly unmixed with commisseration.

But if theirs be a madness of a different kind, a moody, mischievous insanity,—if, not contented with tearing and wounding themselves, they proceed to exert their unnatural strength for the annoyance of their neighbours,—if, not satisfied with weaving straws, and wearing fetters at home, they attempt to carry their systems and their slavery abroad, and to impose them on the nations of Europe; it becomes necessary then, that those nations should be roused to resistance. Such a disposition must, for the

safety and peace of the world, be repelled, and, if possible, eradicated.

When it is found that we are not to be daunted by the effects of their madness, we are called upon to compassionate its cause. It has arisen, as we are told, partly from the oppression of their ancient government, and partly from their being inflamed and exasperated by the present powerful confederacy formed against them. What, if I were to be attacked by an individual madman—is it my business to proceed to an investigation of the origin of his disease, before I guard against its consequences? And if I find, upon examination, that there was reasonable and just cause for his running mad, if a stander-by shall say to me, "that poor man lost his wits from love, or was driven out of them by the cruelty of relations—if you were to know by what a melancholy train of accidents that unhappy maniac was reduced to his present desperate condition, you would be above resisting him!"—Is this sort of reasoning to operate with me against the adoption of any measures of self-defence? I can hardly think so—nor can I agree that, with regard to the French nation, it would merit much more attention—no matter how they came to be what they are; if wild beasts I find them, as against wild beasts, I must defend myself.

I do not envy gentlemen the task which they have imposed on themselves of poisoning the fair hopes of the country, and reducing the minds of the people, otherwise not inclined to a want of confidence in the successes of the war, to a state of depression and despair. I do not much envy their industry; neither, I confess, do I much fear their success. But when gentlemen have once undertaken that ungrateful task (for unpleasing I am sure it must be, and nothing but a strong and imperious sense of their duty could induce them to undertake it at all)—when they have once done so, I think they are bound to go through with it. And then, if all that they have said be true; if our situation be indeed as deplorable as they represent it—if we have failed in all our plans—and been baffled in every exertion—if such have been the nature and extent of our misfortunes, that we have neither satisfaction in what is past, nor resources for the present, nor hopes for the future—and if for all these reasons, it is become necessary, as they state, to sue for peace—let not gentlemen stop here—let them finish the picture—let them show us the extent of our calamities—and describe all the horrors of our situation. If for these reasons, peace must be asked, let them tell us, for these same reasons, what sort of a peace we are likely to obtain. It would not be a common peace, to be obtained by common concessions, or preserved with common security. On our part, assuredly, we must insist on the disbanding of the great standing army, which is the instrument of the revolutionary government

of our enemy; and can it be thought that the potent Republic, which has, according to some gentlemen, baffled all our schemes, and withstood all our efforts, would submit to so degrading and humiliating a concession? Our only reliance then must be on the public faith and responsibility of the present rulers of France—men, whose characters are so familiar to this House, that I shall not think it worth while to delineate them—but will ask gentlemen, whether or not they recollect an argument, which some of them brought forward on a former night—that it was by the distraction of that unhappy country within, and the pressure of hostile force from without, that these monsters had been raised to power? If they avow that argument, I would farther ask, whether they must not acknowledge, that the power of these men would cease with the cessation of the cause that produced it—that those causes would cease with the war—and that the very act of making peace, therefore, on the responsibility of the present rulers of France, would, by destroying their power, destroy the only security of its continuance?

So much for our security, and on the other hand—what terms could we offer? In vain might we propose all the usual securities of pacification on our part—the recalling our troops—the dismantling our navy—the cession of the islands and provinces which we have taken—the abandonment of our allies, and the relinquishment of this same Savoy, of which so much had been said: the answer of France would be, "No—that is not enough from you—it is idle mockery to talk of those things as pledges for your peaceable disposition towards us. It is not enough, that you relinquish all that you have gained, or indemnify us for all we have expended, that you expose your commerce to our rapine, and your coasts to our invasion. You have among you what must keep alive an internal disposition to enmity against us, and a power that will give effect to that disposition; you have your Constitution, surrender us that. It is against that, that we originally declared war;—by the submission of that alone can the war be determined. We ask no more of you, our enemies, as a pledge of peace, than we have before demanded of our friends, the Belgians, as a memorial of amity. But, while your Constitution remains, whatever other show of friendship you may hold out to us, never can true reconcilement grow between sentiments and systems so opposite—while that continues to give vigour to your government, and generosity to your people, never can you sit tamely by, spectators of the fantastic pranks which we mean to play throughout Europe."

But neither does it appear to me, that the call for peace is so pressing and immediate. I have heard it asserted, indeed, that the people were awakening from what was called their delusion,

and were become clamorous for the speedy conclusion of the war. I heard it asserted on a former night, that even among those gentlemen who support ministers in this House, there was not one who would stand up to say, that in his heart he was satisfied with the prosecution of the war. I, for my part, cannot boast of such various and extensive communications out of doors, as many gentlemen might have—nor have I long enough had the honour of a seat in this House, to be able to judge by any other criterion than its votes, of the touch and temper of its inclinations. But so far as my own limited communication and short experience enables me to speak to this point, I can fairly say—I come from among the people, whom I have left, not disheartened and desponding, anxious, indeed, (as which of us is not?) for the happy and honourable termination of the war—but resolved to persevere with vigour, till a termination, such as they approve, not disgraceful, nor calamitous, shall be obtained. I come among the representatives of the people, whom I find as they ought to be, in unison with the sentiments of their constituents, to continue to prosecute with firmness a war begun through necessity;—supporting it with unremitted ardour, and sanctioning it with unexampled majorities.

For all these reasons, because I conceive the war, of which this treaty is a natural and necessary part, to have begun in necessity, and to be continued in justice; because I cannot think that in its progress it has been so deplorably and disgracefully unsuccessful as some gentlemen are willing to represent it; because I do not see how our acquisitions in the West Indies can fairly be stated as a loss; because I do not see, how our conquests in the East can properly be characterized as disgraces and defeats; because I do not see, how the destruction of the maritime force of our only maritime rival, can reasonably be calculated as a fatal blow to our commercial and naval superiority;—but, because I do in my heart believe, the very reverse of all these propositions to be true: because, to conduct the war to a successful and glorious termination, I conceive that the system of alliances, which we have formed, should be scrupulously maintained;—that they should be maintained, not only with those powers, which were of themselves strong enough to perform a part adequate to the assistance which they might receive from us, but, if there should appear in any of the allied powers, a want of ability to perform such a part,—if there should appear to be weakness in their councils, or slackness in their spirit, or inadequacy in their force; that they ought to derive from us the ability which they wanted, they ought to be counselled by our wisdom, and animated with our ardour, and recruited with our strength; because, among all the allied powers, I know none to whom it is more necessary that

such support should be liberally furnished, than to the King of Sardinia, I shall cheerfully give my vote for referring the treaty to a committee.

Mr. Stanley followed Mr. Canning in the debate. After having highly eulogized the eloquence of the honourable gentleman who preceded him, (whose speech was listened to throughout with the deepest attention,) he expressed his approval of the treaty, and should have done so, if the subsidy had been doubled. Peace was at present impossible, and for his part, he thought the war had not been conducted with sufficient vigour. These were his sentiments as a country gentleman.

Mr. Fox replied; after which the motion was agreed to.

ON MR. TIERNEY'S MOTION RESPECTING PEACE WITH THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

DECEMBER 11, 1798.

Mr. Tierney felt himself impelled to make the present motion, from a comparison of the situation of our affairs at this moment with that which it exhibited some time since. He brought it forward principally to enter his protest against the new spirit that had begun to rise up. The spirit he alluded to, was that which led to an extensive continental connexion. He regretted that the pacific disposition which was manifested in His Majesty's declaration, soon after the conferences at Lisle, had been since abandoned. *The first objection he anticipated to his motion, was, that it broke in upon the undoubted power which the crown had of making war or peace;* but this was a point which would not be much insisted upon, when it was considered that the power of that House was unquestionable with respect to granting supplies. *It might also be said, that this motion had a tendency to damp the spirit which was rising in Europe. He disclaimed a wish to discourage such a spirit, and had no idea that his motion, if assented to, would have such an operation. Indeed, he was led to think there was no symptom of any spirit rising from principle in any quarter.* Look at Prussia; that power had been at peace for three years with the French Republic, and its minister was treated there with all the respect which nations usually show towards those with whom they wished to continue a good understanding. If we looked at the Emperor, we could not say there was any dispute actually between him and the French: there was, indeed, a congress held at Radstadt, but that he believed was a trial to make the best of a mere squabble for the right and left bank of a river. If we looked to Russia, we could not see any thing interesting: he saw nothing from that quarter but professions; neither did he see any thing in the conduct of the Ottoman Porte, which led him to think that the resentment shown in that quarter was a resentment arising from any principle on which we could rest for a permanency. He did not mean to say that the enemy had not been guilty of the most scandalous injustice, but he did not see any thing like a systematic course of opposition to the projects of the enemy. The spirit of opposition in Turkey would cease when she got what she wanted for herself—she would have no share in the deliverance of Europe. It would be granted to him, he presumed, that unless the confederacy were general, it could not be attended with any extensive advantages. Now, with respect to a confederacy, it existed in greatest force when the unfortunate monarch was under trial, and at the time of his death, and when France had not the advantage of a settled government; when her troops were undisciplined—when she had nothing to oppose to her difficulties, but the energy of her people. Compare the extended boundaries of France now, with her situation at the time of the former general confederacy. That confederacy failed—its discomfiture was produced either by the skill of the French, or by the jealousy of the confederates; whichever of these two causes the House took, the conclusion was the same; and in neither did he see any new ground for hope from a general confederacy. The French were not less skilful—their generals not less able, nor their armies less powerful: and as to the allies, he did not see any greater probability of their adhering to each other than formerly. Could we have more confidence in Austria or Prussia now than at a former period, after we had the experience of being deserted by both? Could any of the powers expect much from the co-operation of Russia? Be-

sides, what was the real advantage to be derived to Great Britain from her combination with these powers? It may be said, however, that nations feel what their interests are now better than formerly. For his part he could not conceive that any thing could be done to inflame the resentment of the confederates, than what had been done already by the French Republic? Could any thing be done to excite deeper hatred in monarchy against French principles, than the conduct held towards that monarch? Could the nobility of a country have deeper anger against any thing, than against that conduct which abolished their whole order at once? Would any thing make the prayers of the church more fervent against anarchy, than the overthrowing all church establishments? Could any thing more enrage lords of manors, and such persons, than the total extinction of feudal rights? Yet these were the men who united against France, and it was from an union of these again we looked for the deliverance of Europe. He would be glad to see France driven within her ancient limits; but let us not say we would bring about the deliverance of Europe—we could not accomplish it—and he, therefore, did not wish that we should make so extravagant an attempt. He would remind the House, that ministers put into His Majesty's mouth, after the breaking up the conferences at Lisle, words tantamount to the spirit of his motion.

The honourable gentleman here read a passage* from His Majesty's declaration, respecting the negotiation for peace with France. The passage was expressive of His Majesty's disposition to conclude peace on moderate and equitable principles. If this motion were to be negatived, it would be incumbent on those who opposed it, to show what had altered the course we ought to take. There were but two reasons that he knew of, which could be made applicable to this case—one was the aggression of the French in Switzerland—no man looked upon that event with more horror than he did; but the House should remember it was the same in the case of Venice, before the declaration he alluded to. The next reason was the victory of Admiral Nelson; it was unquestionably great and glorious; but it should be recollected, the declaration was made after the brilliant victory of Lord Duncan. The last objection to this motion, he believed, was that it might operate as a notice to France, that we could not longer co-operate with our allies—he thought we certainly should, in the first instance, seek an honourable peace; but if we were to co-operate, we should co-operate only as we hitherto had done, most effectually by our naval exertions. He protested against the sending of troops to the continent, and against sending to any of the powers any pecuniary assistance whatever, either under the title of loan, subsidy, or otherwise. He differed from those gentlemen who might think this an unfavourable moment to proclaim our pacific dispositions. Our finances were in a state to excite the deepest anxiety. In six years we added one hundred and fifty millions to our debt, by which we had created the necessity of adding to our annual burdens eight millions—a sum equal to the whole of our expenditure when the present monarch ascended the throne. Let us consider also our situation at home—the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended; besides, notwithstanding all the efforts to curb and repress rebellion in Ireland, further exertions were necessary for that purpose. If we looked to our establishments in the East, we would see these very large and expensive. Then look at the West Indies: and here the first thing that presented itself was the evacuation of St Domingo; within a few hours sail of our West India colonies, there was a force of no less than fifty thousand Blacks, disciplined and trained to arms. The enemy had, if not the first, certainly the most successful general in Europe. Under these circumstances, and considering that we had been engaged in what was called the common cause, for no determinate object that he could see, it was time for us to have some separate care of ourselves. The honourable gentleman concluded with moving:—

* See vol. 33, Parl. Hist. page 908.—He looks with anxious expectation.

"That it is the duty of His Majesty's ministers to advise His Majesty, in the present crisis, against entering into engagements which may prevent or impede a negotiation for peace, whenever a disposition shall be shown, on the part of the French Republic, to treat on terms consistent with the security and interests of the British empire.'

Mr. Canning:—If I might judge, Sir, of the impression made by the honourable gentleman's speech, from the manner in which it has been received, and particularly from the unusual degree of apathy and languor which has prevailed on that side of the House on which he sits, I should be led to believe, that the ardour manifested on this side of the House by my noble and honourable friends who rose at the same time with me, was, perhaps, more than the occasion required:—and I assure you, Sir, I should not have pressed myself upon your attention, if I had thought the occasion one which demanded abilities like theirs;—if I had not felt, that what arguments I have to state in opposition to the honourable gentleman's motion, are so clear and plain in themselves, as to require little aid from any talents in the person who states them. The motion of the honourable gentleman cannot be denied to be of an extraordinary nature; and he has certainly treated it in a very extraordinary manner. I conceive it to be consonant as well to the rules of the House, as the reason of the thing, that the House should not be urged to the adoption of a new and unusual measure, without its being, in the first place, established, that there exists some necessity for adopting it, or that some advantage may be gained by doing so. I did expect, therefore, from the honourable gentleman, rather some solid reasons for the measure which he has proposed, than an anticipation of the objections which he thought might be urged against it. He has contented himself, however, with endeavouring to destroy the validity of several arguments which he has heard out of doors, and which he expects to hear to-night against the motion he has made; but he has omitted, what seemed to me to be more peculiarly incumbent upon him, an explanation of the motives which induced him to make it. I admit that the honourable gentleman has been not unsuccessful in anticipating several of the most obvious and prominent objections against his motion; I cannot think that he has been equally fortunate in removing them. I shall certainly have occasion, in the course of what I have to say, to re-state many or most of those which he has anticipated, and not without the hope of establishing them to the conviction of the House. I shall follow him through these objections, as nearly as I can in the same order in which he has brought them forward.

The first objection which he expects to hear, but upon which I am certainly not inclined to lay the greatest stress, is the point of constitutional form. It is by no means my intention to contend,

that the nature of the honourable gentleman's motion, though extraordinary, is wholly unprecedented,—much less to deny the power and the right of the House of Commons, to offer its advice to His Majesty, on any subject, either of negotiation, or of war. I know they have at several times interfered in both. It is, indeed, somewhat singular, that the honourable gentleman should not himself have cited any of the former instances of such an exercise of the right of parliament. Perhaps he has some recollection, that a peculiar sort of fatality has, in almost every instance, seemed to attend interferences of this nature; that in almost every instance, from the Revolution to our own time, they have been either nugatory or mischievous. I will mention two only, out of the few that have occurred during this period: the first, —that which was nearest, in point of time, to the Revolution; the other,—that which is nearest to our own time; the first, an interference tending to prolong the war; the other, intended to accelerate a peace. The first, the warlike measure, was the famous vote of the House of Lords in 1707, "That no peace could be safe or honourable which would leave Spain and the Spanish West Indies in the possession of the House of Bourbon." It is hardly necessary to remind gentlemen, that this vote, carried by the heat and violence of party, had no effect whatever; that no manner of regard was paid to it, in the peace which was afterwards negotiated.—And, whatever might be the faults of that peace, or however loud the cry against the ministers who made it, I do not think that any man, who looks fairly and impartially at that peace now, will say, that it was any very great crime in those ministers, that they did omit to carry this vote into execution. The second example to which I refer, is, the resolution voted by the House of Commons, respecting the "Independence of America." Of a transaction so recent it is hardly possible to speak with the freedom of history. I speak, probably, in the presence of many who took part in favour of that resolution—of some certainly, who opposed it. Who were right, or who were wrong, I do not presume to determine. But in one thing, I believe, those who opposed and those who promoted it will equally concur,—that the vote which carried that resolution was an *unfortunate* vote; and that it had an influence fatal to the interest of this country, on the peace which concluded the American war This was a proposition which those who had to make that peace must, I am sure, contend to be true; and which those who condemned that peace would find it difficult to deny.

But whatever might be the force of precedents, they would not of themselves,—even if their bearing was as much in favour of motions of this kind, as unfortunately it has been against them,—they would not of themselves be sufficient to justify the honour-

able gentleman's motion. It would, I presume, be farther necessary for him to show (as was shown, or attempted to be shown, in all former instances,) that some necessity at present exists, which calls for such an interference of the House of Commons. I can conceive such a necessity to arise only from one of two circumstances: either from the circumstance of some opening for peace now presenting itself, of which ministers do not show themselves enough disposed to take advantage;—or from ministers having at former periods evinced a disposition generally hostile to peace, which this motion is intended to censure or to control. That any such opening now exists, the honourable gentleman has not attempted to argue. I must, therefore, naturally have attributed his motion to a false impression remaining on his mind of the conduct of ministers in former negotiations:—I must have conceived, that he retained a confused and perplexed recollection of what had passed at Lisle,—that he remembered something indistinctly of an embarrassment having been thrown in the way of the negotiation by a question about allies,—but utterly forgot that the allies who created this embarrassment were the allies of France and not of Great Britain;—and that, under this mistake, he was bringing forward the restriction in the wrong place, and applying to this country, a cure for the misconduct of the enemy. But I am prevented from admitting even this foundation for his proceeding, by the approbation which the honourable gentleman has expressed of the manifesto published by this government, after the breaking off of the negotiations at Lisle. The honourable gentleman distinctly and fairly acknowledges that manifesto to have exhibited undoubted proofs of the pacific dispositions of His Majesty's ministers.

And here give me leave to observe rather a singular argument, which grows out of the honourable gentleman's peculiar conduct and situation. He tells you that he brings forward this motion as an "unconnected and unsupported individual," acting with no party or set of men whatever. By agreeing to the motion, therefore, the advantage which we are to gain is his individual co-operation. It is hardly to be supposed that he will be more convinced of the pacific disposition of ministers after this resolution shall have been adopted, than he was after the publication of the manifesto, which he has so warmly commended. What was the first step that he took by way of co-operation after that manifesto was published? *He voted against the supply.*—Convinced, that His Majesty had done all in his power to obtain peace;—that he had gone almost beyond what could have been expected of him, in forbearance and moderation;—that he had shown, even after the victory of Lord Duncan, the most decided disposition to make peace, upon fair and reasonable terms;—convinced, that the ab-

rupt conclusion of the negotiation at Lisle had been the act of the enemy exclusively:—that the continuance of the calamities of war was to be attributed to the arrogance, and wickedness, and pride, of the enemy alone;—that His Majesty had no choice;—that he must of necessity continue to carry on a war, which the mad ambition of that enemy would not allow him to terminate;—in this conviction, to enable His Majesty to carry on the war, the honourable gentleman, "unconnected and unsupported," individually *voted against the supply*. I do not mean to impeach the honourable gentleman's conduct in this instance. He had no doubt his reasons for it. But I do mean to put it to the judgment of the House, whether, if it should be evident (as I trust it will be) that no solid and general advantage is to be derived to the country from our agreeing to the honourable gentleman's resolution,—there is much temptation held out to us to do so, by the prospect of his future individual co-operation; whether it is worth while to adopt an unusual, unnecessary, and much more, a mischievous measure, to evince our desire for peace,—in order to secure the honourable gentleman's vote against the supply for carrying on the war. This, however, would certainly be a very inferior consideration, if there were any utility or advantage to be derived from the measure proposed. I have not heard the honourable gentleman state any advantage as likely to arise from it to the country. As he has affirmed nothing of this kind, I have nothing of the kind to deny. But there is one way of considering what is advantageous to this country, to which I confess I am very partial; and the rather, perhaps, because it does not fall in with the new and fashionable philosophy of the day. I know it is a doctrine of that large and liberal system of ethics which has of late been introduced into the world, and which has superseded all the narrow prejudices of the ancient school,—that we are to consider not so much what is good for our country, as what is good for the human race; that we are all children of one large family;—and I know not what other fancies and philanthropics, which I must take shame to myself for not being able to comprehend. I, for my part, still conceive it to be the paramount duty of a British member of parliament, to consider what is good for Great Britain: and where no immediate advantage is pointed out as obviously arising from any new measure that is proposed for our adoption,—I hold it no bad test to examine in what way it bears upon the interests of France, and to conclude, however unphilosophically, or illiberally, that what is good for the enemy, cannot be very good for us.

Now, Sir, I beg to have it understood,—and I assure the honourable gentleman, that I am very far from meaning any thing personally disrespectful to him;—that I give him full credit for

feeling, as strongly as any man, every thing that he owes to his country, for being as ready as any man to devote his talents and exertions to her service. I appeal, therefore, not to his feelings, but to his judgment and ingenuity,—when I desire him to consider, whether he could possibly devise any measure (capable, at the present moment, of being patiently entertained by this House, or by the public,) which should have a more direct and manifest tendency to benefit France, than the motion which he has now brought forward? What could any man—any member of this House (if it were possible to suppose that there should be such a member in this House), most perversely devoted to the views of the enemy, and bent upon exalting France at the expense of Great Britain,—what more effectual measure could such a man take for such a purpose, than by a motion like the present? For what is it that the French Directory appear, by all their conduct, by all their publications, to dread and deprecate more than any other thing in the world? What is it that all their official and unofficial papers most labour to discredit? What—but the revival of a great and general confederacy in Europe, of which England should be the animating soul? Why should we co-operate with the French Directory? What interest can we have in common with them, that should induce us to take their work out of their hands, and complete it for them? What advantage can it be to us to daunt and dispirit Europe; and to relieve the Directory from the apprehension of any powerful resistance, or the necessity of any extensive preparation; to maintain their influence abroad, and their authority at home?

I will put the question in another way. I will suppose that we were now in the last year of the monarchy of France, instead of the sixth or seventh year, or whatever it may be, of the French republic, one and indivisible. By the monarchy, I mean, of course, that cruel, wicked, profligate, abominable despotism, of which we have heard so many, and, no doubt, so just complaints, —which oppressed France with I know not what unheard-of cruelties,—which insulted England, and desolated Europe, by crimes and calamities such as can never be imputed to the French republic. I will suppose that this monarchy had received so formidable a blow as has been given to the Directory by the victory of the Nile;—that its fleets had been disgraced and defeated, in different expeditions against the British Empire—that its fairest provinces were in revolt;—that its subjects were universally discontented;—that its commerce was extinguished;—its revenue destroyed;—and its finances, by the confessions of its ablest financiers, in a state of utter and irrecoverable ruin and bankruptcy;—that against the monarchy, thus situated, a general spirit was rising in Europe:—I will suppose that under these circum-

stances, the ministers of this country had come down to this House, and suggested the propriety of such a measure of abjuration and self-denial as is now under consideration: and I will ask, —what would have been the clamour raised on the other side of the House?—how pointedly would the question have been put to ministers, "What are you doing? Why do you interfere to arrest the downfall of this detestable tyranny? Look on only—do nothing—and it will fall of itself. What business is it of yours to rescue from destruction a power, so inordinate in its ambition, and so hostile to the happiness of Europe!"

Such would have been the language that we should have heard, if the monarchy of France had been the object of forbearance, and if ministers had been the persons to advise us to forbear. I will not press similar interrogations in such a way as to impute to any gentleman improper and unjustifiable partialities:—but I cannot help asking, whether the present gevernment of France be indeed one, which has deserved so well of this country,—which, to take the question more candidly, has deserved so well of France,—which, in the still more large and liberal cant of the day, has deserved so well of *humanity*—as that we should feel ourselves called upon to take so extraordinary a step in its behalf? And I would farther ask, whether,—whatever be the present degree of weakness or stability in the government of France (upon which I give no opinion)—whether the effect of this motion must not be to prop its power, and to come to the aid of its unpopularity? whether, with this vote of security in one hand, the Directory might not boldly hold out the Gazette of Lord Nelson's victory in the other, and call upon the people of France to balance what had been lost with what had been gained?

But admitting, for the argument's sake, the object of the honourable gentleman's motion to be advantageous to this country; it would remain to be seen how far that object is clearly expressed or understood, and how far the means which he suggests are calculated for attaining it. The honourable gentleman takes credit to himself for not limiting or defining in any degree, the nature or terms of the peace which it is the duty of His Majesty's ministers to conclude. If he had not mentioned this omission as a point on which he takes credit to himself, it is that which I should have been tempted to select for peculiar disapprobation. It seems to me at least a new and unusual course of policy, instead of defining the end, to contract the means of action. It would have seemed more natural and more fair, to say beforehand, "Such or such is the peace with which the country would be contented, and which would be consistent with its security and interests; but the mode of arriving at that peace, is what must be left for His Majesty's ministers to devise:"—this surely would be fairer

than to say, in the language of the present motion, "I will not tell you what peace you ought to make;—but I will take from you one great instrument for making any peace at all."

By this motion what advice do you give to ministers, or what control do you impose on them? Your advice is certainly not worth much,—when you only tell them how they shall not proceed; but say nothing of how they shall proceed, or whither they shall go. Your control cannot be very effectual,—since it is they, it seems, after all, who are to remain the judges of what is "consistent with the security and interests" of Great Britain. These interests and this security must necessarily be considered with relation to the different circumstances of the enemy and of Europe. What might be a secure peace for Great Britain with France reduced in power, and Europe at liberty,—would no doubt be highly unsafe against France in her present state of force and aggrandizement, with great part of Europe at her feet, and the resources of other nations at her disposal. It is equally clear, that it would be more difficult for us, single and unassisted, to extort from France such terms as would be consistent with our interests, than to obtain the same terms, if backed by a powerful confederacy in Europe. The declaration conveyed to France by this motion, that we are determined, at all events, to treat singly, would naturally inflame her pride, and increase her demands. The declaration that we make no common cause with other nations, would necessarily place those nations at her mercy, or on her side. The effect of the motion must, therefore, be to diminish alike the probable advantages of the peace to be obtained, and our power of obtaining it. It prescribes a more difficult end to be accomplished, with less efficacious means. At the same time, it does not tend to hasten the conclusion of even such a peace, as with such means might possibly be obtained; for it leaves ministers at liberty to conclude no peace, which they do not think "consistent with the security and interests" of the country:—and if they should choose to think, (which they very probably and very laudably might), that no peace would deserve this character, which should not provide for the safety of Europe;—what assurance does this motion give you against a hopeless prolongation of the war?

Sir, the hon. gentleman's purpose, if I at all comprehend it, required that he should have made the latter part of his motion as distinct as the beginning. If he had done so,—if he had fairly stated the idea which he has in his own mind,—I apprehend that, instead of the circumlocution of a peace "consistent with security and interests," &c., we should have heard of a *separate peace.* I confess, that this was what I was prepared to expect. I expected it the rather, from comparing the general reasoning of the hon.

gentleman with respect to *separate war*,—with what is reported to have been said upon the same topic in another place by a noble statesman of great consideration and celebrity—a statesman, who to a life of political activity has had the advantage of adding an age of retirement and reflection. This great authority, (I understand) recommended, as the only sort of war that suited the circumstances of this country,—a tight, snug, little, domestic war; in which our exertions should be confined at home; in which we should not stretch an arm beyond the circumference of our own dominions, but should sit down with our navy collected about us, and turn round upon our own axis, without reference to the rest of the world. The main advantage stated as likely to result from this system was, that *our sailors would spend their wages at home:*—the noble statesman ought to have added, to heighten the glowing picture, that they would spend them in *exciseable commodities.* This system of separate war was evidently calculated to lead ultimately to separate peace: as, indeed, its illustrious promulgator avowed. I imagined that the hon. gentleman, in adopting the premises of the noble statesman, must be prepared likewise to adopt his conclusion. I should certainly disapprove of both—because I cannot but apprehend that a war so very like peace, would lead to a peace that would be very like war—that a contest (if contest it might be called) in which we should be afraid to employ our forces, would lead to a pacification at which we should be afraid to disband them. And this opinion I venture to entertain, in opposition to such high authority; because I think I have on my side the eternal and immutable truth,—that the objects of human desire are attainable only by human exertion;—that never yet did inaction beget repose, or a want of energy and spirit secure permanent and unmolested tranquillity.

The system of separation, however, is defended upon another ground. It is conceded with great candour, that the conduct of France is very bad; but it is at the same time contended, that the other powers of Europe are very bad, too; and that the less we have to do with either of them, the better. I must take leave, Sir, in the first place, to observe upon the affectation which has grown up among those who argue against the war, of pairing off the enormities of France against the imputed crimes of regular governments. No sooner is any fresh act of atrocity, cruelty, perfidy, or injustice, on the part of the French Republic, brought forward in argument, than recourse is had to some stale trite topic of declamation, which has been used a hundred and a hundred times against Russia, Prussia, Austria, or the old government of France. During Robespierre's reign, the favourite *pair* for every one of his noyades, and fusillades, his crowded dungeons, and sweeping executions,—was the imprisonment of Lafayette! The

partition of Poland, too!—(a measure which I have no thoughts of justifying,) against how many detestable, impious, and tyrannical outrages, invasions, confiscations, rapines, and massacres of the French government, has not the partition of Poland been cited as a parallel! It has really, Sir, been called into service so often, that it ought no longer to be considered as a *pair*. It is time to agree, that, at least, in any future enormities of France, she shall not have a set-off in the partition of Poland.

But, after all, to what does this argument at best amount? The world is a bad world, and we are, therefore, to withdraw ourselves from it. Good:—if this were, indeed, practicable; if it remained for us to choose whether we would make a part of this world or no;

> "If Heav'n would make us such another world
> Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,"

where all should be pure, and perfect, and without a flaw. But if we are, in spite of ourselves, compelled to belong to the world in which we are placed, I know not whether it be not more manly, more statesman-like, and more virtuous, too, to make the best of it;—to do what we can with the materials which we have; and to endeavour to work out our own happiness, even though we should not be able to separate and disconnect it from the happiness of our fellow creatures.

I think this is a more rational conduct than the sort of national secession which the hon. gentleman's motion goes to recommend. I know of no justifiable reason for such a secession,—I can conceive no motive for it, consistent with true sense of right, and just dignity of character. I know not how we could reconcile it to ourselves (if it were practicable) to withdraw into gloomy solitude, and "grim repose:" while we have talents which God has given us for the benefit of our fellow creatures, and while we have a station which affords us an opportunity of employing those talents to that purpose. It is not under such circumstances that I can conceive it to be excusable, to indulge a whim, and fretfulness, and peevishness of temper, from personal spleen and petty resentment, because every thing does not go exactly as we would have it. I can conceive no cause, except sullen discontent, and disappointed ambition, which could lead us to abjure communion with mankind. For discontent, as a nation, God be thanked, we have no ground! Ours has been a generous ambition, and it has not been disappointed, so far as we are ourselves concerned; but it looks to larger and more elevated objects,—to the peace and prosperity of the world. If, indeed, a full gratification of ambitious views were a sufficient reason for retirement, we might fairly and proudly retire, and say, with truth and confidence, that we have acted our part. If we had undertaken the war for territorial

aggrandizement,—if we had been impelled to it by a thirst of naval glory,—we might, indeed, sit down contented with our conquests, when there is scarcely any thing left us to acquire; we might pause, satiated with victory, when we have no longer an enemy to subdue. But we did not undertake the war for these objects. Undertake it, indeed we did in no sense: it was forced upon us by the aggression and ambition of our enemy: we were compelled to engage in it for our safety and defence,—not in local, partial, and insulated points, but in those points in which our safety is connected and bound up with the safety, honour, and interests of Europe.

"But what," say the gentlemen on the other side of the House, "is the distinct *object* for which we are engaged?"—Gentlemen put this question, as if an *object* were a corporeal substance; as if it was something tangible, something that could be taken in the hand and laid upon your table, and turned round and round before them for accurate, ocular examination. In this sense I profess myself perfectly unable to satisfy them. But do they mean something less precise than this, (though scarcely less so)—the statement of some one distinct term, the obtaining of which is to be settled beforehand as a *sine qua non* condition of peace? If they do mean this, are they really prepared to argue that such a statement, supposing it could be made, would be politic, would be prudent,—particularly with a view to the facilitating or accelerating a pacification? Do they not believe—is it not evident—that if it had any effect, it would have an effect exactly the contrary? Do they think the resolution of 1707, for instance, to which I have already referred, had a tendency to promote, or to retard peace? That resolution, indeed, we know was not adhered to. Was it then politic to have passed it? Or, would the gentlemen be contented with the statement of an *object* to which we did not mean to adhere? Would they gain any thing by this? Would this give facility to peace, or vigour to war? Would it contribute to any possible purpose that could be in any way beneficial to the country?

That we have objects, great and momentous objects, in our view, there is no man that must not feel. I can have no difficulty in declaring, that the most complete and desirable termination of the contest would be the deliverance of Europe. I am told, indeed, that there are persons who affect not to understand this phrase; who think there is something confused, something involved, something of studied ambiguity and concealment in it. I cannot undertake to answer for other gentlemen's powers of comprehension. The map of Europe is before them. I can only say, that I do not admire that man's intellects, and I do not envy that man's feelings, who can look over that map without gather-

ing some notion of what is meant by the deliverance of Europe. I do not envy that man's feelings, who can behold the sufferings of Switzerland, and who derives from that sight no idea of what is meant by the deliverance of Europe. I do not envy the feelings of that man, who can look without emotion at Italy,—plundered, insulted, trampled upon, exhausted, covered with ridicule, and horror, and devastation;—who can look at all this, and be at a loss to guess what is meant by the deliverance of Europe? As little do I envy the feelings of that man, who can view the people of the Netherlands driven into insurrection, and struggling for their freedom against the heavy hand of a merciless tyranny, without entertaining any suspicion of what may be the sense of the word deliverance. Does such a man contemplate Holland groaning under arbitrary oppressions and exactions? Does he turn his eyes to Spain trembling at the nod of a foreign master? And does the word deliverance still sound unintelligibly in his ear? Has he heard of the rescue and salvation of Naples, by the appearance and the triumphs of the British fleet? Does he know that the monarchy of Naples maintains its existence at the sword's point? And is his understanding, and is his heart, still impenetrable to the sense and meaning of the deliverance of Europe?

Sir, that we shall succeed in effecting this general deliverance, I do not pretend to affirm. That in no possible case we should lay down our arms and conclude a peace before it is fully effected, I do not mean to argue. But that this is the object which we ought to have in view, even if we look to our own safety only,—that of this we ought to accomplish as much as our means, our power, our exertions, our opportunities will allow,—I do most anxiously contend. If circumstances should unhappily arise to make the attainment of the object hopeless, it will be time enough when they do arise, to give up the hopes of attaining it:—but do not let us run before misfortune, do not let us presume disappointment, and anticipate the necessity of disgrace!

But it is contended and justly contended, that the deliverance of Europe cannot be effected by our exertions alone: and that, unless other powers are sincerely disposed to co-operate, we are setting out on a romantic and absurd and impracticable enterprise, which we have neither any chance of accomplishing, nor any duty or call to undertake. I perfectly agree, that if other powers are not disposed to co-operate, we have no reasonable chance of succeeding to the extent of our wishes. But I cannot help asking, at the same time—If there be no such disposition on the part of other powers, where is the use, or what is the necessity for the hon. gentleman's motion? Why need parliament interfere to prevent His Majesty's ministers from taking advantage of dispositions which do not exist, and from accepting co-opera-

tion which will not be offered? But if, on the other hand, the powers of Europe, or any of them, are ready to do their part towards the common salvation, and want but our countenance and encouragement to begin; if the train is laid,—if the sparks of enmity and resentment, which the aggressions of France have kindled in every nation throughout Europe, want but our breath to blow them into conflagration; is it the dictate of our duty, our interest, or our feelings, to save France from destruction,—and by a coarse and hasty proceeding, like that which is now recommended to us, to throw a wet blanket on the flames?

If, however, the co-operation of allies should be offered, we are called upon to receive them with suspicion and distrust; and to be assured, from the fate of former confederacies, from the manner in which we have been duped and deceived heretofore, that no fidelity to engagements, and no consistency of conduct, is to be expected from the continental powers. It seems to me that this is rather a hard, unfair, and hasty judgment. When it is contended, that because Austria and Prussia have been unfaithful to our alliance, and have made peace at different times in a manner equally inconsistent with their engagements and their interests,—Russia and the Porte must, therefore, be considered as equally faithless, equally worthless allies, as powers on whom no reliance can be placed, and from whose exertions no advantage can be expected;—when the errors of the guilty are thus made to furnish a ground of presumption against the innocent;—I have too much respect for the hon. gentleman, to say, that he reasons falsely, or feebly; but I must say, that if I had ever happened to meet with such a train of reasoning, upon any other subject, in any other place, I should have had little hesitation in condemning it as illogical and inconclusive. Of the treatment, indeed, which the Ottoman Porte receives, I think we have some reason to complain. Gentlemen seem to think that when they have quoted the words of His Majesty's speech, "the vigour and decision of the Ottoman Porte," they have entirely settled the question; that they have stated something obviously and palpably absurd and ridiculous:—and the smile with which this quotation is received by those who surround them, must very much encourage them in that idea. They seem to think, that because the Grand Seignior wears a long beard and a long gown, and is altogether a figure such as we are not accustomed every day to contemplate,—to expect vigour and decision, or good sense or sound policy from him, is an expectation in the highest degree wild and fantastical.

I cannot, for my life, bring myself to understand where all this ridicule lies. I know not why the Grand Seignior should not take as correct a view of his interests, as any other power whose customs may be more conformable to our own. I am sure that

the Declaration (which we have all seen) of the motives which have guided the conduct of the Porte, is as able and masterly a composition, as correct in principles of justice, and as sound in principles of policy, as any state paper that ever was published by any cabinet of Europe. And if the dress and decorations of the Turk be all that strikes the hon. gentleman as ridiculous:—I know not why I should forbear to take the benefit that might result to my arguments, from calling your attention to the antic mummeries and tri-coloured trumpery of the enlightened Executive Directory of France. But I know, if I were to do so, Sir, I should be censured as illiberal, unphilosophical, and—(there is another word in fashion, which I had almost forgotten)—*uncandid.* Allow me, Sir, only to claim the same candour and liberality for the Turk.

But your Turk is a Mahometan, it seems, and, therefore, an ally not fit for a Christian!—I do not know, Sir, but an alliance with a Mahometan may be as good as a peace with an Atheist; the sanction of its engagements may, perhaps, be as sacred, and its stipulations as likely to be fulfilled.

But he is a sluggish Turk; slow to anger, and hard to be driven into action. If that be his character, what must be the provocations which have roused him!

But then comes the worst of all:—the Turks and Russians are naturally enemies; and yet here we find them most unnaturally allied together against a common enemy. In the first place, Sir, it is a little hard, that, when in favour of France, all notions of received and establshed policy, and of the balance of power in Europe, are to be utterly disregarded, and put out of the question—there is yet to be no combination against France, but upon principles strictly conformable to them. But, after all, what is there in this argument? What does it prove,—but that the aggressions of France have been so multiplied, so various, and so extraordinary, as to unite against her powers the most opposite in nature and in interest, as to make the necessity of resistance, and the duty of self-preservation supersede every narrower consideration, every motive of more particular and contracted policy.

Did gentlemen suppose, then, that there is such a magic force in the hostility of France, that if she attacks, at the same time, two powers, naturally enemies to each other, the recollection of their previous hostility shall deprive each of them of the capacity of self-defence? Did any body ever see, or hear, or read of an instance of such rooted, and unconquerable, and unreasonable antipathy? Can they conceive this in individual instances? If a man comes against me with a sword stained with the blood of my enemy, am I, therefore, to make no resistance to his attack?

For our *old* allies, however, it is taken for granted, that no

apology can be made. No good reason (it is contended) can be given, why *they* should not be more worthy of our confidence, more steady to our interests and their own, than they have proved themselves in the former confederacy. The honourable gentleman has anticipated an argument which he is apprehensive may be drawn from the change of circumstances in Europe, and from the conviction which is grown up within this last year, respecting the real views and intentions of France. This argument the honourable gentleman has anticipated, and declares he sees nothing in it. The honourable gentleman is right in his anticipation. I certainly am disposed to use this argument; and I certainly am equally disposed to differ from the honourable gentleman as to its force and validity.

I would ask the honourable gentleman, I would ask every man in the House, whether he does not know—personally and intimately know—many individuals in this country, the whole course and current of whose ideas, with respect to France, have of late been entirely changed? Does he not believe that the invasion of Switzerland, for instance, that the profligate, swindling transaction with America, that the event of the negotiation at Lisle, worked a great change in the public mind in this country? Is not the honourable gentleman acquainted with great and illustrious converts among what some persons have deemed the most able, the most enlightened, and most respectable characters of the age? And by what rule, either of justice or of reason, does the honourable gentleman propose to limit the benefits of experience to his own countrymen alone? Is it not possible that the statesmen of Austria or of Prussia may have caught some light from what has passed upon the continent of Europe? May not Baron Thugut or Count Haugwitz have declared (though not, perhaps, in a public tavern,) at Berlin or Vienna, that "France has thrown off the mask, if ever she wore it?" Would not they be to be believed if they had made such a declaration? Is there any thing that should make their profession incredible, and their conviction suspicious? Or is it to the enlightened wisdom, to the penetrating and perspicacious sagacity, to the firm and inflexible virtue of our patriot statesmen alone, that we would confine the plea of credulity, and restrict the privilege of recantation?

I, Sir, do not see the justice of such a restriction and limitation: and I confess I should try the sincerity of such a recantation by one test alone; by observing whether or not it were followed by any act that corresponded with its spirit and its meaning. It has been observed by ancient philosophers, that if virtue could be brought to perfection and consummation in any human mind, the possessor of it would still be an imperfect creature, inasmuch as the consciousness of his own excellence would weaken in him

one of the first and most amiable qualities of human nature—the indulgence for the frailties of his fellow creatures. It is, I suppose, from some such cause as this, that the gentlemen on the other side of the House show themselves so little indulgent to the failings and errors of our allies. Conscious that nothing of French artifice, or French wickedness, could deceive or impose upon them, they cannot forgive the folly and stupidity of those who have suffered themselves for a moment to be so deluded: nay, they are hardly content to ascribe the delusion to folly; but are forward to insinuate a suspicion of sympathy and fellow-feeling with France.

We, Sir, who have not the same consciousness of infallibility in ourselves, are naturally averse from such suspicion, and more disposed to make good-natured allowances. And I protest, for one, that if the ministers whom I have mentioned, Baron Thugut, and Count Haugwitz,—nay, if even their masters, the Emperor of Germany, and the King of Prussia, had pledged themselves yet deeper to a mistaken opinion of France;—if the forms of the House had admitted of their being brought to your bar, and there, Sir, before God and the country, swearing upon their oaths and upon their honour, that they believed—nay, swearing that they always would continue to believe,—that the government of France was the gentlest, quietest, purest, noblest, faithfullest, best of governments;—that it abhorred and detested, above all things, the idea of foreign interference with the government of other countries;—that the character of the Directory had something in it of peculiar candour, ingenuity and openness;—that they (the witnesses) spoke to these facts from their own certain knowledge,—for that they had lived upon terms of the most confidential intercourse with the Directory, and their communications had been almost entirely upon subjects of a political nature:—If, I say, Sir, such had been the testimony in favour of France, given with all the solemnity of an oath, by the great personages to whom I have referred;—I should yet be willing to allow some credit to their asservation, if they were now to come forward and tell us, that the circumstances of the conduct of France since the time when this testimony was given, that, above all, the declarations and confessions of France herself had completely changed their opinion; had detected the fraud which had been practised upon their judgment, and had convinced them of the profligacy, the atrocity, and the hypocrisy of the Directory. I say, Sir, I should be willing to give full credit to this penitent retraction. I should be willing even to profit by their offers of future co-operation against France. Nor do I well see on what ground the honourable gentlemen could reject such offers, unless they are prepared to argue (which if they are, on their own judgments be the re-

sponsibility,—I do not presume to give any opinion for or against such a proposition,) that "no man who has once been contaminated by the communion of French principles,—who has been drawn, however innocently or mistakenly, into an approbation and encouragement of persons acting upon these principles,—can ever again be a sound man." I, for my part, should in such a case incline to believe the recantation sincere, and to act upon it as such;—unless, indeed, at the moment of making it, the same person were to say to me, "I do not, however, so much disapprove of French principles in themselves: I only doubt the propriety of their application."—Then, indeed, I admit, that I should distrust him again as much as ever.

So much, Sir, as to the particular argument, that the past conduct of our former allies ought to lead us to withhold all credit from their future professions. There is, however, another and a more general argument, comprehending alike these and the other powers of Europe; which, but that it has been stated by the honourable gentleman, I should really have thought scarcely worth confutation. We, it seems—a wise, prudent, reflecting people—are much struck with all the outrages that France has committed upon the continent; but on the powers of the continent itself, no lasting impression has been made. Is this probable? Is it possible? Is it in the nature of things, that the contemplation of the wrongs and miseries which others have endured, should have worked a deeper impression upon our minds, than the suffering of those miseries and wrongs has left on the minds of those upon whom they were actually inflicted?

> "Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
> Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus."

Yet the echo and report of the blows by which other countries have fallen, are supposed to have had more effect upon us, than the blows themselves produced upon the miserable victims who sunk beneath them.

The pillage and bloody devastation of Italy strike *us* with horror;—but Italy, we are to believe, is contented with what has befallen her. The insults which are hurled by the French garrison from the walls of the citadel of Turin rouse resentment in *our* breasts; but have no effect on the feelings of the Piedmontese. *We* read with indignation of the flag of Bernadotte displayed in mockery and insult to the Emperor and his subjects; but it flaunted in the eyes of the people of Vienna without exciting any emotions of hatred or resentment. The invasion of a province of a friendly power, with whom they had no cause nor pretext for hostility, has created in *us* a decided detestation for the unprincipled hypocrisy and ambition of the Directory; but the

Ottoman Porte sits down contented with the loss of Egypt; feels no injury, and desires neither reparation nor revenge.

And then, Sir, the wrongs of Switzerland! They, too, are calculated to excite an interest *here;* but the Swiss no doubt endure them with quiet resignation, and contented humility. If, after the taking of Soleure, the venerable magistrates of that place were first paraded round the town in barbarous triumph, and afterwards, contrary to all the laws of war, of nations, and of nature, were inhumanly put to death; if, when the unoffending town of Sion capitulated to the French, the troops were let loose to revel in every species of licentiousness and cruelty;—if the women, after having been brutally violated, were thrown alive into the flames; if, more recently, when Stantz was carried, after a short but vigorous and honourable resistance, such as would have conciliated the esteem of any but a French conqueror, the whole town was burnt to the ground, and the ashes quenched with the blood of the inhabitants:—the bare recital of these horrors and atrocities awakens in British bosoms, I trust it *does* awaken, I trust it will long keep alive, an abhorrence of the nation and name of that people by whom such execrable cruelties have been practised, and such terrible calamities inflicted: but on the Swiss (we are to understand), these cruelties and calamities have left no lasting impression: the inhabitants of Soleure, who followed, with tears of anguish and indignation, their venerated magistrates to a death of terror and ignominy; the husbands and fathers and sons of those wretched victims who expired in torture and in shame, beneath the brutality of a savage soldiery at Sion; the wretched survivors of those who perished in the ruins of their country at Stantz: *they* all felt but a transient pang: *their* tears by this time are dried; *their* rage is hushed; *their* resentment silenced: there is nothing in *their* feelings which can be stimulated into honourable and effectual action; there is no motive for *their* exertions, upon which we can safely and permanently rely! Sir, I should be ashamed to waste your time by arguing such a question.

If, however, with such allies as there is a probability of obtaining, with such a chance for the fidelity and stability of those alliances, as the circumstances which I have mentioned appear to furnish, we are yet to be told that there is no safety in such a system; it may be worth while to consider very shortly, whether a greater degree of security would belong to a separate treaty of peace with France concluded at the present moment, if at the present moment it were possible to conclude it. I certainly have no thoughts of troubling you at length upon this part of the subject, because there is not one word in the honourable gentleman's speech which implies the belief (it would be strange indeed if he

could believe) that any peace, on any terms, is at present within our power.

But if the faith of other powers be doubtful, the perfidy of France is certain: need I enumerate the several instances of direct and profligate breach of faith which have distinguished, or rather which have marked in almost equal degree, every diplomatic act of the French Republic? Need I recall to your memory how the preliminaries of Leoben (first granted to the Emperor to extricate Buonaparte from the difficulties of the situation into which his rashness had precipitated him) were withdrawn and cancelled by the French government, under the pretence that to claim the execution of them was to impose on the generosity of the Republic? How in their room was substituted the treaty of Campo Formio? And how the treaty of Campo Formio, after being violated in innumerable instances, has been almost distinctly abrogated and renounced in the confederacies at Radstadt? Need I desire you to recollect the fraud and violence by which the French took possession of Venice, and the shameless injustice with which they the next day transferred that possession to the Emperor? Need I return again to Switzerland to remind you, that the invasion of that devoted country was the work not of arms so much, as of treaty; that the way for pillage and devastation was opened by the pretext of superintending and guaranteeing a few *parliamentary reforms?* Can we remember these things, and yet pretend to doubt if we shall have as good security for the fidelity of our allies in the prosecution of the contest, as we could build on the faith of France for its safe and honourable termination?

There is yet another point of view, in which this argument may be considered. Let us compare the expectations which we may be allowed to form of our allies, with the character and situation of the several allies of France. If we, in renewing the great confederacy of the powers of the continent, are weaving a rope of sand;—let us examine whether the connexions of France are bound to her by a chain which nothing can loosen. If the ground upon which we stand is false and hollow, let us see whether the alliances of France rest upon a more stable and solid foundation. If the only sure foundation of permanent alliance between nations must be laid in community of interest and of sentiment, in the sense of mutual benefits, or in the interchange of protection on the one side, and attachment on the other:—let us look round, Sir, among the states which are immediately connected with France: let us examine the benefits which they derive from her friendship, and it will not be difficult to estimate the affection which they must owe to her in return. Is it in the Cisalpine, the Roman, the Ligurian republics, those deformed and ricketty children, upon

whom the mother republic has lavished so much of her care,—is it in these, however they may bear the precious resemblance of their parent, that we are to look for the fondness of filial duty and attachment? Are we to look for it in the Cisalpine Republic, whom, in preference to the others, she appears to have selected as a living subject for her experiments in political anatomy; whom she has delivered up tied and bound to a series of butchering, bungling philosophical professors, to distort, and mangle, and lop, and stretch its limbs into all sorts of fantastical shapes, and to hunt through its palpitating frame the vital principle of republicanism? Is the infant Roman republic so gratified by the present which France has made to it of five consuls instead of two, as to forget all the miseries, the robbery, the confiscation, and the blood, by which this invaluable acquisition has been purchased? Does the protection which she has afforded to the Ligurian Republic, entitle her to their affectionate acknowledgment and pious devotion? Observe, I beg of you, in what a situation those unfortunate Ligurians have been placed by her. They are forced into acts of outrage and hostility against England. We declare war against them;—and such is their confidence in the protection of France, that no sooner has that war been declared, than they come crawling upon their knees to implore our pity and forbearance! Unnatural Ligurians! if they are not thankful for such an instance of the parental solicitude of France for their welfare!

Look next at that unfortunate Prince, whose dominions border upon these wretched republics: and ask, by what ties of gratitude is the King of Sardinia bound to his ally! The King of Sardinia, it is true, has not yet been precipitated from his throne; but he sits there with the sword of a French garrison suspended above his head. He retains, indeed, the style and title of King: but there is a French General to be viceroy over him. A prisoner in his own capital, surrounded by the spies and agents, and hemmed in by the arms of the Direotory, compelled to dismiss from his councils and his presence all those of his servants who were most attached to his person, and most zealous for his interests; compelled to preach daily to his people, the mortifying and degrading lesson of that patience and humility, of which he is himself a melancholy example, to excuse and extenuate the insults offered by his allies to his subjects; to repress, even by force, the resentment of his subjects against his allies:—is this a situation in which the King of Sardinia can be supposed to derive comfort from the alliance of France, and repay it with thankfulness? Would he not, even if this were to be the extent of his suffering and degradation; would he not, if he inherits the spirit of his great ancestors, if their blood flows in his veins; would he not seize, even at the

risk of his crown and of his life, any opportunity that might be afforded him, to emancipate himself from a connexion so burthensome, to shake off the weight of a friendship so intolerable?

But he well knows that he has not yet suffered all that is prepared for him. He knows full well that he is allowed to occupy even this shadowy and tottering throne, to grasp the "unreal mockery" of a sceptre, only so long as he shall be necessary as purveyor for the French army in Italy; or until it shall please the capricious cruelty of his tyrants to end his disgrace by annihilation. Perhaps the supplies for a campaign may be more readily procured by the operations of a regular government, than they could be by any new upstart revolutionary power, in a country agitated by the ferment of political change. Perhaps the lust of destroying may overbear this prudential consideration. But, at all events, the war in Italy once over, whether it be in the tide of victory, or in the ebb and reflux of defeat, that the French armies return through Piedmont, their passage will alike be fatal to this unhappy monarch and to his people; they will equally sweep away with them, in a torrent, whatever remains of royalty and of established government; and will leave behind them the same wreck, the same shapeless ruins, with which the fair face of the neighbouring countries is already encumbered and deformed.

But, perhaps, with more powerful and more respected allies, with those whose names were brought forward with such a display and ostentation in the negotiation at Lisle, as inseparably connected with the honour and interests of the French Republic; perhaps with Holland and with Spain a greater degree of forbearance has been observed; a more friendly and liberal intercourse has been established; a more honourable and independent system of communication has been maintained.

The friendship of Holland! The independence of Spain! Is there a man so besotted as to suppose, that there is one hour of peace with France preserved by either of these unhappy countries; that there is one syllable of friendship uttered by them towards France, but what is extorted by the immediate pressure, or by the dread and terror of French arms?—

> ————" mouth-honour, breath,
> Which the poor heart would fain refuse, but dare not!"

Have the regenerated republic of Holland, or the degraded monarchy of Spain, such reason to rejoice in the protection of the French Republic, that they would voluntarily throw themselves between her and any blow which might menace her existence? Holland once had wealth, had industry, had commerce. Where are they now? Gone; swallowed up in the all-devouring gulf of French bankruptcy. Holland once had flourishing colonies; them, perhaps, France has preserved for her. The flag of the

enemies of France is flying at Ceylon, and at the Cape of Good Hope. Holland had once a navy, a navy of strength and gallantry and reputation, a navy which has often contended even with our own, and contended with no mean exertion, for the mastery of the sea? Where is it now? Where is the skill which directed, the promptness, courage, and vigour, which manned it? All utterly destroyed and gone. The baneful touch of French fraternity has blasted the reputation, has unmanned the strength, has bowed the spirit, of the people, in the same proportion as it has exhausted the resources of the country. The spirit of the people is bowed, it is true; but let us trust that it is not broken; let us hope that, if an opening should be presented, it may yet spring up with sudden and irresistible violence, to the astonishment and overthrow of its oppressors.

Spain, however, it may be said, is still powerful, and still a monarchy; to Spain, therefore, the friendship of France must have been offered on more equal and durable terms. An alliance with a Bourbon, cemented with Bourbon blood, cannot but be lasting. I look at Spain, Sir, and it must be owned I find her still a monarchy: she has not yet received the blessings of a Directory and two councils. But, I confess, I perceive no one of those features by which the monarchy of Spain has heretofore been distinguished. I see nothing of power; I can discover nothing of policy. I know, that to be engaged in an impolitic war, is not of itself an unheard of, or an unaccountable novelty. Spain has, no doubt, been often engaged, as well as other powers, in wars of pride, in wars of ambition, in wars of doubtful or mistaken interest. In an absolute monarchy, too, like Spain, it must often have happened, that, in matters of war, or alliance, as well as of internal regulation and domestic policy, the will of the prince, guided either by shallow favouritism, or by crooked intrigue, has at times adopted measures prejudicial to the welfare of his subjects. A powerful and haughty nobility, a numerous and highly privileged clergy, may, at other times, have given an impulse to the direction of affairs, agreeable only to their own prejudices and partial interests. At other times, again, the tempest of popular fury has overborne, both the will of the prince and the power of the aristocracy, and driven the machine of government wholly out of its natural course and direction. But a situation of things, in which the crown is enthralled, the aristocracy humbled, and the nation in general degraded and impoverished, not by the effects of internal struggle, or the perverse preponderance of any one party or member of the state, but by the palpable, undisguised, and oppressive agency of a foreign power: this is, indeed, an unusual situation for an independent kingdom. Such is, however, the situation of Spain. The power of the monarch, the

prejudices and privileges of the higher orders, the comfort, happiness, and almost subsistence of the mass of people, are all embarked together in a war, of which the success or failure must be equally fatal to them all: a war which has committed that country with an enemy whom it dares not face, and has linked it to the fortunes, and subjected it to the will of an ally, whose friendship is more formidable than hostility: a war which has brought into contempt the authority of the government, and the character of the nation; which has exhausted their commercial and annihilated their military marine: which, in precluding their intercourse with their colonies, has cut off the springs of wealth that fed the state, and the streams of commerce that enriched the country; a war, which has done more in two short years, under the auspices of France, to carry into execution that vote of the British parliament in 1707, to wrest the monarchy of Spain and the Spanish West Indies from the possession of the house of Bourbon, than all the exertions of this country could ever have effected, than all its enmity could ever have desired.

So fatal has been to Spain already the friendship of the French Republic; and such are the obligations by which she is bound to it in perpetual allegiance and fidelity! But this is not yet all: the King of Spain has yet to drink the bitter dregs of misery and degradation.

Sir, when Louis XIVth broke up the conferences of Gertruydenberg, rather than submit to the proposal of turning his arms against his grandson; whatever our dislike of his former insolence, or our detestation of his ambition may be, we cannot refuse our approbation to this just display of spirit and of feeling. Fallen as he then was from the splendour of his high fortunes, and, in some measure, at the mercy of his enemies; we cannot but applaud the honourable pride with which, while conceding territory and dominion as the price of peace, he yet rejected peace itself, when it was to be purchased with ignominy. I think, too, we cannot but condemn the cruel and ungenerous policy which dictated the demand of such a sacrifice. But this, we are to recollect, was the demand of a triumphant enemy. Mark now the extortion of a protecting friend! The King of Spain, exhausted in his resources, and disgraced in his arms, by a war carried on at the instigation, and for the exclusive interests of the French Directory, is, in return for these exertions, commanded by that Directory to employ what remains of the strength and power of his kingdom, for the conquest of Portugal, for the subversion of the throne to which his daughter is heir. Have we the feelings of men, and do we doubt what sentiments of indignation and disgust this outrageous command must have excited in the bosom of a father and a king?

Now, Sir, there is a story, and it was a good one until the French got hold of it—the story of *William Tell.* I think I need hardly make the application. Would it appear to us a surprising or an unnatural thing, if the King of Spain, urged, and finally compelled to point his last weapon at the crown of his daughter, should turn round, in the fury of despair, and aim it at the bosom of the tyrant who dictated the blow?

I have not troubled the House with this enumeration, as conceiving it to hold out in itself inducements and temptations for the continuance of the war; supposing that we had any choice as to continuing or concluding it. But forced as we are to persevere in the contest, and expedient as it appears, that we should furnish ourselves with whatever means we can procure for conducting it to a termination consistent with our safety and our honour, and convinced, as I think every man must be, that the co-operation of other powers affords, at least, one great instrument for such an exertion; it does, I think, seem material, when against the system of alliances no argument is so loudly urged as the probability of those alliances proving unfaithful and unsound. It does, I think, seem material, to ascertain, whether this hazard is peculiar to our situation alone; or whether, if, on the one hand, we have but feeble assistance, we are likely, on the other hand, to have any thing but feebleness to oppose. Committed with our enemy single handed, France to England, what should we fear? But if the accession of allies is to us an accession of weakness, is it not something to be assured that to France it is not an accession of permanent and formidable strength?—that if France has the means of seducing our allies, we have the satisfaction of feeling that our interests cannot be indifferent to the allies of France?—that men called on her side, and fighting under her banners, cannot fail in their secret hearts to pray that the victory may be on our side?

Is not this the case? Do we not know it to be so? Who is there that has not heard, and heard with heartfelt delight, that the glorious victory of the first of August communicated a sensation of triumph and of joy, not only to the heart of England; not only to the bosoms of those nations whose deliverance it more immediately effected; not only to nations neutral in name, but who feel, in spite of their neutrality, that their independent existence is involved in the issue of the contest; but even to nations nominally hostile to Great Britain, to governments, the slaves of the power, or creatures of the caprice of France? The presence of a French ambassador could scarce repress the burst of exultation in courts that trembled at his frown. The whispered satisfaction went round in circles, where an open manifestation of joy would have been treason; and even the vassal republics leaped in their chains.

Oh! but, however willing the allies of France might be to seize a favourable opportunity for shaking off the yoke of her protection, were we even able to rally them on our side in the outset of the contest, their assistance would be nothing worth. Exhausted and dispirited as they are, they have neither the heart nor strength to fight the battle of independence! True, Sir, they have been cruelly reduced and broken down. It is true, that many of them have been moulded and distorted into shapes so strange and unnatural, that they scarce have limbs to use, or the power of self-motion remaining; but yet, even so, they are not wholly without vigour and vitality,—

"Spoliatis arma supersunt.

The arms which they have remaining, are the arms most terrible to tyrants: their wrongs, their desperation, their desire of revenge. Let France appeal to the bad passions of *our allies;* let her cajole their fears, or inflame their appetite for aggrandizement. The foundations of *our* tacit but intimate alliance with the *allies of France*, are already laid, in their just resentment, in their proud indignation, in every virtuous and every honourable feeling. When did such a contest terminate in giving ultimate and permanent preponderance to evil? If I do not venture to anticipate a fortunate result amounting to the full completion of our sanguine and justifiable expectations, I may surely ask, what has France done to deserve that the ordinary course of human events should be reversed in her favour?

But then, Sir, another and a graver doubt is stated. It is doubted whether, with half the world in arms on our side, the objects which we might hope to obtain, would be, in any just and politic sense, *British objects.* I, Sir, have not sat long enough in this House to remember the time, but a time I am told there was, when if I had ventured to hesitate a doubt whether or not the situation of the powers of the continent, relatively to us or to each other, and the general balance of Europe (as it is called) were objects of British concern, I should have been scouted and laughed at as a driveller and an idiot, or reviled as a presumptuous arraigner of the wisdom and policy of our ancestors. I understand that all this is now changed. I understand that the great authorities, from whom I should more particularly have expected such a censure, if I had ventured such an opinion, have entirely thrown away and abandoned their favourite system; and are now more strenuous in decrying those who maintain it, than they were before in propagating it themselves. I cannot account for these eccentricities; but I do not presume to blame them. They at least teach me to proceed with caution; and rather to inquire with great humility from the honourable gentlemen on the other side of the House, whether or no such and such things

are objects of interest to our country, than to state any affirmative opinion of my own upon the subject.

The honourable gentleman mentioned the East Indies, and alluded to the expedition to Egypt as having threatened our possessions in that quarter. Is then the deliverance of Egypt from a French army a *British object?* Does the honourable gentleman, or does any man, believe, that if peace had been concluded at Lisle, this expedition would at all the less have been undertaken? Does he believe that, in that case to defeat the expedition would have been equally a *British object?* And does he think that, after the peace made at Lisle, we should have been equally in a condition to defeat it? Would not the co-operation of the Turk have been then desirable, to enable us to effect that purpose? Is it less desirable now? If, by his co-operation, we are enabled to confound and expel that horde of robbers, and buccaneers, who have taken possession of his Egyptian territory; or (what I should like much better), to shut them up on all sides, and leave them there to be quietly and gradually exterminated—is *this* no advantage to Great Britain? Was the purpose of the honourable gentleman's motion to preclude the possibility of *this* event? If, by the joint assistance of Russia and the Porte, we could sweep the Levant and the Mediterranean of the scattered remnants of this piratical armament; if the coasts of Italy were thus rendered unassailable by the enemy, and the southern coasts of France thus laid open to our attack, and the ports and commerce of the Mediterranean and Levant secured to us; are *these British objects?* Are the Netherlands a *British object?* I have heard that the dependence of the Netherlands on France, has in former times been considered as so prejudicial to this country, that there was no case in which that object alone would not have been a sufficient cause for prolonging or for even engaging in a war. I do not assert that this is so. But if there be any truth in this opinion, and if, by a vigorous co-operation on the part of Austria or Prussia, or both, we might have a chance of wresting this possession from France,—will the honourable gentleman, will any other man in the House, be the person to get up and say, "This you might effect, but I will prevent you?" If by the help of Prussia, we might hope to rescue Holland from her present state of servitude and degradation, to raise her head once more among the independent powers of Europe, a rich, a flourishing and a happy country, connected with us by old habits, common interest, and the reciprocation of commercial advantages; will any man say that this would not be a *British object?* will any man lay in his claim now, would any man be proud hereafter to have entitled himself, to the credit of having thrown an insuperable impediment in the way of the rescue and restoration of Holland?

And yet, Sir, Holland has heretofore been thought to be so intimately interesting to this country, especially by gentlemen who used to sit on that side of the House, and to whose former opinions on foreign politics I have been accustomed to attach no small degree of respect and consideration, that, if I am rightly informed, (for it is much beyond my memory in parliament) the only act of my right honourable friend's administration which has had the good fortune to receive the approbation and applause of those gentlemen, and upon which they lavished as large and unqualified praise as his warmest supporters could have afforded him, was a spirited and judicious exertion by which, in the year 1787, the designs of France in Holland were defeated (at the risk of a war), and the ascendancy of this country secured.

I cannot believe that if we were now debating, if it possibly could be fit matter for this House to debate, "whether or no, having an opportunity to conclude a peace in all other respects desirable, we should continue the war for the single purpose of the deliverance of Holland alone?" I cannot believe that those persons to whom I have referred, holding the principles which they have heretofore professed, could hesitate to give their vote in the affirmative. If I am wrong in this supposition, I desire only to be informed, where, and when, and how, the change in the policy of the country took place? Is the ambition of France less formidable now? Is her desire of aggrandizement less notorious? Is her power less terrible? Is her hostility to this country less acrimonious? than when, in the year 1786, the commercial treaty with France was arrianged, by the same persons whose maxims of foreign policy I have already quoted, not as unfavourable to Great Britain, but as likely to take off the edge of our national antipathy against France? When my right honourable friend was attacked and reviled for having, in a paltry search after mercantile profit, wholly abandoned the doctrines of our ancestors, and improvidently thrown away the safety of posterity, by admitting the possibility of any relations between this country and France, except those of jealous rivalry or open contest; for having attempted to lull England into the belief that the ambition of France, because not active at the moment, was extinguished; that her power, because not exerted, had ceased to be formidable: that her professions of friendship could mean any thing, but to gain time and strength; that her apparent pacific disposition could be any thing but a drawing of breath against the renewal of hostilities?

If all this is changed, allow me to inquire of those who can instruct me, by what process the change has been wrought? and at what period? What is its origin and date? Did it come in with the new style? Was it on *primidi, duodi or decadi*, in what

month, and in what year, of the new republican calendar? Did the old system expire in September, and the new one begin with *Fructidor?* I really ask for information. I do not mean to question the propriety of the alteration, but to get at the reason of it. I am not too old to learn. But I cannot take it upon authority alone: and that, too, an authority which has always hitherto been on the other side. I must continue to repeat my old catechism, until I am sufficiently illuminated to understand the articles of the new.

Till then, I must continue to ask, with some degree of earnestness, if any one of the objects which I have enumerated, may possibly be obtained by an alliance with the powers of the continent, much more if we could be sanguine enough to suppose that such an opening might arise as would lead to the attainment of them all, as would lead to the reduction of France within her ancient limits, and to the replacing Europe nearly in the situation in which it stood before the commencement of the war; whether or no it is possible for a member of the British parliament to entertain so extraordinary and perverse an ambition as to be desirous of having it to say hereafter, "All this might, perhaps, have been accomplished, but, by a single motion, I prevented it all?"

Understand me, Sir, however, that I do not mean to undertake that if the honourable gentleman's motion should not pass, all this will, therefore, be accomplished. We are debating now, not whether or no such and such exertions will lead to such and such results, but whether or no we shall gratuitously throw away the only chance which we have for the exertions being made. The honourable gentleman does not affirm that Europe cannot be saved; he only desires that we may have no share, that we may give no encouragement for saving it. In answer to such a proposition, it is not necessary for me to argue (what is not denied) that the success of the experiment is probable: it is only necessary for me to ask, whether its success is so improbable, and its nature so uninteresting, that you will determine beforehand that it ought not to be tried?

The honourable gentleman, however, for his part declares, that he "washes his hands of the whole business." The honourable gentleman has a habit, Sir, (which I do not mention to disapprove it) of appealing to the testimony of his conscience, and of holding out to his opponents the miseries which must accrue from "pillows stuft with thorns." Has the honourable gentleman ever considered the present situation of Switzerland in this point of view? And is he so eager to "wash his hands" of any share in her possible emancipation? Is it necessary as a balm to his conscience? Will it strew his pillow with roses, to be able to say to himself, "If the people of Switzerland succeed in breaking the

galling fetters of an intolerable and bloody tyranny, thank God, I have given no aid to their efforts! I can lay my hand upon my heart and declare, that for aught I would have done for them, or would have encouraged them to do for themselves, the Swiss should have continued to groan in bitterness of sorrow, in abasement and despair. Fight your own battles, miserable Swiss!—England has no sympathy with your sufferings!—Bind tighter their fetters, sanguinary Directory!—You have nothing to dread from English interference!

> ——"Bleed, bleed, poor country!
> Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
> For goodness dares not check thee!"——

Such, Sir, is the language of the honourable gentleman's motion. But such, I trust, is not the sense of those who have heard it. I, too, will appeal to the conscientious feelings of individuals. I might appeal to their recorded professions in the almost unanimous vote upon the address to His Majesty, at the beginning of the session; but, I confess, when I can reach the heart and spirit, I prefer a direct appeal to them, to any argument that rests on mere formal ties or technical obligations. I might remind every gentleman who hears me, that he has concurred in an address to the throne, expressing his hearty hope that the opening afforded by the glorious successes of His Majesty's arms, may lead to "the general deliverance of Europe;" and pledging himself, in no equivocal manner, to assist with his voice and counsel in the prosecution of this important object. I might require them to reconcile, if they can, the pledge there taken with a motion which contradicts both its letter and its meaning. But I prefer going home with every man to his own bosom, and desiring him to remember, what were his first individual impressions upon receiving the account of Lord Nelson's stupendous achievement? What was the language of every society in which he happened to be conversant? The first sentiment, undoubtedly, was that of thanks, and praise to the heroes who had thus exalted the name, the power, and the glory, of their country, and of humble gratitude to that Providence which had so signally prospered their exertions. But next—what occurred to every man's feelings and understanding? what was the question which immediately succeeded to the first burst of wonder, the first transport of thankfulness, the first emotions of rapture and delight? I see I am anticipated, "What effect will this have upon the powers of the continent?" This was the question asked and echoed by a thousand tongues. What then was the meaning of this question? Was it the offspring of cold speculation? of idle curiosity? No. It sprung from the instantaneous, and almost instinctive, conviction, that, in spite of all the sophisticated argument that may be urged to dissuade us from

a generous sympathy with the fates and fortunes of other nations, we *have* an interest in the liberties of the continent; that *our* "assurance is doubly sure," when those around us are preserved from destruction; that *we* can be but precariously safe, so long as there is no safety for *the rest of Europe.*

Depend upon it, Sir, in all questions which partake equally of reason and of feeling, the first impressions of a good heart and sound mind are rarely to be distrusted. They may be sanguine; they may be romantic; they may represent the object desired as much nearer, than in the practical pursuit it turns out to be; but as to the object itself, they are seldom misdirected. And I believe that any man of honest and liberal feelings, who can recollect what were his first impressions upon any subject, in the consideration of which the heart, as well as the understanding, was engaged, will find that, in consulting those impressions, he has not been led astray. How stands the case in the present instance? Have we any reason to repent or to be ashamed of the wishes that sprung up in our bosoms upon this occasion? Was the impulse too generous, and must it be restrained? Was the benevolence too large, and must it be contracted? What new circumstances have arisen to vary our original view of the subject? Has England become less powerful to interfere? Has the slavery of the continent been lightened? or the tyranny of France softened or subdued? Or has some disposition for peace been manifested by the enemy? such as throws difficulty in the way of any hostile and offensive operations against them; and requires that we should rest on our arms until their intentions shall be more clearly explained? I have heard of nothing of this sort—Has the honourable gentleman? He has mentioned nothing of it. He has not pretended that *France* is willing to negotiate. He has not advised that *we* should propose a negotiation. He has, indeed, given it as his opinion that peace is desirable; and he has drawn some arguments to this effect from Ireland, from the East Indies, and from St. Domingo. I shall not follow him into these arguments; both because I think that they may, all of them, with much greater propriety, be reserved for a separate discussion in their due time; and because, unless this motion were to be understood distinctly as a motion for peace, I do not see how they can be made to bear upon the present discussion.

But does the honourable gentleman intend his motion, as a motion for peace? Then, indeed, I should have a worse opinion of it than I had before. For is this the way to go about such a business, with any prospect, or with any serious appearance of a desire of success? If the honourable gentleman really thinks this a moment for opening a negotiation—why has he not the candour and manliness to say so? Let him bring the matter distinctly to

a question; and let us argue it. I have no hesitation in saying that it is my decided opinion that this is not the moment. But my opinion is more decided still, that, if this were the moment, the honourable gentleman has chosen the very worst possible way for availing ourselves of the opening.

Is it dignity, and etiquette, and national honour, that stands in the way of a more direct attempt at negotiation? Is it necessary, in the honourable gentleman's judgment, that France should make the first overtures? I confess, Sir, I have no such delicacy; and if the moment seemed to me proper for any overtures at all, I should not raise much squabble about who should offer, or who should receive them. But if the honourable gentleman has this delicacy, mark, I entreat you, how delicately he manages it. He will not speak to France, but he would speak at her. He will not propose—not he—that we should say to the Directory, "Will you make peace?" No, Sir, we are merely to say to ourselves, loud enough for the Directory to overhear us, "I wish these French gentlemen would make an overture to us.', Now, Sir, does this save the dignity of the country? or is it only a sneaking, shabby way of doing what, if fit to be done at all, must, to have any serious effect, be done openly, unequivocally, and directly? But I beg the honourable gentleman's pardon: I misrepresent him; I certainly do. His motion does not amount even to so much as I have stated. He begins farther off. The soliloquy which he prompts us by his motion is no more than this—"We must continue to make war against France, to be sure—and we are sorry for it, but we will not do it as if we bore malice. We will not make an ill-natured, hostile kind of war any longer—that we won't. And who knows, but, if they should happen to overhear this resolution, as the Directory are good-natured at bottom, their hearts may soften and grow kind towards us—and then they will offer to make a peace!" And thus, Sir, and thus only, is the motion a motion for peace.

But the honourable gentleman reproaches His Majesty's ministers that they have lost all their pacific dispositions; that they are become inveterately and incurably warlike; that the spirit of moderation, which he so much commended in the manifesto of last year, is evaporated; and that, however they may have stood out against Lord Duncan's victory, that of Lord Nelson has intoxicated and inflamed them to madness.

That the confidence of the country is indeed high, I am happy to acknowledge; and that the government partakes the spirit of the people, I am equally willing to believe. But that this spirit has started suddenly out of the late victory, and is exclusively to be attributed to it, I cannot agree. It was confirmed, indeed, by that victory, a victory which would have created a spirit if it had

not found one. But that the spirit existed before the event of the first of August, is no derogation to the glory of that day, and is a proud accession of dignity to the character of the country. It adds new lustre to the character of the country; it places in a more conspicuous light the talents and reputation of Lord Nelson, that before we were in possession of the confidence which grew out of his victory, we had the confidence to presume it.

Let us recollect only the days and months of anxiety which we passed, before the intelligence of that memorable event had reached us. It was an anxiety, not of apprehension, but of impatience. Our prayers were put up, not for success, but for an opportunity of deserving it: we asked, not that Nelson might conquer Buonaparte, but that Buonaparte might not have the triumph of deceiving and escaping him; not that we might gain the battle, but that we might find the enemy: for the rest we had nothing to fear—

> "Concurrant pariter cum ratibus rates;
> Spectent Numina Ponti, et
> Palmam, qui meruit, ferat!"

Standing, then, in our present proud and exalted situation, fortified by that confidence which has its foundation in the good sense, the spirit, the unexampled prosperity of the nation, and which, by the blessing of Providence, the signal and glorious successes of our arms have been established and confirmed, what is the best advantage that can be made of such a situation? "Hoard up your safety for your own use," says the motion of the honourable gentleman. "Lend a portion of it to other nations, that it may be returned to you tenfold, in the preservation and security of the world,"—is the dictate of a larger, and, I think, a sounder policy.

But the nations of the continent, the honourable gentleman will tell us, stood by, while we were engaged in a struggle in which our very existence was at stake, without offering any assistance, or manifesting any interest in our preservation: undoubtedly, so they did: and undoubtedly, as the honourable gentleman insinuates, our revenge is now in our power. We may tell those, who abandoned us at that moment of peril, that it is now our turn to take breath, while they are contending; that to us is now the respite, and to them the toil; that as they left us contentedly to our fate, we consign them unpityingly to theirs. We may do this in strict retalliation: but I think a British House of Commons will feel that we have a nobler vengeance in our power. We have it in our power to say to the nations of Europe: "You deserted us at our utmost need; but the first use that we make of our prosperity is, to invite you to partake of it. We disdained to call you in, reluctant as you appeared, to share our

danger; but, we are now, by our own exertions, secure; come, now, and take shelter under our security."

Sir, they were wise words that were spoken by a great statesman and orator of ancient times, under circumstances not wholly unlike the present circumstances of the world. "If by any superhuman testimony, for to such a paradox no testimony merely human could possibly obtain belief, if by an angel from Heaven I were to be assured, that the farther the enemy pushed his conquests over other countries, the more territory he acquired—the more governments he subverted—the more nations he subdued, —by so much the more quiet, the more harmless, the more friendly neighbour he would be to this country: I protest that I would not, even with this view, and under these conditions, consent to give my vote for the slavery of Europe. But if there be no man upon earth who will venture to assert so monstrous a proposition; if the very reverse of all this be demonstrably true; if every step that the enemy takes upon the continent be a step to the accomplishment of our destruction; if every city that he ransacks, every district that he acquires, be a fund of wealth and a levy of soldiers, to be employed hereafter in an exterminating war against us: then, in God's name, to what do we look? or wherefore are we hesitating?"

Since, then, Sir, this motion appears to me to be founded on no principle of policy or necessity; since, if it be intended for a censure on ministers,—it is unjust; if for a control,—it is nugatory: as its tendency is to impair the power of prosecuting war with vigour, and to diminish the chance of negotiating peace with dignity, or concluding it with safety; as it contradicts, without reason, and without advantage, the established policy of our ancestors; as it must degrade in the eyes of the world the character of this country; as it must carry dismay and terror throughout Europe; and, above all, as it must administer consolation, and hope, and power, and confidence to France; I shall give it my most hearty and decided negative.

Mr. Jekyll supported the motion. That glorious achievement, the victory of the Nile, as his honourable friend (Mr. Canning) had stated, produced a sensation of joy; but the sensation of joy it occasioned, was combined with the hope that it might tend to the restoration of peace. He protested against the propriety of this country embarking upon the ocean of continental politics, and of its entering the lists in foreign warfare, without our knowing the purposes for which we were engaged, or the extent to which we may be involved. The motion was negatived.

EXPEDITION TO COPENHAGEN.

FEBRUARY 3d, 1808.

Mr. Ponsonby this day made the motion, of which he had given notice, relative to the Expedition to Copenhagen. The object he had in view, was principally to ascertain how far His Majesty's Ministers had been justified in advising His Majesty to employ his naval and military forces in the Expedition against Copenhagen. The topics necessary for the mature consideration of the subject were to inquire, first, what the disposition of Denmark had been; next, what the conduct of Russia had been; and lastly, what means France possessed of executing any project hostile to this country in the Baltic.

At the close of a former war, an apology was stated to have been received from Denmark for having entered into a hostile confederacy against Great Britain, which apology "was founded on the avowed inability of Denmark to resist the operation of external influence and the threats of a formidable neighbouring power." He had inquired into this subject, and had been told that Denmark never did send such an apology for the abandonment of its neutrality. He was desirous to know the truth of the fact, and he could not conceive what objection could be made to the production of the papers necessary to elucidate it, if they really existed.

He had shaped another resolution, for the purpose of ascertaining what information had been received by His Majesty's Ministers respecting the conduct of Denmark with respect to its naval force. He contended that no steps had been taken by Denmark to awaken jealousy or rouse suspicion on our part. He had made it his business to inquire what had been the conduct of Denmark with regard to their own ships, and their valuable cargoes, which were in the ports of Great Britain, at the very time that the Expedition against Copenhagen was fitting out. When Admiral Gambier was preparing to sail, many of the Danish captains hearing, amongst other rumours, that it was as likely that the British force was destined against Denmark as against any other place, consulted the Danish Consul on the subject. The Consul applied to the Chamber of Commerce in Copenhagen, a branch of the public administration of Government. He received for answer, that there was not the smallest ground for anxiety or alarm on the part of the Danish mercantile interest, for that no such circumstances existed which tended to disturb the neutrality of Denmark, or to place her in a state of hostility with Great Britain. At the time that this answer was received, there were three hundred and fifty Danish ships in British ports, with cargoes amounting to two millions sterling. Was it possible to suppose, that under these circumstances, when the Danish Government declared to her commercial interest that they need not hurry themselves—that there was no fear of an interruption of the good understanding with Great Britain? Was it possible to suppose, that when a third of the commercial property of Denmark was in our hands, the Danish Government meditated hostility against us? Such a thing was incredible.

But it was said, that though Denmark herself might entertain no hostile disposition against Great Britain, she was likely soon to be forced into a state of hostility, and that, therefore, we were justified in seizing her marine, without any previous notice to Denmark, and without any previous behaviour on her part to provoke us to that seizure. If our conduct could be at all justified on this ground, it must be on the necessity of anticipating the views of the enemy with regard to the Danish fleet. No writer on the law of nations, or on any

other law, or on common justice, had ever maintained that one Power could be justified in taking from another Power what belonged to it, unless a third Power meant, and was able to take, the same thing. The justification of this step, therefore, must rest on the necessity of it, which would depend on these circumstances—the weakness of Denmark, or her indisposition to resist compulsion; the strength of her enemy, and the certainty that she must yield to its force. Every shadow of proof that Denmark must have yielded to a hostile confederacy was out of the case. It was necessary to inquire what were the means which France possessed of accomplishing her object. One of his resolutions went to ascertain what information His Majesty's Minsters had received respecting the power that France possessed of seizing the Danish navy. If His Majesty's Ministers knew the intentions of France on this subject, surely they were not so negligent as to omit informing themselves of her power to carry those intentions into excution. What was the relative situation of the two countries? At the time that Admiral Gambier sailed, a great part of the Danish army was encamped in Holstein; a considerable French force was also in the same place. This disposition of the two armies showed no intention in Denmark to yield to France. Had she entertained such an intention, she would not have advanced a force against a French force. The question then came to be, was the French force sufficient "to induce or compel" (such were the terms of His Majesty's Declaration), Denmark to yield to the views of France? In his opinion, it was utterly insufficient. Let the House consider the situation of Denmark. She possessed considerable countries on the main continent of Europe, but she had still more valuable possessions in Norway, the Danish islands, (on one of which her capital was situated), and considerable foreign colonies. Had France, therefore, required Denmark to give up her fleet that it might be employed against Great Britain, what would Denmark have answered? "No, you have no right to make such a demand; it is a manifest usurpation on your part. If you make me choose between hostility with England and hostility with France, I prefer the latter: for if I quarrel with England, England can take from me all my foreign possessions; she can injure my marine, and employ Sweden to attack me in Norway. It is, therefore, better for me to keep that which you cannot take from me, than to sacrifice it by a war with England." This would have been the conduct of Denmark, if the rashness and precipitation of His Majesty's Ministers had not forced her into hostility against Great Britain.

The next consideration was, how far France was to receive assistance in the execution of her projects from Russia? Immediately after the conclusion of peace at Tilsit, it had been argued by many that Russia had thrown herself into the arms of France, and thereby had given preponderance to that power in the north of Europe. To those who believed this, it must have been strange to see the Danish marine taken possession of by this country, and the Russian marine permitted to rove about at pleasure. In one of Lord Leveson Gower's despatches, dated the 2d of September, (p. 191), his lordship stated, that in a conference with General Budberg, the General allowed the existence of secret articles in the Treaty of Tilsit, but declared that those articles had no reference to England. Now, it had been insisted in His Majesty's Declaration relative to Russia and Denmark, that it was a knowledge of those secret articles that had induced His Majesty to take the steps that he had done for the purpose of securing the Danish fleet. It therefore became material to know when His Majesty's Ministers became acquainted with those secret articles, how far they related to Denmark, and how far by those articles France approached her purpose, with regard to the marine of that country.

* * * * * *

There were two or three most material paragraphs in the despatches of Lord L. Gower, which he should notice. The case which his Majesty's Minis-

ters wished to make out was, that Russia had been all this while secretly instigating Denmark to join the confederacy against us; and yet on the 4th of November, His Majesty's Minister at St. Petersbugh, after detailing the difficulties which he had experienced in obtaining an interview with Count Romanzow, says, that "he had been informed that some members of the Council, who had been consulted in the present very critical state of affairs, had advised the Emperor not to reject the present opportunity of re-establishing the tranquillity of the North of Europe, and that their opinion had been adopted." So then, down to the 4th of November the Emperor of Russia entertained this favourable disposition towards England! In the next despatch, enclosing the Russian Declaration, Lord Gower observes, that General Savary and the other members of the French mission, "boasted, that they had gained a complete triumph, and had carried not only this act of hostility against England, but also every other point essential to the success of Buonaparte's views." What! had they been labouring from the conclusion of the Treaty of Tilsit down to the beginning of November, before they could succeed in carrying these "points so essential to the success of Buonaparte's views?" and was that conduct of Russia to be assigned as a reason for our breaking in upon a neutral nation and robbing her of her fleet? In no period of the history of any country could a similar transaction be found. But, suppose he were to concede in argument, that which was completely contradicted by the despatches on the table, that Russia had been active in forming a confederacy against Great Britain, was there the smallest proof that Denmark would have been disposed to join it? And what means had Russia to compel her? She could not march an army down the Baltic; and what fleet had she to oppose against the united fleets of England, Denmark, and Sweden? The power of protecting the neutrality of Denmark was all on the side of England, not on France. Was it probable that Denmark would have sacrificed her East and West India possessions, her own Islands, and Norway, because France might have threatened her with the loss of Jutland and Holstein? He defied the right honourable Secretary to show on the table one syllable of evidence, that Denmark entertained such an intention. He had shaped other Resolutions, for the purpose of inquiring what had been the conduct of His Majesty's Ministers with respect to Denmark herself; and whether, having determined to pursue a course hostile to her interests, they had pursued a course advantageous to ours.

By what Ministers had done, they had provoked hostility without depriving the enemy of the power of revenge. If our army had been able to beat the Danes, as asserted the other evening by a noble lord, might we not have kept Zealand? With the assistance of Sweden and of our own reinforcements, what chance would France and Denmark, united, have had, to get back this important possession? To abandon it was the height of weakness. But even if we had not kept Zealand, could we not have dismantled the arsenal and destroyed the docks? Could we not have blown up the Crown Batteries and Cronenberg Castle, and secured to ourselves the quiet passage of the Sound? Why so shabby in our iniquities? When we imitated the atrocities of the ruler of France, why not imitate the grandeur and magnitude of his designs? Would Buonaparte, under similar circumstances, have given up Zealand? The conduct of Ministers showed how weak it was to do ill by halves. If it was necessary to attack Denmark at all, then it was their duty to render her as inefficient as possible. The same motives that justified the one would justify the other. He presumed that it was not want of will in the right honourable gentlemen opposite, but want of knowledge. He trusted at least that they would not talk of scruples, or morality, or law: these, according to the modern tenets, were considerations fit only for fools and philosophers, not for statesmen. Would they venture to contend, that it was no disadvantage to Great Britain to have the Sound shut against her commerce, to have Zealand created, what

it certainly would be, a strong depository of force against her arms? Having begun the work of destruction, they neglected their duty by not completing it. Let them not say that he gave counsel so atrocious, so monstrous, that their delicacy and sensibility would not allow them to accept it.

Were Ministers, he would ask, disposed to put Ireland in a state of greater discontentment than that in which she was at present? If not, why leave Denmark so much power? Having alienated Denmark from England, France would construct in Copenhagen fleets much faster, better and cheaper, than in any other port of Europe. His Majesty's Ministers had expressed great solicitude for Sweden. A subsidiary treaty with Sweden was soon to be laid on the table of the House. France had long been the enemy of Sweden; Russia probably had become so. Denmark was rendered the ally of France, and thus by refraining from dismantling Zealand, Sweden was exposed to the greatest danger. All these considerations pressed with the greatest urgency for the fullest information on the subject. There did not appear to him the slightest justification of the conduct of Ministers with regard to Denmark. If they could justify themselves for the acts that they had committed, then they could not justify themselves for the acts that they had not committed. In commencing the war, in carrying on the war, in the mode of seeking for peace, in all, he thought them completely wrong, and on all, he demanded the fullest information.

He was anxious the character of the country should stand as fair as it always had done, and that it should not be made a reproach to us, that at the very time we were most vehement in condeming the atrocity of France, we went far beyond it. The right honourable gentleman concluded with moving his first Resolution: viz. "That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, praying that he would be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before the House, the substance and dates of all information transmitted by His Majesty's Minister at the Court of Copenhagen, during the last year, respecting the Naval Force of Denmark; and particularly respecting any measures taken for augmenting the same, or putting it in a state of better preparation, or for collecting seamen for the purpose of manning the same, or any part thereof."

Mr. Secretary Canning then rose. He commenced his reply by observing, that the moment was at length arrived, when the gentlemen opposite, so peculiarly qualified by their own splendid achievements, to inquire into the conduct of their successors, had, by a worthy selection of the right honourable gentleman who had just sat down, put His Majesty's Ministers on their trial for that, which, until questioned by them, had been considered as the salvation of the country. In the greatness of his apprehension, lest all moral impressions should be effaced from the minds of the House, the right honourable gentleman had taken a course which afforded a brilliant example of a morality, not only out of the ordinary track, but more severe even than that Roman morality, which he knew had its admirers on the opposite bench. His Majesty's Ministers were called—not to account for disaster and disgrace; but to answer an accusation of success, and justify the motives of an eminent service. Whatever might be the decision of the House, he, for one, should always feel the highest satisfaction in having been so accused. It was also a source of peculiar gratification, that no imputation could rest on those gentlemen by whom this motion was brought forward, of being actuated by

party feelings, as had sometimes happened, when the successors of an administration had been left in possession of a glory, which they had tarnished. Envious feelings of comparison could not have instigated the present motion; as when nothing had been done by one set of men, it was impossible to find actions of theirs to compare with what had been done by another.

There was another feature in this transaction honourable to the character of the House, they were not then debating how to ward off impending danger, but, in comparative security, were discussing by what mode that security could be continued. According to the sentiments of the right honourable gentleman opposite, the restoration of the Danish fleet would be the best mode of continuing that security; for, certainly, if it were decided that the taking of them was unjust, the justice of retaining them could not possibly be maintained. The House could not blame the spoilers, and yet keep the spoil. Though he could not agree with the right honourable gantleman in his conclusion, he agreed with him in his premises, that if injustice had been done, it should be not only marked but repaired.

The right honourable gentleman had fairly stated, that the disposition of Denmark and Russia, and the means of France, constituted the question before the House. He had admitted the designs of France, without any other evidence than that contained in His Majesty's speech. With respect to the disposition of Denmark, he begged the right honourable gentleman to recollect, at the outset, that it was not asserted by His Majesty's Ministers, that wilfully, knowingly, and of choice, Denmark had been desirous of war with Great Britain rather than of peace. This had neither been maintained, nor was it necessary to be so:—indeed, a right honourable friend of his, on the opposite side of the House, (Mr. Sheridan,) had said, on a late evening, that a case of weakness on the part of Denmark, and of a determination to avail herself of that weakness on the part of France, would alone be a justification of the conduct of the British Government. But though he did not impute to Denmark a disposition to go to war with this country, he protested against the advantage which was taken of this admission, when it was asserted, that we had the hearts of the Danes, and that we had forfeited them. He did not like talking of national dislikes; but such an observation evinced a most complete blindness to the fact, that from the moment of the Armed Neutrality, in 1780, there had been a feeling towards this country, on the part of Denmark, if not of direct hostility, certainly not of very cordial friendship.

Every body knew what had been the conduct of Denmark at the end of two former wars. In inciting the Armed Neutrality of 1780, Denmark had been an active agent; and at the end of

1800, but a few months after Denmark had declared her abandonment of the principles on which the Armed Neutrality was formed, she again entered into a league confederated against Great Britain. Did this testify the good intentions of Denmark? Or, on the other hand, did it testify her means of resisting the influence of superior powers? Let whichever part of the alternative the House chose be adopted, he would not hesitate to say, that any Government would be lost to a due sense of the interests of the country, if, with a recollection of former occurrences, they had not looked with vigilance and suspicion to see how Denmark would conduct herself at a period of so much greater danger to Great Britain. Was it not probable that a league of much more force, and knit with much greater vigour than any preceding one, would be formed against this country? Was it not probable, from the experience of the past, that Denmark would be induced by inclination, or compelled by force, to join that league? The favourite project of Buonaparte, since he had desisted from his threat of immediate invasion, was to destroy our commerce, and to collect a naval force which should run down the navy of Great Britain. Not a treaty did he conclude in which the exclusion of British merchandise and shipping, did not form a leading article. In terms too plain to be mistaken, he had avowed his intention to bring every power of the Continent to act against Great Britain. Was there any thing in the situation of Denmark which rendered it probable that she was out of his view in this avowal? To all these presumptions the right honourable gentleman had thought it sufficient to answer, that Denmark had prepared against any attempt, on the part of France, to control her conduct, by stationing a military force in Holstein. What was the history of that force? The greatest danger to which Denmark was exposed from France was in 1803, when France occupied Hanover with a large force. Then not a man was in Holstein beyond the peace garrison. Did the boasted cordon of Holstein remain in this state until the period when France seemed disposed to molest Denmark? No—only until the armies of England and Sweden were in force in Hanover; then, and not till then, the Danes increased their military power in Holstein. He must be an ingenious arguer who could deduce from this circumstance that England had been the object of the sympathy of Denmark, and France of her apprehension. After the battle of Jena, the territory of Denmark had been violated by a French detachment in pursuit of a Prussian corps, and a slight skirmish took place with the Danish troops, in which a Danish general was taken, and conveyed to the head-quarters of the French general, where, in place of being treated with the distinction to be expected from an officer of a friendly Power, he met with no very flattering reception; and was

sent back, after his horse had been stolen, and his pockets picked, under every species of injury which a licentious soldiery could inflict. This had been done whilst the Danish army, collected to cover the neutrality of Holstein, was stationed in the neighbourhood. Was this event followed by the advance of that army? No such thing; the insult was immediately succeeded by the retreat of the Danish army; and this circumstance produced a remonstrance on the part of the British Government, against the conduct of the Danish Government, in neglecting to vindicate its neutrality. The mention of this circumstance led him to contradict a misrepresentation which had been charged against the British Government, namely, that the Danish army had been stationed in Holstein at its desire, in order that its designs against Copenhagen might be more easily accomplished. This statement was so wholly unfounded, that it was not till the retreat of the Danish army, before a handful of French troops, that the British Government had made a representation, complaining that that was not the way for Denmark to enforce its neutrality.

The conduct of France to Sweden was very different. When the French division, commanded by General Murat, entered Lubeck, two thousand Swedish troops were made prisoners, after the storming of the town, and the general who commanded them, was not only treated with every distinction due to his rank and character, but sent back with a message to the King of Sweden from the French General, the brother-in-law of Buonaparte, inviting him to make common cause with France, intimating that it would be for his advantage to do so, and hinting that it was unnatural for Denmark to possess Norway, which ought to be annexed to Sweden. This had been the conduct of France towards Sweden, at a period cotemporary with the assertion of the Danish neutrality; and when afterwards a negotiation was entered into at Hamburgh, for the release of the Swedish prisoners, the same communication was made to the Swedish *charge d'affaires* there. What was the conduct of the King of Sweden upon this occasion? He sent immediately to acquaint the Crown Prince with the offer that had been made to him, and proffered the assistance of twenty thousand Swedish troops for the defence of Denmark, an assistance which the British Government also had strongly recommended to the acceptance of the Government of Denmark. This offer, thus recommended on our part, had been rejected by the Danish Government, which, in communicating the terms of the offer, concealed entirely the proposal of France respecting Norway. Could the right honourable gentlemen then contend, that, after such conduct, we had a right to rely on the frank and full declaration of Denmark? Shortly after, Hamburgh was evacuated by the French, but re-occupied on the 19th of November, only

two days before the famous Decree of the 21st November. This Decree was communicated to the Danish Government, and no remonstrance was made against it; yet, when the mitigated measure of retaliation was afterwards resorted to by the British Government, then the rage of the Danish Government was excited, and a determination to resist its execution declared. It was due, however, in justice to the noble lord who preceded him in office, (Lord Howick,) to state, that this determination had been manfully met; which led to its abandonment. He did not mean to insist on this as conclusive, though it amounted to a strong presumption that, whether from predilection or necessity, the Danish Government had no power of election between England and France; there was no choice, no discussion, no reasoning upon the subject.

The magistrates of Hamburgh had remonstrated against the decree of the 21st of November, and sent a deputation to wait upon Buonaparte with it. In the conference which the deputies had with Buonaparte, they represented to him the ruin of commerce that would be the consequence of pursuing his wild plan of restrictions; to which his answer was, "that he would annihilate all commerce; for, as commerce and England were identified, and he was determined that England should fall, it was necessary that commerce should fall also." But he did not stop there; he added, "that he would make others co-operate with him;" and then adverting to this mighty neutral, this powerful independent state, he said, "let that little Prince take care, or I shall teach him how to act." This was not a private communication, but a statement in a conference which had since been published. What was it that Buonaparte was to teach the Crown Prince of Denmark, to whom he directed such an insulting observation as no one individual could address to another without offence, except the manner of making his means subservient to the views of the French Government? When the French shut the Elbe and the Weser, the Danish Governtment consented to the measure without a murmur, but remonstrated strongly against our blockade of those rivers, though the remonstrance was afterwards given up, when it was found that it would be injurious to their own commerce to press their objections to the measure. That it was not the determination of the Danish Government to defend Holstein against the French, appeared evident from a variety of opinions, which he found recorded in his office. The right honourable gentleman had called for copies of correspondence to show what was the immediate intention of Denmark; but he must contend, that the concurrent opinions of several Ministers at different times, and under similar circumstances, were more to be depended upon as a ground of decision, than the opin-

ion of any individual, however qualified he might be to form a correct judgment. [The right honourable secretary here read extracts from several despatches from Mr. Garlicke, dated Copenhagen, December 1806, stating, that, after the French Decree of the 21st November had been communicated to the Danish Government, a demand was made that the Danish army should be withdrawn from Holstein; that no English or Swedish troops should be allowed to enter the Danish territory, nor any measures taken demonstrative of distrust of France; that on receipt of this intelligence at Kiel, relays of horses had been provided, not for the advance, but to secure the retreat of the Crown Prince. He also read from a subsequent despatch, dated 28th December, 1806, that no preparations for defence had been made, nor any inclination shown to resort to the aid of the natural allies of Denmark; that several persons employed in the offices of state, though not in the highest department, acted in collusion with France, and were attached to the French interests; that these persons would have considerable influence on the opinions respecting the defence of the country; and that, viewing the indolence of some, and the activity of others, at the Danish Court, he (Mr. Garlicke) thought it his duty to state the truth, that there was reason to conclude that when France was in an attitude to enforce her demand, she would insist upon the exclusion of British vessels from the ports of Denmark, and probably afterwards upon the surrender of the dock yards of Copenhagen; and that it was therefore the more necessary for the British Government to use every means of vigilance and precaution, to defeat the designs of the enemy in that quarter.]

These had been the opinions of that Minister upon the policy and temper of the Danish Government: and yet that was the Power upon whose determination they were required implicitly to rely. It would not be just for him, in stating these facts, to withhold his tribute of applause from those who had preceded him in the office he had now the honour to fill, and who had met with firmness the remonstrances and demonstrations of the Danish Government. The noble lord who had immediately preceded him had instructed Mr. Garlicke to declare to the Danish Government, that His Majesty could never, in the event of that Power submitting to the control of France, suffer either the whole or a part of its navy to be placed at the disposal of France. (Loud cries of hear, hear!) The honourable gentlemen opposite might continue their acclamations, but the opinion was entitled to respect. Perhaps, however, the noble lord had not considered the means adequate to the end, and did not look upon the capture of Holstein as more likely to secure the possession of the Danish fleet, than the conquest of Alexandria that of the Turks. But the in-

structions of the noble lord went on to say, that if the Danes should suffer the French to occupy Holstein, His Majesty could not abstain from those measures which would be necessary to maintain the honour of his crown and assert the interest of his subjects. (Loud cries of hear, hear! from the opposition.)

He presumed, from their acclamations, that the gentlemen opposite inferred, that these measures should not be resorted to until the Danish navy should be actually taken, or until the agreement should be entered into for its surrender, or until a communication of such agreement should be made by a government, which had entered into a convention with this country in August, and in the December following had violated that convention. The whole conduct of that court showed, that, either from necessity or inclination, it would have taken a part against this country, and it was no weak presumption of such an event, that all the offers of France had been kept back from this country, whilst they were amusing us with the assurance, that they placed an implicit reliance upon the declarations of France.

He had been hitherto speaking of the state of Denmark in December 1807, and January 1808, when Buonaparte was employed at a distance in Poland, against armies, certainly not equal to his own, but which kept him at bay, and by a small assistance might have been rendered equal to his armies. By what means could Denmark defend herself against the French, when Buonaparte should return with his whole force triumphant from Poland, after she had refused the assistance that had been offered to her? Of all persons he did not think that His Majesty's Ministers should be accused of injustice by the captors of Alexandria; of mismanagement by the attackers of the Dardanelles; as inglorious by the conquerors of Constantinople? But though he should admit that the demand of the Danish navy was a strong measure, yet there was some extenuation in that case, which did not apply to the demand of the Turkish fleet. He did not mean to argue here the difference of the necessity in either instance. There was this circumstance which bore upon the case of the Danish navy, that the Danish Government, contemplating the dangers that were gathering round it, had entertained the project of reducing its navy by sale, and he had it upon authority to state, that the Russian Minister had actually entered into a treaty for the purchase of part of the Danish navy. As to the influence of national pride, therefore, it could not be very active, for he could not conceive any situation that this country could be placed in, in which she could entertain a proposal for the disposal, by sale, of any part of the British navy. This would not certainly justify the demand of the Danish fleet; but it certainly did strip the right honourable gentleman's speech of part of its gorgeous eloquence. The ex-

perience of the past had enabled His Majesty's Ministers to judge of the conduct that would be pursued by Denmark. Had she not received intimation of the dangers that impended over her? Had not the bulletin, published by Buonaparte after the battle of Friedland, given her notice of her approaching fate, when it stated, "that the blockade of the British islands would then cease to be a vain word." What ports but those of Denmark could this prospective threat apply to, for what others were neutral? The conferences, too, at Tilsit, and the immediate execution of some of the arrangements entered into there, by the restoration of the Dukes of Mecklenburg and Oldenburg, for whom the Emperor of Russia had particularly interested himself, on the condition of shutting their ports against Great Britain, showed the designs of Buonaparte, and pointed to Denmark as the next state that would be called upon to submit to his laws of blockade. To Denmark alone this intimation of the bulletin referred, and accordingly she was found shrinking into her shell as France approached, and neglecting to make any addition to her means of defence. She had declared the French Decree of the 21st November innocent, whilst she remonstrated strongly against the British mild retaliation in the Order of the 7th of January as unjust; and yet this was the Power which they were told was capable of defending itself against France! The proposition was not maintainable, and if His Majesty's Ministers had not acted upon the impressions they received from the experience of the past, and their knowledge of the state and sentiments of the court of Denmark, they would not have done their duty. If they had not taken the very steps which were now censured, the eloquence of the right honourable gentleman was cold and dead, compared with the thunder that would have then rolled over their heads. But these were distant warnings. Had not Denmark more immediate intimation of its danger? General Bernadotte, on coming to take the command at Hamburgh, directed the assembled burghers to prepare quarters for fifteen thousand men, which he represented as only the advanced guard of a much greater force, that was to be employed on an expedition which would not require him to be long absent from Hamburgh. Whither could this expedition be directed but against Holstein? Bernadotte had also been charged with a mission to the Crown Prince at Kiel; and, though he should state as a fact, a thing which he did not know upon official authority, that officer, he was assured, had had an interview with the Crown Prince at Kiel, on the night of the 21st of July. He believed the fact, though he could not state it positively, and he knew also, that it was believed at Kiel, in Holstein, at Hamburgh, and at St. Petersburgh, at the time. Bernadotte, too, had made no secret of the object of his mission, being to

procure the exclusion of the English from the ports of Denmark. Was this a state of things, in which His Majesty's Ministers were to go on confiding in the sincerity and means of the Danish Government, till they should be called on for assistance? He wished to know, why they should have waited for the Declaration of Denmark, when fully apprised of the disposition of France towards that Power, of the inability of Russia to control that disposition, and the want of means, or of inclination, on the part of Denmark, to resist the force of France?

But the right honourable gentleman had argued that though there had been enough in the circumstances and conduct of Denmark to excite suspicion, or call for measures of precaution, yet there was not sufficient to justify the length to which the measures of His Majesty's Government had been carried. For himself, he did not know what other measures could have been resorted to; and he would defy the ingenuity of the gentlemen opposite, to show what others could have been adopted, that would have insured the accomplishment of the object. It was not necessary for him, in this instance, to say that the whole of the force employed on this occasion, had not been provided for this expedition originally. A very large part of it had been employed to assist the King of Sweden, the remainder had been provided on principles of precaution; and, as the influx of intelligence demonstrated the critical nature of the emergency, or, as the views of France developed themselves, it became the more necessary to employ the whole upon this important service. As to the demand of the fleet, he was at issue with the right honourable gentleman; but as he meant to object to the production of the papers he called for, he thought it right to state, that the proposition intended to have been made in the first instance to the court of Denmark, was to surrender its fleet in deposit, to be returned on the conclusion of peace. This proposition had not been submitted to the Danish Government, because the gentleman who was the bearer of it, on his arrival at Kiel, felt confident that he should see the Prince on the following morning, but found in the morning that the Prince had set out for Copenhagen; on following the Prince to Copenhagen he found he had returned to Kiel. The Danish Minister whom he met at Copenhagen, had orders not to treat upon the terms he was authorized to propose: the Minister at Kiel could not treat till the return of a courier from Copenhagen; the Minister at Copenhagen could not open a negotiation till the return of a messenger from Kiel. Under these circumstances, it was impossible to enter into any negotiation that could hold out any prospect of a speedy or satisfactory result, and thus it was that the original proposition had never been submitted to the Danish Government. A sufficient force had been sent to justify the court of Denmark

to France in conceding to our demand, or, if it did not concede, to accomplish the object for which it had been despatched.

As to the violated dignity of the Danish nation, the very display of our force before Copenhagen might be considered a violation of that dignity. If one of our cruisers had searched a single Danish ship, or stopped a corporal's guard going to Zealand, this might also be called an attack upon that nation; and upon this subject he should quote a great authority upon the law of nations, which he held in his hand. That great modern expositor of the law of nations, whom the right honourable gentleman, in the religious part of his speech, seemed to consider as a special instrument in the hands of Providence—Buonaparte—who, in his tender concern for the interests of this country, always took care to give an exposition of his sentiments at a time when it would bear on a parliamentary debate—had given, in a Moniteur which arrived this very day, a sufficient proof of what would have made him consider Denmark as in a state of hostility with France. When the Austrian Minister, Stahremberg, was recalled, he was particularly ordered to leave London by the 20th, as Parliament were to meet on the 21st: and a Moniteur which had arrived this very day, had given an exposition of Buonaparte's sentiments with respect to neutrals. In the justification of the conduct of France towards Portugal, one of Buonaparte's Ministers says in his official report, "If any sovereign in Europe should allow his territory to be violated by the English, the act would clearly place that sovereign in hostility with your Majesty; and, therefore, if the Portuguese have suffered their vessels to be violated by the cruisers of that Power, they, too, were in hostility with your Majesty." Now, those who thought so much of the wounded pride of Denmark, should consider, that upon this principle, the search of the smallest vessel, in crossing the Belt, would be sufficient to place Denmark in a state of war with France. With a French army on the frontiers of Holstein, and no English fleet or force off Copenhagen, it would be an idle waste of words, a mere mockery of negotiation, to enter into any discussions. Humanity, as well as policy, required a force large enough for the ultimate accomplishment of the object under any circumstances. No man could blame His Majesty's Ministers for having made the force much larger than was necessary for either object, in order to invite the surrender of the fleet which was required; but, when no proposition would be listened to, it was satisfactory that the means employed were sufficient for the accomplishment of the object with the least possible loss.

The right honourable gentleman had said that the case could only be justified by necessity; but he was sure the right honourable gentleman must carry his principle further, and admit, that the

measure ought not to be carried beyond the necessity of the case. He was, therefore, surprised to hear the right honourable gentleman say, at the conclusion of his speech, that the measure ought to have been pushed to extremity. By other premises he might arrive at that conclusion, but certainly not from those he had that night stated. The right honourable gentleman had said, that the Danish Government could defend the islands against France, though France should be in possession of Holstein. But if the Danish navy was not prepared against England, neither could it be prepared against France. However, the fact was, and it was notorious, that after Zealand had surrendered, many Danish troops had succeeded in getting into that island, notwithstanding the judicious distribution of the British naval force in the Belts, by the very able officer who commanded in that quarter. On the authority of his predecessor he could state, that the pressure in Holstein was considered as likely to lead to the surrender of Zealand. The right honourable gentleman had asked, why they had not put their questions directly to Russia, respecting her conduct? He would answer, that they had flattered themselves, that by pursuing a course rather conciliatory, they might bring back Russia to the line of her true policy, and, therefore, they abstained from any conduct that might drive her irrecoverably into the arms of France. But the right honourable gentleman asked why, if Russia were a party against us, we ought not to have selected Russia for our attack? To this question, which had been so often put, the answer was so obvious, that he was surprised to hear it repeated. If they had had certain information of the hostile intentions of Russia, and the object which they had in view were not attainable by any other means, he agreed that Russia should have been attacked. It had been shown, that the object sought from Denmark could not have been obtained without a prompt and peremptory force, and that that object was of the highest moment to the security of this country. An attack upon Cronstadt might have been productive of glory, but would not have diminished the maritime means that could be employed against us, and which constituted our danger. Would it then have been wise, or politic, or safe, to have passed the harbour of Copenhagen, which contained twenty sail of the line, that would instantly become the instruments of the enemy's vengeance against us, in order to execute a barren bravado against Cronstadt, where we could obtain but three or four rotten hulks? It was true, he admitted, that Russian ships of the line had passed through our fleets, and we had the choice of attacking them; but, aware of the circumstances by which the Emperor had been rendered the friend of France, of the disgusting humiliations to which he had been subjected at the conferences of Tilsit, and hoping that his magnanimous spirit

might still be driven to resistance and aggression, His Majesty's Ministers had still cherished the hope that the Emperor Alexander would retrace his steps, not for the purpose of a renewal of war with France—God forbid!—but in order to consult the true interests of his empire. In the present circumstances of the world, a war with France would be hopeless; but it was not hopeless that the spirit and disposition of his people might bring him back to better councils. They had strong grounds to know that the intentions of Russia were hostile, but, in the most inauspicious moment, they were not without expectations of altering them.

The right honourable gentleman had contended that this prospect was not improved by calling upon Russia to sanction the business of Copenhagen; but it was somewhat strange, that such an opinion should be entertained by those who held that it was of no consequence whether a mediator was friendly or not. He could assure the right honourable gentleman, that the note of Baron Budberg, which he imputed to some French intelligence respecting the transactions at Copenhagen, was not produced by any such cause. The business at Copenhagen had been known at St. Petersburgh on the 22d July, a week before that note was written; and if gentlemen reflected that General Savary dictated to the Emperor of Russia in his capital, they might easily account for the asperity of any note which might have been submitted to his inspection. All accounts agreed in representing, that the mind of the court of Russia was alienated from this country, and one might easily conceive a reason for that alienation. The expectation of assistance from this country, no matter whether well or ill founded, was the cause, not of the peace of Tilsit, but of the temper in which it was conducted, when the military disasters had rendered that peace necessary. Out of twenty despatches received from our Ambassador with the Emperor, there was not one in which he did not say, "Send assistance, or Russia will fail you; make a diversion, which will take part of the weight of war off Russia, or she will withdraw from it."

As to the charge, that the expedition to Copenhagen was the cause of the hostility of Russia, he contended, on the authority of our Ambassador at Petersburgh, that the fact was not so; but he could also refer to the authority of another noble person, who had an ample opportunity of knowing the truth of what he here advanced, and he should do this with the more satisfaction, because of some rumours he had heard, that that noble person (Lord Hutchinson) had declared an opinion since his return to this country, that the Expedition to Copenhagen was the cause of the hostility of Russia. The right honourable secretary here read an extract from a despatch from Lord Hutchinson, dated Memel, 20th of July, and stating that there were many secret articles in the

treaty of Tilsit; that the predominant party in the Russian court was French, but that the rational part of the nation was against a war with England; and it was probable the secret articles to Turkey, and to the shutting of the Russian ports against England, in the event of the failure of a negotiation within a limited time. This extract would be sufficient to do away any impression that the rumours to which he alluded might have made, as if the noble writer of the despatch really attributed the hostility of Russia to the business at Copenhagen. Hoping for a change of circumstances, they had thought it better to afford to the Russian Government an opportunity of releasing itself from the embarrassing engagements into which it had unfortunately entered at Tilsit; and when he considered the nature of the policy and practice of that court, when he contemplated the anxiety which it had always manifested to maintain its rank as Protector of the North of Europe, and the tenacity with which it still fondly wished to cling to that character, he could not suppose a case in which every feeling of its pride and ambition could be so completely gratified as in the submission of our differences with Denmark to the mediation of Russia as arbitress of the North. She could thus say to herself, the sea of which I am protectress has been violated; but those who have violated it are placed in my hands, subject to my mediation. This was the light in which he was confident the application to Russia to mediate, would be considered by every person who was a friend to the true interests of Russia, and it was so considered, until the overbearing influence of General Savary altered the tone of the Russian Cabinet. But it had been said, why not attack Cronstadt, and insult the Emperor in his own capital? There was a great party, or rather the majority of the bettermost people in Russia, who were anxious for British connexion; but whatever might be the partialities of such persons, they must all feel for the honour and glory of their country, and, therefore, it could not be desirable to destroy, by an unprofitable attack upon the national feelings, the nascent popularity of this country. We had the right, unquestionably; but it was a different question, whether, under the circumstances of the case, we ought to exercise it: besides, the object was not worth the cost and pain of the undertaking, and the execution of it would have infallibly disgusted those who would be likely to bring back Russia to her real interests. Those gentlemen who admitted that a knowledge of the designs of France, and of the weakness of Denmark, would justify the expedition, seemed to forget the inadmission, and to urge the broad principles applicable to a different state of things. It was undoubtedly just, that if there were a community of states in Europe, the weaker states ought to be as secure from aggression, as the more powerful ones. This was a principle which had

never been denied. But gentlemen wrongly applied to the existing state of Europe this principle, which properly belonged to that state of Europe, in which the rights of all were secured by the sanctity of public law; and even the weakest were preserved from aggression or insult—if not by immediate protection, at least, by conflicting interests.

In the enthusiasm of the right honourable gentleman's morality, it was rather strange, that he should have forgotten the moralities of the French revolution. In the present state of the world, whatever miseries might be produced, whatever calamities endured, whatever atrocities committed, by the permission of that Providence in whom we live, breathe, and have our being, the whole responsibility must rest upon him, who is the sole author of them. There was not now a community of states in Europe, connected by the solemnity and sanction of public law, protecting and protected by the influence of the principles of equal justice, and a mutual sense of reciprocal rights; there was but one devouring state, that swallowed up every one that it could bring within its grasp, and that, so far from respecting the rights and independence of other nations, reduced all to indiscriminate subjection, rendering them alike subservient to the designs of its Ruler against this country. Buonaparte now dictated to all the nations of the continent, and had erased every vestige of public law in Europe. He could not but be surprised then, to find gentleman censuring a measure, which had proved the salvation of the country, and comparing it with antiquated crimes in which we had no share, and for which we had incurred no responsibility.

Was it to be contended, that, in a moment of imminent danger, we should have abstained from that course which prudence and policy dictated, in order to meet and avert those calamities that threatened our security and existence, because if we sunk under the pressure, we should have the consolation of having the authority of Puffendorf to plead? But the conduct that had been adopted on this occasion, was not without precedent or example. In the year 1801, the island of Madeira had been taken possession of, by our Government, for fear it should fall into the hands of the French. Yet Portugal was a neutral nation, and had always, by way of pre-eminence, been styled the old and ancient ally of England. The capture of Madeira had been effected without any previous communication to the Court of Lisbon. Undoubtedly, instructions had been sent to our Minister at the Court of Lisbon, to request that an order should be sent to the Governor to surrender the island in good will. The instructions arrived at Lisbon about the time that the troops arrived at Madeira, and the island was, consequently, taken by force, before any orders could have

been sent out to surrender it. Where had Portugal, at that time, a fleet that could convey troops for the invasion of these islands, or if she had that fleet, what expedition could be sent by her that would not be defeated by the valour and intrepidity of our seamen? He did not mean to condemn the capture of that island, because he knew that it might be, and he had no doubt that it was, justifiable upon the grounds of probable necessity; he adverted to the transaction only as a defence against the generality of the charge. But this was not the only instance in which such conduct had been practised to neutral states, in which it had been used towards neutral and friendly Powers; nay, even there was an instance in which it had been adopted by morality itself towards a friendly state. In the year 1806, there had been reports of its being the intention of the French Government to invade Portugal. He had himself no doubt of the perpetual intention of the French Government to prosecute that purpose, and he did not question that the design might have been in contemplation at that time; but it did not appear that any army was assembled for the purpose at Bayonne. He admired the conduct which had been adopted by the late Ministers on the occasion, he applauded their spirit, and he felt gratitude for the manner in which their proceeding enabled him to meet the general question on this charge. [Here the right honourable Secretary read an extract from the Instructions given by the late Board of Admiralty to Earl St. Vincent, when despatched to Lisbon. The Instructions directed the noble Admiral's attention to three objects; first, if the Portuguese Government should, by itself, or in conjunction with Spain, be disposed to defend the country against the French, to promise all the assistance that Great Britain could afford, and the presence of a respectable naval force in the Tagus would contribute to that object; secondly, if that should not be the determination of the Court, and the Government should embrace the resolution of emigrating to the Brazils, as it had once proposed during the late war, to offer them the assistance of a British naval force, under the protection of which alone, that determination could be carried into effect; and, lastly, if there should not be vigour enough in the Government to adopt either of these resolutions, he was to prevent, if possible, the port of Lisbon from falling into the hands of the French, and, at all events, the Portuguese navy was to be secured; every vessel of which, that was serviceable, was to be brought off, together with the ships, goods, and persons of the British factory at Lisbon, and also the court, if it should be so disposed: for the execution of these instructions, the troops that were then embarking were to be sent to him with all convenient expedition; but he was not to give any intimation of the circumstance to the Portuguese Government, nor to hold any language

that might excite the suspicion of the French Minister, or lead to any measures of precaution; and, as it might be necessary to employ the troops immediately on their arrival, in order to secure a strong position, he was to have the marines and boats of the fleet constantly in readiness for that service.] These instructions were clear in their tenor, precise in their object, and conclusive as to the question then under consideration. If any gentleman wished for the document, it would be laid on the table, and the only shyness that had been felt in producing it before was, that it would place him and his colleagues in the situation of convicted plagiarists. (Hear, hear!) These were the instructions that had been given by morality itself, and the only difference between them and the instructions that had been given by the present Government was, that the latter did not desire that the army should be introduced in disguise.

But there might yet be one qualification that the right honourable gentleman would apply to Denmark, namely, that her conduct, when she was relatively strong to weaker neutral states, did not merit such a measure against her. What had that conduct been? When, in 1801, the maritime confederacy held out a prospect that this country would not be able to protect its allies, Denmark treated the unprotected neutral state of Hamburgh with the most violent oppression, and did so for the purpose of excluding the English from that port. The same conduct had been pursued towards Ratzburg. This conduct proved that Denmark had no very strong claims for forbearance. But it was rather strange, that those gentlemen who blamed Government for not having accepted the mediation of Russia, should now impute it as the ground of charge that they had not passed by Copenhagen in order to attack Cronstadt. We had a right to attack Russia, but had we no interest in forbearing to exercise that right? There were, at the time, in the ports of Russia, five hundred British ships, and six thousand British seamen; and gentlemen would perceive, that these formed too important an object to be hazarded for the sake of the few hulks that might be obtained at Cronstadt: besides, the fleet which Russia had in the Mediterranean was a security to us for her good behaviour. And here he would take occasion to contradict a misrepresentation that had taken place upon the subject of this fleet. The Russian squadron did not enter the Tagus by order from the Government, but from sheer distress, and because all the ports of the enemy were so closely blockaded by our squadrons, that they could not enter any one of them. This squadron was first directed to touch at a British port, and even the Russian Ambassador was so deceived with respect to it, that he had kept here a frigate with specie on board, for the payment

of that very fleet. But, if that fleet had been attacked, what an argument might yet be drawn against the precipitancy of such a measure, from the circumstance of the squadron having been directed to touch at a British port, and the Russian Ambassador having detained the frigate with the specie for the pay of the crews!

He had intentionally avoided referring to any thing in this debate but what was notorious; and if they were to ask why they had rested their defence upon precise information, when the events and facts that had since taken place, had amply justified their measure, he would answer, that they had stated that precise ground because it was true, and not because they thought it necessary to their justification in judging of the case before the House. If any more evidence should be thought necessary, let them be condemned, for nothing should ever extort from them the source whence they had derived their information. If gentlemen should say, that this course was contrary to the practice of Parliament, he would go the Journals, to prove that it was not out of the usual course of parliamentary proceedings. Having rescued the country from a great and imminent danger, he would trust to the case as it stood, and he had no doubt but that the conduct of Ministers would be judged deserving of approbation. The House might judge of the extent of the service performed by contemplating the distribution of our naval force, that might be necessary if the Danish fleet were not now in our possession.

As to what the right honourable gentleman had said of the increase of the danger of Sweden by the Expedition, he could assure him, that that danger was greatly diminished by that event, and so the Government of Sweden felt it. As the right honourable gentleman had alluded to a communication made by him to Mr. Rist, the Danish charge d'affaires, he would briefly state the fact to the House. He had been commanded by His Majesty, after the Danish fleet had been surrendered, to make an official communication to that gentleman, desiring that he might procure powers from the Crown Prince to negotiate an accommodation, or to procure passports for a Minister to go to Keil for that purpose. This was all the official communication; he had, however, thought it right to inform Mr. Rist of the terms upon which the accommodation might be effected. He had mentioned then the period of three years, as that which might, after the conclusion of peace, enable us to form a judgment of the stability of the peace; and certainly, those who had witnessed the last peace must be sensible, that the period was not too long; for in eighteen months after that peace, we were as much at war as before. Considering that we had gained possession of the fleet by force, he

did not think the stipulation of such a term any insult, and he had proposed either to keep the fleet in deposit, or to take it in purchase. When he communicated this fact to the House, he thought it necessary to state why he did not produce the papers. As all negotiations were resumed on the terms upon which they had been last broken off, and though he and his colleagues had thought it right to make such offers in that instance, it would not follow that they should be disposed to grant the same conditions at a future period. In the hope of some such accommodation, His Majesty had even been induced to delay directing the condemnation of the Danish shipping, as well as his declaration of war. He had no hesitation to add, that every stipulation had been required that could be necessary for the security of the Swedish territory. But now that war had taken place, it could not be contended that the capture of the Danish Navy, did not, *pro tanto*, diminish the means of the enemy, whilst it added to our means of security. Buonaparte well knew, that the maritime power of Great Britain was the only impediment to his universal aggrandizement. He would not cease, therefore, to exhaust all the means he possessed to accomplish the grand object of his ambition. The trial he would make; and it was only by making it, and its failure, that he was to be convinced of the inefficiency and fruitlessness of all his designs. He would destroy all commerce in order to injure this country, which he identified with it:

> "Cedet et ipse mari vector: nec nautica pinus
> Mutabit merces."—

But though he should direct the whole accumulated force of his vast territories to this purpose, he would find all his projects frustrated, until he could make all nations independent of commerce, in consequence of their own productions:

> "Omnis feret omnia tellus."

By the expedition to Copenhagen, the means of the enemy had been reduced, and the security of the country augmented. Those who thought the policy of that measure weak, and its execution unjust, would certainly vote against him. But he could not consider it a manly way to take the division upon the motion for papers, and not on the merits of the question, merely because some few would vote for the papers, who would not support a motion for censure. Conscious of the principles upon which he and his colleagues had acted, and of the advantages resulting to the country therefrom, trusting to the justice and the good sense of the House, for a confirmation of the universal sentiment of the country with regard to the conduct of His Majesty's Ministers upon the present transaction, he should submit to its decision, and meet the motion with a direct negative.

Mr. Wyndham supported the motion of Mr. Ponsonby; and after a very lengthened discussion, the House divided at half-past five on Thursday morning—

For Mr. Ponsonby's motion - - - - -	108
Against it - - - - - - - -	253
Majority - -	145

EXPEDITION TO COPENHAGEN.

FEBRUARY 25th, 1808.

Mr. Sheridan concluded a speech, possessing the usual characteristics of his style of speaking—great eloquence and great humour—by moving the following resolutions:—

1. "That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, that he will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before this House, as far as the same can be done without prejudice to the public service, copies or extracts of any correspondence which passed between His Majesty's Ministers and the Danish Charge d'Affaires, or his Secretary, resident at the Court of London, from the date of the capitulation of Copenhagen, to their departure, together with the minutes of any verbal communications between the same.

2. "Copies or extracts of all correspondence which passed, after the capitulation of Copenhagen, between His Majesty's Ministers and the Court of Stockholm, relative to the retaining possession of the Island of Zealand by a Swedish army, or in concert with His Majesty's forces; and also copies of any correspondence which may have passed between the Courts of Copenhagen and Stockholm relating to the same, and communicated to His Majesty's Minister residing at the Court of Stockholm."

Mr. Secretary Canning was not ashamed to confess, that he at all times felt considerable difficulty in disagreeing from his right honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan); and that in this instance, his difficulty was much increased, not by the line of argument adopted by his right honourable friend, but by the humour with which he had treated subjects stated to be atrocious, and the gravity with which he had dwelt upon things trifling and unimportant. His right honourable friend had set out with a discussion of the particular benefits of the British Constitution, which he contrasted with the practice of despotic governments. But he had pushed this contrast to a greater extent than any writer or speaker with whom he was acquainted. His right honourable friend had said, that His Majesty's Ministers were preserving the gloom of despotism upon every transaction, upon which they did not, shortly after the transaction took place, or whilst the consequences were yet flowing from it, give the fullest information to the House, and through that House to the public, and through the public to the enemy, by which the enemy might be enabled to defeat the ob-

jects of them. He had always thought that the Constitution had solved that problem which his right honourable friend seemed to think insoluble, by enabling that House to steer between difficulties, and by uniting the promptness of the executive with the salutary corrective of its popular branch. But the extremity to which his right honourable friend had pushed his proposition was not to be maintained in argument or in fact, and the former of his motions allowed the principle which the whole tenor of his speech went to invalidate. His right honourable friend had complained of the sparingness with which His Majesty's Ministers granted papers; but he was sure his right honourable friend must be convinced that papers had been laid upon the table this session in greater masses than upon any former occasion. It began to be the feeling of the House, that he and his colleagues had granted too many papers, and that the few which remained in the public offices should be retained there, if not for the guidance of future ministers, at least for the service of future oppositions. His right honourable friend had asserted, that because only extracts had been laid before the House, they were not entitled to credit; and that the remainder of the documents, if produced, would contradict the tenor of the parts given to the public; as well as that, because chasms existed in the chain of papers, those which were forthcoming were not to be credited. The instance which his right honourable friend had selected to prove a deception in the case of the three despatches from Lord G. L. Gower, and upon which he dwelt with so much earnestness, as if they might have been written at intervals of some weeks, was rather an unfortunate one for his argument; because he had antecedently proved in his speech that they must all have been written between the 30th of August and the 2d of September. The clerical error of the copying clerk, in dating one of these despatches the 2d instead of the 1st of September, was the ground upon which his right honourable friend built his argument, to prove the deception which he imputed to His Majesty's Ministers.

But in contending that these despatches were framed with a view to justify His Majesty's Declaration of December 19th, which was issued in answer to the Emperor of Russia's Declaration of October 26th, which had been received in this country on the 3d of December, his right honourable friend gave credit to him and his colleagues for a portion of political sagacity which he was not, on other occasions, disposed to allow them. But as the observation had been applied not only to the despatches from Lord G. L. Gower, but to his answer to these despatches, dated September 17th, his right honourable friend cut him short a fortnight of the allowance of political sagacity. The view which his right honourable friend had taken of the statement in Lord G. L.

Gower's despatch, relative to the amicable tone assumed by General Budberg, was not maintainable in argument, or by the fact. Did his right honourable friend mean to say that General Budberg, at the time of adopting that tone, was not acquainted with the transactions at Copenhagen? If he did, he was mistaken; because these transactions had been known at St. Petersburg, either on, or shortly after, the 20th of August. If that were so, he would ask his right honourable friend whether, under such circumstances, he would not think it proper to take advantage of such a disposition, in order, if possible, to preserve the relations of amity and alliance which had previously subsisted between the two countries? The note demanding an explanation of the attack upon Copenhagen, had been communicated under the influence of a Power which had since acquired and exerted an ascendency in the Russian councils. Though the depatches communicating this note had been received with the other, they did not seem to His Majesty's Ministers sufficient to alter the view which they had of turning to advantage, if possible, the friendly disposition which had appeared on the part of Russia. If this had been the use which his right honourable friend made of the papers produced at the desire of his own friend, what credit would he have given to the despatches if they had been voluntarily laid upon the table by His Majesty's Ministers? Would he not have said, that Ministers had produced them in order to make out their own case? But he should not then enter into the general question, until it should be regularly brought before the House, by the motion of the learned gentleman on Wednesday.

If his right honourable friend was prepared to contend that the question ought to be answered because it was put; or that, according to the daily practice of that House, it ought to be answered without any reference whatever to any particular course to be grounded upon it; he was of opinion that it would require somewhat more than the ingenuity of his right honourable friend to establish that point. If he understood his right honourable friend right, he had adverted to certain misconstructions which had been put upon what had fallen from him on a former occasion, as if he had made statements from documents in order to misrepresent the general tenor of their contents. Upon this particular point he should observe, that if other reasons did not interfere with the production of these documents, he could, for his part, have no objection to produce them; and, on this occasion, he trusted he should meet with the indulgence of the House, in adding a few words upon a subject so immediately personal to himself. If he were to look to himself alone, he should have no difficulty in producing the papers, which would take away all misconstructions upon the subject, and leave the learned gentleman, when he came

to bring forward his motion, to discuss it upon the mere naked principle. His right honourable friend had mis-stated the view in which he had used one of those papers which he had read. He had stated, that he (Mr. Canning) from Lord Howick's despatch, had imputed that the Danish Court was in collusion with France; but this was a mistake: he had only stated, that from all the circumstances of Denmark's having retreated as the French advanced towards Holstein, there was reason to apprehend, if they got possession of Holstein, Denmark might dread their proceeding to do the same by Zealand, and that might be a means of drawing the Danish fleet into the hands of France; and he thought the noble lord had good cause for fearing that might be the case.

His right honourable friend, in one part of his speech, admitted, and, in the wording of his motion, had more strongly confirmed the admission, that it must be left to His Majesty's Ministers to say what particular papers ought to be laid before the House, and what would be inconvenient or dangerous so to do, and then called on him to say whether there would be any inconvenience in the production of the papers now moved for? To this he distinctly answered, yes, there would be the highest inconvenience. His right honourable friend had told them that we had but one ally in Europe, and that he was in the greatest danger. He argued that this danger would arise to Sweden, from having entered into a compact with this country relative to taking possession of Norway, and, in return, asked for the whole correspondence relating to that transaction.

His right honourable friend's belief with respect to that, was founded on a few paragraphs in the Moniteur, which he brought down, threw on the table, and then called on Ministers for all the correspondence between them and their only ally; he thought, however, Ministers knew too well how to show their value for their only ally, to comply with so unreasonable a request. He did not know how it was, but it seemed to him that the Moniteur had been strangely favourable to the views of the honourable gentlemen opposite; for they no sooner began to be exhausted in topics of declamation against Ministers, and to show symptoms of being languid and flat, than over popped a Moniteur with some agreeable information to cheer their drooping spirits, and to give them a fresh opportunity of calling for more papers, in doing which, he thought his right honourable friend had, on the present occasion, shown a voracious curiosity. If he would limit it to any information that could safely be laid before the House, he would be glad to oblige him as far as possible, to give him an opportunity of joining more effectually in the motion which the honourable and learned gentleman soon meant to move on the capitulation of Copenhagen. He assured the House, that in every

respect that treaty had been complied with on our part. There had been a conference as to British property seized and detained prior to our taking possession of Zealand. A doubt having arisen whether the capitulation meant to confine it to Zealand only, or to the rest of the Danish territory, it was agreed to be submitted to the officers on both sides, who made the capitulation, and was determined against the English, and implicitly complied with. The same, as to hostilities by the declaration of war, which were not known at the time of the capitulation: every thing had been abided by, that was stipulated by the capitulation. His right honourable friend was also mistaken as to the offer of Norway to Sweden by France. It was Prince Murat, and not General Brune, that made the offer which Sweden communicated to Denmark, but which Denmark concealed from us. His right honourable friend seemed to think, that France might do as she pleased—might give away Norway with impunity, whilst we should be highly criminal in any such intention, let the state of warfare between us and Denmark be what it might. His last point, however, was, that we should not follow the example of the enemy. In that respect His Majesty had hitherto carried on a system of scrupulous forbearance. If his right honourable friend meant that we should not imitate his cruelties, oppressions, and unbounded aggressions, he would coincide with him; but if he meant that we should not follow him in every measure which might tend to put us on a perfect equality with him in carrying on the war, he must differ with him entirely. His right honourable friend had indulged the exuberant fancy of his classic mind, by giving garbled extracts from Latin poets by way of quotation, such as—"*Ridiculum acri quid vetat.*" If he was inclined to retort a quotation on his right honourable friend, it would, he thought, be strictly allowable to him to say,—

"Arma virumque cano."——"Fas est et ab hoste doceri."

Buonaparte, whatever might be his cruelties, his oppressions, or his aggressions, had on all occasions scrupulouly adhered to and protected those who had entered into alliance with him; he had never sacrificed an ally to any consideration, however pressing or important. Ministers were that night called on to give up the correspondence of our only ally, which could not fail of being attended with great inconvenience; and he would, therefore, so far follow the example of the enemy, as to adhere to our ally, and to refuse his assent to his right honourable friend's motion.

The House divided—

For the motion - - - -	85
Against it - - - - -	184
Majority - -	99

CONDUCT OF THE DUKE OF YORK.

MARCH 8th, 1809.

Mr. Wardle moved the order of the day for taking into consideration the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee who were appointed to investigate the Conduct of His Royal Highness the Duke of York, the Commander-in-Chief, with regard to Promotions, Exchanges, and Appointments to Commissions in the Army and Staff of the Army. The honourable member proceeded to offer what he had to say upon the evidence, on the several prominent parts of which he commented at considerable length. He concluded by moving the following Address:—

"That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, humbly stating to His Majesty that information has been communicated to this House, and evidence produced to support it, of various corrupt practices and other abuses having prevailed for some years past, in the disposal of commissions and promotions in His Majesty's land forces; that His Majesty's faithful Commons, according to the duty by which they are bound to His Majesty and to their constituents, have carefully examined into the truth of sundry transactions which have been brought before them, in proof of such corrupt practices and abuses; and that it is with the utmost concern and astonishment His Majesty's faithful Commons find themselves obliged, most humbly, to inform His Majesty that the result of their diligent inquiries into the facts, by the examination of persons concerned, together with other witnesses, and a variety of documents, has been such as to satisfy his faithful Commons that the existence of such corrupt practices and abuses is substantially true. That His Majesty's faithful Commons are restrained by motives of personal respect and attachment to His Majesty, from entering into a detail of these transactions, being convinced that they could not be stated without exciting the most painful sensations of grief and indignation in the breast of His Majesty. That the proceedings of His Majesty's faithful Commons upon this important subject have been public, and the evidence brought before them is recorded in the proceedings of Parliament; and that they trust His Majesty will give them credit when they assure His Majesty, that, in the execution of this painful duty, they have proceeded with all due deliberation. That, without entering into any other of the many obvious consequences which may be expected to follow, from the belief once generally established, of the prevalence of such abuses in the military department, there is one great and essential consideration inseparable from the present subject, which they humbly beg leave, in a more particular manner, to submit to His Majesty's gracious consideration; namely, that if an opinion should prevail amongst His Majesty's land forces, that promotion may be obtained by other means than by merit and service—by means at once unjust to the army, and disgraceful to the authority placed over it—the effect of such an opinion must necessarily be, to wound the feelings and abate the zeal of all ranks and descriptions of His Majesty's army. That it is the opinion of this House that the abuses which they have most humbly represented to His Majesty, could not have prevailed to the extent in which they had been proved to exist, without the knowledge of the Commander-in-Chief; and that even if, upon any principle of reason or probability, it could be presumed that abuses so various and so long continued, could, in fact, have prevailed without his knowledge, such a presumption in his favour would not warrant the conclusion that the

command of the army could, with safety, or ought, in prudence, to be continued in his hands. That on these grounds and principles, His Majesty's faithful Commons most humbly submit their opinion to His Majesty's gracious consideration, that His Royal Highness the Duke of York ought to be deprived of the command of the army."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed, as an amendment to the honourable gentleman's Address, to leave out all of it but the word "that," for the purpose of converting his motion for an Address into a Resolution. He thought it absolutely and indispensably necessary that the House should decide the question of guilt or innocence, and, therefore, he should submit a question expressive of the sense of the House, that they should decide the question as follows.

The right honourable gentleman then read two resolutions, acquitting the Duke of York of any personal corruption or connivance at the infamous and corrupt practices disclosed in the evidence taken on the inquiry.

These Resolutions he proposed to introduce into an Address, the substance of which is contained in the following extract:—

"His Majesty's faithful Commons think it their duty to state to His Majesty, that whilst this House has seen with satisfaction, in the course of this inquiry, the exemplary regularity and method with which the business of the Commander-in-Chief has been conducted under the direction of His Royal Highness; and also the many salutary and efficient regulations which have been introduced into the army, during his command of it—some of which regulations have been specially directed to prevent those very abuses, which have, in this inquiry, been brought under the notice of the House of Commons—they could not but feel the most serious regret and concern, that a connexion should ever have existed, under the cover of which, transactions of a highly criminal and disgraceful nature have been carried on, and that an opportunity has been afforded, of falsely and injuriously coupling with such transactions the name of His Royal Highness, whereby the integrity of his conduct in the discharge of the duties of his high office, has been brought into question; that it is, however, a great consolation to this House, to observe the deep regret and concern which His Royal Highness has himself expressed on the subject of that connexion; as from the expression of that regret on the part of His Royal Highness, this House derives the confident assurance that His Royal Highness will henceforth invariably keep in view that bright example of virtuous conduct, which the uniform tenor of His Majesty's life, during the course of his whole reign, has afforded to all his subjects, and which has so much endeared His Majesty to the affection of every rank and description of his people."

Mr. Bankes moved another amendment, which varied slightly from the original one. It contained the additional expression, "That the abuses which had been disclosed during the progress of the examination, had unveiled a course of conduct of the worst example to public morals, and highly injurious to the cause of religion."

On the sixth night of the adjourned debate on the original Address, and the two amendments of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Bankes,

Mr. Secretary Canning, in a speech of great length and ability, commented on the evidence in all its details. A few extracts from the speech will suffice as a record of the part that Mr. Canning took in the discussions that arose on the inquiry into the Duke of York's conduct:—

Sir,—There are two Addresses before the House. For the Address of the honourable member who brought forward the question, I cannot vote, because I do not agree with the aver-

ments of it; but certainly I should have less difficulty in voting for that Address than for the Address supported by my honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce, who supported the Address moved by Mr. Bankes).

Is it wise or fair when you have before you questions, all indeed of misconduct, but differing in their degrees: some calling for punishment, some for animadversion, and some more fitly perhaps the subject of silent regret, than either of punishment or of animadversion: is it wise or fair to take an indistinct view of all these questions at once, and give, as it were, an average decision upon them? Is it just to the person who is the subject of this inquiry? Is it respectful, is it kind, is it humane to that other personage to whom those Addresses are to be carried, deeply interested as he must be in the result, both as a Sovereign and as a Father? Is a decision of such a nature consonant to the justice, or creditable to the character of Parliament?

First, as to what is due to the illustrious person whose conduct is the subject of this inquiry.

And here let me guard against an insinuation which is too often thrown out, as if there were intended to be some claim set up for particular forbearance towards this illustrious person, on account of his station; as if it were intended or attempted to prevent the House of Commons from inquiring into his conduct. I have seen no such thing attempted. I believe no such thing to have been intended in any quarter. And I trust, that whatever the decision of the House may be, there will not be fastened on the House itself, or on any member of it, a suspicion of having acted upon such views.

But when we are cautioned not to take into consideration the rank of the Commander-in-Chief in the course of the inquiry, or in mitigation of punishment, let us be sure that these considerations, so cautiously to be abstained from in favour of the Duke of York, be not suffered to operate the other way.

My honourable friend has spoken of the times in which we live; my honourable friend is in the habit of viewing these times with a philosophical eye, of comparing the present with the past. Let him tell me whether upon comparison with any times of which he has ever read, he will say that the peculiar bent of the disposition of the present times is to exalt the high at the expense of the low? Will he tell me that the current of public prejudice does not run precisely the other way? I think my honourable friend will agree with me, that if there are any who allow weight to the consideration of the rank of His Royal Highness as exempting him from punishment, there are many, many more, whose feelings are the more acrimonious against him on

that account, and who consider him as, on that account, the more desirable victim.

I must entreat the House therefore to look not to one side of this question only—that is all that I desire. All that it is right to ask on behalf of the Duke of York is, that he should have no favour, but no prejudice; that he shall be considered on a par with the meanest subject of his father; that he shall not be excluded by his rank from all those protecting presumptions which the ordinary course of law affords to every person under accusation.

What then is the situation of His Royal Highness? Charges have been preferred against him:—no, not *charges*, I am told, because not reduced into writing. To whom that is attributed, as a fault, if to any one, I do not know; charges, however, it is said, there are none, they are only accusations.

These charges, then, in the shape of accusations, not reduced to writing, but preferred in the manner in which they have been preferred, impute to His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, the foul and degrading imputation of direct personal corruption, and of wilful and criminal connivance at the corrupt practices of others.

True it is, that in searching for evidence of these graver matters, you find evidence of matters of comparatively lighter moment; not free from blame, God knows, but blame of a very different description. You have developed scenes of misconduct, of the existence of which there can be no doubt, and which I neither can, nor would attempt to justify. But if, in endeavouring to obtain the proof of the facts alleged against His Royal Highness, you have not been able to prove those facts, but have proved something different, something less, does it follow that if he is innocent of the great offence, the lesser ones are to preclude him from acquittal?

It is said, however, that there is no *record* of this inquiry; no specific entry on our journals which renders a specific sentence of acquittal or condemnation necessary. Posterity, it is said, will know nothing of our proceedings but from our journals; and there is, therefore, no injustice done to the Duke of York in leaving such a charge without an answer. Is it possible to urge this argument seriously? If it might be true in former times that the formal acts, the recorded transactions of Parliament, and those alone, would go abroad to the world, or descend to posterity, blasting the name and character of a man accused,—are we therefore to be told that the case is the same now? That now, when by those modes of dissemination of which we are all aware, the knowledge of all that passes in this House is extended in a few hours to every corner of the kingdom, and, by degrees, to the re-

motest parts of the world; that there is now no unfairness, no cruelty, in leaving such charges unrefuted, because not formally entered upon *record?* Is there any man who can satisfy himself, in the present times, to set up this technical plea in defence of such substantial injustice?

So much for the *record*, even if the fact which is taken as the basis of the argument were true. But is there not, after all, a *record?*—is there not that *record* which, when in the most distant time or country our proceedings shall be read, will plainly indicate the nature of the charge, at the same time that there will be to be collected from our proceedings that condemnation, which, if we intend to pronounce it, surely we cannot intend to conceal?

What appears on the *record?* It appears that the House referred to a committee of the whole House, "to investigate the conduct of His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, with regard to promotions, exchanges, and appointments to commissions in the army, and the staff of the army, and in raising levies for the army."

What further will appear, if this Address, if either of the two proposed Addresses shall be voted by the House? Why, that the House, after receiving the report of their committee, are of opinion that "corrupt practices *have* prevailed" in the disposal of promotions, exchanges, &c. &c., in the army.

With *whom* is that disposal? Why, with the Commander-in-Chief. *Whose* conduct were the committee to investigate in respect to this disposal? Why, the Commander-in-Chief's, the Duke of York's.

It is clear, therefore, that the Duke of York *will* appear, on the face of these proceedings, if we shall vote either of the Addresses proposed, to be found guilty of corruption; and yet, gentlemen who are prepared to vote for these Addresses, professed themselves, at the same time, ready to allow that there is nothing of corruption in His Royal Highness's conduct. Are they, or are they not, ready to allow this? They must come to this averment or this denial. But to say that there can stand upon the journals of Parliament such a reference to a committee, followed by such an averment of the existence of corrupt practices, and that, nevertheless, you have not framed any distinct charge, and, therefore, are not bound to give any distinct decision, is a course of proceeding as contrary to common sense as to common justice. A vote founded on these pretences will produce all the effect, without plainly pronouncing the sentence of condemnation. If you pass this Address, it is impossible that your country and posterity should consider His Royal Highness otherwise than as having been judged guilty of these charges, of charges the most criminal and degrading.

But it is admitted that these charges are false—(some member

said *No!*)—I am glad to hear that it is not so admitted; I am glad to find that there is in some quarters, at least, an impatience of being supposed to admit what this Address is, by its supporters, pretended to imply; because I presume that those who feel that impatience will insist upon having their real meaning fairly and unequivocally explained by their vote. They will agree with me, not in their decision undoubtedly, but at least as to the manner in which alone their decision can be properly taken. They will call for a plain, intelligible question. They will not be contented with a speech of charge and a vote of compromise; a speech which insinuates guilt, and a vote which only avoids affirming innocence, and leaves the guilt to be collected and inferred. They will be for an "aye" or a "no" upon the questions of "corruption" or "connivance."

* * * * * * *

The Address of my honourable friend (Mr. Bankes) submits to His Majesty, "whether, even if it can be presumed that abuses so various and so long-continued, could have prevailed without the knowledge of His Royal Highness, the command of the army can, with propriety, or ought, *in prudence*, to remain any longer in his hands. "What should we say of a judge, who, in summing up the evidence on the trial of a culprit, should state to the jury this? "The evidence before you does not appear to prove the guilt alleged in the indictment; but it may not be *prudent* to say so. If, for other reasons not before you in evidence, you are of opinion that it is *expedient* the man should be hanged, you will take into account those *prudential* reasons for getting him out of the way, and frame your verdict accordingly." This is, in substance, the language of the Address: this is, almost without disguise, the language of those who support it. They have told us plainly that they do not think it *expedient* to come to a vote, a direct affirmative or negative vote, upon the plain question, "Guilty or not guilty of corruption?" Even my honourable friend who spoke last, in that part of his speech where he alluded to parliamentary tricks, seemed to think that this call for a direct vote upon the principal charge, was one of those tricks: a trick which he was determined to defeat. A trick, to call for decision upon a charge! A trick, to put an accused man on his trial! In what vocabulary shall we find words to describe the other functions of Parliament, if the performance of this, one of our highest duties, the ascertainment of guilt or innocence upon a grave criminal accusation—if the endeavour to perform this duty strictly and conscientiously, is to be branded as a trick and a delusion?

The Duke of York has been accused of personal corruption, of wilful connivance. True it is, that he is assailed by minor charges; but will any one say, who loves justice, who thinks rever-

ently of the laws of the land in which he lives, who remembers that in this land "no man is to be found guilty but by the judgment of his peers," and that even a person accused of the most heinous crimes, has the right "to be presumed not to be guilty, till he is proved and pronounced guilty"—will any man, who knows that he has these for his birthrights, and who prizes them as they deserve, will any such man be induced by any eloquence, by any ingenuity, or by the weight of any authority whatsoever, to consider a call for decision upon a charge, before punishment is inflicted, as nothing but a trick of Parliament, nothing but the tactics of party?

It is on these principles that I do call upon you for a decision: principles, the fair operation of which were never denied to any man before. I ask for no partial favour for the Duke of York, beyond that which is due to any other subject in the kingdom: but let it not be said, that in the first case of the sort which the House of Commons has had to decide, it has made a precedent unfavourable to the party accused, for no better reason than because the party accused was of the highest rank, and because justice done to him might, therefore, have been misrepresented as partiality! How any gentleman can have made up his mind to consent to a general *lumping* Address, condemning, by a comprehensive censure, without sentence, without reference to the proof of facts, to the gradations and degrees of blame, or to any just apportionment of punishment; and how, in agreeing to such an Address, any man can fancy that he is discharging conscientiously the duty imposed upon him on this occasion, does pass my understanding.

* * * * * * *

But, in any case, in all cases, in any or in all modes of proceeding, this question of acquittal or condemnation upon the greater charges must take place, and must, in justice, precede even the examination of the less criminal matter of inquiry. To this justice, I say, the Duke of York, in common with every accused person, is entitled.

"Oh, (but it is said,) those only are entitled to this justice, who have not, by their own act, disinherited themselves of the rights and privileges of the British constitution." The Commander-in-Chief, it seems, *has* done this: he has written a letter, Sir, through you, to this House, in which he has presumed to dictate to the House the mode of proceeding, and contumaciously to assert his innocence, and call for trial. True, Sir, he has written a letter: he has, in that letter, not dictated but taken for granted, the same course of justice, in his own case, which is applicable, and is uniformly applied, to all his fellow subjects. He has asserted his innocence. If that be denied, he has called for trial. What is

there in all this to deprive him of the right of being tried, to justify the condemning him unheard? Look at the meanest prisoner at a bar, who waits the decision of his jury on an accusation of the foulest felonies; what is the course with respect to him? His crime is stated to him: he says he is "not guilty." If he omits this plea himself, it is pleaded for him. In him this plea is not considered as contumacious; it is not considered as abdicating his right to a trial. On the contrary, the felon is then asked how he will be tried? He replies, "by God, and his country." In the felon, this is not considered as dictating to his judge. But, in the Prince, to call for a trial, is, it seems, a species of contempt of court, a rebellion against the supremacy of the tribunal before which he is arraigned, such as not only subjects him to punishment, but deprives him of the right of being tried. Is this equal justice? Will an honourable gentlemen (Mr. Whitbread,) who spoke the other day with great ability and great warmth on this very topic, of the equality of the rights of princes with those of ordinary men, will he suffer patiently, will he consent to, and concur in effecting the gross *inequality* which this argument would establish, to the prejudice of the person now under consideration, only *because* he is a prince? But the "honour of a prince," appeared to that honourable gentleman a most offensive expression. Why so? The "honour" of a *peer* is a regular and purely technical form of affirmation; why not the "honour" of a *prince?* But the honourable gentleman told us that the honour of a prince had thus been put in competition with the word of a prostitute, and that, being compelled to decide between them, he had felt himself obliged to believe the latter. "The Duke of York," said the honourable gentleman, "has aggravated his case, because I am thus put in a situation of the greatest difficulty and delicacy. I cannot condemn him of the crime with which he is charged, without condemning him, at the same time, of falsehood, vouched upon his honour." This was the substance of the honourable gentleman's argument. Was the like ever heard? A man is accused of a crime; he protests his innocence; and his protestation is contended to be an aggravation of his offence, because you cannot afterwards affirm his guilt, without contradicting his plea of innocence! And this is a case of difficulty and delicacy, forsooth, to the honourable gentleman and his friends! O, this delicacy! it stands much in their way.

* * * * * * *

Upon the view of the evidence suggested by the speech of my right honourable friend, what appears most incontrovertible and most important, is this—the only link that connects the foul transactions which have been developed to the House with His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, is the testimony of the offend-

er herself. That this testimony has received partial confirmation from collateral and circumstantial evidence, that many statements which were at first sight thought incredible, have been confirmed, either by the testimony of others whose veracity is not questioned, or by letters produced by herself, or accidentally discovered, I readily allow; but nothing, independent of her own testimony, has proved the privity of the Duke of York.

My honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce) dwelt much on this part of the subject, and particularly on the almost providential detection (as he would have it to be) of the letters in possession of Captain Sandon; which letters, he says (rather incorrectly,) have been carefully evaded by all those who have spoken in defence of His Royal Highness. Does he know how many there were of those letters? Let him refer to the printed volume of evidence. There are forty-two. Does he know how many of these were commented upon yesterday, in great detail, with laborious particularity, and with convincing clearness, by my honourable friend (Mr. Croker,) the effect of whose commentary was so completely satisfactory as to make it worse than useless to follow him? Why, exactly thirty-one. This is surely a complete answer to the charge, that these letters have been studiously left unnoticed. But neither is it true that these letters, or any accidentally discovered evidence, has gone to confirm the testimony of the principal witness and criminal, in respect to the privity of the Duke of York. It is incontrovertibly true that the charge of the Duke of York's privity to Mrs. Clarke's corrupt practices rests on the testimony of Mrs. Clarke alone. I say her "corrupt practices;" for with respect to her interference, without rebuke I cannot deny, and have no wish to excuse, the fact, that the letter respecting General Clavering, affords a decisive proof; but of corruption, or of the knowledge or suspicion of corruption, there is no proof at all; nor any thing that can, by the most uncharitable inference, be taken for proof.

The other piece of evidence which is thought to corroborate the testimony of the accusing witness, on this point, is the note respecting Tonyn; and this is the particular, with respect to which (as I have said) I entertain a different opinion from that declared by my right honourable friend (the Chancellor of the Exchequer.) He thinks that note a forgery. I certainly believe that note to be genuine. After the most impartial consideration of what has been said for and against its authenticity, I am convinced (in my own judgment) that it is the Duke of York's note. But I think, at the same time, that a most exaggerated importance has been given to this note. The doubts of its authenticity, and the attempts to disprove it, may, perhaps, have contributed to this exaggeration.

If I am asked, how I can explain this note innocently, I answer frankly, that I cannot explain it at all. I do not pretend to un-

derstand to what it refers. It is without date; it is an answer to a question, or a letter, which is not forthcoming; it contains three hurried lines: and in this total obscurity, and absence of any grounds of reasoning, or even of conjecture, I see nothing extraordinary in the not being able satisfactorily to explain it. The witness herself did not pretend to know any thing about it; nor, I dare say, would His Royal Highness.

But, Sir, I must protest on behalf of all who are, or may be, public men, against an inference of guilt from such want of explanation. Any man who knows what it is to be in a situation to receive twenty, and write perhaps a dozen letters in a day, many of them from and to persons of whom they have no personal knowledge, will feel with me, that if a note, of which they may have neglected to keep a copy, is to be produced against them, years after it was written, and they are to be called upon either to deny their hand-writing, or, acknowledging it, to account for the contents, they may any day in the year most innocently and inadvertently write their own condemnation.

Why, Sir, it happened to me to find among my papers, a very few days ago, the copy of a letter addressed by me to a lady in these words:—"Madam, I have received your valuable present, and have only to assure you, that you may depend on my discretion."—This letter was written not long ago—since this inquiry began; but at the moment of finding it, I was so utterly unconscious to what it related, and to whom, that I am very sure, if it had been to be used against me ten years hence, it might (if inability to explain it were a sufficient evidence of guilt) have been absolutely conclusive against my honour, or perhaps my life. I could not help fancying to myself the process by which I should thus have been proved guilty. My honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce) has told you that Buonaparte keeps ladies in his pay to corrupt the ministers of other courts. Well; here is a letter from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, written on such a day to a lady, acknowledging a "valuable present;" *i. e.* a bribe—a manifest bribe—and assuring her that she may "depend on his discretion." The very language of crime and confederacy! Now what could this be for? The treasonable intention is plain enough, but to what was it applied? Why, about that time peace was concluded with the Ottoman Porte, as much against the expectation as against the interests of Buonaparte. Buonaparte was naturally anxious to learn the contents of the treaty; and, "see here," would my honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce,) or those who reason like him, exclaim, "See here, the letter to the Lord Mayor, announcing this Turkish peace, just two days before the date of this most providentially discovered letter." According to the reasoning applied to this note against Tonyn, here would

be my condemnation complete. "A bribe was offered to the Secretary of State, of £10,000, to betray the articles of the Turkish treaty to Buonaparte. The lady avows she offered it; and here is the copy of a letter found in the Secretary of State's drawer, which proves his acceptance!" Here then would be conviction, and punishment of course would follow.

Now, Sir, what was the real history of this letter? and who was this lady? This lady, Sir, was a poetess, who did me the honour to send to me, but upon condition of my keeping her secret, her poem—"an ode to vaccination." This was the "present" which I acknowledged; and this was the "discretion" on which I assured her she might depend. But ten years hence I should not have recollected this. In ten, or five, or two years, in all probability, I should have forgotten both the ode and the lady: and if so, there would not have been wanting those who, according to this new mode of reasoning upon evidence, would have voted me guilty of high treason, and carried up an Address to the Throne for my removal.

Sir, I trust, if that note respecting Tonyn, because unexplained and unexplainable, is to operate the weight of a hair in judgment against the Duke of York, inferior courts of justice will not learn their rules and construction of evidence from us, the Commons of Great Britain.

Again then, I say, Sir, there is nothing in these hidden treasures, the letters discovered in Sandon's possession, which, like the talisman in the Arabian Nights, were supposed to shed light around them, and open to view the darkest recesses of iniquity; I say there is nothing that goes to supply the link which is wanting, in the whole concatenation of evidence, to fasten the knowledge of the corrupt practices of Mrs. Clarke upon the Duke of York. In many instances, as in the case of Spedding, these papers, so accidentally, so providentially brought to light, directly contradict and disprove her statement.

But then it is said, a witness who is incredible in some respects, is not so in all; therefore his testimony may still be believed, where it is corroborated by others. It will not be contended, however, that an incredible witness, such as Mrs. Clarke is allowed to be, is to have the whole of her evidence believed, because her testimony is accidentally strengthened in some parts: she is credible only where her evidence is confirmed. One gentleman, indeed, of great talents and eminence, the former Solicitor-General (Sir S. Romilly,) expressed an opinion, which, if he does entertain, I hope he will be found to be the only man who entertains it, "that a witness who is detected in giving false testimony, in one particular, *at the bar of the House of Commons*, is not so much to be distrusted, as to the remaining part of his testimony, as a

witness who trips when *upon oath;* that *perjury*, indeed, affects not only *that part* of a witness's testimony which is proved to be false, but the *whole;* but that an *unsworn* falsehood vitiates *only the part so* falsified, and leaves the *remainder* as worthy of credit as before." Such I collected to be the honourable and learned gentleman's doctrine; and a doctrine more monstrous in morals, or more destructive of the jurisdiction of the House of Commons, it would not be easy to devise. That a witness who speaks falsely when *not on oath*, is not thereby rendered wholy unworthy of belief, when the sanction of *an oath* is applied to him, is an intelligible proposition: a man *might* be ready to *say* what he would not *swear:* but to maintain that he who is proved to have *said* one thing falsely, is therefore not liable to be suspected of *saying* another thing falsely; that he is to be believed in the *remainder* of his testimony, as if he had not been detected in falsehood in a *part*, is a proposition which it will require something more than the single authority of that honourable and learned gentleman, (however he may pride himself on that singularity,) to maintain.

The main questions, therefore, to which you must come, are these: do you believe Mrs. Clarke's evidence, or do you not? Or do you see reason to think that there is a mixture of truth and falsehood in it? There are but these three possible degrees of credit. Do you believe this woman altogether? She affirms corrupt knowledge and participation to the fullest extent. Believing this, you cannot refuse to bring the Duke of York to trial. Do you *not* believe her? Say so; say so by your vote, by a recorded sentence. Are you in doubt? Do you find it difficult to determine how much to believe? how much to reject? *That* is precisely the case for further inquiry. "To be once in doubt is to be once resolved." Institute such inquiry as shall convert your doubts into certainties; and probe the matter to the bottom.

The evidence of Mrs. Clarke is true, or it is false, or it is partly false and partly true. Are there no means of sifting such evidence? Are there no sanctions, sacred in the eyes of God and man, by which truth and falsehood can be discriminated? Have those sanctions been applied to this testimony? They have not. Have you the power of applying them? Not of yourselves, but by reference to another tribunal. Can any honest man doubt, then, that such ought to be our course, rather than to confound the false and the true in a compromise of injustice, and to come to a conclusion which *may* be wrong *either* way, but can by no possibility be right?

But if the proof is deficient, what is the presumption of guilt in His Royal Highness the Duke of York? Your Address affirms "that there were corrupt practices with respect to promotions,

&c. in the army." It does not affirm that the Duke of York was cognizant of them: but it more than insinuates that he was, that he must have been so. What is the ground of this insinuation? These corrupt practices were carried on by a firm consisting of the Duke of York, Mrs. Clarke, Colonel Sandon, Mr. Donovan, &c. In 1806 this partnership is dissolved. The Duke of York goes one way; Mrs. Clarke and her associates the other. Are the practices continued after this separation? Yes. By whom? By Mrs. Clarke and Captain Sandon. And yet you prosecute—whom? The Duke of York. You never hear of the Duke of York's malpractices, except in connection with Mrs. Clarke's name; of Mrs. Clarke there are abundant malpractices, wholly unconnected with the name of his Royal Highness; and yet you think it just to punish in him, not in her, the guilt of that which you do not even show him to have known.

* * * * * * * *

But my honourable friend tells us that all the world knew of this connection; that it was matter of notoriety that the Duke of York was living in this state of disgraceful concubinage with Mrs. Clarke. I do assure the House, in the most solemn manner, that I did not know it; and that the first time that, to my recollection, I ever heard the name of Mrs. Clarke, was in this House, from the lips of the honourable gentleman, who is the accuser upon this occasion. I may be giving a great proof of my ignorance of what is going on in the world by this declaration, but upon my honour it is true; and that of which I was ignorant may have been equally unknown to others.

This utter ignorance it was, coupled with the utter disbelief which I felt, of the Duke of York's submitting to the sort of traffic imputed to him (a feeling which I should entertain in its full force, if I were to hear the same charges to-morrow brought against any honourable gentleman on the opposite benches,) that extorted from me, on the night when the honourable gentleman opened his charges, those expressions of indignation which I have so often, in the course of this debate, been called upon to retract or to explain. Sir, I have nothing to retract on that score; nothing to explain: but I have something to deny.

I *did* say that "infamy must rest somewhere," but I did not say that it must rest "either on the accuser or on the accused." I affirm this with confidence; not only from my recollection of the words, but from my recollection of what was the state of mind in which I spoke, and what the scope and purview of my statement on that occasion. I have, besides, endeavoured to correct and confirm my own recollection, by reference to others, by reference to certain records which it would not be regular directly to name, but which I must describe as well as I can, without naming. Sup-

pose, Sir, there were daily to be published accounts of what passes in this House, multiplied perhaps to the number of ten or a dozen, and suppose I were to find my words stated, according to my own recollection of them, in ten or eleven of those accounts, and stated, as the noble lord and those opposite recollect them, by only one of those reporters, and that one notoriously a decided enemy to me and to those with whom I act; should I not be warranted in considering the many which agreed in confirming my own recollection, as better authority than the one which contradicted it? Should I not be warranted in doing so, more especially if I should find, at the same time, another part of the same speech cautiously omitted in that one, and accurately detailed in almost all the others? I refer, Sir, to what I said, in the same speech, about the liberty of the press. I said that the libels on the Duke of York had been so frequent and so flagrant, "as almost to make good men hesitate whether the licentiousness of the press was not more mischievous than its liberty was beneficial." I said this, it is true; but in the same breath I added, "The hesitation, however, can be but for a moment: the blessings of the liberty of the press are so clear and so acknowledged, as far to outweigh the mischiefs of its abuse. The evil is transitory, but the good is immortal."

* * * * * * * *

I know, Sir, that in the language of Parliament, I must not advert to considerations which, in every other case, and before every other tribunal, would be thought worthy of some attention. The venerable age, the infirmities, and the virtues of the royal person, whose heart is to be torn by this Address, are surely not to be overlooked in the question of the mere form of your proceeding. I do not say, God forbid! that these considerations should warp the decision; but surely they may be allowed, blamelessly allowed; to operate upon the manner of pronouncing it.

It was stated some nights ago, with as much truth as eloquence, that we owe to the Sovereign now upon the throne, not only that allegiance and duty to which his high functions entitle him, and which the institutions of the country prescribe and consecrate, but we owe to him, eminently, and individually, gratitude for the preservation of those institutions themselves. Who but must recollect the time when the minds of men in this country were unsettled by the first shock of the French Revolution, and when the wildness of theory and speculation put to hazard all the establishments of the state? Who but must recollect that, at that most agitated and alarming period, when the frame of our constitution, the whole fabric of our laws, and the authority of Parliament itself, were threatened to be jostled out of their order, and laid in ruins, that even then, amidst the conflicts of passion and the

schemes of change, the throne was kept steady by the virtues of him who filled it? and that while every thing else, however venerable, was endangered, the monarchy was worshipped in the person of the King?

Of such an individual would you not wish to spare the feelings? This Address itself professes to intend to do so. With what delicacy—

Mr. Tierney said, he rose to call the right honourable gentleman to order, conceiving he was using the King's name to influence the House.

Mr. Canning.—Sir, the honourable gentleman has interrupted me, perhaps, not improperly. I feel no resentment for the interruption. Unquestionably, the argument is one not easy to manage in perfectly strict conformity to the rules and orders of the House. The right honourable gentleman has a right to enforce those orders, but then I entreat the House to observe in what a situation he places me. This Address, indeed, both Addresses, and the mode of proceeding by Address, have been defended on the ground that it was proper to proceed in the manner least injurious to the feelings of the King. The Addresses themselves contain this sentiment. The supporters of the Addresses have recommended the adoption of them on this ground. But when I proceed to examine the truth of the statement on the faith of which we are called upon to vote; when I presume to inquire how far the Address is consistent with the professed purpose of those who framed it; how far they have executed their own intention, and secured their own object; I am stopped by the right honourable gentleman, who tells me that I am out of order. The Addresses are praised because they are so tender of the King's feelings; but when I venture to describe those feelings, and to probe this professed tenderness, I am told that I travel on forbidden ground, and that you, Sir, and the House must not hear me! Is this just? With this topic, however, I have done.

* * * * * * *

The proceeding by Resolution is that which has been adopted in almost all instances, in good times, from that of the Duke of Marlborough, down to the last instance, in the case of Lord Melville. Of Addresses, not either preceded by some examination where the evidence was taken on oath, or not founded on previous Resolution, I have not found approved instances. I have found instances enough to show that the other is the approved parliamentary practice. Why, then, should we depart from it on the present occasion? Why are we to do this? Because, forsooth, there is a public expectation awakened of some immediate and sweeping act of wrath and vengeance on the part of the House of Commons; and in your eagerness to gratify that expectation, you

must refuse to listen to the voice of justice and reason, and to follow the recorded practice of good times!

I would fain persuade you to adhere to sound precedent. But, according to some doctrines of this day, you must shut your ears to every thing that I, or any one in my situation, can say to you. For we have heard from an honourable baronet, (Sir Francis Burdett) whose usual practice it is to impute to persons in office all sorts of corruption and incapacity; but we have heard it not from him only; he has been followed by one of the greatest landed proprietors among us (Mr. Coke)—a gentleman who seems to think that he derives from his landed property a degree of authority which property alone, however great, cannot confer—that what comes from any man in office, on this or any other subject, is not to be attended to; that it is worth nothing. Sir, from whatever quarter such sentiments proceed, I hear them with scorn. They disgrace only those who utter them; and show only what it is that they who are capable of imputing base motives to others would themselves be, if they were in official situations.

But, however I may despise such sentiments, I cannot hear them without regret; because I know that property, in times like those in which we live, has need of all the protection which good order and good government can give it; and I think it but ill pleads its own cause, and but ill provides for its own security, when its possessors endeavour to instil into the minds of the people a distrust, not of this or that individual, but of the whole class and description of public men. The honourable gentleman who uttered this sentiment may fancy himself safe, in the extent of his possessions, from all the inconveniences attending popular commotion; but let him not think that the destruction of the authority of Government, and the degradation (if his opinion or his exertions could effect that degradation) of all those who, by their habits and their education, are qualified for public life, or by an honourable ambition are led to engage in it, however it might conduce to the aggrandizement of his individual importance for a time, would, in the end, secure the stability of that property on which he founds his pretensions to pre-eminence.

* * * * * * *

Whatever our decision shall be, I fear not for the character of the House of Commons. The confidence which I feel in this respect does not proceed from indifference. I deem as highly of this branch of the constitution as any man. I think it would be difficult to point out the individual who must, from every motive of education, of personal feeling, and, I hope, not dishonest ambition, be more sincerely interested in the honour of the House of Commons; in the maintenance of its honour in the eyes of the country; and of its power, its preponderance in the balance of the

state. But I would not flatter the House of Commons any more than I would offer adulation to my Sovereign. I would not betray either into an abuse of power, by encouraging either to mistake power for right. The House of Commons, acting upon this principle, would be a despot; and a despot whose tyranny would not be less intolerable than that of a single tyrant. It is not every thing which the House of Commons can do, that it, therefore, ought to do. It is not because it has the power to sweep from his station whomever it may choose to sacrifice to its displeasure, that it would be justified in condemning the Duke of York either against evidence or without trial—in condemning him upon any other principle than that which would apply equally to the meanest individual, or by any other process than that of impartial and dispassionate justice.

On a division, the numbers were

For Mr. Bankes's Amendment - - - -	199
Against it - - - - - - - - -	294
Majority against the Amendment	95

A second division afterwards took place on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Amendment on Mr. Wardle's Address.

For the Amendment - - - - - -	364
For the original motion - - - - -	123
Majority in favour of the Duke of York	241

Adjourned at half-past six o'clock on Thursday morning.

EXPEDITION TO THE SCHELDT.

JANUARY 26th, 1810.

On the 26th of January, 1810, Lord Porchester moved, "That a Committee be appointed to inquire into the policy and conduct of the late Expedition to the Scheldt."

Mr. Canning, in the course of a protracted discussion upon this motion, said,—That under the circumstances that had been stated, it would be better to postpone any direct motion for inquiry, until the House was in possession of the information which Government had promised. This was a deference which he conceived due to the Government. But whatever the contents of these papers might be, they would not supersede the necessity of an inquiry of some kind. Inquiry could not be avoided, it must take place sooner or later. And here he would take the opportunity of repelling an accusation made against him, that he had ever entertained any wish or desire that all the facts connected with that most disgraceful and inglorious business, should not undergo the fullest investigation. No inquiry before that House, or any selection from it, he feared, would be competent to embrace the misconduct, supposing any imputable to them, of the commanders of the Expedition. The case was different, however, with regard to the share that Ministers had in the transaction. If blame was imputable to the plan or policy of the Expedition to Walcheren, he had nothing to say against the proposition of the noble lord, (Porchester) putting in, at the same time, his claim to a full share of the responsibility which the Government that set it forward might have incurred. He foresaw one inconvenience from the adoption of the motion, namely, that it would pledge Parliament to a particular mode of inquiry; a mode not the best calculated, in his opinion, to attain the ends which it proposed. Upon these grounds, he thought it would be best to wait for the information that was promised. The practical delay would be but small. At the same time he thought that papers which were mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, should have been sooner ready, and that not a moment should be lost in preparing the way for that public and impartial investigation, which no man in the House was more desirous than himself to see instituted. He would give his vote against the motion of the noble lord, but not in the hope of defeating inquiry, which could not, and must not be avoided. The country called for it; the country was entitled to it.

The House divided—

For Lord Porchester's motion - - - -	195
Against it - - - - - - - - -	186
Majority - - - - -	9

Lord Porchester, on Friday, the second of February, gave notice that on the Monday following he would move that certain papers relating to the late Expedition to the Scheldt be laid before the House.

Mr. Canning was anxious to give the inquiry the greatest possible effect. He had formerly suggested the propriety of referring the military evidence to other tribunals, and he gave it as his opinion that it would have been better so to have done. He would state, in a very few words, what he thought it would

be most becoming the House to inquire into. There were three points to which he thought their attention should be directed. The first was the policy of the Expedition. This was the most extended question, since it comprehended the situation in which Great Britain was placed with the other Powers of Europe. For this he felt himself in the highest degree responsible. The military and naval proceedings, though he viewed them with the most favourable eye, he could not think himself responsible for. He did not consider himself at all answerable for the evacuation of Walcheren; at the same time, while saying this, he most distinctly desired to be understood as not giving an opinion either the one way or the other. It might be, that the House would be of opinion, that blame attached itself nowhere; but if it should appear that blame did attach somewhere, if he were too active in eliciting discoveries to the prejudice of others, it might appear that he wished to throw the blame off himself, by placing the misconduct of others in a most luminous point of view. He would therefore punctually give his attendance throughout the inquiry, and give every explanation of his own conduct; but it was his intention to avoid as much as possible taking an active part, where he was not personally concerned.

The House then, on the motion of Lord Porchester, resolved itself into the committee, to consider the policy and conduct of the Expedition to the Scheldt.

Mr. Yorke moved the standing order for the exclusion of strangers, which was, of course, enforced, and the gallery cleared. Minutes were taken of the evidence given before the committee, which contained the examination of witnesses, from the 2d of February to the 10th of March.

Lord Porchester, on the 26th of March, moved the following Resolutions:—

"1.—That on the 28th of July last, and subsequent days, an armament, consisting of thirty thousand land forces, thirty-seven sail of the line, two ships of fifty, three of forty-four guns, twenty-four frigates, thirty-one sloops, five bomb vessels, and twenty-three gun brigs, sailed on the late Expedition to the Scheldt, having for its object the capture or destruction of the enemy's ships, either building at Antwerp or Flushing, or afloat on the Scheldt, the destruction of the arsenals and dock yards at Antwerp, Torneux, and Flushing; the reduction of the island of Walcheren, and the rendering, if possible, the Scheldt no longer navigable for ships of war.

"2.—That Flushing surrendered on the 15th of August, whereby the reduction of the island of Walcheren was completed; and that on the 27th of August, all attempts on the fleet and arsenals of the enemy at Antwerp were, by the unanimous opinion of the lieutenant-generals, declared to be impracticable, and were abandoned.

"3.—That the destruction of the basin, dock yard, arsenal, magazines, and naval store-houses of the town of Flushing, and of such part of the sea defences as it was found proper to destroy, having been effected on the 11th of December, the island of Walcheren was on the 23d of December evacuated by His Majesty's forces, and the Expedition ended.

"4.—That it does not appear to this House, that the failure of this Expedition is imputable to the conduct of the army or the navy in the execution of their instructions, relative to the military and naval operations in the Scheldt.

"5.—That on the 19th of August a malignant disorder showed itself amongst His Majesty's troops; and that, on the 8th of September, the number of sick amounted to upwards of ten thousand nine hundred and forty-eight men.

"6—That it appears by the report of the physician appointed to investigate the nature and the causes of the malady to which His Majesty's troops were thus exposed, that the disease is one which prevails periodically in the islands of Zealand, and is of peculiar malignity there, and which constantly follows a

law of season, appearing towards the end of summer, becoming more severe in the autumnal months, declining in October, and nearly ceasing in November. That perfect recoveries are rare, convalescence never secure; and that the recurrence of fever quickly lays the foundation of complaints which render a large portion of the sufferers inefficient for future military purposes.

"7.—That of the army which embarked for service in the Scheldt, sixty officers and three thousand nine hundred men, exclusive of those killed by the enemy, had died before the 1st of February last, and on that day two hundred and seventeen officers, and eleven thousand two hundred and sixty-nine men were reported sick.

"8.—That the Expedition to the Scheldt was undertaken under circumstances which afforded no rational hope of adequate success, and at the precise season of the year when the malignant disease which has proved so fatal to His Majesty's brave troops was known to be most prevalent; and that the advisers of this ill-judged enterprise are, in the opinion of this House, deeply responsible for the heavy calamities with which its failure has been attended."

There was also a second set of resolutions, as follows, relating to the retention of the island of Walcheren:—

"1.—That Lieutenant-General Sir Eyre Coote having, on the 9th of September, been left in command of Walcheren, with an army of about fifteen thousand men, did, on that day, make an official report on the state of the island, the extent of force required effectually to guard it, the nature and condition of its defences, and the number of men then sick and unfit for duty; representing that after such his exposition, His Majesty's Ministers would be the best judges of the propriety or possibility of keeping the island; and adding, that the advantages must be great indeed which could compensate the loss of lives and treasure which the retention must necessarily occasion.

"2.—That on the 23d of September, Sir Eyre Coote stated to His Majesty's Ministers, that the alarming progress of disease was such, that if it should continue in the same proportion for three weeks longer, (as he added there was every probability that it would,) our possession of the island must become very precarious.

"3.—That on the 6th of October, Sir Eyre Coote, after stating that the number of sick was increasing, and that the effective force was thereby rendered so trivial, as to make the defence of the island, if it should be attacked, extremely precarious, did express his anxiety to be informed of the intentions of His Majesty's Government as to the future state of Walcheren.

"4.—That notwithstanding these, and many other pressing representations, on the alarming condition of the troops, and the danger to which they were exposed, His Majesty's Ministers did neglect to come to any decision until the 4th of November, and that the final evacuation of Walcheren did not take place until the 23d of December.

"5.—That on the 10th of September, the number of sick in the island of Walcheren was, exclusive of officers, six thousand nine hundred and thirty-eight; and that the total number of sick embarked for England between the 15th of September and the 16th of November, was eleven thousand one hundred and ninety-nine, making in that period an increase of sick of four thousand two hundred and sixty-eight.

"6.—That although the great object of the Expedition had been abandoned as impracticable, a large proportion of the British army was (without any urgent or determined purpose in view, or any prospect of national advantage to justify such a hazard, or to compensate such a sacrifice) left by His Majesty's Ministers to the imminent danger of attack from the enemy, and exposed during a period of more than three months, and under circumstances of aggravated hardships, to the fatal ravages of a disease, which on the 31st of Au-

gust had been officially announced to be daily increasing to a most alarming degree.

"7—That such the conduct of His Majesty's advisers calls for the severest censure of this House."

THURSDAY, MARCH 29th.

The House of Commons was engaged four nights in the discussion of the above Resolutions. In the course of the adjourned debate upon them, on the third night of the discussion, after Mr. Grattan had delivered a speech of great eloquence, in vehement condemnation of the Expedition,

Mr. CANNING rose and said:—The right honourable gentleman (Mr. Grattan,) who has just sat down, has concluded his speech with a declaration, that the calamities brought upon the country by the failure of the Expedition to the Scheldt, ought to be visited with exemplary severity upon the heads of those by whom that Expedition was planned and advised. Now, Sir, as one of the advisers of the Expedition, I rise, not only to speak in justification of it, but to contend, and I trust I shall be able to contend successfully, that, in advising that measure, His Majesty's Ministers were actuated by a just sense of their public duty; that they proceeded upon motives and principles, such as, if I were not myself a party concerned in the transaction, I should not scruple to assert, entitled them to the approbation of their country; and such as they may confidently recommend to whoever may be hereafter their successors in office. They are principles, which, in whatever hands the administration may be placed, must necessarily be adopted and acted upon, if the cause of the country is to be maintained.

For, Sir, in estimating the merits of the great public measure now under our consideration, we must not be contented to look upon it as a mere insulated question, we must regard it as a branch of that general system of policy and action which has been pursued throughout the whole course of the present war, and which has been invariably directed to the twofold object of preserving other nations from the domination of France, and insuring the integrity and independence of the British empire.

It cannot, I apprehend, require any aid of argument to prove to this House the deep and vital interest that we have in the latter object; neither do I think it difficult to show, that, in the former, though our interest may be less direct and immediate, we have, nevertheless, an interest sufficiently strong to keep that object constantly in our view, and as strong an obligation to employ all the means in our power for its accomplishment. While Great Britain stands so pre-eminently high amongst the nations of Europe, she owes it as a duty to her own dignity and character to

assist and protect weaker nations against oppression, not only so far as that can be done consistently with her own interests, but, I would rather say, so far as is not absolutely incompatible with her own security. True it undoubtedly is, that of those nations, which, in different periods of the war, manifested a spirit of resistance against the encroachments or oppression of France, and to whose support this country has contributed generously and promptly every aid and effort in her power; true it undoubtedly is, and not more true than it is deeply to be lamented, that the course and consequences of the war have been such as to place many of those nations, in successive periods, at the mercy and under the control of the enemy. We have been in the situation of fighting not against the power of France alone, but against those countries, to which we have heretofore furnished our assistance, but which, ranged by conquest on the side of France, have, whilst their hearts must be for us, been compelled by a dire necessity to raise their hands against us. It does not therefore follow that the principle of continental co-operation is unwise; or that our generosity has been detrimental to our interest. The destruction of the efforts of the enemy, the suspension of immediate danger to ourselves, and the chances afforded by the protraction of that period at the expiration of which we may probably have to contend for our own safety on our own soil—these are sufficient advantages to be derived from our efforts in behalf of other nations, even if we were to put out of account the higher considerations of national reputation and national faith. But considering at the same time that the period of this separate combat may arrive—that the successive wars of the continent may probably enough, (if the power of France continues unbroken) be extinguished and swallowed up in one great war of the continent against this country—that this consummation (though it may be deferred, and though to defer it be worth every practicable exertion) yet cannot, perhaps, ultimately he avoided; I do admit that in all measures of co-operation with the Powers of the continent, we ought not to lose sight of our own separate security

The prospective apprehension of these distant and contingent dangers to ourselves, ought not to induce us to withhold or to relax our efforts for others: their speedier downfall would but hasten the crises to our struggle. It ought not to make us distrust the sincerity of their efforts in their own cause. They may be, it is true, hereafter (as many of them already have been) found to act against us; but their hostility to us must be preceded by their own ruin; and we may well believe it their desire to avoid an extremity which cannot be hurtful to us, till it has first been fatal to themselves. But we may naturally and justifiably endeavour, nay, we are bound on every principle of sound policy to endea-

vour, to combine in all our continental measures, with the consideration of what is immediately useful to others, that of what may be ultimately not prejudicial to ourselves. It is good to be generous to others. But to ourselves also we owe a duty of self-preservation; and that measure is the most prudent, the most suitable, and the most advantageous, which, while it advances the common cause, in the first instance, does so in a manner consistent with our own permanent security, which gives strength to the combined efforts of our allies, and at the same time fortifies us for the separate contest which we may have to carry on hereafter, unaided and alone. Upon these grounds the King's Ministers acted in advising the late expedition: and by these principles I desire that measure may be tried. The House then will see that I must disclaim altogether one mode of argument by which the Expedition has been condemned—that of estimating it solely by its utility as a diversion in favour of Austria. That it had that effect, that it was calculated to have that effect, and that that was of itself a most important object, is true. It is true, that when Austria had taken up arms against France, and was likely to furnish employment for the great mass of the French army, this country was bound to afford every possible assistance to that Power, not only from the recollection of past alliance, but from a strong sense of common interest. But the question still remained, in what manner that assistance could be afforded most conveniently for us, as well as most advantageously for Austria; how the application of any British force might be rendered at once most beneficial to the cause of Austria, and conducive, or at least not detrimental, to the permanent security of this country. The Expedition to the Scheldt, therefore, as it is not to be considered on the one hand, as having been undertaken for an object purely selfish on our part, so is it not to be judged, in its result, by considerations exclusively connected with the cause and the interests of Austria. It must be viewed with reference to both these objects; and when so viewed, I am persuaded that it will appear to every reflecting mind, to have been not only wisely planned, but the very best measure that, all things considered, could at the time have been undertaken.

It appears by the papers upon the table, that the project of an Expedition to the Scheldt did not originate in the Austrian war. Undoubtedly it did not. An attack upon Walcheren was not a novel project with the Government of this country. It had been frequently, for many years past, in the contemplation of the British Cabinet. It neither grew out of the Austrian war, therefore, nor did it originate with the particular administration by which it was undertaken. The measure had been meditated and discussed by several successive administrations, when the tempta-

tions were much less, and the difficulties much greater than at the period now in question. The importance of the object had grown with the growing naval strength of the enemy in that quarter; and never had any occasion at once so favourable and so urgent presented itself for such an enterprise, as that which occurred at the time when the late armament was fitted out. Nothing can be farther from my thoughts than any intention to apply the circumstance, which I am now about to mention, in the way of recrimination against the honourable gentleman on the opposite side of the House; but I am almost sure that it must be in their recollection as it is in mine, that the noble lord whom I had the honour to succeed in the office which I lately held in His Majesty's Government, and to whose talents and sagacity I am disposed to pay every imaginable respect, did, in a debate which took place very soon after the change of the Administration, of which he formed so distinguished a part (a debate which, from one of those circumstances that sometimes prevent our discussions from being known without our walls, was never made public,) did strongly recommend to the Government then newly come into office, a vigilant attention to the growing naval means of the enemy in the Scheldt; that he described the accumulated facilities of annoyance afforded to Buonaparte by the possession of the mouths and the course of that river, and particularly pointed out the arsenal at Antwerp, as the most desirable and advantageous object of attack on any favourable occasion. In giving this advice,—in leaving this legacy,—in bequeathing this testamentary sanction for such an operation to his successors, that noble lord discharged a solemn duty, and gave a proof of his patriotism as well as of his wisdom. Even in the then state of the enemy's naval resources in the Scheldt, he considered it as an object of wakeful and anxious jealousy and alarm to the Government of this country. I have, therefore, that noble lord's authority, I do not say for the precise detail and plan of this Expedition, but for the principle and object of it, for seizing the earliest opportunity to effect the destruction, if possible, of the enemy's naval force and arsenals in the Scheldt. I have the authority of that noble lord, who had successively filled the two departments of the state that best qualified him to judge of this question, the Admiralty, and the office in which I had the honour to succeed him—first, for the importance of the object, and, in the second place, for the practicability of the undertaking, or, at least, the justifiableness of the risk. And, if such were the noble lord's opinions at the period to which I refer, I will ask any honourable gentleman what was then the state of Antwerp; what was its real importance at the time when that noble lord bequeathed this warning to his successors, compared with its condition and importance at the period when the Expedition was actually undertaken? It

must be quite unnecessary to recal to the recollection of the House the active and unceasing attention which Buonaparte had, during the whole of the intervening time, paid to his navy, and the boasts which he uniformly held out to Europe of his growing naval power. To check the growth of that power was surely an object well worth every effort; and worth that which must attend every effort upon a large scale—the hazard of failure. It was an object, the success of which, if viewed in its effect upon the general scale of the war, would have been important in the highest degree, as lowering the pride and naval power of the enemy; viewed in its relation to the maritime war between this country and France, it was equally recommended by every consideration of national pride, of safety, and of economy. The destruction of the arsenals in the Scheldt might have spared us the necessity of a fleet in the Downs or of a fleet at Yarmouth, and either left that amount of naval force disposable for other services, or enabled us by such retrenchment the more effectually to aid our allies, or the better to support the burden of a protracted warfare. Independently, therefore, of any consideration of the Austrian war, an Expedition to the Scheldt was perhaps the effort best calculated to promote the essential interests of Great Britain.

I have thus briefly stated the general grounds upon which the Expedition was first resolved upon, and by which, of themselves, that resolution would, in my opinion, be altogether justified. Then came the Austrian war, and then came urgent applications from Austria for assistance—applications which, indeed, were scarcely necessary, because we were called upon, by every principle of the most obvious policy, and every consideration of the strongest self-interest, to afford to her in her arduous and critical struggle, all the succour and support in our power. With this disposition, the question which first arose was, how the assistance which we were both bound and willing to afford, could be rendered most effectual in support of the cause of Austria. And I can confidently aver, that if, in the state in which our determination then was, in respect to the Scheldt, any other destination could have been pointed out for an Expedition, more obviously serviceable to Austria, and affording an equal or a reasonable prospect of success, the superior interest which this country had in the success of an attack upon the Scheldt, would not alone have determined us against a change of destination. If other considerations were equally balanced, the obvious and essential interests of this country might fairly be allowed to turn the scale. But not only was there no other destination pointed out in which Austria might be more effectually aided, and which it was necessary to sacrifice to our preconceived partiality for the Scheldt; but I will venture to say, that after a full and fair consideration of

every suggestion which was offered to us, there was no one point to which, an Expedition could have gone, which, exclusively of the separate interests of this country, could, from its general importance, policy, and practicability, be placed in competition with the capture and destruction of Antwerp. There are obviously two modes of aiding the efforts of an ally: the one to support him by direct co-operation with his armies in the field; the other, by a formidable diversion, to distract the attention of the enemy, and to relieve our ally from some part of the pressure of the vast military force concentrated against him. I should certainly not have thought it necessary to establish by argument the impracticability of a direct military co-operation with Austria, in the situation to which the Continent was at that period reduced, if I had not heard some of the honourable gentlemen opposite contend that we should have sent our Expedition to the bottom of the Adriatic, to Trieste, in order to act in conjunction with the Austrians; I know not exactly where, but I suppose by penetrating through the Tyrol to Suabia: an idea so utterly extravagant and absurd, that the mention of it has filled me with amazement. Have the honourable gentlemen who expressed their approbation of such a plan, reflected upon the difficulties and dangers of sending a fleet of transports, crowded with troops, upon such a voyage, through the streights of Gibraltar, along the Mediterranean, and up the Adriatic, to a destination, at which it might arrive three or four months after it sailed, and two or three months after the junction for which it was sent out was no longer either useful or attainable? Have they considered the enormous preparations, the immense tonnage, and the inordinate expenditure which it would have required to place an army in a situation to take the field after such a voyage, at such a distance, and in countries so little prepared to receive us? With respect to the other mode of direct co-operation—the landing with a British force in Lower Italy—it is only necessary to state, that that experiment was tried to a certain extent, and was only desisted from when it was incontestably found, that the further prosecution of it was useless, in consequence of the retreat of the Archduke John, with whose operations alone those of Sir John Stuart could have been combined. And how would this same retreat have operated upon the notable Expedition to Trieste, if unfortunately it had been adopted? Why, the consequence, it appears, would have been, that our armament on its arrival at Trieste, would have found the French in possession of that place, and no Austrian army or military force within three hundred miles of it. And then what mercy should we have found at the hands of our present accusers, if we had pleaded that, when the Expedition sailed, forsooth, we had every reason to think that it would be in time?

I must, however, beg leave in this place to state, in justice to the Austrian Government, that the idea of requiring us to send out a British force to Trieste, never entered into their contemplation. Austria unquestionably did, as was naturally to be expected, point out several modes, by which the force of this country could be employed; but never hinted at, still less recommended, the impracticable scheme of an Expedition to Trieste.

The points, to which Austria did propose to the British Government to direct its attention, were distinctly and specifically these—1st, that an attempt should be made by a British force upon Italy; 2dly, that our operations in the Peninsula should be continued; and 3dly, that we should endeavour to operate a diversion in her favour, by landing an army in the north of Germany. These were the propositions actually made and strongly urged by the Austrian Government. With respect to the first, an attack on the side of Italy, I have already stated that such an attempt was made, and that it only was desisted from when a perseverance in it on our part, could no longer be productive of any benefit to the cause of Austria. As to the second proposition, the continuance of our efforts in the Peninsula, I need scarcely observe, that the British Government has fully complied with the desire of Austria in this respect, because every gentleman who hears me must be aware that our operations in the Peninsula, so far from having been slackened or suspended, were pursued with unremitting earnestness and exertion.

It remains only to consider the third and last point, recommended by Austria for the employment of a British force, namely, the north of Germany. Gentlemen have dwelt with much emphasis upon the great advantages which would have been derived in aid of such an Expedition from the insurrections then known to exist in that quarter, and from the spirit of disaffection so prevalent throughout the whole of the population of Germany, which the first success of the British arms would have called forth into active and universal hostility against the common enemy. But I have always been of opinion, and have had occasion, more than once, to declare that opinion in this House, that to excite such insurrections, without having the means of affording effectual permanent protection to the insurgents, is an act of the greatest cruelty as well as impolicy.

Undoubtedly such insurrections, however temporary, might possibly have operated for the moment as a partial relief to Austria, by drawing off a portion of Buonaparte's troops, or detaining the reinforcements destined for his army on the Danube. But that advantage would also belong to the Expedition to the Scheldt. So, therefore, the two rival destinations might be considered as equal. They were then to he compared as to their respective

probabilities of success. Supposing these probabilities equal also, then, and then only, would be to be considered the balance of advantage to this country in favour of the Scheldt. But supposing the failure in Germany the more likely, how would the evil of that failure be aggravated by the miseries which it would bring upon the unfortunate people who had been induced to join us! Gentlemen declaim against the Expedition to the Scheldt, merely because the objects of that Expedition, the capture of ships, and the destruction of naval arsenals, fix upon it the suspicion of a selfish motive. They appear to me to carry a principle, good in itself, much too far. Whenever any partial or temporary interest of our own clashes with a permanent and vital interest of an ally, our temporary interest ought certainly to give way; but to put our own interests of any description altogether out of view, merely for the purpose of avoiding a possible imputation of selfishness from a perverse construction of our motives, would be absurd and romantic in the extreme. At all events, let those who feel such an extreme delicacy on this point consent to carry that delicacy a little further, and apply it where it is at least equally applicable, to the case of those districts of Germany, which the approach of a British army would have roused to insurrection, and which its retreat would leave to the vengeance of their oppressors; and let them consider whether a temporary success to our own arms, or a partial relief to Austria, would have been legitimately purchased by such a sacrifice of those whom we pretended to deliver, but should, in truth, by such a course betray.

If indeed we could have hoped to effect their permanent deliverance, the case would have been widely different. In that case the north of Germany would unquestionable have been the chosen scene of our exertions. But what was the chance of such success?

No long period has elapsed since a British army was actually sent to the north of Germany to co-operate against France, and it has been attempted to be argued, that those who were parties to, or who approved the sending out that former Expedition (which arrived in Germany just in time to learn the issue of the fatal battle of Austerlitz,) could have no possible justification, for not having sent the late Expedition to the same destination. But here I must beg of gentlemen to consider the difference in the situation of affairs at these different periods; and to compare the state of Europe at the time when the former armament was sent to the north of Germany, with the situation to which it had been reduced at the period when the Expedition to the Scheldt was undertaken. On the former occasion a formidable Russian army was combatting, in support of the Austrian monarchy; and, with the Emperor at its head, was already partici-

pating in the main operations of the campaign: another Russian force of fifteen thousand men was advancing in the north; and with a corps of fifteen thousand Swedes was ready to take the field in conjunction with our expedition. Denmark was neutral; the power of Prussia was whole and unbroken; and though her neutrality was cold, perhaps it was not a mere profession; the strength and character of her armies made her policy respected, and preserved her territory from French violation. Compare with this description, which every honourable member must admit to be just, the situation of the north of Germany last year, when we were invited by the Austrian Government to make a diversion there in its favour. Russia, instead of being leagued against France, was now her most obsequious and devoted ally; Denmark our enemy, the military power of Prussia no longer formidable even by reputation, but broken down in one disastrous battle, the sequel of a disastrous policy; and the whole face of Germany, once covered with independent and respectable states, now strewed with the fragments of her ancient institutions, and presenting nothing in their room but enfeebled or usurped governments, all leagued with, or subservient to France. Such was the state of things, in which we were invited to send an army to the north of Germany. Let us consider a little the detail of such an operation. Could we have sent our army upon any other condition, or with any other view than that it should return to England in the winter? No one of those who have most strenuously contended for the policy of a diversion in the north of Germany, has ventured to go the length of stating that it would have been politic to risk the fate of a British army during the winter in that part of the continent. The times are indeed long past, when foreign armies, moving in great masses, could maintain themselves like a separate state, a nation among nations, in the heart of Germany, for many successive seasons: the circumstances of Europe are completely changed since any such comprehensive plan of continuous operations could have been practicable; and, at all events, the force we could spare for such an undertaking must have been so small as to be wholly inadequate to the accomplishment of it. With whatever good fortune, therefore, it might have commenced its career, it must have been finally withdrawn before the winter. And I shudder at the calamities that would have been brought upon the unfortunate inhabitants, who, having been induced to take up arms upon the faith of British protection, must have been left exposed to all the vindictive outrages of exasperated tyranny, whenever the progress of the seasons, independent of military disasters, should render it indispensable for the British army to retire.

But this is not all. It is not alone a humane consideration for

the sufferings that might have been entailed upon the wretched inhabitants, nor even a regard for the ultimate security of the British army, that rendered an expedition to the north of Germany, in my opinion, inexpedient and impolitic. There were other considerations, which could not be safely overlooked at a time when such an Expedition was in agitation. Broken down and humbled as Prussia was, she still had an army, which, though unable to make head against France, might yet have been very formidable against the limited force which we could have sent out to Germany. With that army the British army, in the course of its operations, must have come in contact; and, if that were likely, (nay, rather, if it was impossible to avoid it,) I will ask whether, under all the circumstances of Europe, it would have been prudent in us to have involved ourselves in active hostilities with Prussia; or, on the other hand, if any thing like an understanding should appear to have existed between Prussia and us, would it not have furnished Buonaparte with a plausible pretext for wresting from the monarch of that country the bauble of a sceptre, and tearing from his head the mockery of a crown which he is still allowed to wear? If, then, these would have been the consequences that would have resulted from an Expedition to the north of Germany, need more be said to show, that it was the bounden duty of His Majesty's Government to pause before they should undertake it; nay, that they are fully justified in having declined the undertaking after the most grave and mature deliberation?

All this would be true, even on the supposition that the insurrections in Germany had risen to such a height, without our interference, as to hold out some temptation to an enterprise of this kind. Without such a temptation, to be sure, the hostile invasion of Germany would have been madness. But, after all, what was actually at the time the state of these insurrections? What progress had they made, or what assistance were they likely to afford to our efforts, if an expedition from Great Britain had been sent thither? A bold and adventurous soldier (Schill,) impelled by loyalty and national zeal, though unauthorized by his sovereign, took up arms against the common enemy, and having assembled a few followers, commenced an intrepid but short-lived career of active hostility and daring enterprise; the Prince of Hesse, seeking the recovery of the dominions of which he had been tyrannically deprived by Buonaparte, was employed in raising a corps of partisans; and the gallant Duke of Brunswick, anxious to revenge the wrongs sustained by his illustrious house, had placed himself at the head of a small but chosen body of troops, and was enabled, partly by the bravery of his followers, and partly by the good will of the people, to traverse the whole of the north of Germany unmolested, defeating several corps of the enemy, his supe-

riors in number, on the way. This was the sum of the insurrections in the north of Germany. The little obstruction given to the different bodies of troops in arms was undoubtedly a proof of the disposition of the mass of inhabitants; but that disposition, though friendly, was inactive and quiescent. Splendid as they were as instances of individual heroism, these partial and detached exertions surely did not amount to such an expression of national will, nor hold out such assurance of general concert, as would alone have justified a landing in the north of Germany, in reliance upon the co-operation of the people. It was surely incumbent upon us, before we embarked in such a momentous enterprise, to compare our means with the end; to weigh against the possible advantage the certain sacrifice; and to keep ever uppermost in our contemplation the dreadful sufferings that its failure or even its partial success, would draw down upon the population of Germany. The feelings of humanity no less than considerations of prudence, were against the measure, nor could Austria justly expect, nor could we consistently afford her, that temporary relief which, it is admitted, she might have gained, at the expense of so much certain and permanent injury to others.

The course which His Majesty's Government, on the contrary, did actually take, was calculated to promote alike the interests of our ally and our own, to a degree in all probability much greater, and in a manner free from the objection of injustice.

Sir, I understand that in a French newspaper, published immediately under the eye of the Government at Paris, in an account of some former debate in this House, expressions have been imputed to me, importing that, when the Expedition sailed for the Scheldt, I looked for and expected an active co-operation from the people of Flanders and Holland. The words of so insignificant an individual as myself could hardly be worth the trouble of misrepresentation—nor should I think myself warranted to take up the time of the House in setting such misrepresentation right—were it not that, from the official situation which I had the honour to fill when this enterprise was undertaken, I might be supposed to speak from some ascertained knowledge of the dispositions of the inhabitants of the countries in question; and a declaration, taken to be official, might be used to their wrong. I think it right, therefore, to avail myself of this opportunity to deny that I ever uttered such an expression; I will go farther, and fairly and truly state, that no expectation of the kind was entertained; and that one consideration which mainly recommended the Expedition to the Scheldt to my mind, was the absence of any such view or expectation. I knew we had not a force, and I did not think it was our policy to engage in a system of continental operations. The same objections which I felt to the north of Germany would

have weighed with me against Antwerp, if it had been proposed to me to go in search of insurrections. I agreed to the Expedition to the Scheldt as a military, not a political enterprise; as an enterprise of destructive hostility, not of conciliatory co-operation. I had no hope of conquering through Flanders; or of keeping Flanders against France; or of liberating Holland by penetrating its frontier from the Scheldt. But I did think, and do think still, that a great blow was to be struck against the pride and power of Buonaparte, by the destruction of his fleet and arsenals. I wished for no longer occupation than might be sufficient for this purpose, and this I expected to gain, not by the connivance of the inhabitants, but by force, and by taking them unprepared. Indeed, if I were to lay my finger upon that spot of subjugated Europe, which has suffered the least from French tyranny and oppression, and where, therefore, co-operation was least to be expected, I should point out Antwerp. Before the French Revolution, Antwerp was in a state of comparative desolation; her former greatness had vanished; her prosperity was extinguished; her trade annihilated; her population was dwindled, and the grass growing in her streets, formerly the crowded haunts of industry and commerce. To this wretched state had Antwerp been reduced, not by nature, but by treaty; not by any moral or physical defect, but by the arts of the diplomatist and the dash of a pen; and from the destructive effects of a restriction so imposed, was she liberated in consequence of her annexation to France. Neither was there any thing of attachment to her former government to counteract the natural influence of her present prosperity; and it was against the sources of that prosperity, her growing maritime greatness, that this blow was aimed. From the population of Antwerp, therefore, no aid or co-operation was to be expected. They alone, perhaps, of all the inhabitants of the continent, would suffer by being replaced in the situation in which they had been previous to the French Revolution. On what, then, did we ground our hopes of success? I have stated on our own means, and their want of preparation. Undoubtedly we had expected to be able to take Antwerp by surprise; and we had every reason to suppose it would be found in such a state from all the information which had been collected upon the subject. That the information upon which that expectation was founded, was correct, has since been unequivocally proved. I refer, as the most satisfactory proof on this point, to certain articles which were published in the Moniteur, at the time when the destination of the Expedition was first publicly known at Paris, purporting to be the official correspondence between Buonaparte and his minister of war; and manifestly published with a view to make the people of France believe that Antwerp had not been incautiously neglected. This correspond-

ence set forth that our Expedition had been originally intended for Spain, but that in consequence of the conclusion of the armistice between France and Austria, its destination was subsequently changed. An assertion which we know to be false, and which could have no object but to excuse the not having made timely preparations at Antwerp. This is a construction of itself sufficiently evident, but is made still more so by the order with which this correspondence was followed—an order, commanding the *gens d'armes* and the *garde nationale* to march to Antwerp immediately, and put that city in a perfect state of defence. Most unquestionably if that city had been previously secure against attack, it would not have been necessary to issue an order calling for the services of comparatively irregular troops, for the purpose of putting it into a proper state for defence. Such a measure is a virtual admission that Antwerp was in an unprepared state, that the enemy was taken by surprise. It is an evidence derived from the enemy himself, of the wisdom of the original plan of the Expedition—and of the original probability of its success.

But it has been urged with a great apparent triumph against His Majesty's Ministers, either that they had not foreseen the difficulties encountered in the progress of the Expedition, or that, having been aware of those difficulties and dangers, and having yet sent out the armament under all these discouragements, they are more deeply responsible for all the consequences of it. Undoubtedly His Majesty's Ministers did foresee difficulties in the course which they were pursuing (and what great military measure can be expected to be wholly free from them,) but the difficulties which they foresaw were not of a nature to preclude a rational prospect of success. If I am to judge by what I have heard in the course of this discussion, gentlemen think that before any expedition should ever sail from our shores, His Majesty's Ministers should not only have an absolute certainty of ultimate success, but should also trace out to the respective commanders every step by which they are to proceed in the execution of the service intrusted to them. In that case no expedition would ever be undertaken; for what mortal foresight can take in all the possible casualties that may occur to defeat the object? Or who would undertake to furnish a general with a detailed plan of all the operations which he may have to execute, without leaving him any discretion to depart under any circumstances, from the strict line of his instructions; considering how much must always depend upon contingencies which cannot be foreseen, as well as upon observations made, and information collected, upon the spot. A man engaged in a game of chess, may, without any question, by taking certain moves on the part of his adversary for granted, insure his own success. But then if his adversary should vary from the

course which he assumes for him, all his hopes would be frustrated, and all his plans would fall to the ground. All that can, upon this point, be required of a government, is, that they should in the first place select a proper object to justify the attempt by its importance, and where there may be a probable prospect of success; that their views, respecting such object should be communicated without reserve to the generals commanding, to whom, at the same time, should be left a certain degree of discretion as to the means of executing the service; and that they should provide adequate means for carrying any plan that may be determined upon into execution. Much has been said as to the insufficiency of the means provided for the regular siege of Antwerp; but in this objection it is assumed that a regular siege was necessary for its reduction. The expectation of the Government certainly was, that it would be taken by surprise, and carried by bombardment or by an assault. Much censure has also been bestowed upon His Majesty's Ministers for having undertaken the Expedition at all in opposition to the declared opinions of the Commander-in-Chief and of Colonel Gordon; and much stress is laid upon a particular expression of the latter officer, viz. "that it was a desperate enterprise." It appears to me that this expression does not bear out the interpretation which has been given to it. It is clearly used by Colonel Gordon in a colloquial sense, but honourable gentlemen extract from it more than its strict etymological meaning; and insist, that according to Colonel Gordon, the enterprise was so difficult and hazardous, as, if undertaken, to preclude all hopes of success, and to include every ground of failure.

Great efforts, I observe, have on the other hand been made to disparage the opinions of General Brownrigg, and with this view particularly it has been urged against him that he had not stated the authorities upon which those opinions were founded. I observe, indeed, that those gentlemen who seem to set so high a value on authorities, never once thought of calling for the authorities upon which the opinions of those officers were founded whose testimony appeared in any degree to bear against the Government But so minute, so anxious are they in scrutinizing and sifting every thing that favours His Majesty's Ministers, that if General Brownrigg had quoted authorities for his opinion, I am convinced they would have called for the authorities of these authorities, and so on, until at length they should arrive at some point where they could make a stand and withhold belief. An old Indian mythology affirms that this globe is supported by an elephant: a question arises, what supports the elephant? the answer is "a tortoise;" well, and upon what does the tortoise rest? to that question the mythologist affords no answer. And in like manner, General

Brownrigg's authorities must have had some end, and so the honourable gentlemen would find at last some ground of doubt, and some excuse for incredulity.

It has been much insisted upon as a ground of charge against the Government, that the opinion of Lord Chatham had not been taken upon the policy and practicability of the Expedition; but upon what ground does such a charge rest? As a Cabinet Minister, Lord Chatham was a party to the principle, and by having accepted the command in chief he rendered himself more particularly responsible for its execution. There is a story which I remember to have heard more than once from an honourable member of this House, now no more, (Mr. Fox,) of two generals in the French service, one of whom, addressing his troops at the commencement of a battle or an assault, used to say, "*Allez, mes enfans;*" the other "*Allons, mes enfans.*" The latter was the more popular commander, as he showed his confidence in the enterprise and his expectation of success, by his willingness to share in the perils and the glory of the attempt. Upon the same principle the honourable gentleman may infer Lord Chatham's approbation of the Expedition, from his censenting, by the acceptance of the command, to associate himself with its operations and its success.

In reply to all that has been said, as to the impracticability of taking Antwerp by surprise, the noble lord on the bench behind me (Lord Castlereagh) has very appositely quoted the case of Copenhagen: that case unfortunately, however, "was not to the taste of the honourable gentlemen opposite:" for, say they, "Copenhagen was taken too much by surprise. And besides, the inhabitants of Copenhagen were filled with such indignation against us for the unprovoked attack;" that—what? Why "that they surrendered the city, without making all the resistance which the state of its defences would have allowed." This was, certainly, the oddest effect of indignation that I have ever heard of; that it should diminish energy, and facilitate surrender; instead of animating and exasperating hostility, and determining men to defend themselves to the last extremity!

But, if instances are necessary to prove the practicability of carrying such a place as Antwerp by a *coup-de-main*, they present themselves to recollection in abundance. We cannot forget how the strong fortresses of Breda, Bergen-op-Zoom, and the other fortified places in Dutch Flanders, and Brabant, fell without a struggle before Dumourier in the infancy of the French Revolution. These instances, however, will perhaps be set aside by the honourable gentlemen as easily, and certainly with more plausibility than Copenhagen. Their fall was the effect of revolutionary principles, it will be said. They were half conquered

before the enemy appeared under their walls. Let us go back then to former wars, when no such extraneous principles operated upon the fate of fortified towns, and we shall find a regular fortification, Prague, surrendering upon a bombardment of seven days. We shall find a Schweidnitz, in Silesia, a fortress deemed impregnable, yet taken and retaken by surprise, I think three several times, between the years 1747 and 1761, and a fourth time, I believe, in 1762, but then to be sure by a regular siege. The three former captures were by *coup-de-main*. If I were to go farther back still, I might refer to the case of Lerida in Catalonia, before which the great Conde failed in a regular siege, and yet, when afterwards invested by the Duke of Orleans, the place was carried by assault in a fortnight.

It is not my object to prove by these instances out of the numberless cases of a similar description that could be quoted, that, because places deemed secure against such a mode of attack have sometimes been reduced by a *coup-de-main*, therefore every impracticable attempt upon a strong fortress, may prudently be hazarded! No such thing. The inference that I draw from the cases alluded to, is simply this, that as in the progress of wars, fortresses of the highest military description, fortresses generally deemed impregnable, have been reduced by summary means, it does not necessarily follow, that an expedition fitted out under peculiarly favourable circumstances, for the attainment of such an object, should be justly condemned as rash and absurd, because the place against which it is directed may have been, in other times, considered as not liable to be taken without regular approaches. I do not mean to say, that a positive dependence ought by preference to be placed on improbable contingencies, but that war never has been nor ever can be carried on, without incurring some danger, and leaving something to hazard? Undoubtedly means should be diligently proportioned to ends, every practicable foresight should be exercised, every attainable security taken, and as little left to chance as may be. But when, after all that human wisdom can do, to chance something must still be left; when, after all physical and material means are provided, spirit and enterprise must after all turn the scale: I am not prepared to condemn an expedition because I cannot beforehand demonstrate that it will succeed. The general who surrendered without a blow, because the enemy outnumbered him, in a certain given proportion, may have acted according to all the rules of war. When Lord Peterborough took Montjuich, he sinned against all the principles of military calculation. But I read with more delight of Lord Peterborough's romantic achievements, than I do of the sober and regular movements of his successor, who proceeded with the most scrupulous regularity, to lose back all

that his predecessor had so irregularly won. A book came out, some years ago, in France, on the sucject of a carriage, or some such vehicle, which had been contrived in this country, I believe, for a wager at Newmarket, to go a certain distance in a given time. The author of the book undertook to prove, very learnedly, that the project could not possibly succeed. He formed a most elaborate calculation, according to the most precise rules, which gave the greatest satisfaction to all the scientific of Paris. A was to represent the carriage; B the horses; C the driver; D the resistance of the air; E the friction of the earth; and F the utter impossibility of success. And A plus, B plus, C plus, D plus, E was equal to F, and, therefore, the project must fail. While the book was publishing, however, the wager was won: but the lovers of science contented themselves with affirming that, though the project did succeed, it ought not to have succeeded. Now, Sir, I am ready to admit that honourable gentlemen came forward with their mathematical reasoning under very great advantages; the Expedition, upon whatever grounds undertaken, has failed. But, whatever may be the reasoning on their part, I must ever contend that this failure has risen from causes which it was utterly impossible for human wisdom or power to control. It was chiefly to that state of the winds by which the Expedition was compelled to go into the Room-pot, and to the consequent impossibility of capturing Cadsand, that this failure is to be attributed. I will ask any honourable gentleman, whether, if Cadsand had been reduced in the first instance, and the passage up the Scheldt at once opened and free, there would not have been good reason to expect complete ultimate success?

From the countenances of some of the honourable gentlemen opposite, I collect that there are judges in this House before whom the accused appear under great disadvantage. I feel sensibly, that I labour under considerable difficulty in arguing this case before those gentlemen by whom His Majesty's Ministers have heretofore been called on, not only to defend themselves for failures, but to exculpate themselves for victories, and to make atonement for success. From those gentlemen undoubtedly I am not sanguine enough to look for any very favourable decision. Such, I trust, however, is not the disposition of the whole House. The House will not make His Majesty's Ministers responsible for disasters which they could not prevent; nor censure them because the weather proved unfavourable; it will not, I am persuaded, regard with a prejudicial harshness and severity the conduct of men, to whom the utmost stretch of human malice could impute no motive but that of having desired, at great risk to their own situations, to render a great service to the country. They had but to be still to be safe: but it never did and never

could escape them, that, in an undertaking of such magnitude and hazard, the discredit and unpopularity to be incurred by failure, infinitely counterbalanced any credit that would be given to them by their opponents for success.

For, Sir, in all discussions upon the events of the war, I observe that some gentlemen mete out a very different measure of judgment to the actions and undertakings of their own Government, and those of the enemy. They uniformly find room for panegyric in the success of the French Ruler; nor do I recollect to have ever heard one of them censure the conduct of Buonaparte for his oversights or his failures. The injudicious and unsuccessful attack upon Acre, the defeat at Aspern, and the shutting himself up after that defeat in the island of Inder-lobau—a measure universally condemned by military men as an egregious error, and one which afforded to Austria an opportunity of decisive and destructive success, if, happily, advantage had been taken of it—these acts of rashness and misconduct have passed, so far as I have observed, without animadversion. But while they overlooked the blunders of the enemy, and gave him the fullest credit for his successes, they disparage every advantage, and exaggerate every misfortune of this country. According to their just standard, any success on the part of the British Government is invariably the result of accident, but failure is evidence of ignorance and incapacity. But let us suppose the course of the campaign which we are now discussing to have been inverted; suppose the enemy to have been the assailant; suppose that instead of having to justify themselves for having captured Walcheren, His Majesty's Ministers had now to defend themselves for having suffered the Isle of Wight to be occupied by the enemy; for having allowed a French army to remain for three whole months in possession of a station menacing and overawing our principal naval arsenal at Portsmouth? What would be the severity of the charges which their accusers would then have brought against them; what admiration would have been expressed of the enterprise of the enemy, and what epithet of disgrace left unapplied to the Ministers who had thus been taken by surprise? And yet, extravagant as this supposition may sound, the continued occupation of Walcheren by a British army during so many months, had precisely the same effect with respect to France, to which the Scheldt is not less important, as a naval port and arsenal, than Portsmouth to this country.

The continued occupation of Walcheren would have been not less a blow to the maritime power, and to the pride of Buonaparte, than that of the Isle of Wight by France, to the power and pride of Great Britain. In that view—in contemplation of its moral effect upon the minds of the people of France, as much as

in respect to its solid advantages—I concurred in the destination of the Expedition to the Scheldt. I think it would have been of incalculable benefit that the Ruler of France should see that he could not strip his coasts snd country of troops, and draw the whole strength of his army into the heart of distant kingdoms, without subjecting to insult and invasion his own immediate territories, and the dearest interests of his empire.

That these and other objects have been blasted by the ultimate failure of the Expedition, I do not attempt to deny. But while the magnitude of these objects aggravates the regret which its failure naturally occasions, it offers to the discriminating justice of the House what will be deemed, I trust, a sufficient justification of the undertaking.

Having said thus much upon the general question of the policy of the Expedition, in which I feel myself involved in a common responsibility with all those who were at the time of its being undertaken members of His Majesty's Government, I come now to that part of the question in which I am no otherwise concerned, than that, as having concurred in advising the Expedition, I may be, to a certain degree, responsible for all its consequences; but in which I had no personal share—I mean the period of the evacuation of Walcheren. Upon this subject the resolution of censure proposed by the noble lord, appears to me immeasurably severe. No man can, in my opinion, think conscientiously that His Majesty's Ministers, with the island of Walcheren in their hands, with so many strong reasons for retaining it, if the retention were possible, could reasonably be expected to come to an immediate decision upon a point involving so many considerations of infinite importance and embarrassment.

I have already stated, among the grounds for attempting the Expedition, the commanding position of Walcheren; the curb which it put upon the maritime strength, and, I might add, upon the commercial greatness of the French empire. The customs of Antwerp are at least one-third of the whole custom revenue of Buonaparte. Add to this considerations of economy: if (as was at least the opinion of some of the most competent judges) the possession of Flushing would have enabled us to diminish the amount of the fleet destined to watch the Scheldt: add, too, the military triumph of wresting and retaining from the enemy the key of this naval arsenal, upon the creation of which he had rested so much, too, of his glory. Against this was to be put the afflicting sickness and mortality which prevailed among our troops; a calamity of which it is as absurd as it is unjust to pretend that the Ministers did not feel all the weight and poignancy as much as those who affect to be the loudest in deploring it. But neither the original plan of the Expedition, nor the prolongation of the

stay of the army in Walcheren, are fairly censurable on this account, in the manner and to the degree to which the noble lord proposes to inflict his censure.

If an expedition is never to be sent to a climate less healthy than that in which we have the happiness to live, the circle of warfare will undoubtedly be much contracted. If the authority of the very eminent physician (Sir John Pringle,) which has been quoted with so much confidence, is to be conclusive upon this question, that same authority proves a great deal too much; for, if taken in its full extent, it would follow that no expedition ought ever to be sent to any part of Dutch Flanders. It would condemn retrospectively most of our former expeditions to the continent, and specifically all those campaigns of which Sir John Pringle himself has written the history.

Every man who has read the papers on the table must feel, and deeply feel, for the miseries unavoidably incident to war; but though these miseries have been brought nearer to our view than in former instances, and though it may possibly suit the particular purposes of some gentlemen to dwell upon them, yet I must beg of the House not to suffer themselves to be so far biassed in their judgment by the impulse of a very honourable feeling, as to imagine that the instance of this Expedition, however striking, is singular in the history of the wars of this country: I beg them not to imagine that they are at liberty to exhaust the whole of their compassion on Walcheren alone; nor to deceive themselves as to the tenure by which our West India islands are held. No man can deplore more than I do the waste of life that results from the acquisition and retention of such possessions; but it must be considered at the same time, that no important national advantage is to be gained without some kind of sacrifice; and however we may lament the price at which it is purchased, a government would betray its trust, which should precipitately abandon a great and essential object of national acquisition, or national glory, even from such a laudable impulse. Happy, indeed, would it be for mankind, if the slaughter of the battle was the only evil of war. But there are, it is too true, various other sufferings consequent upon a state of war, besides those that are produced by engagements in the field; sufferings which have not the animation of effort, or the consolation of glory: but let it not be supposed that they were incurred in so much greater proportion for Walcheren as to require the exaction of a vindictive retribution from Ministers in this case more than any other. Walcheren had often been an object of British desire, aye, and of British possession, too. We have won it—we have held it in former times. Its importance to this country is now increased ten-fold; surely its climate is not in the same proportion become more pestilential. It has been confidently as-

serted in this debate, that a clause existed in the capitulation of the regiment of Berne, when in the service of the Dutch Government, stipulating that these troops should not be employed in Walcheren. This assertion I cannot take upon myself positively to contradict; but I can affirm, from very good authority, that this very regiment of Berne has, in point of fact, more than once, within the last twenty years, made a part of the garrison of Walcheren. And I have further been assured, too, that after the most diligent search no such clause is to be found in any published treaty or capitulation of the Cantons, though there is, in some of the capitulations published in Dumont's collection, an article providing that the Swiss auxiliaries shall not serve in Batavia or the other Dutch colonies. This stipulation is, as we know, not unusual; the foreign troops in our own service are not bound to serve in the British colonies.

Still, however, the whole point thus at issue is merely a question of degree. I admit, without hesitation, that the miseries incident to an unhealthy situation may overbalance many and considerable political advantages. But the question to be considered is, what were the nature and extent of the advantages to be derived from the possession of Walcheren, and were the advantages such as to justify the retaining it, could it have been retained, at any moderate sacrifice? This is the calculation into which gentlemen should enter, before they make up their minds to pass censure upon His Majesty's Ministers for having kept the island so long. The result of such a calculation, I firmly and conscientiously believe, will be, that such was the importance of Walcheren to this country, that very great efforts ought to have been made to retain it; and that His Majesty's Ministers were perfectly justified in having hesitated as long as they did, before they finally determined to abandon so very valuable a possession: my doubt, I confess, is, whether they ought to have abandoned it at all.

If, indeed, His Majesty's Ministers had previously resolved to evacuate the island, I am not ready to affirm, or even to admit, that they were in that case justifiable in retaining it so long merely with a view to the destruction of the works at Flushing, or in compliance with the wishes of Austria. The destruction of the basin at Flushing, a mere temporary mischief to the enemy, to be repaired by money, ought not, in my opinion, to have been purchased by any avoidable expense of British life. It was not an advantage worth such a price; and as to Austria, though I would do much, and sacrifice much for an ally in the war, yet in the actual situation of her affairs at that period, so long after the armistice, with so very little reasonable probability of the renewal of hostilities, if our army was exposed to ten days' unnecessary sickness upon the supposition of affording any effectual aid to Austria, then I

must say, that there does not appear to me to have been any just proportion between the advantage expected and the sacrifice actually made.

Such, however, do not appear to have been the motives of the delay. It appears that His Majesty's Ministers received successive reports, which went so far as to encourage the hope of being enabled to retain Walcheren, that I must take it for granted that they were induced really to look to that object, that they did not unnecessarily expose the army to the influence of disease for a day after they had finally resolved on abandoning the island; and under this impression I shall certainly vote against the second resolution of the noble lord, though I shall at the same time feel it necessary to move or to suggest an amendment to the counter-resolutions of the honourable and gallant general (General Crawford.) The object of my amendment will be to omit the specific grounds of justification arising from the circumstances of Austria, and from the destruction of the basin at Flushing; and to leave that justification on the plain and obvious ground of the necessity of collecting the materials for an opinion, and the danger of deciding precipitately on so great and important a question. I am perfectly ready to concur in the conclusion that no blame attaches to the Government; but I cannot concur in the honourable general's statement of the premises from which that conclusion is to be drawn. These, Sir, are the grounds upon which I as cordially join in acquitting the Ministers upon the second of the noble lord's propositions, in which I am not myself personally implicated, as I confidently expect, from the reflecting justice and temper of the House, an acquittal for myself in common with my former colleagues, upon the charge contained in the noble lord's first Resolution.

Something yet remains to be said upon one topic on which much stress has been laid by our accusers—the policy of marking with extraordinary severity a failure so disastrous as this is represented to have been, of an enterprise, (as it is averred,) so rashly undertaken.

Sir, of this policy, as a matter distinct from justice, I take the liberty to entertain great doubts. I doubt whether the vice of the British Constitution and Government be a too great proneness to undertake splendid and daring enterprises, or its main perfection an uncommon facility for conducting the operations of war. There is enough already, as it appears to me, both of difficulty to impede and of responsibility to daunt any administration in this country, to whom the conduct of a war is intrusted: and when that war is to be carried on against such an enemy as him with whom we have to contend at present, it is not, in my humble opinion, politic to go one step beyond what justice may prescribe

to enhance that difficulty, and press the weight of that responsibility upon the Government. Possibly I might think that even to stop something short of an extreme and rigorous account, might be the more politic alternative of the two. We have to contend against an enemy who, with whatever qualifications he may be endowed by nature, has full scope and play given to all his faculties and views, by the unlimited power, the irresponsible freedom with which he acts. He asks no consent, he renders no account, he wields at will the population and resources of a mighty empire, and its dependent states. His successes are magnified with enthusiasm, his failures silently passed over. And against this unity of counsel and this liberty of action we have to contend, under the disadvantages of a mixed and complicated government. Disadvantages in this respect they are, though happily and gloriously redeemed and compensated by the great and manifold blessings of a constitution unequalled by any other system of human policy in the history of the world! Secrecy of design, celerity of execution, a boldness of adventure arising from fearlessness of responsibility for ill success, are the qualities the most useful for the vigorous prosecution of military operations. They are advantages which our despotic adversary enjoys in the most eminent degree. They are those which a free government necessarily wants. I doubt whether it be politic to aggravate the inequality of such a contest, by a severity of scrutiny, and a hardness of animadversion upon failure, which, by making responsibility too heavy to be borne, has a tendency to make all enterprise too hazardous to be attempted. Neither again, while I admit and lament the failure of this Expedition, can I agree with those who consider the disappointment of a great object of national policy as synonymous with national disgrace and as pregnant with national ruin.

Disgrace happily there has been none. Our arms are not only untarnished in this enterprise, but have been crowned with signal success. It is not by military defeat that we have incurred political disappointment.

And as to national ruin, or any real danger, external or internal, to the state, from the failure of this undertaking, and from the judgment of acquittal which it is anticipated the House may pronounce upon the authors of it, I confess they appear to me to be visionary apprehensions.

That the inquiry which has taken place into this subject was proper and necessary, that it was due to the magnitude of the case and to the feelings of the country, I admit as willingly as any man—I think it will be generally agreed that the inquiry so instituted has been conducted throughout with as much industry and impartiality as temper and moderation.

I hope it will be felt that those who were implicated in it have

not shrunk from the investigation, but have courted it with all becoming deference, and now await the result with all humility, but with all confidence in its justice.

When that result shall be pronounced, I trust that it will meet the dispassionate acquiesence and approbation of the country. Nor do I fear any shock from the failure of the Expedition to the Scheldt (disastrous and afflicting as it has been,) or from the conduct of the House, upon it, either to the substantial and magnificent fabric of the British Constitution, or to the sound and solid foundation of British greatness and prosperity. And so, Sir, upon every ground of feeling, reason, and principle, I expect, from the justice of the House, a vote in opposition to the resolutions of the noble lord.

The debate was again adjourned to the following day, (Friday) and after a protracted discussion, the House divided at *seven* o'clock on the morning of Saturday:—

For Lord Porchester's Resolutions - -	227
Against them - - - - - -	275
Majority for Ministers - -	48

Mr. Canning's amendment was carried by a majority of 51, and a resolution (proposed by General Crawford,) was also carried by a majority of 23, declaratory of the approbation of the House in the retention of Walcheren, and consequently approving the conduct of Ministers.

VOTE OF CREDIT BILL.

JUNE 15th, 1810.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER moved the order of the day for the third reading of the Vote of Credit Bill. The amount of the vote of credit was £3,000,000. On the question being put—

MR. WHITBREAD took an extensive review of our internal and foreign relations, and dissented from so large a vote of credit, at the same time that he declined dividing the House upon the question. The principal points in his speech are brought so clearly into view in the following very eloquent speech of Mr. Canning, as to supersede the necessity of introducing here a summary of his arguments. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Canning rose at the same time. The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave way.

MR. CANNING then spoke to the following effect:—I should hesitate, Sir, to avail myself of the courtesy of my right honourable friend, especially as there are some topics in the speech of the honourable gentleman (Mr. Whitbread,) to which a person in my right honourable friend's situation, as one of His Majesty's Ministers, can alone be competent to afford a satisfactory answer, were it not that the honourable gentleman has done me the honour to address himself, in many parts of his speech, personally to me, and in a manner which naturally makes me anxious to reply to him. I trust, therefore, that I shall meet the indulgence of the House, while I state distinctly, but as shortly as I can, the reasons which induce me to give my most cordial assent to the measure which the honourable gentleman opposes.

As to the grounds which the honourable gentleman has laid for this opposition in the character which he ascribes to the present administration, and the distrust which he professes to feel in them, it is not my intention to follow the honourable gentleman through that part of his speech. I leave these topics to those who may hereafter take part in the debate. It is sufficient for me to say, that whatever might be my general opinion of any administration, yet, if they continued in office at the end of a session of Parliament, I know nothing that would justify me in leaving them, during the recess, unarmed with the means usually placed at the disposal of all administrations, to provide for unforeseen contingencies, and to take advantage of any fortunate, though unexpected change in the situation of Europe.

A Government does exist, to which His Majesty has intrusted the administration of public affairs, and from which the confidence of Parliament has not been withdrawn. If the determination of the honourable gentleman be to withhold from this Government such

means as have never been hitherto refused to any other, far from approving of the candour which he has shown in putting off his opposition to the last stage of the bill now under discussion, I should have thought that he had acted more consistently with that determination on his part, if he had made some distinct motion for placing the administration of affairs in other hands. To tie up the hands of those who are still left in the conduct of the Government, appears to me to be neither a wise mode of marking distrust, nor a happy expedient for remedying imbecility.

If, then, the present Government be entitled to the usual confidence given to every administration, by a vote of credit at the close of the session, there remains only the question as to the amount of that vote—a question of degree, which would equally apply to any government, even to one in which the honourable gentleman could place the most unlimited confidence. That a vote to some amount ought to be granted, is a proposition which, I apprehend, will not be denied, if the functions of the Government are to be discharged at all, and the affairs of the nation to be at all administered. But the amount of such a vote is undoubtedly matter fit for discussion, and is to be decided by the view which the House may take of actual and probable circumstances in the situation of the country.

The view which the honourable gentleman would induce the House to take of those circumstances is such as would justify, in his mind, the withholding of any vote of credit, or, at least, of the vote proposed; though he has not stated exactly in what degree he would desire that vote to be diminished. He foresees no use, at least no advantageous use, that can be made of it. To whatever points he directs his view, all prospect of good seems closed upon him; he looks for nothing from continued exertion but renewed disappointment, and ultimate despair.

The honourable gentleman, I perceive, (and not without some degree of surprise) has not concluded his speech this night in the same manner as his former annual exhibitions at the close of the session, by a declaration of the necessity of peace, and an avowal of his conviction that the attainment of peace is practicable. If to terminate a contest, into which this country has been forced, and in which it is compelled to continue by the violence and injustice of the enemy, the honourable gentleman could have contended that a safe and honourable peace might be obtained, and had recommended the immediate opening of negotiations for the purpose of obtaining it; however I might be disposed to disagree with the honourable gentleman in that opinion, I should yet be compelled to admit that he had laid some parliamentary ground for the course which he is taking. He might argue, that, if a secure and honourable peace, the only legitimate end of all war,

could be procured, this House ought not to grant to the Government the means of meeting the contingencies of unnecessarily protracted warfare. But as the honourable gentleman appears to have abandoned the opinion which he entertained respecting peace—("I have not abandoned it," said Mr. Whitbread across the table, "I omitted to state it")—well then, the honourable member has not abandoned his opinion, but he has omitted to state it: if the omission was voluntary, that honourable gentleman's sentiments have clearly undergone a considerable change; if inadvertent, it at least shows that he does not feel quite so confidently upon the subject as heretofore; for no man forgets the main article of his creed while his faith continues unshaken. In either case, therefore, it is obvious that, according to the honourable gentleman's own present views we are to look to, and ought to provide for, a state of indefinite, not to say interminable war.

The observations made by the honourable gentleman respecting the rapid and unexpected changes which have of late years taken place in Europe, appear to me to suggest a reply to much of his general reasoning; because the more frequent these sudden changes, the greater is the chance that some one may be favourable; and the more necessary is it for this House to furnish to the Government the means of taking advantage of such a change. Let the honourable gentleman retrace the awful and extraordinary events of the last year, and then say that it appears even to him prudent to shut our eyes to the variations of the still shifting scene, and wantonly to put it out of our power to profit of any possible opening, not to say of any probable contingency, in our favour? The honourable gentleman admits that he felt sanguinely in the cause of Spain in the outset; but had he anticipated that glorious struggle? Did he foresee or foretell that sudden ebullition of the heroic spirit of Spain, that simultaneous and universal effort against the formidable French force, which, at the time, occupied every advantageous position in that country? The honourable gentleman augured unfavourably, and expected little, from the result of the war in which Austria embarked last year. He told us so (to do him justice) at the moment when that war broke out. But while he indulged these forebodings, had he any notion that, within the space of one month from the date of his prophecy, such a turn of affairs would have arrived as not only arrested the victorious career of the enemy, but rendered the issue of the campaign doubtful, and, by poising equally for one critical month the chances of the war, opened to the nations of Europe a cheering, though alas! a short lived prospect of deliverance? Was either of these chances foreseen? Was either of them not worth seizing as it arose? Argue then from the past to the future, and let the honourable gentleman say whether, in the unsettled and anomalous situation of the con-

tinent, it is not now equally impossible to foresee what events may burst upon us, in the course of a few months, with as little previous notice as those to which I have referred?

But although events are not exhausted, the honourable gentleman's hopes are so. Is Parliament then not to make provision for any possible case but such a one as may have in it demonstrable certainty of success? Or is there in the present state of the Spanish cause, to which the honourable gentleman's expressions of despondency particularly apply, such utter hopelessness, such irrecoverable exhaustion and decay, that nothing can henceforth be rationally attempted on its behalf; and that on that ground alone, therefore, to prevent a wasteful application of the resources of this country, to an absurd and unattainable object, Government ought to be left without any discretionary power of applying them?

If the honourable gentleman is resolved to despair of Spain, I cannot hinder him. But I think I can prove to him that he has no right to despair, on the same principles on which he has despaired so often during the last fourteen years, (and so often, I am grieved to add, has been justified by the event) respecting the other states of Europe.

What has been the nature of those former contests—and what the character of the states which have been successively subdued by France? What that of France as compared with them? I speak, Sir, of the earlier stages of the French Revolution, and refer to the language then held by the honourable gentleman and his friends. France was then a nascent Republic—the neighbouring nations were governed by old and feeble despotisms—military despotisms, it is true, but feeble from the inherent vices of their constitution. In France, a liberal and enlightened philosophy had brought forth a spirit of revolutionary freedom—had reared this new and formidable birth to a sudden maturity of strength and vigour—had

> "Torn from his tender limbs the bands away,
> And bade the infant giant run and play."

He did so, and the effete and tottering monarchies of the continent, military despotisms though they were, fell before the first touch of this regenerating conqueror.

But now the spirit, at least, if not the strength, has changed sides. France—as if, according to the doctrines of barbarian superstition, the soul of the slain had transmigrated into the slayer—France is herself become a military despotism. She is opposed in that character to the new-born independence of Spain; and, if victory had been faithful to the precepts of the honourable gentleman and his friends, victory ought no longer to declare in favour

of arms which are no longer wielded in the cause of freedom, but in that of tyranny and oppression.

Victory, indeed, the Spaniards have not to boast. The military power of France has unfortunately outlived the causes which produced it; and in spite of theory, flourishes not only unsupported by freedom, but opposed to it. But yet the theory is not wholly shamed. And, if France has not at once lost her good fortune because she is enslaved, there is yet sufficient distinction between the degrees of resistance opposed to her by Spain and that of any other country, to justify the generous belief, that a truly national spirit is not to be subdued.

In other instances, when once the French armies had overcome the regular and disciplined armies of the continent, the conquered Power fell without further effort, and submitted to the will of the conqueror. But is that the case in Spain? Has the enemy, with all his military superiority, and with all the advantage of having taken the Spaniards unprepared—of having occupied in peace the strong holds, which he afterwards turned to the purposes of war—has he yet succeeded in establishing his will as the law of Spain? Whatever faults the honourable gentleman may find with the Spaniards, I am sure he cannot accuse them of tame submission; or of a want of persevering exertions in the glorious contest, into which they have been driven and betrayed. We have seen their armies beaten down, their towns taken and razed; yet have not those calamities broken their spirits. From the ashes of their slaughtered countrymen, and from the smoking ruins of their cities and their hamlets, has burst forth a renovated flame, kindling anew that ardour and enthusiasm, which misfortune may for a time smother and overwhelm, but has not power to extinguish. A people so animated and so resolute may be exterminated, but they cannot be subdued; from each disaster that befalls them they derive new energies as they do fresh motives of resistance. Immediate and decisive success was not to be expected in such a contest; but surely to have so long protracted the struggle against such an enemy, and under all the disadvantages under which they were forced into it, affords indisputable proof of qualifications in the Spaniards, which demand our admiration and esteem; of a patriotism, a steadiness, a zeal, a perseverance, of which no people in Europe had hitherto afforded an example.

The more I contemplate the circumstances of Spain, the more pleasure I derive from the consideration, that the honourable gentleman himself, with all the doubts and apprehensions which he professes to entertain, has not thought it wise to recommend any step to be taken with a view to peace. He feels, no doubt, that whilst there remains a chance of rescuing that country from the unjust and tyrannical usurpation of France, it would be as little politic

as generous to withdraw our assistance from the Peninsula. We cannot do so, unless we are prepared to leave the Peninsula to be occupied by France: and all its means, opportunities, and resources to be immediately employed against ourselves.

It is not now a question, whether Spain and Portugal shall be suffered to return to a state of neutrality, upon our consenting on one part, and of France on the other, to retire from the Peninsula as from a field of battle; it is not now to be decided whether Cadiz chall send forth her peaceful fleets of commerce, to pass, unmolested by either belligerent, over the surface of the ocean, and to waft the products of the remote dependencies of Spain, indiscriminately to both: the only question is, whether, by abandoning the footing which we possess in the Peninsula, we shall leave France at liberty to occupy the ground which we abandon, to occupy the ports and arsenals, to seize the naval resources of Spain and Portugal, and to fit out in harbours now in our possession, or under our protection, hostile fleets destined (though destined, I trust, in vain) for the object most dear to the heart, and always uppermost in the thoughts of Buonaparte, the invasion and destruction of Great Britain.

We are engaged in the struggle, therefore, inevitably; and have no alternative but to maintain it with vigour, or, declining it, to be prepared to pay, in our own perils, and in exertions for self-defence, the price of our own pusillanimity and baseness. Is this the situation of things, in which the honourable gentleman would recommend to us to pause on our policy—to cease our efforts on behalf of our allies—and to acquiesce in the injustice and usurpation of the enemy?

But again I ask, what are the grounds of the honourable gentleman's despondency? There has been (says the honourable gentleman) no order, no plan, no combination in the military efforts of Spain: and is this wonderful? The population of universal Spain, roused by a sense of insult and injury, and actuated by the powerful and heroic determination to preserve their existence as a people, rose against their invaders, in different and distant parts of the country, rose at once, but without previous concert or combination. Who could expect to find in that unparalleled national explosion, at a time, too, when the French troops were in possession of all the strong places of the kingdom, all the order, all the arrangement, all that efficient organization of means, and all that wise and judicious application of them, which are to be traced in the operations of governments of regular constitution, and established authority, representing and uniting the general will, and capable of directing the general resources of a country? But these advantages of regular governments, we know, have been frequently more than counterbalanced by their inherent disadvantages in

the tremendous conflicts which, of late years, they have had to sustain. And Spain, with the disadvantages which belong to her, has some counterbalancing advantages. If the old governments have fallen an easy prey before the energies of regenerated France, let it be recollected, as I have already had occasion to observe, that the principle from which these energies were supposed to spring, no longer exists; that the spirit of liberty in France has been extinguished; that its republican throes and convulsions have quietly subsided into a military despotism: while, on the other hand, the Spanish nation, rising in vindication of its invaded rights, and for the preservation of its integrity and independence, is animated by every sentiment, and impelled by every motive, which can ensure a determined resistance against tyranny, and a steady devotion to the country's cause. And whilst the Spaniards, true to these motives and these sentiments, continue to maintain the struggle, can we doubt that it is the first duty, as well as the clearest interest of this country, to afford them all possible assistance?

I do not mean to deny that, if the object of this war were one of Spanish interest merely, and if it were a question as to the claims of Spain upon this country for support, there may have been—there undoubtedly has been—cause of dissatisfaction, in the conduct of the Spanish Government. The papers upon the table, the correspondence of Lord Wellington particularly, show, that, in respect to the reception of the British army, there is great reason for complaint, and that, as between Spain and England, Spain has been much in the wrong. But the question now at issue is really of a higher order: it relates, indeed, in the first instance, to the immediate existence of Spain; but it ultimately and intimately involves the most essential interests of this country—and the hopes, if hope remain, of subjugated, but yet restless Europe.

Considerations of such magnitude must not give way to the resentments—even to the just resentments—of the moment; to differences between parties whose object and whose interests are so closely united. True, we have a good cause against Spain, and could make out a very sufficient ground of quarrel, if this were the time, if we had at this moment the leisure, and if we had the inclination to bring her to account. But what is our case against Spain compared with the case of Spain, and with our own case, against France? And to whose advantage would it be, but to that of France, if we were now to separate ourselves from the Spanish cause, or to waste in complaint against our ally the season of action against the enemy? Our interests demand that we should defend the Peninsula to the last extremity; even if we were released by the conduct of Spain from all other obligation; even if honour

did not bind us not to abandon her, whilst there remains a possibility of defence. Our citadel lies here, it is true, in this impregnable island: but Spain and Portugal are its outworks; and, though I can have no doubt of a glorious triumph, if we should ever have to maintain the contest in this country, I cannot consent to be a party to that chivalrous feeling, that would retreat from the outworks and admit the enemy to the gates, in order that we might have the satisfaction of defeating him under the walls of our fortress. Our obvious policy, if policy alone were in question, is to keep the war alive in every quarter where France has an enemy in arms, to prevent her from converting those enemies into conscripts for her armies, to fight our battle with combined, rather than against confederated, nations.

This, I say, would be the dictate of policy, even if we were to banish from the maxims of a great, a powerful, and a generous nation, those enlarged views of interest, and that just sense of duty, which prescribe to us to resist tyranny, even when exercised against others, and to aid the oppressed, even though our aid may be unsolicited or unacknowledged.

Let us then continue to aid Spain in spite of her weakness, in spite even of her ingratitude, if she has proved ungrateful; cautious where we have found reason to distrust her, but not eagerly seizing on every pretext, which the conduct of her Government might offer for abandoning her to her fate.

But the faults of the Spanish Government, it is contended, are attributable to us—to the administration in this country, by whom no measures had been taken to procure for Spain a better form of government. Hence the mismanagement of the internal affairs of Spain; and hence, also, the spirit of jealousy manifested by the Spaniards towards this country!

For my own part, I am desirous to claim my full share of responsibility for all the measures taken by the administration of which I was a member, with respect to Spain, and in relation to its government; a share, which must be the more ample from my having had the honour to fill that department, within the province of which it fell to advise and execute whatever measures were taken on that subject. One point the honourable gentleman will find sufficiently established by the papers laid before Parliament, that no pains were spared, even from the earliest period of our intercourse with Spain, to obtain the establishment of a supreme and central government, which should collect into one point the scattered authorities of the several provincial juntas, and control, and guide, and give consistency and energy to, the whole. This was made the condition of the continuance of our aid: it was the express and *sine qua non* condition of the employment of a British army in Spain.

It is true, we did not go so far as to prescribe the precise form of the government so to be constituted. And I am ready to explain, and to defend the grounds of our forbearance in this particular. But let the honourable gentleman look at Mr. Stuart's correspondence—the first British agent sent to Spain. He will find Mr. Stuart constantly insisting upon the establishment of one uniform government, and stating *that* as the condition of sending a British military force into Spain. At length this point was accomplished.

As to the characters of the persons composing the supreme government, for which the honourable gentleman would make me responsible, because I was, as he affirms, the warm panegyrist of the Spanish Junta, I beg leave, in the first place, to ask the honourable gentleman by what possible knowledge, by what intuition, rather, I could be prepared, not only to stipulate for the establishment of a supreme central government, but to dictate the selection of the members who were to compose it? What could I know of them but from the communications of the British agent? And when, in despatches received previously to the formation of the Junta, the names of distinguished persons in Spain, of Florida Blanca, Saavedra, and Jovellanos, were stated to be in the mouths of every body, as the fittest persons to be intrusted with the conduct of the government; and when I found by the first despatch transmitted after the establishment of the government, that these persons were actually appointed, not only members of the Junta, but to the leading situations of the executive government, could I possibly have supposed, that they were not, as they had been previously represented to me, the most proper persons in Spain, to whom that high and important trust could have been committed? or that the government, which had the sanction of their approbation, and the advantage of their assistance, was not the best, upon the whole, that could be put together under the very difficult circumstances of the country? The eulogium, therefore, which I am accused by the honourable gentleman of having pronounced upon the members of the Supreme Junta, was not, because it could not be, the result of personal knowledge on my part; nor was it so imposed by me upon the House: neither could it by any fair construction render me in any degree responsible for the consistency of their conduct with the tenor of my representations. What I said here, was, in fact, but the echo of the voice of the Spanish nation conveyed to me through the medium of official reports, and repeated by me to this House and to the world. I conceived it an act of justice to the Junta, and an act of duty to my country, whose interests were so intimately connected with the existence of an efficient government in Spain, to afford every en-

couragement in my power, to a government professing that character, and represented to me as deserving it.

If the Junta disappointed the hopes which were entertained of it—if it either wanted the energy or the authority, which it was intended to possess—undoubtedly there is much cause for regret; but there is none for blame as to the administration here, unless it can be shown, that some other form of government in Spain would have been obviously preferable, and also could have been, with equal facility, and at an equally early period, obtained. For, let it not be forgotten how precious were the moments of this glorious and unexpected opportunity!—let it not be forgotten that, while on the one hand it was necessary for the ultimate and permanent success of the Spanish cause, that the efforts of the nation should be combined and directed by one presiding authority, it was no less necessary for its immediate safety, that the enemy, once taken by surprise, should not be allowed to recover from the first shock of the insurrection! Had we then time to pick and choose, even if we had had the means of judging, and had conceived a sound and rational preference for one form of provisional government over another? Were the feelings of the country here disposed to give us time? What would my right honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan,) who has so repeatedly renewed his notice of a motion respecting the campaign in Spain, and of whose presence I should have been extremely glad on the present occasion, what would he say to the charge of the honouranle gentleman, that we had too hastily acquiesced in the form of government established by the Spaniards? he, who two years ago, when no deputation had been received in this country, except from the Asturias, one of the smallest of the Spanish provinces, and consisting of a rocky and mountainous tract, though containing a brave, a loyal, and independent population, reproached the Administration with being too tardy in adopting the Spanish cause, too timid in hesitating to give it at once every possible assistance and support? I should wish to know whether my right honourable friend, who then reproached us for having paused, before we determined to act, on the solicitation of a single province, would now condemn us for having supported the Spanish people with all the means of this country, after deputations had been received from the north, and from the south, and when we had a certainty of the whole nation having determined to rise as one man against their unprincipled oppressors? Would he, who thought us wanting to the interests of this country and of the world, because we did not send fleets and armies to the port of Gijon, when that port alone (for aught we knew,) was open to us throughout the whole coasts of the Peninsula; who stimulated us to action, when

a single principality had taken up arms against the French, and therewith, for aught that we could know, against the rest of Spain also; when, what turned out undoubtedly to be a faithful specimen of a general national effort, might have been, for aught that we could know, the insulated and unsupported burst of mere provincial patriotism? Would he, I say, or any rational man, have desired that when not Asturias, but all Spain had declared itself; when what might have been a partial, proved to be the universal sentiment of the nation; when the will of the whole country was expressed beyond the possibility of misapprehension, would any man have thought that it was then our duty to boggle about the precise shape and denomination of the presiding government, by which the collective will was to be provisionally represented and embodied?

In a crisis of such extraordinary novelty, and such transcendent importance; when interests so mighty were committed to the issue of the struggle; and where that issue, after all that could be done, was necessarily so hazardous and uncertain; it was impossible to take any step, or to offer any counsel, which must not at the time, be felt and acknowledged to be of doubtful and questionable policy; and to which it was not foreseen, that in the event of a disastrous result, that disaster would be, however unjustly, ascribed! But in this difficulty of choice, were we to do nothing, were we to counsel nothing, till the use of counsel and the period of action were past? Or were we at some risk, but with a determined purpose, conscious of a just end, though necessarily less confident in our means, to take the course which appeared upon the whole liable to the fewest objections?

Gentlemen talk very glibly now of what might have been, and what ought to have been, our mode of proceeding. Some would have done nothing, the safest opinion of all: but they must have found another Ministry to act upon their opinion, and another people, than such a one as the people of England were in June 1808, to countenance and support them in doing so.

Some think, that we ought to have insisted upon the immediate assembling of the Cortes; some, that we ought not to have acknowledged Ferdinand at all; others again, that we ought not to have stipulated for (in truth, we did not stipulate, they mean that we ought directly to have discountenanced) the monarchical constitution in Spain. A word upon each of these suggestions.

And first, as to our acknowledgment of Ferdinand VII., or, as it is sometimes stated, our imposition of him upon the Spanish people. On the one hand, it is said, that by acknowledging Ferdinand VII. as King of Spain, in exclusion of his father, we thereby gave a sanction to the principle and the practice of the revolutionary deposition of sovereigns; whilst on the other hand, we

are accused of making the preservation of monarchy in Spain the peremptory condition of our assistance. Nothing, however, could be more unfounded than either and both of these charges. Perhaps, in any other kingdom of Europe, we should have been slow to recognize the accession of the son before the demise of the father. But in Spain, the elevation of the son by the voluntary resignation of the father is familiar to the people by the recorded transactions of some of the brightest periods of their history. There was therefore no ground for jealousy at such an event, unless there had been good cause for suspicion respecting the means by which it had been accomplished. The resignation of Charles V., their greatest monarch, and of Philip V., the founder of the Bourbon Dynasty in Spain, who subsequently resumed the reins of government on the death of his son, to whom he had transferred them, must be in the recollection of every gentleman who hears me: and with these precedents before us, and whilst there existed no ground whatever for suspicion, the Government of this country was bound to consider the resignation of Charles as voluntary, and the accession of Ferdinand as legitimate, according to the usage of the Spanish monarchy. As to the charge of imposing Ferdinand, and in his person monarchy, on Spain; why, Sir, the name of Ferdinand resounded from every corner of the kingdom; it became the watch-word of Spanish patriotism; the pledge of popular enthusiasm; the bond and cement of national union; the charm, before which all separate interests, all discordant passions and prejudices faded away. It was no suggestion, no fancy of ours; we found this symbol of Spanish loyalty interwoven with every part of the Spanish cause. It was the burden of every oral, and the stamp and sanction of every written communication, which, in my official character, it was my duty and my happiness to receive from the Spanish agents or ministers. It was not left to our option, whether Spain should be a monarchy under Ferdinand VII. If we had denied Ferdinand they would have disclaimed us; if we had stipulated against monarchy we should have been repudiated by Spain.

I say not this as a matter of defence; I state the plain truth. Upon this point we have no responsibility, because we had nothing to decide. Upon every principle by which our conduct could be guided, whether drawn from legal precedent, or from the unequivocal demonstrations of national feeling, we could look upon Ferdinand VII. in no other light, than as being at once the lawful Monarch of Spain, by the established constitution of the kingdom, and the Sovereign of the nation's affections, the King of the people's choice.

But then we should have insisted on the assembling of the Cortes, the ancient, legal, recognized estates of the realm—whereas

we acknowledged the weak and incapable authority of the Supreme Junta. First, as I have before argued, what right had we to criticise the form of that institution, or the pretensions of the members? Was it not enough that we were assured of its having the sanction and the confidence of the Spanish nation; and were we not justified thereby in recognizing the Junta as representative of the authority of the legitimate sovereign during the period of his most unfortunate absence and captivity? Let us only look back to a memorable instance in our own history, I mean the glorious Revolution of 1688, and judge what would have been the consequence, if the proceedings of that period had been criticised with too scrupulous nicety, or required to have been conducted with all the solemnity and precision of the most minute forms and established precedents? What might have been the consequences of such a scrupulous adherence to established ceremonials, such an appeal to ancient usage, at a period, when the novelty of the circumstances and the urgency of the case called for the adoption of extraordinary measures, if William the Third had refused to take upon himself the government before the meeting of the convention, because the address to him to do so proceeded from an irregular authority—from a few members of extinct Parliaments, gathered together in haste, with the lord mayor, aldermen, and common council of the city of London; if he had declined taking any share in administering the affairs of the kingdom, or affording any assistance to the nation, until a Parliament, summoned by regular writs, and assembled with all the forms of the constitution, should have ceremoniously invested him with the powers of the executive government? The case of Spain was still more urgent, because at the very moment, when, it is said, we should have waited for all the tardy forms and all the regular process of the old constitution of Spain for the election, and assembly of the Cortes, the French troops were in possession of all the fortresses of the country. At such a moment, it was rather to be considered as miraculous, that the Spaniards should have found in each of the several provinces a spot whereon to plant the standard of resistance, than to be expected, that they should be able to conduct the election of the Cortes with all the requisite solemnities, and with all the deliberation, which would have been necessary to find out what those solemnities were. For let it not be forgotten, that these same Cortes had been long disused; that, when last assembled, they had been assembled in mere form, and to register the edicts of the crown; that the Cortes of Arragon and Castile have never been brought to act cordially together, even if brought together at all, except by compulsory means; that many of the provinces, foremost in the great struggle against France, had not the privilege of sending repre-

sentatives to the Cortes; that Asturias had never sent any, Gallicia seldom if ever—certainly not uniformly, nor of custom and right; and that to the two provinces therefore, which were the earliest in their application to us for assistance, if we had answered, "assemble the Cortes," they might have replied, "with the Cortes we have nothing to do;" that to bring into shape and into action this grand but obsolete machinery, would have required deep and laborious research into records and registers; that perhaps after all a representative might have been produced less satisfactory to the nation at large, than that which sprang from their own concurrent though irregular impulse; but that, at all events, much precious time must have been lost in the process, and that while we were discussing antiquated forms and adjusting contested elections, the enemy would have rallied from his first consternation, and effected the conquest of the country.

That the assembling of the Cortes would be a wise and salutary measure, when it could be effected peaceably and regularly, no doubt was entertained; and accordingly the Junta were advised, and had determined to make it one of their first acts. But I am not surprised, for one, that it was not earlier effected. I doubt whether a general election could be speedily accomplished here after a long disuse of Parliaments, and with an enemy occupying all the country north of Trent. And I cannot but make some allowance for the Spanish Government, when I recollect, that at almost every period since the establishment of the Junta, the French have been masters of Arragon and of the greatest part of the countries behind Ebro.

In truth, the uniform experience of all similar revolutions shows that time only and practice can safely be relied on for modeling and perfecting the form of a government, struck out at a heat, as it were, by the immediate necessity of the occasion. The natural effect of the pressure of the immediate exigency is, in all such cases, it was in this, to unite in one body the two distinct branches of the legislative and executive authority. The equally natural tendency of experience is, to show the expediency of separating these authorities as soon as proper depositories can be found or contrived for them. A Regent, or a Regency, for the one, and the Cortes for the other, formed obviously the natural division of the combined authorities of the Junta. And, even if we had had the right, and the leisure to prescribe the course which should be taken, I doubt whether it would have been wise to insist upon erecting these separate powers in the first instance; whether the Junta, or something like the Junta, was not a necessary stage, preparatory to the more regular distribution of the functions of the government. It is plain that the Regency could be claimed by no one, without something like the

form of a choice, and something, or somebody to choose it. And it may be doubted, whether, if the Cortes had been called at once, they would have been contented with their own share of authority and power; whether the Cortes assembled in the first instance and exigency would not have been, in fact, a Junta under another name. At any rate, these were questions exclusively of domestic cognizance, upon which it was neither our duty, nor our right to dictate to Spain, if we had been competent to do so. Much less should we have been justified in withholding our assistance, until this most delicate, difficult, and perplexing question should have been settled to our satisfaction, at a period so critical to the existence of Spain as a nation, that the delay of a moment might have been ruin to the cause.

Such then were the principles on which the Government, of which I was a member, acted; and such are the answers which I offer to the several clashing and contradictory charges of having been too precipitate, and of having been too dilatory; of having exacted too much, and of having exacted too little from Spain; of having dictated improperly the constitution of the government, and of having suffered the government to constitute itself.

The truth is, that we interfered to the extent, to which we had a right to interfere, and no further, when we insisted that there should be a central government formed, before a British army entered Spain.

Sir, in following the honourable gentleman next to his observations on the conduct of the war, I pass over the campaign of Sir John Moore, because it has been, heretofore, the subject of ample and detailed discussion; and because the honourable gentleman himself has very properly avoided dwelling upon it this night. I come now therefore to the operations of last summer. The honourable gentleman has condemned in strong terms the impolicy, the madness, as he calls it, of sending another army into Spain, after the dear-bought and fatal experience which we had acquired in the campaign which terminated in the battle of Corunna. But here the honourable gentleman assumes what is not the fact, in order to make his unfounded assumption the ground of a charge to which His Majesty's Government is not justly liable. The army of Lord Wellington was not sent out to penetrate into Spain; it was sent out to liberate Portugal from the yoke of the French; to provide for the security of that kingdom against any fresh attack; and, so far as could be done consistently with these objects, and so far only, upon any favourable occasion that might be presented, to co-operate with the Spanish generals and armies in the provinces of Spain, that border on the Portuguese frontier. Would the honourable gentleman then have left the British general inactive in Portugal, after having accomplished the first object

of his expedition by the expulsion of the enemy from that country? or would he have restricted him from extending the line of his operations with a view to the relief of Spain, when that could be done without abandoning or endangering the other object for which the force under him was immediately destined? Would he blame Lord Wellington for availing himself of the latitude given him by his instructions, occasionally to lengthen the chain which bound him to the frontiers of Portugal? Would he have prevented him from pursuing that course which brought on the battle, and led to the brilliant victory of Talavera; a victory which covered the British arms with unfading laurels, and crowned the gallant general and his brave troops with immortal glory? But, says the honourable gentleman, that victory was barren. Barren undoubtedly it was, if you know no fruits of victory but districts overrun, fortresses taken, extent of territory acquired; yet not barren but fruitful: not unproductive, but as advantageous as brilliant, if you take into account, that it immediately opened the gates of Cadiz, and that it will hereafter open to you the ports of Spanish America. These are advantages which far outweigh the ordinary military results of a victory. But even were the effects of all our exertions confined to the prolonging the struggle against France in European Spain, so thoroughly am I convinced of the policy of supporting that struggle to the last extremity, that were the question at this moment a new and undecided question; were our armies and our fleets hitherto not engaged, nor our faith pledged in the cause, I should be of opinion, that it would be the duty no less than it would be the interest of this country, even now to begin our efforts in aid of the Peninsula, if now, for the first time, we were called upon to begin them.

It is not, however, only with respect to Spain itself, to the formation and control of her Government, and to the conduct of the war in the Peninsula, that we are accused of great and sinful negligences and omissions, but with respect to the Spanish colonies we are said to have been criminally neglectful. We have been told to-night, in the course of a discussion upon another subject, that we should have made it a condition of our alliance with the Government of Spain, that the Spaniards should give up the slave trade in their colonies. The honourable gentleman (Mr. Brougham,) who made that observation, must be aware, that it would have been much easier to declare, than to effectuate, our wishes in such a case. I am as anxious as that honourable gentleman for the total extermination of that abominable trade, and with him I am ready to allow that we ought to make every sacrifice to principle, whenever such sacrifice may be likely to advance the principle· but I very much question, whether, by such a proposition, prematurely brought forward, we might not have thrown the

Spanish colonies into the arms of France, without at all advancing the object of humanity. England and the abolition, on one side, might possibly have had but an unfavourable competition against Buonaparte and unlimited slave trade on the other, in bidding for the affections of the colonies.

Sir, I have noticed this subject incidentally, only to show, that, in the colonial, no less than in the European part of this great political question, the course which the British Government have had to steer, has not been altogether plain sailing—has not been so little embarrassed with difficulties of different kinds, as to entitle gentlemen to turn round upon the King's Ministers and make it matter of charge against them, that they have not provided for every interest, and secured the operation of every principle, which they and we may concur in our desire to promote and to maintain. It is true, it is perfectly true, as gentlemen are fond of observing, that Spain is a country of prejudice and of bigotry: bigotry and prejudice, however, not without their use in such a contest as that in which they are engaged—prejudice which exalts the spirit of patriotism by the rooted preference for their own manners and institutions—and bigotry, which, if it is akin to intolerance on one side, is allied to perseverance on the other; which, however to be deprecated as an active principle, is of powerful operation in inspiring resistance, and sustaining courage under oppression. I am not sure that, balancing the good and evil of such qualities, I would strip the Spanish nation of them, in their present circumstances, if I could. But it is enough for my argument that I could not, if I would. And, with this conviction, nothing can be more unreasonable than to make it matter of reproach to the British Government, that they have not, at the same time that they were aiding the Spaniards in a struggle for the preservation of the mother country, been able, or attempted, to engage them to revise the whole system of their colonial polity, to adopt reformations and improvements, which, if they had been disposed to adopt them, they might have found it impossible to reconcile to the feelings of the colonies, and equally impossible to enforce against those feelings, at a time when the circumstances of the war must necessarily have loosened the ties of colonial allegiance.

Advice, however, has not been withheld, nor has the Spanish Government shown itself unwilling to listen to the advice which has been offered to them, for extending privileges to the colonies, and uniting them closer with the mother country by community of rights and of interests. To promote this union has been the object of our policy. Some, I know, are of opinion, that we ought rather to have played a separate game with the colonies. The honourable gentleman who spoke last, has alluded to the benefits, which might be derived to this country from a connexion

with Spanish America altogether distinct from Spain. I have only to observe, that in my opinion, if any advantages are to result to us from a connexion with the Spanish trans-atlantic colonies, we should rather wait for them as a reversion, as the reward of the success, or the consolation under the reverses of the European struggle, than consider them as a temptation to the premature abandonment of the mother country. With these feelings deeply impressed upon my mind, I shall never consent that the hand of Great Britain should be laid, in untimely interference, for the sake of immediate gain upon Spanish America. I shall never be one of those, who, professing the warmest wishes for the success of Spain, would aim the most deadly blow at her existence, by robbing her of those foreign dependencies, now more than ever necessary to enable her to maintain her independence, by prosecuting to a successful issue the mortal contest in which she is engaged. Still less will I consent to starve the Spanish cause, for the sake of hastening that consummation of evil, which, if it is not to be averted, may yet be delayed; and of profiting by the rich spoil, which we may gather in Spanish America, after European Spain has fallen. I cannot bring myself to contemplate the fate of Spain, as our inimitable dramatic poet describes one of his most exquisitely drawn characters, Shylock, contemplating the fate of his daughter, who had fled from him with a heap of gold and jewels—while he is lamenting her flight, and his friends undertake to console him with the hope, that after all she may be still alive, he presently undeceives them as to the real cause of his wailing. It is not his daughter, but his treasure, that is uppermost in his thoughts. "As for her," says he, "would she lay dead at my feet, with the jewels in her ear; would she were coffined at my feet, so that my ducats were in her coffin!" So it is that the honourable gentleman and others appear to think of Spain: they think of the money that she has cost us; they think of the little return in profit that she has made to us; they look to the advantages, which we may hope to inherit after her struggle is well over; and they are disposed rather to blame the obstinacy of that struggle, and to deplore the length of that agony, which keeps us out of our expected inheritance.

And yet, Sir, surely the coldest heart, the most calculating head, cannot but be warmed and exalted by such a spectacle as Spain affords to the world! There can surely be but one feeling in this House with regard to the character of the Spanish cause: no man can entertain a doubt that a contest of such a description ought to succeed: and, if in spite of all the difficulties, which the Spaniards have had to encounter (and formidable those difficulties have been,) they have contended with unbroken spirit, though with various fortunes, against the gigantic power of France, in a

manner, and for a period, to shame by the comparison the efforts of almost all the nations of the continent, I must again ask, why are we to despair? I cannot bring myself yet to despair of the ultimate success of Spain, because I would fain believe in the success of any people, that shall act upon the same principle, and persevere with the same courage, in so righteous a cause; because I would not despair of ourselves under similar circumstances.

If the enemy should pass those outworks, which the line of policy recommended by the honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. Whitbread,) would level: if ever we shall have to contend against that enemy on British ground, I trust that our resistance will be signal, and his defeat certain: but I doubt how far we can expect to exceed the example which is set to us by the Spaniards. In prowess in the field, no doubt we shall, and must exceed them, because that depends upon a variety of circumstances and advantages, which the Spanish nation did not possess; not on valour only, but on skill—on discipline in the soldier—on science and experience in the officer—and, above all, upon an efficient Government to organize the establishments, to provide for the accommodation, and to direct the movements of the various masses of individuals that compose an army. In these particulars, unquestionably we shall have greatly the advantage of the Spaniards; but in other qualities, not less essentially necessary for maintaining a defensive struggle—in firmness under defeat—in contentment under privations—in patience and long suffering, we may equal, but I doubt, if we can go beyond them.

Let any gentleman who hears me, ask his own mind, and ask impartially whether he can answer for the town or city near which he lives, that if attacked in the same way, it would rival in its defence the heroic perseverence of Saragossa or Gerona? If any man, who confides (as I trust every man does) in the ability of this country to defend itself against any force of the enemy, yet hesitates how far he can answer this question in the affirmative, that man has no right to despair of the eventual triumph of Spain.

The contest is not at an end. The French, it cannot be denied, have gained very considerable advantages, and the Spaniards have on the other hand suffered most severely. But the fortress of Cadiz, containing the principal arsenal and the principal naval means of Spain, and garrisoned in part by British troops, detains before it a large portion of the French army; no impression of a serious nature has been made upon the defences of that important place; every day brings fresh accounts of the unabated enthusiasm displayed by the population of the various provinces; the French troops are harassed in their movements, and straitened in their quarters, by the desultory activity of the Spanish peasants; their supplies cut off, and their communications intercepted: place all

these things before your eyes, and then say, if it be at such a time, and under such circumstances, that we are to withdraw ourselves from the support of Spain, and to leave the Peninsula to the mercy of its ruthless oppressors?

I have said that there is a British garrison in Cadiz. I admit to the honourable gentlemen that some jealousy has been manifested by the Spanish Government upon this subject. I must, however, in this respect, do justice to the Spanish Government. It is true, that I thought it my duty to press earnestly for the admittance of a British force into Cadiz, after the failure of the first campaign, and to make that admittance the *sine qua non* condition of ever again sending British troops into Spain. It is equally true, that the Spanish Government would not at that time consent to receive them. But it is no less true, that in such refusal, and in the explanation given of the cause of it, I did not find any just ground for supposing that it had proceeded from distrust in the British Government. A Government, depending for its existence, and certainly for its authority, wholly upon public opinion, and aware of the jealousy, (for some jealousy of us did most certainly prevail amongst the people of Spain,) with which the nation might view the introduction, at that critical period, of foreign troops into one of their most important naval stations, might feel itself obliged to decline opening the gates of Cadiz to a British corps, until an adequate and obvious necessity for that measure had arisen. But although the admittance of our troops was in the first instance refused on these grounds, I never had a doubt, but that they would be received whenever the necessity became obvious. The period of necessity has since arrived, and the event has most fully justified my expectation. Cadiz is now occupied by British conjointly with Spanish troops: the pledge of that alliance by which Spain may yet be rescued and saved. Whilst Cadiz is safe, Spain is not lost; and while all is not yet lost, all is ultimately retrievable.

The French army has achieved and may continue to achieve the conquest of province after province; but it has not been, and will not be able to maintain such conquests in a country, where the influence of the conqueror does not extend beyond the limits of his military posts! where authority is confined within the fortresses which he garrisons, or the cantonments which he occupies; where all that is behind him, and before him, and around him, is sullen discontent, and meditated vengeance—unconquerable resistance, and inextinguishable hate.

And if the Spaniards have their sufferings to endure, at what price do the French carry on this war? At a price which no former war with the other Powers of Europe has ever cost them. The honourable gentleman indeed, has lamented, that we should

be parties, as he expressed himself, to the system of warfare pur sued by the Spaniards, which he describes as transgressing the limits of legitimate hostility. I would entreat the House to contrast that sentiment with what fell from the same honourable gentleman in a former debate, when another honourable member detailed to the House the abominable atrocities committed by the French on their approach to the Isle of Leon. On that occasion the honourable gentleman affected to discredit the statement of crimes so shocking in the recital, and warmly deprecated the introduction of such horrible details into the discussions in this House, lest their circulation should have the effect of substituting wicked enormities of that description for the more humane spirit of generous warfare! Generous warfare! Good God! the generous warfare begun by Buonaparte against unoffending Spain! the generosity of him,—the outrageous violator of every sacred obligation, the bloody and unfeeling destroyer of the rights of sovereigns, and the independence of nations! Far am I, as far as any man, from justifying the commission, under any circumstances, of excesses, which deform the character, and brutalise the feelings of man. But the crime and the shame are in the original perpetrator. There are insults and injuries, which to have endured at the hand of an oppressor, degrades a man in his own esteem, and forces him to recover his level by a signal and terrible revenge. Such are the inflictions, which the French armies have poured out upon the Spaniards. If ever acts of ferocious retaliation might admit of extenuation, it is in such a cause, and upon such provocation as they have received, from an enemy unrestrained in his career of ambition and blood, by any law human or divine.

Such is, in my opinion, the justification of the Spaniards Thus they defend and avenge their invaded country—their pillaged and desolated homes—their murdered parents—their violated wives and daughters—and who shall say, that such vengeance is not justified in the eyes of God and man? Who shall pretend that the assailant of unoffending and defenceless innocence is privileged from resistance or retaliation; that the invader has a right to make his inroad when he thinks fit, to commit what excesses he pleases;—but that he is only to be met in the listed field and by regular battalions—that the cottage or the altar are to be defended or avenged only by an enrolled soldiery; that the peaceful population of a country must be passive under every species of outrage and of wrong?

That our army has had any share in committing or countenancing such excesses is not pretended, and would not admit of excuse. Our business with the enemy is in the field. But that I should, therefore, whine over his sufferings and his losses—that I should deny or disguise the satisfaction which I derive from the

consideration that every French soldier, who falls a sacrifice to Spanish vengeance, is one oppressor the less, for the rest of the nations of the world—would be a hypocrisy, which I disdain. Long may the struggle be! And be its course as deathful to the French armies as heretofore! One French army has already been worn down and destroyed in Spain: and I know no precept of humanity that forbids me to exult in the prospect of a similar fate awaiting those who are now the instruments of tyranny and violence.

War is unavoidably attended with calamities, as well as with glories. Its glories are sullied and darkened by its calamities: its calamities redeemed—or in part redeemed—by its glories. But if we accustom ourselves to look only at one side of the picture in the case of an enemy, and at the other in our own;—at all that is gloomy on one part, and all that is brilliant on the other—if we count for the enemy all that he gains, and all that we lose—but for ourselves only our positive gains, without admitting into the account the losses of the enemy: against such a mode of calculating results, no spirit can long stand unimpaired:—we go to the field already half subdued: we may entitle ourselves to commendation for the fineness of our sympathies; but we are utterly unfitted for continuing the contest.

I fear that I may have detained the House to an unpardonable length upon the subject of Spain; though I feel it even now difficult to tear myself from it. I hope, however, that my excuse for having dwelt upon it so long may be found in the share which I personally had in the counsels and measures of this Government at the commencement of the Spanish struggle, and in the desire, which I naturally feel, that these counsels and measures should be distinctly and fairly understood; but, above all, in my earnest zeal for the success of our allies, and for the continuance of our effective support of a cause involving as much our interests as our glory.

I shall now proceed to follow the honourable gentleman briefly into one or two of the other topics, to which he has alluded. As to the statements made by the honourable gentleman with respect to Sicily; to the disaffection of its inhabitants; to the probable change in the policy of the Sicilian Government, and the consequent critical situation of the British army in that island, I shall only assert, as an individual (having no official knowledge to support my assertion,) that I believe his opinions and his apprehensions to be unfounded. I do not believe that there is any correspondence open between Buonaparte and the Queen of Naples. I have not seen the letter to which the honourable gentleman refers, but from the description of it, I should doubt if it be genuine.

As to the effect of the Austrian marriage upon the politics of the court of Palermo, I cannot oblige the honourable gentleman to forego his conjecture, though I do not agree with him in it. I will only say by the way, that I am glad to miss, in the honourable gentleman's speech of to-night, the epithet of "*felix*," which he applied on a former night to this inauspicious alliance. The painter of old, when he drew the picture of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, despairing to express the workings of anguish and shame in the countenance of the father, by whom she was sacrificed, hid Agamemnon's face in his robe; so would I have the honourable gentleman deal on this occasion with the Emperor of Austria, and, at least, not insult his paternal feelings by ascribing to them the character of "felicity."

But whatever may be the soundness of the honourable gentleman's speculations in respect to the ultimate policy and conduct of the court of Sicily, I am not prepared to recommend the anticipation of treachery: I cannot agree, therefore, with the honourable gentleman to withhold the Vote of Credit, unless part of it should be expended in defeating the designs of the enemy upon Sicily, and keeping him out of possession of it too long. I am still less prepared (even if that were a cheap expedient) to seize on Sicily for ourselves.

From Sicily—declaring, that in Europe he sees nothing to require or justify so large a Vote of Credit—the honourable gentleman passes to America, and specifically objects to the Vote of Credit, on the ground, that a war with the United States is no longer probable. I hope and trust it is not. The recent proceedings of Congress have effected so much of what it was the anxious wish of the Government, of which I was a member, to attain, that I trust all our differences with America may be speedily adjusted. In truth I had never much doubt upon my mind, that America, if left to her own policy, and to the effect of those discussions which would take place in her own legislatures, general and provincial, would at no distant period arrive at that point, at which by the late act of Congress, she appears to have arrived. No man is more anxious than I am for an amicable accommodation with that Power. But I trust, at the same time, that the change in the policy of the United States has not been effected by any improper concessions on our part; a circumstance, which I can fully disclaim, during the period that I remained in office. I should rather hope, that it has been the consequence of a determined adherence to that system, which has been so often declaimed against in this House, but which has proved as clearly beneficial to the commercial interests, as it has been consistent with the political dignity of this nation.

The honourable gentleman has introduced into this part of the

discussion a reference to the instructions given to our Minister to the United States (Mr. Erskine,) upon which it was not my wish to have touched, if the honourable gentleman had not forced me to do so, because I cannot touch upon it without speaking unfavourably of the conduct of a gentleman towards whom I entertain no feeling of hostility whatever. But, as the honourable gentleman has thought proper again to advert to the subject, I am compelled, in my own defence, again to assert, as I have repeatedly before asserted, that Mr. Erskine, in the arrangement which he concluded with the American Government, did violate both the letter and the spirit of the instructions under which he acted. That he violated the letter of his instructions, is admitted by every body—by the honourable gentleman himself. Mr. Erskine was expressly directed to do certain things, which he did not do. But it was not, as the honourable gentleman insinuates, a mere formal error—a merely literal mistake. Mr. Erskine violated the spirit of his instructions, because, being authorized to concede certain points to the American Government, in consideration only of concessions to be by them reciprocally and simultaneously made, he did that absolutely, which he was instructed to do only conditionally, and thereby lowered the tone and just pretensions of his country. I am still ready, as I ever have been, to go into the full discussion of this question, whenever the honourable gentleman may think proper; but unless he should advert to it again I shall now take a final leave of it, and never again revive it.

Sir, I have now only to add, with respect to the Bill before the House, that it is not because I think that a war is to be apprehended with America, or that a question may arise as to the abandonment or seizure of the island of Sicily, that I assent to the Vote of Credit; but because I wish to enable His Majesty's Ministers to aid to the utmost extent to maintain to the last extremity the contest in Portugal and Spain, and also to take advantage of any opportunities which may arise from the annoyance of the enemy, and for which, without a Vote of Credit, they might be unprovided. For the application of the means, which this Vote entrusts to them, the Ministers are responsible. And I can assure the honourable gentleman, that, if he and his friends had now the conduct of the Government, for the same purposes, and under the like resposibility, I should not be disposed to withhold from them that degree of confidence (whatever it be) which this Vote may be construed to imply.

After some discussion, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ON THE REPORT OF THE BULLION COMMITTEE.

MAY, 8th, 1811.

Mr. Horner, as Chairman of the Bullion Committee, moved the following Resolutions:—

First.—That the only money which can be legally tendered in Great Britain, for any sum above twelve-pence in the whole, is made either of gold or silver; and that the weight, standard, and denomination, at which any such money is authorized to pass current, is fixed, under His Majesty's prerogative, according to law.

Second.—That since the forty-third year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the Indentures of His Majesty's Mint have uniformly directed that all silver used for coin should consist of eleven ounces two pennyweights of fine silver, and eighteen pennyweights of alloy in each pound troy; and that the said pound troy should be divided into sixty-two shillings, or into other coins in that proportion.

Third.—That since the fifteenth year of the reign of King Charles the Second, the Indentures of His Majesty's Mint have uniformly directed, that all gold used for coin, should consist of eleven ounces of pure gold and one ounce of alloy in each pound troy; and that the said pound troy should be divided and coined into forty-four guineas and one half guinea, or into other coins in that proportion.

Fourth.—That by a proclamation of the fourth year of the reign of King George the First, it was ordered and directed, that guineas and the several other gold coins therein named, should be current at the rates and values then set upon them; *viz.* The guinea at the rate of twenty-one shillings, and other gold coins in the same proportion: thereby establishing, that the gold and silver coins of the realm should be a legal tender in all money payments, and a standard measure for ascertaining the value of all contracts for the payment of money in the relative proportion of $15\frac{2859}{13640}$ pounds weight of sterling silver to one pound of sterling gold.

Fifth.—That by a statute of the fourteenth year of the reign of His present Majesty, subsequently revived and made perpetual by a statute of the thirty-ninth year of his reign, it is enacted, that no tender in payment of money made in the silver coin of this realm, of any sum exceeding the sum of twenty-five pounds at any one time, shall be reputed in law, or allowed to be a legal tender, within Great Britain or Ireland, for more than, according to its value by weight, after the rate of 5*s.* 2*d.* for each ounce of silver.

Sixth.—That by a proclamation of the sixteenth year of the reign of His present Majesty, confirmed by several subsequent Proclamations, it was ordered and directed, that if the weight of any guinea shall be less than five pennyweights eight grains, such guinea shall cease to be a legal tender for the payment of any money within Great Britain or Ireland; and so in the same proportion for any other gold coin.

Seventh.—That under these laws (which constitute the established policy of this realm in regard to money,) no contract or undertaking for the payment of money, stipulated to be paid in pounds sterling, or in good and lawful money of Great Britain, can be legally satisfied and discharged in gold coin, unless the coin tendered shall weigh in the proportion of $\frac{20}{21}$ parts of five pennyweights

eight grains of standard gold for each pound sterling, specified in the said contract; nor in silver coin, for a sum exceeding twenty-five pounds, unless such coin shall weigh in the proportion of $\frac{20}{62}$ of a pound troy of standard silver for each pound sterling specified in the contract.

Eighth.—That the promissory notes of the Bank of England are stipulations to pay, on demand, the sum in pounds sterling, respectively specified in each of the said notes.

Ninth.—That when it was enacted by the authority of Parliament, that the payment of the prommissory notes of the Bank of England, in cash, should for a time be suspended, it was not the intention of Parliament that any alteration whatsoever should take place in the value of such promissory notes.

Tenth.—That it appears, that the actual value of the promissory notes of the Bank of England (measuring such value by weight of standard gold and silver as aforesaid) has been, for a considerable period of time, and still is, considerably less than what is established by the laws of the realm to be the legal tender in payment of any money contract or stipulation.

Eleventh.—That the fall which has thus taken place in the value of the promissory notes of the Bank of England, and in that of the country bank paper which is exchangeable for it, has been occasioned by too abundant issue of paper currency, both by the Bank of England, and by the country banks; and that this excess has originated, from the want of that check and control on the issues of the Bank of England, which existed before the suspension of cash payments.

Twelfth.—That it appears that the exchanges with foreign parts have for a considerable period of time been unfavourable to this country, in an extraordinary degree.

Thirteenth.—That, although the adverse circumstances of our trade, together with the large amount of our military expenditure abroad, may have contributed to render our exchanges with the continent of Europe unfavourable; yet the extraordinary degree, in which the exchanges have been depressed for so long a period, has been in a great measure occasioned by the depreciation which has taken place in the relative value of the currency of this country, as compared with the money of foreign countries.

Fourteenth.—That during the continuance of the suspension of cash payments, it is the duty of the Directors of the Bank of England, to advert to the state of the Foreign Exchanges, as well as to the price of bullion, with a view to regulate the amount of their issues.

Fifteenth.—That the only certain and adequate security to be provided, against an excess of paper curreucy, and for maintaining the relative value of the circulating medium of the realm, is the legal convertibility, upon demand, of all paper currency into lawful coin of the realm.

Sixteenth.—That in order to revert gradually to this security, and to enforce meanwhile a due limitation of the paper of the Bank of England, as well as of all the other bank paper of the country, it is expedient to amend the act which suspends the cash payments of the Bank, by altering the time, till which the suspension shall continue, from six months after the ratification of a definitive treaty of peace, to that of two years from the present time.

Mr. Canning.—After the ample discussion which this question has undergone, I rise, Sir, not in the presumption that I am able to add any thing to the information which the Committee has already received from gentlemen the best qualified by their talents and their acquirements, by their professional pursuits and their official situations, to throw light upon the subject in all its princi-

ples and details; but simply for the purpose of stating the grounds of my own vote upon the several propositions which are submitted to our consideration.

In discharging this duty—a duty which I feel to be incumbent upon me as a Member of Parliament—I beg to be considered as speaking in that character only; as delivering freely and honestly, a sincere and unbiassed opinion, upon a question so important, that I did not think myself at liberty to let it pass without forming, to the best of my judgment, some opinion upon it; as neither adopting nor countenancing the prejudices of any set of men whatever; as neither the advocate nor the antagonist of the Bullion Committee; neither the advocate nor the antagonist of the Bank.

With respect to both those bodies, I firmly believe, that they have, each according to their measure, performed conscientiously a very difficult duty.

Of the Bank it is always to be remembered, that the condition in which they have found themselves has been none of their own seeking; that the original restriction, in 1797, was imposed upon them by Parliament, upon their own showing indeed of their difficulties—difficulties, however, arising out of circumstances over which the Bank had no control; and that the restriction was renewed after they had declared their readiness to resume their payments in cash. Of the necessity of the first restriction I have no doubt: of the policy of the terms upon which it was last renewed, I certainly entertain great doubts; but the error of that policy, whatever it may have been, is not justly to be visited on the Bank. Placed, as the Directors of the Bank have been by the effect of that last renewal, and by the events which have since occurred, in a situation perfectly novel; having—from the mere managers of the affairs of a great money corporation,—become, by the force of circumstances, the sole issuers and regulators of the whole currency of the country;—it is surely not to be wondered at that, in such a situation, they may have found the maxims of their original and habitual occupation either inapplicable to their new and enlarged sphere for action, or insufficient for it; and may have committed mistakes in the exercise of one of the highest prerogatives of the Sovereign, which they would easily have avoided in conducting the concerns of their constituents. If they have fallen into such errors, I am not inclined to blame them. I would correct the errors, but without imputation on the men.

On the other hand, I must as fairly confess that I think the Bullion Committee has been hardly dealt with in the course of these discussions. A stranger who had derived his only knowledge of the case from the debates of the two last nights, would almost have been led to imagine that the Bullion Committee was

some strange and self-erected power, wholly extrinsic to the constitution, and independent of the control of this House; who, without commission, and without provocation, had thought fit to intermeddle in the affairs of the Government and of the Bank, and to attempt the subversion of a system not only eminently beneficial, but confessedly without fault, without mischief, and without danger; a system with which all the world was perfectly satisfied in all its parts, until this officious Committee thought fit to disturb the general satisfaction. But what is the true history of this proceeding? A Committee was appointed last year by the House of Commons to inquire into the causes of the high price of gold bullion, and into the state of the foreign exchanges and of the currency of the country. They took these subjects into their consideration: they brought to that consideration talents and information such as have rarely been collected together in any one Committee of this House; and they bestowed upon it (that praise no man denies to the Committee) unremitted diligence and labour. The result of their investigations they submitted to the House, according to its injunction and to their duty. And because that result was to some persons unexpected, and is to others unpalatable, are we therefore justified in turning round upon the Committee of our own appointment, and rebuking them for the execution of the task which we had imposed upon them?—What would we have had them do? refuse the task allotted to them by the House?—or decline to render an account of the inquiries which we had ordered them to institute?—Or would we have had them fashion their Report, in spite of their own conviction, to the creed or the convenience of any persons or party, and recommend only whatever might best flatter our prejudices and justify our inaction?

If such were our wish, why was the Committee named? Why was not the proposal for its appointment rejected, or at least opposed? I was in the House on the day when it was proposed; and, so far as I recollect, not a single voice was raised against it. If the subject did not require investigation, it was idle, and not only idle, but mischievous, to set the investigation on foot. If it was apprehended that the possible or probable result might be prejudicial to the interests of the country, then was the time to stop. It would then have been perfectly easy to do so. A single word, the intimation of a doubt from any quarter of the House, might, at that moment, have checked the proceeding. But to institute an inquiry upon a matter of great difficulty, with a pre-determination to come to but one conclusion, is neither very creditable to those who appoint, nor very just to those who are appointed the conductors of it.

Although I do not go with the Committee (as I shall presently

have occasion to explain) to the length of their practical conclusion; and although the details of this intricate and perplexing subject are as little agreeable to my taste, or habits, as to those of any person in the House;—although I would as gladly as any body have turned aside from the task of examining the reasonings and deductions of the report; yet I cannot in justice throw upon the members of the Committee the blame of those inconveniences which are inherent in the nature of the subject referred to their inquiry. However much I may dislike the unpleasant truths which are told in the Report, I do not think myself warranted to transfer that dislike to those whose duty it has been to tell them.

The Committee, then, I say, have only done their duty. Nor can we avoid the performance of the duty which now devolves upon ourselves. Distasteful as the matter may be, it is before us, and we must dispose of it.

I do not share in the apprehensions of those persons who predict danger and mischief from this discussion. I have seldom known an instance in which more good than evil has not arisen out of parliamentary discussion of subjects, however delicate, upon which the public mind had been previously agitated and divided.

As little do I agree with those who think that the discussion must necessarily be barren and useless. Even if it should not terminate (as probably it may not) in the adoption of the practical remedy suggested by the Committee, or in the suggestion of any other in its room, I do not think that the time and the trouble of the House will therefore have been entirely thrown away. The discussion which has already taken place out of doors, renders some decision of this House necessary. In the course of that discussion, the fundamental principles of our whole money system have been disputed and denied;—all that had long been considered as fixed and determinate in them has been shaken, or at least attempted to be shaken:—a mischief more serious than even that which the Committee has proposed to cure; and one to which a cure may be (and ought to be) administered by the Resolutions of this House, whatever may become of the practical recommendation of the Committee.

Nor is it only out of doors that these fundamental principles have been questioned. The right honourable gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Vansittart)—a gentleman for whom personally I entertain the sincerest respect as well as regard, and whose just reputation for knowledge upon these subjects entitles his opinions upon them to very peculiar attention—has countenanced, by himself adopting it, a mode of reasoning which has been much employed in the written controversy, but which I had hoped no man in this House, and least of all any man of such extensive infor-

mation and such high authority, would have been found to endure, much less to sanction. He has rejected altogether the established doctrine of a fixed standard of the currency of the realm; and, instead of trying the disputed value of our present circulating medium, by reference to that which has always hitherto been taken as the settled measure in all such inquiries, he has thought himself at liberty to bend and accommodate the fundamental principles of our money system to the state of our currency, such as he happens to find it.

Others who have supported the right honourable gentleman's propositions have carried this license still farther. They have not only considered the principles of all our coinage laws, so far as they relate to the value of our money, as inapplicable to the present state of our currency, but as altogether obsolete. They appear to look upon the law by which Bank paper is made inconvertible into cash, not as an occasional law growing out of a temporary necessity, and determinable with that necessity, but as a wise and provident contrivance to substitute absolutely and indefinitely for the ancient coin of the kingdom, a currency better adapted in their opinion to the present state of the world and to the peculiar exigencies of this country. The suspension of the cash payments of the Bank had hitherto always been treated as a necessary evil; as an expedient upon which we were forced with reluctance, and of which we had the decency at least to pretend to desire and to anticipate the discontinuance: but, in the view of the subject which has been taken by these supporters of the right honourable gentleman's propositions, the Bank restriction is now become the staple resource in our pecuniary system; it is to be avowed as the standing policy of the State; and to be prized as an invention long desired, and now happily found, for supplying boundless exertion with inexhaustible and unexhausting finance.

The decision of the House, therefore, important as it would undoubtedly be, if it should either confirm the recommendation of the Bullion Committee, or substitute in its stead some other practical measure for the termination of the Bank restriction, will yet be not less (I had almost said will be more) important, if, even rejecting that recommendation, and confirming the continuance of the restriction, it shall nevertheless at the same time recognize the general principles which that Committee have laid down; and shall separate and distinguish the measure of the restriction itself, from the false and dangerous arguments by which it has been not only justified as an expedient, but recommended as a system.

To record principles which are true, and which have been called in question, is not of itself an idle nor an unparliamentary

practice: and it is no paradox to say, that to record principles is never so much a matter of duty as when some over-ruling necessity obliges us to a practical departure from them. It then becomes incumbent upon us to prove that we are acting indeed from necessity, not from indifference or change of system; to take care that our deviation shall not be made a precedent to be resorted to hereafter on occasions of less urgency; to provide that the exception shall not be erected into the rule.

This then is the answer which I give to those who represent the concluding Resolution of the honourable and learned Chairman (Mr. Horner) of the Bullion Committee, as the only essential object of our deliberations; and who would persuade us that, if we are not prepared to decide with him upon the opening of the Bank, we have nothing to do with all his preliminary Resolutions but to get rid of them as quickly as possible. I, for one, am not prepared to vote with him for the opening of the Bank; I shall vote against the honourable gentleman's concluding Resolution: but I think that, according to all sound and practical views, the question, important as it is, whether the Bank shall be opened or shut, sinks into insignificance in comparison with that which has been raised with respect to the principles upon which the whole money system, and consequently the whole credit of the country, essentially depends.

Give me the affirmation by Parliament of the first ten Resolutions of the honourable and learned gentleman—those Resolutions which state (and state correctly) the principles of that money system, from which we have been compelled to depart, and the effects of our departure from them—and I would not unwillingly consent to a compromise with the right honourable gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Vansittart.) I would, on that condition, adopt the two last of his propositions; adopt them in substance at least,—so far as to agree with him that this is not the moment at which our cash payments can be resumed, or at which the precise period of their resumption can be determined. The right honourable gentleman ought surely to be satisfied with this compromise. His conclusion would, to my mind, even flow more logically from the premises laid down in the Resolutions of the honourable and learned gentleman. I certainly cannot subscribe to it as flowing from his own. I am ready to do as he would have me do, if he will allow me to record the reasons of my concurrence: but it is a concurrence which, I feel, requires explanation and apology; it is a concurrence which, if I do not altogether withhold it, I certainly cannot give, except on the condition that I shall be at liberty to prove at the same time, that it is given not in consequence of the right honourable gentleman's reasons, but in spite of them. That our currency is in such a state that

the Bank cannot safely open, I agree; but it is hard to insist that I should find every thing right in that state of things which forces me to come to such an agreement.

My right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Perceval,) has, with great dexterity, as well as eloquence, endeavoured to divert our attention from the specific object of this night's deliberation, by directing it to those circumstances in the present situation of affairs at home and abroad, upon which there is scarcely any difference of feeling or opinion. The inordinate ambition and gigantic power of the enemy, the warfare directed by him against our trade and our manufactures; these are topics upon which my right honourable friend has expatiated with a force of statement, and a warmth of language, which do full justice to his argument; and has appealed to us, whether we will wantonly aggravate difficulties already so complicated and so overwhelming? He has availed himself with equal skill of another argument, which he well knows would operate upon my mind with no less force than upon his own, and which, if I could indeed be convinced that it was legitimately applied to the question in the way in which he applies it, would lead me, I will not say to concur in his conclusions, but at least to hesitate in rejecting them. He refers to the recent triumphs of our arms; he places before our eyes the prospect of successes still more splendid; he describes the safety of this country as involved in the war in the Peninsula; and he asks us, how that war is to be maintained? how we are to find the means of keeping on foot that army which has already performed such brilliant achievements, and of seconding the exertions of the Commander who has carried the British name to the highest point of military glory? Shall such a contest—a contest for all that is interesting to this country and to Europe, be abandoned? Shall Lord Wellington be checked in his career? Shall Portugal have been liberated only to be again given up to slavery? Shall the hopes of Spain have been revived only to be finally dashed and extinguished? God forbid! My right honourable friend well knows that, in calling upon me duly to weigh these considerations, he interposes the surest impediment to any rash decision on my part, by which interests so dear to this country could by possibility be brought into hazard. He knows that I must put a violence upon myself before I can coolly calculate the real bearing of topics which come home so forcibly to my feelings; before I can dissipate the illusion which they throw round the matter in debate, and examine dispassionately the degree in which they really apply to it.

But I will not pay my right honourable friend so ill a compliment as to suppose that he is not himself perfectly aware, that in thus shaping his argument, he has, in fact, either assumed or

omitted the question that is in dispute.—The question is not—whether we shall continue the war in the Peninsula with all our heart, and with all our might?—Who doubts,—who dissuades that determination? That point might have been assumed without hazard of contradiction. But my right honourable friend argues that point as if it were disputed:—and assumes without argument that which it was necessary for him to prove;—namely, that to the continuance of the war, and of our successes in the Peninsula, it is essential that the present system of our currency should remain unchanged. Just as fairly might I assume without argument, that a change in our currency is necessary to this same purpose of continuing the war;—and then retort upon my right honourable friend his own expostulations against fettering the energies, and cramping the exertions of the country. In either case the point which alone is in dispute, remains to be decided.

Why is the continuance of the present system of currency essential to the continuance of the war? Is it because that currency is in a sound state?—or that, being depreciated, a depreciated currency is the best instrument of foreign exertion? Which of these two propositions is it that my right honourable friend intends to maintain? I ask this question with the more earnestness, because throughout the whole of his speech, long, able, and eloquent as it was, I watched in vain for any sentence which distinctly expressed an opinion upon either of them. I did not hear him affirm that the currency was sound; I did not hear him admit that it was depreciated; he always stopped short of this affirmation and of this admission; and if any distinct proposition could be collected and embodied out of those topics with which he endeavoured to cover these simple questions, it seemed at most to amount to nothing more than this—that it was best to go on as we are, avoiding all inquiry on the subject.

To that proposition (if that be the proposition which my right honourable friend means to maintain)—I answer, that it comes too late. The period for acting upon that policy passed by when the House consented to the appointment of the Bullion Committee.

To the question, how shall our military exertions be best supported? I reply—By supporting the credit of the country; by ascertaining the soundness of our currency, if it be sound; by ascertaining the degree of its defect, if it be defective; with a view in the one case to apply a remedy so far as a remedy may be applicable; and in the other to fix and settle the public opinion, which of itself is no small ingredient in the financial resources of a state.

I have no right, and certainly full as little desire, to impute to

my right honourable friend that he is avowedly the advocate of a depreciated currency: but this debate would end most unsatisfactorily for the public, as well as for the House, if it were to end without its being clearly understood on what precise grounds my right honourable friend thinks the present state of our currency such as it ought to be.—First, whether he thinks it is not depreciated; secondly, whether, admitting it to be depreciated, he considers the depreciation as incurable, and therefore only would take no step to cure it; or, thirdly, whether he concurs with those who see in that depreciation a fertile source of wealth and blessings to the country:—these, after all, are the points in dispute,—and these points my right honourable friend appears to me to have studiously avoided.

Even in that part of his speech in which he approached the nearest to the question of depreciation, my right honourable friend so managed the course of his argument as to make it impossible that he should arrive at any definite conclusion.—With a semblance of candour which seemed as if he had adopted an inverted mode of reasoning as the best calculated in this particular instance for discovering the truth, he begins with examining the question of Excess—"Prove," says my right honourable friend, "that there exists an excess, and then I will be ready to go with you into an inquiry whether that excess has produced depreciation."—Now, it cannot be necessary to remind my right honourable friend, that to reason from effect to cause has always been the course of sound philosophy.—The Committee affirms the existence of depreciation; and, as that depreciation cannot arise from any doubt of the solidity of the Bank—of its ability to meet its engagements, they attribute it (unanswerably, as appears to me) to excessive issue. "Prove this excessive issue," says my right honourable friend. But how is positive excess (if I may use that expression) susceptible of proof? How is it possible to prove, that too many bank notes are issued, so long as there is a single applicant willing to receive them? The comparison of the amount of bank notes in circulation with that of the aggregate pecuniary transactions of the community, would of itself afford no certain criterion of the sufficiency or excess of that circulation —even if it were possible to state that comparison with any thing like accuracy. But who shall pretend to state the actual aggregate amount of all the pecuniary transactions of the community? So far as a pretty general increase of prices is any symptom of excessive currency, that symptom undeniably exists. But I acknowledge it to be no more than a symptom. I admit further, that the mere amount of bank paper in circulation, however large it may be, does not of itself necessarily constitute excess. I admit that there is not excess, unless there be depreciation. Whether

depreciation does exist or not, is, therefore, the question which must necessarily have the precedency in our examination.

The right honourable gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Vansittart,) when he opened his counter-propositions to the House, put to my right honourable friend near me (Mr. Huskisson,) the question—"What do you mean by depreciation?" He put this question, rather irregularly, in the middle of his own speech; and seemed to think it matter of triumph that he did not receive, at that moment, an answer in a single word. An answer he has, however, since received, and I should imagine (in one sense at least) to his complete satisfaction. "By depreciation, do you mean discredit?" said the right honourable gentleman. If by "discredit," the right honourable gentleman means a doubt of the solidity of the Bank, a doubt whether the outstanding demands upon the Bank do not exceed the amount of their assets; unquestionably no such doubt exists, and consequently "discredit" enters for nothing into the "depreciation" of Bank of England paper.

But when the right honourable gentleman has obtained this concession, it appears to me that he has obtained nothing at all towards overthrowing the arguments of his antagonist, or towards establishing his own. For the same concession would be equally true with respect to a paper currency which should represent to its full amount the whole moveable and immoveable property of the country. There would be assets in existence adequate to the redemption of that paper. Of a paper issued to such an amount, although resting on such unquestionable security, it is probable that my right honourable friend (Mr. Perceval,) who spoke last, would not dispute the excess; yet how could that excess be indicated except by depreciation? That depreciation, in the case which I have supposed, the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Vansittart) could not deny; but he must acknowledge that it would arise from other causes than discredit. The argument, therefore, or rather the suggestion (for it has not been distinctly argued,) that there can be no depreciation unless arising from, or accompanied with, discredit; and the inference which is covertly insinuated, that they who affirm bank notes to be depreciated, intend to attack the credit of the Bank, entirely fall to the ground.

The alleged depreciation of bank notes consists in this—that, whereas they did in fact represent heretofore the real as well as the nominal value of the coin which constitutes our lawful money, they now represent its nominal value only. This is the answer to the question of the right honourable gentleman.

In return, my honourable friend proposed a question to the right honourable gentleman, to which I think he has not yet given any answer. "If you affirm," said my honourable friend,

"what I deny, the equivalency of bank notes to money, tell me, what is the common standard by which you measure that equivalency?" This question the right honourable gentleman has altogether evaded. He has given no answer to it.—Does he mean to acquiesce in those which have been given for him by others who have taken the same side with him in this debate, or by some fanciful writers, who, under the guise and garb of practical men, have indulged themselves in the wildest theories and imaginations, upon this subject of the standard?

"The coin," says a noble Lord, "is, or was, the standard of the paper." But this description does not advance us a single step? for the question still remains, "What is the standard of the coin? What is that common measure to which coin and paper may be equally referred for the purpose of ascertaining their agreement or disagreement, with it, and with each other?"

The noble Lord has indeed devised a singular definition of this measure, in which I should be exceedingly curious to know whether the right honourable gentleman concurs. He defines it to be "a sense of value in reference to currency as compared with commodities."—I hope I do not misquote him. To the best of my recollection, these were the very words—"A sense of value!" But whose sense? with whom is it to originate? and how is it to be communicated to others? Who is to promulgate, who is to acknowledge, or who is to enforce it? How is it to be defined? and how is it to be regulated? What ingenuity shall calculate, or what authority control its fluctuation?—Is the "sense" of to-day the same as that of yesterday, and will it be unchanged to-morrow? It does fill me with astonishment that any man, of an accurate and reasoning mind, should not perceive that this wild and dangerous principle, (if principle it can be called) would throw loose all the transactions of private life, all contracts and pecuniary bargains, by leaving them to be measured from day to day, and from hour to hour, by no other rule than that of the fancies and interests of each individual conflicting with the fancies and interests of his neighbour.

A "sense of value!" It is not many days since an experiment was tried upon this "sense," which may serve to illustrate the probable course of its operations, if left exclusively to its own guidance. The artizan who on the Thursday night had exchanged a one-pound note with his neighbour for four dollars, found in the morning that he had, insensibly to himself, become two shillings richer by the exchange. I am not, here, about to inquire whether the Bank were right or wrong in raising the denomination of the dollar; I refer to this operation merely as an illustration of the argument: and I ask, Where would be the end of such operations if every individual's "sense of value" were to

be his only guide in his dealings with his neighbours? In this instance the authority of the Bank sanctioned and limited the degree of the rise in the current value of the dollar, or, to put the same thing in other words, the degree of the loss which the bank note should sustain in exchange against the dollar. But, is it to be imagined that,—if they had merely sanctioned the principle of such alteration, without limiting the degree,—two shillings in the pound, or ten per cent., is the precise amount of the rise on the one hand, or of the depreciation on the other, which all the holders of bank notes, and of dollars respectively, would have agreed to fix by a common "sense of value"? Is not such a supposition utterly absurd? Is it not clear that something wholly extrinsic to that capricious "sense," is necessary to regulate the ordinary dealings between man and man; and that the course of those dealings could not be left without a guide, but at the hazard, or the certainty rather, of immediate and inextricable confusion?

If, however, we were persuaded to leave the proportions and prices of all commodities to be adjusted by this "sense of value," we ought at least to be consistent in our theory and practice. This "sense of value," which is now proposed to be erected into an universal measure, has been occasionally adopted as such by individuals. There is a man now expecting the judgment of the law, whose "sense of value" led him to exchange for guineas a proportion of Bank of England paper, which he considered as no more than an equivalent. Of what crime was this man guilty, but of obeying that natural and instinctive impulse which the noble Lord is now prepared to set up as a substitute for the standard of our money? If there be nothing more fixed and stable than individual feeling, to which the estimate of values can be referred, let us at least refrain from punishing the exercise of that individual feeling. If the law shall decline to fix a standard measure, it cannot reserve the right of visiting erroneous measurement as a crime. This would be an injustice like that of the eastern monarch who called upon the soothsayers to interpret his dream, but refused to tell them the dream of which he required the interpretation.

No dream, it must be owned, could be more extravagant than the visions of those practical men who have undertaken to refine away the standard of the currency of the realm into a pure abstraction. There is indeed something perfectly ludicrous in the inconsistency and injustice with which they impute a love of abstraction to their opponents, while they are themselves indulging in the most wanton departures from substance and reality. "Beware of abstract theories," say they to the Bullion Committee, when they find fact and law laid down as the foundation of its Report. "Beware of abstract theories," say they to the honour-

able and learned Chairman of the Committee, when they find, in his first seven Resolutions, nothing like theory or imagination; but a clear, concise, a dry and faithful, recapitulation of those rules which the statutes of the country have established for the weight and fineness of its coin. Nor has the speech with which that honourable and learned gentleman introduced and enforced his Resolutions—a speech which, remarkable as it was for eloquence and ability of every kind, was by nothing so distinguished as by its perpetual appeal to acknowledged principles and established law,—even that speech has not rescued the honourable and learned gentleman from the imputations of flightiness and romance. The same caution, to "beware of abstract theories," is addressed to my honourable friend near me, whose intelligence, whose accuracy, and whose official knowledge, digested and assimilated by a powerful and really practical understanding, make him perhaps, of all men, the least proper object for such an admonition. And this admonition comes from whom? from the inventers and champions of "abstract currency;" from those who after exhausting, in vain, every attempt to find an earthly substitute for the legal and ancient standard of our money, have divested the *pound sterling* of all the properties of matter, and pursued it, under the name of the "*ideal unit*," into the regions of nonentity and nonsense!

When the ingenious sophistry of Dr. Berkeley, to prove the non-existence of matter, was quoted to Dr. Johnson as a fallacy not easy to be refuted, Dr. Johnson stamped his foot with force against a stone, and exclaimed, "I refute it thus." Unluckily, I know no process of reasoning that can reduce one of these practical men to the necessity of admitting, that a pound sterling is not a creature of the imagination: one cannot appeal even to their senses, because that sense of theirs, which I suppose is the most conversant with this subject, the "sense value," is enlisted on the other side. But one may appeal from their theories to ancient records, to positive institution, and to existing law. On these authorities, I contend that a certain specified weight of gold, or silver, of a certain fineness, is the only definition of a pound sterling which an Englishman, desirous of conforming to the laws of his country, is bound to regard or to understand.

Here then it is that I should pause for the answer of the right honourable gentleman opposite to me to the question of my honourable friend.—Does he admit or deny this definition of standard? does he admit or deny the existence of a standard at this moment conformable to this definition? If he admits it, then it is possible not only to answer his question with respect to the meaning of the word "depreciation," but also to demonstrate that a depreciation, in the sense in which that word is used, does

exist. Grant but the lawful standard as the instrument of mensuration, and nothing is more easy than to assign the exact proportion in which coin and bank notes differ in value from each other. But while the right honourable gentleman denies the existence of any such instrument, how can he reasonably require that the accuracy of such a measurement should be proved to his satisfaction?

A pound sterling is either $\frac{20}{62}$ of a pound of standard silver; or, $\frac{20}{21}$ of a guinea weighing not less than $5^{dwts.}$ and $8^{grs.}$ This is the simple and the only definition which the practice of our ancestors recognizes, and the law of the country allows. Does a one-pound note represent this portion of the precious metals, or does it not? If it does, the legal coin of the country, and the notes of the Bank, are equivalent. If not, either the law is mis-stated, or the depreciation is proved.

"Oh! but," says the right honourable gentleman, "the bank note represents the coin itself, *quatenus* coin; and has no reference or relation to the quantity of gold or silver which that coin contains." But does not the right honourable gentleman see that it is impossible for him to avail himself of the law in one instance and to deny its operation in the other?—The King's proclamation confirmed by Act of Parliament has fixed the denomination of the coin; which denomination it is admitted on all hands, the bank note continues to represent: but the same Act of Parliament has fixed the weight of the coin as the sole and indispensable test of the value which that denomination implies. The law (as the right honourable gentleman well knows) watches with such scrupulous anxiety over the weight of the guinea, as to consider the loss of a single grain as sufficient to destroy its character as a legal coin. When the law evinces this anxiety about weight, is it not a little too much to assume in argument that its only care is denomination?

But what is the proposition for the sake of which this assumption is hazarded? Not simply that bank notes are a convenient symbol of coin, but that they are actually equivalent to it. In proof of this equivalency it is contended that the law has bound them together.

First, this argument would prove too much: it would undoubtedly get rid of all the embarrassing considerations of standard, of weight, and of intrinsic value; but, on the other hand, those who maintain it would be involved in absurdities, which even the ingenuity of the right honourable gentleman could not reconcile. They would have to maintain, for instance, that in the year 1695, when, previous to the resolution taken to reform the silver coinage, arguments something like those which are now used on the right honourable gentleman's side of the question,

prevailed upon the Legislature to try the experiment of a statute by which it was made penal to receive or tender the unclipped coin at any higher price than the clipped coin—they would have to maintain, I say, that from the passing of that act, the clipped and unclipped coin of the country became precisely equivalent; in other words, that an ounce of silver in the one became, by the operation of the statute, equal to an ounce and a quarter of the same silver in the other. Unquestionably this cannot be what the right honourable gentleman is prepared to maintain as true; though I must admit, on the other hand, that a subject of this country might at that time have been punished for acting as if he thought it false. But is the relation which was thus produced by law between two things, obviously of different values, equivalency? Or is it to be imagined, that so forced and unnatural a state of things, call it by what name you will, could be maintained by any law, that any law could continue long in force whose purpose it was to maintain it? The consequence of this state of things in 1695, was the disappearance, that is to say, the hoarding, the melting, or the exportation of the perfect coin: the further consequence was, that, after a short trial of the compulsory law, Parliament found itself obliged to go to the root of the evil, and to reform the depreciated part of the currency.

But, moreover, the right honourable gentleman's assertion of the equivalency of coin and bank notes, is in direct contradiction with admissions of his own. In the course of this debate he has admitted (though others have denied) that in the year 1804 the paper of the Bank of Ireland was depreciated. I might here ask him in what sense he understands the word depreciated, when he so applies it; and he would have to answer me, as it has been answered to him, that the Irish bank note did not then represent the intrinsic value of the coin with which it was interchangeable.

This is the most important admission on the part of the right honourable gentleman; and it has a bearing upon the present question, of which one would almost apprehend he could not have been aware, but which nevertheless he will find it difficult to deny. The premium, as I understand, in 1804, was about one shilling and sixpence on the guinea. At that period Irish Bank paper, as interchangeable with English, was at a discount which pretty nearly corresponded with its depreciation in reference to the coin. The premium now openly paid in Ireland upon guineas is from three and sixpence to four shillings. But Irish Bank paper is now exchangeable with English nearly at par. Whence is it that English Bank paper, which had an advantage over Irish Bank paper in 1804, when Irish paper was depreciated only about seven and a half per cent. should be now nearly on a par with it, when it is confessedly depreciated almost twenty per cent. If, indeed,

English Bank paper has suffered a depreciation to the same amount, this phenomenon is perfectly intelligible: but upon the hypothesis of the perfect and unchanged equivalency of English Bank paper and coin, it admits of no solution.

To my mind, I do confess, here is one decisive proof of depreciation.

But, is not the case of the dollar (to which I have had occasion to refer with another view in a former part of the argument,) itself a conclusive proof, not only of the existence of a depreciation of Bank paper, but of the opinion of the Bank, and of the Government, that such depreciation does exist? Why was the bank note, which was equivalent to four dollars on one day, worth two shillings less than four dollars the next? Those who claim to themselves exclusively the title of practical men, take a subtle distinction, and say that it is not the bank note which is worth less, but the dollar which is worth more: and they treat as theorists and visionaries all whose faculties do not enable them to enter into this distinction. But, however the variation arose, why did the Government and the Bank think it necessary to sanction and promulgate it? Why? but because the dollar, being a coin circulating in this country by sufferance only, a currency of convention, would, according to the admission, or rather the declaration of the Bank, under the authority of the Privy Council, have been driven out of circulation, that is to say, would have been hoarded, or melted, or exported, if it had not been allowed to pass at the marketable value of the silver which it contains.

With this example before their eyes—with this admission and declaration still recent before the eyes of the public, there are yet some persons who contend, that the disappearance of our legal coin—the guinea—is no proof of the depreciation of bank notes, in respect to that coin; but is entirely owing to the balance of trade and of payments, and to the wiles of our inveterate enemy. The bank note, which, confronted with the dollar, shrunk from twenty to eighteen shillings, preserved, as they affirm, in face of the guinea, an unaltered, and unalterable equivalency. And what is it, according to their theory, that occasions this peculiarity? The law. The law, which does what? The law, which makes it criminal (if indeed it be criminal) to exchange the guinea for more than its denominative value in bank notes; and which prohibits the exportation of the legal coin of the realm.

Let us see what is the mode in which these powerful and beneficial laws are now actually operating. The result which they were intended to obtain confessedly was to keep our legal coin at home, and to maintain it in circulation. The result actually is, that such coin has vanished from domestic circulation, and that it is exported to all parts of the world. The dollars were sent into

circulation, unprotected by any law which should prevent their exportation to foreign countries: for a time they circulated in abundance; at length they began to disappear. By what process has it been attempted, and successfully, to check their disappearance? By the same process which it so wisely contrived to prevent the disappearance of guineas? By forbidding more to be given for them than they had hitherto been exchanged for in bank notes? No, but by a precisely contrary process—by allowing the dollars to pass at, or above, their value. The consequence is, a continued circulation of dollars in this country, in spite of the balance of trade and of the wiles of the enemy.

Here, then, are two metallic currencies, one of which continues in circulation, while the other vanishes from it. The distinctive differences between them are: First, that of one the exportation is permitted, and of the other prohibited. I acknowledge the perversity of human nature, and its proneness to do what is forbidden: but I cannot think that principle alone sufficient to account for the exportation of the coin, which it is illegal to export, and for the continuance in circulation of that which might be exported without offence. Secondly, the one is exchangeable for its full marketable value in our domestic currency, whereas the law enforces (or is supposed to enforce) the exchange of the other at no more than its denominative rate. The bank note is the common measure both of the guinea and of the dollar, of the exportable and unexportable coin: the guinea it is allowed by law to measure only according to its denomination; the dollar by the ordinance of the Bank, it is allowed to measure according to its marketable value. What is the result? The coin, which is by law unexportable, flies to another market, while the exportable remains at home.

But let it, for argument's sake, be conceded that the rise of the dollar is not a proof of depreciation in the bank note. It follows then, that if the bank note, which would heretofore have purchased four dollars, is not depreciated in respect to the dollar, because it is now obliged to call in two shillings to its aid in order to make the same purchase, neither would the bank note, which heretofore purchased a guinea with the aid of one shilling only, be depreciated in respect to the guinea, if it should now be allowed to make the same purchase with the aid of four or five shillings. I think I may defy the most practical of men to quarrel with this proposition.

Well, then, if this be so, and if it be indeed an object to keep our guineas at home, why is not the operation, which has been so successful with respect to the dollar, applied to the guinea? What difference is there in the principle? and what difference in the practical policy of the transaction, but such as would preponderate

in favour of the guinea? If it be answered, "that the guinea is a legal coin, which the dollar is not; that the dollar might be treated as arbitrarily and unceremoniously as we pleased, but that the same experiment could not be tried upon the guinea, without an alteration of the law, and that alterations of the law are dangerous;" I reply, that the law is much less in our way on this point than gentlemen seem to apprehend. It is true that the dollar is a foreign coin, of which our laws take no specific cognizance; but it is equally true that there is another coin in the country not a legal coin—a coin of which the law takes no notice, except to put it out of its protection; which no man is obliged, or even permitted, to receive from another in payment; which, in short, is as completely devoid of the qualities of British coin as the dollar, and indeed more completely so, since it is expressly stripped of those qualities by statute. Now if such a coin as this can be found, where is the harm of trying upon it the same experiment which has been so happily applied to the dollar; especially if it be, as fortunately it is, a gold coin, and, therefore, capable of supplying that share which dollars do not supply towards the completement of a metallic circulation? The coin to which I allude is one which my honourable friend near me (Mr. Huskisson) is accused of having treated in his pamphlet with exaggerated respect, but which, in the course of this debate, has, I think, been too much disparaged—I mean the light guinea.

The light guinea is not, any more than the dollar, a legal coin. A guinea having arrived by wear at a certain degree of lightness, is at once divested by law of all its qualities of coin, and is reduced to its intrinsic value, whatever that may be, as bullion. It happens, to be sure, at the present moment, that this reduction, as measured in bank notes, is a promotion. But that is equally true in respect to the dollar. The rate at which the dollar now passes is not only higher than it was some time ago, but higher than that which it bears, from its intrinsic value, in comparison with the legal coin of the country. Whether it was right to raise the denomination of the dollar, I do not think it necessary to give an opinion:—that is done. But upon the principle, whatever it was, on which the denomination of the dollar was raised, there can surely be no objection to suffering the light guinea to go for what it is worth, and thereby obtaining an anomalous gold currency to correspond with the anomalous silver currency, each alike independent of the legal coin of the realm.

The legal coin—the guinea of full lawful weight—would still remain, in the eye of the law, in that of the imagination, and in the argument of the right honourable gentleman, as the equivalent for bank notes. It would not often come forth indeed to afford a practical illustration of his argument: but he might continue to

enjoy the satisfaction of maintaining, as he does now, as an abstract proposition, that bank notes and guineas are equivalent in law.

Meantime the advantage derived from the marketableness of light guineas would be, either to retain at least that portion of our metallic circulation at home, or to make the foreigner or the enemy pay its full value for it on exportation.

It is on all hands acknowledged—by the right honourable gentleman and his supporters it is earnestly contended—that our gold finds its way out of the country, either in discharge of the balance of payments, or into the coffers of the enemy. That enemy is by some persons represented as sitting like a great spider in the midst of its web, and drawing along the living lines and fibres of its net all the gold of Great Britain, into an abyss from which it is never to return. By what process this can be effected, except by that of a trade of some sort or other, we are not told, and I am at a loss to conceive. Among all the dangers of the country, many of them real and formidable, a danger happily more visionary than this was never apprehended by a disordered imagination.

That our gold, however, goes from us, is generally asserted and believed; and whether by a natural efflux, or by some unheard-of power of magnetic attraction in Buonaparte, is, in regard to the question which we are considering, of little moment. It goes, and we wish to stop it. It can be stopped effectually only by being retained in circulation at home. It can be retained in circulation (as those who raised the denomination of the dollar, and who gave the reasons which were given for raising it, must of all men be the last to deny,) only by allowing it to pass for what it is intrinsically worth, or what it will fetch in the market.

Here, however, I shall be met by an argument which has been urged with much vehemence and solemnity by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Vansittart,) that the law absolutely prohibits the exportation of our coin, and that any reasoning, therefore, which is founded upon the supposition of that exportation, is not only incorrect, but is of a most immoral and dangerous tendency, as holding out encouragement to perjury and fraud. Let us examine this argument.

We are all agreed upon the fact, that gold bullion is at a high price in the currency of this country. We are all agreed, that either as the consequence of this high price or as the cause of it, or both, there is a great scarcity of gold bullion in this country. We are all agreed that the gold coin has nearly vanished from circulation; and nobody doubts, so far as I have heard, and nobody has asserted more strenuously than the right honourable gentleman and those who side with him, that this high price and scarcity of bullion, and this vanishing of our gold coin, are infallible in-

dications of a large exportation of gold; of which exportation a large part must, as infallibly, have consisted of coin, either melt- or unmelted. Upon these facts, I say, we are all agreed. Now I ask, is it not idle, is it not absurd, to assume for the purpose of argument a supposed obedience to the law, which notoriously has no existence; and to deny for the purpose of argument, a fact which is acknowleded by all to be the surest symptom, and contended by many to be the origin and cause, of the evils which have brought us to the necessity of the present discussion? Is it not wholly unworthy an assembly of legislators, to pretend an ignorance in our legislative capacity of that, which every one of us, in his individual capacity, perfectly believes to be true? Is the existence of a statute which, as we know, is openly violated (and for the most part with impunity) every day in the week, to be pleaded as a bar against any attempt to remedy the evils which confessedly result from its violation?

What then can be more unjust, or more ridiculous, than to represent those persons as countenancing and encouraging perjury and fraud, who only tell you what you yourselves avow, that perjury and fraud are and have always been committed under your present system of law; and who, inferring that they always will be committed under that system, suggest to you the expediency of amending it? Who are the encouragers of crimes?—they who, finding the existing law notoriously inadequate to counteract the temptation to commit them, propose either to change the law or remove the temptation;—or they who content themselves with whimpering over the depravity of human nature, and, instead of endeavouring to prevent the commission of crime, console themselves with the reflection that the mischief to the public is only in proportion to the guilt of the criminal?

He was not an unwise or an unjust judge, of whom it is recorded, that—

> "He sent the thief who stole the gold away,
> And punish'd him who put it in his way."

Undoubtedly it is neither wise nor just to place temptations in men's way, which we know by constant experience to be sufficient to overpower the positive enactments of law. It is neither politic nor moral to resort on every occasion to the obligation of oaths as supplementary to a defective legislation. This policy unfortunately pervades too many of our statutes; and it is but rarely successful in its object, never perhaps where considerable gain and great facility conspire to tempt to perjury. The exportation of coin, or of bullion melted from coin, when the exchanges are unfavourable beyond a certain limit, is looked upon as so much in the natural course of things, that most writers, who have treated of coinage and of trade, have laid it down as a conse-

quence not to be disputed, and not even necessary to be proved. According to the concurrent opinions of such writers, the efflux of bullion from one country to another is governed by causes nearly as steady and uniform in their operation, as those which govern the seasons or the tides. As well might you pretend to fix a limit on the shore, and bid the flowing ocean advance no farther, as attempt by the interposition of a statute to stop the tide of the precious metals in whatever direction it is made to flow by the influence of commercial necessity and commercial demand.

The right honourable gentleman, and those who adopt his views of the present question, acknowledge the force of these principles: they attribute, in fact, the whole of our difficulties to their operation. There is, indeed, a slight difference of opinion among them as to the cause of the export of our gold; some attributing it to the demand for gold in the market of the continent, others to the necessity of remitting it from hence, in payment of the balance of trade; but all concurring that, whatever may be the degree in which either of these causes, separately or jointly, operate, the result is an irresistible attraction of the gold of this country to the continent. Is it not, then, with marvellous inconsistency that these same gentlemen oppose the mere existence of a powerless law, and a high-coloured description of the crimes which it occasions and constitutes, as an answer, and the only answer, to those who contend, that, if the evil which the law is intended to prevent, be indeed one which it is important to check, and if the efflux of our gold be certain, so long as the force of the temptation is stronger than the restraint of the law, it is necessary, and it would be as wise as humane, either to alter the law, or to diminish the temptation?

I may, perhaps, be inclined to believe, that the repeal of this law would be in itself no unwise measure. That belief might be supported by the opinion of many able writers and experienced statesmen, and by the example of many of those states in which commerce has been most flourishing, and credit and coin most abundant. I admit that the immediate, the momentary effect of this repeal, (if unaccompanied by any other measure,) might be to increase the exportation of our gold, by removing the scruples of such persons as may now, perhaps, be wavering between temptation on the one hand, and obedience to the law on the other. Even so, however, it would have the benefit of saving all that perjury and fraud which shock, so justly, the moral feelings of the House; and of extending to the honest trader a convenience which is now exclusively reserved for the dishonest one. But in the long run, I certainly do not believe that the repeal of

this law would swell, by a single guinea, the amount of the export of our gold.

It is true that the repeal of this law alone would not have a necessary tendency to bring gold again into circulation in this country, either by recalling what has been exported, or by enticing what is now hoarded, out of its hiding places. That would be the effect of the other alteration to which I have already alluded, of suspending the law and the proclamation which limit the current rate of the guinea, and permitting it to pass according to its intrinsic value.

I have, indeed, stated this proposition hitherto only as applicable to the light guinea; of which the purchase, at its intrinsic value, is certainly no infringement either of the letter or the spirit of any existing proclamation or statute. I do not know whether I might, without presumption, say, that the law is by no means clear on this point, even with respect to guineas of full legal weight. Guineas of legal weight, however, I left out of my proposition in the former part of my argument, expressly, as I said, in the hope of conciliating the right honourable gentleman, by leaving untouched, in respect to guineas of full weight, his proposition of the equivalency of bank paper and legal coin. But, if the right honourable gentleman should be disposed to concur with me at all, I trust, upon reflection, he would not be prevented from doing so by the contemplation of this trifling advantage to his argument. If he will consent to let guineas go for what they are worth in the market, he will have a gold currency; he will prevent the exportation of our coin, he will get rid of fraud and perjury: and all this benefit he will purchase at no greater expense, than that of being one argument out of pocket. It will then, to be sure, be vain for him to contend, against the daily evidence of men's senses, that bank paper and guineas are, at their respective denominations, equivalent to each other: but at least we shall have them both, and they may circulate amicably together.

That by no other possible means the coin of the country can be retained in circulation, so long as the precious metal of which it is composed, is intrinsically of a value so much higher than the rate at which it is estimated in our currency, is a proposition of which all experienee, as well as all reason, establishes the truth. The present state of the law in the present state of our currency, operates, in fact, as a bounty upon the exportation of our coin.

Of the two causes of the export of gold, which are admitted by the right honourable gentleman and his friends, the supposed demand for gold on the continent, and the supposed necessity for exporting it to set right the balance of our trade, the first will undoubtedly have an uncontrolled operation, so long as there is no counter-demand for gold in the market at home; so long as the

Bank do not purchase, and as no one else purchases here, except for exportation: the second would, in a natural state of things, find its limit far within the amount of the balance to be set right; it would cease to operate, whenever the scarcity of gold, produced here by exportation, and the plenty produced on the continent by its importation, rendered gold less eligible for transmission abroad than any other merchantable commodity. But this limit it can never find, so long as gold is the only merchantable commodity for which the consumption of this country affords no market.

Independently, however, of these causes, the difference between the real value of the precious metal and that at which it is rated in our currency, would be itself sufficient to ensure us against the continuance of the guinea in circulation. Demand on the continent might be counteracted by demand here; and gold would cease to be a preferable article for transmission abroad, from the moment at which it, like other articles, could be sold for its real value at home. But, imprisoned in the coin, and degraded by its imprisonment, gold has an unconquerable tendency to escape from a situation so unnatural: and it would make its escape from such a situation, even although you do not owe the continent any thing; and although there were no more demand on the continent for gold, than for any other article of merchandise.

But this, I may be told, is the language of theory. Is not the principle, then, recognized by any sober practical authority? Let us hear the statute-book itself. "Whereas it has been a practice," says the preamble to the Act 14 Geo. III. c. 70, "to export the new and perfect coin of the realm for private advantage, and to the great detriment of the public; and the like practice will continue," (adds this theoretical and visionary preamble) "while pieces, differing greatly in weight, are current under the same denomination, and at the same rate of value."

The persons who framed this Act, and framed it for the express and practical purpose of restoring the credit of our currency, could not be ignorant of the penalties under which the exportation of coin was prohibited; yet we see, that in spite of these penalties, they take for granted as inevitable the "continued" exportation of the coin, so long as the temptation to export it continues. We see further, that, in their opinion, conformity to standard weight is the distinctive quality by which the value of money is to be estimated. We see, lastly, that, without any reference to demand for gold on the continent, without any reference to an unfavourable balance of trade, the certain result of an attempt to circulate together, "under the same denomination and at the same rate of value," two descriptions of currency, differing in intrinsic value from each other, is to drive that which is of the higher intrinsic value out of circulation.

This is, in fact, as I understand it, the whole of the Bullion Committee upon this subject; and so far from having the guilt or the merit of novelty, we find it assumed six and thirty years ago, in the preamble of an Act of Parliament, as a doctrine established and self-evident.

Of this doctrine, thus adopted by Parliament in the year 1774, there is an earlier and not less authoritative recognition in the Report of Sir Isaac Newton, in the year 1717, of the existence of which Report I was surprised to hear a right honourable friend of mine, (Mr. Rose) declare himself entirely ignorant. A person so distinguished as my right honourable friend unquestionably is, by great knowledge and indefatigable research, I should have thought, could hardly have missed a document of such interest and importance, and so immediately bearing upon the subject before us. This Report was made by Sir Isaac Newton in his capacity of Master of the Mint, and is to be found in our Journals.*

It is too long for me to trouble the House with reading it; but gentlemen will find, upon looking into it, that upon a reference made to him by the Lords of the Treasury, as to the best method of preventing the melting down of the silver coin, Sir Isaac Newton represents the temptation to melt and export it as "arising from the higher price of silver in other places than in England in proportion to gold;" that is to say, from the circumstance, that the silver coin, then our standard currency, was, by the regulations of our Mint, exchangeable with the gold coin at a rate somewhat lower than that at which it was exchangeable, as bullion, with gold in the general market of Europe. So small was this difference, that the taking of sixpence from the current rate of the guinea was estimated by Sir Isaac Newton as sufficient to cure the evil; and yet, small as the difference was, during its continuance, and by its operation alone, the silver coin of standard weight was daily vanishing from circulation.

In this report of Sir Isaac Newton, and in the principles which are laid down for it, is to be found the answer to many of my right honourable friend's (the Chancellor of the Exchequer's) observations upon that part of the Report of the Bullion Committee, which refers to the re-coinage of the silver currency in the year 1696. The subsequent disappearance of the new silver coin, is not, as my right honourable friend seemed to insinuate, a proof that the re-coinage at that time had been unadvisedly undertaken; or that it was not the only cure that could be applied to that depreciation of the currency, which Parliament had attempted in vain to remedy (as I have already had occasion to state) by a penal law. It is true that, by a slight error in the valuation of the two pre-

* Vol. XVIII. p. 664.

cious metals with respect to each other, the silver coin was rated a small degree below its just proportion to gold; and that, in consequence, it began to disappear not long after the recoinage was completed. But this technical error does not in any degree vitiate the principles on which the re-coinage had been adopted. It in no degree diminishes or affects the merit of those who had the courage to undertake, and the firmness to carry through that important work, in spite of the prevalence for a time, even in this House, of prejudices very much akin to those of the present day.

Those prejudices were sufficiently strong to defeat for a considerable time the intentions of the Government, after they had upon mature deliberation convinced themselves of the absolute necessity of the measure; but the good sense, temper, and perseverance of that Administration triumphed in the end, and it is no disparagement to my right honourable friend to recommend the example of the Administration of 1696 to his serious consideration.

The war in which King William was then engaged against France, may not have been equal with the present war in magnitude of exertion. Yet if we compare the means of the country at that period with its present means, and consider the exertions which were then made, it would perhaps be difficult to say that any excuse could be offered now, which was not in a great measure applicable then, for sparing, amidst the burdens of war, any internal effort which was not absolutely indispensable. But the restoration of the currency to a sound state was then deemed to be indispensable; and the war was considered not as a reason for postponing the required effort, but as an additional reason for making it with as little delay as possible.

The high price of gold was then, as it is now, one striking indication of the deteriorated state of the currency. The indication might, indeed, be at that time more undeniable; because, gold not being then our standard coin, and the guinea not being limited by law as to the rate at which it should pass current, the high price became immediately visible in the gold coin as well as in bullion, the guinea being actually exchangeable for as much as thirty shillings of the clipped silver. The unfavourable state of our exchanges with foreign countries afforded then, as it does now, the other most unerring proof that all was not sound in the currency of this country; a proof of which my right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer clearly admits the validity, when he admits that the unfavourableness of the exchange might probably now be corrected by correcting the excess, or (if he objects to the word *excess)* diminishing the abundance of our paper currency. This admission I understood my right honourable friend to make in the most unequivocal terms; not meaning

thereby that I understood him to admit that it was advisable to diminish the paper currency for the sake of correcting the unfavourableness of the exchange, but simply that such a correction of the exchange would be the effect of such a diminution of paper.

This leads me to consider the subject of the exchanges, as it bears upon that of depreciation. I shall treat it as concisely as I can; both because I must confess, that with all the attention which I have bestowed upon it, I am perfectly conscious that I have not been able to unravel all the intricacies of the subject; and also, because it appears to me that the whole question as to depreciation is disposed of by the preceding part of the argument; this is to say, by the comparison of currency with bullion. The state of the exchanges may add some illustration to that argument, but is not wanted for the purpose of establishing it.

If that which constitutes the par of exchange between any two countries be (as, if I am not mistaken, it is) an equal quantity of precious metal in their respective currencies, this definition alone sufficiently shows, that whatever other considerations there may be, whether growing out of law or out of opinion, which regulate and sustain the rate of a currency at home, its value can be estimated abroad by no other criterion than that of the quantity of precious metal for which a specific portion of it is exchangeable. The foreigner knows nothing of the value of the currency of any other country except that a certain portion of that currency represents, and will procure in his own country a certain quantity of precious metal.

The question of the exchanges would therefore be as simple as the question of depreciation, if there were not confessedly other causes which operate upon the exchange, and the operation of which may sometimes be concurrent with that of the relative values of the respective currencies, and sometimes may tend to counteract it.

A country which imports from another more than it exports to it of all other articles of commerce, is supposed to make up the difference by a transmission of bullion. In point of fact, this transmission takes place in much fewer instances than the theory supposes; but the necessity of making it either actually or virtually, causes a variation in the rate of exchange in favour of the creditor, and to the disadvantage of the debtor country; the amount of which variation is measured by, and expresses, the cost of making the transmission.

Supposing the currencies of two countries, each in a perfectly sound state, any variation from the par of exchange between them can be produced only by the one country having a debt to discharge to the other. Supposing the debts and credits of two

countries to be exactly balanced, any variation from the par of exchange between them can only be produced by a depreciation in the currency of one of them. These causes, however, may both exist at the same time; and they may exist, either on opposite sides, or together; in the one case aggravating, in the other counteracting each other.

A country might be largely in debt to another, and yet, if its currency were sound, and the currency of the creditor country deteriorated, the course of the exchange would exhibit only the difference between the contending effects of such deterioration on the other hand, and such debt on the other: and it might happen that these effects might be so precisely balanced, as exactly to neutralize each other. But when a country is in the situation of being indebted to another, and at the same time of having a depreciated currency, the depression of the exchange exhibits the combined effect of both causes.

This last may, or may not, be our present situation. For I am far from taking upon myself to assert, that the balance of the payments from us to the continent, enters for nothing into the unfavourable exchange against this country. I only deny that it can be the sole cause of that unfavourableness. Still less do I pretend to define the share which this cause may have in producing the effect. But as it is obvious that the depression of the exchange from this cause can never, for any great continuance of time, very far exceed the expense of transmitting bullion for the liquidation of the balance of payments; as it is not only acknowledged but contended, that bullion for this purpose is in fact transmitted; as the expense of the transmission is perfectly known, in all its several parts of price, freight, and insurance; and as their collective result is notoriously very far within the limits of the actual depression of the exchange, there will remain of that depression a large share to be accounted for, after every deduction that can be made on account of the balance of payments, and that remainder can no otherwise be accounted for than by the deterioration of our currency.

The state of the exchanges, therefore, is a proof, though I do not admit it to be a necessary proof, still less could I allow it to be the test, of a depreciated currency. I do not admit it to be a necessary proof; because, the price of bullion in the currency, is proof sufficient without it. I do not allow it to be the test; because under certain circumstances, a currency might be depreciated to a limited degree, without producing a visible depression of the exchange; nay, it might coexist with an exchange positively favourable. These cases would arise whenever the effect produced upon the exchange by the balance of payments in favour of the country whose currency is depreciated in the one case ex-

actly equalled, or, in the other exceeded, the degree of the depreciation. But though a depreciation of the currency might thus exist without inducing an unfavourable exchange, a state of the exchange unfavourable to a great degree, and progressively growing worse for a great length of time, is an infallible indication of a depreciated currency.

This is all the use that I think it necessary to make of the arguments to be drawn from the exchanges; and so far as this goes, I cannot understand how any one can doubt as to their bearing. We do not doubt with respect to other countries, that a sound or unsound state of their currency influences the state of their exchanges. When we see the exchanges between Hamburgh or Amsterdam on the one hand, and Russia or Austria on the other, unfavourable in a great degree to either of the two latter countries, we have no hesitation in at once ascribing that unfavourableness, in great part at least, to a depreciation of its currency.

My right honourable friend (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) has taken what I must think not a very fair advantage of an argument of an honourable gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Sharp,) when he has represented him as having recommended the general policy of Holland and of Hamburgh as an object of imitation for this country; because, the honourable gentleman stated that by not issuing a paper-money, the currencies of Holland and of Hamburgh had been preserved from depreciation. The honourable gentleman certainly did not guard and qualify his statement with all the circumstances which were nevertheless obviously connected, in his mind, with the proposition which he was advancing; but it is quite as clear that nothing but the strong temptation of flying from argument to declamation, could have led my right honourable friend so far to mistake the honourable gentleman's meaning. The meaning of the honourable gentleman evidently was not to hold out Holland as having been wise in its submissions and compliances towards France, and as enjoying the reward of her prudent obedience in a state of enviable happiness and prosperity. Still less could he intend (how is it possible that any rational being could be for a moment suspected of intending?) to extol the prowess of Hamburgh. "Prowess" was, I think, the word which my right honourable friend did not disdain to put into the honourable gentleman's mouth, for the sake of making an indignant comment upon it. The scope of the honourable gentleman's argument I understood to be simply this:—that if Holland, impoverished by an exhausting war, and preyed upon by an exacting despotism—if Hamburgh, in the very clutches of the French power—if these unhappy states, stripped of their commerce and independence, could yet maintain their respective currencies undepreciated, it would seem to follow that a state of war,

however expensive and burdensome—that stagnation of commerce—that even the oppression of a conquering enemy—were not sufficient justifications, much less necessary causes, of such a system of currency as that which (according to the honourable gentleman's argument) now existed in this country, and of which my right honourable friend and others seemed prepared to justify the continuance, so long at least as the war shall continue, as our commerce shall be embarrassed, and as our enemy shall persevere in his present system of measures. This is what I understood the honourable gentleman to contend; and, whatever might be the worth of his argument, it surely was not open to the imputation which my right honourable friend found it convenient to attach to it; as if the honourable gentleman had been guilty of the egregious absurdity of proposing for the imitation of this country the political courage of the Dutch, and the military prowess of the Hamburghers.

I am not, however, disposed to deny the assertion which my right honourable friend has grounded upon this argument, that inferences are not to be conclusively drawn from the establishments of other countries, whether political or commercial, to our own. The principles of public credit are so much better understood, and so much more religiously observed in this country, the line of separation between the financial operations of the State, and the concerns of the National Bank, confounded too often by arbitrary governments, is here so distinctly marked, that it cannot be doubted but many general propositions are true of paper currencies abroad, which would be utterly inapplicable to the system of the Bank of England.

The depreciation of the Austrian paper money, therefore, which has been cited and commented upon by my honourable friend near me (Mr. Huskisson,) is not precisely an example; it is not a counterpart of our actual situation; but it does afford a most useful warning, it shows how rapidly paper money sinks in value, when once power has been in any degree substituted for confidence; and how tremendously, when once the first impulse has been given, the force of descent accumulates and increases. The depreciation of Austrian paper was not, in its origin, like that which we are now discussing; there was, in its origin, something of discredit, of a distrust (that is) of the solidity of the funds upon which the paper was issued.

If solidity of funds, however, were alone sufficient to keep up the credit of a paper, even the assignats of France would not have fallen so soon and so rapidly in value. The rulers of France by whom that paper money was coined, affected to be surprised at the depreciation of securities, resting, as they contended, on foundations more solid than those of the Bank of England—and cal-

culated, like the paper of the Bank, to promote the prosperity of the country in which it circulated. Well and wisely did Mr. Burke, when, in the language of an orator, and in the spirit of a prophet, he foreshowed that series and succession of calamities, which the principles of the French Revolution, in all its parts, must inevitably produce—well and wisely did he describe those essential qualities of the paper of the Bank of England which constitute its real value.

"They (said he, speaking of the National Assembly) imagine, that our flourishing state in England is owing to bank paper, and not the bank paper to the flourishing condition of our commerce, to the solidity of our credit, and to the total exclusion of all idea of *power* from any part of the transaction. They forget that in England not one shilling of paper money of any description is received but of choice; that the whole had its origin in cash actually deposited; and that it is convertible at pleasure, in an instant, and without the smallest loss, into cash again. Our paper is of value in commerce, because in law it is of none. It is powerful on Change, because in Westminster Hall it is impotent. In payment of a debt of 20*l.* a creditor may refuse all the paper of the Bank of England. Nor is there among us a single public security, of any quality or nature whatsover, that is enforced by authority. In fact, it might easily be shown, that our paper wealth, instead of lessening the real coin, has a tendency to increase it; that instead of being a substitute for money, it only facilitates its entry, its exit, and its circulation; that it is the symbol of prosperity, not the badge of distress. Never was a scarcity of cash and an exuberance of paper a subject of complaint in this nation."

These were the characteristics of the paper of the Bank of England, when Mr. Burke contrasted it with the assignats of France. Its convertibility into specie upon demand, was suspended by the Act of 1797, on grounds which it is not now necessary to discuss. The suspension was, for a series of years, unattended with any symptoms that indicated depreciation. And it must be our wish, as well as our interest, to believe (what from reasoning also appears most probable,) that this suspension alone, if not followed up by excessive issue, might have endured, as long as the political circumstances of the state might have rendered its endurance necessary, without producing that effect. But if that effect has been produced, as seems to be established beyond the possibility of contradiction, let us not, instead of attempting to correct it, endeavour rather to palliate its evils, and to reconcile ourselves to its consequences. Even under the change produced by the temporary suspension of cash payments, let us remember, that the essential and fundamental principles upon which the character and utility of bank paper rest, are those described in the ex-

tract which I have just quoted from Mr. Burke. Let us not, under the pressure of what has been always considered as a temporary necessity, and in the despair of meeting what I trust is no more than a transitory, and, as yet, a curable evil, abjure this language and these doctrines of Mr. Burke, and adopt in their stead the cant and sophistry of those against whom his arguments were directed.

Far be it from me to imagine that between the notes of the Bank of England and the assignats of the National Assembly, there now exists that resemblance of which Mr. Burke, in 1791, denied and disproved the existence! But in proportion as I am satisfied that the bank note is of a different nature from the assignat, in that proportion do I dislike to hear them defended by the same arguments. "*Ce n'est pas l'assignat qui perd, c'est l'argent qui gagne,*" was the motto and the doctrine of a treatise, published in Paris during the reign of the National Assembly, for the purpose of maintaining the credit of assignats, by accounting for the difference between their nominal and exchangeable values. "It is not the bank note which loses, but the dollar which gains," is the argument by which we have heard the rise in the denomination of the dollar explained: "It is not paper which has fallen, but gold which has risen," is the argument which has filled all the pamphlets and all the speeches which we have read and heard upon the subject. The arguments are identically and undistinguishedly the same. I wish that any of my honourable friends, who maintain the undepreciated state of our paper currency, could satisfy me and the country that there is some essential difference in their mode of applying them. I wish they could show me that the doctrine of the French pamphlet might be false, while that of the English pamphlets and of their own speeches is true.

I do not need to be reminded of the many essential differences in the circumstances of the two paper currencies. I am here speaking, not of the causes of depreciation, but simply of the fact. That assignats were discredited in all sorts of ways, no person doubts. But the price of the precious metals in those assignats was, after all, the evidence and the measure of their depreciation. The high price which other commodities bore in assignats, afforded, to be sure, strong suspicions of depreciation; but it proved the fact, and established the degree of that depreciation only as compared with the price for which the same articles could be obtained in gold or silver. I say this to guard myself against the imputation of disparaging bank notes by comparing them with a currency so notoriously worthless and fraudulent. Paper currency may be depreciated from various causes, which

have no resemblance to each other; but whatever may be the causes of depreciation, the test of it is in all cases the same.

On all these grounds, I own my entire, though unwilling conviction, that a depreciation of our paper currency does actually exist;—that the permanently unfavourable state of the exchanges with foreign countries, is an indication—and the long continued high price of bullion at home, the proof—of it. I can at the same time most truly say, that I shall hold myself infinitely indebted to any man who, by reasoning and argument, by reference to admitted facts and established principles, can bring me back from this most unsatisfactory conviction. No man set out in the examination of the subject with less disposition to arrive at this conclusion: and no man would more gladly find reasons that could satisfy his own mind for receding from it.

I confess, however, that although I can make full allowance to others for the same unwillingness which I have felt myself, to believe in the fact of an existing depreciation, I am more alarmed than encouraged by the apparent disposition rather to escape from the avowal of this fact, than to controvert it. I cannot see, without concern, the constant flight from the point at which the controversy really lies, to the war, to the harvest, to Portugal, and to Buonaparte; in short, to every imaginable topic, except those on which the discussion essentially turns. This may confuse and perplex the argument, by raising a crowd of images, with which it has no relation. But as to the point at issue, it seems to me a confession of weakness, rather than a display of strength.

Still greater is my apprehension, when I hear what are the motives assigned for continuing the present state of our currency, whatever it may be, rather than making any attempt to decide what that state really is, and, if necessary, to correct or to improve it. Some persons there are indeed so sanguine and extravagant, as to deny altogether that either improvement or correction is necessary; or, that the ideas which these words convey, can be applicable to a system which they consider, not as an evil, but as a benefit. We have been told of "localized" currency, of an "insulated" circulation, as a blessing far outweighing all the other advantages arising from our peculiar local situation; as something analogous to them; something which was wanting to complete the perfection of our insular character, and which we have fortunately stumbled upon by accident; for I think no man has been hardy enough to say, that we could have or ought to have established it by design.

One honourable gentleman (Mr. Baring) only, I think, has gone back to the origin of the Bank restriction in 1797, and has imputed to the great man who was the author of it, an intention

of laying in that measure the foundation of a system of fraudulent finance, and of providing for an indefinite extension of the public expenditure abroad, by retrenching the just value of the payment of the public creditor at home. This is the imputation brought forward by that honourable gentleman: and, while I fully acquit my right honourable friend (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) of any participation in this sentiment, I cannot but express my regret that he should not have distinctly disclaimed it; especially as he thought proper to bestow such lavish and unqualified commendation upon the speech in which it was contained, and to declare, in more large and positive terms than I think he would upon reflection be disposed to confirm, his concurrence in the general views and doctrines of that speech.

But acquitting my right honourable friend altogether of the wildest and most extravagant of the tenets which have been advanced by persons who admit and admire a depreciated currency, I see cause of sufficient alarm in those which he has avowed and maintained. If the causes of the present state of our currency be, as he says, the unfavourable balance of our trade, and the necessary extent of our war expenditure; if, so long as those causes continue to operate, gold must, as he contends, continue to flow out of the country; if nothing can contribute to recall it, except a turn of the exchanges in our favour; if that turn can never be produced, except either by the previous turn of the balance of trade in our favour, or by the reduction of our paper currency; if the balance of trade, having been turned against us by the anti-commercial decrees of our enemy, must continue against us till those decrees are repealed; and if, of the only other expedient for correcting the exchanges (viz., the reduction of our paper currency,) my right honourable friend, while he admits the efficacy to be probable, denies the application to be possible;—I am afraid the result of this series of propositions, every one of which I collect from the speech of my right honourable friend, is, not only that we have no remedy for the present evil, but that we are likely to arrive at a term, when all our exertions for the safety of the country must cease, from our absolute inability to maintain them.

The precious metals are necessary to feed and sustain our military operations abroad. In all former wars, what went out in bullion for military purposes, was replaced in the course of trade by fresh importations. But now, according to the argument of my right honourable friend, our commerce itself is but another drain for our bullion, and must continue so long as the enemy pleases. The time, therefore, must come when the stream—always flowing, and never replenished—will be exhausted; and when, consequently, all the operations, whether of war or of com-

merce, to which it gave motion, will stand still. This, I beg it may be remembered, is not my statement: it is that which I collected from the speeches of those who profess to see nothing requisite to be set right in the present system of our currency. It would be a statement of complete despair, if there were absolutely no check in nature for the course and progress of the mischief. One check, one only check, there is—a check, as I should think, safe as well as effectual. But while we are comforted with hearing from my right honourable friend that such a check might, in his opinion also, be effectual, we hear from him, at the same time, that it would be absolute destruction to resort to it.

In addition to these motives of policy, there are—as I have heard this night, not without astonishment and dismay—considerations of justice, which preclude any systematic reduction of the amount of our paper currency. Such a reduction, it is argued, would change the value of existing contracts, and throw into confusion every species of pecuniary transactions, from the rent of the great landed proprietor down to the wages of the peasant and the artizan. Good God! what is this but to say, that the system of irredeemable paper currency must continue for ever? What is it but to say, that the debts incurred, and the contracts entered into, under the old established legal standard of the currency, including the debts and contracts of the State itself, are now to be lopped and squared to a new measure, set up originally as a temporary expedient; and that the sacredness of public faith, and the obligation of legal engagements, are to be conformed to the accidental and fluctuating derangement, and not to the ancient and fixed rule of our currency?

If this be so, there is indeed no hope that we shall ever return to our sound and pristine state. This objection is of a nature to propagate itself indefinitely. Every day new contracts must necessarily be made; and every day successively (as it is of the essence of depreciation to go on increasing in degree,) at rates diverging more and more widely from the real standard from which we have departed. Every day, therefore, must interpose additional impediments to a return to the legal standard. Never did the wildest and most hostile prophesier of ruin to the finances of this country venture to predict that a time should come, when, by the avowal of Parliament, nominal amount in paper, without reference to any real standard value in gold, would be the payment of the public creditor. But still less could it ever be apprehended that such a system was to be built on the foundations of equity and right—that it would be considered as unjust to give to the paper creditor, the real value of his contracts in gold, but just to compel the creditor who had trusted in gold, to receive for all

time to come the nominal amount, whatever that might come to be, of his contract in paper.

This proposition appears to me so monstrous, and shows so plainly to what an extravagant and alarming length we are liable to be hurried, when once we have lost sight of principle, and given ourselves up to the guidance of expediency, that I am sure this House ought to lose no time in pronouncing its opinion as to the maxims by which, for centuries, the currency of this country has been preserved in eminent purity and integrity; and in declaring its determination to acknowledge no others in the theory of our money system, and to look to a practical return to that system, not only as advantageous to the state, but as indispensable to its justice and its honour.

For these purposes, it is in my opinion necessary, in the first place, to enter a distinct record of what is, in our opinion, the legal standard of our currency. I know not how this can be done with greater clearness and correctness, than by adopting the first* seven of the Resolutions proposed by the honourable and learned Chairman of the Bullion Committee.

To these seven Resolutions are opposed, and for them it is intended to substitute, the first of the Propositions of the right honourable gentleman opposite to me.†

I should have no hesitation in affirming these first seven Resolutions, if they stood simply and positively on their own merits: but when I find that we cannot get rid of them without admitting into their place a Proposition so exceptionable as the first Proposition of the right honourable gentleman, and one which, when admitted, will bring in its train other Propositions still more exceptionable—one in particular (I mean the third) absolutely repugnant (as it seems to me) to common sense—I consider the affirmation of the original Resolutions as doubly important, not only from what it will establish, but for what it will exclude.

This is not the time to discuss the Propositions of the right honourable gentleman; otherwise it would be easy to show that the doctrine of his first Proposition, which, referring every thing relating to the money of the country exclusively to the prerogative of the Crown, states, as altogether equal and indifferent, the exercise of that prerogative by the will of the Crown alone, or with the concurrence of the two Houses of Parliament—that this doctrine, if not absolutely false in principle and in theory (a question which I will not now discuss,) is, at least in any practical view, and to any practical purpose, unsound: it is incomplete, delusive and dangerous; it states the prerogative, indeed, but it does not state it as defined and regulated by law. This, however, is a

* See Res. 1 to 7, of Mr. Horner. † See Res. 1, of Mr. Vansittart.

part only of his objections to the right honourable gentleman's Propositions. There are others which I shall reserve till the moment shall arrive, when it becomes itself the subject of substantive discussion. What I have now said, in my opinion, is sufficient to disqualify it as a subtitute for the precise and unimpeachable definition of the monetary system of this country as established by the joint authority of the Crown and Parliament, which is contained in the honourable and learned gentleman's first seven Resolutions.

If I do not go at large into those Resolutions for the purpose of explaining and defending the vote which I shall give in favour of them, it is because, in the whole course of this debate, I have not heard a single objection urged against them. It is singular that the whole skill of his antagonists should have been exhausted, not in attacking, but in evading his statement; that, of a chain of reasoning, which, if it could be loosened in a single link, would, I admit, fall to pieces, not a single link has been attempted to be loosened. It remains entire and unbroken, and connects undisputed premises with an inevitable conclusion.

The eighth and ninth Resolutions* of the honourable and learned gentlemen contain truisms which no man disputes; and which the right honourable gentleman, in proposing to substitute for them his second Proposition, only makes less completely true by the omission of one essential circumstance. The eighth Resolution states, that the notes of the Bank of England are stipulations to pay *on demand.* The right honourable gentleman's second Proposition omits the words, *on demand.* Why this omission? It can hardly be accidental; it can hardly be without some meaning: and yet the right honourable gentleman, so far as I have heard, in the speech with which he introduced his Propositions, did not offer any thing to account for so singular an alteration. Is it possible that he can mean to say, that bank notes are *not* stipulations to pay *on demand?* It is perfectly true that the restriction law of 1797 suspends the fulfilment of this stipulation, and protects the Bank against the consequences of a refusal to fulfil it: but does not the right honourable gentleman see the danger of confounding two things so different as the temporary suspension of the effect of an obligation, and the actual annulment of the obligation itself? I am almost sure that the right honourable gentleman must, upon reflection, be aware of the perilous tendency of such a confusion. But, in the mean time, forasmuch as a correct and complete definition is preferable to one which is undeniably and dangerously defective, I cannot hesitate to vote for the eighth and ninth of the original Resolutions, to the exclusion of the right honourable gentleman's most unnecessary and most suspicious amendment.†

*See Res. 8 and 9 of Mr. Horner. † See 2d Res. of Mr. Vansittart.

The tenth* of the original Resolutions contains a clear, indisputable, and (as I have before described it) inevitable conclusion, from the state of the law, as accurately laid down in the preceding Resolutions, coupled with the notorious and undisputed fact of the high price of bullion. The truth of the averment contained in this Resolution is not directly denied. The dispute is only whether that which is admitted to be true is not nevertheless unfit to be recorded. It is not denied that the exchangeable value of bank notes is at this moment considerably less than their denominative value, if those values respectively be measured in gold or silver; but it is disputed whether gold or silver be the fit measure of the value of bank notes. This is in effect the whole of the argument, not upon this Resolution only, but upon the whole in dispute. It is the single point on which all our discussions turn.

I have already discussed this point so much at length, and have so nearly (as I am afraid) exhausted the patient indulgence of the Committee, that I do not think myself at liberty here to recapitulate the arguments upon it. I will content myself with asking of those who maintain a contrary opinion, and particularly of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Vansittart,) "If the precious metals, and particularly that one which is the legal standard of the currency of the country, be not the proper measure of the value of that currency, what is?" The right honourable gentleman has his answer ready in his third Proposition: and a most curious one it is.† "Public estimation" is, according to the right honourable gentleman, the true standard measure of the value of a currency; and the common measure of the two parts of a currency as compared with each other. If I felt upon this question with the spirit of a partisan—if I had been a member of the Bullion Committee, and were responsible for their Report, I should say, that the right honourable gentleman's third Proposition was absolutely beyond my hopes. Speaking impartially, I must say, that if I had seen this third Proposition any where but where it is, fairly printed and numbered in the right honourable gentleman's series, I should have thought it an invention of his antagonists, calculated to place the fallacy of his doctrine in the most glaring and ridiculous point of view, but carrying the license of exaggeration rather beyond pardonable limits, and defeating its purpose, by the grossness of the caricature. I would have taken no other person's word than the right honourable gentleman's own, that he, a man of science, a man of practical knowledge and experience, was the author of this Proposition.

This Proposition, however, is not now regularly before us. I think it absolutely incredible that it should ever be brought be-

* See Res. 10, of Mr. Horner. † See 3d Res. of Mr. Vansittart.

fore us for our direct consideration and adoption. It is now only to be viewed as the contrast and contradiction of the tenth Resolution of the honourable and learned gentleman; as intended to divert us by the prospect of something better from sanctioning that Resolution. And how does it effect that purpose? By showing us that, if we will let that Resolution alone, and not unsettle the public mind by resolving any thing at all about the measurement of the value of bank notes, there is already a sufficient rule for the just estimation of their value. What is that rule? "Public estimation." Good. And who is the party whose opinion is to be settled? The public. To whom do they appeal? To the House of Commons. The public opinion is divided; the public appeal to the House of Commons for judgment; and the House of Commons, after gravely hearing the arguments on both sides, delivers, not its own decision of the question in dispute, but a decree that the opinion of the public has already decided it.

Is this (I do not say) wise, judicious, satisfactory? I ask if it be intelligible; if it be not a mockery of the public; a degradation of our own character, and an abdication of our own functions?

Again I say, I cannot, will not believe, that we shall ever be seriously called upon to vote this third Proposition.

But even so, we must not leave this main point of inquiry undetermined, nor our determination upon it unrecorded. The tenth of the original Resolutions contains the just and indisputable inference from the known law and the acknowledged facts of the case. Till the indentures of the Mint be altered, and the statutes which sanction them repealed, definite weight of precious metal constitutes the true standard of our currency. By that standard, while it subsists in law, every species of our currency must be measured. Measured by that standard, bank notes have not at present a value equal to their denomination. Unless the premises can be denied, it is vain to dispute the conclusion. And this conclusion, if it be true, it is our bounden duty solemnly to record.

These ten Resolutions, therefore, expound the law of our currency; and establish the fact of the actual depreciation of that part of it which consists in paper.

Here I confess I should be contented to leave the matter: conceiving that the remedy to be applied to the evil may best be proposed by the Executive Government; and that the causes of it, though to my mind obvious and manifest, yet are not as capable of certain and demonstrative proof, as the fact of its existence.

I have myself no doubt of the truth of the honourable and learned gentleman's* eleventh Resolution. But I am not pre-

*See Res. 11, of Mr. Horner.

pared to affirm it by my vote. I think that, unlike, in this respect, to those which have preceded it, it asserts more than it proves; and I think it implies a degree of blame upon the Bank, which I am not ready to impute to that body.

When it is stated that the depreciation of bank notes is owing to an excessive issue, and that the excessive issue has been produced by a want of check and control, it is difficult not to construe such a statement as imputing to the Bank a heavy responsibility both for the excess of their issues, and for a neglect of those precautions by which such excess might have been prevented. But the check and control which are said to have been wanting, may have been, and in point of fact were, in part at least, extrinsic to the Bank. The main check was the payment of their notes in specie upon demand: for the discontinuance of this check the Bank is obviously not responsible. If indeed I could agree with my right honourable friend (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) in considering the question of excess as independent of that of depreciation, and as capable of being satisfactorily proved or disproved, otherwise than through the depreciation, I could not affirm the fact of an excessive issue without imputing to the Bank the blame of having intentionally produced that excess. But the check of cash payments once removed—which was, as I apprehended, the only infallible guard against excess, I know of no test by which the Bank could ascertain the fact that their issues had become excessive, except by that of their paper having become depreciated. The degree and the long continuance of the unfavourableness of the exchange strongly indicate—and the high price of bullion incontrovertably proves—the depreciation; the depreciation proves the excess. But such being the order of the demonstration, it is not till the fact of depreciation was established that I could consider that of an excessive issue as proved: and it would not be until such excess should have been persevered in against better knowledge, that I should think it just to animadvert upon the conduct of the Bank in the sense of this Resolution.

Besides, I confess I think it unnecessary. I cannot help being satisfied, that without any specific resolution on the subject of excess, the effect of this debate, should the first ten Resolutions be adopted—nay, I cannot help hoping that the effect of the debate itself—will be to correct that evil.

For this purpose, however, it is undoubtedly desirable, that the Bank should be disabused of some notions which it appears to entertain, and of others which have been suggested in this debate; at least if those notions are, as they appear to my understanding, entirely erroneous. "It is impossible that there should be an excess in the issue of bank notes," say the Bank, because those notes are never issued except upon solid security—the se-

curity of real mercantile transactions." Surely it cannot be necessary to show that, although this may be an adequate precaution against loss to the Bank, it is none against an excessive issue. It surely cannot be contended, that every mercantile transaction, that is to say, every object of commerce, may be represented to its full value in the paper currency of the country—and represented not once only, but as often as it changes hands—without any inconvenient augmentation of the mass of that currency. A. sells to B. a bale of cloth, or a hogshead of sugar, and receives from B. a bill of exchange payable in two months. Here is a bill founded upon a real mercantile transaction. A. carries B.'s bill to the Bank for discount; and a bank note to the amount of the bill is sent into circulation. Next day B. transfers his goods to C., and receives from C. a similar bill of exchange. Here is another bill founded on a real mercantile transaction. Like the former, it is carried to the Bank; and, like it, is the cause of adding a bank note of the same amount to the circulation. Is it not plain that this transaction may be almost indefinitely repeated, till the bale of cloth or the hogshead of sugar is represented a hundred fold in the currency of the country? The security of the Bank is not in the rule of its issue, but in the solvency of the several parties. This may guard their notes against depreciation from discredit; but what tendency has it to secure them from depreciation by excess?

"It is impossible," others have said, "that there should be an excess, when the mass of property to be circulated in this country—the rents of land, the profits of trade, the expenditure of the state, and the receipt of the revenue—are grown and daily growing to an amount so much beyond all former experience." "The amount of the circulating medium," it is said, "so far from having increased in a ratio equal to that of these several enormous demands for its employment, bears an infinitely smaller proportion to those demands than it has done at former periods of our history. It cannot therefore be in excess." This proposition has been much dwelt upon by many gentlemen who have spoken in this debate; and the difficulty of dealing with it lies in this—that on neither side of the comparison are what it assumes as *data*, fixed and certain; that, on the one side, the total amount of the currency of the country, including paper of all kinds, is necessarily unknown; and on the other side, who is there (as I have before had occasion to ask) that shall pretend to estimate with accuracy the aggregate amount of all the private transactions of the country? The peremptory inference that excess is impossible, is surely not to be drawn with confidence from premises necessarily conjectural.

In one sense indeed, which, however, I can hardly suppose to

be intended, it may be true that there never can be any such thing as excess or superabundance of currency in a country: it cannot be superabundant, if you do not care for its depreciation. Suppose for instance, ten millions sufficient to carry on all the transactions of the country—fabricate fifteen millions of paper instead of ten, the whole fifteen will circulate:—the only consequence will be, that the commodities for which it is exchanged will rise fifty per cent. in their nominal price. Make those fifteen millions twenty; the addition will in like manner be absorbed into the enhanced prices of commodities. Excess of currency cannot be proved to the conviction of those who will not admit depreciation to be the proof of it.

But again, if we were to allow the accuracy and certainty of all the data that are assumed by those persons who have relied on this argument; to allow whatever amount they please for the pecuniary transactions of the country, public and private; to allow them to fix where they please, the amount of the currency; and to assume that its actual amount at the present moment, consisting, as it does, almost exclusively of paper, is not greater—is even less—than when it consisted in part, and in great part, of gold;—still it would remain for them, before they could infer the impossibility of excess, to show, that there was no improved mode of carrying on the transactions of the country, which facilitated and quickened all pecuniary transfers, and made a less quantity of currency perform what had required a greater amount before;—it would remain for them to show that the very substitution of paper for gold did not greatly contribute to this facility; that a bank note of one hundred pounds would not perform in a given space of time an infinitely greater number of operations in exchange of commodities, than an equal sum in the more bulky and less transferable shape of guineas.

That these or any other arguments can disprove the possibility of excess, I utterly deny—and I trust that the Bank has, by this time, ceased to believe. On the other hand, that the existence of excess can be proved by the converse of these arguments, or that any conclusive inference can be drawn from the positive amount of paper in circulation, or from the comparison of that amount, either with the amount of currency in circulation at any former time, or with that of the pecuniary transactions, revenue and expenditure of the country—I do not pretend.

The currency might be increased or diminished in any assignable degree, without affording any inference fairly conclusive upon the point in question, unless that diminution or increase were accompanied by a variation of its value. Whether that value has or has not varied, is therefore the sole question. It is the point from which we set out, and that to which we must return. And

as it is one which is capable of being either proved or disproved directly, they who argue about it analogically, instead of directly, afford a strong indication of their own distrust in the soundness of their reasoning.

That excessive issue has therefore been the cause of depreciation, I entertain no doubt. And although, for the reasons which I have given, I do not think it necessary to declare this fact in a distinct Resolution, I trust that the statement of principles in those Resolutions which precede, and those which follow, is sufficient to answer every practical purpose of such a declaration.

The twelfth Resolution simply records a fact, about which there is no dispute—the unfavourable state of the exchanges.

The thirteenth Resolution attributes this unfavourable state of the exchanges, in a great measure, to the depreciation of the relative value of the currency of this country, as compared with that of other countries; without however excluding the operation of other causes.

The fourteenth* declares it to be the duty of the Bank, under the present circumstances, to take the state of foreign exchanges, as well as the price of bullion, into their view, in regulating the amount of their issues.

The twelfth Resolution requires no comment.

To the thirteenth and fourteenth, however the right honourable gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Vansittart) may object, my right honourable friend (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) must agree. He must agree, at least, unless he thinks either that the depreciation of our paper currency is a good thing in itself; or that, being an evil, it is productive of good by which it is more than counterbalanced. He must agree to these Resolutions: for he admits that the reduction of the amount of Bank paper would have a tendency to set right the exchanges. The state of the exchanges, therefore, is not, in his opinion, as it is in that of others, wholly independent of the amount of the Bank issues, and unaffected by it. If the exchanges are affected by the issues of the Bank, and affect in their turn, as they undoubtedly do, and as by some they are thought to do exclusively, the price of gold, and the general commercial interests of the country, the state of the exchanges cannot be altogether a matter of indifference in any question respecting the amount to which the Bank issues should be carried. But the Bank have told us distinctly, that they do not advert to the exchanges with a view to regulate their issues. Their reason for not doing so, they state to be, that they do not consider the amount of their issues, and the state of the exchanges, as having any connexion, or bearing in any degree upon each other. In

* See Res. 12, 13, and 14, of Mr. Horner.

this opinion, my right honourable friend (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) thinks, as I think, that the Bank is wrong. He must, therefore, naturally agree with me in the necessity and expediency of correcting their error on this subject. Consequently, I can anticipate no objection on his part to the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth Resolutions.

The fifteenth* Resolution cannot be opposed by any man, who is not prepared to go the full length of the argument, that excess of paper currency is a thing of itself physically impossible, or who is not desirous of converting the temporary suspension of cash payments into a permanent system. With these exceptions, every man must concur in the opinion, that the convertibility upon demand of paper into coin, is the only permanent and certain security against excess in the issue of paper; and must be anxious that this principle, having been called in question, should be unequivocally affirmed. More especially must those persons be anxious for such an affirmation, who are prepared to vote for the last but one of the propositions of the right honourable gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Vansittart;) in which the expediency of returning to cash payments as quickly as possible, is so clearly and properly recognized. I have already declared that I am one of those who concur in that proposition; and who would not object to voting, at the same time, for the concluding proposition of the right honourable gentleman, which declares the inexpediency of reverting to cash payments at the present moment: but to those propositions, the Resolutions of the honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. Horner,) which I have already discussed, and especially this fifteenth Resolution, appear to me to form the best and most natural introduction.

I now come to the concluding Resolution of the honourable and learned gentleman,† and that with respect to which alone I differ from him to the extent of being compelled to vote against it. Agreeing with him as I do in all the main principles of his argument; admitting, as I do, that the evil which he has denounced, exists, and that he and his fellow-labourers have traced it to its source; admitting also that it requires remedy, I am certainly bound to explain why I cannot go along with him in his practical conclusion: and I will endeavour to explain myself upon this point, I hope, to his satisfaction.

The object of this Resolution is to change the term of the restriction upon cash payments at the Bank; and to ascertain, though not necessarily to shorten, the period of its duration.

I have already said, that, throughout the whole of this business, I consider the Bank as entirely passive. The restriction

*See the 15th Resolution of Mr. Horner. †See Res. 16, of Mr. Horner.

was originally imposed upon them by Parliament. By Parliament it was renewed more than once during the continuance of the former war, after the Bank had declared its readiness to pay in cash;—by Parliament it was re-enacted at the recommencement of the war;—and with a policy, which I deeply regret, but for which the Bank is no way answerable, was made commensurate in its continuance with the continuance of the war. If, therefore, the error has prevailed of considering this as a war measure, it is not to the Bank, but to the Parliament, that this error ought to be imputed. The Bank was taught by Parliament so to consider the subject; and it is hard to visit upon the Bank the consequences of our own error.

Nothing can be more obvious than that, considering its own interests as a commercial corporation, the Bank may have thought itself not only warranted, but obliged to adopt a different course of conduct, with a view to prepare for the resumption of cash payments at a period of six months after a definite treaty of peace, from that which they would have adopted with a view to a different period, definite in point of time, but independent of the consideration of peace or war. It is possible that, taking the colour of their opinions from Parliament, and considering the war as the cause of restriction, and peace, whenever it should be made, as certain to supersede the necessity of it, they may have thought that the six months which are to intervene between the conclusion of the definite treaty and the call upon them for cash, would be sufficient to enable them to replenish their coffers; however they might have exhausted them in the mean time, by a liberal assistance to Government, and however they might have omitted to replace their issues by the purchase of gold in the market. I do not say that such has been the conduct of the Bank: I say, that if such has been their conduct, it is perfectly natural and excusable. We know, indeed, in point of fact, that they have omitted to purchase bullion. I regret this—because I think that continued purchases, on their part, would have tended to keep their notes and the precious metals more nearly on a par. But we have nothing to do with the policy on which the Bank conducts its own private concerns; we have no right to examine into the state of its coffers; and it would be highly improper and mischievous to do so. We had a right to require, before the Bank restriction, payment of their notes in specie on demand: that right we have voluntarily forgone for purposes, and with a view to interests, not of the Bank, but of our own; and all that we have now strictly a right to require of the Bank is, that it should be ready to resume its cash payments at the period which Parliament has fixed for that resumption.

It would, therefore, in my opinion, be unjust to shorten, by

any compulsory measure, the duration, or to change the nature of the term for which the restriction has been enacted.

But I also think the change would be impolitic, as well as unjust. I am for adhering to our bargain; although I do not think it a very wise one. I am afraid, that if we propose to alter it for our own convenience, we should not only not obtain our object, but by throwing loose the terms of the existing agreement, should risk the non-performance of that agreement when the period for exacting it arrives.

That our first object might be defeated by the Bank—if we could suppose that the Directors of the Bank (which, however, I am very far from believing) were capable of defeating it by design,—is sufficiently obvious. But even innocently, and with the sincerest desire to conform themselves to the express wish of Parliament, the Bank Directors, suddenly driven out of the course which they may have adopted in reliance upon the former act, by this new and unlooked-for interposition, might, by the very measures which that interposition rendered necessary, create a state of things which would oblige us hastily to recall it.

We read in the Report of the Bullion Committee of the alarming effects of a too sudden and violent contraction of the Bank issues. We feel at the present moment the ill effect of an uncontrolled augmentation of them. The result of the present discussion must and will be (I cannot doubt but it will) to check the latter evil: but I am afraid, that, by fixing peremptorily a new period for opening the cash coffers of the Bank, we should incur a danger of the former kind to an extent of which the consequences cannot be foreseen. Of these consequences, that which I most apprehend, which I think the most certain, and consider as the most to be deprecated, would be that, the act under which the restriction is now limited being repealed, the new limitation would be found impracticable; and that we should thus be left without the prospect of any definite period for the restoration of the sound and natural state of our currency.

In the present state of this discussion, I shall be well contented if we come out of the Committee with the principles of our money system unequivocally recognised, and with the prospect of our return to the practice of them only not impaired. Of that issue I will not despair. For the rest, I am willing to leave to the good sense and good intentions of the Bank, and to the suggestions of the executive government, that gradual retrenchment of the excess of our paper currency, which can alone correct those evils, the existence of which we all agree in acknowledging. I impute nothing to the Bank for whatever has taken place amiss; I rely confidently on their disposition to amend it. As to the Government, I am quite sure, that whatever may be the

present feelings of my right honourable friend, no obstinate attachment to preconceived opinions will prevent him from looking at the whole subject with impartiality, or from setting himself, with that solicitude which its importance demands, to review and to re-consider all the facts and arguments connected with it, and to adapt his conduct (his counsel, rather—for it is in that way alone that he can properly influence the Bank) to whatever may, after full deliberation, be his own final and sincere conviction. I think that, after full deliberation, he cannot be convinced but aright.

If I am asked "What, will you then be satisfied, after all, with doing nothing?—with leaving things as they are?" I answer—We the House of Commons do perhaps as much as at this moment we can do; we do something practical, something essentially useful and important, if we strengthen, by a declaration of our opinion, the foundations of the money system of the country; if we re-establish the credit of the true standard of our currency, at a moment when it is attempted to be brought into doubt and disrepute.

The Bullion Committee will not have sat in vain, if its report shall have recalled the attention of Parliament to that system, and that standard, which it was never the intention of Parliament to abandon. Nor will this House have mis-spent its time, if, at the conclusion of this long and anxious investigation, it shall give its sanction to the principles of the Bullion Committee, so far as the system of our money and the standard of our currency are concerned, even although it may withhold that sanction from the practical measure which the report of the Committee recommends.

The Committee then divided on the first of Mr. Horner's Resolutions—

Ayes - - - - - -	75
Noes - - - - - -	151
Majority against it - -	76

The fourteen next resolutions were then put and negatived without a division; and on the sixteenth resolution the Committee again divided:—

Ayes - - - - - -	45
Noes - - - - - -	180
Majority against it - -	135

BULLION COMMITTEE.

MAY 13th, 1811.

Mr. Vansittart moved the following Resolutions:—

First.—Resolved, that it is the opinion of this Committee, that the right of establishing and regulating the legal money of this Kingdom, hath at all times been a royal prerogative, vested in the Sovereigns thereof, who have from time to time exercised the same, as they have seen fit, in changing such legal money, or altering and varying the value, and enforcing or restraining the circulation thereof, by proclamation, or in concurrence with the estates of the realm, by Act of Parliament: and that such legal money cannot lawfully be defaced, melted down, or exported.

Second.—That it is the opinion of the Committee, that the promissory notes of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England, are engagements to pay certain sums of money, in the legal coin of this kingdom; and that, for more than a century past, the said Governor and Company were at all times ready to discharge such promissory notes in legal coin of the realm, until restrained from so doing on the 25th February, 1797, by an order of council confirmed by Act of Parliament.

Third.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the promissory notes of the Company have hitherto been, and are at this time, held in public estimation to be equivalent to the legal coin of the realm, and generally accepted as such in all pecuniary transactions to which such coin is lawfully applicable.

Fourth.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that, at various periods, as well before as since the said restriction, the Exchange between Great Britain and several other countries have been unfavourable to Great Britain; and that during such periods, the prices of gold and silver bullion, especially of such gold bullion as could be legally exported, have frequently risen above the mint price; and the coinage of money at the mint has been either wholly suspended or greatly diminished in amount: and that such circumstances have usually occurred when expensive naval and military operations have been carried on abroad, and in times of public danger and alarm, or when large importations of grain from foreign parts have taken place.

Fifth.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that such unfavourable exchanges, and rise in the price of bullion, occurred to a greater or less degree, during the wars carried on by King William the Third and Queen Anne, and also during part of the Seven Years' war, and of the American war, and during the war and scarcity of grain in 1795 and 1796, when the difficulty of procuring cash or bullion increased to such a degree, that on the 25th of February, 1797, the Bank of England was restrained from making payments in cash, by an Order of Council, confirmed and continued to the present time by divers Acts of Parliament; and the exchanges became still more unfavourable, and the price of bullion higher, during the scarcity which prevailed for two years previous to the peace of Amiens.

Sixth.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the unfavourable state of the exchanges, and the high price of bullion, do not, in any of the instances above referred to, appear to have been produced by the restriction upon cash payments at the Bank of England, or by any excess in the issue of bank notes; inasmuch as all the said instances, except the last, occurred previously to any restriction on such cash payments; and because, as far as appears by such information as has been procured, the price of bullion has frequently been highest, and the exchanges most unfavourable, at periods when the issues of bank

notes have been considerably diminished; and they have been afterwards restored to their ordinary rates, although those issues have been increased.

Seventh.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that during the period of nearly seventy-eight years, ending with the 1st of January, 1796, and previous to the aforesaid restriction, of which period accounts are before the House, the price of standard gold in bars had been at or under the Mint price twenty-eight years and five months, and above the said Mint price forty-eight years and eleven months; and that the price of foreign gold coin has been at or under 3*l.* 18*s.* per ounce thirty-six years and seven months, and above the said price thirty-nine years and three months; and that during the remaining intervals, no prices are stated. And that, during the same period of seventy-eight years, the price of standard silver appears to have been at or under the Mint price three years and two months only.

Eighth.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that during the latter part, and for some months after the close of the American War, during the years 1781, 1782, and 1783, the exchange with Hamburgh fell from 34. 1. to 31. 5. being about eight per cent.; and the price of foreign gold rose from 3*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* to 4*l.* 2*s.* 3*d.* per ounce, and the price of dollars from 5*s.* 4½*d.* per ounce to 5*s.* 11½*d.*; and that the Bank notes in circulation were reduced between March 1782 and September 1782, from 9,160,000*l.* to 5,905,000*l.*, being a diminution of above one-third, and continued (with occasional variations) at such reduced rate until December, 1784; and that the exchange with Hamburgh rose to 34. 6., and the price of gold fell to 3*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* and dollars to 5*s.* 1½*d.* per ounce before the 25th of February, 1787, the amount of Bank notes being then increased to 8,688,000*l.*

Ninth.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the amount of Bank notes in February, 1787, was 8,688,000*l.* and in February, 1791, 11,699,000*l.*, and that during the same period, the sum of 10,704,000*l.* was coined in gold, and that the exchange with Hamburgh rose about 3 per cent.

Tenth.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the average amount of Bank notes in the year 1795 was about 11,497,000*l.*, and on the 25th of February, 1797, was reduced to 8,640,000*l.* during which time the exchange with Hamburgh fell from 36. to 35., being about 3 per cent.; and the said amount was increased to 11,855,000*l.* exclusive of 1,542,000*l.* in notes of 1*l.* and 2*l.* each, on the 1st February, 1798, during which time the exchange rose to 38. 2. being about 9 per cent.

Eleventh.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the average price of wheat per quarter in England in the year 1798, was 50*s.* 3*d.*; in 1799, 67*s.* 5*d.*; in 1800, 113*s.* 7*d.*; in 1801, 118*s.* 3*d.*; and in 1802, 67*s.* 5*d.* The amount of Bank notes of 5*l.* and upwards, was—

	£.		£.	£.		£.
In 1798, about	10,920,400,	and under	5,	1,786,000	making together	12,706,400
In 1799 "	12,048,790	"		1,626,110		13,674,900
In 1800 "	13,421,920	"		1,831,820		15,253,740
In 1801 "	13,454,370	"		2,715,180		16,169,550
In 1802 "	13,917,980	"		3,136,470		17,054,450

That the exchange with Hamburgh was, in January 1798, 38. 2.; January 1799, 37. 7.; January 1800, 32.; January 1801, 29. 8.; being in the whole a fall of above 22 per cent.; in January 1802, 32. 2.; and December 1802, 34., being in the whole a rise of about 13 per cent.

Twelfth.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that during all the periods above referred to, previous to the commencement of the war with France in 1793, the principal states of Europe preserved their independence, and the trade and correspondence thereof were carried on conformably to the accustomed law of nations; and that, although from the time of the invasion of Holland by the French in 1795, the trade of Great Britain with the Continent was

in part circumscribed and interrupted, it was carried on freely with several of the most considerable ports, and commercial correspondence was maintained at all times previous to the summer of 1807.

Thirteenth.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that since the month of November 1806, and especially since the summer of 1807, a system of exclusion has been established against the British trade on the Continent of Europe under the influence and terror of the French power, and enforced with a degree of violence and rigour never before attempted; whereby all trade and correspondence between Great Britain and the Continent of Europe has (with some occasional exceptions, chiefly in Sweden and in certain parts of Spain and Portugal) been hazardous, precarious and expensive, the trade being loaded with excessive freights to foreign shipping, and other unusual charges; and that the trade of Great Britain with the United States of America, has also been uncertain and interrupted; and that in addition to these circumstances, which have greatly affected the course of payments between this country and other nations, the naval and military expenditure of the United Kingdom in foreign parts has, for three years past, been very great, and the price of grain, owing to a deficiency in the crops, higher than at any time whereof the accounts appear before Parliament, except during the scarcity of 1800 and 1801, and that large quantities thereof have been imported.

Fourteenth.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the amount of currency necessary for carrying on the transactions of the country must bear a proportion to the extent of its trade and its public revenue and expenditure; and that the annual amount of the exports and imports of Great Britain, on an average of three years, ending 5th January, 1797, was 48,732,651*l.* official value; the average amount of revenue paid into the Exchequer, including monies raised by lottery, 18,759,165*l.*; and of loans, 18,409,842*l.*, making together 37,169,007*l.*; and the average amount of the total expenditure of Great Britain 42,855,111*l.*; and that the average amount of Bank notes in circulation (all of which were for 5*l.* or upwards) was about 10,782,780*l.*; and that 57,274,617*l.* had been coined in gold during His Majesty's reign, of which a large sum was then in circulation.

That the annual amount of the exports and imports of Great Britain, on an average of three years, ending 5th January, 1811, supposing the imports from the East Indies and China to have been equal to their amount in the preceding year, was 77,971,318*l.*, the average amount of revenue paid into the Exchequer, 62,763,746*l.*, and of loans, 12,673, 548*l.*, making together 75,437,294*l.*; and the average amount of the total expenditure of Great Britain 82,205,066*l.*; and that the average amount of Bank notes above 50*l.* was about 14,265,850*l.*, and of notes under 5*l.* about 5,283,320*l.*; and that the amount of gold coin in circulation was greatly diminished.

Fifteenth.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the situation of this kingdom, in respect of its political and commercial relations with foreign countries, as above stated, is sufficient, without any change in the internal value of its currency, to account for the unfavourable state of the foreign exchanges, and for the high price of bullion.

Sixteenth.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it is highly important that the restriction on the payments in cash of the Bank of England should be removed, whenever the political and commercial relations of the country shall render it compatible with the public interest.

Seventeenth.—That it is the opinion of this Committee, that under the circumstances affecting the political and commercial relations of this kingdom with foreign countries, it would be highly inexpedient and dangerous now to fix a definite period for the removal of the restriction of cash payments at the Bank of England prior to the term already fixed by the Act 44 Geo. III. c. 1, of six months after the conclusion of a definite treaty of peace.

Mr. Canning.—I should not have thought it necessary, Sir, to trouble the Committee with the expression of my sentiments in this night's debate, after the able and lucid speech of the honourable gentleman who spoke last (Mr. H. Thornton,) if I had not been desirous of addressing myself more particularly than he has done to the propositions now brought forward, in the shape of Resolutions, by the right honourable gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Vansittart,) which are the immediate subject of this night's deliberation.

I should, indeed, be unpardonable, if, after having already trespassed at so great length on the indulgence of the Committee, when the original Resolutions were under discussion, I should again expatiate upon the general subject which I conceive to have been disposed of by the vote of the former night. The present, however, is a very different question from that which was then decided. We decided by our former vote, not to adopt the practical recommendation of the Bullion Committee. In that vote I concurred. We decided farther, not to sanction and record the declaration of the principles of our money system, on which the recommendation of the Bullion Committee was founded. In that decision I did not concur, and it is one which I deeply regret; because those principles were, as I think, correctly defined in the original Resolutions; and because I think that a declaration of them, under the sanction of this House, would have been eminently useful at the present moment.

But the House having thought otherwise, and having rejected all the Resolutions of the honourable and learned gentleman; my next wish would have been, that with that rejection the whole discussion should have terminated. Why pursue it farther? The Bullion Committee is defeated; its doctrines are, at least for the present, set aside. Why could not its antagonists be contented with this negative victory? Why must they aim at the unnecessary and perilous triumph of substituting their own doctrines in the place of those which they have discomfited?

In the majority of the former night were numbered many persons who profess to disapprove of abstract propositions. Those persons must, in common consistency, oppose the propositions of the right honourable gentleman, which are to the full as abstract as the original Resolutions. In that majority were many who not only did not agree with the right honourable gentleman opposite to me, in denying the existence of a depreciation of the paper currency; but who distinctly declared their entire conviction of the existence of that depreciation, and only thought it too notorious and undeniable to require the formality of a parliamentary affirmation. Can those persons be expected by the right honourable gentleman to concur in the Resolutions which he is now

bringing forward? Others again there were, who, neither admitting nor denying the depreciation, were desirous only of escaping from the necessity of a decision either way: contending that no result could be so satisfactory, as the discussion itself was mischievous. Will those persons thank the right honourable gentleman for reviving a discussion which, if it had finally closed on Friday night, would have left them in quiet possession of their doubts,—doubts which any man might very reasonably prefer to a decision in support of the right honourable gentleman's third Resolution?

Independently of this violence to the feelings and judgments of his supporters, has the right honourable gentleman no consideration for the reputation of the House of Commons itself, when he calls upon us, by voting that Resolution, to affirm a proposition, which, I will venture to say, there is no man who, without the doors of the House, could affirm with a grave countenance?

The third Resolution is the essential part, the soul and spirit, of the right honourable gentleman's system. Of the other Resolutions, the first and the fifteenth are the only two, which, in my view of the subject, appear to require particular observation. The remainder, from the fourth to the fourteenth, inclusive, contain a vast variety of statements, historical, political, commercial, financial and agricultural; some accurate, some inaccurate; but all valuable rather from their intrinsic erudition, than from any very near connexion with the subject before us. With none of these, therefore, shall I presume to meddle.

But, before I proceed to the three Resolutions in which the whole of the right honourable gentleman's argument lies, I must say a word or two in answer to a challenge of the right honourable gentlemen as to his sixteenth and seventeenth Resolutions.* He states, and states very truly, that I had declared myself ready to vote for those two Resolutions, provided they were prefaced and introduced, not by his own preceding Resolutions, but by the first ten of the original Resolutions moved by the honourable and learned Chairman of the Bullion Committee. The right honourable gentleman triumphs in this declaration of mine, as if it had been a concession to his argument, instead of an exposition of my own. He has caught me in a great inconsistency it seems. And what is this inconsistency? That I am ready to affirm two things irreconcilable with each other? That I would vote premises that did not bear out their conclusion, or a conclusion contradictory to its premises? No such thing; but, simply, that I am ready to adopt the premises suggested by one man, and the conclusion drawn by another. This is what he considers as an inconsistency;

* See Res. 16, 17.

as if consistency had reference not to the compatibility of doctrines, but to the identity of persons holding them.

It is true that if the first ten of the original Resolutions had been carried, I should not have objected to adding to them the two concluding propositions of the right honourable gentleman. But I cannot consent to vote for them by themselves, nor if introduced by his own preceding propositions.

I am not, any more than the right honourable gentleman himself, for changing the period now fixed by law for the repeal of the Bank restriction. I could therefore have been contented to vote for the sixteenth and seventeenth of the right honourable gentleman's propositions, if those principles, respecting the standard of our money, which were luminously and accurately developed in the Resolutions moved by the Chairmain of the Bullion Committee had been previously recognised and sanctioned. The truth of these principles once admitted, there might have been comparatively little danger in deciding either way the question, whether the period for returning to the strict practical application of them should be accelerated. But to decide that question in a way which should imply a denial of the truth of those principles, would be productive of a mischief than which none can be greater, except, indeed, that of adopting the right honourable gentleman's Resolutions, in which the truth of those principles is denied, not by implication, but directly.

To have abstained from adopting the original Resolutions, provided no others were agreed to in their room, would be to leave the true principles of our money system unvouched indeed, but not discredited, and to leave the Bank restriction precisely as it stands. To declare the continuance of the Bank restriction, by adopting the right honourable gentleman's sixteenth and seventeenth resolutions only, without adverting at the same time to the principles laid down by the Bullion Committee, would be to leave it matter of doubt whether the restriction was continued because those principles were false, or only because their force was overborne by considerations of expediency. This result would be unsatisfactory enough. To adopt and record the right honourable gentleman's premises as the foundation of his own conclusion, would be, in his view, no doubt, perfectly consistent; but it would be a consistency obtained at no less an expense than that of abrogating, so far as the Resolutions of this House can abrogate it, the whole system under which the currency of this country has been hitherto regulated and preserved in a state of purity and integrity, equally creditable to the character of the state, and to the increasing vigilance and anxiety of Parliament.

In matters which have been frequently the object of parliamentary revision, it is no light thing to come to Resolutions of a

general and abstract nature without taking the former proceedings of Parliament for our guide.

If they who dissented from the doctrines of the Bullion Committee thought the errors of that Committee the more formidable on account of the authority by which they were inculcated, how much more cautious ought we to be in ascertaining, beyond possibility of doubt, the truth of those doctrines which we are now called upon to promulgate by the much higher authority of the House itself?

A declaration of the law by one of the branches of the Legislature ought not to be made at all but for a grave and adequate object; and, at least, ought to be unimpeachably correct.

Let us examine the right honourable gentleman's first Resolution, in this double view. First, let us see how far it is positively correct; and secondly, what is the object to which it is directed, and how far it attains that object.*

That the right of establishing and regulating the legal money of this kingdom is a prerogative of the Sovereign, is most undoubtedly true: that the Sovereigns of this kingdom have at different times altered the value of such money, is also true—if by value be intended only the denomination of such money, that is, the rate at which any given quantity of gold or silver should be current within these realms. But "value," absolutely stated, is by no means a correct expression. To alter the positive intrinsic value of the precious metals, or make it other than it is by nature, and by the relation which those metals bear to other commodities, is a power, which neither kings nor parliaments have hitherto, so far as I know, arrogated; but the existence of which, to be sure, would at once put an end to all dispute, and give to the right honourable gentleman, and those who side with him, a complete triumph. If value were, indeed, the offspring of authority, there is no doubt but that paper or pasteboard, or any viler material, might be raised by that authority to a level with gold. But the only power which Sovereigns have ever yet exercised or claimed, has been to fix the rate or "current" value of coin within their own dominions.

Nor is it merely an inaccuracy of expression to omit this qualification of the word "value." It is an inaccuracy which may lead to serious misconception in a case where the whole controversy turns upon this single question, "whether there be or be not an inherent inextinguishable value in the precious metals estimated according to their relation to other commodities generally, throughout the world; and independent of any arbitrary valuation, which positive edicts or enactments can affix to them?"

*See 1st Resolution.

The right honourable gentleman's proposition, as it stands, without the addition to the word "value" of the epithets "current" or "denominative," would go to favour the notion that edicts and enactments have this power: a notion so wild that it might seem almost unnecessary to guard against it, if it, or something very like it, were not in fact the foundation of almost all the right honourable gentleman's arguments.

He cannot, however, intend to avow such a notion. He will, therefore, I presume, have no objection to qualify the word "value," by the addition of one or other of the epithets which I have suggested. So qualified, the proposition, that the Sovereign has at different times varied the "current" or "denominative" value of the coin, would be true, and perfectly harmless.

The Resolution proceeds to state, that this has been done by proclamation, "or" by Act of Parliament. This is also a true proposition; but upon this also I must observe, that it is not stated with sufficient qualification. The Resolution seems to imply that the option between the two modes of proceeding is perfectly arbitrary; that Parliament may be either admitted into, or excluded from, a share in the operation, exactly according to the will and pleasure of the Crown. But, I would take the liberty of suggesting to the right honourable gentleman, that it was not enough to state the abstract principles and theory of the constitution; it was incumbent on him to state them as they have been acted upon, as they are modified by practice, as they are to be found, not in the proclamations of Henry the VIIIth, but in the statute book; in statutes of the last century; in those of the present reign.

The Sovereign (says the right honourable gentleman) can alter the value of the coin—but can he do that at the present moment, without consent of Parliament? Can he do it against existing Acts of Parliament? Can he, except by the aid and concurrence of Parliament, repeal the Acts of the 14th of the present reign, which were passed on occasion of the last recoinage of the gold; and which must be repealed or amended, if any alteration should be made in the current value of the guinea? Unquestionably the King, according to the theory of the prerogative, can, by his proclamation, reduce or raise the denomination of the curren coin. But, if by doing so, he would place his subjects in the dilemma of either disregarding his proclamation, or acting in contravention of an Act of Parliament, would it be in that case a sound or a safe statement of the law, to give a naked definition of the prerogative, without reference to the practical restrictions by which the exercise of it must necessarily be controlled?

Are the opinions of lawyers so settled and uniform upon this subject as to warrant the right honourable gentleman's sweeping

and unqualified assertion? Do lawyers agree that there is no limit to the power of the Crown in this respect? that the Crown may give what current value it pleases to coin, which it may debase at its pleasure?

I do not mean to assert that all such authorities are uniformly the other way: it would, perhaps, be difficult to name that branch of the prerogative which has not been exalted to an excess in the speeches or writings of some one or other of the great Crown lawyers who have spoken or written upon the prerogative. But such opinions, even if they were more general than they will be found to be, surely could not avail against positive statute.

"The *denomination*" (says Blackstone,) "or the value for which the coin is to pass current, is likewise in the breast of the King; and if any unusual pieces are coined, that value must be ascertained by proclamation. In order to fix the value, the weight and the fineness of the metal are to be taken into consideration together. When a given weight of gold or silver is of a given fineness, it is then of the true *standard*, and is called sterling. Of this sterling metal all the coin of the kingdom must be made by the statute 25 Edw. III. cap. 15; so that the King's prerogative seemeth not to extend to the debasing or enhancing the value of the coin below or above the sterling value: though Sir Matthew Hale appears to be of another opinion."

The right honourable gentleman may perhaps tell me that his opinion agrees with that of Sir Matthew Hale; to which Judge Blackstone here refers as seemingly more favourable to the prerogative than his own. But if he will look into that elaborate and instructive treatise, which contains an abstract of all the learning and all the history relating to our coinage—I mean the Letter of the late Earl of Liverpool to the King—he will there find in what respects the Legislature has limited the exercise of that prerogative, since the death of Sir Matthew Hale. He will find it stated that, even in Sir Matthew Hale's opinion, "though this great prerogative is unquestionable, it is certainly advisable that in the exercise of it, whenever any great change is intended to be made, the King should avail himself of the wisdom and support of his Parliament." "Sir Matthew Hale observes," says Lord Liverpool, "that it is neither safe nor honourable for the King to imbase his coin below sterling; if it be at any time done, it is fit to be done by the assent of Parliament: and he concludes, that on such occasions '*fieri non debuit, factum valet.*'"

Even if such were still the state of the prerogative, would it justify a Resolution of the House of Commons, which describes that prerogative as absolute and indefinite, and describes "the assent of Parliament" not as that with which, according to Sir Matthew Hale, "it is fit" that such alteration should be made, if

made at all; and without which, according to the same authority, "*fieri non debuit;*" but merely as that which it is optional with the Crown to ask or not to ask, according to its good pleasure? Would such a Resolution have befitted the House of Commons, even at the time when Sir Matthew Hale wrote? Is it possible to pass it now; when that prerogative, which by Sir Matthew Hale was considered as unfit to be exercised without consent of Parliament, stands actually limited by statute?

Let us now consider what is the object with a view to which this exposition of the law is made, and how far that object is attained by it.

The question in agitation is, whether our paper currency be or be not depreciated? The price of gold in that paper currency is adduced in proof of the depreciation. What answer is it to this question—what refutation is it of this proof—to say, "The King's prerogative can alter the value of the coin?"—Granted that it can. At least it has not done so in the present instance. The coin is not varied in value: the paper currency, it is contended, is. The King's prerogative has nothing to do with the paper of the Bank. The paper of the Bank is not (God forbid it ever should be!) the legal money of the realm. How, then, does the King's prerogative decide—how does it even affect—the question as to the depreciation of Bank paper? It can by no possibility affect it at all, unless the right honourable gentleman be prepared to address us in something like the following manner—"The King has a power to make whatever he pleases money; and to make that money of what value he pleases. If you murmur at this supposed depreciation of bank notes, beware that you do not provoke an exercise of the prerogative, which shall make those bank notes to all intents and purposes legal money; or which shall cure that pretended disparity between paper and gold about which you clamour so loudly, by raising the denomination of the coin."

Is this what the right honourable gentleman means to say? If so, though I do not think that there would be much wisdom in the measure, I admit that his Resolution is an apt and natural introduction to it. I can at least understand its application to the subject. I can see what is meant by it. But unless this be his meaning, I am at a loss to conceive how the assertion that the paper currency is actually depreciated, is disproved, or even touched, by the assertion of the King's prerogative to establish and alter at his pleasure the legal money of the realm.

The Resolutions on the subject of the coinage laws, which we rejected on a former night, and for which this of the right honourable gentleman is intended as a substitute, had a direct and sensible bearing upon the question in dispute. In affirming the

depreciation of the paper currency, it was necessary to define the standard by which such currency was to be measured. The honourable and learned mover of the original Resolutions did define it, and, as I think, with perfect truth as well as precision. Can it be the right honourable gentleman's intention, by stating with such laxity the absolute and indefinite power of the Crown over the legal money of the realm, to imply that, where every thing is liable to such arbitrary fluctuation, there can be no fixed standard by which to measure the value of the currency? If his argument be good for any thing, it can only be so by being pushed to this extent: but even then it affords no answer to the Resolutions of the honourable and learned gentleman. Those resolutions asserted that the paper currency is in a state of depreciation, if measured by the existing standard of our legal currency. The right honourable gentleman does not contradict this assertion; he passes it by; he says nothing at all as to what the standard of our currency really is; but contents himself with disparaging its fitness as a measure of value, by insinuating that, whatever it may be at the present moment, the King has, by his prerogative, an unlimited power of changing it.

But, again, even if the King has this power, it is not pretended that he has in point of fact thought fit to exercise it. If any part of our currency has been varied in its value, either in respect to another part of it, or in repect to the standard, it is not pretended that this has been done by the interposition of the Crown. The complaint is, however, that such a variation has in fact taken place in the value of Bank paper. What answer is it to this complaint, to say, that though the King has not, yet he might, if he pleased, have made a like variation in the current value of the coin?

There is, however, another operation of the prerogative, which, to make his definition complete, the right honourable gentleman ought to have noticed: but which he has altogether omitted, perhaps because he saw that it would bear inconveniently upon his argument: I mean the King's power of giving currency to foreign coin within his own dominions. Now one of the plainest illustrations of the actual depreciation of our paper currency has been derived from the change which has been recently made in the current value of the dollar.

"The King," says Mr. Justice Blackstone in the same part of his work to which I have already referred, "may also, by his proclamation, legitimate foreign coin, and make it current here; declaring at what value it shall be taken in payments. But this, I apprehend, ought to be by comparison with the standard of our own coin; otherwise the consent of Parliament will be necessary."

"This great prerogative," says Lord Liverpool in his Letter to the King, "which the Kings of this realm have immemorially enjoyed and exercised, of giving currency to the coins made at their mint, and sometimes to foreign coins, at a determinate rate or value, and of enhancing and debasing them at their pleasure, is of so important and delicate a nature, and the justice and honour of the Sovereign, as well as the interests of the people, are so deeply concerned in it, that it ought to be exercised with the greatest judgment and discretion."

We here see the limitations in point of law, which, in the opinion of so able a lawyer as Blackstone,—and those in point of prudence and discretion which, in the opinion of so profound a practical statesman as the Earl of Liverpool, would have governed the exercise of the prerogative of the Crown in giving currency to the dollar. Have these limitations, has this caution, been observed in fixing the rate at which the dollar now circulates? The intrinsic value of the dollar "by comparison with the standard of our own coin,"—as compared, for example, with the British crown piece—is nearly in the proportion of nine to ten. The current rate at which the dollar circulates, as compared with the crown piece, is now in the proportion of eleven to ten.

By what authority has so strange an anomaly been introduced into our money system?—an anomaly which, according to Blackstone, the Crown, in the exercise of its prerogative, is bound to avoid. By an ordinance of the Bank. The prerogative of the Crown, we have seen, might have given currency to the dollar: but it could only have done so at a rate proportionate to its intrinsic value, as compared with the standard of the realm; or for any deviation from that standard it must have obtained the concurrence of Parliament. But the thing is done. It is one of the main features of our present system. It makes one of the grounds of the complaint which the right honourable gentleman proposes to answer by the authoritative language of his first Resolution. And how does he answer it? By referring to the prerogative of the Crown as the authority by which alone the currency can be regulated; and yet omitting altogether a part of that prerogative, so essential to the present subject, as the power of giving currency to foreign coin! He omits it—Why?—Evidently because he could not state it, without acknowledging, at the same time, that the rules by which the exercise of that part of the prerogative has always been governed, have been entirely neglected in the issue of the dollar at its present rate; and because he could not make that acknowledgment without avowing the depreciation of our currency.

Before the late ordinance of the Bank, nine crown pieces would

have exchanged for ten dollars. Now, ten dollars cannot be had for less than eleven crowns. If this be not depreciation, what is it? Perhaps I shall be warned that this argument proves too much; for that the depreciation here established would be that of the lawful coin of the realm,—not of the paper currency, of which alone the depreciation is asserted.

I answer—the depreciation of the lawful coin in respect to the dollar is effected through the medium of the paper. If the crown piece and the dollar circulated together without the intervention of the paper, it would be impossible that they should bear to each other any other relation than that which arises naturally from their respective intrinsic values. It is by the intervention of the paper, which measures the one according to its nominal, the other according to its intrinsic value, that this relation is forcibly inverted, and the more valuable is degraded below the less valuable coin.

I shall probably be told, however, that the dollar is a mere token; it is no more than a promissory note in silver, which no man is bound to accept in payment. This is perfectly true: but it is a singular argument to be relied upon by the practical school, since it is no less true that the dollar, such as it is, constitutes in fact by far the greater part of the metallic currency now in circulation. In the same way it has been argued, that a bank note is not a legal tender—that no man is bound to take a bank note from his neighbour in satisfaction of a just debt. This also is true: but it is no less so that the public creditor is bound to receive bank notes, or at least can get nothing else, in payment of his demand upon the state; and it seems to be no great consolation to the public creditor to be assured that what he is compelled to take from the Government, nobody is compellable to take from him.

This being then practically the state of our currency, what satisfaction, I must again ask, does the first Resolution of the right honourable gentleman afford to those who complain of the depreciation of bank paper, by stating, and stating, as it appears, incorrectly, the money prerogatives of the Crown?—prerogatives, which, in respect to the bulk of our currency, the paper, have no operation at all; and which, in respect to the small portion of metallic currency which we possess, have been suffered to lie dormant and passive, while that currency has been regulated, by another authority, on principles directly contrary to those by which the Crown must have been guided in giving currency to a foreign coin.

This Resolution, therefore, the House of Commons cannot but reject: first, because it is defective as a definition of the prerogative which it affects to define; secondly, because it is wholly in-

applicable to the only points about which there is any dispute,—namely, bank paper, which is out of the province of the prerogative; and the foreign silver currency, of which in fact it has taken no cognizance; and lastly, because it is calculated, by implication at least, to exclude Parliament from all share in the regulation of a subject, in which, in all good times, Parliament has claimed it as a right, and felt it a duty, to interfere, whenever the occasion has called for its interference.

It is impossible to pass over the second Resolution without observing, that it remains liable to the objection which I took the liberty of making to it in a former debate.* The words "on demand" are still omitted: I trust, the right honourable gentleman intends to supply this omission. I must say, that the persisting in it would afford just ground of serious suspicion and alarm.

I now come to the main Resolution of all, the third. This it is that contains the sum and substance of all the right honourable gentleman's arguments and doctrines; and to which I cannot believe it possible, until the vote shall actually have passed, that any assembly of reasonable men can be persuaded to give their concurrence. The Resolution is as follows:

III. That the Promissory Notes of the said Company have hitherto been, and are at this time, held in public estimation to be equivalent to the legal coin of the Realm, and generally accepted as such in all pecuniary transactions to which such coin is legally applicable.

The right honourable gentleman, in stating what he considered to be the effect of this Resolution, made use of an expression which does indeed most truly describe its character, and the character of that assent which he reckons upon obtaining to it. By this Resolution, said the right honourable gentleman, we "pledge ourselves to believe the equivalency of bank notes to coin." Pledge ourselves to believe! This is perhaps more than any man ever before avowed of himself; but certainly more than any man ever openly declared his intention to exact from others. Belief is not usually matter of volition; therefore, one should think, it cannot reasonably be made matter of undertaking and engagement. Of all martyrs of whatever faith, I have always conceived the just praise to be, that they adhered stedfastly to a belief founded on sincere conviction, not that they anticipated that conviction by pledging themselves beforehand what their belief should be. The right honourable gentleman's martyrdom is of a superior description: it not only professes its faith, but creates it: and to say the truth, it does require a faith, rather of the will than of the understanding, to believe the doctrine which the right honourable gentleman has promulgated in this third Resolution.

* See Second Resolution.

The right honourable gentleman, however, has not done full justice to his own Resolution. The pledge which it contains goes much farther than he describes. It is not we, the resolvers, that are pledged by it to the creed of the right honourable gentleman: it pledges all mankind, except ourselves. It is so contrived, that even I might consistently vote for it, denying as I do every syllable of the doctrine which it contains. Whatever other merit the Resolution may want, this is at least ingenious, and I think I may venture to say it is altogether new in parliamentary proceeding.

The object of the right honourable gentleman is to settle the public mind on a question on which there is a great division of opinion. There are various modes in which the public mind may be settled in matters depending on positive authority. The first is a proclamation by the King, where the subject matter is one to which the Royal prerogative is of itself competent; and such the right honourable gentleman contends this matter to be. A second mode is by Act of Parliament, in which the united wisdom of the two branches of the Legislature is sanctioned by the authority of the Crown. A third mode is by concurrent resolution of the two Houses of Parliament declaring their joint opinion. A fourth mode is, by resolution of one or other House of Parliament, declaring its opinion alone. But to these four recognized modes, it remained for the ingenuity of the right honourable gentleman to add a fifth—that of a resolution of the House of Commons, declaring, not its own opinion, but that of the litigants themselves.

Are bank notes equivalent to the legal standard coin of the realm? This is the question which divides and agitates the public opinion. I, says the right honourable gentleman, will devise a mode of settling this question to the satisfaction of the public. By advising a proclamation? No.—By bringing a bill into Parliament? No.—By proposing to declare the joint opinion of both Houses, or the separate opinion of one? No.—By what process, then? Why, simply by telling the disputants that they are, and have been all along, however unconsciously, agreed upon the subject of their variance; and gravely resolving, for them, respectively, an unanimous opinion. This is the very judgment, I should imagine, which Milton ascribes to the venerable Anarch, whom he represents as adjusting the disputes of the conflicting element:

> "Chaos umpire sits,
> And by decision more embroils the fray."

That the public would have bowed in reverence and submission to the pronounced opinion of the House of Commons, cannot be doubted: but when the House of Commons speaks, not as a judge but as an interpreter, it can hardly expect to be regarded as infallible by those whose sentiments it professes to interpret.

"In public estimation," says the right honourable gentleman's Resolution, "bank notes and coin are equivalent." Indeed? What then is become of all those persons who, for the last six months, have been by every outward and visible indication evincing, maintaining, and inculcating an opinion diametrically opposite? Who wrote that multitude of pamphlets, with the recollection of which one's head is still dizzy? What is become of the whole class of readers of those pamphlets, of whom to my cost I was one; and a great number of whom at least were convinced, like me, of the actual depreciation of our paper currency? Were these writers and readers no part of the public? or does the right honourable gentleman apprehend that his arguments must have wrought their conversion? Far be it from me to say that, whatever I may think of his arguments, the authority of his name would not have great weight with me and with the public. Therefore do I regret that, if he does not think fit to frame his Resolution in the name of the House of Commons, he should not at least resolve in his own name the equivalency which he is so bent upon establishing. A Resolution, importing that "in the estimation" of the right honourable gentleman individually, "bank notes are equivalent to the legal coin of the realm," though I do not pretend to say it would carry all the force of a decision of the legislature, would yet be a prodigious comfort even to those who are hardened in their disbelief of that equivalency; as it would show them in what quarter to apply when they wished to make an exchange on equal terms.

Nor would such a declaration of individual opinion, though unusual, be wholly without example. I saw the other day an address to the public from a patriotic lottery-office keeper, which in truth I should think had not escaped the right honourable gentleman's notice, since his third resolution is nearly a transcript of it. This worthy distributor of the favours of Fortune disclaims, in the most indignant terms, the intention to "make any distinction between bank notes and the current coin of the realm." He is "at all times ready," he says, "to serve the public with tickets or shares, on equal terms for either." Why should not the right honourable gentleman give a similar demonstration of the sincerity of his own opinion? It is obvious that if the lottery-office keeper, instead of speaking for himself, had only declared that "in the estimation of the public," bank notes and coin were equal, his assurance would have gone for but little: and I really cannot see why, in adopting, as he has done, the very words of the lottery advertisement, the right honourable gentleman should decline adopting the advertiser's test of his sincerity.

I must, however, observe, that the right honourable gentleman carries his doctrine somewhat farther than his prototype, the lot-

tery office-keeper. The advertisement is much more cautiously worded than the Resolution. The advertisement only affirms the equivalency of bank notes to the "current" coin of the realm. The Resolution says that they are equivalent to the "legal" coin. Now the assertion of the advertisement may be perfectly safe from contradiction, forasmuch as "current" coin of the realm, there is at this moment none. But the "legal" coin of the realm, though driven out of circulation, is capable of strict definition. The right honourable gentleman's proposition therefore admits of a test, which the advertiser's does not. To make his proposition perfect, the right honourable gentleman ought to define both those things which he declares to be equivalent to each other. Bank notes he has defined in his second Resolution: they are "engagements to pay certain sums of money in the legal coin of this kingdom." But he has omitted to define the "legal coin."

With his leave, I will venture to remind him that one pound in sterling money of this realm, is either $\frac{20}{21}$ of a guinea, weighing not less than $5^{\text{dwts.}}\ 8^{\text{grs.}}$ standard fineness; or it is $\frac{20}{62}$ of a lb. of standard silver. Does the right honourable gentleman object to either of those definitions? If not, does he maintain his proposition of equivalency? Does he maintain that a one-pound note is equivalent to $\frac{20}{21}$ of a lawful guinea, or to $\frac{20}{62}$ of a lb. of standard silver? Does he not know that a guinea is intrinsically worth not a one-pound note, with one shilling in addition, but with the addition of four or five shillings, at the present moment?—and that so far from purchasing nearly the third part of a lb. of standard silver, a bank note of one pound would now purchase little more than the fourth part of it?

But the right honourable gentleman warns us, that we overlook the force and real meaning of the word "legal" as employed in his Resolution. He alludes not to the laws which have fixed the standard, and which ensure the weight and purity of our coin; but to those which provide by wholesome penalties against the influence of its real upon its denominative value. The gold of a guinea may be worth what we will; the Resolution applies only to the gold in a guinea. It does not say that a bank note is worth as much as a guinea. It says only that the guinea can pass for no more than the bank note. It ties the living to the dead, and then pronounces them equal to each other. The gold which is necessary to constitute a guinea, may be worth twenty-six or twenty-seven shillings. The right honourable gentleman's business with it commences only when it has received the stamp and sanction of the Sovereign. It is then that, degraded by this distinction, and restricted by this guarantee, it looses about a fifth of its value, and becomes worth only a one-pound note and one shilling.

Be it so. This then may be the state of the law: but how does this prove "public estimation?" If the Resolution had purported merely that by law the guinea could pass for no more than twenty-one shillings, perhaps the right honourable gentleman may have the law on his side. But this proposition he had the sagacity to see would not answer his purpose. It would do nothing for the bank note. It would settle the proportion between gold and silver coin; but not between either of those metals and bank paper. Bank paper, until it is made the paper of the state, and a legal tender (which as yet happily it is not,) must depend upon confidence for its value; and I am afraid that confidence may rather be impaired than restored by such a Resolution as the right honourable gentleman's.

There is, however, yet one addition, which qualifies the right honourable gentleman's proposition. Bank notes are not only "equivalent to legal coin," it seems, but are "generally accepted as such;" which to be sure it is natural to expect they should be, if equivalent. They are so accepted, however, not in all transactions. No—only in "transactions to which such coin is legally applicable." There are transactions, then, it seems, in which they are not accepted as equivalent? Yes; but those transactions are not legal ones. Is the purchase of gold bullion a legal transaction? I presume it is. A pound of gold bullion is at this moment worth about 58*l.* 16*s.* in bank notes: 58*l.* 16*s.* in guineas, according to their current value, makes fifty-six guineas. Now forty-four and a half of these guineas, we know, weigh exactly one pound. The right honourable gentleman, therefore, means gravely to affirm that there exist persons who will with equal readiness, give 58*l.* 16*s.* in bank notes, or fifty-six golden guineas, in payment for a commodity which is intrinsically worth exactly forty-four guineas and a-half. It warms one's heart to hear such heroic instances of more than Roman virtue: but I must be permitted to doubt whether they can be truly stated to be as "general," as the right honourable gentleman supposes. I doubt whether even the patiotic lottery-man, from whom the right honourable gentleman has borrowed his third Resolution, would make such a sacrifice as this to the laws of his country. I doubt whether the right honourable gentleman himself does not stand the single instance of such striking self-devotion: and would again submit to him, therefore, whether his third Resolution, instead of affirming any thing about the public, ought not to run singly in his own name.

But, after all, is the right honourable gentleman sure that he is prepared to define exactly, at this moment, the legality or illegality of interchanging guineas and bank notes, at any other than the nominal current value? What cognizance does the law take of

the rate at which bank notes shall pass? Is there any law which touches this matter? If any body had such a fancy for bank notes, and differed so entirely from the Bullion Committee, and from the right honourable gentleman, as to think them not only not depreciated in respect to coin, but as worth being bought up in coin at a premium; is there any law which would prevent him from gratifying his taste in this particular? If for more, might he not also buy them for less, than their nominal value? Is there any law to prevent that? The man who has been convicted, and is now expecting judgment for buying guineas at a premium, might he not justly aver that he had only sold bank notes at a loss? Is there any law which forbids that? The right honourable gentleman may tell me, that this question is at this very moment before the judges of the land, by whose determination the conviction to which I have referred, will be either confirmed or reversed. And so I tell the right honourable gentleman; and from that very circumstance, from the law on that subject being in such a state of uncertainty as to require a reference to the judges, it is, in my opinion, unseemly, and must be most unsatisfactory, for the House of Commons to assume the law to be such as the right honourable gentleman's Resolution declares it.

But, supposing the declaration of the law by the right honourable gentleman's Resolution to be correct, how does it bear out his assertions as to "public estimation?"—Does he not know—is it not notorious—has it not been admitted in the course of this debate—that in one part of the United Kingdom, at least in Ireland, so far are bank notes from being "equivalent to the legal coin in the public estimation," that a premium is openly given for guineas? Does the right honourable gentleman forget, that the House of Commons to which he proposes his Resolution, is the House of Commons of Ireland as well as of Great Britain? And can he conceive a proceeding more likely to bring that House of Commons into contempt with the people of Ireland, than that, with the perfect knowledge which we have that they are every day exchanging bank notes against guineas at a discount, we should come to a Resolution that—not in our estimation, but in theirs—bank notes and guineas are equivalent?

When Buonaparte, not long ago, was desirous of reconciling the nations under his dominion to the privations resulting from the exclusion of all colonial produce, he published an edict, which commenced in something like the following manner:—"Whereas sugar made from beet-root or the maple-tree is infinitely preferable to that of the sugar-cane...." and then proceeded to denounce penalties against those who should persist in the use of the inferior commodity. The denunciation might be more effectual than the right honourable gentleman's Resolution; but the preamble

did not go near so far; for though it asserted the superiority of the maple and beet-root sugar, it rested that assertion merely on the authority of the state, and did not pretend to sanction it by "public estimation."

When Galileo first promulgated the doctrine that the earth turned round the sun, and that the sun remained stationary in the centre of the universe, the holy fathers of the Inquisition took alarm at so daring an innovation, and forthwith declared the first of these propositions to be false and heretical, and the other to be erroneous in point of faith. The Holy Office "pledged itself to believe" that the earth was stationary and the sun moveable. This pledge had little effect in changing the natural course of things: the sun and the earth continued, in spite of it, to preserve their accustomed relations to each other, just as the coin and the bank note will, in spite of the right honourable gentleman's Resolution.

The reverend fathers, indeed, had the advantage of being enabled to call in the aid of the secular arm, to enforce the acceptance of their doctrines. I confess, I am not wholly without apprehension that some of the zealous advocates for the right honourable gentleman's doctrine may have it in contemplation to employ similar means of proselytism. There is something ominous in that mixture of law and opinion, which pervades the right honourable gentleman's Resolution. The business of law is with conduct; but when it is put forward to influence opinion, pains and penalties are seldom far behind. I like but little the period of our history, to which my honourable and learned friend, the Attorney-General, was obliged to go back to find a penal statute for settling opinions upon the value of money—that statute upon which the late convictions have taken place, and upon the applicability of which to the present times the Judges are now deliberating. This statute was passed at a period when our coin had been debased, in the course of three years, considerably upwards of £200 per cent.—and when the total debasement, as compared with the original standard, was not less than £355 per cent. The consequence of this debasement, as stated by Lord Liverpool, was, that merchants and tradesmen increased the price of every article which they had to sell. To counteract this effect, Government tried every method to keep up the value of the debased coin; prices were set on all the necessary articles of consumption; laws were passed for regulating the manner of buying and selling; the law against regraters, forestallers, and engrossers, since repealed, was passed on that occasion. Amongst those admirable and judicious efforts of wholesome and enlightened legislation, was enacted the law for inflicting penalties on those who should "exchange any coined gold or coined silver at a greater value

than the same was or should be declared, by His Majesty's proclamation, to be current for within his dominions."

Such is the law which, according to the right honourable gentleman, secures the equivalency of the different sorts of our currency. Such is the shelf from which that law has been taken down and brought into use on the present auspicious occasion: a law passed at a time which the late Lord Liverpool forcibly describes as a "period of convulsion in our monetary system," and in company with laws which have since been repealed as a disgrace to the statute book. Faulty, however, as our legislation appears to have been at the period to which we are referring, it at least did not fall into the absurdity of declaring such laws to be the opinions of the people. If the right honourable gentleman is determined to force opinions to conform to his law, he must come down a few years later in our history. He must pass from the reign of Edward the VIth, to that of Queen Mary, to find the most approved method of applying the operation of law to the reformation of speculative opinions.

Even in times, however, of such ignorance, and such licentious theory, in respect to the value of money, there were not wanting in one part of this island shrewder spirits, who saw the errors into which the English Government were running, and determined to guard against their effects, at least upon themselves. In the year 1529, it is related in a note to Lord Liverpool's Treatise, "Gavin Dunbar, Bishop of Aberdeen, in a contract with William Sutherland, of Duffus, stipulated, that 'if it should happen that the money of Scotland, or of any other kingdom, which passes in Scotland, be raised to a higher price than it is now taken in payment for, whereby the reverend father, his heirs or assigns, be made poorer or in a worse condition, he the said William Sutherland should pay to the possessors (whoever they may be) of the annual rent reserved therein, for every mark of thirty-two pennies, one ounce of pure silver of certain fineness, or else its true value in the usual money of the kingdom of Scotland.'" This contract took place about twenty years before the statute of Edward VI. If that statute shall be revived and acted upon, and if the doctrine of the right honourable gentleman's Resolutions shall be sanctioned by Parliament, it requires no great stretch of apprehension to foresee that men will, ere long, endeavour to guard themselves against the effects of such a system by resorting to contracts of a similar nature.

I have now done with the right honourable gentleman's third Resolution. I will only again say, that if any man had mentioned it to me out of this House as a proposition which the right honourable gentleman intended to offer for our acceptance, I should have utterly disbelieved him: I should have considered

such a rumour as a mere device on the part of his opponents, to place in the strongest light imaginable the absurdity to which, if pushed to all their consequences, the right honourable gentleman's arguments were capable of going.

Passing over the statistical Resolutions, from the fourth to the fourteenth inclusive, I come now to the fifteenth, which contains the right honourable gentleman's doctrine of exchanges.*

This Resolution partakes, in a very striking degree, of the faults which I had occasion to remark upon in the first of the series to which it belongs. From the vague and imperfect manner in which it is expressed, the proposition intended to be conveyed by it is rather insinuated than affirmed. The right honourable gentleman does not distinctly deny that the state of our currency has any influence on the foreign exchanges, or on the price of bullion; at the same time, he certainly does not admit that it has any such influence. He only asserts that there are other causes "sufficient to account for the unfavourable state of the exchange, and the high price of bullion, without any change in" (what he calls) "the internal value of our currency."

Now it cannot escape so accurate an understanding as that of the right honourable gentleman, that this mode of stating his argument, is not an answer to the main points in dispute, but an evasion of them. The Bullion Report asserts that our paper currency is depreciated, and that the depreciation of our currency has raised the price of gold, and turned and kept the foreign exchanges against us. The right honourable gentleman replies, not by denying both these assertions, but by affirming with respect to the latter, that the imputed consequences may have been produced by other causes, without the existence of the cause specifically assigned for them.

We know, indeed, from the preceding part of the right honourable gentleman's argument, that he does deny the depreciation of our currency. So far he is perfectly intelligible. But as to the second proposition, "that the depreciated currency has occasioned the rise in the price of bullion and the unfavourableness of the foreign exchanges," are we to understand him as saying, that a depreciated currency would not have those effects? or only, that as our currency is not depreciated, such effects cannot in this instance be attributable to that cause?

If he admits that such would be the natural effects of a depreciated currency, admitting at the same time (as he does) that such effects do exist, the whole of his argument is destroyed by his own admissions. The utmost advantage that he could then derive, even from the undisputed admission of all the facts enumer-

* See Res. 15.

ated in his statistical Resolutions—of his prices of stocks, and prices of corn, his exports and imports, and revenue and expenditure—would be to show that there are other causes which may enter for something into the degree of the rise in the price of bullion, and into the degree of the unfavourableness of the exchange, which nobody denies.

But to acknowledge the tendency of a depreciated currency to produce certain effects, to acknowledge these effects to have been produced to an extent, and to have continued for a length of time, unexampled in the history of the country,—and then to expect that upon the mere *dictum* of the right honourable gentleman, his adversaries in the argument shall consent to ascribe those effects wholly to other causes, of which they deny the sufficiency, altogether excluding the operation of that one, the efficacy of which he himself admits, is to reckon upon a degree of ductility in those with whom he argues, which even the right honourable gentleman's authority is not entitled to command.

On the other hand, does the right honourable gentleman contend, that the depreciation of our currency, even if it existed, would not affect the exchange? To argue that it would not affect the price of bullion in that currency, is certainly more than he can venture. But it has been contended by others who take the same side with him, that depreciation "of internal value" in the currency of a country has no tendency to alter the foreign exchange. Is this the right honourable gentleman's meaning?

By "internal value," I now understand the right honourable gentleman to signify not "intrinsic value," as I was at first inclined to suppose, but value in internal or domestic currency, as opposed to value abroad. The proposition, then, of those who push the right honourable gentleman's argument to its extent is, that the currency of a country may be depreciated to an indefinite degree, and yet, if the inhabitants of that country continue, no matter whether voluntarily or by legal compulsion, to receive that depreciated currency at its full nominal value, the foreigner has no business with it, and the foreign exchange would not exhibit any symptom of being affected by it. The very definition of exchange, about which I apprehend there is no dispute, is of itself sufficient to confute this doctrine. The par of exchange between any two countries, being an equal quantity of precious metal in the respective currencies of those countries, how is it possible, that if, by any process, the currency of one of those countries shall cease to contain or to represent that quantity of precious metal which it did represent or contain when the par of exchange with the other country was assigned—the currency of that other country remaining precisely the same—there should not take place a proportionate variation in the rate of the exchange? To say that

the rate of exchange will continue unaltered, when one of the currencies between which the comparison is made has lost part of its value, is to say, in other words, that an equation is not destroyed by a change in the value of one of its terms.

We should be sufficiently alive to the fallacy of such a doctrine, if applied to the currency of other countries. In the edict lately published in Austria, which has been referred to more than once in the course of these debates, while a gradual depreciation, amounting in the end to no less than £400 per cent. is acknowledged, and the paper directed to be current henceforth at £400 per cent. below its nominal value; sundry excellent reasons are given why, in Austria, in the particular circumstances of that country, this depreciation ought to occasion no manner of alarm; and especially why foreigners ought not to consider it as vitiating or confounding the transactions of exchange. The foreign creditors of Austria, however, probably entertain a very different opinion: and it is a curious fact, which has been vouched to me on what I believe to be unquestionable authority, that even before the Austrian paper money was depreciated to the present extravagant degree, the monied men on the continent, who were engaged in loans to the Emperor, were in the habit of stipulating that those loans, if repaid any where else than at Hamburgh or at Amsterdam, should be repaid, not in the currency of Austria, or of any other country, according to its denomination, but in specific quantities of gold or silver. And why this exception in favour of Hamburgh and Amsterdam? For a reason which at once explains the nature of exchange, and the true principles of value in money, namely, that at the Banks of Hamburgh and Amsterdam, all payments are made, not in reference to coins of any country or any denomination, but by the transfer from the debtor to the creditor of a specific quantity of bullion.

Can we really flatter ourselves, then, that the currency of this kingdom might be depreciated with impunity so far as relates to transactions with foreign countries? If a bill upon England for 46*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* would heretofore have purchased, on the exchange of Hamburgh or Amsterdam, a credit on those Banks for a pound of gold bullion, and if a pound of gold bullion cannot now be purchased in England for less than 58*l.* in English currency, we can imagine that, nevertheless, the bill upon England for 46*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* will still purchase a pound of gold at Hamburgh or Amsterdam? Yet this is, in fact, the proposition of those who contend that an alteration in the value of the internal currency of a country does not proportionably affect the foreign exchange.

But while this is the argument of many who have taken part in the debate—whilst it is covertly, though not avowedly, the argument of the right honourable gentleman's fifteenth Resolution

—it is not the argument of my right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has admitted the influence of the internal currency of a country upon its foreign exchanges, by admitting that a diminution in the quantity of our paper would tend to turn the exchanges in our favour. Does the right honourable gentleman agree in this admission, or differ from it? If he differs, I refer him for conviction to my right honourable friend: if he agrees, there is no escape from the conclusion to which this admission leads—that the unfavourableness of the exchange, which would be, in part at least, cured by a diminution in the amount, and consequent rise in the value of our paper currency, is, in part at least, occasioned by the excess and consequent depreciation of it.

What then becomes of the assertion of the right honourable gentleman's fifteenth Resolution, whichever sense we assign to it? If it is meant to deny the connexion of internal currency with foreign exchange, can the House consent to adopt a vote so directly at variance with the fact? If, admitting that connexion, it is meant only to deny its effect now, why, I should be glad to know, is the present time to afford an exception to an universal rule? What is there now to suspend the operation of principles, not dependent upon circumstances, but inherent in the nature of things? There is a great stagnation of commerce it is true, but that stagnation of commerce is not peculiar to this country. The continent shares largely in all the distress which the decrees of the tyrant of the continent produce; and yet it is in comparison with the continent that the exchanges are in our disfavour. True, we are carrying on an expensive and extended war; but the exchanges have been permanently against us in peace as well as in war, when the same cause, a depreciated currency, has operated to produce that effect. In 1696, a period of war, the deterioration of our silver, then our standard coin—in 1773, a time of peace, the deterioration of our gold coin, were indicated alike by the long continued unfavourableness of the foreign exchanges. In both instances the reformation of the coin remedied the evil. What the deterioration of coin occasioned in those instances, the depreciation of paper has occasioned now. The coin had then ceased to contain, as the paper has now ceased to represent, the quantity of precious metal implied by its denomination. Foreign countries estimated the coin then as they do the paper now, not by what it is called, but by what it would exchange for in those commodities—gold and silver—which are, by the consent and practice of mankind, the common measures of all marketable value.

However gentlemen may endeavour to disguise and perplex this simple view of the question, it is, after all, that by which it must be decided. If this be not the test, there is no other. If

gold and silver have ceased to be the common measures of the value of other commodities, and weight and fineness combined have ceased to be the standard of value in gold and silver, there is no more to be said: but in that case, instead of these Resolutions, let the right honourable gentleman come forward boldly at once with an assertion, not merely that paper is equivalent to the precious metals, but that it has altogether superseded them.

If, on the other hand, the same standard of value remains, let not the right honourable gentleman attempt to draw a veil over it. In all our departures from it, let us fairly own that we are departing from it—by necessity, if you please, but with a resolution of returning to it again. Let us not, like men who, when hurried down a rapid stream, fancy that the shores are flying from them—

"terræque urbesque recedunt;"

let us not conceive that, by some strange revolution in the physical world, the precious metals are retreating beyond our reach; when it is, in fact, only by a rapid depreciation that our currency is leaving them behind. Neither let us suppose that we have already gone down so far, that to reascend the stream is impossible —that,

"Should we wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er."

A very little firmness, a very little sacrifice, might at present enable us to retrace our course. The half of the ingenuity which is employed in the right honourable gentleman's Resolutions to gloss over our situation, might suffice to find a remedy for it.

It is asked—shall we attempt this in time of war? Can we attempt it without abandoning our present military system, with all its hopes and all its glories? Undoubtedly, I think, we can. I never can believe of this mighty empire, that it has not sufficient energy in itself at once to right whatever may be amiss in its own internal situation, and to maintain its accustomed place and movement in the system of the world.

But, it is said, we are only going on in the course in which greater authorities have led the way; Mr. Pitt had made up his mind to this depreciation of our currency. "He contrived it," says one honourable gentleman. "He could not avoid foreseeing it," says my right honourable friend (the Chancellor of the Exchequer.)

First, the inconveniencies which now result from that depreciation, and which constitute the proof of it, were not felt in Mr. Pitt's time. Neither could they possibly be foreseen by Mr. Pitt, if they in fact arise only from the causes to which my right honourable friend and the right honourable gentleman's fifteenth

Resolution ascribe them: Mr. Pitt certainly could not foresee the Berlin and Milan decrees. The war, indeed, raged in his lifetime with not less violence than since; but yet in the very hottest and most disastrous part of the war, at the moment of the greatest public alarm and calamity, the exchanges were in our favour, and the price of gold did not materially rise. He therefore did not witness any of those symptoms which have awakened anxiety, and led to investigation on the present occasion.

Further, we have the testimony of my honourable friend opposite to me, (Mr. Wilberforce,) that in the year 1802, when the probable tendency of unredeemable bank paper to excessive issue, and consequent depreciation, became a subject of alarm to some men of great ability in financial matters—we have, I say, that most satisfactory testimony, that Mr. Pitt at that time professed his entire agreement in the principles laid down in a very able publication of the honourable gentleman who preceded me in this night's debate (Mr. H. Thornton,) which I presume every man who has attended to this question, has read. And what are those principles?—Why, these—

"It is the maintenance of our general exchanges" (says Mr. Thornton,) "or, in other words, it is the agreement of the mint price with the bullion price of gold, which seems to be the true proof that the circulating paper is not depreciated."

If these are the principles which Mr. Pitt sanctioned, what pretence is there for saying that he foresaw the present state of things? or that, if he had lived to see it, he would now have asserted our circulating paper to be in an undepreciated state? Are our "general exchanges" now "maintained?" "Does the bullion price of gold" now "agree with the mint price?" Are not, on the contrary, the unfavourable exchanges, and the high price of bullion, the very particulars which are cited as affording the most irrefragable proof of a depreciation? If the absence of these criteria at that time was conclusive one way, must not the presence of them be now admitted to be conclusive the other? If Mr. Pitt was then satisfied that all was right because these symptoms had not appeared, is it fair to infer, that he would have been equally satisfied now, when they are seen in so aggravated a degree? Is not the fair inference directly the contrary?

Nor is it an unimportant evidence of Mr. Pitt's general view of this subject, that the Letter of Lord Liverpool to the King was the result of an investigation commenced in Mr. Pitt's first administration in 1798, and concluded in the year 1805, when he was again minister of the country. In that letter, not only are all the principles of our money system distinctly and ably expounded, according to the authority and the practice of the

best times; but, with respect to the system of our paper currency, the danger of its being carried to excess, and the necessity of a parliamentary revision of it, are stated in a manner which shows with how much attention, in the opinion of the Government of those days, that system required to be watched.

But if Mr. Pitt had happily been still alive, what remedy would he have applied to this evil? Far be it from me to presume on this or on any other occasion to usurp the authority of his name, or to employ it for any purpose, which is not warranted by his recorded opinions. But that he would have applied some remedy—that he would not have been contented to let the evil take its course, if there were in human wisdom the means of checking it—that he would not have sought to reconcile delusion with credit, and to palliate a departure from principles by a denial of the principles themselves; every man who remembers his characteristic firmness, who recollects the difficulties which he had to combat, and the manner in which he combated and overcame them, will, I think, be ready to acknowledge.

If I am asked what remedy I would myself apply, I again say, as I have said before, that it must rest with the Executive Government to propose, as they alone can advantageously carry into effect, any measure of practical benefit. But I have no difficulty in offering one suggestion, which has indeed been in some degree anticipated in the course of these debates. The Bank proprietors have made great and unusual gains under the operation of the Bank restriction. I say this without the smallest intention of laying blame upon the Bank, or of exciting any invidious feeling towards them. The Directors of that Institution, I again repeat, have, so far as I can judge, acted for the best in the discharge of a new and most difficult duty. But the fact I believe will not be disputed. Great gains have been made in consequence of the Bank restriction. The issues of bank paper, whether too large or not in another view, have undeniably been much larger than they could have been, had the obligation to pay in cash upon demand continued, or been renewed. These gains certainly formed no part of the inducement to lay on or to renew the Bank restriction. They form no ground to continue it. But it is obvious—it is in the principles of human nature—that they must form a temptation to the Bank proprietors to wish for its continuance. It is obvious also, that if the issues are inordinately extended, the difficulty of resuming cash payments must be proportionably augmented. And it is still more obvious, that whether those motives and those causes do in fact so operate or no, from the natural invidiousness attendant on great gains, the world in general will be apt to suspect and impute their operation.

Now the public has no right to complain that the Bank restriction, though not laid or continued in contemplation of advantage to the Bank proprietors, has incidentally been productive of such advantage; but they have a right to expect that no impediment shall on that ground be thrown in the way of the removal of the restriction. A continued increase of profit, and a continued raising of the dividends to the Bank proprietors, if it had not that effect, would have that appearance. The dividend is now, I believe, ten per cent. There surely it might stop. All surplus profit beyond that amount, during the continuance of the restriction, might be strictly appropriated as a fund for the purchase of bullion, at whatever price.

It is not in my contemplation that the public (as has been suggested in several quarters since this question has been in discussion) should enter into any share of the extraordinary profits, or meddle in any degree in the management, of the Bank. No such thing. Let those extraordinary profits remain, in full, undisputed, and unenvied property, to the Bank. But as they are created by the suspension of cash payments, let the public have the assurance that they are so employed by the Bank, as to ensure their ability to resume those payments, without convulsion or distress, at the period which the Legislature has fixed for the resumption of them.

This, I think, is a suggestion, the adoption of which would be no less creditable to the Bank than satisfactory to the public.

For this, or any other measure calculated to remedy the evils acknowledged to exist, we can, after the decision to which this House has already come, rely only on the effect which may be produced by our discussions upon the advised discretion of the Bank, and upon the awakened attention of the public.

But at least, if we will do no good, let us, in the name of common sense, not do any harm. If we will not set right the course of the vessel, let us at least not destroy the chart and compass by which it may steer.

Let us leave the evil, if it must be so, to the chance of a gradual and noiseless correction. But let us not resolve as law, what is an incorrect and imperfect exposition of the law. Let us not resolve as fact, what is contradictory to universal experience. Let us not expose ourselves to ridicule, by resolving, as the opinions of the people, opinions which the people do not, and which it is impossible they should, entertain. This is not the way to settle the public feeling, and to set the subject at rest. It is the way to ensure renewed and interminable discussions. That we may at least not incur this unnecesary mischief, by adopting the Resolutions now before us, I move, Sir, that you do now leave the Chair.

The House divided on Mr. Canning's Amendment, when there appeared—

For Mr. Canning's Amendment	42
Against it	82
Majority against it	40

Mr. Vansittart's Resolutions were then agreed to *pro forma*, with an understanding that they should be discussed upon the Report. The discussion on Mr. Vansittart's Resolutions was resumed on the following day; and on the 15th, after some verbal amendments, they were agreed to.

ADDRESS RESPECTING THE WAR WITH AMERICA.

FEBRUARY 18th, 1813.

LORD CASTLEREAGH moved the following Address:

"That an humble Address be presented to His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, to acquaint His Royal Highness that we have taken into our consideration the papers laid before us, by His Royal Highness's commands, relative to the late discussions with the Government of the United States of America. That, whilst we deeply regret the failure of the endeavours of His Royal Highness to preserve the relations of peace and amity between this country and the United States, we entirely approve of the resistance which has been opposed by His Royal Highness to the unjustifiable pretensions of the American Government; being satisfied that those pretensions could not be admitted without surrendering some of the most ancient, undoubted, and important rights of the British empire. That, impressed as we are with these sentiments, and fully convinced of the justice of the war in which His Majesty has been compelled to engage, His Royal Highness may rely on our most zealous and cordial support in every measure which may be necessary for prosecuting the war with vigour, and for bringing it to a safe and honourable termination."

Mr. Canning and Mr. Stephen rose together; a general wish being expressed by the House, that the former should proceed, the latter gave way, and Mr. CANNING addressed the House nearly as follows:

I should not have persisted, Sir, in claiming the attention of the House in opposition to the learned gentleman to whom personal allusions have just been made, had not my opinions also been called in question in more than one sense, at an earlier period of the debate. I have been asked, from two different, indeed, opposite quarters, whether I still persist in the opinions which I formerly stated on the subject of America. Those opinions were of two descriptions; the one relating to the justice of the war into which the United States have thought proper to plunge us, the other to the management of that war on our part. I retain both. But the noble lord has very properly said, that the main question, indeed the only question for deliberation and decision to-night, is, whether we will uphold, by our votes, the justice of the cause of our country, laying aside all dispute upon the less important point of the practical management of the war. And agreeing with the noble lord in this view of our present and most pressing duty; agreeing that our first object must be to inform our new enemy that we, the Parliament of the British Empire, think our country in the right, and that we are determined to stand by the Executive Government in maintaining that right against any power that may venture to dispute it, and thinking, at the same time, that

any very anxious or angry discussion, as to the vigour and effect with which the cause of the country has hitherto been maintained by the Executive Government, might, if it impaired the unanimity of this vote, detract from its weight and consideration with the Government and people of the United States of America, I confess that I am glad to postpone all such details, however important they may be in other views of the subject, or however fit for separate discussion hereafter; and I shall be much less solicitous to examine this night the conduct of Administration, since the war has began, than to vindicate the principles on which this and preceding Administrations have acted, in the transactions from which the war has sprung, and to establish those upon which it must be maintained, and upon which alone it can be concluded with safety and with honour.

The honourable gentleman (Mr. Baring) who spoke last, observed at the outset of his speech, with regret, mingled with some consolation, that the differences with the United States, were now reduced to a single point, and he recommended that the negotiations should be revived, with a view to an amicable conclusion on that point. I agree with the honourable gentleman that the grounds of dispute are ostensibly so much narrowed, that if a negotiation could be set on foot, which should have regard merely to the true interests of the republic of the United States, and should not be disturbed and diverted from its course by the influence of those passions by which its Government has been agitated, then, indeed, we might hope for conciliation and tranquillity; but I cannot concur with him, either that the point in dispute is of such easy settlement, complicated as it has been in the course of the negotiations with national feelings and animosities. Still less do I think that so prompt a solution of the difficulty, as he seems to reckon upon, is afforded by his construction of the English Act of Parliament to which he has referred. If, indeed, the true meaning and intent of the statute of Anne, were to give to foreign sailors, entering and serving on board the British navy, not only all those privileges here, but all that protection against their natural sovereigns and native governments, which the United States both claim the right of conferring, and in practice attempt to confer upon British sailors, seduced or deserting into their service, then I admit that this country would have to make to America an equal concession for an equal infringement of national rights: and that as there would have been a parity in the infringement, there could be no difficulty in a parity of concession. Neither Government could in that case have had any thing to reproach to the other: and instead of a question of violation of the law of nations, on the one side, and of forcible and summary self-redress on the other, the whole matter would be one of mutual acknowledgment,

as to the past, and of conventional arrangement for the future. There would be no difference of principle, and the point in dispute would be settled only on grounds of reciprocal convenience. But I acknowledge that my construction of the act of Anne, was altogether different. I understood that by it this country professed to give that only which it is competent to bestow, without interfering in any degree with the rights or claims of other Powers—that it imparted to foreigners, on certain conditions, certain municipal privileges, but leaves untouched and unimpaired their native allegiance. The operation of this act as I understood it, before the honourable gentleman's commentary, was not to hold out to foreign seamen, that at the same time that they may become entitled to possess or inherit property, and to participate in all the blessings of the British constitution, all the ties which bind them to their native country, are loosened; not to assert that by any service to a foreign state, he can relieve himself from that indelible allegiance which he owes to the Government under which he was born. The enactments of this statute are a testimony of national gratitude to brave men, of whatever country, who may lend their aid in fighting the battles of Great Britain; but not an invitation to them to abandon the cause of their own country when it may want their aid: not an encouragement to them to deny or to undervalue the sacred and indestructible duty which they owe to their own Sovereign, and to their native soil. Such being the real intention of the act, what similitude, what analogy can be drawn between it and the pretensions of America? In the papers upon the table of the House, it is asserted by our enemies, that British seamen once enrolled in the American service, become the seamen of the United States of America: and the Government of that country declares that it must protect them against the claims of their undoubted Sovereign, even when he on their allegiance demands their service in war; in the present war, for instance, which he is unwillingly compelled to wage. Taking the converse of the honourable gentleman's proposition, then, I should say, that if the American Government would adopt such a provision as that quoted by the honourable gentleman, from the Act of Queen Anne, in that case, if all differences were not instantly and altogether removed, at least the question in dispute would be greatly and advantageously narrowed.

But, coupled with the inordinate and unheard-of rights of citizenship which the United States pretend to confer, to the annihilation of the claims of nativity and allegiance, the practical abuses of which we have also a right to complain, in seducing or harbouring our seamen, even independently of the principles and pretensions by which they are defended, would be of themselves matter of serious grievance. Were these principles and

pretensions, once fairly given up, indeed, the road would be opened to the discussion of the practice. It would be open to consider whether any adequate security could be provided by diplomatic arrangement, and municipal regulation, against a grievance which it is impossible that we should tolerate; such as should supersede the necessity of that summary and effectual method of doing ourselves justice, which we cannot relinquish till some satisfactory substitute is found for it: but the exercise of which, it must be admitted, may be liable to some abuse or irregularity. Now, on a fair perusal of the documents, I find nothing which proves any disposition, in the English Ministry, to shut the door against a consideration of that important question. The fact is, that different modes of entering upon the subject have been suggested, but there is one preliminary demand on the part of America, which it is absurd to suppose that we could comply with. We are, by ancient and unquestioned usage, and by the law of nations, as they are now understood, in the possession of the right of search. It has been, and is, of ancient and uninterrupted usage. It is proposed by both parties, that a discussion should be commenced, as to the more unexceptionable mode of exercising this right; but what does the American Executive insist upon? That we should first abandon it, and trust for its restoration to the result of the negotiation. We are required to trust to an act to be hereafter passed by the American Legislature, for the restoration of this right, or for the provision of an equivalent. Can any thing be more manifestly absurd and unjust? Is not the natural course, not by the law of nations only, but by the rules of common sense, that we should retain that which we rightfully possess, until the equivalent for which it is to be exchanged shall be fully discussed, and satisfactorily ascertained? The honourable gentleman says, that it will cost us a war to maintain the possession of it. I wish to ask him what wars would it not cost us to regain possession, if it were once resigned? At least, maintaining our right, we are safe until force compel us to resign it.

I am sure that gentlemen, upon reflection, must see the proposed compromise is at least attended with difficulties which, if not absolutely insuperable, are extremely hard to be surmounted. The appointment of a tribunal similar to a prize court, as suggested by an honourable gentleman (Mr. Baring) in this debate, approaches nearest to my ideas of possibility; but is this likely to be found practicable or palatable to America, if the proposal of it should come from this country? Were it suggested by America, it might perhaps produce some beneficial result; but if proposed by Great Britain, would it not be repelled with indignation? Would America bear to see her citizens made subjects of judicature, like bales of contraband goods? Would she endure that a

judge of our appointment should settle the fate of her natives, as we assign chattels to the right owner? Or would not such a proposal, instead of tending to the settlement of differences, and the extinction of animosities, be employed by the demagogues on the other side of the Atlantic to inflame the public mind, to exasperate the jealousies and hatreds of the enemies of Great Britain, and to make all amicable arrangement utterly hopeless?

I have, however, as I have said, no objection, and the British Government has not shown any, throughout the correspondence now under our consideration, to any attempt to make the exercise of this right the subject of diplomatic arrangement, provided the principle of the right itself be unequivocally acknowledged; provided the suspension, or tacit abandonment of it be not expected to precede the substitution of some other effectual mode of securing the objects to which it applies; and provided it be distinctly understood that, failing the attempt to effect that substitution, our right, and the practice of it, are to continue not only unimpaired, but thenceforth unquestioned. The dispute relating to the impressment (as it is termed) or rather the recal of our own seamen, is not, however, as the honourable gentleman admits, the only point to be adjusted, before we can return to a good understanding with the United States. The American Government also requires the renunciation of the system and principle of what they call paper blockades; that is to say, of the right which we claim and have exercised under the orders in council of 1807, and should, I trust, exercise again, if again occasion arose for it, of retorting upon the enemy any attempt which he may make to wound us through the sides, or by the instrumentality of neutrals. With respect to blockades, the honourable gentleman has appealed to my recollection, whether the blockade of 1806 did not stand on different principles from those of 1807? The honourable gentleman is perfectly correct. The order of 1806 established, or professed to establish a blockade upon the old principles, by the application of a specific and competent force to particular ports. In January 1807, an order was issued professedly of a retaliatory character. The order of 1806 merged in it. What had intervened between the order of May 1806, and that of January 1807? The French Berlin Decree. In retaliation, and avowedly in retaliation for that decree, the order of January 1807 was issued; doing away the strict legal blockade, and instituting what has been and may justly be described as a constructive blockade, not supported by an adequate specific force, but excluding neutrals from the coasting trade of the enemy by a prohibition retaliatory of that sweeping prohibition of the Berlin Decree by which they were precluded from all trade with Great Britain. The orders of November, 1807, extended the operation of the

order of January: but did not vary its principle. I have no wish to revive the differences which the honourable gentleman and I have so often discussed upon that subject, but I am equally prepared to contend now, as four years ago, that though there was some difference in degree between the orders of November, and that of January 1807, there was no difference in the principle; and certainly the honourable gentleman must own that the Americans have made no such distinction in their remonstrances.

The orders in council, however, both of January and November were abandoned: wisely or not, there is now no advantage in inquiring; with little chance of satisfying America, as I thought at the time, and as must now be manifest to all mankind: and for this plain reason, that the American Government was not to be satisfied. They had an itch for war with this country, and they were determined to have it. Although, therefore, these are the only two points on which any practical discussion is pending, I cannot agree that they only entered the minds of the American Executive when they declared war (for be it always remembered, that the war originated in *their* declaration.) The spirit of animosity to this country, indeed, was not confined to the persons forming the cabinet of the United States; the gall of bitterness not only overflowed in Washington, but at the very court of London. The notes of the republican Charge d'affairs, Mr. Russell, contain abundant evidence not only of the predetermination to war, but of the real motives of that policy. In the month of August, he, with warning voice, pointed out to Ministers the consequences of hostility; he told them, "if concessions are not speedily made, the passions of the inhabitants of the United States will be roused, and conquests may be gained on terms that forbid restoration." When this sentence was penned, has not Mr. Russell Canada before his eyes? Was he not in the transport of his visions of success betraying incautiously the secrets of his employers, which were not to be divulged till the promulgation of the declaration? Low as he was in the rank of diplomacy, he was intrusted with this grand and favourite design; and it is impossible for any man not to see from the commencement to the termination of all the proceedings of the Government of the United States an eager desire to gain possession of our North American territories: a plan long cherished, and not wholly, I fear, repugnant to the sentiments even of that party in the United States whom it is usual to designate as our friends. Even when their whole military establishment was 1,000 men, the American Government and its partisans loudly proclaimed their sanguine hopes of victory in an expedition against British America, and delighted their fancies by imaginary conquests. I say, that even those who are called our friends in the United States, are not averse from this enterprise,

and would be won by the acquisition of Canada to the support and approbation of the war. But I use the expression "friends of this country,"—as I do that of friends of France,—not as implying on the one hand a British influence, nor on the other hand, imputing an actual conscious subserviency to Buonaparte: (though it must be owned that for the latter imputation there are appearances of but too probable grounds:) but simply as designating the two parties in the United States who respectively think the interests of their country best consulted, the one by a British, the other by a French connexion.

And here I must confess that the censure of the honourable gentleman (Mr. Whitbread) upon that part of the noble lord's (Lord Castlereagh's) speech which referred to the period chosen by the American Government for declaring war, appears to me exceedingly ill-founded. The noble lord's remarks upon that subject did not appear to me unjust or unnecessary. Looking at the present state of the world who shall say what America might not have achieved? Not by mixing in the contest, and involving herself in the complicated relations of European politics; (for I have never wished to see America involved in the war,) but merely by abstaining from the course which she has unfortunately taken, by refusing to administer to the passions, to flatter the hatred of the tyrant, to afford him that new hope of victory, and that consolation in defeat, which he boasts of deriving, from the diversion of our means, and the distraction of our efforts by the American war? What assistance might she not have rendered to the late glorious struggle in the north, not by active concert, but merely in forbearing to aid Buonaparte's arms by partly occupying ours? Who would have expected to have seen this favourite child of freedom leagued with the oppressor of the world? She who, twenty years ago, shed her blood for independence—She that, ever since that time, has boasted of the superiority of her citizens above all the nations of the globe—She that, watched over in her infancy by Great Britain, with parental tenderness and anxiety,* nursed in the very lap of liberty, and educated in the school of republicanism, is now seen truckling to France, and condescending to become the tool of an ambition which threatens to lay prostrate at its feet the independence of every government, and of every people! Is this the same nation that we once remember to have heard shouting for emancipation? Is this the people that was to set an example of magnanimity to the world? I can scarcely believe it: I would willingly persuade myself that I am deceived; but facts cannot be discredited, and I behold the free republic of America lending her aid to crush those principles to

*Vide Ld. Chatham.

which she owes her own existence, and to support the most desolating tyranny that ever afflicted the race of man. It is impossible not to lament the loss to such a nation, of such an opportunity, which no combination of circumstances can ever restore. I do not say, that America should have been induced to assist us against France. I would not have asked her to risk her tender and unconfirmed existence in a war, and to endure all the dangers, or to incur all the expenses that must have ensued from her taking part in such an enterprize. She might have maintained a just and noble neutrality. But were it put to me indeed as matter of opinion, supposing (what I do not suppose) that she could not avoid deciding one way or other, and that the risk of war on one side must be run, which would best become her history, her character, and her constitution, to unite with England or to league with France;—I should not have hesitated in my determination. There was a time when I hoped that her choice, under such an alternative, would have required little deliberation; but though I should have applauded her option in such a case, I would not have forced nor even have solicited it. She was welcome to be neuter, could she but have persuaded herself to be impartial.—There is still something imposing in the name of a republic. The veneration for that form of government is, even in this monarchical country, interwoven with our earliest impressions of honour, of liberty, and of virtue. But, I fear, that in the republic of America we look for the realization of our visions of republican virtue in vain. The sacred love of freedom, displayed in the annals of Greece and Rome, "made ambition virtue," and consecrated even the weapons of the conqueror. The modern republics of Europe polished mankind by their industry, and their arts. But I am afraid that neither the hardy valour, the ardent patriotism and the lofty magnanimity of ancient Greece and Rome, nor the gentle manners and artificial refinements of Genoa or Florence, are to be traced in the hard features of transatlantic democracy. Would it were otherwise! The heartless and selfish policy pursued by America will lead her far astray from her real interest. The first consequence of it will be, the loss of much internal prosperity, and I am much deceived if she will compensate this loss by the acquisition of much military glory. The honourable gentleman (Mr. Foster,) describes a thousand soldiers, four or five frigates, to guard an extent of coast of fifteen hundred miles, and a revenue of only two millions and a half of dollars, I think, or thereabouts, as the means, physical and pecuniary, of which the United States were in possession, when they declared war against this country. Undoubtedly no man could hear the statement without exclaiming—"and could a nation so circumstanced venture upon a war with the mighty em-

pire of Great Britain, with the most distant prospect of success?" Unluckily it did. The unwelcome truth cannot be concealed. Two out of these four or five frigates have captured two frigates from the British navy. I advert with unwillingness to this part of the subject, because in my opinion, (an opinion before expressed and still retained) vigorous measures becoming this great nation might have averted disasters which may have the effect of prolonging hostilities. It is no answer to say, that our navy is immense, but that it is proportionably extended on the different stations. I complain not of the naval department, but of the policy which controlled its operations. I complain that the arm which should have launched the thunderbolt, was occupied in guiding the pen: that Admiral Warren was busied in negotiating, when he ought to have been sinking, burning, and destroying. Admiral Warren sails from this country in the middle of August, and on the 27th of September he reaches Halifax with his squadron, where he employs himself in writing despatches to the American Government; while Commodore Rogers on the 10th of October, sails unmolested from Boston. But we waited, it seems, to be quite sure that we were actually at war? Granted for argument's sake (for no other purpose could I consent to grant it) that in the first instance there might be not full conviction of the certainty of war; but even after the American declaration was received in the end of July, no hostile measure was resorted to by this country till the 14th of October, when letters of marque were issued, upon the receipt here of the intelligence (and as might be not unfairly suspected, in consequence of that intelligence) that the Guerriere frigate had been captured by the Americans.—What is the next advance towards actual war? The blockade of the Chesapeake; and the order in council announcing that blockade, was issued, when?—the day after the arrival of the intelligence that the Macedonian, another of our frigates, had fallen into the power of the Republic. The loss of these two fine ships of war, produced a sensation in the country scarcely to be equalled by the most violent convulsion of nature. I do not attribute the slightest blame to our gallant sailors, they always do their duty; but neither can I agree with those who complain of the shock of consternation throughout Great Britain, as having been greater than the occasion justified. Who would represent the loss as insignificant, and the feelings of shame and indignation occasioned by it as exaggerated and extravagant? That indignation was a wholesome feeling, which ought to be cherished and maintained. It cannot be too deeply felt that the sacred spell of the invincibility of the British navy was broken by those unfortunate captures; and however speedily we must all wish the war to terminate, I hope I shall not be considered as sanguinary and unfeeling, when I express my devout wish

that it may not be concluded before we have re-established the character of our naval superiority, and smothered in victories the disasters which we have now to lament, and to which we are so little habituated.—Sir, I entered on these points reluctantly on the present occasion. Other occasions will arise for their discussion. I hasten to quit them. But having been expressly called upon to declare if I retained the sentiments which I before expressed upon the conduct of the war, I felt bound in fairness not to decline the avowal that my opinion not only remains unaltered, but has received additional confirmation from subsequent events. If it be true (as I believe it to be) in general, that indecision and delay are the parents of failure; that they take every possible chance of detriment to the cause in which they are employed, and afford every advantage and encouragement to the adversary; it was peculiarly true in the present instance, that promptitude and vigour afforded at once the surest pledge of success in the war, and the only hope of averting it altogether, if while the elections were pending, the result of which was to place Mr. Madison, the arch enemy of this country, in the President's chair, a decisive blow had been struck by this country, the tide of popular opinion in America might have been turned, and the consequences of a long and ruinous war might have been avoided. I lament, for the general happiness of mankind, that no such vigourous exertion was attempted; and though I am not disposed to unnecessary cruelties, nor would countenance the wanton effusion of human bood, yet I cannot help thinking that if some signal act of vengeance had been inflicted on any part of the United States exposed to maritime attack, but particularly on any portion of their territory where there prevailed the greatest attachment to the interests of France, it would have at least been a useful warning, and might have prevented the continuance of the contest, if they had not prevented its commencement. I protest against the doctrine of half measures, and forbearance in war; for where vigour has a tendency to decide the contest, hesitation is cruelty. But, with these topics I have done. Whatever may be the result of the contest, after the declaration issued by the United States, this country will stand right in the eyes of the world and of posterity. Nay, it is not paradoxical to say that we shall stand right, at no distant time, in the eyes even of our enemies in the United States; for by a singular anomaly, upon the issue of this struggle in which America is attempting to cripple our resources, depends not only the independence of Europe, but perhaps ultimately, the freedom of America herself.

The question was put and carried *nem. con.*

MR. CANNING'S EMBASSY TO LISBON.

May 6th, 1817.

Mr. Lambton this day brought forward the motion of which he had given notice, respecting Mr. Canning's Embassy to Lisbon. In bringing forward this motion, he disclaimed any intention of attack upon the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Canning,) whose name was prominently connected with the transactions to which it referred. It was not the conduct of an individual that he arraigned; but the charge which he had to prefer was against His Majesty's Ministers of delinquency, by which, in his opinion, they had subjected themselves to an impeachment (if that was not an obsolete proceeding,) on a charge of a criminal misapplication of the public money for the most corrupt private purposes. This was not the first time when this transaction had been made the subject of discussion. Both within and without those walls it had been regarded as a measure resorted to, purely for the purpose of supplying the weakness of the members of Government, by calling to their assistance the talents of the right honourable gentleman, (Mr. C.) talents too useful indeed to languish in obscurity. It had every where been asserted, that there were no public grounds for sending an Ambassador to Lisbon after the conclusion of the Peninsular War; that it was a disgraceful waste of public money, and solely to be attributed to the lowest species of political barter and intrigue. The papers which had been laid upon the table of the House fully proved that the mission to Lisbon was undertaken with no prospect of advantage to the interests of this country in its political or commercial relations, but with a view solely to the political, and he might almost say, commercial, advantages of the Ministers themselves; and that for these sinister objects they consented to add to the burthens of the people, already groaning under the weight of an insupportable taxation.

The statement of the case was this:—In July, 1814, a negotiation was entered into by the Ministers for the purpose of obtaining the co-operation of the right honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. Canning) and his friends in both Houses. On the 29th of June that negotiation was brought to a successful issue, Mr. Canning being appointed Ambassador to Lisbon, Mr. Huskisson Surveyor-General of Woods and Forests, and Mr. Wellesley Pole Master of the Mint. On the 30th of July, the member for Liverpool moved for a new writ in the room of his friend, Mr. Huskisson, on the appointment of that gentleman. The motives assigned for the appointment of an Ambassador to Lisbon had been two despatches from Lord Strangford, the Minister at the court of Brazil, to Viscount Castlereagh, respecting the intention of the Prince Regent of Portugal to return to Europe. The first of these despatches had been received on the 24th of April, 1814, the second on the 26th of August. As these were the only authorities on which the measure rested, he should read them. The first was in these words:—

"I should fail in my duty, did I not earnestly recommend to the consideration of his Royal Highness's Government, the speedy return to Europe of the Portuguese Royal Family. The Prince's own feelings, and those of every member of his family, are earnestly in favour of this measure. Some degree of apprehension may, perhaps, operate upon the mind of the Prince himself, to prevent him from coming forward as eagerly as the other individuals of the royal family would wish; but this sentiment would be easily removed, and His Royal Highness has explicitly stated to me, that as soon as ever Great Britain de-

clares that his return to Portugal is necessary, he will accede to any intimation to that effect."

This, it would be observed, contained merely a declaration of the line of policy which Lord Strangford had thought fit to adopt. The next despatch was received on the 26th of August, and was in these words:—

"The glorious events which have given peace and independence to Europe, have revived in the mind of the Prince of Brazil those eager desires to revisit his native country, which had been for a time suppressed. His Royal Highness has lately done me the honour to state his anxious hope that Great Britain will facilitate the completion of his wishes upon this subject, and that he may return to Portugal under the same protection as that under which he had left it. And His Royal Highness has, during the last week, intimated to me four or five times, as well publicly as privately, that in case Great Britain should send a squadron of ships of war to this place, for the purpose of escorting His Royal Highness to Europe, it would be particularly and personally gratifying to His Royal Highness that ——— ——— should be selected for this service."

The blank, he believed, had been filled up by the name of Sir Sidney Smith. Now, on one or other of the despatches which he had read, the appointment of the Lisbon Ambassador must have been founded, if it had any foundation but the desire to find an appointment for the right honourable gentleman. It was ascertained that, in the interval between the 24th of April and the 26th of August, no communication had been made from the Portuguese Ambassador to our Government. An address had been voted for all the communications from the Portuguese Ambassador respecting the return of the Prince Regent of Portugal, and the answer was, that no written communication had been made. Indeed, he could prove at the bar that not only had the Portuguese Minister made no communication of the probability of the return of the Prince of Brazil, but he had asserted that the Government had quite misunderstood the intention of his master. The appointment could not have been in consequence of the despatch received in April, for it was on the 6th of June that Mr. Sydenham was appointed; and on the 18th of July, when the noble lord opposite had written to Mr. Sydenham, telling him that he could not anticipate any public grounds why he (Mr. S.) should not confine himself within his ordinary allowances, he of course could have had no contemplation of any such appointment. It was still more impossible that the appointment could have been occasioned by the despatch received on the 26th of August, for that was a month after the appointment of the right honourable gentleman had been announced to the public in the newspapers. He supposed it would not be contended that the appointment did not take place until it was formally announced in the Gazette—the *evidentia rei*, the previous notoriety of the transaction, was a sufficient contradiction of any such idea, and he did not think any of the Ministers would stand forward in their places and assert, that the appointment did not take place in July. But if the right honourable gentleman had really been appointed for the purpose of welcoming the Prince Regent on his return, by what pretence could the appointment be justified in August, when the fleet intended to convey the Prince of Brazil to Europe did not sail till the 29th of October? It was morally impossible, therefore, that His Royal Highness could have reached Europe till the month of May following.

He should now call the attention of the House to the expenses of the missions:—On the 18th July, 1814, Lord Castlereagh had written a letter to Mr. Sydenham, then the Minister at Lisbon, in which he stated that it was the Prince Regent's pleasure that the expenses of the mission should be reduced to the lowest scale, and stating, that he could not contemplate any reasons for continuing the scale of expenditure which had been adopted during the Peninsular War. He had been rather surprised to find this economical disposition in any production of the noble lord's; but his surprise was of short duration, for only

ten days after Mr. Sydenham had been reduced to a salary of £5,200 a year, the right honourable gentleman was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary, with a salary of nearly treble that amount. On the 31st of October, in the absence of the noble lord (Castlereagh) at the Congress, Lord Bathurst wrote to Mr. Canning, then in England, to inform him that he was to be allowed £14,200 a year, on the same grounds on which Mr. Sydenham had been limited to £5,200. Why such a change had taken place in the allowance to the Minister, while no change had taken place in the circumstances of the embassy, and when no chance existed of the immediate return of the Prince of Brazil to Europe, yet remained to be explained. The expense of Sir Charles Stuart had been referred to, but that could form no precedent for the expenditure of the right honourable gentleman. The whole of Sir Charles Stuart's expenses were occasioned by the Peninsular War. He actually held the reins of the Portuguese Government. He was a member, he believed the sole efficient member, of the Regency, and was forced to incur the whole of his large expenditure, to discharge the high official duties of his situation. But the case was very different when the war had ceased, and when the Ambassador was no longer a member of the Portuguese Government. On the 30th of May, 1815, the right honourable gentleman had found out a reason for this increased scale of allowance. In a letter to the noble lord (Castlereagh) of that date, he stated, that "the rank of ambassador, which could make no practical difference in expenses, of which the salary (whether as ambassador or as envoy) supplied only a part, was politically important, as counterbalancing the positive loss of rank and influence, which would otherwise have been occasioned by the British Minister's being no longer a member of the Regency." The right honourable gentleman had by that time forgotten the letter of Lord Castlereagh, in which Mr. Sydenham was directed to reduce his expenses to the lowest scale. He seemed to have taken a former suggestion of his noble friend—to have "two strings to his bow"—for when he was forced to acknowledge that the object of his mission had ceased, as there was no probability of the Prince of Brazil's return to Europe, he contrived to discover that it was essential to the political welfare of England that his salary should be continued; he discovered, in short, that as Sir Charles Stuart had a large allowance, because he was a member of the Regency, so he (the right honourable gentleman) ought to have a large allowance, because he was not a member of the Regency. The rest of this letter of the right honourable gentleman's was unimportant, except as it displayed talents for finance, which, although in this instance elicited for his own advantage, it was to be hoped he would henceforward contribute to the public service, and in support of his friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in this season of financial difficulty.

From all these documents it was evident, that the plain and almost avowed purpose of the mission was, to procure a place for the right honourable gentleman. He was therefore sent, with a salary of £14,000 a year, to a capital where there was no court, and to which, even while it had a court, no ambassador had been sent for almost a century. He superseded a deserving servant of the public, acting there as envoy, with a salary of £5,000 a year. He said, superseded designedly, for Mr. Sydenham's intention of resigning was not known to Ministers when they made Mr. Canning's appointment, and when he had amassed a sufficient sum, or when a place was provided for him, or when the job became too glaring and called forth the public censure, he left the important business of the Lisbon mission under the sole guidance of a chargé d'affaires; and during the whole of this mission, the only duty performed by him was a speech to the factory. The defenders of this mission had talked of the efforts which the right honourable gentleman had made to complete the abolition of the Slave Trade; and one of his friends, on a former occasion, had said, "that if there was the least chance that the abolition of the Slave Trade

would be accelerated by this measure, the opposers of the appointment of the right honourable gentleman should pause before they called on the country to pronounce it a gross and scandalous job." He could prove, however, that since the appointment of the right honourable gentleman, the trade of Portugal in human flesh had increased instead of decreasing; and that not one single favourable declaration was procured from the Portuguese Government by the efforts of the Ambassador.

Under all these considerations, he called on the House to come to a decision on the merits of the case. He had now to put to the test the sincerity of the professions of the House, of economy and vigilance over the extravagant conduct of Ministers. He showed them a case in which the public money had been most culpably and disgracefully squandered;—no sort of necessity had been shown in the papers which the Government had submitted as their justication; on the contrary, every document tended to prove most clearly that in no one instance had they more abused the confidence reposed in them by Parliament than in the present. If, in these times of distress and discontent, it was important for the House to acquire a reputation for strict public virtue, and incorruptibility, they would mark their sense of this proceeding, and show the people that they still retained within themselves the means of satisfying their just claims, and of protecting them against the culpable and profligate extravagance of Ministers. He should move the following Resolutions:

1. "That it appears to this House, that on the 18th of July 1814, Lord Viscount Castlereagh addressed an official despatch to Thomas Sydenham, Esq., then His Majesty's Minister at Lisbon, acquainting him that it was the command of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, that during his residence at the Court of Portugal, he should confine his personal expenses within his ordinary allowances as Envoy Extraordinary and Ministry Plenipotentiary, viz. £5,200 per annum; that he had directed Mr. Casamajor to lose no time in removing the mission from the house of the Marquis de Pombal, and that he could not anticipate any public grounds for continuing the expenditure of His Majesty's servants at Lisbon on the scale on which it had been conducted during the war in the Peninsula.

2. "That it appears that under the pretence of congratulating the Prince of Brazil, on his return to his native dominions, the Right Honourable George Canning was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to the court of Lisbon, with the increased emoluments and allowances belonging to that character, viz. £8,200 as salary, £6,000 as extraordinaries, £1,500 as outfit, and £3,180 as plate money, amounting in the whole to the sum of eighteen thousand eight hundred and eighty pounds.

3. "That such an appointment, on such a scale of expense, appears to this House inconsistent with the recorded declaration in Lord Castlereagh's despatch to Mr. Sydenham, of the 18th of July 1814; was uncalled for by any change in the circumstances of the mission subsequent to Mr. Sydenham's appointment; and has been attended with an unnecessary and unjustifiable waste of the public money."

After the speech of Admiral Sir John Beresford, there was a considerable pause in the House,—Sir Francis Burdett alone having spoken in support of Mr. Lambton's Motion. At length, no other Member offering himself, and the Question being about to be put from the chair,

Mr. Canning rose, and spoke nearly as follows:—

Sir,—Upon a question which, however disguised in form, I cannot but feel in common with every Member who hears me—

in common with the honourable mover of the Resolutions, and in common with the honourable baronet, who has fairly stated the real object in view,—to be an attack directed against me individually, I trust I shall not be considered as having shown any blameable reluctance in pausing before I offered myself to the attention of the House. Sir, I could not bring myself to believe, that, in the two speeches of the honourable mover, and the honourable baronet, I had heard the whole of what is to be alleged against me; and yet I must suppose that, if others intended to add their weight to the accusation, I must suppose that, in a case in which every thing that is dear to man, in character, in reputation, and in honour, is at stake, they would have had the fairness to give to the accused an advantage which is not withholden from the meanest criminal,—that of hearing the whole indictment to which he is to plead.

If, after a year of menace, and after three months of preparation, from amidst all the array which I see opposed to me, these* are my only accusers; if the speeches which I have heard, contain the whole of the charges which are to be urged against me; charges, which those who bring them forward, state to be directed to no other object than the public weal,—but which I know, and which they know, to be intended to disqualify me for ever from serving the public with credit to myself or with advantage to the state; if this be all,—it falls, indeed, far short of the expectations excited by such mighty menace and by such deliberate preparation? But, Sir, if this is *not* all,—if there are gentlemen, who hold themselves in readiness to aggravate the matter preferred against me,—whose speeches, prepared for the occasion and now throbbing in their breasts, are reserved till I shall be disabled from answering them,—from such I appeal to the candour of the House and of the world; declaring, and desiring it to be understood, both within and without the walls of this House, that if I do not refute what they may hereafter advance against me, it will be only because I am precluded by the forms of the House from speaking a second time (cries of No, no.) Oh, Sir, I am not to be told that the motion consists of a string of Resolutions—that each Resolution is a separate question—and that upon each separate question I *may* speak:—but neither are my accusers to be told that this is technical nonsense:—that the effective debate must take place upon the first Resolution, and that the question upon that Resolution once put to the vote, I should be heard upon those which follow, to very little purpose indeed.

I agree with the honourable baronet, that I have often deplored and deprecated; and, in spite of the honourable baronet's warn-

* Mr. Lambton and Sir Francis Burdett.

ing, I shall continue (not for myself but for the public good) to deprecate and to deplore—the practice of calumniating public men on either side of this House, by imputing to them motives of action, the insinuation of which would not be tolerated in the intercourse of private life. If, indeed, I shall be found to have forfeited all claim to the confidence of the House, the honourable baronet needs not fear that I shall again offend him by such unpleasant animadversions. But if, on the other hand, I shall be fortunate enough to make plain to others, that which I myself confidently feel—my perfect clearness from any of the imputations attempted to be thrown upon me—the honourable baronet may depend upon hearing from me hereafter the same language which I have used heretofore on this, and on other subjects still more disagreeable to the honourable baronet and his followers.

Sir, the charge which the honourable gentleman's Resolutions involve, is this,—That the Government, being perfectly aware that the Prince Regent of Portugal had no intention of returning to Europe, pretended a belief in such intention, for the express purpose of corruptly offering that mission which I corruptly accepted. It is true, that a distinction is most disingenuously affected to be drawn between the Government and me, of which it is hardly necessary to say, that I disdain to take advantage. It is pretended, that a charge is brought forward only against the Government for making the offer, but that I might have accepted that offer, if not altogether without blame, at least without absolute criminality. Sir, I disclaim this insidious distinction. I will allow no such exception in my favour. As my noble friend has claimed that my case shall be considered as that of the Government; so do I declare on my part, that the case of the Government is mine.

The *first* head of charge, therefore, against the Government and myself is, that there was no belief on the part of the Government, or on mine, that the Prince Regent of Portugal intended to return to Europe: the *second* is, that the Mission sent to receive and congratulate the Prince Regent on his return was on a scale of unnecessary, unexampled, profligate prodigality. To both these issues, distinctly, I mean to plead. All that I require of those who are to judge me is, that they will keep these two issues separate in their minds: that they will not confound them, as has been industriously done in the speeches of the honourable gentleman and the honourable baronet. If a fraud were purposed —if the Government did believe in the return of the Royal Family of Portugal—there is crime enough for an impeachment, if you will, without entering into the question of expense. In that case the expense of one farthing was too much. But if, on the contrary, the Government was sincere in its belief of the occasion

for the appointment when they made it,—and I, when I accepted it,—then the question of expense is indeed a fair subject of parliamentary jealousy (I am far from denying that it is so;) but the amount of that expense must be estimated, with reference to its object, and not upon the unfair and fallacious assumption that there was no occasion for any expense at all.

As to the first point, if I were pleading for myself alone, all that it would be necessary for me to do, would be to refer to one only of the papers before the House:—the extract of Lord Strangford's despatch to Lord Castlereagh, dated Rio de Janeiro, June 21st, 1814. It is in these words:—

"The glorious events which have given peace and independence to Europe, have revived in the mind of the Prince of Brazil those eager desires to revisit his native country, which had been for a time suppressed.

"His Royal Highness has done me the honour to state his anxious hope that Great Britain will facilitate the completion of his wishes upon this subject; and that he may return to Portugal under the same protection as that under which he left it."

The despatch, of which this is an extract, was, in fact, the only one upon the subject that I happened to see before I went to Portugal.

Before I proceed further, I must here vindicate my noble friend the Secretary of State for the Foreign Department, from the allegation of the honourable gentleman, that my noble friend studiously delayed, or wilfully confounded, the papers moved for by the honourable gentleman or his friends. The honourable gentleman accuses my noble friend of having produced a despatch, addressed to *me* by Lord Bathurst (No. 2, of the papers first presented to Parliament,) instead of the despatch of my noble friend to Mr. Sydenham of the 18th of July—well knowing that this latter was the paper really moved for. Now, Sir, I cannot pretend to say in what terms the motion of the honourable gentleman was conceived: I was not in the House (so far as I know) when he made it. The first knowledge that I had of it was from a note of my noble friend, inclosing a copy of the despatch addressed to me by Lord Bathurst; informing me that this despatch was to be laid before the House of Commons; and desiring to know whether there were any papers which I might wish to be produced in order to meet the charge, whatever it might be, which appeared, by the call for this despatch, to be meditated against me. This was a courtesy which my noble friend, or any Minister, would have equally shown to any other individual menaced with a parliamentary attack, and I only mention it, as affording a strong proof of the sincerity of my noble friend's belief that the paper first produced was that which had been moved for by the honourable gentleman. Lord Strangford's despatch being (as I have said) the

only document that I happened ever to have seen, relating to the Prince Regent of Portugal's return, it was the only one that occurred to me at all necessary to illustrate that matter. It was the only one, therefore, of which, with that view, I suggested the production; and, upon looking it over—as I was extremely desirous to bring forward nothing but what was absolutely necessary—I thought the two or three sentences, which are given in the *first* set of papers presented to the House, amply sufficient. I knew, indeed, that the Prince Regent of Portugal's intention of returning to Europe had been questioned; but it was not until after the production of these papers that I had any suspicion that it was denied. The honourable gentleman now professes that his intention was to move, not for any despatch to me, but for a despatch to Mr. Sydenham. It is to be regretted, in that case, that the honourable gentleman did not mention Mr. Sydenham's name in his motion, which would have obviated any possibility of misapprehension. I am not without my suspicions, indeed, that if in return to the honourable gentleman's ambiguous motion my noble friend had laid upon the table the despatch to Mr. Sydenham, he would then have been accused of keeping back the despatch to me. In truth, Sir, if the honourable gentlemen wanted complete information, their obvious course was to move for *all* despatches relating to the subject in question, within a certain specified period. But if their object was to feel their way, paper by paper, in order that they might proceed or not, according as the information obtained by their successive motions should or should not correspond with the prejudices which they had endeavoured to raise; why, then, Sir, perhaps they had not gone far in this course of discovery before they repented of having engaged in it.

But to return to the despatch of Lord Strangford.—The extract from that despatch which I have just read, appeared to me quite sufficient to establish the Prince Regent of Portugal's intention.—I confess, indeed, that my belief in that event rested on authority short even of this extract. It rested on the authority of a private letter from Lord Liverpool, received by me on the 28th August, at a considerable distance from London; which,—though it is not pleasant to quote in public discussion the contents of private letters, I will now (having my noble friend's permission,) read to the House. It is dated London, August 26th, 1834.

"Letters have been this day received from Lord Strangford, by which it appears that the Prince of Brazil has intimated his desire to return to Portugal (in consequence of the recent events in Europe,) and the gratification which he would feel at the arrival of a British squadron at Rio de Janeiro, for the purpose of conveying the royal family to Lisbon.

"Under these circumstances, Melville has given orders for preparing a proper squadron for this service, and it will sail as soon as the necessary arrangements can be completed."

This letter, Sir, I received on the 28th of August at Manchester, in my way from London to a distant part of the country, from whence I had no thoughts of returning till the middle of September. My right honourable friend, now sitting near me (Mr. Huskisson,) was with me when I received it. Now, the hypothesis of my accusers is, that the whole notion of the Prince Regent's return was a feint and a fraud on the part of the Government, if not on mine. But, I ask of any candid man, if he can believe, I ask of any man living, if he will avow the belief, that supposing a fraud to have been intended, it is likely that such a letter as this from Lord Liverpool, written in the unguarded style of private friendship, and addressed (as any gentleman who would take the trouble to look at it would see that it is) with the usual formulary of the most familiar correspondence, should have been one of the documents *got up* for such a purpose? Is it likely, that of two men, known to each other by nearly thirty years of intimacy, one should practise such a delusion upon the other? Or, is it likely that two such men should carry hypocrisy so far as to provide beforehand for the support of a public fraud, by the contrivance of such a private communication?

This letter from Lord Liverpool was founded upon that despatch from Lord Strangford of which I have already read the extract, and which appears at full length in the papers *last* laid upon the table. The extract was moved for at my desire, the extract only, when I conceived that *my* justification alone was in question: the whole despatch was afterwards moved for, also at my suggestion, when I found that the Government were suspected of having deceived *me* into a belief, for which they had no foundation. I will now take the liberty of reading the whole despatch.

RIO DE JANEIRO, June 21, 1814.

[*Received August 26th*, 1814.]

"MY LORD,

"The glorious events which have given peace and independence to Europe, have revived in the mind of the Prince of Brazil those eager desires to revisit his native country, which had been for a time suppressed.

"His Royal Highness has lately done me the honour to state his anxious hope, that Great Britain will facilitate the completion of his wishes upon this subject, and that he may return to Portugal under the same protection as that under which he left it. And His Royal Highness has, during the last week, intimated to me, four or five times, as well publicly as privately, that, in case Great Britain should send a squadron of ships of war to this place, for the purpose of escorting His Royal Highness to Europe, it would be particularly and personally gratifying to His Royal Highness that —— —— should be selected for this service.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"STRANGFORD.

"*To Viscount Castlereagh, &c. &c. &c.*"

(The name of the officer is omitted from motives of delicacy. Sir John Beresford had been already appointed and announced to the Court of Rio de Janeiro, before this depatch was received.)

Submit this document to any man in the habit of canvassing evidence, and ask him, whether there is any thing in it that could create a suspicion of the sincerity of the wish which it announces? —whether the Government could reasonably doubt the authenticity of the intelligence conveyed in it, any more than I doubted the fidelity of the abstract of that intelligence transmitted to me by Lord Liverpool? A man might say, that he intended to go a journey, and the fact of his entertaining that intention might, perhaps, not be considered as altogether established by the mere intimation of it: but, when he ordered his carriage to the door, and named the servants by whom he wished to be conducted, then, surely, one would consider him to be really in earnest.

This despatch, however, I did not see till after my return to London in September. I was quite satisfied of the fact, as stated to me by Lord Liverpool. Nothing is more easy than, when an event has, or has not, actually taken place, to find out that you ought to have foreseen how likely, or to have discovered how unlikely, it was to happen. But who balances probabilities in this way, in the ordinary transactions of life? Who is the wise and happy man that receives every friendly communication with distrust; that calls for proofs of the most credible expectancies, and deems every occurrence problematical till it has actually occurred? The Prince Regent of Portugal announced to the British Cabinet his intention of returning; he requested that a squadron might be sent to escort him to Europe; he named the officer by whom he wished that squadron to be commanded: yet Ministers were to suspect that he entertained no intention of the kind! For myself, I protest, that no shadow of doubt ever crossed my mind, as to the reality of this intention. Perhaps it may have been rash to believe: if so, I must acknowledge my error. But when, in addition to such positive testimony, I considered how desirable it was, with a view to the interests of the Portuguese Monarchy, of this country and of the world; how essential to the complete restoration and tranquillity of that order of things which the French Revolution had disjointed and broken up, that Portugal, now sunk into a province, should resume her station among the States of Europe;—when I felt that no efforts of the British Government ought to have been spared, and had reason to be assured that none had been spared, to induce that return, I confess I know not on what I could have founded the smallest doubt that the return of the Court of Portugal was really determined upon, and that this determination was upon the eve of execution.

It may be true, that there were, as has been asserted, at the pre-

cise period to which I am alluding, conflicting reports on this subject; that merchants in Lisbon had received letters from their friends in Brazil, contradicting the opinion that the Prince Regent would return; that there were rumours of opposition to the measure in the councils of Rio de Janeiro; and that persons, supposed to have access to correct intelligence, avowed the conviction that the Court would remain in South America. If there were such reports, I knew nothing of them. But I fairly own that had they come distinctly to my knowledge, had I even been consulted as to the weight to be allowed to them, I should have considered the British Minister's testimony as outweighing them all. I will tell the House why the testimony of Lord Strangford would have had so powerful a weight with me on this subject. In 1807, at the time when the Court of Portugal emigrated to the Brazils, I had the honour to fill the office now filled by my noble friend—(Lord Castlereagh.) When the first intelligence of the intended emigration reached this country, there was then, also, an abundance of conflicting and contradictory reports; and I believe I may say that for several days I alone, in London, alone perhaps among my colleagues, was persuaded of the existence of that intention. At that time I knew nothing of Lord Strangford, except from his official correspondence: but that correspondence had inspired me with a full reliance upon the authenticity of his sources of information, and upon his knowledge of the Prince Regent's mind; and Lord Strangford all along affirmed that the Prince Regent intended to emigrate. The general persuasion at Lisbon was that the Court would not emigrate; even up to the very day, when, as Lord Strangford had predicted, the Prince actually embarked in the Tagus, and set sail for Brazil.

My belief, therefore, in the present instance was founded, first, on positive information,—secondly, on the obvious desirableness of the return of the Prince Regent to Europe, and on the certainty that this country must have used all means of counsel and persuasion to ensure that event. I was persuaded both of the reality of the intention, and of the probability of its instant execution. Nothing, absolutely nothing, had come to my knowledge that could excite a reasonable distrust. But even had such distrust been excited in my mind by any rumour, or any testimony less than official, it would have been dispelled by the assurances of Lord Strangford. Such was my belief, my credulity, if you will —but a credulity of which I have assigned the grounds—a credulity which was assuredly not so fatuitous as to be fairly construed into crime.

I must, however, beg not to have it understood that my belief in the return of the Prince Regent at once determined my acceptance of the mission; though it might have done so, for aught that

I can see, without blame. Undoubtedly no earthly consideration would have induced me to accept it without an assurance as to that return: but it required a combination of other circumstances, with which I need not trouble the House, to induce me to go in an official character to Lisbon; and in fact my acceptance was not determined till after my return to town, late in September.

The Government had stronger grounds for their belief than I had. They had before them the communications contained, or referred to, in the papers last submitted to the House:—letters, namely, from Lord Strangford, of so early a date as February, and the autograph letter of the Prince Regent of Portugal to the Prince Regent of Great Britain, dated the 2nd of April. Of these I knew nothing till the other day, when the honourable gentleman's inquiries and denunciations led to an examination of the correspondence in the Foreign Office. This autograph letter disproves the notion of the honourable gentleman, that there was an interval between the month of February and the month of August in the communications respecting the Prince Regent's intended return. This letter fills up the supposed chasm in the correspondence. The reason why a copy of this document has not been laid before the House, is, that as many gentlemen who hear me must know, it is contrary to the etiquette observed towards Sovereign Princes so to make their letters public. The practice is for the Secretary of State to refer to the substance of such letters in an official despatch accompanying them, or acknowledging their receipt: and such a record of the letter in question is to be found in the despatch from the Secretary of State to Lord Strangford, of the 25th of July. In that despatch, this autograph letter is noticed as stating that the Prince Regent of Portugal only waited for intelligence of the final success of the allies, in order to determine his return to Europe.

But all this evidence, all this testimony, is, it seems, to be considered as fallacious, if not absolutely false, because there is a solemn, indubitable, irrefragable witness at variance with it—a paragraph in a newspaper of the 29th of July, which announced my actual appointment as Ambassador to Portugal! An appointment of the 29th of July could not be in consequence of information received on the 26th of August.—Clearly. But events might be contemplated as probable before the 29th of July, which intelligence of the 26th of August might confirm: and a speculation might be founded upon those probabilities, contingent upon their fulfilment or non-fulfilment. I do not affirm that some such speculation, founded on some such possible contingency, but absolutely dependent for its realization on the happening or not happening of that contingency, might not be afloat before the 29th of July. The despatch, of the 25th of July (of which,

however, any more than of the autograph letter alluded to in it, I had not any distinct knowledge till it was brought into notice the other day in consequence of the honourable gentleman's inquiries)—the date, I say, of this despatch renders it not improbable that it may have been about that time that a mission to Portugal began to be contemplated as probable. But that I was at that time, or near that time appointed, that I then accepted such appointment, if offered to me, or that it could then have been offered to me, if I had been willing to accept it, I utterly deny. I deny here, Sir, in your presence, and in the presence of my country, that which has been assumed as established because I did not deny it when asserted in a newspaper. Sir, I value as much as any man the liberty of the press; I acknowledge its utility, I bow to its power; in common with all public men, I listen to its suggestions, and receive its chastisements, with all due humility and thankfulness: but I will not plead at its bar! I will continue to treat with scorn the attacks of anonymous malice. I disdain to make any answer to such charges, whilst there is a House of Commons before which I can vindicate my character. This is the place where it is my right as well as my duty to plead, before a competent tribunal, and in the face of known and accountable accusers. And in behalf of all that is sacred and decent in private life, as well as in behalf of the honour of public men, I protest against the inference, that he is to be held guilty of a charge, who resolutely declines to answer it at the bar of the daily press.

But the newspaper had, it seems, announced not only that I was appointed Ambassador to Lisbon; but that my right honourable friend near me (Mr. Huskisson,) was appointed Surveyor of the Woods and Forests, and my right honourable friend (Mr. W. W. Pole,) at the end of the bench, Master of the Mint; both which nominations were immediately verified. It is very true that the latter office was shortly afterwards filled by my right honourable friend (Mr. W. W. Pole,) who has discharged the duties of it with so much honour to himself, and advantage to the public: but I disclaim in the most peremptory terms any merit or influence of mine in that appointment. My right honourable friend (Mr. Huskisson) near me, was, it is also true, appointed to the office of Surveyor of Woods, and undoubtedly not without my intervention. On the 30th of July I think it was that I moved the new writ for my right honourable friend. I moved that writ for the express purpose of showing that I approved, and was party to, the accession of my right honourable friend, and of other friends of mine, to the Administration. And had I myself accepted office at that time, I should have been equally ready, nay, anxious to avow it. At different periods of my political life, I have held, I have resigned, I have refused, and

I have accepted office. And there is no occasion on which I have taken either of these courses, on which I am not perfectly prepared to vindicate (I will not say always the prudence, but I will say confidently) the purity and honourableness of my conduct.

I know, Sir, how difficult it is to speak plainly on subjects of this nature, without transgressing the decorum, if not the strict order of our debates. But is it brought as an accusation against me, that, having no difference of opinion with the Administration, I did not neglect an opportunity which presented itself of furnishing an accession of strength to that Administration, which I wished to strengthen and uphold? Why ought I to have declined this? And by whom am I accused for not declining it? By those who consider the principle of party as a virtue—as a badge of distinction, and a pledge of purity, when predicated of themselves; but who are intolerant of any party, presuming to connect itself together, except under their banners. And, what is the bond of party? what are the boasted ties that connect the honourable gentlemen on the other side of the House with each other? Fidelity in private friendship, as well as consistency in public principle. Their theory of party is a theory which they would confine exclusively to their own practice. One may become a satellite in their system, and welcome; but any eccentric planet, moving in another system, they view with jealous, yet with scornful eyes, and denounce its course as baleful and destructive. To this exclusive doctrine I have never subscribed. To these pretensions I have never listened with submission. I have never deemed it reasonable that any confederacy of great names should monopolize to themselves the whole patronage and authority of the state: should constitute themselves, as it were, into a corporation, a bank for circulating the favours of the Crown and the suffrages of the people, and distributing them only to their own adherents. I cannot consent that the administration of the Government of this free and enlightened country shall be considered as rightfully belonging to any peculiar circle of public men, however powerful, or of families however preponderant; and though I cannot stand lower in the estimation of the honourable baronet than I do in my own, as to my own pretensions, I will (to use the language of a statesman,* so eminent that I cannot presume to quote his words without an apology,) I will, as long as I have the faculty to think and act for myself, "look those proud combinations in the face." I plead guilty, then, to the charge, if it be one, of having treated with an Administration, with the principles of which I perfectly agreed. I plead guilty to the charge, if it be one, of having on this, aye, and on other occasions, postponed my own interest

* Mr. Burke.

to that of my friends. If, indeed, the charge could be turned the other way; if, occupied exclusively with any personal objects of my own, it could be said that I had neglected the claims, the interests, or the feelings of any individual connected with me in political life, I should, indeed, hear that charge with sensations very different from those which I now experience: then, indeed, should I hide my head with shame.

When I moved the writ of my right honourable friend, on the 30th of July, I declare, upon my honour, that I thought it very doubtful whether I should myself have any official connexion whatever with the Government. I do not mean to say, that the question had not been mooted, as to my undertaking the mission to Portugal, if it should turn out that such a mission was to be sent. But many circumstances might have prevented the result that did afterwards happen. I was not pledged, I was very far from having made up my own mind, to accept the mission if it should be offered to me; nor had the Government, as yet, any assurance that they should have it to offer. I had previously made arrangements of my own. My plans were to go where I did go, but from different motives and with a different object. What that object and those motives were, I am not called upon, nor do I think it necessary to state in this place. It is sufficient for me to say that I was master of my own actions, and that I chose to go. My intention was known to my private friends, and had been communicated to my constituents two months before the close of the session.

The first official tender of the mission was made to me by my noble friend, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, I think about the end of the first week of August:—I cannot be positive as to the day; but I recollect perfectly that I had but two interviews with my noble friend upon the subject, within a few days of each other,—and that at the date of one of those interviews, Mr. Sydenham had arrived in England. He arrived on or about the 8th of August. My noble friend was then on the eve of his departure for Vienna. His tender to me was altogether contingent and conditional. The way in which the matter was left, was this; that if the certainty of the Prince Regent of Portugal's immediate return should be established, I should hear from him (or, in his absence, from Lord Liverpool) again. I did hear again, in the manner that I have stated; but, in proof that I had not, in the mean time, acted on the presumption that I should go out in an official character, I can appeal to some of the members of the Board of Admiralty who sit near me, that I was, so late as in the month of September, a supplicant at the Admirality, as a private person, for a ship to convey me and my family to Lisbon; and when I arrived in Portugal, I found a house provided for me, as a private

person, through the kindness of a friend,—a house in the neighbourhood of Lisbon, which, in my official character, I could not occupy.

But all this, it may be said, was but contrivance,—an artificial chain of circumstances forged and linked together, with a view to the present discussion. Has such an imputation the colour of probability? What I have now stated both as to facts and motives is the truth. If any man shall contradict this statement, I can only say that he will affirm that which is not true. Where a matter rests—and from a nature must rest solely—on the consciousness of an individual, there is no other answer (that I know of) to be given to an arbitrary contradiction. I speak this, I hope, without offence. But, on this part of my case, I know of no other possible answer.

I did believe then in the intention of the Prince Regent to return. The Government believed in it. Their belief would have been ground enough for mine. But I have shown that they had good grounds for their belief. Further, it appears, from what has been stated by the gallant admiral behind me, (Sir John Beresford,) in anticipation of a question which I might perhaps have taken the liberty to put to him, that not only had the royal family really entertained that intention, but that the disposition to carry it into execution survived the report of its abandonment; that he was repeatedly requested by the Prince Regent of Portugal to defer his departure from Rio de Janeiro from time to time, in hopes that the next arrivals from Europe might bring intelligence decisive of the voyage; and that it was not until the beginning of April that those hopes were finally relinquished, and the gallant admiral permitted to take his leave.

Contrary and contradictory rumours did, no doubt, continue to prevail on this subject, in London, as they certainly did in Lisbon. Even when I received at Lisbon, in the beginning of April 1815, the first intimation from England on which I founded my resignation, I was in possession of most positive assurances the other way; and on the very day on which I sent off my resignation, I had heard through what I might have considered as authentic channels, that the Prince would certainly embark. The day was specified on which the embarkation was to take place; and we were to look for the first news of that event in the arrival of the squadron off the bar. But did I act on this information? Did I endeavour to shake any credit which the Government at home might be disposed to give to their accounts from Rio de Janeiro? Did I contrast the rumours of Lisbon with the rumours of London, for the purpose of clinging to my office? No. It appears, from the papers on the table, that upon the 29th of March the information of the Prince Regent's abandonment

of his design was received here in an official shape. Probably this official information must have been preceded some days by private intelligence. The intimation which reached me on the 9th of April certainly was not official; I did not wait, however, for its official confirmation: on the 10th of April, I wrote and sent off by an express packet the following despatch to the Foreign Office:

"By the mails which came in yesterday, I learn, (though not officially,) that the accounts received in England from Rio de Janeiro since Admiral Sir John Beresford's arrival there, create a doubt of the Prince Regent of Portugal's present intention to return to his European dominions.

"Nothing has been received here from the Brazils, which indicates any such change in His Royal Highness's intention. But should any impediments have been interposed to delay the execution of it, until the intelligence of the late astonishing and afflicting revolution in the state of Europe shall reach Rio de Janeiro, it is possible that the receipt of that intelligence may determine His Royal Highness to remain there for the present.

"In that case, or in the event of your lordship's receiving such positive accounts, as satisfy your lordship's mind that such a determination has been taken by the Prince Regent of Portugal, I have to request your lordship, to lay at the feet of His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, my humble resignation of the commission with which he was graciously pleased to honour me, in contemplation of the Prince Regent of Portugal's return."

So much for the first head of the charge against me, and against the Government. I have shown, I hope to the satisfaction of the House, that we did believe in the return of the Court of Portugal to Europe;—that we had good grounds for that belief;—and that, upon that belief exclusively, any mission to Lisbon was founded.

It remains to be considered, whether upon that ground, *such* a mission was necessary or justifiable. And this question again divides itself into two heads; first, whether necessary at all; secondly, (if admitted to be necessary,) whether conducted on a scale of disproportionate expense—disproportionate either to the unavoidable expenditure of the mission, or to its political importance.

In the first of these questions—Was an embassy to Lisbon necessary, in the event of the Prince Regent's return?—is involved another more personal question, from which I must not shrink:—namely—Was there any unfitness in the offer of that mission to *me*, or in *my* acceptance of it?—I feel all the difficulty of arguing this point in a manner at once satisfactory to the House and not unjust to myself. It is distasteful and revolting to one's feelings to be obliged to speak of one's-self, and of one's own fitness for any situation, or any undertaking. But it will be remembered, that I am upon my trial—that I am defending myself against a criminal charge; and if in such a defence, something like egotism

should be unavoidable, I hope the House will have the goodness to excuse it.

Sir, to place this question in its true point of view, I must once more go back to the year 1807. I have said that when in that year the royal family of Portugal adopted the resolution of emigrating to the Brazils, I had the honour to hold the Seals of the Foreign Office. I had thus an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the wishes of the Prince Regent of Portugal in favour of Lord Strangford, who had been employed to advise and to urge that splendid and magnanimous emigration. It was my duty to report these wishes, and to recommend the services of Lord Strangford to the consideration of my royal master. The result was, that his lordship was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; was invested with a red riband; and might also have received an advance in the peerage—which (for reasons nothing to the purpose of this night's discussion) he declined. There was, however, another point respecting which the Court of Portugal was extremely solicitous,—a reciprocation of missions of the highest rank: and this point, from the period of which I am speaking to the last moment at which I held the Seals of Office, the Portuguese Minister never lost an opportunity of pressing upon my attention. It has been said, by shrewd observers of domestic politics, that when once a coronet gets into a man's head there is no driving it out again: and I believe it may be as justly said, that when once a Court takes up the notion of reciprocation of embassies, it is no easy matter to get the better of it. Such a notion reproduces itself on every occasion. A Secretary of State is to be assailed with repeated solicitation till the favourite measure is accomplished.

To this application I at that time did not listen. And I believe I reconciled the Court of Portugal to the refusal of it, by showing that it could not then be granted in the person of Lord Strangford; whose diplomatic standing would not admit of such an advancement—having been already so recently raised from the station of Charge-d'Affaires. I promised, however, that on the occurrence of any signal event which might constitute a proper occasion for an embassy, (and the two possible events in contemplation were either the final establishment of the Portuguese Court at the Brazils—should the cause of Europe be lost, or, what was then a distant, though never with me a hopeless prospect—its restoration to Europe on a successful termination of the war,) I would recommend to my Sovereign—should I be then in office—a compliance with the wishes of the Court of Portugal.

Long after I quitted office, and more than once, or twice, or three times, I was appealed to for the truth of the assertion, that such a promise had been given; not that any engagement of mine

could be binding on my successors. At last, I believe in 1811, without waiting for these long coming events, the Portuguese Minister here assumed the character of Ambassador. The reciprocation was declined. Much discussion, it seems, followed during the three succeeding years upon the refusal to name an Ambassador at the Court of Brazil: and I perfectly remember, that in one of the conversations which I had with my noble friend the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, he reminded me of the circumstances which I have here recapitulated, and observed, "We shall, besides, thus have the long disputed point of a reciprocation of embassies settled, and your pledge to the Court of Portugal redeemed in your own person."

If it is supposed by honourable gentlemen, that the aggregate allowances of the mission were necessarily increased by giving the name and rank of Ambassador, instead of that of Envoy Extraordinary, to my appointment, I assure them they are mistaken. The question of expense I reserve for separate consideration; but as it here mixes itself with the question of the rank of the mission, I am compelled shortly to advert to it, a little before its time. There are (or were before the regulation of 1815,) two different scales of ambassadorial allowances; the higher scale with a salary of £11,000 a year, and the other, on what is called the *old* salary of £8,200. The difference between these two salaries is nearly the same as the difference between the lower of them and that of an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary,—which is £5,200. Now, Sir, a man who coveted an embassy for the sake of emolument would hardly fail, once Ambassador, to choose the higher scale of salary. I chose the lower. But I do not claim any merit from this preference. For as neither £5,200, (the salary of Envoy Extraordinary,) nor £8,200, (the salary of Ambassador on the old scale,) nor even the higher salary of £11,000 reduced by deductions at home and abroad, was expected to cover all the expenses of the mission, without an addition of extraordinaries (as I shall presently show) it became indifferent in *that* point of view, what should be the nominal rank of the mission.

But it was not indifferent in *other* respects. I flatter myself, that I shall not be suspected of the idle and stupid vanity of caring under what name I did the public business. I believe, however, that it will be generally acknowledged, that having once,—with however little pretensions to so high a station—filled that office which presides over the diplomacy of the country, I could not consistently assume any other than the highest diplomatic rank—that which alone represents the Sovereign—in any mission on which I should happen to be employed. Much less could I have done so with propriety on a mission to the Court of Portu-

gal, with which I had, as Secretary of State, engaged for those exertions, and (sanguinely, perhaps, but, as it has turned out, safely) anticipated those results, by which that Court was now enabled, if it so thought fit, to accomplish its return to Europe.

But neither was the question of what might be individually becoming, the whole of this question. The character of Ambassador, though it may make little difference *here*, where every negotiation passes through responsible Ministers, is by no means a matter of indifference in many foreign courts. The mere question of precedency, trifling as it may seem in itself, is not a thing of no moment, in diplomatic transactions. The facility of access to the person of the Sovereign without the intervention of a Minister, perhaps hostile to our interests—and the right of pre-audience of that Sovereign himself—are advantages of no inconsiderable moment in courts where the will of the Sovereign is mainly the policy of the State.

But what good did I expect to achieve through these advantages? What was there for me to do? What did I expect to be able to do? First, it was not for me to judge of my own qualifications; it was for the Government. I might entrench myself behind this answer. But in the spirit in which I am stating my argument, taking the defence of the Government upon myself (as my noble friend has taken mine upon the Government) I will not do so. I must again remind the House, that I speak of myself, only because I am upon my trial. With the allowance belonging to that consideration, I may be permitted to say, I think that there *was* good to be done; and I think that *I* had as fair means, and as probable a chance, as any other man, of doing it.

I pass by many obvious difficulties and embarrassments in the present state of the relations of the Court of Portugal with other Governments in Europe, which might have been avoided had that Court returned. But there is one subject which seems to be comparatively forgotten at this moment, but which in 1814 (the year of my appointment) was the theme of loud remonstrance and incessant reproach against the Government—as though they had been indifferent or lukewarm in their exertions upon it,—I mean the Slave Trade. I *did* hope to be able to effect something on this great and interesting subject. I cannot conceive a more favourable opportunity for this purpose than would have been afforded by the return of the Prince Regent to the kingdom of his ancestors: a kingdom saved, through the blessing of Providence upon the arms and counsels of this country. Of those counsels I had, from my official situation, been the humble instrument and organ: nor was it perhaps altogether an unreasonable presumption, to hope that the share which I had accidentally had in them might have conciliated, even to so humble an individual as myself, some-

thing of kindness from the Sovereign whose crown and whose dominions had been thus preserved and restored to him. I say, therefore, Sir, I cannot conceive circumstances which would have afforded a better chance of making some impression on the mind of a prince naturally good—naturally religious—upon a matter in which his personal character was the best, perhaps the one, hope of success.

I can assure the honourable gentlemen, that of the instructions which I carried out with me, three-fourths were directed to this object. And, besides the instructions of my noble friend, the Secretary of State, I had with me ample and most useful suggestions from an honourable friend of mine (Mr. Wilberforce,) whom I do not now see in his place, which should not have lain idle in my desk. I hoped nothing, indeed, from the "oratory" which the honourable baronet is pleased (I suppose ironically) to attribute to me; but much from a good cause in zealous hands. I did believe—I do still believe, that had I had the opportunity of personal intercourse with the Prince, I might have effected some good in this matter; and if it had pleased God that I should succeed in it, I should neither have thought the expenses of my mission ill employed, nor have felt any disparagement to myself in having undertaken it.

So much for the objects in contemplation at the commencement of the mission. But these objects were not attained.—True. And it is supposed, that not to have attained them was to me matter of great disappointment. In one sense, undoubtedly it was so. I should have thought the settlement of the question of the Slave Trade with one of the Peninsular Powers, an object of importance not easily to be over-rated. In another sense, I do assure the honourable baronet and the honourable gentleman, that I had not experienced one half of the satisfaction in accepting my office which I felt when I was permitted to resign it.

When, after writing the letter of April the 10th, tendering my resignation, I yielded to the request of my noble friend, and consented to remain at my post so long as my services might be thought necessary, I must beg the House to observe that the whole question of the mission had assumed an entirely new form. The war had broken out; and if there had not then been a Minister of high diplomatic rank at Lisbon, it would have been absolutely necessary to appoint one. I failed, it is true, in the main object of my negotiations during the war,—the obtaining the aid of a corps of Portuguese troops to act with the Allies in Flanders. But why did I fail? Precisely because that state of things existed in Portugal—because that form of local government remained there—which it was the interest and the wish of this country to see altered. I failed because the Sovereign himself was not at Lisbon;

an additional proof, if any had been wanting, of the advisableness of that return which we had endeavoured to invite by every proper inducement; an additional proof of the inconvenience of leaving one of the kingdoms of Europe with which Great Britain is most intimately allied, under a delegated Government; a Government incapable, from the very nature of their trust, and from the immensity of distance which separates them from their Sovereign, of acting in all cases with the promptness and energy necessary for the glory of the absent Sovereign, and for the welfare of his people.

Sir, I venture to hope that the House will feel that I have satisfactorily disposed of the first part of the question as to the embassy, and justified the nomination of a mission of that character, on the supposition (which I had before justified) of the Prince Regent of Portugal's return. I now proceed to the second part of that question, the expense of the mission.

If there was no delusion in the cause assigned for the embassy —if I have shown that it was necessary or highly expedient in the case supposed to exist—it still remains to be inquired whether or not it was conducted on too costly a scale. I must observe, however, again, that if the belief in the return of the Prince and the expediency of an embassy to welcome him are not made out, one farthing of expenditure was too much; and if, therefore, in the opinion of one honest and impartial man who has heard me, what I have stated appears to be founded in fraud or artifice, the question of pecuniary expense is at an end. On the other hand, if I have been so far successful, I am prepared to challenge a like decision on the issue now to be joined; and to demonstrate that the cost of this mission was not only not prodigal in proportion to its rank and character, but that it was economical, in comparison with any standard with which it can in fairness be compared.

The honourable baronet has quoted a *dictum* of Sir Robert Walpole's, that "every man has his price." I do not think this maxim true of men:—I do not think it true that even every *thing* has its price. Things must be estimated not merely by their intrinsic qualities, but by their relative fitness and value. There is no rule for judging absolutely what ought to be the cost of *an* embassy. There is no forming such an estimate *a priori*. Facts and experience are the only gounds on which you can safely or justly proceed.

I beg gentlemen then to look at the printed accounts of missions in the years 1812, 1813, and 1814, and I ask who could tell, on going to Lisbon in the autumn of the latter year, what his expenses were likely to be? Who is there, that having before him the expenditure of Sir Charles Stuart for the years 1812–13, and 1813–14, would have ventured upon such a mission, without com-

ing to some understanding as to the extent of his expenditure, and as to the principles of its limitation?

I shall perhaps surprise the honourable baronet when I confess that an application on the subject of extraordinaries was made by me to the Government. But in what sense was this application made? Was it for latitude and indulgence? Was it that I might be put upon the same footing and allowed the same range as my predecessor? No, Sir; it was for strictness, for definition, for restraint. In the beginning of October I wrote a letter to my noble friend, Lord Liverpool, (my noble friend, Lord Castlereagh, near me, was then abroad,) an extract of which, with their permission, I will now read to the House. The House will see that it was of as private and familiar a style, and as little destined for public citation as that from Lord Liverpool to me, which I read to the House a short time ago.

"I have been looking over Stuart's extraordinaries, and they really frighten me. It may be very well for him or any man not connected with politics, to draw thus at discretion, but it would not do for *me*. For God's sake limit me to what you think right—I can form no judgment of the matter: only limit me, so that I may have no responsibility."

This letter shows at least the *quo animo*—the disposition with which I entered upon the subject. Is this the language of rapacity? Is this a petition for large emolument and unbounded discretion? Or does it not rather indicate a cautious dislike of discretionary power, arising from a dread of responsibility, and an anticipation of injustice—the former of which I am not ashamed of confessing I did feel; the latter, I have at this moment, God knows, no reason to disavow.

Sir, in entering upon this most disagreeable discussion—disagreeable, because I must mention the names of honourable men in a way which may be liable to misconstruction—disagreeable, because I must speak (though but to repel them with scorn) of imputations with which I never thought my own name liable to be stained, I beg leave to preface what I have to say by observing, that the name of Sir Charles Stuart, or of any other person whom I may have occasion to mention in my defence, is brought forward by me most reluctantly. I have no choice, the necessity is forced upon me. The name of Sir Charles Stuart I mention with the respect due to his talents and character. I consider him as one who has rendered eminent services to his country, and from whom his country may confidently look for such services hereafter. I believe him to be as free from pecuniary taint, as I know myself to be. Large as his expenditure at Lisbon may appear, I am persuaded that it was at once justified and limited by the necessity of the case. It is to be borne in mind also, that of the ag-

gregate sums which appear to have been expended by him, no small proportion was simply and absolutely loss upon the exchange, and upon the conversion of English into Portuguese money. After these declarations, I proceed to state the expenditure of the Lisbon mission, as it stood in Sir Charles Stuart's time, and the amount of his regular and extraordinary allowance.

For the year, from the 5th of April, 1812, to the 5th of April, 1813, Sir Charles Stuart's extraordinaries appear to have

been - - - - - - - - - -	£26,807
Salary - - - - - - - - -	5,200
Total - - - - - - - - - -	£32,007

For the next year, from the 5th of April, 1813, to the 5th of April, 1814, the extraordinaries are stated at - - £26,006

Salary - - - - - - - - -	5,200
Total - - - - - - - - - -	£31,206

This was the conclusion of Sir Charles Stuart's mission. These statements are all before the House. They are to be found in pages 30 and 31 of the Report of the Committee on the Civil List, in June, 1815;—which Report I wish that the honourable gentlemen opposite would have the goodness to take into their hands, as I shall have many occasions to refer to it.

Then comes a period which is particularly selected as a contrast to my expenditure;—namely, the half year, beginning the 5th of April, 1814, (the termination of Sir Charles Stuart's mission,) and ending the 10th of October, 1814, (the commencement of mine.) Here my accusers take their grand position. This is the narrow isthmus between two rushing seas of expense, on which they plant their standard of economy!—I do not complain of them for doing so. I do not blame the honourable gentleman who brought forward this question, for moving for papers to illustrate this position. But what I do think I have some right to complain of is, that having obtained these documents, they have somehow or other totally forgotten to notice their results. When it suited the honourable mover's purpose, he asked for the information; and when he got it, and found that it was not precisely what he wanted, it suited his purpose to abstain from any observation upon it. In this respect, he will excuse me if, instead of following his example, I endeavour to supply his omissions.

At Sir Charles Stuart's departure from Lisbon, Mr. Casamajor, the Secretary of Legation, was appointed Charge d'Affaires, receiving of course the regular salary belonging to these two ap-

pointments. As Mr. Casamajor's salary during this half year was nearly the same as his salary of Secretary of Embassy with me, and made but a trifling part of the expenses of either mission, I shall not take it into calculation. Not so, however, as to his *extraordinary* allowances; which during this economical half-year appear, by the Civil List Report, p. 32, as well as by Mr. Sydenham's testimony, to have amounted to upwards of £2,500.

I am not exactly informed at what period between April and July Mr. Sydenham was named Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Local Government of Portugal. The first official despatch to him that I have seen is dated in July: but his nomination must have preceded that despatch by some weeks. He had from the 5th of April the same salary as had been enjoyed by Sir Charles Stuart. I speak here of the regular salary of £5,200 a year,—not of extraordinary allowances. Mr. Sydenham arrived at Lisbon the end of the first week of July. He remained there until the 27th or 28th of that month, when he embarked for England, being obliged to quit his station suddenly on account of his health. These three weeks (or thereabouts) were the whole of Mr. Sydenham's residence at Lisbon; and for these he received (I am not blaming him, but I state the fact) two quarters' salary, at the rate of £5,200 a year—that is to

say - - - - - - - - - - -	£2,600
He received also, for outfit, - - - - - -	1,500
He received for his journey to Lisbon - - -	1,100
And lastly he received (at a subsequent period) for losses occasioned by his sudden relinquishment of the mission - - - - - - - - -	2,000
In all	£7,200
Add to this sum, Mr. Casamajor's extraordinaries for the same period - - - - - - - -	2,500
The result of cost to the public, for the half year intervening between Sir Charles Stuart's mission and mine, is therefore - - - - - - -	£9,700

This was the reformed period which is to put all past and future Ministers to shame! This was the rigid scale of economy which I ought to have taken for my guide, and for departing from which I am arraigned before this House and the country! Yet hear how Mr. Sydenham describes Mr. Casamajor's way of life. "I find," (says Mr. Sydenham, in his letter to Mr. Hamilton of the 8th of July, written immediately upon his arrival at Lisbon.)

"I find that Mr. Casamajor has been living in a very quiet retired way, with no suite to feed and lodge; and by the examination of his books I perceive that he does not live on less than £100 a week."

Here was no establishment, no representation, no call for display of any kind; yet the ordinary expenses of Mr. Casamajor's household were £100 a week, or at the rate of £5,200 a year!

It is true, at least I have heard and believe, that during the three weeks that Mr. Sydenham passed at Lisbon he lived in Mr. Casamajor's house. But, as to the charge upon the public, Mr. Sydenham was then in the enjoyment of a yearly salary of £5,200, which comes to exactly another £100 a week. So that independently of the *extraordinary* allowances of Mr. Sydenham, for outfit, journey, and losses, the aggregate of the regular salary received by him, joined to the extraordinaries allowed to Mr. Casamajor for weekly expenditure, for *victus* and *convictus*, during the economical half year, was at the rate of upwards of £10,000 a year.

There is not upon earth a more honourable mind than Mr. Casamajor's; and I had myself the opportunity of verifying the statement respecting his expenditure, by the inspection of his books, at his own particular desire. But I must take the liberty of reminding the House, that from the moment at which I arrived at Lisbon, Mr. Casamajor, then becoming Secretary of Embassy, became part of my family, and as such, lived at my table. From that time, therefore, *his* expenses (salary excepted) were involved in mine. Why, Sir, if I were to calculate by simple addition, or by the rule of three, I might say, that, according to what I have shown you, on Mr. Sydenham's testimony as well as my own—*two* Casamajors ought to have eaten up my whole allowances, ordinary and extraordinary. And, by the way, I *had* two Casamajors—for in addition to the gentleman of whom I have been speaking, and of whom I speak with every feeling of kindness and of respect, another gentleman, Mr. Croft, who was recommended to me by my noble friend as Secretary for the Portuguese Language, (and who had been with Sir C. Stuart in the same capacity) lived with me as one of my family, during the whole period of my mission. I, of course, do not mean seriously to state that the increase of my expenses was in exact proportion to the number of persons whom I had to maintain. But I *do* mean seriously to show the different footing upon which Mr. Sydenham and Mr. Casamajor *separately*, or even Mr. Sydenham and Mr. Casamajor *jointly*—stood in respect to the claims upon *their* expenditure, from that in which I stood,—with all the accessary burdens, and all the unavoidable representation of an embassy. With neither of the two gentlemen, whom I had the good fortune to have attached to me—Mr. Casamajor or Mr. Croft—had I any

personal acquaintance before my mission began. I learnt, during our official and domestic intercourse, to value and esteem them both. I am sorry to be forced to mention their names in connexion with these miserable details; but I am driven to it by the unsparing coarseness of the attacks which have been made upon me, and by the foolish, fallacious, and dishonest contrast of my expenditure with that of Mr. Sydenham:—Mr. Sydenham's, who, during his three weeks' residence at Lisbon, was an inmate in the house of Mr. Casamajor,—and mine, who, during the whole period of my mission had the suite of an embassy to maintain!

And now, Sir, come we to the famous letter of letters, upon which it seems that the whole of the case against me is made to turn —the letter from the Secretary of State to Mr. Sydenham, directing him to confine his expenditure within his regular allowances. Before this letter is made conclusive against *me*, I might perhaps contend that it should be shown that I was in some degree, if not party to it, cognizant of it. Upon my honour, I never saw it till after the honourable gentleman's first notice of his motion. I cannot say that I had never heard of it. I had heard, or perhaps seen in a newspaper, that some such letter had been written to Mr. Sydenham by my noble friend: and I well remember that the same authority stated the rate of £5,000 a year as that which covered *all* Mr. Sydenham's allowances. I have already shown the accuracy of *that* statement.

But I waive this plea: I acknowledge the authority of the letter; and, *if* the circumstances of Mr. Sydenham's situation and mine were the same; and *if* the meaning of this letter was what has been attributed to it; and *if* that meaning was enforced against Mr. Sydenham, or was not remonstrated against by him; I will admit that, notwithstanding my ignorance of the law, I was bound by it, and am guilty of not conforming to it.

And, first, what was Mr. Sydenham's situation? That of Envoy to the Local Government; mine, that of Ambassador to the Sovereign. (With the propriety of the appointment we have in this part of the argument nothing to do.) Secondly, what was the meaning of the letter? My noble friend, the writer of it, has told you, that it did not mean the absolute exclusion of extraordinaries, which he held to be almost impossible; but it did mean to prescribe the discontinuance of that rate of expenditure which had brought, during the war, such heavy charge upon the public. The letter itself says,

"I cannot anticipate any public grounds for continuing the expenditure of His Majesty's servants at Lisbon, *on the scale on which it has been conducted during the continuance of the War in the Peninsula.*"

To be sure he could not. Who dreamt of an expenditure of upwards £30,000 a year in time of peace? Lastly, the instruc-

tions which were given, were they executed? Did Mr. Sydenham think it practicable to conform to them? Did he receive them without a remonstrance, and act up to them with strictness and fidelity? With fidelity, in the moral sense of the word, I have no doubt he would have acted up to them if he had remained at Lisbon; but have we no positive proof that he regarded the literal execution of them as impossible?

And here, Sir, again I feel myself called upon to guard against being supposed to mean any thing unkind in the reference which I am compelled to make to Mr. Sydenham. That gentleman is no more! He has closed a distinguished and honourable life, during which he endeared himself to his friends, and has left behind him an unspotted character. I implore of those who hear me, that if a word should escape me in the heat of argument, which can be thought to bear any colour of disrespect to Mr. Sydenham's memory, they will believe it to be wholly unintentional. I am the last man living who would wantonly throw a slur upon his reputation, or give a wound to the feelings of those who mourn his loss. I would most gladly have avoided any allusion to him: but his name has been made the vehicle for a foul calumny against my character; and the House will feel that not to me who repel an attack, but to those who have misused Mr. Sydenham's name for the purposes of attack upon me, is to be imputed the guilt of profaning (if it be profaned) the sanctity of the tomb.

The fact is, that while the mandate to Mr. Sydenham, directing him to confine his expenses within certain limits, was traversing the ocean in one direction, a remonstrance, by anticipation, against such a limitation was on its passage to the Foreign Office. Mr. Sydenham, I suppose, might have heard rumours of such intended restriction; he knew, from what he saw of Lisbon himself (in the amount of Mr. Casamajor's weekly bills,) and from what he had heard of it from others, that a literal compliance with that restriction was impracticable; and, on the 8th of July, the very day (I believe) after his arrival at Lisbon, he thus addressed himself to Mr. Hamilton, the Under Secretary of State (for the information of my noble friend,) in the letter from which I have already quoted an extract:—

"While the Duke of Wellington was at Madrid, he spoke to me on the subject of my allowances at Lisbon, and he gave me the comfortable assurance of my being ruined, unless Government allowed me something more than the usual salary, diminished by the usual deductions in England, and the loss of exchange. He promised to mention the subject to Lord Castlereagh; and I have written to him to remind him of his promise. I find that Mr. Casamajor has been living in a very quiet, retired way, with no suite to feed and lodge, and by the examination of his books, I perceive that he does not live on less than £100 a week.

So far is printed. Further on, in the same letter, the extract

of which now lies before me, he states that he "shall live with the greatest possible economy; but that what he cannot pay out of his allowances he shall trust to the Government to pay for him."

Mr. Sydenham, as I have before observed, resided about three weeks in Lisbon, namely, from about the 7th or 8th to the 27th or 28th of July. I have already stated the allowances, regular and extraordinary, which he received during that period or on account of it—viz. £2,600 salary; £1,500 outfit; £1,100 for the journey from Paris and Madrid to Lisbon. All these sums are in the printed accounts of the Civil List Report; and therefore gentlemen might have known them without moving for papers: but I was not aware, and I suppose they were not aware, till in an evil hour they brought it out by their own motion for papers, —of the sum of £2,000 for losses, which makes up the aggregate of Mr. Sydenham's receipts on account of his half year's mission, to £7,200.

If it is said, that as the sum of £7,200 includes outfit, and allowances for journey and for losses, it is not fairly to be stated as Mr. Sydenham's expenditure for *half a year*, I readily admit that it is not so: but then I must observe, that, on the same ground the aggregate of *my* allowances cannot be fairly stated as the expenditure of *a year*. The cost of outfit and plate in *my* case would not have been repeated another year, any more than that of outfit, and allowances for journey and for losses would, in Mr. Sydenham's case, have been repeated in another *half* year. But it *is* quite fair—it is indeed absolutely necessary, since the contrast between Mr. Sydenham's half year and my year, has been so much insisted on—to state, as I have done, Mr. Sydenham's *salary*, joined to Mr. Casamajor's *extraordinaries*, for the *same half year*, as constituting the expenditure of *the mission* for that period. And it *is* fair to state *the whole* of Mr. Sydenham's receipts joined to Mr. Casamajor's *extraordinaries*, as the aggregate expense of that half year with which the aggregate of my receipts for a whole year is to be compared.

Whatever comments, therefore, gentlemen may think proper to make on my conduct in other respects, they will at least, I think, abandon the contrast between Mr. Sydenham's mission and mine, as to the rate of their respective cost to the public. This point, on which they relied so confidently, completely fails them. They may, if they will, continue to arraign my political sins; but if comparison with the period of Mr. Sydenham's mission be a decisive test of economy, they must on that comparison absolve me from pecuniary transgression.

But, Sir, it is not on pecuniary matters only that they have guessed wrong as to me and Mr. Sydenham. They flattered

themselves that they had another case against me on his account; a case of hardship—as if this valuable public servant had been displaced purposely to make way for me. It has been asserted that I superseded Mr. Sydenham. Sir, I did *not* supersede Mr. Sydenham. If the fact were so, I know not that it would constitute any charge against me. It would, I believe, be the first time that the undoubted right of the Crown to appoint and to change its foreign Ministers has been made matter of charge, or even of question, in Parliament. But the fact is not so. Mr. Sydenham's mission was irretrievably at an end before mine began. He quitted Lisbon not only unrecalled, but without leave. He did this from necessity, on account of the impaired state of his health. He arrived in England (as I have already had occasion to say) on or about the 8th of August. From that day to the 10th of October he received in England his appointments as Minister at Lisbon. Are the economists angry that he did not continue so to receive them longer? He was neither then, nor at any subsequent period before his death (as I shall presently show, by a document founded on his own representations) in a state of health to admit of his resuming the Lisbon mission—or accepting any other. If he had happily been so, my noble friend will bear testimony not only to the fact, but to my knowledge of the fact, that another and more important employment was in contemplation for him. So much for that charge.

I have in my hand a copy of the letter from the Foreign Office to the Treasury, which authorized the payment to Mr. Sydenham of that sum of £2,000 for losses, which forms the last item in his account. I almost wonder, by the bye, that I have not been told, in distinct terms, that this £2,000 was given to Mr. Sydenham to reconcile him to my supersession of him. The House, if they will allow me to take the liberty of reading this letter to them, will see how that matter stands. I am ready to move for its being laid on the table, if they think it necessary. It is luckily the last document of the kind with which I shall have occasion to try their patience. It is as follows:

"FOREIGN OFFICE, *Oct. 25th*, 1815.

"MY LORDS,

"Thomas Sydenham, Esq. late His Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Lisbon, has represented to me the very great expense he was at in making preparations to undertake that mission, with a view to a permanent residence at Lisbon, and the great loss he sustained by the sudden disposal of his effects, &c. on his *being obliged to relinquish that mission, on account of the dangerous state of his health*, after a residence of only a few months, whereby he has been a looser of considerably more than £2,000 and is thereby involved in difficulties beyond the reach of his private fortune to satisfy."

(There is a slight error of inadvertency here as to the period of Mr. Sydenham's actual residence at Lisbon—which was, as I have shown, weeks only and not months. I now come to a passage to which I particularly wish to call the attention of the House.)—

"Having considered this application, it has appeared to me, under the peculiar circumstances of the case (*Mr. Sydenham's state of health still preventing his being employed in the diplomatic service of His Majesty,*) to be just and reasonable that Mr. Sydenham should receive a compensation on account of these losses.—I am, therefore, to desire your lordships will be pleased to take the commands of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, with regard to the issue of the sum of two thousand pounds, *nett*, to Mr. Sydenham, or his assigns, as a compensation for the losses above stated."

Is this also a sham letter and a concerted fraud? Perhaps the *date* will help us to a solution of this question. It is dated the 25th October, 1815,—that is to say, six months after I had tendered the resignation of my mission, and three months after my resignation had been accepted—a period, therefore, when, if Mr. Sydenham's health had been sufficiently restored to enable him to resume his station at Lisbon, there had been for three months no impediment whatever, and for six months no impediment on *my* part, to his resuming it. It was manifestly the hopelessness of his return to public life that weighed with the Foreign Office in writing this letter, to which I am happy to have had an opportunity of referring, both for the proof which it affords of good-natured and considerate disposition, and the just testimony which it bears to the merits and character of Mr. Sydenham. I had not the honour and the happiness of a personal acquaintance with Mr. Sydenham. I knew him only by reputation; by the report of common friends, whose report would of itself have been sufficient to ensure my belief of his good qualities,—and by the exhibition of his talents in that memorable investigation which was carried on in a Committee of this House upon the renewal of the East India Company's Charter. In the course of that examination the gentlemen connected with India displayed a degree of ability and information, which perhaps could not have been matched, certainly not excelled, in any other service, or in any other country. Among these very able men Mr. Sydenham stood eminently distinguished,—evincing a capacity for great affairs and a fitness for important employments, such as are rarely to be found even in more practised statesmen. If, therefore, I have been driven to say any thing of this gentleman (I hope I have not, I am sure I have not intended it) which may have appeared in any degree disrespectful or disparaging,—if I have been obliged to soil the name of a high-minded and liberal man with money,—the blame (I repeat it) is not with me,—but with those who forced Mr. Sydenham's name into this discussion.

I now, Sir, come to the details of the expenditure of my own mission, the account of which is among the papers upon the table. The honourable gentleman who made the motion, has had the goodness to compliment me on the minuteness and accuracy of my calculations. I understand the nature of the honourable gentleman's compliment; and I see that he has been taught thoroughly to understand the nature of the advantage which he has over me on this day. Undoubtedly any charge connected with money places the accused in a dilemma of painful difficulty,—a difficulty the more painful in proportion to the consciousness of his innocence, and to the warmth of his indignation. If he contents himself—as is the first natural impulse of every honourable mind—with general and lofty denial, he exposes himself to be triumphed over as having evaded investigation; and figures are then invoked as the only test of truth. If, on the other hand, he condescends to detailed arithmetical calculation, he becomes liable to such compliments as those of the honourable gentleman; and must feel (as I do now) a certain inevitable degradation in the very process by which he is to be justified. It is certainly not without such pain that I made up my mind to this latter alternative. Those who know me in private life are, I am afraid, too well aware how little I am versed in questions either of arithmetic or of economy, not to have been as much surprised, as the honourable gentleman professes himself to be gratified, at the proficiency in figures which is displayed in the papers before the House; particularly in that laboured despatch of mine of the 30th May, 1815. In truth, I availed myself, for the purpose of those statements and calculations, of the aid of persons much more conversant with such matters than I can pretend to be. I beg the honourable gentleman also to understand that I do not profess, in these accounts, to state my *whole* expenditure at Lisbon, but only my expenditure of *public* money.

Sir, the expenditure of Sir Charles Stuart's mission for the two years, 1812–13, and 1813–14, and that of the interval between the conclusion of Sir Charles Stuart's mission and my appointment, can hardly be denied to justify the nominal amount of the allowances assigned to me. But that *nominal* amount and the *real effective* value were very different indeed. For my actual *expenditure* (as distinguished from nominal *receipt*, or rather nominal *issue*,) a fair but strict standard of comparison is furnished by the Report of the Civil List Committee of June, 1815. If it shall appear that my whole *actual* expenditure as *Ambassador*, tallied within a very trifle with the amount fixed by that Committee and sanctioned by the House for a *Minister* at Lisbon *of the second order*, I think it will not be imputed that I abused the discretion confided to me.

Assuredly I did not, on going out to Lisbon, anticipate the trial of this day; but I did, as has been seen, dread and deprecate any unlimited pecuniary discretion. It has been shown how anxious I was to have the limits of my expenditure defined: and within those limits, whatever they might be, I resolved to restrict myself.

My *nominal* allowances were, as I have said, and as appears from the papers upon the table—

Salary - - - - - - - -	£8,200
Extraordinaries, not to exceed - - - -	6,000
Total	£14,200

Of this amount of extraordinaries I drew only for three-fourths, or £4,500. I received (like every other Minister of whatever rank,) the sum of £1,500 for outfit. If that sum be taken as replacing the £1,500 extraordinaries which I declined to draw, the result of salary, extraordinaries, and outfit for that *one* year (*outfit* could only be a charge on the *first* year,) is, as above, £14,200. I had plate, like other Ambassadors and Envoys Extraordinary, &c., but upon the scale of an Envoy.

Having no rule or experience to guide me, all that I could determine was to consider the established recognized amount of the *salary* as the limit of my public expenditure, and to draw for no more *extraordinaries* than should make up the *nominal salary* of £8,200 to that *effective* amount. Had, therefore, that salary been paid free from deductions at home, and without loss on the exchange and on the conversion into Portuguese money, I should not have drawn for one shilling of extraordinaries for my expenses at Lisbon. But the case was very different. This *nominal* salary was liable to deductions amounting to no less than about sixteen per cent. in England, which reduced it from £8,200 to about £6,900; and this latter sum again to a loss of something more than twelve per cent. in its transit and conversion, reducing it from £6,900 to somewhere between £6,100 and £6,000.

This statement applies to the first three quarters of the year, ending the 5th of July, 1815. In July I received the Report of the Civil List Committee, to which I have so often had occasion to refer. From that time, therefore, I had—what I had always wished—a positive written public rule, not laid down indeed for my mission, but which I might safely take for my guide. By the Civil List Report, the Minister to Portugal was considered prospectively on the footing not of an Ambassabor, but of an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary. To that Minister of the second order, the Report assigned a salary of £8,000 a year. It further recommended that all sums for foreign missions

should be paid free of all deductions except the property tax; thus relieving the issues of salary from all the established legal defalcations at home, amounting to about six per cent. (in addition to the property tax,) and from all losses by exchange or otherwise, in the transmission abroad. At the same time, the allowance for outfit—which had been hitherto in all cases, and for all ranks, only £1,500—a sum which is stated by the Report not to be sufficient to cover above one-third or one-fourth of the real expense, was raised to £4,000, and an annual allowance of £500 was given for house rent. The several arrangements are to be found in pp. 47 and 48 of the Civil List Report, to which I beg the gentlemen who do me the honour to watch what I am saying, to refer. Deducting £800 the property tax, from the *salary* of £8,000, these issues to the new *Envoy* would amount to £11,700 nett for the *first* year; and to £7,700 nett for every subsequent year. And this exclusive of plate, for which the Report makes a special provision.

When I received the copy of this Report, I instantly determined that, so long as the mission continued in my hands, I would limit myself strictly to the amount specified in it. For the *last* quarter, therefore (from July the 5th to October 10th, 1815,) I conformed to the new scale of ordinary allowances, and received only £1,800 *nett*, without any extraordinaries whatever. The exchange was now, in consequence of the termination of the war, become so favourable as in a great measure to counteract the loss upon the paper money, which continued to be about seven per cent. The result of this counteraction was, that the loss upon £1,800 by the exchange and paper money jointly, which three months before would have been about £220, was now only about £70.

Of the £6,000 extraordinaries which I had liberty to draw, I drew only for so much as was sufficient—

First, to replace the deductions on £6,150, being three quarters of *nominal* salary at the *old* rate of £8,200 (*gross*,) and on £1,800 one quarter at the *new* rate of £7,200 (*nett*.)

Secondly, to make up the old allowance for outfit, viz. £1,500 to the sum of £4,000 specifically allowed by the Committee, and not one farthing more, so help me God.

So scrupulously did I adhere to these limits, (which seemed to me to have been formed on a clear principle, and which had the sanction of the House of Commons,) that finding that my agent had drawn for the last quarter a sum of £1,500 as *extraordinaries* (at the rate of £5,000 originally allowed to me,) I directed him to return that sum to the Treasury: and I declare, on my conscience, that when I gave this direction, I had no more expectation that the transaction would ever be known to any one except to my agent, to my right honourable friend near me, Mr. Huskis-

son, whom I requested to see my direction executed, to my noble friend, Lord Castlereagh, (whose permission was necessary;) and to the Treasury, (to which the return was made,) I had no more expectation that I should ever have to state this transaction privately or publicly in vindication of my character, than I had apprehension that on such grounds my character would ever be assailed.

It is undoubtedly still open to the honourable gentlemen who are the framers and supporters of the impeachment against me, to recur to the charge that the mission to Lisbon was unnecessary; to find fault, if they please, with my personal conduct in accepting it (of which a word by-and-by,) and to censure the mode in which I may have discharged the duties of it. But as to pecuniary imputation, I stand upon a rock—I stand upon the authority of a Committee of this House, appointed long after my embassy was established and endowed, and not merely approving by retrospect the amount of its actual endowment, but recommending prospectively the same endowment for a mission of a lower character. Before that Report was known to me, with the power to go to a certain extent of expense, I restrained myself within that extent, to limits narrowed by my own sense of what was right. As soon as I had the authority of that Report to guide me, I adhered to it voluntarily and strictly, living as an Ambassador, within the allowances assigned for an Envoy. To other allegations of misconduct, political or prudential, I may be obnoxious; but surely no fair adversary, after this exposition, will impute to my embassy either a wasteful prodigality on the part of the Government, or a corrupt rapacity on mine.

I am afraid I have already wearied the House with figures, but there is another calculation, of which the result is so striking, that I cannot help requesting of the House to allow me to state it to them. Its elements are few, and the process short and simple. I particularly request attention to it from the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Tierney,) who sits opposite to me, whose skill in these matters peculiarly qualifies him to detect any error in the statement.

The Report of the Committee on the Civil List fixes the salary of the Lisbon *Envoy* at £8,000, to be reduced by the deduction of the property tax to £7,200. This sum of £7,200 was to be received *nett* at Lisbon, free from all other deductions at home, and from loss by exchange and conversion abroad. Sir, I desired a person far better skilled in calculations than I am, to make out for me how much must have been received *nett* from the Treasury *here*, to produce £7,200 *nett*, in *Lisbon*, during the years 1814–15? The following is the statement of my arithmetician.

The first addition to be made is that of the amount necessary

to cover the average loss of something more than 12 per cent. by exchange and paper money: this would be about - £ 980
which being added to - - - - - - - 7,200

Gives - - - - - - - - - - - £8,180
as the sum necessary to have been received *nett* in England, in order to produce £7,200 *nett* in Lisbon.

But, again; how much would it have been necessary for the Treasury to issue *gross* to produce (on the footing on which my salary was issued) £8,180 *nett* in England? The deductions at the Exchequer, I have shown, amounted to about 16 per cent., the property-tax included. The sum necessary to cover these deductions, would be about - - - - - - £1,556
Which, added to - - - - - - - 8,180

Shows, that the *gross* issue at the Treasury must have been about - - - - - - - - £9,736
Add to this sum the allowance for outfit - - 4,000
Add the allowance for house-rent (to which, by the way, might be added 12 per cent. for loss on exchange, &c.) - - - - - - - - 500

And the *gross nominal* issues at the Treasury to meet the recommendation of the Committee, for the first year of the new Envoy, must have been £14,236

Does not the very *sound* of this sum carry conviction,—and I could almost hope compunction, to the bosoms of my accusers? Does it not excite in the minds of all impartial men, an indignant recollection of the arts and the clamours, by which, during two years and a half, I have been stigmatized to the country as an instance of unexampled waste,—as an insatiable pillager of the Exchequer?

Sir, of the pecuniary charge I trust that I may here take my leave. After my own vindication, however (which must on every account be nearest to my heart,) I confess, I am most anxious to put the well-intentioned part of the nation on their guard against those exaggerations, for mischievous purposes, by which public men are run down. If the result of this night shall warn them not to be too easily misled into the belief of monstrous and improbable corruptions, I cannot say that I shall not still regret the calumnies with which I have been overwhelmed; but I shall be in some degree rewarded and consoled for them.

I have thus disposed of the two main heads of accusation. I have shown that there was a sincere and well-grounded belief in the return of the Prince Regent of Portugal to Europe: and I have

shown that the cost of the embassy appointed to receive him on his return was not only not extravagant, but that according to every test by which expenditure can be tried, whether of contrast with what had gone before, or of comparison with what has been deliberately established for the future, it was limited by a reasonable and scrupulous economy.

Some minor charges remain to be refuted.

I am accused of having held the mission after all hope of executing the duty which I undertook to fulfil was abandoned. But, before I enter on this point, I am reminded that I am accused also of having assumed the mission too soon. It is said that I assumed it in October, although the Prince of Brazil could not be expected in Europe for six months from that date. Now if there were any ground for supposing that the return was altogether a false pretence, the acceptance of the Embassy sooner or later would be of no consequence; the acceptance of it at all was a crime. But if the Prince Regent of Portugal was to come to Europe, there was fair probability that Sir John Beresford might have landed him at Lisbon in February. Sir John Beresford sailed from Portsmouth on the fifth of October. True, he was driven back to Plymouth after having been some days at sea. But, as to the length of the passage, he *did* reach the Brazils in seven weeks from the date of his last sailing (that too with a convoy under his protection;) and it was not only no improbable expectation, but it was the belief of Sir John Beresford himself, stated repeatedly to the Prince Regent of Portugal, that from five to six weeks would be sufficient for the voyage from Rio de Janeiro. It is true, that the hypothesis was, that the Prince Regent would be ready to embark, and would have made all the preparations necessary for his departure, between the period of his writing for a squadron and its arrival. Such in fact was our expectation; and upon that supposition (as I have said before) the arrival at Lisbon of the Prince Regent himself would have been the first intelligence that would have been received there of his departure from Rio de Janeiro. I sailed in the beginning of November. I landed at Lisbon (I think) on the first of the following month. I had no more doubt of the impatience of the Portuguese royal family to return to Europe than I have that I am now addressing this House. I consequently reckoned upon their arrival in Lisbon almost as soon after my own as I could conveniently be prepared to receive them. In the month of February, I well remember, we used to be looking out at Lisbon, at every favourable turn of the wind, for the arrival of Sir John Beresford with his royal passengers, in the Tagus. The only period, therefore, during which I can be accused of receiving a salary without executing a public duty, is that between the date of my appointment and my sailing for Lis-

bon, a period of about three weeks. Surely this then is a charge of minute and petty captiousness. It is said that nature abhors a *vacuum;* and I believe it may be equally said that an Exchequer Quarter abhors a fraction. My salary was reckoned from the 10th of October, the quarter-day which preceded by about ten days my taking leave at Carlton House;—and which preceded my actual departure (as I have said) by about three week. Of the scores or hundreds of missions which have gone out from this country for the last century, I very much doubt whether *one* could be found whose allowances had begun to run from so short a period before its departure. If this, Sir, be not a sufficient defence on such a matter, I can only give myself up to the mercy of the House, with a frank expression of my regret that I was gazetted three weeks too soon.

As to retaining my office too long, I have already answered to this point incidentally; but I must briefly answer to it again here in its proper order. The first loose intimations of a doubt of the return of the Prince Regent to his European dominions, arrived in England in the month of March. They reached me at Lisbon on the 9th of April. On the 10th of April I wrote to the Foreign Office, tendering my resignation. I was desired to continue in the exercise of my functions; and from that moment the mission entirely changed its character. I was no longer the pageant Ambassador to a non-forthcoming Sovereign. The war had broken out, with the ominous re-appearance of Buonaparte; and who was there in this country, or in Europe, that ventured to predict its speedy, its miraculous termination? Who could presume to say what might be its course; or what the extent of effort required to give effect to its operations? Henceforth, therefore, I filled (whether worthily or not, is another question,) a situation of business at a not insignificant post, and at a most eventful crisis. If *I* had not been on the spot, another must have been appointed—a Minister *of the second order*, if you please—but even if so, with all the allowances and expenses incident to a Minister of the second order at Lisbon—which I have already shown to be, according to the recommendation of the Civil List Report, substantially the same as mine. Henceforth, therefore, I did not add one farthing to the unavoidable expenses of the country. It may be alleged, that a more able individual might have been found to discharge the duties of the mission; and that I did wrong in continuing to do what others might have done better; but there is not a shadow of pretence for affirming that my continuance at Lisbon laid any burden upon the public, or that any saving could have been effected by the acceptance of my resignation on the 10th of April.

It is obvious that in the refusal to accept my resignation, I was wholly passive; but neither does my noble friend require any jus-

tification for having recommended to the Prince Regent to decline accepting it. My noble friend is sufficiently justified by the case itself, and by his subsequent conduct. For no sooner was the battle of Waterloo fought, and the war thus happily ended, (almost as soon as begun,) than my noble friend signified to me His Royal Highness's acceptance of the resignation which had been before declined. It is true, that it was not until three months after this notification that I was finally relieved from the mission. Amidst the important negotiations in which my noble friend was then engaged, he appears to have forgotten that he had not appointed any one to receive the business and correspondence of the Lisbon mission, out of my hands. Portugal and myself had (no wonder) sunk into insignificance and oblivion; and up to the beginning of August no successor to me was appointed. Did I think this a lucky chance? Did I go on quietly to enjoy the advantage of this oblivion? No. After about a month had elapsed without hearing any thing from the Foreign Office, I wrote to my noble friend to remind him of my existence: and, apprehending him to be—as he in fact was—absent from England, I wrote by the same packet a private letter to Lord Bathurst, begging leave, in case any difficulty should have occurred in the nomination of a successor, to recommend Mr. Croft (whom I have already mentioned as having been first introduced to me by my noble friend,) as a person perfectly competent to act as Charge d'Affaires; and offering, at the same time, the aid of my unofficial advice, so long as I should remain (which I intended to do through the winter) in Portugal. I desire to know if this conduct can be characterized as a clinging to my office? or whether my pertinacity in adhering to it was more than exactly on a par with my eagerness in seeking it?

Perhaps, Sir, I might now sit down, perfectly satisfied with having cleared the integrity of my conduct; and, perhaps, with a feeling rather of gratitude than of hostility towards those who, by manfully giving a distinct and substantive shape to their allegations, have afforded me an opportunity of refuting them. But I cannot pass by the taunts of the honourable baronet, and the grave admonitions of the honourable mover of the question, without assuring them, that so long as I possess in my own breast the consciousness of integrity, such assailments, whether taunting or monitory, will excite in it no emotion warmer than contempt. I must above all things assure the honourable baronet, that no attempt to impeach my character and to degrade me (as he flattered himself his proceeding might do) in that estimation with this House which constitutes all that is valuable, and all that is efficient in a public man—no such attempt, I say, will cause me to lower my voice one key, or to abate one jot of my exertions, in

opposing and exposing those doctrines of which the honourable baronet is the representative and the champion. Let not the honourable baronet flatter himself with any such result from this attack upon my reputation. Let him not flatter himself with the hope of such a result from his asperity to-night, or from his menaces for the future. If I am satisfied to have done right, for the peace of my own conscience—I am also glad to have made that right apparent, mainly because I know how necessary are the good opinion and the favouring attention of this House, to enable me to exert myself successfully for the defeat of those projects which the honourable baronet has at heart, and which, I verily believe would bring this country to ruin. The honourable baronet has spoken out: and the only sentiment with which I am inspired by the bitterness of his declared enmity, and by the burst of his anticipated triumph, is that of a pride—I hope an honest and pardonable pride—at the proof which he has thus unintentionally afforded of the reasons to which I am indebted for his hostility. It is because I am held in hatred and in fear by those who share the honourable baronet's opinions, that by them I have been sought to be destroyed. I have been sought to be destroyed, because I have declared myself—(with what effect it becomes not me to say, but with all my heart and soul)—against schemes, which, if unchecked, would bring destruction upon those hallowed institutions by which the mixed and free Government of this great kingdom is upholden, and from which the practical blessings of our constitution are derived.

Sir, I thus dismiss all that part of the charges which, if substantiated, would have established against me the guilt of criminality or of culpable misconduct. But I wish to leave nothing unnonoticed, whether of charge or of insinuation; whether conveying the imputation of positive guilt, or only implying discredit and disparagement.

It is made matter of accusation and reproach against me that I have accepted office with my noble friend (Lord Castlereagh) who sits beside me,—between whom and myself it is assumed that our former differences had placed an impassable barrier. First, from what quarter comes this reproach and accusation? From a bench, on which I do not see any two neighbours who have not differed from each other, and that within short memory, too, much more essentially than myself and my noble friend. But it is insinuated that the differences between my noble friend and myself were of a sort which precluded reconciliation! Since when have such matters become topics of parliamentary discussion? Since when has it been the practice of this House to take cognizance of the disagreements of individuals, and to indulge in such animadversions on the most delicate topics of personal conduct as in private so-

ciety no gentleman would venture to hazard? Since when, I say has this practice commenced? and how far is it to be carried? I know of no precedent for it. I know of no authority. It is not for my own sake, but for the sake of this House, that I protest against it; for if this practice be permitted, our discussions must inevitably sink into grosser personalities than have disgraced the meetings of Palace Yard and of Spa Fields.

The honourable baronet is entirely mistaken as to what he supposes me to have addressed to my constituents at Liverpool in 1812. Nothing that I then said was intended to convey, or did convey, the notion that I was precluded by any feeling, or (in my own judgment) by any principle, from acting in office with my noble friend. I had declared the directly contrary opinion some months before, in a correspondence respecting the formation of an Administration, which the discussions of those times brought before the public, and which is now upon record. What is *not* publicly recorded is, that some time after those discussions had closed, but six or eight weeks before my Election at Liverpool, other negotiations, which had for their object my return to office, had taken place; amongst the proposed arrangements of which, my noble friend, with a manliness and generosity which I hope I felt as they deserved, had voluntarily tendered to my acceptance the seals of the office which he now holds. Other reasons induced me to decline that tender; I might be right or wrong in my view of those reasons. One among them was, that I was at that time embarrassed with respect to a most important question (the discussion of which is now fixed for no distant day) by pledges which I could best hope to redeem with unquestioned fidelity and honour, by remaining out of office till I had redeemed them. But what would be thought of me, what should I deserve to be thought of by any liberal mind, if, after such a transaction as I have described, I could ever pause for a moment, to consider in what order with respect to each other my noble friend and I should march towards our common objects in the service of the country? In that transaction, any feelings which had previously separated my noble friend and myself were buried for ever. The very memory of them was effaced from our minds: nor can I compliment the good taste of those who would call them up from oblivion; surely not with the vain hope of exasperating differences anew, but with the purpose of making a reconcilement now of five years' standing, a subject of suspicion, taunt, and obloquy.

What I have said, Sir, is, I hope, a sufficient comment upon the notable discovery that I accepted public employment not *with*, but *under*, my noble friend. This paltry distinction, I can assure those who are so vain of it, occasions me not the slightest uneasiness. When Lord Pembroke went out to Vienna, and the Mar-

quis Wellesley to Spain, during (or *under*, if you will) *my* administration of the Foreign Department, had *I* the ridiculous vanity to fancy that these distinguished noblemen acted *under* me, in any sense of degrading subordination? Or is it imagined that when the Duke of Wellington undertook his mission to Paris, my noble friend conceived that *he* was therefore entitled to claim pre-eminence over the deliverer of Europe? They know little, Sir, of the spirit of our Constitution, they are very ill acquainted with the duties that it imposes, and the privileges that it confers, who are not aware, that in whatever station a man may be called upon to serve his Sovereign and his country, there is among statesmen, co-operating honestly for the public good, a real substantive equality which no mere official arrangement can either create or destroy; they, who are yet to learn, that in a free country like ours, it is for the man to dignify the office, not for the office to dignify the man.

Sir, I have now done. I have humbly to apologize to the House for having trespassed upon them so long, and to thank them for their indulgent attention. The manner in which I have been heard by the House, has been such as satisfies me that they justly and kindly considered how much I had at stake on this day. If I have succeeded, (as my conscience tells me that I must have done,) in refuting the charges brought against me, I have not spoken in vain; and you, Sir, will not regret having listened to me. If I have not succeeded; if the House shall be of opinion that any stain remains upon my character, then, indeed, Sir, have I troubled you too long; but I have troubled you for the last time.

Sir T. Ackland said, that he was confident the candour of the honourable baronet (Sir F. Burdett) would not permit him to hesitate in pronouncing the full acquittal of a person accused, who had proved himself to be innocent. After a speech so eloquent, which had thrilled through every heart in the House, he should have been proud to have been accused, in order to have so defended himself.

The House divided:—

For Mr. Lambton's Motion - - -	96
Against it - - - - - -	270
Majority - - - - - -	174

VOTE OF THANKS TO THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS, AND THE BRITISH ARMY IN INDIA.

MARCH 4th, 1819.

MR. CANNING—

MR. SPEAKER,—I rise, in pursuance of the notice given by me to the House at the opening of the session, to propose a vote of Thanks to the Marquis of Hastings, and to the Officers and Troops who served under his command during the late Campaign in India. This vote, I wish the House to understand, is intended merely as a tribute to the military conduct of the campaign, and not in any wise as a sanction of the policy of the war. I feel it necessary to state this reservation the more emphatically, lest, from my having deferred my proposition until the papers which the Prince Regent was graciously pleased to direct to be laid before us, had been for some time in the hands of the members of the House, any apprehension should be entertained that I wished the policy of the measures adopted in India to be discussed on this occasion, with the view of conveying in the Vote of Thanks an implicit general approbation. I assure you, Sir, that I have no such object in view. The political character of Lord Hastings' late measures forms no part of the question upon which I shall ask the House to decide. My object in the present motion is to acknowledge with due praise and gratitude the splendid services of the Indian army. I was, indeed, anxious to have the papers upon the table, because some statement of the political relations of the different parties in the late hostilities, in the way, not of argument but of narrative, seems necessary, to render intelligible the origin and operations of the war. From these papers I will describe as succinctly as I can, the situation in which the British Government found itself placed towards the different native powers of India: and if, in performing this task, I should let slip any expression of my own opinions as to the policy of the Governor General (and it may be hardly possible to avoid doing so, whatever caution I endeavour to observe,) I beg to be understood as by no means calling upon the House to adopt those opinions. In agreeing to the vote to which I trust they will agree this evening, they will dismiss altogether from their consideration the preliminary observations with which I introduce it.

I approach the subject, Sir, with the greater caution and delicacy, because I know with how much jealousy the House and the country are in the habit of appreciating the triumphs of our arms

in India. I know well that, almost uniformly successful as our military operations in that part of the world have been, they have almost as uniformly been considered as questionable in point of justice. Hence the termination of a war in India, however glorious, is seldom contemplated with unmixed satisfaction. That sentiment generally receives some qualification from a notion, in most cases perhaps rather assumed than defined, that the war is likely to have been provoked on our part, with motives very different from those of self-defence. Notions of this sort have undoubtedly taken deep root in the public mind: but I am confident that in the present instance (and I verily believe on former occasions which are gone by, and with which it is no business of mine to meddle at present) a case is to be made out as clear for the justice of the British cause, as for the prowess of the British arms. Neither, however, do I accuse of want of candour those who entertain such notions; nor do I pretend to deny that the course of Indian history since our first acquaintance with that country, furnishes some apparent foundation for them. It is not unnatural that, in surveying that vast continent, presenting as it does, from the Boorampooter to the Indus, and from the northern mountains to the sea—an area of somewhere about one million of square miles, and containing not less than one hundred millions of inhabitants; in looking back to the period when our possessions there consisted only of a simple factory on the coast for the purposes of a permitted trade, and in comparing that period with the present, when that factory has swelled into an empire; when about one-third in point of extent, and about three-fifths in point of population, of those immense territories are subject immediately to British Government; when not less than another fourth of the land, and another fifth of the inhabitants, are under rulers either tributary to the British power or connected with it by close alliance; it is not unnatural that, upon such survey and comparison, prejudices should have arisen against the rapid growth of our Indian establishment; that its increase should have been ascribed, not only by enemies or rivals, but by sober reflection and by impartial philosophy, to a spirit of systematic encroachment and ambition.

On the other hand, in a power so situated as ours, a power planted in a foreign soil, and without natural root in the habits or affections of the people; compelled to struggle, first for its existence, and then for its security, and, in process of time, for the defence of allies from whom it might have derived encouragement and aid, against nations in the habit of changing their masters on every turn of fortune, and, the greater part already reduced under governments founded by successful invasion; in a power so situated, it can hardly be matter of surprise that there should have been

found an irrepressible tendency to expansion. It may be a mitigation, if not a justification, of such a tendency, that the inroads which it has occasioned have grown out of circumstances hard to be controlled: that the alternative has been, in each successive instance, conquest or extinction; and that, in consequence, we have prevailed for the most part over preceding conquerors, and have usurped, if usurped, upon older usurpations.

But, with all that may be said in excuse for this disposition of our Indian empire to stretch its limits wider every day, far am I, very far, from describing it as a disposition to be fostered and indulged; or from undervaluing the constant laudable exertions of the British Parliament to check its progress, and, if possible, to counteract its impulse. Would to God that we could find, or rather that we could long ago have found, the point, the resting-place, at which it was possible to stand! But the finding of that point has not depended upon ourselves alone.

I state these considerations rather as qualifying generally the popular and sweeping condemnations of Indian warfare, than as necessary or applicable in the case of the present war. I refer to the wise and sober enactments of the British Parliament, not to dispute their authority or to set aside their operation; but because I can with confidence assert, that at no period of our Indian history, have the recorded Acts and Votes of Parliament been made more faithfully the basis of instructions to the Government in India than at the period when the Marquis of Hastings assumed the supreme authority. It is but justice to the executive body of the East India Company to say, that the whole course and tenour of their instructions has been uniformly and steadily adverse to schemes of aggrandizement, and to any war which could safely and honourably be avoided. It is but justice to the memory of the noble person, whom I succeeded in the office which I have the honour to hold, to say, that he uniformly inculcated the same forbearing policy, and laboured to turn the attention of the Indian Governments from the extension of external acquisitions or connexions to the promotion of internal improvement. And having said this, it may not be an unpardonable degree of presumption in me to add, that I have continued to walk in the path of my predecessor; that I have omitted no occasion of adding my exhortations to those which I found recorded in my office, against enterprizes of ambition and wars of conquest. So strongly and so recently had the pacific system been recommended, that upon the eve of the breaking out of the late hostilities, the hands of the Supreme Government were absolutely tied up from any foreign undertakings, except in a case of the most pressing exigency. Such an exigency alone produced, or could

justify, the war, the glorious result of which the House is now called upon to mark by its vote.

That war takes its denomination from the power against which it was in the first instance exclusively directed, the Pindarries: a power so singular and anomalous, that perhaps no exact resemblance could be found for it in history; a power without recognized government or national existence; the force of which, as developed in the papers upon the table, is numerically so small, that many persons have, naturally enough, found themselves at a loss to conceive how it could be necessary for the suppression of such a force to make preparations so extensive. It is true that the Pindarries consisted only of from thirty thousand to forty thousand regular and irregular horse; capable, however, of receiving continual reinforcements, and of eluding, by the celerity of their movements, the attack of regular armies. Remnants of former wars—the refuse of a disbanded soldiery—they constituted a *nucleus* round which might assemble all that was vagabond and disaffected—all that was incapable of honest industry and peaceful occupation—all that was opposed in habit and in interest to a system of settled tranquillity in Hindostan. Hostilities against them could, therefore, be undertaken only at the risk of bringing into action all the elements of a restless and dissatisfied population; and the hazards to be calculated were not merely those arising from their positive strength, but those also which might arise from the contagion of their excitement and example.

It was not, however, from mere speculation as to the danger to be apprehended from such a body collecting and bringing into activity the unquiet and dissolute of all manner of *castes* and tongues and religions; it was not from theoretical conviction of the incompatibility of the existence of such a power in central India, with the maintenance of social order and general peace, that the late war was undertaken. The Indian Government, however confident its persuasion upon these points might be—however keen its sense of the perils to which the peace of India was exposed—were too fast bound by their instructions to strike the first blow, or to engage in war upon any less provocation than that of positive aggression, either against the British power itself, or against allies whom its faith was pledged to defend. The war was provoked by actual aggressions, such as no government could endure without the neglect of a sacred duty. The native population would, without doubt, have had just reason to complain if the British Government, having superseded those who would have sympathized with their sufferings, had omitted to avenge injuries which the awe of the British name ought perhaps to have been sufficient to prevent. Neither was it one aggression only, nor a series of aggressions, confined to one year, that called for chas-

tisement: nor was it against distant provinces, or obscure dependencies of the British power, that these injuries had been directed. So long ago as 1812 an irruption was made into Bengal; in 1813 into the territory of Bombay; and in 1816, accompanied with circumstances of extraordinary audacity and outrage, into that of Madras. Of this last irruption intelligence was received in England, within a few weeks after the final and most peremptory injunctions of a forbearing policy had been despatched to India: and this intelligence it was that determined the Government at home so far to relax those injunctions, as to loose the hands of the Indian Government specially against the invaders. Even without such specific permission, the Government in India could not longer have forborne; unless it had forgotten what it owed to its subjects, and had not been contented to forfeit its good name throughout the territory of Hindostan. And it is but justice to that Government to say, that it had taken on its own responsbility a determination conformable to its character and its duty. Fortunately, the delays incident to the season at which this determination was taken, enabled the Marquis of Hastings to receive from home a warrant for his proceedings, before he began to act on his own discretion.

The war, therefore, against the Pindarries was undertaken by the Indian Government, with the full concurrence of the Government at home. And what was the nature of the aggressions which called for this concurrence? Nothing can be imagined more dreadful than the irruptions of the Pindarries. There is no excess of lawless violence which they did not perpetrate; no degree of human suffering which they were not in the habit of inflicting. Rapine, murder in all its shapes, torture, rape, and conflagration, were not rare and accidental occurrences in their progress, but the uniform and constant objects of their every enterprize, and the concomitants of every success. After ravaging tracts of country of all visible wealth, they inflicted torture on innocence, helplessness and age, for the purpose of extorting the avowal and indication of hidden treasure. There were instances where the whole female population of a village precipitated themselves into the wells, as the only refuge from these brutal and barbarous spoilers; where, at their approach, fathers of families surrounded their own dwellings with fuel, and perished with their children in the flames kindled by their own hands. If it were not a shame to add to such details any thing like a calculation of pecuniary loss, it might be added, that this last invasion was calculated to have cost, in booty and in wanton waste, scarcely less than a million sterling.

No wonder then that the Government of India had resolved to avenge and chastise such unparalled atrocities so soon as the sea-

son for taking the field should arrive, even had they not received any previous sanction from England. No wonder that the Government at home had not hesitated to revoke its interdicts of war and to qualify its injunctions of forbearance, upon receipt of details so afflicting to every feeling of human nature.

It is obvious from what I have already stated, that a war once excited in India might draw into its vortex many whom fear of our power only kept at peace. With respect to the Pindarries themselves, the difficulty was to find an opportunity of striking a decisive blow. Attacked, routed, scattered in all directions, they would speedily collect and congregate again; as a globule of quicksilver, dispersing for a moment under the pressure of the finger, re-unites as soon as that pressure is withdrawn. But the Pindarries had also chances of external support. They had, many of them, been trained to arms in the service of Scindia, the greatest among the native princes who maintain an independent rule; in the service of Holkar, long the rival of Scindia for preponderance in the Mahratta confederacy; and in that of Meer Khan, a Mahometan adventurer, who, originally employed as an auxiliary by Holkar, had the address to render himself, for a time, master of the Government which he had been called in to support, and to carve out for himself, in return for his abdication of that influence, a substantive and independent sovereignty. However contemptible therefore in themselves, when compared with the numerous and well-trained armies of the British Government, yet, as the fragments of bands that had been led by formidable chieftains, to whom they still professed allegiance, these vagrant hordes might be the means of calling into action Powers of greater magnitude and resources,—Scindia, Holkar, and lastly Meer Khan, himself essentially a predatory Power, and the leader only of more regular and disciplined Pindarries. Nor was this the utmost extent of danger to be apprehended. Suspicions might also be naturally entertained that the other Mahratta Powers were not displeased to see the British authority, against which they had more than once combined with all their forces in vain, weakened in effect and in opinion by the unavenged attack of such despicable antagonists; and that when the occasion should ripen, they might not be disinclined to revenge and retrieve their former defeats. But whatever might be the extent of immediate hostility to be encountered, or the chances of future danger to be calculated, the case was one which did not admit of doubt. The most beneficial acquisitions of territory would not have justified the incurring either the expense or the hazard of a war; but no hazard and no expense could be put in competition with the vindication of national honour, and the discharge of national duty.

In the endeavour to render intelligible the origin and operations

of the war, I fear I may have trespassed much too long with prefatory matter upon the patience of the House. But it will be felt that in offering these explanations, I have incidentally disposed of a question strictly military, which I have mentioned as suggesting itself on the first view of Lord Hastings' undertaking—how it happened that preparations on so large a scale were necessary for the suppression of a horde of 30,000 horsemen? Banditti as they were, it will have been shown that they touched in near relation three powerful independent chiefs of India;—friendly indeed by the existing state of peaceful relations, but in character, and habit, and interest, our foes. It will have been shown, that two of these three chiefs being members of the great Mahratta confederacy, it would not have become a prudent statesman to lay out of his contemplation the possibility, however remote—however in the name of good faith to be disbelieved and deprecated—that the nominal head and the other members of that confederacy, the Peishwah, the Rajah of Nagpore, and the prince known by the title of the Guickwar (whose dominions are situated on the western side of Hindostan) might, if the course of events should be protracted or untoward, forget the obligations of treaties, and make common cause with those whose hostility we more nearly apprehended.

In fact, of these last mentioned Mahratta States, our allies and tributaries, the Guickwar is the only one that did not, in the course of the war, take part with our enemies. The Peishwah and the Rajah of Nagpore, though recently bound to us by the most solemn engagements—and the latter particularly by the most signal benefits—did avail themselves of the earliest opportunity to declare against us:—with a treachery which, to Lord Hastings' trusting and generous nature, was unexpected; but which, though unexpected, did not take him unprepared.

I now come, Sir, to the operations in the field: upon which, extensive and complicated as they were—spread over so wide a theatre, and involving so much intricacy of military detail—I do not presume to venture to speak with any particularity; or to offer myself as a guide to the House through a labyrinth, which I have neither skill nor practice to enable me to trace. I shall confine myself to the general course, and character, and results, of the campaign.

The House has seen that when the Governor General prepared to take the field against the Pindarries, he looked forward to the possible hostility of Scindia, Holkar, and Meer Khan. With the Peishwah—a prince the most important from the influence of his high rank among the Mahratta States—and with the Rajah of Nagpore, treaties had been recently signed and ratified, under such fair seeming protestations of good faith and friend-

ship, that, so far as instruments and professions could be binding, the fidelity of these Powers seemed assured. The treaties to which I refer are the first and second in the collection upon the Table.

So effectual were the plans and dispositions of Lord Hastings, that Scindia, the most formidable of his expected enemies, was overawed, and compressed, as it were, into a new treaty which pledged him to active co-operation against the Pindarries. The utmost extent of the stipulations of this treaty cannot be said to have been very diligently fulfilled by him: but so far the object of it was effected that he at least remained neutral during the campaign. Whether in this respect Scindia acted under the impulse of fear, or was persuaded by arguments addressed to his interest and ambition, the prudence of the Governor-General is equally conspicuous: it detracts nothing from military skill to have been aided by political sagacity. As to Meer Khan, the overwhelming force which Lord Hastings brought to bear upon him compelled his immediate acquiescence and submission. He withdrew his troops, and surrendered his artillery. It remains to speak of the third power whose hostility was expected—Holkar. With Holkar's Government, (the actual chief being a minor) negotiations were for some time carried on: regarding which, the papers on the table contain information somewhat less ample than could be wished; as, by some omission, no doubt accidental, various documents relating to these transactions have not yet reached this country. That Lord Hastings had been in negotiation with the Regent, the mother of the young Rajah, and that great hopes were indulged of a favourable issue, is clear: but how these hopes were disappointed does not appear in the documents before the House. I am, however, enabled to add to what appears in the papers, one fact, the particulars of which have only come to my knowledge within a few days. A short time before the great and decisive battle with the forces of Holkar, one of the refractory and disaffected chieftains in his council took this summary method of over-ruling the policy of the Regent: he entered her tent at night, dragged her out by her hair, and severing her head from her body, cast both into the river. Of the change thus suddenly wrought in Holkar's counsels, the first indication was an attack by the army of Holkar on the troops composing the advanced guard of Sir Thomas Hislop.

This brings me to the battle of Maheidpore—the only great general action which occurred in the course of the campaign. Of this battle I feel myself incompetent, even if it were necessary, to enter into the military details: the Gazettes furnish a more perspicuous account of it than I could pretend to offer. But I may be permitted to say, that more determined gallantry, more

inflexible perseverance, or greater exertion of mind and body on the part of every individual engaged, were never displayed than in the battle of Maheidpore. The result was, the defeat and dissolution of the army of the enemy, though not without a loss on our side, deeply to be deplored. This victory recommends to the gratitude of the House the name of Sir Thomas Hislop, by whose conduct and under whose auspices it was won; and that of Sir John Malcolm—second in command on that occasion—second to none in renown, whose name will be remembered in India as long as the British tongue is spoken, or the British flag hoisted throughout that vast territory.

The result of this battle, as it was the complete dissolution of the army of Holkar, so was it that of the confederacy among the Mahratta Powers, which had long been secretly formed, and which an unprosperous or even a doubtful issue of our first action in the field, would unquestionably have brought into full play. A treaty of peace was forthwith negotiated with Holkar, by which were ceded to us all his possessions on the south side of the river Nerbudda: and the remainder of the campaign, so far as this member of the hostile confederacy was concerned, consisted in collecting for the British Government the scattered fragments of his dismembered chieftainship.

While the campaign was proceeding thus successfully against those whom Lord Hastings had taken into account as probable enemies, their number was unexpectedly increased by the addition of the Peishwah, the executive head of the Mahratta empire; —who suddenly broke the ties which bound him (as has been seen) in the strictest amity to the British Government. Even Sir John Malcolm—better qualified perhaps than any other person to fathom the designs and estimate the sincerity of the native Powers—had been so far imposed upon, in an interview with that prince at Poonah, as to express to Lord Hastings his perfect conviction that the friendly professions of the Peishwah deserved entire confidence. In the midst of this unsuspecting tranquillity, at a moment now known to have been concerted with the other Mahratta chieftains, the Peishwah manifested his real intentions by an unprovoked attack upon the residency (the house of the British Resident) at Poonah. Mr. Elphinstone (a name distinguished in the literature as well as in the politics of the East) exhibited on that trying occasion, military courage and skill which, though valuable accessories to diplomatic talents, we are not entitled to require as necessary qualifications for civil employment. On that, and not on that occasion only, but on many others in the course of this singular campaign, Mr. Elphinstone displayed talents and resources, which would have rendered him no mean general, in a country where generals are of no mean excellence and reputation.

The gallant resistance of Lieutenant-Colonel Burr, at the head of the small force cantoned in the vicinity of Poonah, to the concentrated army of the Peishwah,—and the brilliant and decisive victory subsequently gained over that army by Brigadier-General Smith, stand recorded in the Gazette—memorable instances of British valour. Nor less memorable is the instance of British moderation displayed by General Smith after his victory, in sparing the then hostile capital of a treacherous enemy, which lay at the mercy of the conquerors.

It may be convenient to despatch in continuity what remains to be stated respecting the Peishwah, though anticipating for that purpose events and the order of time. It was the task of General Smith to pursue that fugitive prince, through all the windings and doublings of a warfare which shifted its ground a thousand times; to overthrow his collected force a second time in a pitched battle; and in that battle to rescue from his power the Rajah of Sattarah, descendant of the ancient sovereigns, and, by just title, the real head—of the Mahratta empire. Of that empire the Peishwah was originally the first executive minister. As happens frequently in Oriental sovereignties, the legitimate monarchy had for some time sunk into a mere name; and in that name the Peishwahs had now for six generations exercised the supreme authority, keeping during the same period the successive hereditary sovereigns in confinement. To seize the person of the Rajah of Sattarah, in the fort of that name, in which he had long been immured, was the first object of the Peishwah in his flight from Poonah; lest, falling into the hands of the British, the restitution of that sovereign to his state should lead to the final extinction of the Peishwah's office and power. To defeat this precaution was the effect of General Smith's victories; and it was no small reward of his exertions to be the instrument of such a restoration. Amid the rapid revolutions and fluctuating dynasties of the East, it is not always that European policy can satisfy itself as to the correctness of the course which circumstances or engagements may compel it to pursue or to sanction. But it is no unsatisfactory consequence of a faithless and unprovoked attack upon the British power, that a lawful sovereign has been replaced on the throne of his ancestors, by the same British army which drove a perfidious aggressor from his capital, and finally reduced him from a wanderer to a captive.

What has been stated of the unexpected hostility of the Peishwah, applies, in its general outline, and with change only of names and places, to the Rajah of Berar. At Nagpore, as at Poonah, an attack was suddenly made on the British Residency, while the attention of the Governor-General was supposed to be exclusively occupied with the Pindarry war. A similar resistance was suc-

cessfully opposed to this attack by the resident, Mr. Jenkins; who affords another instance of the happy union of military qualifications with diplomatic skill; and whose courage and constancy had been heretofore displayed under very trying circumstances, when, after the former Mahratta war, he held the office of resident at the Court of Scindia. The few troops stationed at Nagpore, under Lieutenant-Colonel Scott, made a gallant stand against the superior numbers of the enemy—(a superiority sufficient to surround and overpower the British force, even if the attack had been foreseen)—instances of individual heroism displayed on this occasion are deservedly recorded in our military annals. It remained for the skill and valour of Brigadier-General Doveton to follow up the advantages thus obtained; and to complete the overthrow of a Power which had acted with such perfidious violence. The hostility of Nagpore was a still greater surprise than that of Poonah. The result in both cases was the same. The Peishwah is consigned to a secure though mitigated captivity; the Rajah of Berar continues still a fugitive, but so reduced and deserted, that although I cannot aver that a renewal of hostilities by him is altogether impossible, I trust that they cannot be renewed in a shape likely to give the Governor-General much trouble or uneasiness.

Neither had these distant and unforeseen occurrences the effect, which was probably anticipated by the Mahrattas, of calling off the attention of the Bengal Government from the original object of their military preparations—the Pindarries. Within three months after the opening of the campaign, this formidable horde had ceased to exist as a body. Surrounded and driven, as if into a net, between the converging forces of the British Presidencies, repelled on one side from the frontiers of the Company's territories, and pressed on the other against the frontiers of Scindia and Holkar (Scindia's territory being closed against them by that chieftain's treaty of co-operation, and Holkar's by the treaty of peace which followed the battle of Maheidpore;) cut off from their accustomed retreat across the Nerbudda, into the territories of Poonah or Nagpore, and unable, as is their nature, to make head against a regular army in the field, they gradually melted away, dispersed, concealed, or surrendered themselves; their families, their treasured plunder, their fortresses, fell into our hands; and that association of freebooters may, I hope, be said to be extirpated, not, indeed, in their persons, but in purpose and in name.

Of such complicated hostilities, covering an extent of country before which the dimensions of an European campaign shrink in comparison, it is, as I have said, quite impossible for me to attempt any thing like a detailed exposition. Among feats of prowess and deeds of gallantry performed contemporaneously in scenes of action far removed from each other, but conducing alike to

one great end, I feel totally unable to thread the mazes of victory, and to select instances for minute specification and particular praise, either with justice to the British troops, or with satisfaction to my own sense of their merits. The names of the leaders and of the actors in these distinguished scenes must be fresh in the recollection of those who have perused the reports of the campaign; and I fear that if I were to attempt a catalogue, I might, from inadvertence (though not from partiality,) leave many well deserving of praise unnamed. In every instance the valour of the British troops has been eminently conspicuous. And when I say of the British troops, let me guard the House against any such erroneous impression as that the contest was one between tried and valiant British soldiers on the one side, and feeble and unwarlike natives on the other. Let it not be considered as an unequal conflict of European valour with untaught Indian courage: for out of about 90,000 troops, whom Lord Hastings brought into the field, 10,000 only, or thereabouts, were British; the remainder were the native forces of the East India Company, trained, it is true, by European officers, and proving by their obedience, their courage, their perseverance, their endurance, that in discipline and in achievements they were capable of rivalling their British instructers.

In doing justice to the bravery of the native troops, I must not overlook another virtue—their fidelity. Many of the Bombay army had been recruited in the territories of the Peishwah; their property, their friends, their relatives, all that was valuable and dear to them, were still in that prince's power. Previously to the commencement of hostilities, the Peishwah had spared no pains to seduce and corrupt these troops—he abstained from no threats to force them from their allegiance—but his utmost arts were vain. The native officers and soldiers came to their British commanders with the proofs of these temptations in their hands, and renewed the pledges of their attachment. One man—a non-commissioned officer—brought to his captain the sum of 5,000 rupees, which had been presented to him by the Peishwah in person, as an earnest of reward for desertion.* The vengeance denounced by the Peishwah was not an unmeaning menace. It did in many instances fall heavily on the relatives of those who resisted his threats and his entreaties; but the effect was rather to exasperate than to repress their ardour in the service to which they had sworn to adhere.

This combined courage and attachment were never more conspicuous than on one occasion, which I will take the liberty to particularize, for the purpose of paying a just tribute as well to the

* The name of this man—Shieck Houssein—however unmusical to European ears, deserves to be recorded.

native troops, as to the talents of an officer commanding them. It is an instance which I may select without invidiousness, as the rank of the officer does not allow of his name being mentioned in a vote of thanks.

A body of between eight and nine hundred men, all natives except the artillery (the proportion of which to a force of this strength many gentlemen present can estimate more correctly than myself,) was on its march from a distant part of the Peishwah's territories to Poonah, soon after the denunciation of hostilities, and unexpectedly found itself in presence of the whole Mahratta army. What was the exact amount of the Peishwah's force I am not able to state with precision, but the cavalry alone was not less than 20,000. The small band which I have described, hemmed in on all sides by this overwhelming superiority of numbers, maintained through a long day an obstinate and victorious resistance; victorious, for they repelled on every point the furious attacks of the enemy. The chief suffering of which they complained during this singular and most unequal contest, was the intolerable thirst which they could not procure the means of slaking until the action was over. In the end they not only secured an unmolested retreat, but they carried off their wounded. In such a waste and wilderness of space and of glories, distracting the sight and perplexing the judgment, it is satisfactory thus to select some small insulated field of action, which one can comprehend at a single glance, and of which (as of some green and sunny spot in a far-stretching and diversified landscape) one can catch and delineate all the characteristic features.

From this one small achievement—small as to extent, but mighty with reference to the qualities displayed in it, the spirit which pervaded and animated the whole Indian army may be inferred. The officer who commanded this gallant little force was Captain Staunton; his rank does not entitle him to be recorded in our votes, but the House will be glad to learn that his merits and services have not been overlooked by his immediate employers the Court of Directors.

To sum up the military results of the whole campaign in a few words:—Within the short period of six months, between November and June, eight-and-twenty actions were fought in the field, differing from each other in magnitude, but all exhibiting in unvaried splendour the character of our Indian army. One hundred and twenty forts—many of them scarcely accessible, some deemed impregnable either by force or skill—fell to that army by surrender, by siege, or by storm. To give some notion of the extent of country over which these actions were distributed, the distance between the most northern and most southern of the captured fortresses is not less than seven hundred miles.

At the southern extremity of this long line of operations, and in a part of the campaign carried on in a district far from public gaze and without the opportunities of early and especial notice, was employed a man, whose name I should indeed have been sorry to have passed over in silence. I allude to Colonel Thomas Munro; a gentleman of whose rare qualifications the late House of Commons had opportunities of judging when he was examined at their bar on the renewal of the East India Company's Charter; and than whom Europe never produced a more accomplished statesman, nor India, fertile as it is in heroes, a more skilful soldier. This gentleman, whose occupations for some years past have been rather of a civil and administrative than a military nature, was called, early in the war, to exercise abilities, which though dormant, had not rusted from disuse. He went into the field with not more than five or six hundred men, of whom a very small proportion were Europeans; and marched into the Mahratta territories to take possession of the country which had been ceded to us by the treaty of Poonah. The population which he subdued by arms, he managed with such address, equity, and wisdom, that he established an empire over their hearts and feelings. Nine forts were surrendered to him or taken by assault on his way; and at the end of a silent and scarcely observed progress, he emerged from a territory heretofore hostile to the British interest, with an accession instead of a diminution of force, leaving every thing secure and tranquil behind him. This result speaks more than could be told by any minute and extended commentary.

This, however, Sir, (in order that I may keep my word with the House) is the last episode in which I shall indulge. It remains only to describe briefly the general state in which our affairs were placed at the end of the campaign. The Peishwah and the Rajah of Nagpore I have already traced from their unprovoked hostility to their merited chastisement. The Pindarries, the original cause and object of the war, are gone. Of the Powers which had a natural interest to side with the Pindarries, Meer Khan, is reduced to his original comparative insignificance; Holkar has paid the penalty of his hostility by the sacrifice of a large portion of his dominions; and the most formidable and most important of all, Scindia, having been prevented by wise management from taking that course which would justly have placed him amongst the victims of our vengeance, remains, and long may he remain, an independent sovereign. Long may he remain so!—because, anxious as I am for the prosperity and grandeur of our Indian empire, I confess I look at its indefinite extension with awe. I earnestly wish that it may be possible for us to remain stationary where we are; and that what still exists of sub-

stantive and independent power in India, may stand untouched and unimpaired. But this consummation, however much it may be desired, depends (as I have said) not on ourselves alone. Aggression must be repelled, and perfidy must be visited with its just reward. And while I join with the thinking part of the country in deprecating advance,—who shall say that there is safety for such a Power as ours, in retrogradation?

In one view, the accession of territory, by the various operations of which I have attempted to give some outline, is as important as the war was justifiable and necessary. In the beginning of this war the frontier to be guarded was in extent not less than two thousand five hundred miles. In consequence of our late successes, and of the tributary alliances which have grown out of them, that frontier is indeed much advanced; but in proportion as it is advanced it is also narrowed, so that the line towards the Indus does not now present more than one-third of the extent of the former external boundary.

I have thus, Sir, endeavoured to bring before the House a review of the late campaign; and imperfect as I am aware that review must necessarily be, I do not know that I have omitted any material part of the grounds on which I found my call upon the House for a vote of thanks to the Marquis of Hastings. I have said enough to show the providence with which he called forth, and the skill with which he arrayed, the forces of the great empire committed to his charge; the wisdom with which he laid his plans, and the vigour with which he carried them into execution. I conclude with proposing the vote to Lord Hastings as the commander under whose auspices these successes have been achieved; but I think it due to him as a statesman at the same time to assure the House that his most anxious wish is to improve by the arts of peace the provinces acquired in war; extending the protection of British justice to every part of our widely-spread dominions; but leaving as he may find them the harmless prejudices of nations; and conforming our Government to native habits and institutions, wherever those habits and institutions are not at variance with equity and reason: convinced that the British rule will be stable enough throughout India, in proportion as it is beneficient and beloved.——[Mr. Canning here read the vote of thanks to the Marquis of Hastings.]

It is necessary that I should preface the second resolution with a few remarks on a circumstance in the conduct of a gallant general, who has greatly signalized himself in this campaign.

I mentioned, in the earlier part of my speech, that one of the first results of Sir Thomas Hislop's victory over Holkar, was an order issued by that chief, and intrusted to Sir T. Hislop, for the surrender of certain fortresses to the south of the river Nerbudda.

Amongst the fortresses so ordered to be surrendered to Sir Thomas Hislop, was that of Talneir. At that place an event occurred which is related in the papers before the House, and the particulars of which it is not necessary for me to repeat. In those papers the House is possessed of all the information which the East India Company or the Government have received on this subject. With that information neither the East India Company nor the Government are satisfied. The only course which, under these circumstances, could be adopted, was to send instructions to the Government of India to transmit to England the most ample information, and to institute, if necessary, the most minute inquiry. I am very far from admitting that because there has been an omission in sending home satisfactory documents, we are therefore to conclude that the transaction is not justifiable. The inference must be the other way:—First, from the character of *a* British officer; secondly, from the individual character of *this* officer, whom (though I am not myself acquainted with him,) I understand to be eminently entitled to praise, not more from his professional talents, than for his abhorrence of every thing cruel or severe. We have further, in support of this inference, two separate approvals of his conduct by the Marquis of Hastings, conveyed in the most unqualified terms. It is impossible to imagine any interest or affection that could have induced Lord Hastings to slur over a transaction, which in his conscience he thought deserving of blame. I say this the more confidently, because instances have occurred in the course of this campaign which prove that, however anxious Lord Hastings is to bestow praise where praise is merited, he knows his duty too well to withhold blame from those who have justly incurred it. Those instances it would be unfair to mention; but I can assure the House that such are in my possession.

When the despatch which contains the account of the capture of Talnier, was transmitted in the military department of the official correspondence, it came unaccompanied with any civil details whatever. I felt some reluctance in making the bare military statement public: but I thought the plain course to pursue was, to deal with this despatch as other despatches of a military nature had been dealt with; looking forward confidently to the arrival of the details which were wanting to give the transaction its true colour.

Those gentlemen who take an interest in Indian affairs must know how uncertain correspondence is with that part of the world. There have been—there still are—great chasms in the correspondence respecting the late campaign. In last Saturday's Gazette, is an account of occurrences which took place not less than a year and a half ago: it is not the fault of the Government

that the intelligence of them did not arrive sooner. And here it may possibly be expedient for me to state, by the way, why despatches, of which the general interest is gone by, are nevertheless inserted in the Gazette. The reason, Sir, is this: from the intense and laudable eagerness with which military honours are sought for, it is necessary that those services by which such honours may be merited, should be publicly recorded. Public record being made—and wisely—an indispensable condition of the grant of those honours, it would be hard to run the risk of invalidating any officer's title to them hereafter, by keeping back altogether the notification of services, the official report of which might have happened to be delayed.

To return to Sir Thomas Hislop: his despatch arrived in August; the approbation of the Marquis of Hastings, though dated only a fortnight after that despatch, did not arrive till the 27th of November. The details of a complete justification may be now on their way.

In this imperfect state of evidence three modes of proceeding presented themselves to Government. The first was, to withhold remuneration altogether from the services of the Indian army till this point should be cleared up: but no man who knows the spirit and temper of armies in general, and the composition of the Indian army in particular, would recommend a course so ungrateful and ungracious. The next was to grant to other deservers the proper honorary rewards, omitting the name of the commander under whom the most considerable victory had been gained—the name of him in whose praise the letters from India were lavish: but such an exception would have placed on his character a stamp of obloquy too deep to be effaced by any subsequent atonement. The last course was, to include him with the body of officers to whom military honours were due; still, however, expecting and requiring at a future period a satisfactory explanation of this particular part of his conduct. If the House shall be of opinion that the Executive Government have not judged amiss in the choice which they have made between these three modes of proceeding, the House will, perhaps, so far countenance and concur with their decision as to vote its thanks for military service to Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Hislop, in common with his brave compeers in glory; and to be contented with entering, at the same time, a special record of its own suspended judgment on this particular transaction.

I admit the reasonableness of such a record, on the grounds which I have stated; though I feel that, standing in my situation, it would hardly be becoming in me to propose what that record shall be. To join it with the vote of thanks itself, when every end can be obtained by a separate Resolution, would be as harsh

as unnecessary: unnecessary, since the suspension of the judgment of the House may be sufficiently marked without such a junction; —and harsh, because the vote of thanks will be placed on the regimental books, and read in front of every military line in India. This, I am ready to confess, would not be too severe a course if the transaction were finally to be imprinted with a character, such as, I trust, it never can assume: but what would be the feelings of Sir Thomas Hislop and of his comrades, if such a censure were sent forth, in ignorance here, to be read before an audience in India who might well know that it had not been deserved?

I trust, then, that the House will allow the name of Sir Thomas Hislop to stand in my second Resolution of Thanks, without any phrase of qualification; and, in return, if any gentleman shall propose a separate Resolution of the description which I have ventured to suggest, I shall think that by assenting to such Resolution I best discharge my duty to the House, to the Indian army, and to Sir Thomas Hislop himself.

The Resolutions were agreed to without a division.

MR. TIERNEY'S MOTION ON THE STATE OF THE NATION.

MAY 18th, 1819.

MR. TIERNEY moved—"That this House will resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to take into consideration the State of the Nation."—The arguments adduced in Mr. Tierney's motion, are replied to *seriatim* in Mr. Canning's admirable speech on this occasion.

MR. CANNING rose and said:—

The motion, Sir, of the right honourable gentleman, as fairly explained by himself, and as understood by almost every honourable gentleman who has taken part in this debate, is, to call upon the House to exercise one of its highest constitutional functions—to sit in judgment on the character, and pass a verdict on the conduct, of the Ministers of the Crown. Some attempts have, indeed, been made in the course of the discussion, to diminish the force of the right honourable gentleman's explanation, and to detract from his just admissions. But that diminution and that detraction cannot be allowed to weigh against the avowal of the honourable mover; who puts no other interpretation on his own object than this—that the decision of the House this night involves the fate of the existing Administration. Lest any mistake arise on this point—lest any honourable members should be unwittingly led to adopt a measure of which they do not mean to approve—I think it right to repeat, on my own part, and on the part of my colleagues, what has been most candidly and distinctly declared by the right honourable gentleman, that the issue of the division this night, if affirmative of the proposition brought forward by the right honourable gentleman, will pronounce the dissolution of the Government which now possesses the confidence of the Crown. Do I mean on that account to impute any blame or any improper motive to the right honourable gentleman? No such thing. The present proceeding is an acknowledged and constitutional mode of ascertaining the sense of Parliament on the conduct of the Administration of the country. If there is any unfairness to be complained of, it certainly is not in the nature of the motion, but in the time and in the circumstances under which it is brought forward.

An honourable gentleman, who spoke late in the debate, seems to think that he may support the motion without passing a sentence of condemnation and dismissal on His Majesty's Ministers. With this qualification I, Sir, do not presume to find fault: but I

do think myself entitled to desire that all those who may think with the honourable gentleman will take an opportunity of distinctly expressing that opinion, lest, by their votes, if unexplained, the House and the country—who will unquestionably construe the motion according to the general understanding of it, and according to the right honourable mover's own exposition of its intention and effect—should be deceived with respect to the object which those whose votes are thus qualified have in view. Another honourable gentleman fancies he sees a way of escaping from the difficulty, by distinguishing between his general approbation of His Majesty's Ministers, and the abhorrence which he feels for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in consequence of the London Docks not being so full as usual, and still more on account of the dastardly imbecility with which my right honourable friend has recoiled from a double duty upon tallow. Torn as his agitated bosom was by these conflicting sentiments—by a consciousness, on the one hand, of the obligations which he owed to Ministers for their general conduct, and his indignation, on the other, at these particular and reprehensible backslidings of the Finance Minister, the honourable gentleman declared that he saw no means of evading his embarrassment, but by voting with an honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. C. Wynn) for the previous question. Unhappily, however, even this mode of retreat is not left open to him; for that honourable and learned gentleman has not moved, nor does he intend to move, the previous question. He did, indeed, mention such a question as moveable, and as not inapplicable to the motion before the House; but after propounding the matter gravely, and weighing it deliberately, he resolved to have nothing at all to do with the division, but to go home to bed. If, therefore, the honourable gentleman is deterimned to follow the honourable and learned gentleman's suggestion, he must follow him, not into the lobby, but to his chamber. "Misery," as Trinculo says, "acquaints a man with strange bedfellows;" and when the honourable gentleman shall be reclined on the same pillow with the mover of the imaginary motion which he is so anxious to support, they may condole with each other on the difficulties by which they fancy themselves surrounded, and eventually, perhaps, may make up their minds, though somewhat too late, as to the vote to be given on a question on which, of all questions in the world, it seems most easy to come to a decisive opinion.

I have said that if I were disposed to complain of any thing in the right honourable gentleman's motion, it would be only of the time and the circumstances under which it is brought forward. But, in saying this, I beg to be understood as founding my objection not on the general situation of the country and of the world, but merely on the particular state of public business in Parliament.

This I think it necessary to premise, lest my observations on the proposition and speech of the right honourable gentleman may be misunderstood. The course of argument which has been pursued by the right honourable gentleman is this:—that the country stands, both internally and externally, in a situation of extraordinary difficulty and even peril; a situation demanding all the attention which the most able and experienced minds can bestow upon it. I am very ready to admit that the internal situation of the country is full of difficulties; but they are not insurmountable. There is nothing in that situation which ought to lead us to despair. I admit also that it is impossible to look through the world without perceiving that there may be some latent and not yet unfolded grounds of foreign embarrassment, some distant chance that the exertions which have been made for the establishment and preservation of general tranquillity, however strenuous and ardent, may be frustrated at some period, more or less remote, by occurrences, difficult to forsee, and not possible to be guarded against. Who will undertake to say, that at this very moment some unperceived danger may not be gathering over the country? and when was there a moment in the history of the country at which such an undertaking could be confidently hazarded? In making these admissions, therefore, I beg to be understood as not alluding to any specific circumstances of difficulty or danger; but merely as not opposing to the vague suppositions of the right honourable gentleman, any assurance that might be understood as intended to deprecate discussion, or to divest the right honourable gentleman's motion of the character and importance which he has assigned to it. Whatever may be the grounds, or whatever the amount of the apprehensions reasonably growing out of the present situation of affairs—in one thing I most cordially agree with the right honourable gentleman, that nothing could more effectually tend to preserve the tranquillity now so happily prevailing throughout the world, than an impression that we should not shrink from war in case of necessity. To this end it is unquestionably indispensable that our financial system should be sound. And to make it so, it is no doubt necessary to purge it of its defects, to repair its infirmities, and, above all things, to give such an ample and undisguised explanation of its real condition, as may render it perfectly clear and intelligible, not only to this country, but to the world. All this is as strongly felt by His Majesty's Government as by the right honourable gentleman; and the only matter of which they have a right to complain in respect to the present motion, is that it is brought forward prematurely, and, if not with the purpose, certainly with the effect, of intercepting and anticipating that exposition of the whole of our system of finance, which it is the undoubted duty of the Ministers to bring

forward, and which it is notorious that they will, in the course of a few days, submit to the consideration of Parliament. The right honourable gentleman has so timed his motion as to enable himself, whenever this exposition shall be made, to exclaim, "Aye, this flows from my motion; just as the inquiry into the affairs of the Bank was the consequunce of my former notice." As to the origin of the inquiry into the affairs of the Bank, that question was disposed of at the time, and I will not now weary the attention of the House by re-arguing it: but as to the financial statement, I can assure the right honourable gentleman, that nothing but the obvious necessity of first completing the investigation of the committee on the Bank, and of determining the character of the future currency of the country, before any solid and permanent system of finance could be established, has prevented my right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, from proposing to the House the plan of finance which has been prepared, not merely for the present year, but for the whole period of peace, whatever may be its duration. My single objection, therefore, to the fairness of the motion is, that it endeavours to take from Ministers the initiative which belongs to them on this momentous subject; on which (as the right honourable gentleman himself most justly argues) the whole view of the state of the country, external as well as internal, depends.

The right honourable gentleman has, however, avoided entering into any examination of the labours of the Secret Committee, or into the much agitated question respecting the currency, or into the details of our financial situation. In this abstinence I will imitate him: and having merely protested against the implication, thus unfairly conveyed in the motion, that the right honourable gentleman's interference (however great his talents in that line, or however laudable the application with which he has directed them to that object) was necessary to obtain for the House and for the country a prompt and full examination of our financial wants and means, I will proceed to follow the right honourable gentleman through the wider range and more general topics of his speech.

The right honourable gentleman appears to think that in consequence of the alleged exhaustion of our finances, opportunities have been lost of asserting the interests and vindicating the honour of the country. On this point the right honourable gentleman did not indeed express himself in very direct terms. He was contented to "just hint a fault and hesitate dislike." He just made the allusion, and left it to work its own impression. He said that two British subjects had been murdered under the forms of justice by a general of the United States. The act was not characterized by the right honourable gentleman in terms of too strong abhorrence; but for what purpose was it thus alluded to in a motion

for a Committee to inquire into the State of the Nation, unless for that of insinuating, that there had been something in the forbearance of the British Government which could not be accounted for but by a consciousness of absolute impotence? And yet the right honourable gentleman himself confessed his doubts whether, by the law of nations, the interference of the British Government on this occasion would have been justifiable. The right honorable gentleman's doubts are well founded. His Majesty's Ministers have not been the less diligent or the less anxious in their deliberations and researches, to ascertain whether, consistently with the law of nations, they could interfere, than if they had (as was the first natural impulse in every British bosom) made this country and America ring from one end to the other, with cries for redress. Let it not be imputed to His Majesty's Ministers that they alone, of all Englishmen, of all mankind, felt not the indignation at the act in question which it justly merited; that the moral guilt and baseness of that atrocious proceeding appeared to them in any other light than to the plain understanding of every right-minded individual; or that it would not have been easier, ten thousand times more easy as well as more grateful, to have followed at once where their feelings led the way, than to have curbed, and questioned, and disciplined those feelings by a reference to their duties and obligations. But if the unhappy men who were the victims of this inhuman outrage, placed themselves by their own act out of the protection of their Government; if there was no right of interfering in their behalf, which would have justified an appeal to the last extremity, by which atonement, if not granted on a first requisition, must be enforced; if therefore remonstrances disregarded would not have justified resentment; if to have called for reparation would have been to enter upon a course from which, when unsatisfied, we should have had nothing to do but to retire; surely it will be felt that the dignity of the country would have been ill consulted by a proceeding at once fruitless and humiliating: and surely credit may be given to us for having discharged—reluctantly discharged—our duty to our country as Ministers, without imputing to us an insensibility which would have disgraced us as men.

Again, as to the cession of the Floridas by Spain to the United States, the right honourable gentleman spoke, not as if he himself thought, but as if it might be thought by some one, that the British Government ought to have interfered for the purpose of preventing that cession. Unquestionably it would have been more to the interests of this country that the Floridas should have remained in the possession of Spain. But by what right, by what construction of the law of nations, independently of the specific stipulations of particular treaties (and none such were

in this case in operation,) could the British Government interfere to prevent a transfer of territory between independent Powers; unless it had been prepared to make common cause with the nation of whom the cession was required? It is, I believe, pretty generally admitted on all sides, that Ministers have rightly abstained from any interference in this matter; but if no blame is imputed to them, why was the subject introduced into the right honourable gentleman's speech, in a manner which either meant nothing, or meant that there might be something to find fault with? On another point, the right honourable gentleman was less equivocal. He clearly did mean to impute blame to Ministers for not having openly espoused the cause of the South American provinces. When I recollect, Sir, all that has been so often declaimed in the House on the advantages of peace, on the dangers of war, on the impropriety of interfering in the concerns of foreign nations—when I recollect all those brilliant common places with which the ears of every honourable member present must still be ringing, I confess my astonishment at the tone of the right honourable gentleman's remarks on the subject of Spanish South America. I am astonished at the suggestion, coming from a statesman not liable to be misled by the ebullition of any very romantic or fanatical spirit, that the Government of this country ought to have committed its honour and resources in a new, and what I must call unnecessary war against Spain, for the purpose of fomenting the struggle between her and her colonies. I have heard of many wars rashly undertaken—I have heard of wars of interest, wars of temper, wars of honour, and wars of speculation; but I never yet heard of so mad a proposition as that the cause of the insurgents in South America (I do not mean by the term "insurgents," to give any opinion as to the merits of the cause) should be taken under the protection of Great Britain. Putting out of question the moral right of such an interposition, have any of these sanguine enterprizers who contend for alliance with the insurgents, condescended to calculate the magnitude of the undertaking—the distance—the risk—the cost—and that to an "exhausted country?" No, the British Government had but one wise, as but one honest course to pursue in this contest. They have not interfered to assist either party, but they have repeatedly offered their good offices with a view to reconcilement through an impartial mediation. That mediation has unhappily proved hopeless, nor was it our business to obtrude it undesired: nor would we, nor ought we to undertake to give effect to it, on condition of enforcing it on either side by arms. Amicable intercourse has been kept up with every part of South America to which our flag has access; and I have no doubt that a strong sense is entertained of the pacific and impartial dispositions of England throughout

the continent of South America, unless where her character has been maligned, and her motives distorted, for purposes of local delusion, or of personal interest. But, on the other hand, the armaments fitted out from this country in aid of the South Americans have undoubtedly created (and have been most diligently and unfairly employed to create) an impression that the wishes and opinions of the British Government were embarked with the adventurers of which those armaments were composed. Such a supposition is wholly inconsistent with the neutrality professed and observed by the British Government, and may require contradiction; but it is unquestionably a conclusive answer to the imputation of partiality against the South Americans. The wisdom, as well as the good faith of this system of neutrality, must, I think, be obvious to every one, except to a race of petty politicians (I certainly do not mean to include the right honourable gentleman in this description,) who hold that the present is a fine opportunity for retaliating upon Spain, the conduct which we experienced from her during the contest with our North American colonies. Yes, we have retaliated; but I trust on a more just, at least a more Christian principle. Our retaliation has been to endeavour, by mediation, to heal the wounds which discord had inflicted on both parties in the quarrel. Would to God that our offers had been accepted. Would to God that the parties who were the objects of it had yielded to the suggestions of friendship and sound prudence; and that instead of tearing each other to pieces with a waste of blood, such as few wars have occcasioned, some compromise could have been effected, favourable at once to rational principles of liberty, and to the peace of the old world and the new. In one respect, His Majesty's Ministers are certainly guilty of the charges brought against them. In their transactions with South America, they have abstained from endeavouring, by a commercial treaty, to turn the troubles and distresses of a struggling people to the advantage of this country. The assistance which they did not think it right to grant, they would not be tempted to sell; and so far have they carried their forbearance in this particular, that in all their repeated offers of mediation, while they have uniformly stated freedom of trade as one of the conditions which justice would stipulate for the colonies, they have as uniformly disclaimed for Great Britain any separate or partial commercial preference. Let peace be established, let trade be open—competition, enterprize, capital, would ensure her due share of advantage to this country.

These, I think, are all the questions of external policy to which the right honourable gentleman has adverted, with the exception of those general reflections on the state of Europe, which have

been already satisfactorily noticed by my noble friend, the Secretary of State.

To return to internal matters. The manner in which the right honourable gentleman brought forward his motion, rendered it almost impossible wholly to preclude discussion on the affairs of the Bank, the currency, and the finances. Nor has the caution which the right honourable gentleman himself observed on that subject, been imitated by those who followed him. To their remarks, however, I do not mean at present to reply. Nor shall I dwell particularly on the more unimportant charges which the right honourable gentleman has copiously flung out against His Majesty's Ministers, but shall confine myself to the pervading topic of his speech. According to the right honourable gentleman, not only are His Majesty's Ministers, taken as a whole, incompetent to bring the resources of the empire into full and healthy play, whether in respect to its internal or external polity; but their deficiency is rendered still more deficient, and their imbecility more weak, by divisions among themselves: there is no point of union among them, no common principle of action. The country ought therefore to look to an administration all strength—all unanimity—the members of which should not have taken different sides on any question of great political interest. But where is this perfect administration to be found? Not certainly in the persons of the right honourable gentleman and his friends around him. Be it remembered, that it is not I who allege this matter of accusation. But if it be indeed absolutely indispensable for the conducting affairs wisely and steadily, with prudence and decision, that there should be no difference on any important subject among the members of an administration; and if it shall farther appear that such differences would nevertheless exist under any possible administration that could be formed out of the materials now available in this country, the result, I fear, will be not only that the present Ministers cannot go on, but that the country must altogether despair of an efficient and serviceable administration. The truth, however, I believe to be, that those theorists tax human nature too high, who require, among any number of men capable of forming an opinion for themselves, an undeviating unanimity of opinion upon every one of the various and complicated questions that can occur in the management of the affairs of this extended and diversified community. An agreement in general principles, and a concurrence in the details of practical administration, are undoubtedly necessary to give consistency to councils, and unity to action. But upon points either purely speculative, or of comparative unimportance in practice, there may be—there must be—occasionally, such differences among intelligent and instructed minds, as may render necessary mutual

concessions for the sake of the public service. Measures must sometimes be shaped and modified by the comparison and partial compromise of different opinions. If the result be to present for practical adoption, and to support with frankness, strength, and union, measures of sound policy, any harshness of criticism or severity of examination into the process by which such consent may have been obtained, would be utterly misplaced—would be to travel beyond the sphere of human action into that of thought, with which human judgment has no concern.

I apply these observations specifically to the instance on which the right honourable gentleman has commented with the greatest severity—the question of the resumption of cash payments by the Bank. If the measure to be proposed on the report of the Secret Committee has the concurrent recommendation of every member of the Administration, I know of no point of honour which calls for explanation, as to the particular opinions which may have been compromised to arrive at that conclusion, and to produce that salutary concurrence. The existence of that complete practical concurrence, on that most important practical measure, I have the happiness to announce. The right honourable gentleman may easily point out (for they are on record) the particular differences of opinion which prevailed at a former period—a period when I and the right honourable gentleman thought together on the principles of this intricate and interesting subject. I, Sir, hold unchanged the opinions which I avowed in 1811. The right honourable gentleman, I presume, has not altered his opinions—indeed, I know he has not as to principles; but yet, in the Secret Committee, concurring as it did almost unanimously as to the practical inference to be drawn from those opinions as applicable to the present state of the question, the right honourable gentleman admitted that he stood alone. It is not difficult for one man to be unanimous: but the right honourable gentleman has much difficulty in understanding how those who, holding different opinions on a difficult and abstract subject, have nevertheless been able to agree in one common conclusion; while he, holding the opinions of the majority, had contrived nevertheless to have a conclusion entirely to himself. The right honourable gentleman has talked of the supposed disunion among the members of the Cabinet, as if it pervaded every question connected with the welfare of the nation. But, the fact is, Sir, that I know but one great national question, namely, that which is called the Catholic Question, on which the members of Administration are divided in opinion; and no man better knows the sources from which that disunion has flowed, and the attempts which have been made to remedy it, than the right honourable gentleman himself. On that question, indeed, I speak my sincere sentiments, when I say, that it is hopeless to

look for an united opinion in any Administration which there are the means of forming. I believe I can speak with as much experience on this subject as any one in the House; and I am persuaded, that had it been possible, out of the public men in the country to form an Administration united on the Catholic Question, and not differing widely on other questions of equal importance, that object would have been achieved in 1812. To that object, I twice in that year sacrificed what the right honourable gentleman acknowledged, and what I have no hesitation in acknowledging with the right honourable gentleman, to be the legitimate object of liberal ambition in a free state—a share in the Government of the country. Twice in that year did I sacrifice this object of ambition, for the express purpose of being the better able, either to produce (in conjunction with abler and worthier men, who earnestly and sincerely, but vainly, laboured after the same object) the union in Administration of persons agreeing on this question, or (failing that attempt) of serving the question more effectually out of office. It is not necessary to recall to the right honourable gentleman's recollection, the fruitlessness of the search after both of these objects. Every attempt at forming an Administration that should be united upon the Catholic Question, and at the same time upon other great principles and measures, more immediately connected with the carrying on of the public service, failed; and upon that failure the present Administration was formed. In that formation I was not included; but I speak with perfect confidence, when I assert that those who gave their support to the present Administration, on its formation, did so on the understanding that every member of that Administration entered into office with the express stipulation that he should maintain his own opinion in Parliament on the Catholic Question. Whether such a stipulation was wise or not, is another question which I will not now argue; but I will say to those who now first object to it, that they come too late. They ought to have stated their objection when the Administration was framing, and not now charge as a crime that which was settled with their entire cognizance and zealous approbation. When I subsequently entered office, my opinion on the Catholic Question remained unchanged; I take for granted, that the understanding which I have described, that I as well as every other member of the Cabinet, should maintain my own opinions on that subject in Parliament, was unchanged also; and I do not see on what pretext, having taken a course in perfect coincidence with that understanding, I could now be called upon, either by those who oppose, or those who favour the Catholic cause, to desert the ranks of the Government. I feel no such obligation, in point of honour; and I will go farther, and confess, that after all that has passed since 1812, I

should now doubt, with a view to the ultimate success of the question itself, the prudence of attempting to make it the test and bond of opinion in an Administration. Although, as I said in 1812, there was no sacrifice which I was not ready to make, and which I did not make for the sake of forming an Administration which should agree upon it, the difficulties in the way of accomplishing that object, did then appear to me insurmountable; every succeeding year has added so much to my conviction to that effect, that if, by the vote of this night, the power of forming a new Administration should be conferred on the right honourable gentleman, I venture to assure him, that he would find it less easy than he is aware, to form an Administration which would be able to carry that question effectively and safely as a measure of Government, and at the same time to do justice to the country in other important branches of its affairs. Indeed, the gentlemen on the opposite side of the House ceased, long before I did, either to imagine such a scheme of Administration feasible, or to think it desirable—I know not which—for in 1806, when the framing of an Administration was entrusted to the then leaders of opposition, they not only included, but solicited permission to include, in their cabinet, two noble lords (Lords Sidmouth and Ellenborough) who were known to be decidedly hostile to any farther concession to the Catholics. If I might be allowed to state my present creed upon the subject, I would say, that I believe, not only that the difficulties of combining an Administration unanimous on the question of the Catholic Claims, are insurmountable, but that it is not desirable, with a view to the public good, that such an Administration should be formed. An Administration decidedly and uniformly favourable to the Catholic Claims, or one decidedly and uniformly hostile to them, would be equally likely to excite a clamour, and to engender an irritation, at variance with the best and most essential interests of the empire. In this case, as well as in many others, that which at the time it occurred was a bitter disappointment, has providentially turned out to be a most happy circumstance. The question is (in my judgment) gradually making its way in public opinion; and to public opinion it ought to be allowed eventually and soberly to settle the question. Such are my sentiments with respect to that question, the only important question on which any difference of opinion exists in the Cabinet.

Another charge which has been brought forward against Government is, that they have not had strength enough to resist the motions which have been forced upon them. Undoubtedly the charge is true in two memorable instances, in which Ministers failed in resisting the appointment of committees. Overloaded with committees of their own proposing, the kindness of the op-

posite side of the House, it seems, has forced upon them others which they have not been able to decline, although anticipating from them mischiefs of the greatest hazard and magnitude.—Very true—twice have these suggestions been tendered for their acceptance—twice attempted to be evaded, and twice have majorities of the House—not very large ones it must be owned—but majorities, compelled their acquiescence. If I am asked, whether this is the way to carry on the affairs of the nation? I answer with the utmost frankness—No. A Government by minorities would undoubtedly be a very new, and upon the long run, not a very safe or efficient mode of Administration. But, at the same time, there are various considerations to be weighed before a ministry can properly fix the point at which they will pledge their existence as a Government, upon a vote of the House of Commons. The occasion must be adequate, or they might cover themselves with ridicule. But the frequency of small occasions, I admit, would constitute an adequate case; and I admit farther, that enough of such smaller occasions have occurred, to make Ministers very anxious to learn whether the confidence of the House has really been withdrawn from the existing Administration, and to make them feel very thankful to the right honourable gentleman for having afforded an opportunity of trying that question upon the present motion. If the support to be calculated on by Government be only such as they experienced on the two occasions to which I have alluded; if they can rely on no other, then, no doubt, they are gone. The right honourable gentleman says that Ministers will take no hints. If they are not prepared to take the hints to which the right honourable gentleman adverts, it is not because they turn a deaf ear to them, but because they do not understand them so clearly as to be sure that they would do right in acting upon them. A series of such hints occurring in rapid succession, would unquestionably throw the Government into the right honourable gentleman's hands; and if such be the intention of the House, the sooner and the more clearly it is made manifest the better.

But there is another view in which the appointment of committees is objected to the present Administration. It is said, that they are a government of committees—that they abdicate the functions of the executive authority, and fritter them away by partial delegations. It is a little hard in the right honourable gentleman thus to blow hot and cold at the same time. Does he mean that the proposal of a committee is in itself a crime in a Government, and the resistance of such a proposal in all cases a duty? Does he mean that the opposition only should have the privilege of proposing a committee, and then of railing at the Government equally whether they adopt or resist it? When the honourable gentlemen get into one of their *conciliabules* to devise a motion

for the annoyance of Ministers, do they once in a hundred times make such a motion in a direct shape for such or such specific measure? No. The constant device is, to move for a committee of inquiry; a committee of inquiry is the standing recipe for stray votes—for catching, for instance, that of the honourable member for Bramber (Mr. Wilberforce.) Bait the hook of these motions with a committee, and the fish are sure to bite. Nay, some honourable gentlemen, it appears, this night, are so voracious for a vote in opposition, that they even take the hook when there is no bait to cover it; when the right honourable gentleman plainly and openly tells them, that his object is not to obtain the committee which forms the pretext of his motion—that it is simply and nakedly to turn out the Ministers.

But, Sir, I deny that Ministers have resorted to committees except when they have found themselves utterly unable to discharge the detailed duties entrusted to those committees. They shrink from no just responsibility; they neglect no attendance; they share no discussion in this House;—but it ought to be borne in mind how great a change has taken place of late years in the business of the House of Commons—a change which has thrown a burden of business upon Ministers, which no physical or mental constitution can adequately sustain. I call upon those members of the House of Commons who recollect the good old times when the destinies of the empire were swayed in Parliament by Mr. Pitt, or Mr. Fox, to say whether the labours of an Administration in those days were to be compared with what they are now. The Ministers were not then harassed and perplexed by a complication of daily business, with the whole of the details of which, however trifling, it was expected that they should be intimately and accurately acquainted. Their time was not then vexatiously wasted on questions of complaint and cases of pretended grievance, such as a pied-poudre court would not entertain; such as a court of conscience would dismiss without the award of a farthing damages. It is now expected that Ministers should come down to the House every night fully possessed of details of facts, and characters of individuals concerned, and histories of the transactions of years, whenever any person blasted in character may have prevailed on an honourable member to present a folio volume of a petition, charged with falsehoods and libels: and which, after three or four hours wasted in fruitless conversation, is found to be unfit to lie upon the table. Thus the marrow of the day is consumed; and then, after three or four hours passed in a weary, vexatious, useless debate, the Ministers, jaded and fatigued, as they must necessarily be, are expected to proceed to public business, with a host of new opponents, who *plene pasti*, come like giants refreshed to the battle; whilst the unfortunate Minister, exhausted

and *impransus*, is to enter upon a new course of wrangling, happy if at last he can get through one-third part of the real business of the day. It is not then in these cases the weakness of the Minister of which complaint ought to be made, but the weakness of man; for human strength is unable to endure this wearying, worrying, uninteresting, and unprofitable course of exertion. The right of petitioning is a sacred right: but every body must feel to what an extent in these days the abuse of it is carried. That abuse is arrived at such a height, that, in self-defence, if the House values its time, which is the public property, and its functions, which are for the public benefit, it must be remedied one way or other. While Government is thus daily harassed and tormented, can it be matter of surprise that many important questions which require examination in detail, are referred to the consideration of committees? How else can they be beaten out, and sifted to the bottom? Neither time nor human strength would avail for such a task.

"Why," it is said, "do not Administration take up the subject of the poor laws?" "Why," it is asked with admirable consistency on the part of the honourable gentlemen opposite—"why do not Government, foolish and ignorant as they are, undertake to settle the most extensive and important problem that ever came before Parliament? Weak and contemptible, why do they not carry a measure which Mr. Pitt, in the plentitude of his power, found too much for him; in which Mr. Whitbread, in the vigour of his strength, and backed by the influence of Administration, found himself utterly unable to make any way? With such examples before them, why do not Government decide off-hand a question growing out of the usage of centuries, interwoven with the habits and deeply rooted in the prejudices of different classes of the people?" A reference to what has actually taken place will be the best answer to these queries. It will be seen, that the subject, even in the neutral hands, as I may call them, of my right honourable friend (Mr. Sturges Bourne) whose knowledge and industry so well qualify him for the task, and whose firmness and courtesy have conciliated the esteem and good-will of all who have had to act with him upon the subject, who has conducted the discussions upon it without the shadow of an allusion to any topic that could stir up party feeling; it will be seen even in his hands, the principal measures emanating from the committee over which he presided, have failed of receiving the support of the House—and that the gentlemen on the opposite benches are divided in opinion respecting it. What is the inference? Simply this: that if Government had brought forward such a proposition, and had attempted to carry it as a party or ministerial question, the benches opposite would have been, night after night, in as full

array as they are at the moment at which I am speaking: and those who have not been able to agree on a question by the decision of which no political triumph was to be obtained, would have found it easy enough to concur in opposing—where opposition was stimulated by the hope of discomfiting their political antagonists. Gentlemen well know with how many inflammable and inflammatory topics the discussion of the poor laws are nearly allied; how much food for declamation would have been furnished against the weakness, the inconsistency, the corruption of Ministers, if they had hastily adopted any plan on a matter so deeply interesting to the whole nation, and perplexed by so many contradictory theories and conflicting interests. The time may come when, after the whole of this great subject has been well and thoroughly examined by the persons most capable of examining it advantageously, by persons bringing local knowledge and practical experience in aid of general principles of theory and law—it may be the duty of the Executive Government to select that one out of the different suggestions propounded by the Committee, to which they will give their support, and which they will endeavour to persuade Parliament to pass into a law. But of all the subjects of legislation on which Government ought not hastily and prematurely to interfere, without ascertaining and if possible carrying with them the prevailing sentiment of the country—this of the poor laws appears to me to be the one on which it would have been the most unadvisable to take a precipitate course.

But to return from those specific charges to the general scope and object of the right honourable gentleman's motion. Suppose, for a moment, that it were carried, what is the amount of advantage, let me ask, that would arise from the change of Administration? Suppose the right honourable gentleman and his friends in power; is there no question, like that of the Catholic Claims, or the Scotch Burghs, which might produce some dissension in their ranks? What do they think of parliamentary reform? What do they think of another Westminster election? It is true that the honourable baronet,* one of the members for Westminster, is this night with them; but it is only on the understanding that they will support his darling measure of parliamentary reform. After some hesitation, and a sort of whispering negotiation, carried on openly in the face of the House, it appears, that the right honourable gentleman has acceded to the honourable baronet's conditions, and that a coalition has been established between them. Suppose, then, the new coalition Ministry to be formed, who in point of talent—yes, who in point of talent, rank, and of consideration in the country, is better fitted to be a leading mem-

*Sir Francis Burdett.

ber of that Cabinet, than the honourable baronet? Well then, every body knows that one of the first questions which the honourable baronet, when Minister, would bring forward, would be the great subject of Parliamentary Reform. What then would be the conduct of the Whig members of the Cabinet? Either they would come forward in a body to support the plan of their honourable colleague, or they would flatly contradict their professions during a long series of years, and by refusing to support a reform in Parliament, create a division in their Administration on what I presume the right honourable gentleman will allow to be one of the most important, the most comprehensive, the most vital questions that ever "agitated the country." What would this be but the very same reproach which they so unmercifully cast on their unfortunate predecessors? An honourable member has said, that if the Ministers are popular in the House, the Whigs are popular in the country. Really, Sir, I should have thought that popularity was the last topic that the Whigs would have suffered to be put forward as one of their pretensions to come into power. I do not presume to say, that the Ministers are particularly popular, or that I am so, more than the rest of my colleagues; but I have myself gone through the ordeal of a popular election, without the accompaniment of mud and grenadiers. I was not subjected to such striking proofs of favouritism, as those idols of the people, the Whigs: my retreat was effected with more safety than that of the routed cavalcade, who, with laurels in their hats, and brickbats at their heels, bedaubed with ribbands and rubbish, were only rescued from their overwhelming popularity by a detachment of His Majesty's Horse Guards! Suppose, then, these mud-bespattered Whigs were to come into office instead of the present Ministry, where, after all, would be the advantage worth contending about? Is it the trifling difference between an unpopular and a pelted Administration? The right honourable gentleman has confessed that the present is a trial of strength; and I trust that the division of this night will show which party, in the opinion of the House, is most likely to give stability to our internal quiet, and permanence to our external glory; and to diffuse a general satisfaction and general confidence throughout the country. With a view to deciding this question of preference aright, the right honourable gentleman has said, that it would be the duty of the committee to take a retrospective view of the transactions of past years. Yes! and in fulfilling that duty, the committee would have, on the one side of the retrospect, to count nations rescued, and thrones re-established; battles won with matchless courage, and triumphs unparalleled in their splendour and consequences. They would see this little island, after having saved the Continent, watch with a steady guardian care over the tranquillity which it had restored. They

would have to enumerate, on the other side of the account, a series of persevering objections to every measure by which these glories and benefits have been obtained; a succession of theories refuted by facts, and of prophecies falsified by experience: an uniform anticipation of disaster and defeat, contradicted by an uniform achievement of successes unequalled in our history. The proposed committee, if appointed, would have to choose between the two parties to which these attributes respectively belong. But what need of a committee to make the option? The whole subject is before the House; and the House may at once come to the decision. All that I ask for my friends and myself is—a decided course. If Ministers are found wanting, let them be dismissed kindly (for promptitude in such a case is kindness,) with a clear and striking majority. If the course which they have taken is approved, and if they are to be retained by the vote of this night in office, let them be retained with the assurance of receiving such a support as will enable them to conduct the affairs of the country with dignity and advantage.

The House divided.—

Ayes - - - - -	178
Noes - - - - -	357
Majority against the Motion -	179

ROMAN CATHOLIC DISABILITY REMOVAL BILL.

MARCH 16th, 1821.

In the course of the debate that arose on the order of the day being read, for the second reading of this bill, Mr. Plunkett, in a speech of transcendent ability, supported the bill. It was also supported by Mr. Wilberforce and Sir James Mackintosh, and opposed by Mr. Peel, Sir W. Scott, and Mr. Bathurst, who moved, as an Amendment, "That the bill be read a second time this day six months."

Mr. Canning said, that often as it had fallen to him during the time that he had been a member of that House, to take part in the discussion of that most important matter which was this night the subject of their deliberation, he had never risen to discharge his duty under greater anxiety than he felt on the present occasion. That anxiety arose, in part, from the intense conviction which he felt of the great and growing expediency of the measure then proposed to the House. It arose in part also from the peculiar circumstances under which the determination of the House was then to be taken. Those circumstances did not consist in an augmentation of the difficulties by which the question had been surrounded—for difficulties had been, in some degree, removed; nor did they arise from an exaggeration of the objections which were opposed to the measure—for objections heretofore insisted upon, appeared to have been in some measure abated; neither did they consist in any irritation of the public mind—for never, on any former occasion, had the public mind been in such a state—he would not say, with his right honourable friend (Mr. Peel)—of apathy, but of complete resignation to the wisdom of Parliament. They did not consist in any acerbity of temper with which the discussion had been carried on within the walls of that House; for eminently on that night, and also, as he had been informed, in the former stage of this discussion, had it been carried on with a candour, a temper, and a propriety, that did high honour to the right honourable and learned gentleman who had brought in the present measure, and to his right honourable friend, the member for Oxford, who had opposed it.

Having as warm a feeling of esteem for his right honourable friend as it was possible for one man to entertain for another—concurring with him upon most subjects of public policy as much as it was possible for one public man to concur with another—yet, differing with him as he did conscientiously upon the present

question, of his right honourable friend he must say, that he had discharged a painful duty upon the present occasion, in a manner which reflected the highest credit on his public character and conduct, and which must afford him satisfaction in the retrospect, to the latest hour of his life.

In return, he (Mr. C.) hoped he might be allowed in the outset, to assure his right honourable friend and the House, that he came to this debate in the same temper of mind as his right honourable friend; and to say, that if, in the warmth of argument, he should fall into any expression which might be supposed to convey disrespect to those from whose opinions he differed, he trusted he should be acquitted of any intention to give pain, and that for any such accidental intemperance, the interesting nature of the cause would plead his apology. It was from the very improvements in the position of the great question about to be decided; it was from the diminution of the difficulties with which it had been hitherto surrounded; from the abated tone of the objections with which it had been heretofore assailed; from the acquiescence without doors, and the calmness within; that, deriving unusual hope, he also derived a more than common share of anxiety. In proportion as those external causes which, on former occasions, had contributed to the ill reception and defeat of this question, were removed; in proportion as it was left more freely to the operation of its own intrinsic merits, the responsibility for a favourable result appeared to weigh more heavily upon its advocates. And when, in addition to the facilities which he had already enumerated, he considered the advantage of an unpledged Parliament, and the auspiciousness of a new reign, he could not help avowing, that if in a state of things so highly encouraging, the issue of this night's discussion should prove—as he trusted it would not prove—unfavourable, he should almost be led to despair of final success.

Under these circumstances, it was rather the magnitude of the issue than the difficulty of the argument which filled him with apprehension, and occasioned him to approach the question that night with a trepidation such as he had never before experienced.

What, then, was the question which they were called upon to decide? It was whether they should allow the laws that affected the Roman Catholics to remain in their present state; or should reform them by further mitigations; or should restore them to that standard from which, during the whole of the late reign, Parliament had been employed in gradually bringing them down? It was idle to say that this division of the subject was invidious. It was impossible to look to the laws as they at present stood, without adverting to the origin of those laws, and to the state in which they had stood when in their mature and undiminished vigour, in

order to obtain a complete view of their moral operation and effect. It is most true, as had been stated by his honourable friend the member for Bramber (Mr. Wilberforce,) in his delightful speech a few hours ago, that it was not merely the existing state of those laws, nor the temper in which they were now administered, that was to be considered, when you were about to determine upon their continuance or repeal—the temper in which they were originally enacted—the accusations of which they were now the memorial—the imputations which, if true, warranted, more than any other, the efficacy with which they were formerly administered—must all form part of the consideration.

These laws, be it remembered, had never been stationary; for two centuries had they been growing; for half a century had they been in their decline. At the summit of the hill there was a plain of only twenty years; on one side was an ascent of two hundred years, and, on the other, a descent of about sixty. Was it possible to contemplate singly the point to which sixty years of gradual declension had brought them, without taking into view the point of cruel perfection from which they began to decline, and the degrees by which they had previously been raised to it?

Was it possible to consider the propriety and policy of what remains of the code, without reference to the cause in which it had originated;—to the reasons or the pretexts by which it had been justified;—to the effect, good or evil, to which it had operated while in force;—to the recollections with which it was associated;—to the severities which it had inflicted;—to the resentments which it had engendered;—to the character of the times in which it had grown and flourished;—and to that of those in which it was now proposed to abrogate it altogether?

And, first, as to its origin and causes:—At what period in the history of this empire were the laws against the Roman Catholics justified, otherwise than by the supposed political as well as spiritual connexion of the Roman Catholic with a foreign Power?

The argument was now taken as if that connexion had been nothing else but spiritual; but that was not so—it had always been made ground of charge against the Roman Catholic, that he had also entertained a political predilection, or acknowledged the obligation of political obedience towards a foreign Power. That foreign Power, in the earliest times of the reformation, was the Pope, then formidable in temporal as well as in spiritual preponderance; and arrogating a supremacy over the temporal concerns of princes, which those who admitted, could be but imperfect in their allegiance to their lawful sovereigns. In later times, an exiled family—exiled on account of political as well as religious bigotry—became the rival of the reigning dynasty of England,

and divided, or assumed to divide with it, the allegiance of British subjects. Concurring in the religion of the exiled family, the Roman Catholic subjects of the British Crown were held also to be devoted to their political claims. The Roman Catholic was presumed to be essentially a traitor; but as treason was naturally concealed as much as possible, while religion was more readily avowed or ascertained, the test of the suspected politics was sought in the professed creed. It was necessary to discover the papist who was ready to restore the exiled family to the throne. It was devised to detect him by the oath of transubstantiation. Was his creed his guilt? No. But his creed designated the man, and his guilt consisted in his foreign attachment. Would any man pretend to assert that that attachment existed at present? No, it was gone—the object of his attachment was no more. But he who maintained the doctrine of transubstantiation was still to be made the subject of penal laws! This was to mistake a rule for a reason. It was as if a magistrate, having received information that a murder had been committed by a man who wore spectacles and a wig, and having apprehended an individual distinguished by those appendages, should, upon its being afterwards ascertained that no murder had been committed at all, still refuse to relinquish his man, persisting that the spectacles and wig were conclusive evidence of the murder. The Roman Catholic believing in transubstantiation, had been formerly the object of penal laws, because, attached to an exiled family, that family no longer existing, he was now punished for believing in transubstantiation.

The earliest dawn of the Reformation, to which mankind, and this country above all, were indebted for so many invaluable blessings, would be found, like all great mutations in the affairs of the world, to have been tainted with many acts of violence, injustice, and mutual persecution. Out of that conflict, the Reformed Church of England had happily come triumphant; but was it now to be assumed that criminality attached, not only to all who resisted, but to all who professed the creed of those who had resisted its establishment? No man would contend for so unjust a proposition.

He thanked God that the Church of England had come prosperously out of that arduous struggle; but he could not bring himself to say that those who had adhered to the old religion, as the mild Melancthon had advised his aged mother to adhere, rather than distract herself with controversy, were, on that account, fit objects of punishment. Restrict them if they connected their religion with politics hostile to the peace of their native country; but, happy as was the consummation which had rendered this a Protestant state, he could not consent to judge harshly of those

who had opposed the change, when he considered under what circumstances, and by what instruments it had been brought about. Look to the character of the first royal promoter of Protestanism in England, and to the mixed motives by which he was actuated; and whether you attribute his conduct to policy or to passion, to avarice or to vanity; whether you agree with the historian who describes him as a tyrant, by whose arbitrary laws whoever was for the Pope was hanged, and whoever was against him was burned; or with the poet, who attributes his conversion to a softer passion—

> "When love could teach a monarch to be wise,
> And gospel-light first dawn'd from Boleyn's eyes."

In any case, surely it was not a substantive crime, and worthy an inheritable punishment, to have opposed an innovation, in which, whatever might be the governing motive, it was at least pretty clear that simple piety had no considerable share. The reign of Queen Elizabeth was glorious, both in its foreign and domestic policy; but it was, undoubtedly, not the reign either of civil or religious liberty. In that reign was laid the foundation of the penal code against the Catholics; but laid expressly on the ground of political disaffection, not of religious differences. Then, indeed, were papists excluded from the House of Commons, but they were expressly allowed to continue to sit in the House of Lords. And why? because a popish lord was less a papist than a popish commoner? No—but because of the fidelity—the political fidelity of her peers, the Queen said she had other means of assuring herself. During the reign of James I. the Roman Catholic was stripped of his privileges as a citizen, denuded of his rights as a social man, deprived of the common connexions of country, rendered liable to a *præmunire* if he stepped five miles from his own threshold, and to the penalties of treason, if he so transgressed a second time; but was it necessary to remind the House of Fawkes's plot, as a proof that treason, not faith, was the cause and the object of these terrible enactments? Terrible as those enactments were, it must be allowed that there was some justification for them, while the safety of the state, and the succession to the throne were threatened by the conflict of the hostile religions. But with the reign of James I. that apology seemed to end. In the reigns subsequent to that of James I. was there any thing in the conduct of the Roman Catholics to induce the belief that their religion was hostile to the security of the state? In the reign of Charles I. was it the old religion that overturned the monarchy? Did the Roman Catholics bring that monarch to the block? Was it a papist who struck the fatal blow?

It had been asserted, indeed, in that debate, that it was impossible for a Roman Catholic to enter into a full enjoyment of political rights, without feeling it to be his bounden duty to employ

them in an attempt to overturn the Protestant ecclesiastical establishments of the country, and it had even been said that no harm was intended in imputing this doctrine to the Catholics—that it charged them with nothing which they who made the charge would be ashamed of doing, had it been their fortune to live under an adverse ecclesiastical establishment. Now he thought this was taking an unfair advantage. Any man who chose to throw away his own character, was not master of that of another; and honourable gentlemen were mistaken in thinking that by thus impartially accusing themselves, they acquired the right of inculpating the Catholics. He was, therefore, obliged to vindicate his right honourable friend from his own admission, in order to protect the Catholic from the inference deduced from it. He entirely disbelieved his right honourable friend's self-accusation; he was sure that if the lot of his right honourable friend (Mr. Peel) had been cast in another country, of which the established religion was different from his own—and if he had there been allowed, nevertheless, to take his seat in the senate, and to exhibit himself, as he did at present, to the admiration of all who heard him, he was sure that no suggestion of priestcraft, that no motive of conscience, would ever lead him to attempt the overturn of the establishment of that country which had placed him in so distinguished a situation.

But in what manner did the history of England bear out the theory of his right honourable friend? What, as he had already observed, was the conduct of the Catholics of England, throughout the trying struggle of the reign of Charles I.? A continual tenour of adherence to the Government amidst domestic faction, and civil war, and at the risk of their property and their lives. Had they no temptation to shrink from a faithful discharge of their duty? and yet in what instance had they failed?

He had said that Catholics, though excluded by law from the House of Commons, still retained their seats in the House of Peers. What was their conduct in that House? and how was it requited? In 1641, a bill was brought in to exclude the bishops from sitting in Parliament. In the House of Lords it was lost upon a division, and in the majority were to be found many Catholic peers. Thirty years after, a bill was sent up to the Lords, for the exclusion of Catholic peers from seats in Parliament. It was passed by a great majority; and in that majority were included the Protestant bishops. He meant nothing disparaging to the bishops of that day. Undoubtedly, they thought that they were doing their duty. But he should like to know—supposing the Catholics to have voted for the expulsion of the bishops, as the bishops did for theirs—what would now have been said of the conduct of the Catholics? Would not the House have rung with the triumphant

inference that now, as in 1641, the admission of the Catholics into Parliament, must be the destruction of the Protestant hierarchy? The only inference he would draw was, that as one good turn deserved another, the passing of this bill would afford to the bishops of the present day an opportunity of returning the obligation of 1641.

But some gentlemen had a still more ingenious theory. For two centuries, it was urged, had the Catholics been brooding patiently over their wrongs, and, like the Brutus of history, disguising, under the appearance of insensibility, the deep sense which they entertained of them—they were only waiting for the passing of this bill to wreak the vengeance which had so long been smothered in their breasts. Indeed! and had this and former debates so far exhausted all reasonable objections, and all rational fears, that we were now to be daunted from doing what was right, by the apprehension that the present race of Catholics would throw off a mask worn by successive generations of their ancestors, and revenge themselves in the first delirium of new-gotten freedom for ages of suppressed feeling and hypocritical fidelity? Surely to believe in such a danger, required more than a Roman Catholic credulity.

He had hitherto spoken of the Roman Catholic religion generally, and addressed himself to its operation in England. He now came to speak more particularly of that part of the united kingdom which was more peculiarly interested in the present question —of Ireland.

During the earlier of the reigns of which he had shortly reviewed, the Reformation, which, in England had made such rapid strides, had not only mounted the throne, but almost monopolized the legislature, it had made no progress whatever in Ireland. And why? And whose the fault? No pains had been taken to advance it. On the contrary, to judge from facts, it was the policy of Elizabeth to keep it back. Neglect alone hardly furnished a sufficient solution of such total apathy in one kingdom, contrasted with so stirring and anxious an activity in the advancement of Protestantism in the other. But such was the fact. What wonder then, that the rebellion in the time of Charles I. assumed in Ireland a popish character, when the whole population were papists? What wonder if politics and religion were mixed up in a country where the Reformation never entered at all; and the reformed religion never, but in arms and as a conqueror? Such was its entry, first under Cromwell, and last under King William. The penal code against the Catholics of Ireland, dated from the conquest of that kingdom by William III. The popish Parliament had enacted severe laws against Protestants, the Protestant Parliament had retaliated most severely. No single individual

would have dared to take upon himself the odium attendant on such retaliation. From that Parliament emanated a series of laws, such as had not previously existed in the records of legislation—laws, the framers of which seemed to have taxed their imagination to find out the sore points of human nature to which they might apply them as corrosives—laws which counteracted all the feelings of nature, destroyed all the comforts of families so long as they existed; and exist they did, until the fourteenth year of the reign of George III. all in full force and undiminished vigour. By them the conforming son could seize upon the property of the unconforming father; by them the unprincipled and heartless Protestant wife could array herself in the riches of her betrayed Catholic husband; by them the orphan heretic might be robbed by any anti-papist plunderer of his patrimony; through their operation there was no faith in kindred, no social intercourse of friendship, no security in any of the relations of domestic life. In 1774 came the first relaxation of this accursed system, the first breathing of a mighty thaw upon that accumulated mass of cold and chilling enactments, which till then had congealed and benumbed a nation. What was the first symptom of this genial spirit? It was a symptom sufficiently indicative of the degraded state to which the Catholic had been reduced, and of the difficulty which benevolent repentance found in breaking up the frost which so long had bound him. The first relaxation, that omen of returning spring, enabled the papist, notwithstanding his belief in transubstantiation, to rent—oh, mighty indulgence!—fifty acres of bog! This relaxation was found to succeed so well, the Protestant establishment continued so firm under the shock of it, that Parliament allowed them afterwards to take a lease for sixty years. From that time the system was progressively mitigated until the year 1793, which crowned and consummated the gift of civil liberty, and left only political concession imperfect—imperfect in actual deed—but in principle acknowledged and anticipated.

When, in the year 1793, the elective franchise was conceded to the Catholics of Ireland, that acknowledgment and anticipation which he called upon the House that evening formally to ratify and realize was, in point of fact, irrevocably pronounced. To give the Catholic the elective franchise, was to admit him to political power. To make him an elector, and at the same time render him incapable of being elected—was to attract to your side the lowest orders of the community, at the same time that you repelled from it the highest orders of the gentry. This was not the surest or safest way to bind Ireland to the rest of the empire in ties of affection. What was there to prevent our union from being drawn more closely? Was there any moral—was there any physical obstacle? *Opposuit natura?* No such thing. We had

already bridged the channel. Ireland now sat with us in the representative assembly of the empire; and when she was allowed to come there, why was she not also allowed to bring with her some of her Catholic children? For many years we had been erecting a mound, not to assist or improve, but to thwart nature. We had raised it high above the waters; and it had stood there frowning hostility, and effecting separation. In the course of time, however, chance and design, the necessities of man and the silent workings of nature, had conspired to break down this mighty structure—till there remained of it only a narrow isthmus, standing

——————"Between two kindred seas,
Which, mounting, view'd each other from afar,
And long'd to meet."————

"What then shall be our conduct? Shall we attempt to repair the breaches, and fortify the ruins?—a hopeless and ungracious undertaking—or shall we leave them to moulder away by time and accident?—a sure, but distant and thankless consummation. Or shall we not rather cut away at once the isthmus that remains, allow free course to the current which our artificial impediments have obstructed, and float upon the mingling waves the ark of our common Constitution?"

The right honourable gentleman then proceeded to reply to various detached objections which had been offered in the course of the debate by different speakers. Some gentlemen were afraid that when the final concessions were granted, those persons who had stood by the Constitution when they only enjoyed its benefits partially, would rise up against it, after being admitted to the full participation of its blessings. This was not likely. As yet the Constitution was to them negative and repulsive. Then it would be positive and full of advantage. We had frequently been assailed by the prayers of the Roman Catholics, but we had as often treated them with scorn, professing at the same time to do it for their own good. Indeed, he thought that the Catholics might address us in pretty much the same language as a certain lover had addressed his mistress:—

"When late I attempted your pity to move,
Oh, why were you deaf to my prayers?
Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love,
But why did you kick me down stairs!"

Others apprehended that they would still be discontented because all offices could not be opened to them indiscriminately, not those, for instance, which had, by the nature of their functions, any connexion with ecclesiastical interests. Surely the distinction was plain enough. With the established religion of the country the Roman Catholics would of course have nothing

to do. This must be a first and fundamental principle, both of all that was yielded and all that was retained. None but those who professed the established religion of the state could pretend to the exercise of any functions immediately connected with that religion, or with the ecclesiastical system in which it was embodied. They had already provided liberally for diffusing the benefits of education in Ireland—and God forbid that any sect of Christians should, on account of their faith, be deprived of the means of obtaining knowledge—but God forbid, he would also say at the same time, that the means of education should not, wherever it was possible, be conferred under the auspices of our national church! The provisions of the bill excluded Roman Catholics from the universities, and from the spiritual courts. He could perceive no difficulty, no injustice, in carrying those provisions into effect, and in considering them as conditions of this final adjustment. This exclusion must undoubtedly be a perpetual, indispensable article of the new compact, which, he trusted, they were on the point of ratifying. He relied for the observance of that article on the nature of the thing itself, as well as on the millions of hands and hearts which were ready to defend it in case of an attempt to abrogate or repeal it. Such an apprehension, therefore, could afford no legitimate ground for refusing to share with our fellow-subjects the blessings which we enjoyed. Nor could he join in the opinion that the passing of this bill would divorce the union of the national church and state. He could not think that the Crown would be desecrated and the monarchy rendered unholy, any more than insecure; when every christian creed should be admitted to the franchises of the Constitution, and when thanksgivings for a community of benefits were breathed alike in every diversity of christian prayer.

He next adverted to the fears which had been expressed of a combination of Roman Catholic members of Parliament to carry points favourable to their separate interests and persuasions. First, the number of members that would be returned from Ireland, how infinitely small would it be in comparison with the whole representation? But let them for a moment suppose the case of any considerable number of these much dreaded Catholics possessing seats in that House, what was it that they could combine to accomplish or to repeal? What objects could they have in view? They must necessarily be objects of private or local interest; for with regard to political designs, with regard to all that appertained to the advancement of their faith or spiritual interests, suspicion was alive, and the attempt must be defeated as soon as it was made. Such a combination, if directed to general purposes, must be as notorious as the sun at noon; and must be defeated as soon as known. Others again, dreaded not the opera-

tion of numbers, but the danger to arise from the return of demagogues to Parliament. He should only answer, that in Parliament he wished to see them. He had never known a demagogue who, when elected to a seat in that House, did not, in the course of six months, shrink to his proper dimensions. In the event of a parliamentary reform it would be his wish to see a little nest of boroughs reserved for their separate use, and he should not be alarmed at their introduction, even although they had been qualified in Palace-yard. "Here," he would say, "let the demagogue appear, and let him do his worst."

To return, however, to the main question, he was aware that he had exercised too long the patience of the House: he felt the importance of the subject most deeply: he was convinced that this bill, or (as he did not mean to affirm that it was perfect of its kind,) a bill of this nature was necessary, and was most expedient at the present season. The moment was peculiarly favourable for discussion, and singularly free from any hazard with which the measure might otherwise be attended. We were now in the enjoyment of a peace achieved by the common efforts of both religions, by Catholic as well as Protestant arms, and cemented by Catholic as well as Protestant blood; a peace which, notwithstanding the threatening aspect of affairs in some quarters of Europe, he hoped and believed was destined to be permanent. But it became us, with a view to political contingencies, to fortify ourselves by adopting all those means of strength which were offered to our hands; and never did a more auspicious period occur for such a purpose. How beneficial to extinguish a question that never could be discussed without agitating large classes of the community! How desirable to avoid the inconvenience which must follow the loss of that question at this time—its revival from year to year with increasing and more hopeless agitation! How delightful to convert the murmur of national discontent into the voice of national gratitude! The expression of national gratitude was not always conveyed by the proud column or the triumphal arch; but let this grand effort of legislation be consummated, and he had not the shadow of a doubt, but that the sentiment would be effectually inspired and unequivocally displayed. It was indifferent to him, provided the result was concord, on which side the work of conciliation began. He cared not whether the boon was plucked from Protestant acknowledgment, by the patience, the long suffering, and the supplications of the Catholic; or was tendered in generous confidence, as a voluntary gift. It would, in either case, like "the gentle dew from heaven," bless both the giver and the receiver; resembling those silent operations of nature which pervade and vivify the universe, receiving and repaying mutual benefits, whether they rose in the grateful exhalation, or descended in

the fertilizing shower. To conclude, he conjured the House to adopt a measure, from which he entertained a conviction approaching to prescience—that far from having cause to repent of its result, they would long reap a rich harvest of national strength, and happiness, and renown.—[The right honourable gentleman sat down amidst fervent and general cheering.]

The question being put, "That the bill be now read a second time," the House divided:

Ayes - - - - -	254
Noes - - - - -	243
Majority - -	11

The bill was then read a second time; and at half past three in the morning, the House adjourned.

MARCH 26th, 1821.

Mr. Bankes, in the Committee on the Roman Catholic Disability Removal Bill, moved the insertion of a clause in the bill, excluding Roman Catholics from seats in Parliament.

Mr. Canning said, he agreed with those honourable members who considered this as the most important point of the bill. He agreed that it was that of which, if refused, the refusal would take much from the value of any other concessions, and of which, if conceded, the concession would enhance greatly their importance. He agreed that it was a point, the granting of which would form the key-stone of that arch which they were erecting, and complete that incorporation of interests which was the object of those who took part in promoting this bill. He agreed, at the same time, that they who, with him, contended for the admission of Roman Catholics into Parliament, were not entitled, from any previous vote to which the House had come in the course of the present discussions, to assume this point as conceded, or to preclude a renewed examination of it in the present stage. Nothing had been conceded, in fact or in argument, that could prevent members from deciding upon the point before them, according to its merits. Differing as he did from the right honourable gentleman who had last addressed the committee, he begged to guard against any misapprehension of what he should say, by offering at the outset the tribute of his acknowledgment for the general candour and liberality with which he (the Speaker) had stated his opinion, an opinion, it was unnecessary to say, formed most conscientiously, and not urged by the right honourable gentleman beyond the bounds of fair argument and discretion. Whatever the result might be, he (the Speaker) would have the satisfaction of feeling, that he had contributed his full share to the elucidation of the ques-

tion, and to the good temper which had happily pervaded the whole discussion.

He would now proceed, first, to state what he might conceive to be the claims (the extent to which he understood the term "claims," he would afterwards explain, in order to guard against misconstruction,) the claims of the Roman Catholics to admission into Parliament; and secondly, he would inquire what dangers, real or imaginary, might obstruct the concession of those claims. Now as to the term "claims," he was ready to avow his conviction, that neither an individual nor a body of men, could be properly said to have any natural claims belonging to them as men, to any political franchise or employment. The claims of men in a civilized society were subject, not only to limitation from the circumstances of the times, but to lasting control from the necessity of the state. The exclusion of the Roman Catholics from Parliament was just, if it was necessary; and the point now under discussion was whether such a necessity existed or not. Without reverting, however, to any wild theory of natural right, and under the qualification which he had already explained, he had no hesitation in affirming, that in every civilized society, and in every well constituted state, wealth, ability, knowledge, station, gave a claim to office; and that eligibility to office had always been an object of ambition with the most cultivated minds. In this country, for ages past—and he hoped for ages to come—the highest object had been, was, and would be, to obtain a seat in the assembly which governs the counsels of the nation. To be excluded by positive enactment from the pursuit of this object of ambition, he would not say was an exclusion which no circumstances could warrant, and no expediency justify; but it was an exclusion so severe as to be justified only by circumstances which could not be mistaken, and an expediency not to be avoided or controlled. The burden of proof rested with those who contended for the exclusion. Exclusion was the exception. The general rule was the other way. Undoubtedly, if we looked back to the times preceding the Reformation, we should find that no class of society was then precluded from the political service of the state. The distinction grew up with the Reformation, a transaction affecting the whole of Europe, and the policy external and internal of every state composing the European commonwealth; which changed the line of demarcation between nations, and separated each people among themselves. A Protestant and a Catholic interest grew up, which divided and classed the nations of Europe; and within each each nation took place a correspondent division and classification; which had the double effect of arraying different parts of the same community against each other, and creating in each part respectively, a sympathy with foreign states. Simi-

larity of creed was brought into competition with identity of country; and in many instances, and on many occasions, it could not be denied, the religious sentiment was too strong for the patriotic. Grant, then, as he might safely do, for argument's sake, that, during the existence of this struggle, in its full force, it might not be safe to admit to political power the professors of any other than the predominant national religion, and that such a state of things justified exclusion; still, if that state of things no longer existed, if the struggle between patriotism and religious sympathy was at an end, if in all the nations of Europe, whatever might be the form of their government or the modification of their faith, that line of demarcation was effaced (with the exception, he would admit, of Spain and Portugal, where the Reformation never made its way, and where, therefore, the materials for conflict and subsequent reconcilement had not been created;) and if we still saw that line in full force among ourselves, if we found the only trace of that demarcation in this country, a country blessed with a greater portion of regulated liberty than any other—a country in which every individual, born in whatever station, could rise to the highest honours under the Crown by the exercise of talent, industry and virtue; must not we be at a loss to reconcile this inconsistency; and ought we not to look anxiously to the time when it would be entirely removed?

He, therefore, did not contend—his argument did not require that he should contend—that at the period immediately subsequent to the Reformation those who continued attached to the church and court of Rome, after the bulk of the population of England, as well as its Crown and Parliament, had embraced the tenets of the Reformation, and abjured all temporal as well as spiritual allegiance to the Pope, might not be justifiably excluded from political power. He troubled not himself with any reasoning upon this point; but he did contend for the fact, that whatever disqualification was then imposed on the Roman Catholics by the governing power, was justified on the ground of danger from foreign interference, foreign connexion, and foreign allegiance; and that, without one exception, that danger was stated as constituting the sole necessity for such disqualification. But where was *now* the danger of foreign interference, foreign connexion, or foreign allegiance, which justified the maintenance of that distinction in this country which other countries had abolished? He called upon the House, therefore, to reform so unjust an anomaly, if it could with safety be reformed. By the acts which excluded Roman Catholics from Parliament, foreign allegiance was distinctly stated as the cause of the exclusion. It was stated in the statute of Elizabeth the more distinctly, from the partiality of its operation. The Roman Catholic commoners

were excluded by it from seats in the House of Commons; but the right of the Roman Catholic peers to sit in the House of Peers was not taken away. And why? because the Roman Catholic peers were less Catholic than the commons?—because the Commons continued to hold doctrines which the lords had abjured? No such thing. In this respect there was no difference between them. The reason was avowed to be this: the Queen having other means of ascertaining the fidelity of the peers, it was therefore not necessary to exclude them. It was not therefore doctrine or dogma; it was not transubstantiation, but political attachment, which formed the ground of admission or exclusion. The individual peers being under the Queen's immediate eyes, she could satisfy herself of their political allegiance and attachment; but the multitude of the commons precluding any such personal security, it was thought necessary to exclude them from admission to Parliament. So much for the principle of the law. And now what was the extent of its operation? A period of about 260 years had elapsed since the statute of Elizabeth was passed. For not much less than one-half of that period commoners alone were excluded from Parliament—peers continuing to sit there. During that time, therefore, at least, there was no change in the policy of the exclusion. It rested on the grounds on which it was originally enacted—dread of foreign allegiance, not danger of popish faith. In fact, the religious reason for the exclusion, dated only from the act of Charles II.—an act passed in a moment of delirious fear and fury—the sure advisers of indiscriminate violence, and comprehensive and unsparing proscription. Then, for the first time, the creed of the Roman Catholic was made the test of his political loyalty. The belief in transubstantiation was taken as equivalent to disaffection, or rather as an unfailing indication of it; and, tried by this test, the hitherto unsuspected Roman Catholic peer could not but be involved in the general disqualification of his Roman Catholic fellow-subjects. Now, he must be allowed to ask, why was the danger so much greater at the present moment than it was in the 5th of Queen Elizabeth—than it was from that time to the 30th of Charles II.? For the present, he left the commoners out of view; but, as we were to go so much by the wisdom of our ancestors, why might he not put our older ancestors against our more recent ones—the days of good Queen Bess against those of the second of the Stuarts, and humbly inquire, upon what imaginable ground, if the peers of Elizabeth's time, who professed the Roman Catholic religion, should have been suffered to mix in affairs of state, it was unsafe to admit the peers at the present day? Upon what strange apprehension or possibility were Catholic peers not only excluded, but deprived of their birthright? For, be it remembered, they continued

peers of England; they enjoyed their titles of precedency; but they must not take their seats in Parliament. They had been summoned to attend on a late trial, and were obliged to pay the postage of letters inviting them; but they were not allowed to come. It was safe that they should be summoned; but it was not safe to remove the objections to their complying, to their exemption from postage, and admission to take their places. Not a word had been said in justification of this strange inconsistency and injustice. The peers' right to sit in the peers' house, in fact, was only suspended. Was it possible to conceive this suspension necessary? Were the Howards and the Talbots so degenerate from the character of their ancestors that the Constitution would not be safe if they were admitted to the seats which they claimed under that Constitution? So much as to the peers, whose case he verily and in all sincerity felt to be quite irresistible.

Now, as to the lions who were roaring in our own lobby, who, if we once admitted them, would turn us out of doors. He could not reason with antipathies. Some persons had such an antipathy to cats, that they were sensible of the entrance of one into a room before they saw where it was perched. He (Mr. Canning) never felt annoyed at sitting, as he often had done in that House, next to a dissenter. He really could feel no apprehension of that sensitive kind. He would grant, for the argument, that one hundred Catholic members might be returned, partly from Ireland and partly from England; he would grant that they would combine; he would grant that they would combine for overturning the ecclesiastical establishment: but, granting all this, he asked how they were to go about it? It must be—1, by force of reasoning; 2, by force of numbers; or, 3, by force alone. Was it that the eloquence of the one hundred members would succeed in persuading gentlemen attached to the Protestant establishment to join them in destroying it, in order to make way for the magnificent edifice of mitred popery? Could any one believe that the members who might, in consequence of this bill, be admitted to seats in Parliament, would move such a project? or could any one suppose for a moment that the slightest motion which had such an end in view, would not be resisted?

An honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. Wetherall) had exemplified what the opponents of the Catholics understood by force of reasoning in a singular manner, when he said, the other night, with respect to Archdeacon Paley's arguments on the subject of the Catholics, that if we were called upon to refute the archdeacon, he would throw his book into the fire. The honourable and learned gentleman was, in this mode of settling a dispute, only imitating, and imperfectly, the first great disputant of the reformed religion, Henry VIII.; who challenged a poor

schoolmaster to debate some article of faith with him, on this condition, that if he, the schoolmaster, was worsted in the argument, he should be burnt as a heretic. It was unnecessary to add, that victory declared for the king; and the poor schoolmaster was accordingly thrown—where the honourable and learned gentleman proposed only to throw the archdeacon's book,—into the fire. Against such a form of syllogism, he would not answer for it that the honourable and learned gentleman himself, with all his protestantism, would be proof. But happily, it was a form which could only be applied by those who possessed a superiority of force of another kind, from which he trusted, in this case, there was no apprehension to be entertained. As to superiority of numerical force in the legislature, it was really visionary to apprehend it. Look at the distribution of property throughout the whole United Kingdom; and whence were the overpowering numbers of Catholic representatives to come? As to physical force, what tendency had this measure to alter its proportions? And was the rejection of the present measure the best means of calming any ebullition of that kind? Was it the safest remedy to say to the Catholic, that you shut your doors upon him for ever? It would be idle to suppose that any scheme of representation could ever be so arranged, as that the sentiments of every individual in the country should be directly represented. Few persons had expressed their opinions to that effect, more frequently or more decidedly than himself. But still, he must admit, there was a difference between that general or virtual representation which he contended ought to bound the wishes, as it satisfied the wants and protected the interests, of all classes of the community, and an absolute exclusion of any one class from the capacity of representing. He would ask whether it was not carrying the doctrine of virtual representation a little too far, to say that the Catholics were virtually represented, when the first oath to be taken by every member of the House of Commons, was one of abhorrence of their religion, as incompatible with the safety of the state? The way then to avert the danger of external force (granting for argument's sake, what he denied, that any such danger existed) was, to afford vent to the feelings of the Catholic within the walls of Parliament; to give him the capacity to represent, as well as that of being represented; and thus to cure, with respect to Ireland, where the elective franchise has already been extended to the Catholic, an anomaly in legislation, which cannot, in the nature of things, be suffered long to endure.

But not the elective franchise only—a privilege of the utmost civil importance—but the army and the navy, from their lowest to their highest ranks, had been now opened to the Catholics: a concession after which it was difficult to say whether it was more

impolitic or unjust to continue the exclusion from civil power,—to exclude from seats in Parliament. An honourable and learned gentleman had been mistaken, when, arguing on this subject on a former night, he had spoken of this concession as one growing out of former discussions in Parliament. In truth, it had happened, rather than been contrived or foreseen. It had come, as many blessings do come upon mankind, in spite of argument and decision. The dangers of admitting the Catholics to commissions in the army and navy had been argued as strenuously in the last debates on this question, a few years ago, as ever before; but in the mean time, the thing had done itself, without interference or observation. The exclusion of the Catholics from the army and navy had rested upon certain oaths, directed by certain statutes to be administered to all officers in either force on receiving their commissions. By a lapse, of which no one could trace the date, these oaths, which had been always rigidly enforced in the navy, had fallen into disuetude in the army. Upon this discrepancy in the practice between the two services being quite accidentally discovered, it became a question whether the army should be recalled to the strictness observed in the navy, or the navy should be put on the footing of the army. The latter course was adopted, and thus was the service in both instances thrown equally open to Catholic and Protestant ambition. Such being now the situation of Catholics in this respect, he would beg the committee to consider the grievance which it must be to a Roman Catholic, descended of one of the great families of England, who, following the brave example of his ancestors, had merited the thanks of his country; what a grievance must it be to him, that, after having earned the reward, he should be deprived of it on account of his religion. He would suppose a Roman Catholic officer to have commanded under Nelson at Trafalgar, or under Wellington at Waterloo; his Protestant leaders and companions are ennobled, and take their seats in the House of Peers, but the Catholic, even though that Catholic were the first in his rank in the kingdom—even though already in the rank of the peerage—must be turned back from the door of that House, into which, if a Protestant, his valour and his services would have opened the way. Now this was a state of things which could not last. It was a monstrous inconsistency in our system, and he conceived that we could not have a better time to remove it than the present. As we had gone so far already in the work of conciliation, sooner or later this too must be done.

His right honourable friend (the Speaker) had supported the present clause for the exclusion of the Roman Catholics from seats in Parliament, with the impression that, as the adoption of a similar clause had been fatal to a similar bill on a former occasion, it

might prove so at the present moment; but he hoped, whatever might be the result of this motion—however the committee might decide—that it would not stop the progress of the bill. He trusted that, in whatever shape the bill might come from the committee, unless, indeed, it were very materially altered, it would pass the House.

It was said in the debate the other evening, that if Catholics were admitted to seats in Parliament, they might be admitted as governors of colonies. Now, he should like to know what act it was which could prevent the Crown from the appointment of Catholics to the colonies at the present moment. He was not aware of any. The 25th of Charles II. excluded them expressly and specifically from being governors of Guernsey or Jersey; but if that was the act relied upon, the very specification of these places left other commands open. Upon this point, however, he was willing to listen to any suggestion. He thought it of small importance, compared with the general scope and provisions of the bill.

With respect to the interference of Roman Catholics in ecclesiastical preferments, this bill expressly and anxiously provided against it. The office of Lord Chancellor of England was excepted, because he had ecclesiastical preferments to bestow; as was, for the same reason, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; and he had no objection to extend the like exception to all places which had ecclesiastical patronage. But it was objected, that a commission for the filling up of ecclesiastical appointments would be a a clumsy remedy,—that the nomination to church preferments rested with the prime minister, and that if he were deprived of it, it would be taking the first feather from his wing.

Now, in the first place, it was by no means true that the dispensation of church patronage was necessarily vested in any particular office; or that any particular office necessarily constituted what, in common parlance, though not in the language of the Constitution, is called a prime minister. Lord Chatham was prime minister when lord privy seal; and the patronage of the church might, without any violation of form or usage, be delegated to any minister to whom the Crown pleased to assign it. Nor was the expedient of a commission to nominate to church preferments so novel and unprecedented a contrivance as gentlemen seemed willing to believe. There was a precedent for such a commission, and in good times, too, in a reign, and by the act of a sovereign whom those who took this objection were particularly bound to reverence, whose every act but this they were never weary of quoting in these debates—he meant King William. That sovereign, in the year 1695 (he believed, but the fact was to be found in all the histories of the time) appointed a commission, consist-

ing of an archbishop and four bishops, who had authority to prefer to all ecclesiastical benefices and dignities, and the reasons given for it was that they were more versed in those apppointments than the Crown. A commission, therefore, for the same object, at present, could not be considered as a new, nor, after such authority had been produced for it, could it again be called a clumsy contrivance.

Another objection, which he heard with some surprise, was, that Protestants would have a conscientious scruple about taking the oath which recognized the existence of Catholic bishops. Hitherto, it was said, no such order was known to exist. This he considered to be no more than a quibble. We admitted the ordination of a Roman Catholic priest to be valid; and it was difficult to admit that, without acknowledging the existence of a Roman Catholic bishop. Nay, more, if a Roman Catholic priest should become a convert to the Church of England, and should be presented to a living in the Protestant Church, re-ordination was not considered necessary; so that we not only admitted the ordination, but we took the man so ordained into the bosom of the church. And how had that ordination been obtained but at the hands of a popish bishop? But the statutes went farther. By the 11th and 12th William III., chap. 4, it was enacted, "that whereas popish bishops resorted to this country in greater numbers than formerly" (a pretty clear admission of their existence,) "a reward of £100 would be given to any person informing of the residence of such popish bishop, such bishop incurring the pain of perpetual imprisonment." This surely applied to a description of persons whose existence and character were admitted. It was true that the popish bishop would not fetch his £100 now; for, by the 18th George III., this part of the act of William was repealed. We now, therefore, not only acknowledged the existence of popish bishops amongst us, but allowed them to be here at full liberty. Under these circumstances, he thought that the Protestant must have a very tender conscience, indeed, who would not take an oath which implied the existence of Roman Catholic bishops.

The right honourable gentleman then adverted to the intercourse between this country and the see of Rome, and asked whether any doubt existed as to that intercourse being carried on at the present moment, to as great an extent as if there never had been any interdiction at all? By the 13th of Elizabeth it was made treason to receive any bull, rescript, or indulgence, from the see of Rome, in this country. But did a month or a week elapse in which such things were not received at present? If it was right to prohibit them, in the name of God, let it be done effectually; but if the intercourse were to be permitted, what ground of objection could there be for subjecting it to regulation? Why should

it not be so subjected in this, as it was in all other countries? They were told, indeed, that certain Roman Catholic priests said that they would not agree to the measure. He would ask, if any other portion of His Majesty's subjects would thus presume to dictate to the Parliament? He knew of no sanctity which hedged in a popish priest, by which he should be authorized to interpose his private judgment, or his private conscience, between the benevolence of the legislature and the wishes of his fellow subjects. The Roman Catholic peers had expressed their willingness to take the oath prescribed (three of them, he understood, were prevented by absence from signing the petition,) and he would confidently act upon their opinion. The priest might clamour if he pleased; he might roar, like the tyrant of old, in one of his own bulls; but what was the loss of his influence and patronage, compared with the mighty and unspeakable benefit to be derived from bringing under one common bond of union the whole mass of Catholic and Protestant population? He hoped the House would not be deterred by such attempts, from giving to the Roman Catholic peers of this country their birthright, and admitting the fair claims of the other portion of the Catholic community.

It was his anxious wish to see this great question happily set at rest; the great body of the Roman Catholic clergy and laity were ready to join in the measures necessary for the contentment and satisfaction of Protestant scruples. He admitted that the change was an important one; but it would be a change of progression, not of revulsion: it had for its object the reconcilement of both parties, and in their union the better security of the interests of both. The present period was peculiarly favourable. After a season of storms there was one gleam of sunshine: let the House take advantage of it; and let them not counteract what ought to be its effect, by casting millions back into gloom and despair.

The committee divided—

For Mr. Bankes's amendment - - -	211
Against it - - - - - - - -	223
Majority	12

APRIL 2d, 1821.

Mr. Canning, in the course of the debate on the third reading of the Roman Catholic Disability Removal Bill spoke to the following effect:—

Mr. Canning observed, that his right honourable friend (Mr. Peel) who had taken so active a part against the bill, complained, that those who took the same side as himself laboured under great disadvantages, seeing that they were unfairly called upon

to become the champions of those laws which had existed against the Catholics from the Reformation to the present time. But he (Mr. C.) felt, on the other hand, that those who took that part in favour of the bill, which, from conviction, he had found himself compelled to take, were placed in a situation equally difficult; for it was assumed, that every argument which they brought forward was an attempt to disturb the peace which had hitherto prevailed, and to launch out into an untried sea of speculation. He claimed, then, for the advocates of the bill, that the system which they wished to introduce should be compared, not with an uniform and recognized system, but with admitted anomalies, with the state of things which had produced the recent innovations. His right honourable friend deprecated a recurrence to that period when the laws against the Catholics had been in their full force. He would not resist the appeal, because he felt unwilling at the close of a debate which had been marked by such unexampled moderation, to create any new source of contention, or to send forth the bill to the country as a firebrand instead of an extinguisher of discord. If, like his right honourable friend, he could believe that religious animosities would be more likely to be healed, and the excluded Catholic more likely to be contented, if this bill should not pass, he should be satisfied not to press the House to a completion of the present measure; forasmuch as the great object which he had at heart in the support which it was in his limited power to give to it, would then be accomplished. Nay, if the question were as to a system of which the reason was well matured, or the antiquity long established—as to laws which had not been continually changed, and as to circumstances which had not gradually varied—if it had been proposed to destroy that which was tolerable, in favour of a fancied amelioration, he admitted that in such case a heavy burthen of proof would indeed be thrown upon the supporters of the bill. But the measure proposed was to be compared only with imaginary content and fictitious tranquillity; it was another change in laws which had been continually changing; it was not the first of a series, but a crowning act of mercy to complete the improvements of half a century.

The right honourable gentleman then examined the view which Mr. Peel had taken of the different eras of legislation, respecting the Catholics; he denied that even at the time of the Revolution the dangers were such as warranted the system pursued towards the Catholics; but surely the dangers which then did exist, now existed no longer. Religion had then mingled in the political concerns of Europe, and directed the course of wars, and changed the dynasties of kingdoms. Now, struggles of a quite different nature had begun, which were destined, perhaps, to produce effects as stupendous as the wars which followed the Reformation.

The right honourable gentleman then went on to argue, that it was to be gathered from the murmurs of the Roman Catholic clergy, that at least this bill might be considered a boon to the laity; that its provisions were not of that character which some of its enemies represented; and that the Catholic clergy did not look upon the bill as causing so much evil to the established Protestant Church of Ireland, as the House was called upon to apprehend from it. Depend upon it, if the character of the bill was what its adversaries represented it, and if the Roman Catholic clergy were also as ardent for the prosperity of their own church, and as wise in their generation, as they were argued by the same authority, and admitted by him, to be—any little discontent which they might have felt from the fear of a diminution of their influence over their flocks, would have been more than counterbalanced by the contemplation of the advantage to be derived from the operation of the bill, to the exaltation of the popish, at the expense of the Protestant establishment and hierarchy. The murmurs of the more violent Roman Catholic prelates were, therefore, to him (Mr. Canning) one conclusive indication of the probable tendency of the bill to confirm and consolidate the Protestant Church in Ireland.

He next touched upon the number of Catholic members that were likely to be introduced by it into Parliament, contending, in contradiction to the opponents of the measure, that instead of seventy from Ireland, and thirty from England, the utmost that would probably be returned would be a dozen in the whole. Admitting, however, as he had, in a former debate, for argument sake, that more might obtain entrance—allowing even that the vision of the hundred knights was to be realized—still he asked in what way would they be able to set about the destruction of the Constitution? The other side, who talked so much of danger, was bound to show from whence it would proceed, and how it would operate—in what way the Catholic representatives would succeed in corrupting the rest of the 568 members, or at least the whole of the minorities on the late divisions on this subject, and the greater part of the supporting majorities.

He contended that the measure was eminently calculated to conciliate the Irish, and to cement the Union; the recentness of which was to be considered as an advantage instead of an objection, inasmuch as expectations indulged since that event were now to be realized; promises and pledges were to be fulfilled before hope should have been so delayed as to make sick the heart. In the Union, then, he found one of the strongest reasons for enacting the bill. For what was the state of Ireland in its relation to this country? Of fifteen millions of subjects, five were separated from the rest, divided from the general body by the channel.

"How," said the honourable gentleman, "are we to deal with them?" Yes, that is the question on which depended all. To that consideration we must come at last, whether this bill were thrown out here or elsewhere. In that separated island were to be found four millions of Roman Catholics; and one million of Protestants, placed as garrisons in an enemy's territory; of which last million, one-half were the dreaded dissenters, from whom so much danger had been feared. Should we, then, incorporate the hearts and feelings of four millions of Catholics, in the same manner as we had incorporated their laws, their commerce, and their institutions? Should we unite them to Great Britain firmly and effectually? or, by a mistaken policy, coerce them in proportion to our danger? After half a century of concessions, should we now stop short; and referring to the wisdom of our ancestors in the period preceding those concessions, should we, after having again conquered the Irish, again degrade them into helots, in order that we might fear nothing, unless a servile war? No man had openly avowed that policy. The system of laws formerly devised to bring to completion that odious project, and the effects produced by it, no human being was willing to revive. That time was past, the question was not now, as in the beginning of the reign of George III., between the maintenance of that system, and a beginning of a milder policy; but between the memory of that system, and the completion of the benevolent legislation of the reign of George III., by raising those who were its victims to the level of ourselves.

The right honourable gentleman* who had introduced this bill, with an eloquent precision that would not have disgraced Tacitus, pointed out in his speech, as in a funeral procession, the statues of those great orators who had distinguished themselves on this question. Among the names he (Mr. Canning) had missed one,† now no more, never second in the zeal of his resistance, but whose place had this evening, for the first time, been amply supplied by an honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. Ellis, of Dublin) from the same country; indeed, so amply and efficiently, so much in the spirit and manner of the great original, that little was left to be desired, as applied to that honourable substitute, he might, perhaps, be allowed to parody two well known lines:

> "The tone, the topics opening to my view,
> Methinks I see my Duigenan here anew!"

* Mr. Plunkett.

† Doctor Duigenan, who, though a most violent opponent of the claims of the Catholics, was married to a Catholic lady, had a Catholic chaplain constantly resident in his family, and is supposed to have died a member of that religious persuasion.

He must observe, however, that in one part of his argument, in one only, that honourable and learned gentleman had been somewhat unfair. He had objected to the bill as a fault, that it contained a clause, excluding Roman Catholics from several parochial offices; a petty species of legislation in the honourable and learned gentleman's view, and altogether unworthy of so great a subject. Now, surely, the honourable gentleman who had watched the progress of the bill with so much solicitude, must know that this fault, if it be one, was not the fault of the framers of the bill; that this merit, if merit it were, was wholly attributable to the zeal of his right honourable friend, the honourable and learned gentleman's leader in these combats (Mr. Peel;) who foreseeing with admirable prescience that danger to all the affairs of the parish, to which the honourable and learned gentleman appeared most unaccountably insensible, had provided by this special clause for their protection. His right honourable friend, (Mr. Peel) would, he was sure, give him (Mr. Canning) due credit for his forbearance in not having before taken any notice of this mighty effort of legislation. It was very, very tempting; but he had purposely forborne; though certainly nothing since the famous memoirs of P. P., clerk of the parish, had exhibited so fine a specimen of parochial politics. But to have this clause fathered upon the framers of this bill, and by one of its own near relations, was more than flesh and blood could bear. His right honourable friend must forgive him, if, upon such a provocation, he could not abstain from swearing it to its true parent.

It was, however, a consolatory circumstance to see how his right honourable friend's arguments against the measure before the House had dwindled. Formerly, nothing was heard of, in conjunction with this measure, but a tottering throne, a trembling crown, a shaking sceptre; but now the chief danger was described as threatening parish officers; formerly the apalling question was, how, after such a bill had passed, should we be able to support the Church Establishment? now, it is only how shall we repair the parish church? Comparative trifles now occupied one who before had dealt only with the most magnificent declarations.

> ——— "Nunc reges, atque tetrarchas,
> Omnia magna loquens;—Nunc—
> *Vestries* atque *Churchwardens!*"

He trusted that a grateful posterity would remember, with becoming honour, the legislators who had wisely placed such guards, not round the church, but round its overseers. Let not the House, however, be impeded by the smaller obstacles, any more than by those which are now removed: let it not, in its full march to the liberation of five millions of fellow subjects, be stopped at the top

of the hill, and turned back by his right honourable friend and his churchwarden.

Referring now to some general considerations, the right honourable gentleman expressed his decided opinion that the provision for the Catholic clergy ought to be made a matter of subsequent consideration. He desired the House to contemplate the Catholics in their real character, maintaining that *a priori*, a Church of England man would be more ready to admit to equal privileges one who disagreed merely on such a speculative matter as the doctrine of transubstantiation, than one who denied the great fundamental doctrines of the Trinity, the atonement, and the divinity of the Saviour. Yet every day dissenters were admitted to take the oath at the table, and to share the honours and labours of legislation; there were more points of agreement between the Church of England man and the Catholic, than between the Church of England man and many of the dissenters. If the House went back to times of dangers and of terrors, was there more dread to be apprehended of the renewal of the fires of Smithfield, as in the reign of Mary, than was to be feared of a repetition of the acts of the Covenanters in the reign of Charles I.? The character of the modern Roman Catholics was not to be sought from the preambles of the acts of Elizabeth, James I., or Charles II., but from the preambles of the acts which had passed both in the English and Irish Parliaments since 1778. Let not the House, then, dwell only on points of difference, without adverting also to those of resemblance: let it recollect that Catholics and Protestants were fellow Christians; that they were fellow subjects; that their blood was mingled in marriages; that it had often been mingled in the field; that the Catholic had gone before the Protestant in resistance to foreign dominion; that together they had framed and supported the Constitution, and together they ought to enjoy it. The time was now come when public feeling was decidedly in favour of the concession, provided it were temperately carried, and provided those whom it was intended to relieve, did not dash the cup from their lips. For the temper of Parliament he could answer; but for the temper of the Catholic clergy he could not be a guarantee. If, however, they had a spark of patriotism, or if they felt that love for their flocks which they pretended, they would not impede the progress of legislation by hopeless and interminable agitation! By conjuring the House to pass this bill, regardless of those angry squabbles without doors and petty difficulties within, which must encompass every measure of such magnitude, he conjured them not to stop short from any feelings of false pride—not to incur the responsibility of having taught a people to seek for general peace at their hands, and of then forcing them to retire back upon themselves. Let us

rather, in the language of both liturgies, exclaim *sursum corda!* Let us raise our hearts to the Dispenser of all Good, and with that elevation of soul, let us proceed in that great work which we have begun, and which, sooner or later, will find its own way to the final consummation, so devoutly to be wished by all good men. The conclusion of the right honourable gentleman's speech was loudly and ardently cheered.

The House divided:—

Ayes - - - - - - -	216
Noes - - - - - - -	197
Majority for the third reading of the bill	19

The bill was then read a third time and passed.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

APRIL 25th, 1822.

Lord J. Russell moved "That the present state of the representation of the people in Parliament requires the most serious consideration of the House."

Several members rose at the same time with Mr. Canning, but the call for Mr. Canning was so loud and prevalent that they gave way.

Mr. Canning.—In obeying the call which the House has done me the honour to make upon me, I should be unwilling to occupy their attention for any length of time, upon a subject with respect to which my opinions are sufficiently notorious, were it not for the pointed manner in which I have been alluded to by the noble lord (Lord Folkstone,) who has lately addressed them. That noble lord has challenged me either to support my old opinions by new arguments, or to abandon them. He describes himself as having been converted by my former arguments against Parliamentary Reform, to an opinion in favour of it; and in his own conversion to a creed which he had before rejected, he fancies himself entitled to carry me with him, and to make me a proselyte against myself. Those arguments of mine which have produced this unfortunate and unforeseen effect upon the noble lord's understanding, have been long before the public: and I have no disposition to complain that the noble lord has referred to them as pointedly and particularly as if they had been uttered in the debate of this night. It was natural too, perhaps, that the noble lord, with the ardour of a convert, should flatter himself that his new-born zeal would extend to all around him: but I must beg leave to say, that the noble lord has carried his expectations a little too far, when he desires me to read my own speeches backwards; and avow myself, if not a confirmed democrat, at least a friend to moderate reform. With the permission of the House, I will state, in as few words as possible, the grounds on which I continue to hold the same opinions which I have heretofore professed; and to draw from them the same conclusion.

Never, Sir, could those opinions be advanced under more favourable auspices—never could a conviction of their truth and justness be expressed with better assurance of a favourable reception than on the present occasion; when we have just been informed by the noble marquis (Marquis of Tavistock,) in presenting a petition for Parliamentary Reform, that the whole body of the nobility, of the gentry, of the clergy, of the magistracy, of the leading and opulent commercial classes—in short, that the

reat mass of the property and intelligence of the country, is arrayed against that question. To this singular and valuable admission of the noble marquis (singular as to the opportunity chosen for declaring it, and the more valuable for that singularity) have been added others, not less striking, on the part of the noble proposer of the motion. The noble lord (Lord John Russell,) while contending for a change which he declares to be necessary for the salvation of the state, but which he admits to be a change serious and extensive in its nature, has acknowledged that under the existing system, the country has grown in power, in wealth, in knowledge, and in general prosperity. He has detailed, accurately and laboriously, the particulars of this gradual and sensible improvement; and he has further acknowledged, that in proportion to the progress of that improvement, a silent moral change has been operated upon the conduct of this House—which is now, he allows, greatly more susceptible of the influence of popular feeling and of the impressions of public opinion, than it was a century ago. Nay, he has gone farther still. He has—in anticipation of an argument which I perhaps might have used, if the noble lord had not suggested it, but which I am glad to take at his hands—expressed a doubt, or at least has shown it to be very doubtful, whether a more implicit obsequiousness to popular opinion on the part of the House of Commons, would produce unqualified good: avowing his own belief that if the composition of the House had been altered at the Revolution, the purposes of the Revolution would not have been accomplished—the House of Hanover would never have been seated upon the throne. The composition of the House of Commons is now precisely what it was at the time of the Revolution. Whatever change there may be in its temper, is, by the noble lord's acknowledgment, towards a more ready obedience to the public opinion. But if the House of Commons had at the time of the Revolution been implicitly obedient to the people; in other words, if the House had been then entirely composed of members popularly elected—that great event, to which I am as willing as the noble lord to attribute the establishment of our liberties, would, according to the noble lord's declared belief, have been in all probability defeated.

Surely these admissions of the noble lord are in no small degree at variance with his motion. Surely such admissions, if not ample enough of themselves to overbalance the direct arguments which the noble lord has, in the subsequent part of his speech, brought forward in the support of that motion, do at least relieve me from much of the difficulty and odium which might otherwise have belonged to an opposition to Parliamentary Reform. If I contend in behalf of the constitution of the House of Com-

mons, such as it is, I contend at least for no untried, no discredited, no confessedly pernicious establishment. I contend for a House of Commons, the spirit of which, whatever be its frame, has, without any forcible alteration, gradually, but faithfully, accommodated itself to the progressive spirit of the country; and in the frame of which, if an alteration such as the noble lord now proposes, had been made a hundred and thirty years ago, the House of Commons of that day would, by his own confession, have been disabled from accomplishing the glorious Revolution, and securing the fruits of it to their posterity.

Thus fortified, I have the less difficulty in meeting the noble lord's motion in front—in giving at once a plain and direct negative to the general resolution, which is the basis of his whole plan. I do not acknowledge the existence of the necessity, which by that resolution is declared to exist, for taking into consideration, with a view to alteration and amendment, the present state of the representation of the people in the House of Commons. Knowing as I do, that what is in the contemplation of many persons who are calling for reform, could not be adopted; and not knowing what may be the ideas and designs of others; feeling an equal repugnance, both from what I know and what I do not know upon this subject, to a doubtful and equivocal proposition, which would have the effect of binding this House to enter into the consideration of an endless succession of schemes for purposes altogether indefinite; I object in the very outset to the noble lord's general resolution, independently of any objection which I may feel to his particular plan.

Not, however, that the plan itself is not abundantly fertile of objections. So far as I understand it, that plan is little more than to make an addition of one hundred members to this House, to be returned by the counties and larger towns; and to open the way for this augmentation, by depriving each of the smaller boroughs of one half of the elective franchise which they now enjoy. This plan the noble lord has introduced and recommended with an enumeration of names whose authority he assumes to be in favour of it. Amongst those names is that of Mr. Pitt. But the House must surely be aware that the plan brought forward by Mr. Pitt differed widely, not only in detail, but in principle, from that propounded on this occasion by the noble lord. True it is that the object of Mr. Pitt's plan was, like that of the noble lord's, to add one hundred members to this House: but this object was to be attained without the forcible abolition of any existing right of election. Mr. Pitt proposed to establish a fund of £1,000,000 to be applied to the *purchase* of franchises from such decayed boroughs as should be *willing* to sell them. This fund was to accumulate at compound interest, till an adequate inducement

was provided for the voluntary surrender, by the proprietors, of such elective franchises as it might be thought expedient to abolish. There was, throughout the whole of Mr. Pitt's plan, a studious avoidance of coercion; a careful preservation of vested interests; and a fixed determination not to violate existing rights in accomplishing its object. It was hoped that by these means every sense of injury or danger would be excluded, and that the change in view would be brought about by a gradual process, resembling the silent and insensible operation of time. Here, then, I repeat it, is a difference of the most essential kind between the two propositions of Mr. Pitt and of the noble lord; a difference, not superficial, but fundamental; as complete indeed as the difference between concession and force, or between respect for property and spoliation. I am not, however, bound nor at all prepared to contend for the intrinsic or absolute excellence of Mr. Pitt's plan; and still less to engage my own support to such a plan, if it were to be brought forward at the present time. But placing it in fair comparison with the noble lord's, I must entreat the House to bear in mind that Mr. Pitt never lost sight of the obligation to preserve as well as to amend; that he proposed not to enforce any reluctant surrender; nor to sacrifice any other than voluntary victims on the altar of practical improvement.

The noble lord has cited other grave authorities in favour of his projected reform. Now, I hold in my hand an extract from a work which probably will be recognised as I read it, but the title of which I will not disclose in the first instance. Hear the opinion of an eminent writer on the right of Parliament to interfere with the elective franchise:—"As to cutting away the rotten boroughs, I am as much offended as any man, at seeing so many of them under the direct influence of the Crown, or at the disposal of private persons. Yet I own I have both doubts and apprehensions in regard to the remedy you propose. I shall be charged, perhaps, with an unusual want of political intrepidity, when I honestly confess to you, that I am startled at the idea of so extensive an amputation. In the first place, I question the power *de jure* of the Legislature to disfranchise a number of boroughs, upon the general ground of improving the Constitution."—"I consider it as equivalent to robbing the parties concerned of their freehold, of their birth-right. I say, that although this birth-right may be forfeited, or the exercise of it suspended in particular cases, it cannot be taken away by a general law, for any real or pretended purpose of improving the Constitution." Is it from Sir Robert Filmer,—is it from the works of some blind, servile, bigotted, Tory writer, that I quote the passage which I have now read? No; it is from an author whose name, indeed, I am not enabled to declare, but the shadow of whose name is inseparably

connected, in our minds, with an ardent if not intemperate zeal in the cause of political freedom. It is Junius, who thus expresses his fears on the subject of interfering with the existing franchises of election, even for the purpose of effecting what he deems, with the noble lord, a beneficial change in the construction of the House of Commons.

The plan devised by Mr. Pitt, and the sentiments of this celebrated writer, equally furnish a contrast to the proposition of the noble lord; which is in effect forcibly to take away the elective franchise from one body of the people for the purpose of giving it to another; and to inflict forfeiture without guilt and without compensation.

But, even if I, and others who think like me, could be won over to this plan by its vaunted moderation,—by the circumstance of its going only half the length of the more sweeping reform deprecated by Junius,—it does much surprise me that the noble lord should imagine that such half measures would appear satisfactory to reformers. Surely, surely that class of persons upon whom the noble lord reckons for support, and whom he considers as having of late so greatly increased in numbers, look for a very different measure of alteration from that which seems to bound the noble lord's present intentions. How happens it, for instance, that the noble lord, notwithstanding the accuracy of research with which he has apparently studied the subject in all its parts, has omitted any mention of burgage tenures? He cannot but know that it is against that species of election that the popular clamour has been most loudly directed. Yet, amidst all the noble lord's enumeration of rights and modes of election, of freehold and copyhold, of large towns, and small towns, and counties, and villages, the words "burgage tenure," have never once escaped his lips! Does the noble lord mean to take away *burgage tenure*, or does he not? If he does not, I will so far most cordially join with him: but let not the noble lord, in that case, expect the support of those reformers with whom he has recently allied himself. If he intends to pursue a double or a doubtful course; if he proposes to mitigate his violation of franchise in the hands of the present holders by taking only half away, and hopes, by giving only half, to propitiate the new acquirers,—it may be very presumptuous in me to pronounce an opinion upon a scheme which the noble lord must no doubt have turned and viewed in every light before he made up his mind to adopt it; but I do venture to opine, that in thus endeavouring to keep terms with both parties, he will in the end satisfy neither. The one will be as little contented with what is granted to them, as the other will be reconciled to what they lose. Needs there any further argument to show, that whatever may be the feasibility

of other plans of reform, this of the noble lord is one which cannot possibly be useful to any purpose, because it cannot be palatable to any party?

It being plain then to demonstration that the noble lord's plan cannot succeed, the House must prepare itself, if his first Resolution should be carried, to enter immediately upon the discussion of a variety of schemes, upon a concurrence of opinions in favour of any one of which it would be vain to speculate. Plan will follow plan; all unlike each other in every respect, except in their tendency to destroy the present frame of the Constitution. It is affirmed, indeed, that a great change has lately taken place in the public mind; that the sentiment in favour of reform is diffused more widely, while the violence and exaggeration of that sentiment in particular minds is much abated; that more people wish for a reform; but that there is a greater disposition to be satisfied with a moderate one; that in proportion as a practical alteration has become more generally desired, the wild and visionary theories heretofore prevailing have been relinquished and discountenanced. This may possibly be so: but on what ground am I to rest my belief of it? I have seen nothing in the course of the last two years, during which the noble lord (Lord Folkstone,) on the floor, has been meditating on my speech at Liverpool, to lead me to think that those who, two years ago, entertained wild and visionary notions of reform, have since relinquished them. If my speech was, as the noble lord declares, calculated only to make proselytes to the persuasion that the present House of Commons is inadequate to the discharge of its functions, and if such be in consequence the views which that noble lord has adopted, how can he entertain the notion that the small alterations proposed by the noble mover will satisfy genuine reformers?—Let him be assured that he must go far deeper into democracy before he can hope to satisfy the cravings of reform; nay, without the hope of satisfying them, though the Constitution may be sacrified in the experiment.

Sir, if the House looks only to the various plans of reform which have at different times been laid upon its table, not by visionary speculatists, but by able and enlightened men, some of the ornaments of this and the other House of Parliament, how faint and flat is the noble lord's (Lord John Russell) present plan in comparison with them! Let us take, for example, that one of the plans which had the greatest concurrence of opinions, and the greatest weight of authority in its favour. A petition was presented to this House in 1793, which may perhaps be considered as the most advised and authentic exposition of the principles of Parliamentary Reform, that ever has been submitted to the consideration of this House or of the public. Those principles are

developed by the petitioners, with singular clearness and force, and expressed in admirable language. It was presented by a noble person, now one of the chief lights of the other House of Parliament, as the petition of the "Friends of the People, associated for the purpose of obtaining a Reform in Parliament." In that petition, certain distinct propositions are laid down as the basis of a reform, which, to my recollection, have never yet been disclaimed, either on the part of the petitioners, or of those who have succeeded them in the same pursuit. The petitioners complain, in the first place, that there is *not an uniform right of voting;*—secondly, that *the right of voting is in too small bodies;*—thirdly, that *many great bodies are excluded from voting;*—and, fourthly, they complain of *the protracted duration of Parliaments.** Does the noble lord believe that all these notions are forgotten? that no persons still cherish them as the only means of effecting the salvation of the country?—or does the noble lord subscribe to them all, although he may not think this the time for pressing them upon the House?

For my part, Sir, I value the system of Parliamentary Representation, for that very want of uniformity which is complained of in this petition; for the variety of rights of election. I conceive, that to establish one uniform right would inevitably be to exclude some important interests from the advantage of being represented in this House. At all events, the noble lord's plan does not cure this objection. The rights of voting would remain as various after the adoption of his plan, as before; and a new variety would be added to them. Even of burgage tenures, the most obnoxious right of all, and the most indignantly reprobated by the

* Extract of the petition of the "Friends of the People," presented to the House of Commons May 6th, 1793:—

"Your petitioners complain, that the number of representatives assigned to the different counties, is grossly disproportioned to their comparative extent, population and trade.

"Your petitioners complain, that the elective franchise is partially and unequally distributed, and is, in many instances, committed to bodies of men of such very limited numbers, that the majority of your Honourable House is elected by less than fifteen thousand electors, which, even if the male adults in the kingdom be estimated at so low a number as three millions, is not more than the two-hundredth part of the people to be represented.

"Your petitioners complain, that the right of voting is regulated by no uniform or rational principle.

"Your petitioners complain, that the exercise of the elective franchise is only renewed once in seven years.

"Is it fitting that Yorkshire and Rutland should have an equal rank in the scale of county representation?

"Your petitioners affirm, that seventy of your honourable members are returned by thirty-five places, where the right of voting is vested in burgage and other tenures of a similar description."—*Parl. History*, Vol. xxx. p. 789.

petition of 1793, the noble lord would carefully preserve the principle, only curtailing, by one half, its operation.

It must be admitted that this alleged defect of variety in rights of voting was much more directly dealt with by the honourable member for Durham (Mr. Lambton,) in the last session, when he brought forward, with great ability, and with the utmost temper and moderation, his specific plan of reform. That honourable gentleman proposed to treat the constitution of the House of Commons as a *rasa tabula*, and to reconstruct the system of representation altogether upon an uniform plan, abating, without scruple, every right and interest that stood in his way. His plan differed as materially from that of the noble lord, as the noble lord's differs from that of Mr. Pitt, and from the project of 1793. I do not mean to say, (I shall not be so misunderstood, I trust) that I approved therefore of the honourable member for Durham's plan, or thought it either practicable or tolerable. Certainly, no conqueror of an invaded country ever parcelled out with a more unsparing hand the franchises and properties of individuals and communities; but that plan had at least one merit which the noble lord's has not: it cured the alleged evil of diversified rights, and tended to produce the desired uniformity of representation.

Then, Sir, as to the duration of Parliament. Triennial Parliaments, it is averred by the petitioners of 1793, would be greatly preferable to septennial. The House would become a more express image of its constituents, by being more frequently sent back to them for election; deriving, like the giant of old, fresh vigour from every fresh contact with its parent earth. But the noble lord, if I understand him rightly, admits that this particular reform would be rather an aggravation of inconveniences, other defects in the Constitution remaining unchanged. Nothing, indeed, can be more clear than this proposition. One of the main objections to close representation, at present, is the advantage which the member for a close borough has over one chosen by a popular election. The dissolution of Parliament sends the popular representative back to a real and formidable trial at the bar of his constituents. For the representative of a close borough there is no trial at all; he sits still, and is returned without any struggle or inquiry. It is obvious that the proportion of this comparative disadvantage must be aggravated by every repetition of a general election.

But further. What is the original sin of Septennial Parliaments?—Why, that the Septennial Bill was a violent measure. Granted: it was so. But this allegation, however just, applies only to one enactment of the act, not to its general policy. The violence of the Septennial Act did not consist in the prolongation of the duration of Parliaments *in time to come:* for to do

that, the supreme authority of the state was undoubtedly as competent, as it was to shorten the duration of Parliaments by the Triennial Act some twenty years before. The violence consisted in prolonging the duration of the *then existing* Parliament —in extending to seven years a trust confided but for three. This, and this alone, is the questionable part of that act—questionable, I mean, as to right. I will not now inquire how far the political necessities of the time justified so strong an act of power. It is quite enough, for any practical purpose, that the evil, whatever it was, is irremediable; that its effect is gone by; that the repeal of the Septennial Act now cannot undo it; and that, therefore, how grave soever the charge against the framers of the act might be, for the arbitrary injustice of its immediate operation (a question, into the discussion of which I have said I will not enter,) the repeal of it would have no tendency to cure the vice of that enactment which has given the Septennial Act its ill name; but would only get rid of that part of it which is blameless, at least, if not (as I confess I think it) beneficial in its operation. But however much the duration of Parliaments may be entitled to a separate discussion, it is not to that point that the noble lord has called our attention to-night. A change in the constitution of the House of Commons, is the object of the noble lord's motion.

That such a change is necessary, the noble lord asserts—and I deny. I deny altogether the existence of any such practical defect in the present constitution of this House, as requires the adoption of so fearful an experiment. The noble lord has attempted to show the necessity of such a change by enumerating certain questions on which this House has, on sundry occasions, decided against the noble mover's opinion, and against the politics and interests of that party in the state, of which the noble mover is so conspicuous an ornament. But if such considerations be sufficient to unsettle an ancient and established form of political Constitution, how could any Constitution—any free Constitution—exist for six months? While human nature continues the same, the like divisions will arise in every free state; the like conflict of interests and opinions; the like rivalry for office; the like contention for power. A popular assembly always has been and always will be exposed to the operation of a party-feeling, arraying its elements and influencing its decisions, in modern as in ancient times; in Great Britain, in this our day, as heretofore in Athens or in Rome. No imaginable alteration in the mode of election can eradicate this vice, if it be a vice; or can extinguish that feeling, be it good or bad, which mixes itself largely in every debate upon the public affairs of a nation—the feeling of affection or disfavour towards the persons in whose hands is the conduct

of those affairs. I am not saying that this is a proper and laudable feeling: I am not contending that partiality ought to influence judgment; still less that when judgment and partiality are at variance, the latter ought, in strict duty, to preponderate. I am not affirming that in the discussion of the question, "What has been done?" the question, "Who did it?" ought silently to dictate, or even to modify, the answer; that the case should be nothing, and the men every thing. I say no such thing. But I do say that while men are men, popular assemblies, get them together how you will, will be liable to such influence. I say, that in discussing in a popular assembly the particular acts of a government, the consideration of the general character of that government, and the conflicting partialities which lead some men to favour it, and others to aim at its subversion, will, sometimes openly and avowedly, at other times insensibly even to the disputants themselves, control opinions and votes, and correct, or pervert (as it may be) the specific decision. I say that, for instance, in the discussion upon the Walcheren Expedition, which has been more than once selected as an example of undue influence and partiality, there was notoriously another point at issue beside the specific merits of the case; and that point was, whether the then Administration should or should not be dismissed from the service of their country? Never, perhaps, was the struggle pushed farther than on that occasion; and that vote substantially decided the question "in what hands should be placed the Administration of affairs." I am not saying that this was right in the particular instance—I am not saying that this is right in principle. But right or wrong, such a mode of thinking and acting is, I am afraid, essentially in the very nature of all popular governments; and most particularly so in that of the most free.

The noble lord has himself stated, that in the instance of the Revolution the Parliament did wisely in setting at nought the immediate feelings of its constituents. There cannot indeed be the slightest doubt that had the nation been polled in 1688, the majority would have been found adverse to the change that was then effected in the Government: but Parliament, acting in its higher and larger capacity, decided for the people's interests against their prejudices. It is not true, therefore, that the House of Commons is necessarily defective, because it may not instantly respond to every impression of the people.

In the year 1811, I myself divided in a minority of about forty against an overwhelming majority, on the question relating to the depreciation of the currency. It would be idle to deny that the majority, which sturdily denied the fact of that depreciation, then spoke the sentiments of the country at large; they certainly did so; but who will now affirm that it would have been a mis-

fortune if the then prevailing sense of the country had been less faithfully represented in the votes of this House? What a world of error and inconvenience should we have avoided, by a salutary discrepancy, at that time, between the constituent and the representative! Eight years afterwards, but unluckily after eight years' additional growth of embarrassment, in 1819, the principles which had found but about forty supporters in 1811, were adopted unanimously, first by a committee of this House, and then by this House itself. But the country was much slower in coming back from the erroneous opinions which the decision of this House in 1811 had adopted and confirmed. In 1819, as in 1811, if London and the other principal towns of the kingdom had been canvassed for an opinion, the prevailing opinion would still have been found nearly what it was in 1811. Yet is it necessary to argue that the decision of the House in 1819, against the opinion of the country, was a sounder and wiser decision than that of 1811 in conformity to it? Never then can I consider it as a true proposition that the state of the representation is deficient, because it does not *immediately* speak the apparent sense of the people—because it sometimes contradicts, and sometimes goes before it. The House, as well as the people, are liable to err; but that the House may happen to differ in opinion from the people, is no infallible mark of error. And it would, in my opinion, be a base and cowardly House of Commons, unworthy of the large and liberal confidence without which it must be incompetent to the discharge of its highest functions, which having, after due deliberation, adopted a great public measure, should be frightened back into an acquiescence with the temporary excitement which might exist upon that measure out of doors.

Upon another great question which I have much at heart, I mean the Roman Catholic Question, I have not the slightest doubt that the House has run before the sense of the country, which is now, however, gradually coming up to us. I have no doubt that in all our early votes on this most important question, we had not the country with us; but I am equally confident that the period is rapidly advancing, when the country will be convinced that the House of Commons has acted as they ought to have done. If on such questions as these—questions before which almost all others sink into insignificance—the House of Commons have been either against, or before, the opinions of the country, the proposition that the representative system is necessarily imperfect, because it does not give an *immediate* echo to the sentiments of the people, is surely not to be received without abundant qualification. On this ground therefore there is no foundation for the noble lord's motion; unless the free expression of an honest and conscientious opinion, when it may happen to differ

from that of its constituents, be inconsistent with the duty and derogatory to the character of a representative assembly.

To return to the other noble lord (Lord Folkstone,) who has no sooner renounced his former faith and adopted a new one, than he seats himself in the confessional chair, and calls upon me for my recantation:—that noble lord has desired me to explain and defend the proposition which I have heretofore laid down, that those who wish to reform the House of Commons must intend to reform it upon one of two principles—either to construct it anew, or to bring it back to the state at which it exisited at some former period. Before I consent to be thus catechised by the noble lord, I might reasonably ask him in what third sense the word reform can be understood, except that in which it is sometimes applied to a military corps, which means to disband and cashier it altogether? Short of that mode of disposing of the House of Commons (for which I presume the noble lord is not yet altogether prepared,) there is, so far as I know, or can conceive (until the noble lord shall further enlighten me,) no other way in which a reform can take place, than those which I have specified. Between those two modes, then, I must still desire the noble lord to make his choice. If his choice be another construction—a totally new scheme of House of Commons—is it unreasonable in me that, before I pin my faith upon that of the noble convert, I desire to behold that *beau ideal*—that imaged perfection of political good by which his reason is fascinated, and which his inventive fancy has pictured to him as the standard of parliamentary purity? If the second of my proposed alternatives be that which the noble lord prefers, the inquiry that I have then to make of him is merely historical; and surely he can be at no loss for an immediate answer to it—What is the golden era at which the House of Commons was precisely what you would have it?

Simple, however, as this latter question is, I have never yet met with the reformer who did not endeavour to evade it. I must endeavour therefore to collect the best answers that I can, from such partial indications of opinion as are scattered up and down among the general arguments for reform. Some theorists are fond of tracing back the Constitution to the twilight times of history, where all that can be clearly discovered is, that when a Parliament met, it usually sat about a fortnight, granted a subsidy or two, and was forthwith dissolved. It is not to this infancy of our institutions that any one will soberly refer, for the likeness of such a House of Commons as would be competent, in the present age, to transact the business of the country and to maintain its due importance in the Constitution. But the House gradually attained a more mature existence; it has grown into a co-ordinate, and is now the preponderant element of the Constitution. If the

House has thus increased in power, is it therefore necessary that it should also become more popular in its formation? I should say,—just the reverse. If it were to add to its real active governing influence such an exclusively popular character and tone of action as would arise from the consciousness that it was the immediately deputed agent for the whole people, and the exclusive organ of their will, the House of Commons, instead of enjoying one-third part of the power of the state, would, in a little time, absorb the whole. How could the House of Lords, a mere assembly of individuals, however privileged, and representing only themselves, presume to counteract the decisions of the delegates of the people? How could the Crown itself, holding its power, as *I* should say, *for* the people, but deriving it altogether, as others would contend, *from* the people,—presume to counteract, or hesitate implicitly to obey, the supreme authority of the nation assembled within these walls? I fear the noble lord (Lord Folkstone) is not prepared to answer these questions. I do not presume to say that they are unanswerable; but I affirm that, since they were propounded in my obnoxious speech at Liverpool, they have yet received no answer here or elsewhere. In truth, they admit of no other answer than one which I happen to have fallen upon within these few days, in the report of a debate on Parliamentary Reform which took place about thirty years ago; and for which, in the absence of any answer of his own, the noble lord will undoubtedly be very thankful. It is in these words:—"It has been said that a House of Commons, so chosen as to be a complete representative of the people, would be too powerful for the House of Lords, and even for the King: they would abolish the one, and dismiss the other. *If* the King and the House of Lords are unnecessary and useless branches of the Constitution, *let them* be dismissed and abolished: for the people were not made for them, but they for the people. *If*, on the contrary, the King and the House of Lords are felt and believed by the people to be not only useful but essential parts of the Constitution, a House of Commons freely chosen by and speaking the sentiments of the people, would *cherish and protect* both, within the bounds which the Constitution had assigned to them."* These are reported to have been the words of a man, the lustre of whose reputation will survive through distant ages, and of whom I can never intend to speak but with feelings of respect and admiration: they are the words of Mr. Fox. That the report is accurate to a letter, I am not entitled to contend; but the substance of an argument so strikingly important, cannot have been essentially misapprehended. I quote these words with the freedom of history; not with the de-

* Parliamentary History, vol. xxx. p. 921. (May 6, 1793.)

sign of imputing blame to the speaker of them, but because they contain a frank solution (according with the frankness of his character) of the difficulty with which, in these days, I have not found any one hardy enough to grapple. So then—a House of Commons freely chosen by the people, would, it seems "cherish and protect" the House of Lords and the Crown, so long as they respectively kept within the bounds allotted to them by the Constitution. Indeed? cherish and protect!—but cherish and protect, *if* so and so: and how, *if not* so and so? How, if the House of Commons in its reformed character, should happen to entertain a different opinion with respect to the "bounds" to be allotted to the Crown and to the lords under the new Constitution? What would then be substituted for cherishment and protection? A fearful question! but a question which must be answered, and much more satisfactorily than I can anticipate, before I can consent to exchange that equality and co-ordination of powers among the three branches of our present Constitution, in which its beauty, its strength, its stability, and the happiness of those who live under it, consist, for a Constitution in which two of those powers should confessedly depend for their separate existence on the disposition of the third to "cherish and protect" them. This new Constitution might be very admirable: but it is not the Constitution under which I live; it is not the Constitution to which I owe allegiance; it is not the Constitution which I would wish to introduce; and in order not to introduce a Constitution of this nature, I must not consent to the Reform of the House of Commons.

If this House is adequate to the functions which really belong to it,—which functions are, not to exercise an undivided, supreme dominion in the name of the people, over the Crown and the other branch of the Legislature, but checking the one and balancing the other, to watch over the people's rights and to provide especially for the people's interests. If, I say, the House is adequate to the performance of these its legitimate functions, the mode of its composition appears to me a consideration of secondary importance. I am aware, that by stating this opinion so plainly, I run the risk of exciting a cry against myself; but it is my deliberate opinion, and I am not afraid to declare it. Persons may look with a critical and microscopic eye into bodies physical or moral, until doubts arise whether it is possible for them to perform their assigned functions. Man himself is said by inspired authority to be "fearfully" as well as "wonderfully made." The study of anatomy, while it leads to the most beneficial discoveries for the detection and cure of physical disease, has yet a tendency, in some minds, rather to degrade than to exalt the opinion of human nature. It appears surprising to the contemplator of a skeleton of the human form, that the eyeless skull, the sapless bones, the as-

semblage of sinews and cartilages in which intellect and volition have ceased to reside, that this piece of mechanism should constitute a creature so noble in reason, so infinite in faculties, in apprehension so like a god; a creature formed after the image of the Divinity, to whom Providence

> "Os—sublime dedit: cœlumque tueri
> Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus."

So, in considering too curiously the composition of this House, and the different processes through which it is composed, not those processes alone which are emphatically considered as pollution and corruption, but those also which rank among the noblest exercises of personal freedom; the canvasses, the conflicts, the controversies, and (what is inseparable from these) the vituperations, and excesses of popular election, a dissector of political constitutions might well be surprised to behold the product of such elements in an assembly, of which, whatever may be its other characteristics, no man will seriously deny that it comprehends as much of intellectual ability and of moral integrity as was ever brought together in the civilized world. Nay, to an unlearned spectator, undertaking for the first time an anatomical examination of the House of Commons, those parts of it which, according to theory, are its beauties, must appear most particularly its stains. For while the members returned for burgage-tenure seats, or through other obscure and noiseless modes of election, pass into the House of Commons unnoticed and uncriticised, their talents unquestioned and their reputations unassailed, the successful candidate of a popular election often comes there loaded with the imputation of every vice and crime that could unfit a man not only for representing any class of persons, but for mixing with them as a member of society. The first effect of a reform which should convert all elections into popular ones, would probably be to ensure a congregation of individuals, against every one of whom a respectable minority of his constituents would have pronounced sentence of condemnation. And if it be so very hard that there are now a great number of persons who do not directly exercise the elective franchise, and who are therefore represented by persons whom others have chosen for them, would this matter be much mended when two-fifths of the people of England should be represented not only without their choice, but against their will; not only by individuals whom they had not selected, but by those whom they declared utterly unworthy of their confidence?

Again;—should we have no cause to lament the disfranchisement of those boroughs which are not open to popular influence? How many of the gentlemen who sit opposite to me, the rarest talents of their party, owe their seats to the existence of such bo-

roughs? When I consider the eminent qualities which distinguish, for instance, the representatives of Knaresborough, Winchelsea, Wareham, Higham-Ferrers, I never can consent to join in the reprobation cast upon a system which fructifies in produce of so admirable a kind. No, Sir, if this House is not all that theory could wish it, I would rather rest satisfied with its present state, than by endeavouring to remedy some small defects, run the hazard of losing so much that is excellent. Old Sarum and other boroughs at which the finger of scorn is pointed, are not more under private patronage now than at the periods the most glorious in our history. Some of them are still in the possession of the descendants of the same patrons who held them at the period of the Revolution. Yet in spite of Old Sarum the Revolution was accomplished, and the House of Hanover seated on the throne. In spite of Old Sarum, did I say? No; rather by the aid of Old Sarum and similar boroughs; for the House has heard it admitted by the noble mover himself, that if the House of Commons of that day had been a reformed House of Commons, the benefits of the Revolution would never have been obtained.

The noble lord, in his opening speech, made some allusion to the constitutional history of ancient Rome, and called upon my honourable friend (Mr. Bankes) opposite, as the most recent historian of that republic, to vouch for his facts, and for the application of them. Let me follow the noble lord into his Roman History, to ask him a single question. How was the senate of Rome composed? I doubt whether even my honourable friend opposite can inform us. All that is certainly known on the subject is, that one and by far the most usual way of gaining admission to the senate, (this has not a very reforming sound,) was through office. Yet that senate dictated to the world, and adequately represented the majesty of the Roman people. History blazons its deeds, while antiquarianism is poring into its pedigree.

But have the defects imputed to the composition and constitution of the House of Commons increased with time? Are they grown more numerous or more unsightly? I believe the contrary. I believe, Sir, that in whatever period of our history the composition and constitution of the House of Commons are examined, not only will the same alleged abuses as are now complained of be found to have prevailed; but I will venture to say, prevailed in a degree which could not be now avowed in debate without a violation of our orders. There is great difficulty in speaking on this delicate part of the subject. It has been made an article of reproach by the reformers, that the enemies of reform treat these matters with shameless indifference; that we now speak with levity of transactions the bare mention of which, according to the *dictum* of once the highest authority in this House, was cal

culated to make our ancestors perform certain evolutions in their graves. Now it is very hard that the want of shame should be imputed to those who are upon the defensive side of the argument. They who attack, scruple not to advance charges of gross corruption in the grossest terms; and they who defend are reduced to the alternative either of affecting to be ignorant of the nature of those charges, or of admitting notorious facts, and accounting for or extenuating them; and if they take the latter course, they are accused of shamelessness. Be that as it may, however, it may be curious and perhaps consolatory to show to the moralists who are so sensitive upon these subjects, that corruption, as they call it, that (in plain words) influence in the return of members to Parliament, if it be a sin, is not one for which their own generation is exclusively responsible. The taint, if it be one, is not newly acquired, but inherited through a long line of ancestors. The purge or the cautery may be applied to the present generation; but I can show that the original malady is at least as old as the reign of Henry VI. a period beyond which the most retrospective antiquary will not require of us to go back in search of purity of election.

Sir, in the reign of Henry VI. the Duchess of Norfolk thus instructed her agent as to the election of members for the county of Norfolk:—

"*Right trusty and well beloved, we greet you heartily well; and forasmuch as it is thought right necessary for diverse causes, that *My Lord have* at this time *in the Parliament* such persons as *belong unto him*, and be of his *menial servants*, we heartily desire and pray you, that at the contemplation of these our letters, ye will give and apply your voice unto our right well beloved cousin and servants, John Howard and Sir Roger Chamberlayn, to be *Knights of the Shire*. Framlingham Castle, 8 June, 1455."

What follows, probably related to the same election; it is addressed (by Lord Oxenford) to the same individual as the preceding extract.

"†My Lord of Norfolk met with my Lord of York at Bury on Thursday, and there [they] were together till Friday, nine of the clock, and then they departed; and there a gentleman of my Lord of York took unto a Yeoman of mine, John Deye, a Token and a Sedell (Schedule) of my Lord's intent, *whom he would have Knights of the Shire*, and I send you a Sedell inclosed of their names in this Letter; wherefore, methinketh it [were] well done to *perform my Lord's intent*."

The next extract which I shall read to the House is of seventeen years later date than the preceding ones. It is from a letter

* Paston Correspondence, 4to. vol. i. p. 97. † Ibid. vol. i. p. 99.

addressed by one of the Duchess of Norfolk's household to the bailiff of the borough of Maldon, and is dated in the year 1472, the 11th of Edward IV.

"*It were necessary for *my Lady* and you all (her Servants and Tenants) *to have in this Parliament* as for *one of the Burgesses* of the town of Maldon, such a man of worship and of wit as *were towards my said Lady;* and also such one as in favour of the King and of the Lords of his Council nigh about his person; certifying you, that my Lady for her part, and such as be of her council, be most agreeable that all such as be her farmers and tenants and well-willers, should give your voice to a worshipful Knight, and one of my Lady's Council, Sir John Paston, which stands greatly in favour with my Lord Chamberlain; and what my said Lord Chamberlain may do with the King, and with all the Lords of England, I trow it be not unknown to you."

It appears from the following letter that the said member-elect for the Borough of Maldon, Sir John Paston (to whom it is addressed) had expected to be nominated a knight of the shire; but that his patrons had ordered it otherwise:—

"†My Lord of Norfolk, and my Lord of Suffolk *were agreed* more than a fortnight ago, *to have* Sir Robert Wyngfield, and Sir Richard Harcourt; and that knew I not till Friday last past. I had sent, ere I went to Framlingham, to warn as many of your friends to be at Norwich as this Monday, to serve your interest, as I could; but when I came to Framlingham, and *knew the appointment that was taken* for the two Knights, I sent warning again to as many as I might, to tarry at home; and yet there came to Norwich this day as many as their costs drew to 9s. 1½d. paid and reckoned by Peacock and Capron, and yet they did but break their fasts and departed."——"If ye miss to be Burgess of Maldon, and my Lord Chamberlain will, ye may be in another place; there be a dozen Towns in England, that choose no Burgess, which ought to do it,"—(this will surely propitiate the Reformers):—"ye may be set in for one of these towns, an if ye be friended." Such was reform in those days!

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the era to which, habitually and almost instinctively, the mind of Englishmen recurs for every thing that is glorious, I could show the House that the Earl of Essex, her mighty favourite, dictated, without scruple or reserve, the returns to Parliament, not only for the county of Stafford, but for every borough in the county. Unluckily, I have not the documents at hand; but I can aver it on the most unquestionable authority.‡

*Paston Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 99. †Ibid. vol. ii. p. 103.

‡Among the documents alluded to in this passage, are the following letters

Passing over the reign of James I. and his unfortunate successor,—and not dwelling upon the cavalier treatment which Cromwell bestowed upon his own purified and reformed Houses of

from Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, to Richard Bagot, Esq., high sheriff of the County of Stafford; of which the originals are in the possession of Lord Bagot.

1.—*Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, to Richard Bagot, Esq.*

"After my verie hartie comendacions; I cannot write severall letters to all those that have interest in the choyse of the Knights of the Shere, to be apoynted for the Parliament intended to be held verie shortlie. To which place I do exceedingly desire that my verie good friend, Sir Christofer Blount, may be elected. I do, therefore, commend the matter to your friendlie sollicitacions, praying you to move the gentlemen, my good friends, and yours in that countie; *particularly in my name*, that they will give their voice with him *for my sake;* assuring them that as they shall do it for one whome I hold deare, and whose sufficiencie for the place is well known to them; so I will most thankfullie deserve towards them and yourselves any travell, favour, or kindeness that shall be showed therein. Thus I commit you to God's good protection. From Hampton Court, the 2d of January, 1592.

"ESSEX."

"I persuade myself that my credit is so good with my countrymen, *as the using my name in so small a matter will be enough to affect it.* But I pray you use me so kindlie in that as I have no repulse."

2.—*From the same to the same.*

"After my verie hartie commendacions. As I have by my late letters commended unto you Sir Christofer Blount to be elected *one of the Knights of that Shire*, for the Parliament to be holden verie shortlie, by your friendlie mediacion. So I do with no less earnestness intreate your like favoure towards my very good friend, Sir Thomas Sherrard, *for the other place;* praying you that you will employe your creditte, and *use my name* to all my good friends and yours, there, that they will stand faste to me in this requeste, and that my desire may be effected for them. They cannot give me better testimonie of their love and affection, because they are both such as I hold deare, and you may assure all such as shall join with you in election, that I will most thankfullie requite their readines, and furtherance them by any good office I can. So I committe you to God's best protection. From Hampton Court, the 9th of January, 1592."

"Your assured friend,
"ESSEX."

"I should think my credite little in my owne countrie, if it should not afford *so small a matter as this.* Esspessalie the men being so fitt. Therefore I commend you all (*as I have interest in your labours*) effectuallie in it."

3.—*From the same to the same.*

"After my verie hartie commendacions. I have written severall letters to Lichfield, Stafford, Tamworth, and Newcastle, for the *nomination and election*

Commons, I come to the reign of Charles II., where I find, not amid scarce manuscripts and treasures of ancient lore, but published in a hundred popular books, in sketches of biography, and lessons for youth, the famous letter of that most famous woman, Anne, Countess of Pembroke; who, amongst her other great titles and possessions, was undoubted patroness of the then, I presume, free and independent borough of Appleby. This great lady writes thus to Sir Joseph Williamson, secretary of state to Charles II., in answer to his suggestion of a member for the borough of Appleby—

"I have been bullied by an Usurper; I have been ill treated by a Court; but I won't be dictated to by a Subject; your Man sha'n't stand.

"ANNE,
"Countess of Dorset, Pembroke,
and Montgomery."

Now, Sir, I should be curious to know *which* generation of our ancestors it is that the exercise of political influence in the elections of the present day, so lamentably disquiets in their graves. Is it the cotemporaries of the Duchess of Norfolk, and of the worthy electors of Maldon, who were to be careful to choose members so properly "towards" my Lady?—or those who tasted the sweets of uninfluenced election under Queen Elizabeth?—or those who contemplated with equal admiration the Countess of Pembroke's defence of her castles against the forces of the usurper, and of her good borough of Appleby against Secretary Williamson's nominee? Pity it is that the noble lord (Lord Folkstone,) the convert to reform, did not live in the days of one or other of these heroines! Their example could hardly have failed to reconvert him to his original native sentiments upon the subject of influence in elections, and the fit constitution of a House of Commons.

of certen burgesses of the Parliament to be held verie shortlie. *I have named unto them*, for Lichfield, Sir John Wyngfield and Mr. Boughton. For Stafford, *my kinsman*, Henrie Bourgcher, *and my servant*, Edward Reynolds. For Tamworth, *my servant*, Thomas Smith. For Newcastle, Dr. James. Whome, because I do greatlie desire to be preferred to the said places, I do earnestlie pray your furtherance, by the creditt which you have in those towns. Assuring them of my thankfulness, if they they shall, *for my sake*, gratifie those whom I have commended; and yourself that I will not be unmyndful of your curtesie therein. So I commit you to God's good protection. From Hampton Court, the last of December, 1592.

"Your assured friend,
"ESSEX."

"I send you unto the severall letters, which I praye you cause to be delivered according to their directions."

But I have not yet done with my list of patronesses. Nor has interference in elections, and female interference too, been coupled with no great name in the unquestioned good times of the Constitution. The noble lord who made this motion will pardon me for referring him to the published letters of his great ancestress, the Lady Russell; in which he will find the Lord Steward (the Duke of Shrewsbury,) and Lord Keeper Somers, tendering to her, for her son Lord Tavistock, then a minor, the representation of the county of Middlesex, upon the single condition that Lord Tavistock would consent but to show himself to the electors for one day under the name of Lord Russell.* The offer was not accepted, on account, so far as appears, of Lord Tavistock's minority; though instances are adduced by the makers of the proposition to convince her ladyship that *that* need not be an objection. But what would be said now-a-days, and what would be the agitation of our buried ancestors, if a lord chancellor and a lord steward were to concur in offering a seat in Parliament for a county to some young nobleman yet under age?†

Now here let me guard myself against misrepresentation. It must not be imputed to me that I am saying that all this was *right:* I am only saying that all this was *so.* I have been dealing (be it observed) with the second of my two questions: not with the question, whether the House of Commons should be reconstructed?—but with the question whether it should be recalled to some state in which it formerly stood? I have been endeavouring to dispel the idle superstition that there once existed in this country a House of Commons, in the construction of which the faults that are attributed to the present House of Commons, and attributed to it as a motive for inflicting upon itself its own destruction, did not equally exist: and not only exist equally, but exist in wider extent and more undisguised enormity. I have been showing that if the present House of Commons is to be destroyed for these faults, it has earned that fate not by degeneracy,

*"At the General Election which took place in October 1695, it was proposed to her, in the most flattering manner, by order of the Duke of Shrewsbury, then lord steward, and the lord keeper Somers, to bring her son into Parliament as member for the county of Middlesex."—*Life of Lady Russell, Third Edit.* 8vo. p. 120.

†"It is to be remarked that, in those early days of our renovated Constitution, the objection of Lord Tavistock's age was considered merely in relation to himself, and as no obstacle to the success of his election. Mr. Montague, in his letter to the Duke of Bedford, to obviate any scruple in the duke's mind, mentions that Lord Godolphin's son was to be chosen in Cornwall, and Lord Leicester's in Kent, who were neither of them older than Lord Tavistock: and Mr. Owen, in a letter to Lady Russell, tells her the Duke of Albemarle's son had been allowed to sit in Parliament under age."—*Life of Lady Russell, Third Edit.* 8vo. p. 123.

but by imitation; that it would in such case expiate the misdeeds of its predecessors, instead of suffering for any that are peculiarly its own. I have been endeavouring to prove, that of the two options,—"do you mean to restore?—or to construct anew?"—no reformer who has carefully examined the subject, can in sincerity answer otherwise than "to construct anew:" for that to *restore*, the times of purity of election, that is, of election free from the influence, and a preponderating influence too, of property, rank, station, and power, natural or acquired, would be, to restore a state of things of which we can find no prototype, and to revert to times which in truth have never been.

That the proposition "to construct anew" is the much more formidable proposition of the two, is tacitly admitted by the very unwillingness which is shown on all occasions to acknowledge it as the object of any motion for reform. Yet to *that* must the reformers come. To that, I venture to tell the noble lord, he, with all his caution, and all his desire to avoid extravagance and exaggeration, must come, if he consents to reform *on principle.* By reforming "on principle," I mean, reforming with a view not simply to the redress of any partial, practical grievance, but generally to theoretical improvement. I may add that even "on principle" his endeavours to reform will be utterly vain, if he insists upon the exclusion of influence, as an indispensable quality of his reformed Constitution. Not in this country only, but in every country in which a popular elective assembly has formed part of the Government, to exclude such influence from the elections, has been a task either not attempted, or attempted to no purpose. While we dam up one source of influence, a dozen others will open; in proportion as the progress of civilization, the extension of commerce, and a hundred other circumstances, better understood than defined, contribute to shift and change, in their relative proportions, the prevailing interests of society. Whether the House of Commons, in its present shape, does not practically though silently accommodate itself to such changes, with a pliancy almost as faithful as the nicest artifice could contrive, is, in my opinion, I confess, a much more important consideration, than whether the component parts of the House might be arranged with neater symmetry, or distributed in more scientific proportions.

But am I therefore hostile to the reformation of any proved cases of abuse, or to the punishment of mal-practices by which the existing rights of election are occasionally violated? No such thing. When any such cases are pointed out and proved, far be it from me to wish that they should be passed over with impunity. When the noble lord (Lord John Russell) himself brought forward, two years ago, a bill for transferring to other constituents,

the right of election of a borough in which gross corruption had been practised, he began, as I thought and think, in the right course. When he proposed the disfranchisement of Grampound, I gave him my support; and if other cases of the same description occurred, I should be ready to do so again. That, Sir, is the true way of reforming the House of Commons: by adding strength to the representation, where we can do so certainly and definitely, and without incurring a risk of evils greater than those we cure. In the principle of that proposition of the noble lord I concurred: and if I concurred with those who suggested the substitution of the county of York for the town of Leeds, as the recipient of the franchise to be detached from Grampound, I did so, not because I was apprehensive that Leeds would abuse the privilege; but because, for the last forty years, the want of a greater number of members for the county of York had been the standing grievance complained of in every petition for reform. "Shall the great county of York have no more members than the little county of Rutland?"—is the language of the petition of 1793. "Shall so great, and populous, and manufacturing a county, be no more numerously represented in the House of Commons than the borough of Shoreham, or Cricklade, or Midhurst, or finally than Old Sarum?"—are the apostrophes which have added zest to every debate, and a sting to every petition, from the year 1780 to the present day. Well? Here was an opportunity of meeting this master-argument, and quieting for ever the perturbed solicitude for Yorkshire representation. I thought, therefore, that it would be a pity to lose such an opportunity; the House fortunately was of the same opinion; and lo! the grievance of grievances, the subject of forty years' clamour is redressed. But, to be quite ingenuous, I will own that I was not without expectation that when the reformers had gained this point, they would find out that they had not gotten *exactly* what they wanted. So indeed it has happened. Since the bill passed, I have heard of no congratulations on the event; but I have heard of much regret, and of many fears lest great inconvenience should result from the measure to the county of York itself. This to be sure would be exceedingly to be deplored: and to remedy so unlucky a result of the first effort at reform, I understand that it is now in contemplation to bring in a bill for the purpose of dividing the county into two parts; assigning to one the old and to the other the new representation. We shall see how this expedient will be relished. For my own part, I apprehend that every true Yorkshireman will object to it as a sort of converse of the judgment of Solomon; and that the two old members especially, will rush forward and implore that their ancient parent may be permitted to survive whole and unmutilated. In that case, I shall

unquestionably join them in the vote for keeping Yorkshire in undivided magnitude, with its augmented representation; affording, as it will do in that state, a conclusive reply to near half a century of remonstrances and lamentations.

I do not recollect in the speech of the noble mover any other topic on which I feel it necessary to remark; having already, I think, touched upon all the main principles, if not upon all the details and illustrations of his motion; and having, I am well aware, trespassed largely upon the indulgence of the House.

A few words more upon the more general topics, which belong to this debate, and I have done. It is asked over and over again whether the House of Commons ought not to sympathize with the people? I answer, undoubtedly, yes; and so the House of Commons at present does, finally and in the result. But I also maintain that this House does not betray its trust, if, on points of gravity and difficulty, of deep and of lasting importance, it exercises a wary and independent discretion;—even though a momentary misunderstanding between the people and the House, should be created by such difference in opinion with the people. I do not believe that the change produced by the noble lord would infuse into the House of Commons a more wholesome spirit. I do not believe that to increase the power of the people, or rather to bring that power into more direct, immediate, and incessant operation upon the House—(whether such effect should be produced by rendering elections more popular, or by shortening the duration of Parliaments, or by both)—I do not believe, I say, that this change would enable the House to discharge its functions more usefully than it discharges them at present. With respect to the plan of universal suffrage and annual Parliaments, it seems to be pretty generally agreed, that it would deprive the government of all consistence and stability. Most of the advocates for reform disclaim these doctrines, and resent the imputation of them. I am glad of it. But I confess myself at a loss to understand how *any* extension of suffrage on *principle*, how any shortening of Parliaments on principle, can be adopted without opening the whole scope of that plan: and I confess myself not provided with any argument satisfactory to my own mind, by which, after conceding these alterations in *principle*, I could hope to control them in *degree*. I am still more at a loss to conceive in what way such partial concession could tend either to reconcile to the frame of the House of Commons those who are discontented with it as it at present stands, or to enable Parliament to watch more effectually over the freedom, the happiness, and the political importance of the country.

Dreading therefore the danger of total, and seeing the difficulties as well as the unprofitableness of partial alteration, I object to

this first step towards a change in the constitution of the House of Commons. There are wild theories abroad. I am not disposed to impute an ill motive to any man who entertains them. I will believe such a man to be as sincere in his conviction of the possibility of realizing his notions of change without risking the tranquillity of the country, as I am sincere in my belief of their impracticability, and of the tremendous danger of attempting to carry them into effect; but for the sake of the world, as well as for our own safety, let us be cautious and firm. Other nations, excited by the example of the liberty which this country has long possessed, have attempted to copy our constitution: and some of them have shot beyond it in the fierceness of their pursuit. I grudge not to other nations, that share of liberty which they may acquire: in the name of God, let them enjoy it! But let us warn them that they lose not the object of their desire by the very eagerness with which they attempt to grasp it. Inheritors and conservators of rational freedom, let us, while others are seeking it in restlessness and trouble, be a steady and shining light to guide their course, not a wandering meteor to bewilder and mislead them.

Let it not be thought that this is an unfriendly or disheartening counsel to those who are either struggling under the pressure of harsh government, or exulting in the novelty of sudden emancipation. It is addressed much rather to those who, though cradled and educated amidst the sober blessings of the British Constitution, pant for other schemes of liberty than those which that Constitution sanctions—other than are compatible with a just equality of civil rights, or with the necessary restraints of social obligation; of some of whom it may be said, in the language which Dryden puts into the mouth of one of the most extravagant of his heroes, that,

> "They would be free as nature first made man,
> Ere the base laws of servitude began,
> When wild in woods the noble savage ran."

Noble and swelling sentiments!—but such as cannot be reduced into practice. Grand ideas!—but which must be qualified and adjusted by a compromise between the aspirings of individuals, and a due concern for the general tranquillity;—must be subdued and chastened by reason and experience, before they can be directed to any useful end! A search after abstract perfection in government, may produce, in generous minds, an enterprise and enthusiasm to be recorded by the historian and to be celebrated by the poet: but such perfection is not an object of reasonable pursuit, because it is not one of possible attainment: and never yet did a passionate struggle after an absolutely unattainable object fail to be productive of misery to an individual, of madness and confusion to a people. As the inhabitants of those burning climates, which lie beneath a tropical sun, sigh for the coolness of the moun-

tain and the grove; so (all history instructs us) do nations which have basked for a time in the torrent blaze of an unmitigated liberty, too often call upon the shades of despotism, even of military despotism, to cover them—

> —"O quis me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi
> Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra!"—

—a protection which blights while it shelters; which dwarfs the intellect, and stunts the energies of man, but to which a wearied nation willingly resorts from intolerable heats, and from perpetual danger of convulsion.

Our lot is happily cast in the temperate zone of freedom: the clime best suited to the development of the moral qualities of the human race; to the cultivation of their faculties, and to the security as well as the improvement of their virtues:—a clime not exempt, indeed, from variations of the elements, but variations which purify while they agitate the atmosphere that we breathe. Let us be sensible of the advantages which it is our happiness to enjoy. Let us guard with pious gratitude the flame of genuine liberty, that fire from heaven, of which our Constitution is the holy depository; and let us not, for the chance of rendering it more intense and more radiant, impair its purity or hazard its extinction!

The noble lord is entitled to the acknowledgments of the House, for the candid, able, and ingenuous manner in which he has brought forward his motion. If in the remarks which I have made upon it, there has been any thing which has borne the appearance of disrespect to him, I hope he will acquit me of having so intended it. That the noble lord will carry his motion this evening, I have no fear; but with the talents which he has shown himself to possess, and with (I sincerely hope) a long and brilliant career of parliamentary distinction before him, he will, no doubt, renew his efforts hereafter. Although I presume not to expect that he will give any weight to observations or warnings of mine, yet on this, probably the last, opportunity which I shall have, of raising my voice on the question of Parliamentary Reform, while I conjure the House to pause before it consents to adopt the proposition of the noble lord, I cannot help conjuring the noble lord himself, to pause before he again presses it upon the country. If, however, he shall persevere, and if his perseverance shall be successful—and if the results of that success shall be such as I cannot help apprehending—his be the triumph to have precipitated those results—be mine the consolation that to the utmost, and the latest of my power, I have opposed them.

The House divided:—

Ayes - - - - - -	164
Noes - - - - - -	269
Majority against the Motion	105

NEGOTIATIONS RELATIVE TO SPAIN.

APRIL 28th, 1823.

Mr. Macdonald concluded a speech, in which he took an extensive review of the negotiations at Verona, Paris, and Madrid, respecting the affairs of Spain, by moving the following Address:—

"That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, to inform His Majesty, that this House has taken into its most serious consideration the papers relating to the late negotiation, which have been laid before them by His Majesty's gracious command.

"To represent to His Majesty, that the disappointment of His Majesty's benevolent solicitude to preserve general peace, appears to this House to have, in a great measure, arisen from the failure of His Majesty's Ministers to make the most earnest, vigorous, and solemn protest against the pretended right of the sovereigns assembled at Verona to make war on Spain, in order to compel alterations in her political institutions, as well as against the subsequent pretentions of the French Government, that nations cannot lawfully enjoy any civil privileges but from the spontaneous grant of their kings; principles destructive of the rights of all independent states, which strike at the root of the British Constitution, and are subversive of His Majesty's legitimate title to the throne.

"Further, to declare to His Majesty, the surprise and sorrow with which this House has observed that His Majesty's Ministers should have advised the Spanish Government, while so unwarrantably menaced, to alter their Constitution, in the hope of averting invasion; a concession which alone would have involved the total sacrifice of national independence; and which was not even palliated by an assurance from France, that on receiving so dishonourable a submission, she would desist from her unprovoked aggression.

"Finally, to represent to His Majesty, that, in the judgment of this House, a tone of more dignified remonstrance would have been better calculated to preserve the peace of the continent, and thereby to secure this nation more effectually from the hazard of being involved in the calamities of war."

Mr. Stuart Wortley moved an amended Address—

"That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, to inform His Majesty that this House has taken into its most serious consideration the papers relating to the late negotiations, which have been laid before them by his Majesty's gracious command. To assure His Majesty of our entire concurrence in the principles which His Majesty has repeatedly declared with respect to intereference in the internal concerns of independent nations, and in His Majesty's just application of those principles, in the course of the late negotiations, to the case of Spain.

"To acknowledge with gratitude His Majesty's earnest and unwearied endeavours to preserve the peace of Europe.

"To express our deep regret that those endeavours have proved unavailing; and, while we rejoice that His Majesty has not become party to a war in which neither honour, nor treaty, nor the welfare of His Majesty's dominions, required His Majesty to engage, to assure His Majesty that, highly as we estimate the advantages of peace, particularly at the present moment, we shall be at all times ready to afford to His Majesty our most zealous and affectionate support, in any measures which His Majesty may find necessary to fulfil the obligations of national faith, to vindicate the dignity of his Crown, or to maintain the rights and interests of his people."

Towards the close of the discussion that arose on the *third* night of the adjourned debate upon Mr. Macdonald's motion respecting the negotiation relative to Spain, and on the amendment proposed by Mr. S. Wortley—

Mr. Canning rose, and said—I am exceedingly sorry, Mr. Speaker, to stand in the way of any honourable gentleman who wishes to address the House on this important occasion.* But, considering the length of time which the debate has already occupied—considering the late hour to which we have now arrived on the third night of discussion—I fear that my own strength, as well as that of the House, would be exhausted, if I were longer to delay the explanations which it is my duty to offer, of the conduct which His Majesty's Government have pursued, and of the principles by which they have been guided, through a course of negotiations as full of difficulty as any that have ever occupied the attention of a ministry, or the consideration of Parliament.

If gratitude be the proper description of that sentiment which one feels towards the unconscious bestower of an unintended benefit, I acknowledge myself sincerely grateful to the honourable gentleman (Mr. Macdonald) who has introduced the present motion. Although I was previously aware that the conduct of the Government in the late negotiations had met with the individual concurrence of many, perhaps of a great majority of the members of this House; although I had received intimations not to be mistaken, of the general satisfaction of the country; still, as from the manner in which the papers have been laid before Parliament, it was not the intention of the Government to call for any opinion upon them, I feel grateful to the honourable gentleman who has, in so candid and manly a manner, brought them under distinct discussion; and who, I hope, will become, however unwillingly, the instrument of embodying the sentiments of individuals and of the country into a vote of parliamentary approbation.

The Government stands in a singular situation with respect to these negotiations. They have maintained peace: they have avoided war. Peace or war—the one or the other—is usually the result of negotiations between independent states. But all the gentlemen on the other side, with one or two exceptions (exceptions which I mention with honour,) have set out with declaring, that whatever the question before the House may be, it is *not* a question of peace or war. Now this does appear to me to be a most whimsical declaration; especially when I recollect, that before this debate commenced, it was known—it was not disguis-

* Several gentlemen rose at the same time with Mr. Canning, to address the House, but they resumed their seats, as the call for Mr. Canning became loud and general.—Ed.

ed, it was vaunted without scruple or reserve—that the dispositions of those opposed to Ministers were most heroically warlike. It was not denied that they considered hostilities with France to be desirable as well as necessary. The cry "to arms" was raised, and caps were thrown up for war, from a crowd which, if not numerous, was yet loud in their exclamations. But now, when we come to inquire whence these manifestations of feeling proceeded, two individuals only have acknowledged that they have joined in the cry; and for the caps which have been picked up it is difficult to find a wearer.

But, Sir, whatever may be contended to be the question now before the House, the question which the Government had to consider, and on which they had to decide, was—peace or war? Disguise or overshadow it how you will, that question was at the bottom of all our deliberations; and I have a right to require that the negotiations should be considered with reference to that question; and to the decision, which, be it right or wrong, we early adopted upon that question—the decision that war was to be avoided, and peace, if possible, maintained.

How can we discuss with fairness, I might say with common sense, any transactions, unless in reference to the object which was in the view of those who carried them on? I repeat it, whether gentlemen in this House do or do not consider the question to be one of peace or war, the Ministers could not take a single step in the late negotiations, till they had well weighed that question; till they had determined what direction ought to be given to those negotiations, so far as that question was concerned. We determined that it was our duty, in the first instance, to endeavour to preserve peace if possible for all the world: next, to endeavour to preserve peace between the nations whose pacific relations appeared most particularly exposed to hazard; and failing in this, to preserve at all events peace for this country; but a peace consistent with the good faith, the interests, and the honour of the nation.

I am far from intending to assert that our decision in this respect is not a fit subject of examination. Undoubtedly the conduct of the Government is liable to a twofold trial. First, was the object of Ministers a right object? Secondly, did they pursue it in a right way? The first of these questions, whether Ministers did right in aiming at the preservation of peace, I postpone. I will return to the consideration of it hereafter. My first inquiry is as to the merits or demerits of the negotiations; and, in order to enter into that inquiry, I must set out with assuming, for the time, that peace is the object which we ought to have pursued.

With this assumption, I proceed to examine, whether the papers on the table show that the best means were employed for attaining the given object? If the object was unfit, there is an end

of any discussion as to the negotiations;—they must necessarily be wrong from the beginning to the end; it is only in reference to their fitness for the end proposed, that the papers themselves can be matter worthy of discussion.

In reviewing, then, the course of these negotiations, as directed to maintain, first, the peace of Europe; secondly, the peace between France and Spain; and lastly, peace for this country, they divide themselves naturally into three heads:—first, the negotiations at Verona; secondly, those with France; and thirdly, those with Spain. Of each of these in their order.

I say, emphatically, in their order; because there can be no greater fallacy than that which has pervaded the arguments of many honourable gentlemen, who have taken up expressions used in one stage of these negotiations, and applied them to another. An honourable baronet (Sir F. Burdett,) for instance, who addressed the House last night, employed,—or, I should rather say, adopted—a fallacy of this sort, with respect to an expression of mine in the extract of a despatch to the Duke of Wellington, which stands second in the first series of papers. It is but just to the honourable baronet to admit that his observation was adopted, not original; because, in a speech eminent for its ability, and for its fairness of reasoning (however I may disagree both with its principles and its conclusions,) this, which he condescended to borrow, was in truth the only very weak and ill-reasoned part. By my despatch of the 27th of September, the Duke of Wellington was instructed to declare, that "to any interference by force or menace on the part of the allies against Spain, come what may, His Majesty will not be party." Upon this the honourable baronet, borrowing, as I have said, the remark itself, and borrowing also the air of astonishment, which, as I am informed, was assumed by the noble proprietor of the remark, in another place exclaimed "'come what may!' What is the meaning of this ambiguous menace, this mighty phrase, 'that thunders in the index?'—'Come what may!' Surely a denunciation of war is to follow.—But no—no such thing.—Only—come what may—'His Majesty will be no party to such proceedings.' Was ever such a *bathos!* Such a specimen of sinking in policy? '*Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu?*'"

Undoubtedly, Sir, if the honourable baronet could show that this declaration was applicable to the whole course of the negotiations, or to a more advanced stage of them, there would be something in the remark, and in the inference which he wished to be drawn from it. But, before the declaration is condemned as utterly feeble and inconclusive, let us consider what was the question to which it was intended as an answer?—That question, Sir, was not as to what England would do in a war between France

and Spain; but as to what part she would take, if, in the Congress at Verona, a determination should be avowed by the allies to interfere forcibly into the affairs of Spain? What then was the meaning of the answer to that proposition,—that "come what might, His Majesty would be no party to such a project?" Why, plainly that His Majesty would not concur in such a determination, even though a difference with his allies, even though the dissolution of the alliance should be the consequence of his refusal. The answer, therefore, was exactly adapted to the question. This specimen of the bathos, this instance of perfection in the art of sinking, as it has been described to be, had its effect; and the Congress separated without determining in favour of any joint operation of a hostile character against Spain.

Sir, it is as true in politics, as in mechanics, that the test of skill and of success is to achieve the greatest purpose with the least power. If, then, it be found that, by this little intimation, we gained the object that we sought for, where was the necessity for greater flourish or greater pomp of words? An idle waste of effort would only have risked the loss of the object which by temperance we gained!

But where is the testimony in favour of the effect which this intimation produced?—I have it, both written and oral. My first witness is the Duke Mathieu de Montmorency; who states, in his official note of the 26th of December, that the measures conceived and proposed at Verona "would have been completely successful, if England had thought herself at liberty to concur in them." Such was the opinion entertained by the Plenipotentiary of France of the failure at Verona, and of the cause of that failure. What was the opinion of Spain? My voucher for that opinion is the despatch from Sir W. A'Court of the 7th of January; in which he describes the comfort and relief that were felt by the Spanish Government, when they learnt that the Congress at Verona had broken up with no other result, than the *bruta fulmina* of the three despatches from the courts in alliance with France. The third witness whom I produce, and not the least important, because an unwilling and most unexpected, and in this case surely a most unsuspected witness, is the honourable member for Westminster (Mr. Hobhouse,) who seems to have had particular sources of information as to what was passing at the Congress. According to the anti-chamber reports which were furnished to the honourable member (and which, though not always the most authentic, were in this instance tolerably correct,) it appears that there was to be no joint declaration against Spain; and it was, it seems, generally understood at Verona, that the instructions given to His Majesty's Plenipotentiary, by the liberal,—I beg pardon, to be quite accurate I am afraid I must say, the radical—Foreign Min-

ister of England, were the cause. Now the essence of those instructions were comprised in that little sentence, which has been so much criticised for meagreness and insufficiency.

In this case, then, the English Government is impeached, not for failure, but for success; and the honourable baronet, with taste not his own, has expressed himself dissatisfied with that success, only because the machinery employed to produce it did not make noise enough in its operation.

I contend, Sir, that, whatever might grow out of a separate conflict between Spain and France (though matter for grave consideration) was less to be dreaded, than that all the great Powers of the continent should have been arrayed together against Spain; and that although the first object, in point of importance, indeed, was to keep the peace altogether—to prevent *any* war against Spain—the first, in point of time, was to prevent a *general* war; to change the question from a question between the allies on one side, and Spain on the other, to a question between nation and nation. This, whatever the result might be, would reduce the quarrel to the size of ordinary events, and bring it within the scope of ordinary diplomacy. The immediate object of England, therefore, was to hinder the impress of a joint character from being affixed to the war—if war there must be—with Spain; to take care that the war should not grow out of an assumed jurisdiction of the Congress; to keep within reasonable bounds that predominating *areopagitical* spirit, which the memorandum of the British Cabinet of May, 1820, describes as "beyond the sphere of the original conception, and understood principles of the alliance,"—"an alliance never intended as a union for the government of the world, or for the superintendence of the internal affairs of other states." And this, I say, was accomplished.

With respect to Verona, then, what remains of accusation against the Government? It has been charged, not so much that the object of the Government was amiss, as that the negotiations were conducted in too low a tone. But the case was obviously one in which a high tone might have frustrated the object. I beg, then, of the House, before they proceed to adopt an Address, which exhibits more of the ingenuity of philologists than of the policy of statesmen—before they found a censure of the Government for its conduct in negotiations of transcendent practical importance, upon refinements of grammatical nicety—I beg that they will at least except from the proposed censure, the transactions at Verona, where I think I have shown that a tone of reproach and invective was unnecessary, and, therefore, would have been misplaced.

Among those who have made unjust and unreasonable objections to the tone of our representations at Verona, I should be

grieved to include the honourable member for Bramber (Mr. Wilberforce,) with whose mode of thinking I am too well acquainted, not to be aware that his observations are founded on other and higher motives than those of political controversy. My honourable friend, through a long and amiable life, has mixed in the business of the world without being stained by its contaminations: and he, in consequence, is apt to place—I will not say too high, but higher, I am afraid, than the ways of the world will admit, the standard of political morality. I fear my honourable friend is not aware how difficult it is to apply to politics those pure, abstract principles which are indispensable to the excellence of private ethics. Had we employed in the negotiations that serious moral strain which he might have been more inclined to approve, many of the gentlemen opposed to me would, I doubt not, have complained, that we had taken a leaf from the book of the Holy Alliance itself; that we had framed in their own language a canting protest against their purposes, not in the spirit of sincere dissent, but the better to cover our connivance. My honourable friend, I admit, would not have been of the number of those who would have so accused us: but he may be assured that he would have been wholly disappointed in the practical result of our didactic reprehensions. In truth, the principle of *non-interference* is one on which we were already irrecoverably at variance in opinion with the allies; it was no longer debateable ground. On the one hand, the alliance upholds the doctrine of an European police; this country, on the other hand, as appears from the memorandum already quoted, protests against that doctrine. The question is, in fact, settled, as many questions are, by each party retaining its own opinions; and the points reserved for debate are points only of practical application. To such a point it was that we directed our efforts at Verona.

There are those, however, who think that with a view of conciliating the continental powers, and of winning them away the more readily from their purposes, we should have addressed them as tyrants and despots—tramplers on the rights and liberties of mankind. This experiment would, to say the least of it, be a very singular one in diplomacy. It may be possible, though I think not very probable, that the allies would have borne such an address with patience; that they would have retorted only with the "whispering humbleness" of *Shylock* in the play, and said,—

> "Fair Sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
> You spurn'd me such a day; another time
> You called me—dog; and, for these courtesies,"

"we are ready to comply with whatever you desire." This, I say, may be possible. But I confess I would rather make such an experiment, when the issue of it was matter of more indiffer-

ence. Till then, I shall be loth to employ towards our allies a language, to which if they yielded, we should ourselves despise them. I doubt whether it is wise, even in this House, to indulge in such a strain of rhetoric; to call "wretches" and "barbarians," and a hundred other hard names, powers with whom, after all, if the map of Europe cannot be altogether cancelled, we must, even according to the admission of the most anti-continental politicians, maintain *some* internal intercourse. I doubt whether these sallies of raillery—these flowers of Billingsgate—are calculated to sooth, any more than to adorn; whether, on some occasion or other, we may not find that those on whom they are lavished have not been utterly unsusceptibe of feelings of irritation and resentment.—

"——Medio de fonte leporum
Surget amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat."

But be the language of good sense or good taste in this House what it may, clear I am that, in diplomatic correspondence, no Minister would be justified in risking the friendship of foreign countries, and the peace of his own, by coarse reproach and galling invective; and that even while we are pleading for the independence of nations, it is expedient to respect the independence of those with whom we plead. We differ widely from our continental allies on one great principle, it is true: nor do we, nor ought we to disguise that difference; nor to omit any occasion of practically upholding our own opinion. But every consideration, whether of policy or of justice, combines with the recollection of the counsels which we have shared, and of the deeds which we have achieved in concert and companionship, to induce us to argue our differences of opinion, however freely, with temper; and to enforce them, however firmly, without insult.

Before I quit Verona, there are other detached objections which have been urged against our connexion with the Congress, of which it may be proper to take notice. It has been asked why we sent a Plenipotentiary to the Congress at all? It may, perhaps, be right here to observe, that it was not originally intended to send the British Plenipotentiary to *Verona*. The Congress at Verona was originally convened solely for the consideration of the affairs of Italy, with which, the House is aware, England had declined to interfere two years before. England was, therefore, not to participate in those proceedings; and all that required her participation was to be arranged in a previous Congress at *Vienna*. But circumstances had delayed the Duke of Wellington's departure from England, so that he did not reach Vienna till many weeks after the time appointed. The sovereigns had waited to the last hour consistent with their Italian arrangements. The option was given to our Plenipotentiary to meet them on their return to Vienna; but it was thought, upon the whole, more con-

venient to avoid further delay; and the Duke of Wellington therefore proceeded to Verona.

Foremost among the objects intended to be discussed at Vienna, was the impending danger of hostilities between Russia and the Porte. I have no hesitation in saying that, when I accepted the seals of office, *that* was the object to which the anxiety of the British Government was principally directed. The negotiations at Constantinople had been carried on through the British Ambassador. So completely had this business been placed in the hands of Lord Strangford, that it was thought necessary to summon him to Vienna. Undoubtedly it might be presumed, from facts which were of public notoriety, that the affairs of Spain could not altogether escape the notice of the assembled Sovereigns and Ministers; but the bulk of the instructions which had been prepared for the Duke of Wellington related to the disputes between Russia and the Porte: and how little the British Government expected that so prominent a station would be assigned to the affairs of Spain, may be inferred from the Duke of Wellington's finding it necessary to write from Paris for specific instructions on that subject.

But it is said, that Spain ought to have been invited to send a Plenipotentiary to the Congress. So far as Great Britain is concerned, I answer—in the first place, as we did not wish the affairs of Spain to be brought into discussion at all, we could not take or suggest a preliminary step which would have seemed to recognize the necessity of such a discussion. In the next place, if Spain had been invited, the answer to that invitation might have produced a contrary effect to that which we aimed at producing. Spain must either have sent a Plenipotentiary, or have refused to do so. The refusal would not have failed to be taken by the allies as a proof of the *duresse* of the King of Spain. The sending one, if sent (as he must have been) jointly by the King of Spain and the Cortes, would at once have raised the whole question of the *legitimacy* of the existing Government of Spain, and would, almost to a certainty, have led to a joint declaration from the alliance, such as it was our special object to avoid.

But was there any thing in the general conduct of Great Britain at Verona, which lowered, as has been asserted, the character of England? Nothing like it. Our Ambassador at Constantinople returned from Verona to his post, with full powers, from Russia, to treat on her behalf with the Turkish Government; from which Government, on the other hand, he enjoys as full confidence as perhaps any power ever gave to one of its own Ambassadors. Such is the manifest decay of our authority,—so fallen in the eyes of all mankind is the character of this country, that two of the greatest states of the world are content to arrange their dif-

ferences through a British Minister, from reliance on British influence, and from confidence in British equity and British wisdom!

Such then was the issue of the Congress, as to the question between Russia and the Porte; the question (I beg it to be remembered) upon which we expected to be principally if not entirely engaged at that Congress, if it had been held (as was intended when the Duke of Wellington left London,) at Vienna.

As to Italy, I have already said, it was distinctly understood that we had resolved to take no share in the discussions. But it is almost needless to add that the evacuation of Naples and of Piedmont, was a measure with respect to which, though the Plenipotentiary of Great Britain was not entitled to give or to withhold the concurrence of his Government, he could not but signify its cordial approbation.

The result of the Congress as to Spain, was simply the discontinuance of diplomatic intercourse with that power, on the part of Austria, Russia, and Prussia; a step neither necessarily nor probably leading to war; perhaps (in some views) rather diminishing the risk of it; a step which had been taken by the same monarchies towards Portugal two years before, without leading to any ulterior consequences. The concluding expression of the Duke of Wellington's last note at Verona, in which he states that all that great Great Britain could do was to "endeavour to allay irritation at Madrid," describes all that in effect was necessary to be done there, after the Ministers of the allied powers should be withdrawn: and the House have seen in Sir W. A'Court's despatches how scrupulously the Duke of Wellington's promise was fulfilled by the representations of our Minister at Madrid. They have seen too, how insignificant the result of the Congress of Verona was considered at Madrid, in comparison with what had been apprehended.

The result of the Congress as to France, was a promise of countenance and support from the allies in three specified hypothetical cases;—1st, of an attack made by Spain on France; 2d, of any outrage on the person of the King or Royal Family of Spain; 3d, of any attempt to change the dynasty of that kingdom. Any unforeseen case, if any such should arise, was to be the subject of new deliberation, either between court and court, or in the conferences of their Ministers at Paris.

It is unnecessary now to argue, whether the cases specified are cases which would justify interference. It is sufficient for the present argument, that no one of these cases has occurred. France is therefore not at war on a case foreseen and provided for at Verona: and so far as I know, there has not occurred, since the Congress of Verona, any new case to which the assistance of the allies

can be considered as pledged; or which has, in fact, been made the subject of deliberation among the Ministers of the several courts who were members of the Congress.

We quitted Verona, therefore, with the satisfaction of having prevented any *corporate* act of force or menace, on the part of *the alliance*, against Spain; with the knowledge of the three cases on which alone France would be entitled to claim the support of her continental allies, in a conflict with Spain; and with the certainty that in any other case we should have to deal with France alone, in any interposition which we might offer for averting, or for terminating, hostilities.

From Verona we now come, with our Plenipotentiary, to Paris.

I have admitted on a former occasion, and I am perfectly prepared to repeat the admission, that, after the dissolution of the Congress of Verona, we might, if we had so pleased, have withdrawn ourselves altogether from any communication with France upon the subject of her Spanish quarrel; that, having succeeded in preventing a joint operation against Spain, we might have rested satisfied with that success, and trusted, for the rest, to the reflections of France herself on the hazards of the project in her contemplation. Nay, I will own that we did hesitate, whether we should not adopt this more selfish and cautious policy. But there were circumstances attending the return of the Duke of Wellington to Paris, which directed our decision another way. In the first place, we found, on the Duke of Wellington's arrival in that capital, that M. de Villele had sent back to Verona the drafts of the despatches of the three continental allies to their Ministers at Madrid, which M. de Montmorency had brought with him from the Congress;—had sent them back for re-consideration;—whether with a view to obtain a change in their context, or to prevent their being forwarded to their destination at all, did not appear: but, be that as it might, the reference itself was a proof of vacillation, if not of change in the French counsels.

In the second place, it was notorious that a change was likely to take place in the Cabinet of the Tuilleries, which did in fact take place shortly afterwards, by the retirement of M. de Montmorency: and M. de Montmorency was as notoriously the adviser of war against Spain.

In the third place, it was precisely at the time of the Duke of Wellington's return to Paris, that we received a direct and pressing overture from the Spanish Government, which placed us in the alternative of either affording our good offices to Spain, or of refusing them.

This last consideration would perhaps alone have been decisive; but when it was coupled with the others which I have stated, and with the hopes of doing good which they inspired, I think it will

be conceded to me, that we should have incurred a fearful responsibility, if we had not consented to make the effort, which we did make, to effect an adjustment between France and Spain, through our mediation.

Add to this,—that the question which we had now to discuss with France was a totally new question. It was no longer a question as to that general right of interference, which we had disclaimed and denied—disclaimed for ourselves, and denied for others,—in the conferences at Verona. France knew that upon that question our opinion was formed, and was unalterable. Our mediation therefore, if accepted by France, set out with the plain and admitted implication, that the discussion must turn, not on the general principle, but upon a case of exception to be made out by France, showing, to our satisfaction, wherein Spain had offended and aggrieved her.

It has been observed, as if it were an inconsistency, that at Verona a discouraging answer had been given by our Plenipotentiary to a hint that it might, perhaps, be advisable for us to offer our mediation with Spain; but that no sooner had the Duke of Wellington arrived at Paris, than he was instructed to offer that mediation. Undoubtedly this is true: and the difference is one which flows out of, and verifies, the entire course of our policy at Verona. We declined mediating between Spain and an alliance assuming to itself that character of general superintendence of the concerns of nations. But a negotiation between kingdom and kingdom, in the old, intelligible, accustomed, European form, was precisely the issue to which we were desirous of bringing the dispute between France and Spain. We eagerly grasped at this chance of preserving peace; and the more eagerly because, as I have before said, we received, at that precise moment, the application from Spain for our good offices.

But France refused our offered mediation: and it has been represented by some gentlemen, that the refusal of our mediation by France was an affront which we ought to have resented. Sir, speaking not of this particular instance only, but generally of the policy of nations, I contend, without fear of contradiction, that the refusal of a mediation is no affront; and that, after the refusal of mediation, to accept or to tender good offices is no humiliation. I beg leave to cite an authority on such points, which, I think, will not be disputed. Martens, in the dissertation which is prefixed to his collection of treaties, distinguishing between mediation and good offices, lays it down expressly, that a nation may accept the good offices of another after rejecting her mediation. The following is the passage to which I refer:

"Amicable negotiations may take place, either between the Powers themselves between whom a dispute has arisen, or jointly

with a third Power. The part to be taken by the latter, for the purpose of ending the dispute, differs essentially according to one or other of two cases; whether the Power, in the first place, merely interposes its good offices to bring about an agreement; or, secondly, is chosen by the two parties, to act as a mediator between them." And he adds—"mediation differs essentially from good offices; a state may accept the latter, at the same time that it rejects mediation."*

If there were any affront, indeed, in this case, it was an affront received equally from both parties; for Spain also declined our mediation, after having solicited our good offices, and solicited again our good offices, after declining our mediation. Nor is the distinction, however apparently technical, so void of reason as it may at first sight appear. There did not exist between France and Spain that corporeal, that material, that external ground of dispute, on which a mediation could operate. The offence, on the side of each party, was an offence rankling in the minds of each, from a long course of irritating discussions; it was to be allayed rather by appeal to the good sense of the parties, than by reference to any tangible object. To illustrate this:—suppose, for example, that France had in time of peace possessed herself, by a *coup-de-main*, of Minorca; or suppose any unsettled pecuniary claims, on one side or the other, or any litigation with respect to territory; a mediator might be called in, in the first case to recommend restitution, in the others to estimate the amount of claim, or to adjust the terms of compromise. There would, in either of these cases, be a tangible object for mediation. But where the difference was not external; where it arose from irritated feelings, from vague and perhaps exaggerated apprehensions, from charges not proved, nor perhaps capable of proof, on either side, in such cases each party felt that there was nothing definite and precise which either could submit to the decision of a judge, or to the discretion of an arbitrator; though each might at the same time feel that the good offices of a third party, friendly to both, would be well employed to sooth exasperation, to suggest concession, and without probing too deeply the merits of the dispute, to exhort to mutual forbearance and oblivion. The difference is perfectly intelligible; and, in fact, on the want of a due appreciation of the nature of that difference,

* "Les negociations à l'aimable peuvent avoir lieu entre les Puissances seules entre lesquelles la dispute s'est élevée, soit avec le concours d'une tierce Puissance. La part que celle-ci peut prendre pour terminer le litige, diffère essentiellement d'après que 1° Elle interpose seulement ses *bons offices* pour moyenner un accommodement, ou que 2° Elle est choisi par les deux parties pour leur servir de médiateur."—*Martens Droit de Gens, Tome VI. p.* 328.—And he subjoins in a note,—"La médiation diffère essentiellement de l'interposition de *bons offices;* on peut accepter ceux-ci, et rejetter la médiation."

turns much of the objection which has been raised against our having suggested concession to Spain.

Our mediation then, as I have said, was refused by Spain as well as by France: but before it was offered to France, our good offices had been asked by Spain. They were asked in the despatch of M. San Miguel, which has been quoted with so much praise, a praise in which I have no indisposition to concur. I agree in admiring that paper for its candour, manliness, and simplicity. But the honourable member for Westminster has misunderstood the early part of it. He has quoted it, as if it complained of some want of kindness on the part of the British Government towards Spain. The complaint was quite of another sort. It complained of want of communication from this Government of what was passing at Verona. The substance of this complaint was true; but in that want of communication there was no want of kindness. The date of M. San Miguel's despatch is the 15th of November; the Congress did not close till the 29th. It is true that I declined making any communication to Spain, of the transactions which were passing at Verona, whilst the Congress was still sitting. I appeal to any man of honour, whether it would not have been ungenerous to our allies, to make such a communication, so long as we entertained the smallest hope that the result of the Congress might not be hostile to Spain; and whether, considering the peculiar situation in which we were placed at that time, by the negotiation which we were carrying on at Madrid for the adjustment of our claims upon the Spanish Government, such a communication would not have been liable to the suspicion that we were courting favour with Spain, at the expense of our allies, for our own separate objects? We might, to be sure, have said to her, "You complain of our reserve, but you don't know how stoutly we are fighting your battles at Verona." But, Sir, I did hope that she never would have occasion to know that such battles had been fought for her. She never should have known it, if the negotiations had turned out favourably. When the result proved unfavourable, I immediately made a full disclosure of what had passed; and with that disclosure, it is unnecessary to say, the Spanish Government were, so far as Great Britain was concerned, entirely satisfied. The expressions of that satisfaction are scattered through Sir W. A'Court's reports of M. San Miguel's subsequent conversations; and are to be found particularly in M. San Miguel's note to Sir William A'Court, of the 12th of January.

In the subsequent part of the despatch of M. San Miguel, of the 15th of November, (which we are now considering) that Minister defines the course which he wishes Great Britain to pursue; and I desire to be judged and justified in the eyes of the warmest

advocate for Spain, by no other rules than those laid down in that despatch.

"The acts to which I allude," says M. San Miguel, "would in no wise compromise the most strictly conceived system of neutrality. Good offices, counsels, the reflections of one friend in favour of another, do not place a nation in concert of attack or defence with another, do not expose it to the enmity of the opposite party, even if they do not deserve its gratitude; they are not (in a word) effective aid, troops, arms, subsidies, which augment the force of one of the contending parties. It is of reason only that we are speaking; and it is with the pen of conciliation that a power, situated like Great Britain, might support Spain, without exposing herself to take part in a war, which she may perhaps prevent, with general utility." Again—"England might act in this manner; being able, ought she so to act? and if she ought, has she acted so? In the wise, just and generous views of the Government of St. James's, no other answer can exist than the affirmative. Why then does she not notify to Spain what has been done, and what it is proposed to do in that mediatory sense (*en aquel sentido mediador?*) Are there weighty inconveniences which enjoin discretion, which show the necessity of secrecy? They do not appear to an ordinary penetration."

I have already told the House why I had not made such a notification; I have told them also that as soon as the restraint of honour was removed, I did make it; and that the Spanish Government was perfectly satisfied with it. And with respect to the part which I have just quoted of the despatch of M. San Miguel, that in which he solicits our good offices, and points out the mode in which they are to be applied, I am sure the House will see that we scrupulously followed *his* suggestions.

Most true it is, and lamentable as true, that our representations to France were not successful. The honourable member for Westminster attributes our failure to the intrigues of Russia; and has told us of a bet made by the Russian Ambassador in a coffee-house at Paris, that he would force France into a war with Spain.

(Mr. Hobhouse disclaimed this version of his words. He had put it as a conjecture.)

I assure the honourable gentleman that I understood him to state it as a fact: but if it was only conjecture, it is of a piece with the whole of the address which he supports; every paragraph of which teems with guesses and suppositions, equally groundless.

The honourable member for Bridgenorth (Mr. Whitmore) has given a more correct opinion of the cause of the war. I believe, with him, that the war was forced on the French Government by the violence of a political party in France. I believe that at

one time the French Government hoped to avert it; and that, up to the latest period, some members of that Cabinet would gladly have availed themselves of the smallest loophole through which the Spanish Government would have enabled them to find their retreat. But we, forsooth, are condemned as dupes, because our opponents gratuitously ascribe to France one settled, systematic and invariable line of policy; because it is assumed that, from the beginning, France had but one purpose in view; and that she merely amused the British Cabinet from time to time with pretences, which we ought to have had the sagacity to detect. If so, the French Government made singular sacrifices to appearance. M. de Montmorency was sent to Verona; he negotiated with the allies; he brought home a result so satisfactory to France, that he was made a duke for his services. He enjoyed his new title but a few days when he quitted his office. On this occasion I admit that I was a dupe—I believe all the world were dupes with me—for all understood this change of Ministers to be indicative of a change in the counsels of the French Cabinet, a change from war to peace. For eight and forty hours I certainly was under that delusion; but I soon found that it was only a change, not of the question of war, but of the character of that question; a change —as it was somewhat quaintly termed—from *European* to *French*. The Duke M. de Montmorency, finding himself unable to carry into effect the system of policy which he had engaged, at the Congress, to support in the Cabinet at Paris, in order to testify the sincerity of his engagement, promptly and most honourably resigned. But this event, honourable as it is to the Duke M. de Montmorency, completely disproves the charge of dupery brought against us. That man is not a dupe, who, not foreseeing the vacillations of others, is not prepared to meet them; but he who is misled by false pretences, put forward for the purpose of misleading him. Before a man can be said to be duped, there must have been some settled purpose concealed from him, and not discovered by him; but here there was a variation of purpose; a variation too, which so far from considering it then, or now, as an evil, we then hailed and still consider as a good. It was no dupery on our part to acquiesce in a change of counsel on the part of the French Cabinet, which proved the result of the Congress at Verona to be such as I have described it, by giving to the quarrel with Spain the character of a *French* quarrel.

If gentlemen will read over the correspondence about our offer of mediation, with this key, they will understand exactly the meaning of the difference of tone between the Duke M. de Montmorency and M. de Chateaubriand: they will observe that when I first described the question respecting Spain as a *French* ques-

tion, the Duke de Montmorency loudly maintained it to be a question *toute Europeenne;* but that M. de Chateaubriand, upon my repeating the same description in the sequel of that correspondence, admitted it to be a question at once and equally *toute Française, et toute Europeenne:* an explanation the exact meaning of which I acknowledge I do not precisely understand; but which, if it does not distinctly admit the definition of a question *Française,* seems at least to negative M. de Montmorency's definition of a question TOUTE *Europeenne.*

In thus unavoidably introducing the names of the French Ministers, I beg I may be understood to speak of them with respect and esteem. Of M. de Montmorency I have already said, that in voluntarily relinquishing his office, he made an honourable sacrifice to the sincerity of his opinions, and to the force of obligations which he had undertaken but could not fulfil. As to M. de Chateaubriand, with whom I have the honour of a personal acquaintance, I admire his talents and his genius; I believe him to be a man of an upright mind, of untainted honour, and most capable of discharging adequately the high functions of the station which he fills. Whatever I may think of the political conduct of the French Government in the present war, I think this tribute justly due to the individual character of M. de Chateaubriand. I think it further due to him in fairness to correct a misrepresentation to which I have, however innocently, exposed him. From a despatch of Sir W. A'Court, which has been laid upon the table of the House, it appears as if M. de Chateaubriand had spoken of the failure of the mission of Lord F. Somerset as of an event which had actually happened, at a time when that nobleman had not even reached Madrid. I have recently received a corrected copy of that despatch, in which the tense employed in speaking of Lord F. Somerset's mission is not *past* but *future;* and the failure of that mission is only anticipated, not announced as having occurred. The despatch was sent in *cipher* to M. Lagarde (from whom Sir W. A'Court received his copy of it,) and nothing is more natural in such cases than a mistake in the inflection of a verb.

It is also just to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, to allude (although it is rather out of place in this argument) to an other circumstance, of which I yesterday received an explanation. A strong feeling has been excited in this country by the reported capture of a rich Spanish prize in the West Indies by a French ship of war. If the French captain had acted under orders, most unquestionably those orders must have been given at a time when the French Government was most warm in its professions of a desire to maintain peace. If this had been the case, it might still perhaps be doubtful whether this country ought to be

the first to complain. Formal declarations of war, anterior to warlike acts, have been for some time growing into disuse in Europe. The war in 1756, and the Spanish war in 1804, both, it must be admitted, commenced with premature capture and anticipated hostilities on the part of Great Britain. But—be that as it may—I wrote to Sir C. Stuart, as soon as the intelligence reached this country, desiring him to require an explanation of the affair; the reply, as I have said, arrived yesterday by a telegraphic communication from Paris. It runs thus:—"Paris, April 28, 1823. We have not received any thing official as to the prize made by the Jean Bart. This vessel had no instructions to make any such capture. If this capture has really been made, there must have been some particular circumstances which were the cause of it. In any case, the French Government will see justice done."—I have thought it right to clear up this transaction, and to show the promptitude of the French Government in giving the required explanation. I now return to the more immediate subject of discussion, and pass from France to Spain.

It has been maintained that it was an insult to the Spanish Government to ask them, as we did, for assurances of the safety of the Royal Family of Spain. Have I not already accounted for that suggestion? I have shown that one of the causes of war, prospectively agreed upon at Verona, was any act of personal violence to the King of Spain or his family. I endeavoured, therefore, to obtain such assurances from Spain as should remove the apprehension of any such outrage; not because the British Cabinet thought those assurances necessary, but because it might be of the greatest advantage to the cause of Spain, that we should be able to proclaim *our* conviction, that upon this point there was nothing to apprehend; that we should thus possess the means of proving to France that she had no cause, arising out of the conference at Verona, to justify a war. Such assurances Spain might have refused—she would have refused them—to France. To us she might—she did give them—without lowering her dignity.

And here I cannot help referring, with some pain, to a speech delivered by an honourable and learned friend of mine (Sir J. Mackintosh) last night, in which he dwelt upon this subject in a manner totally unlike himself. He pronounced a high-flown eulogy upon M. Arguelles; he envied him, he said, for many things, but he envied him most for the magnanimity which he had shown in sparing his Sovereign.

[Sir J. Mackintosh said that he had only used the word "sparing," as sparing the *delicacy*, not the *life* of the King.]

I am glad to have occasioned this explanation. I have no doubt that my honourable and learned friend must have intended so to express himself, for I am sure that he must agree with me in

thinking that nothing could be more pernicious than to familiarize the world with the contemplation of events so calamitous. I am sure that my honourable and learned friend would not be forward to anticipate for the people of Spain an outrage so alien to their character.

Great Britain asked these assurances then without offence; forasmuch as she asked them—not for herself—not because she entertained the slightest suspicion of the supposed danger, but because that danger constituted one of those hypothetical cases on which alone France could claim eventual support from the allies; and because she wished to be able to satisfy France that she was not likely to have such a justification.

In the same spirit, and with the like purpose, the British Cabinet proposed to Spain to do that, without which not only the disposition but perhaps the power was wanting on the part of the French Government, to recede from the menacing position which it had somewhat precipitately occupied.

And this brings me to the point on which the longest and fiercest battle has been fought against us—the suggestion to Spain of the expediency of modifying her Constitution. As to this point, I should be perfectly contented, Sir, to rest the justification of Ministers upon the argument stated the night before last by a noble young friend of mine (Lord Francis Leveson Gower,) in a speech which, both from what it promised and what it performed, was heard with delight by the House. "If Ministers," my noble friend observed, "had refused to offer such suggestions, and if, being called to account for that refusal, had rested their defence on the ground of delicacy to Spain, would they not have been taunted with something like these observations? 'What! had you not among you a member of your Government, sitting at the same council board, a man whom you ought to have considered as an instrument furnished by Providence, at once to give efficacy to your advice, and to spare the delicacy of the Spanish nation? Why did you not employ the Duke of Wellington for this purpose? Did you forget the services which he had rendered to Spain, or did you imagine that Spain had forgotten them? Might not any advice, however unpalatable, have been offered by such a benefactor, without liability to offence or misconstruction? Why did you neglect so happy an opportunity, and leave unemployed so fit an agent? Oh! blind to the interests of the Spanish people —Oh! insensible to the feelings of human nature!'"—Such an argument would have been unanswerable; and, however the intervention of Great Britain has failed, I would much rather have to defend myself against the charge of having tendered advice officiously, than against that of having stupidly neglected to employ the means which the possession of such a man as the Duke

of Wellington put into the hands of the Government, for the salvation of a nation which he had already once rescued from destruction.

With respect to the memorandum of the noble duke, which has been so much the subject of cavil—it is the offspring of a manly mind, pouring out its honest opinions with an earnestness characteristic of sincerity, and with a zeal too warm to stand upon nice and scrupulous expression. I am sure that it contains nothing but what the noble duke really thought. I am sure that what he thought at the time of writing it, he would still maintain; and what he thinks and maintains regarding Spain, must, I should imagine, be received with respect and confidence by all who do not believe themselves to be better qualified to judge of Spain than he is. Whatever may be thought of the Duke of Wellington's suggestions here, confident I am that there is not an individual in Spain, to whom this paper was communicated, who took it as an offence, or who did not do full justice to the motives of the adviser, whatever they might think of the immediate practicability of his advice. Would to God that some part of it, at least, had been accepted!—I admit the point of honour—I respect those who have acted upon it—I do not blame the Spaniards that they refused to make any sacrifice to temporary necessity:—but still—still I lament the result of that refusal. Of this I am quite sure, that even if the Spaniards were justified in objecting to concede, it would have been a most romantic point of honour which should have induced Great Britain to abstain from recommending concession.

It is said that every thing was required of Spain, and nothing of France. I utterly deny it. I have already described the relative situation of the two countries. I will repeat, though the term has been so much criticised, that they had no *external* point of difference. France said to Spain, "Your revolution disquiets me;" and Spain replied to France, "Your army of observation disquiets me." There were but two remedies to this state of things—war or concession; and why was England fastidiously, and (as I think) most mistakenly, to say, "Our notions of non-interference are so strict that we cannot advise you even for your safety: though whatever concession you may make may probably be met by corresponding concession on the part of France?"—Undoubtedly the withdrawing of the army of observation would have been, if not purely, yet in a great degree, an *internal* measure on the part of France; and one which, though I will not assert it to be precisely equivalent with the alteration by Spain of any fault in her Constitution; yet, considering its immediate practical advantage to Spain, would not, I think, have been too dearly purchased by such an alteration. That France was called

upon to make the corresponding concession, appears as well from the memorandum of the Duke of Wellington, as from the despatches of Sir Charles Stuart, and from mine; and this concession was admitted by M. San Miguel to be the object which Spain most desired. England saw that war must be the inevitable consequence of the existing state of things between the two kingdoms: and, if something were yielded on the one side, it would undoubtedly have been for England to insist upon a countervailing sacrifice on the other.

The propriety of maintaining the army of observation depended wholly upon the truth of the allegations on which France justified its continuance. I do not at all mean to say that the truth of those allegations was to be taken for granted. But what I do mean to say is, that it was not the business of the British Government to go into a trial and examine evidence, to ascertain the foundation of the conflicting allegations on either side. It was clear that nothing but some modification of the Spanish Constitution could avert the calamity of war; and in applying the means in our hands to that object (an object interesting not to Spain only, but to England, and to Europe) it was not our business to take up the cause of either party, and to state it with the zeal and with the aggravations of an advocate; but rather to endeavour to reduce the demands of each within such limits as might afford a reasonable hope of mutual conciliation.

Grant, even, that the justice was wholly on the side of Spain; still, in entreating the Spanish Ministers, with a view to peace, to abate a little of their just pretensions, the British Government did not go beyond the duty which the law of nations prescribes. No, Sir, it was our duty to induce Spain to relax something of her positive right, for a purpose so essential to her own interests and to those of the world. Upon this point let me fortify myself once more, by reference to the acknowledged law of nations. "The duty of a mediator," says Vattel,* "is to favour well founded claims, and to effect the restoration to each party of what belongs to him; but he ought not scrupulously to insist on rigid justice. He is a conciliator, not a judge: his business is to procure peace; and he ought to induce him who has right on his side, to relax something of his pretensions, if necessary, with a view to so great a blessing."

The conduct of the British Government is thus fortified by an

* "Le devoir d'un Médiateur est bien de favoriser le bon droit, de faire rendre à chacun ce qui lui appartient; mais il ne doit point insister scrupuleusement sur une justice rigoureuse. Il est conciliateur, et not pas juge; sa vocation est de procurer la paix; et il doit porter celui qui a le droit de son côté, à relâcher quelque chose s'il est nécessaire dans la vue d'un si grand bien.—L. II. c. 18, sec. 328.

authority, not interested, not partial, not special in its application, but universal, untinctured by favour, uninfluenced by the circumstances of any particular case, and applicable to the general concerns and dealings of mankind. Is it not plain then that we have been guilty of no violation of duty towards the weaker party? Our duty, Sir, was discharged not only without any unfriendly bias against Spain, but with tenderness, with preference, with partiality in her favour; and while I respect (as I have already said) the honourable obstinacy of the Spanish character, so deeply am I impressed with the desirableness of peace for Spain, that, should the opportunity recur, I would again, without scruple, tender the same advice to her Government. The point of honour was in truth rather individual than national; but the safety put to hazard was assuredly that of the whole nation. Look at the state of Spain, and consider whether the filling up a blank in the scheme of her representative Constitution with an amount more or less high, of qualification for the members of the Cortes—whether the promising to consider hereafter of some modifications in other questionable points—was too much to be conceded, if by such a sacrifice peace could have been preserved! If we had declined to interfere on such grounds of *punctilio*, would not the very passage which I have now read from Vattel, as our vindication, have been brought against us with justice as a charge?

I regret, deeply regret, for the sake of Spain, that our efforts failed. I must fairly add, that I regret it for the sake of France also. Convinced as I may be of the injustice of the course pursued by the French Government, I cannot shut my eyes to its impolicy. I cannot lose sight of the gallant character and mighty resources of the French nation, of the central situation of France, and of the weight which she ought to preserve in the scale of Europe; I cannot be insensible to the dangers to which she is exposing herself; nor omit to reflect what the consequences may be to that country—what the consequences to Europe—of the hazardous enterprise in which she is now engaged; and which, for aught that human prudence can foresee, may end in a dreadful revulsion. As mere matter of abstract right, morality, perhaps, ought to be contented when injury recoils upon an aggressor. But such a revulsion as I am speaking of would not affect France alone: it would touch the continental states at many points; it would touch even Great Britain. France could not be convulsed without communicating danger to the very extremities of Europe. With this conviction, I confess I thought any sacrifice, short of national honour or national independence, cheap, to prevent the first breach in that pacific settlement, by which the miseries and agitations of the world have been so recently composed.

I apologize, Sir, for the length of time which I have consumed

upon these points. The case is complicated: the transactions have been much misunderstood, and the opinions regarding them are various and discordant. The true understanding of the case, however, and the vindication of the conduct of Government, would be matters of comparatively light importance, if censure or approbation for the past were the only result in contemplation. But, considering that we are now only at the threshold, as it were, of the war, and that great events are pending, in which England may hereafter be called upon to take her part, it is of the utmost importance that no doubt should rest upon the conduct and policy of this country.

One thing more there is, which I must not forget to notice with regard to the advice given to Spain. I have already mentioned the Duke of Wellington as the chosen instrument of that counsel: a Spaniard by adoption, by title, and by property, he had a right to offer the suggestions which he thought fit, to the Government of the country which had adopted him. But it has been complained, that the British Government would have induced the Spaniards to break an oath: that, according to the oath taken by the Cortes, the Spanish institutions could be revised only at the expiration of eight years; and that, by calling upon the Cortes to revise them before that period was expired, we urged them to incur the guilt of perjury. Sir, this supposed restriction is assumed gratuitously.

There are two opinions upon it in Spain. One party calculates the eight years from the time which has elapsed since the first establishment of the Constitution; the other reckons only the time during which it has been in operation. The latter insist that the period has yet at least two years to run, because the Constitution has been in force only from 1812 to 1814, and from 1820 to the present time: those who calculate from the original establishment of it in 1812, argue of course that more than the eight years are already expired, and that the period of revision is fully come. I do not pretend to decide between these two constructions; but I assert that they are both Spanish constructions. A Spaniard of no mean name and reputation—one eminently friendly to the Constitution of 1812—by whose advice Ministers were in this respect guided, gave it as his opinion, that not only consistently with their oath, but in exact fulfilment of it, the Spainiards might now reconsider and modify their Constitution—that they might have done so nearly three years ago. "Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?" say the Cortes. The answer is, "No; we do not ask you to lay perjury upon your souls; for as good a Spanish soul as is possessed by any of you declares, that you may now, in due conformity to your oaths, reconsider, and, where advisable, reform your Constitution." Do we not know what constructions have been put in

this country, on the coronation oath, as to its operation on what is called the Catholic Question? Will any man say that it has been my intention, or the intention of my honourable friend, the member for Bramber, every time that we have supported a motion for communicating to our Roman Catholic fellow subjects the full benefit of the Constitution, to lay perjury on the soul of the sovereign?

Sir, I do not pretend to decide whether the number of legislative chambers in Spain should be one, or two, or three. In God's name, let them try what experiment in political science they will, provided we are not affected by the trial. All that Great Britain has done on this occasion has been, not to disturb the course of political experiment, but to endeavour to avert the calamity of war. Good God! when it is remembered how many evils are compressed into that little word "war,"—is it possible for any man to hesitate in urging every expedient that could avert it, without sacrificing the honour of the party to which his advice was tendered? Most earnestly do I wish that the Duke of Wellington had succeeded: but great is the consolation that, according to the best accounts from Spain, his counsels have not been misunderstood there, however they have been misrepresented here. I believe that I might with truth go further, and say, that there are those in Spain who now repent the rigid course pursued, and who are beginning to ask each other—why they held out so pertinaciously against suggestions at once so harmless and so reasonable? My wish was, that Spain should be saved; that she should be saved before the extremity of evil had come upon her, even by the making of those concessions, which, in the heat of national pride, she refused. Under any circumstances, however, I have still another consolation—the consolation of knowing, that never, from the commencement of these negotiations, has Spain been allowed by the British Government to lie under the delusion that her refusal of all modifications would induce England to join her in the war. The very earliest communication made to Spain forbade her to entertain any such reliance. She was told at the beginning, as she was told in the end, that neutrality was our determined policy. From the first to the last, there was never the slightest variation in this language—never a pause during which she could be for one moment in doubt as to the settled purpose of England.

France, on the contrary, was never assured of the neutrality of England, till my despatch of the 31st of March (the last of the first series of printed papers,) was communicated to the French Ministry at Paris. The speech of the King of France, on the opening of the Chambers (I have no difficulty in saying,) excited not only strong feelings of disapprobation, by the principles which

it avowed, but serious apprehensions for the future, from the designs which it appeared to disclose. I have no difficulty in saying that the speech delivered from the British throne at the commencement of the present session, did, as originally drawn, contain an avowal of our intention to preserve neutrality; but, upon the arrival of the King of France's speech, the paragraph containing that avowal was withdrawn. Nay, I have no difficulty in adding, that I plainly told the French Charge d'Affaires, that such an intimation had been intended, but that it was withdrawn, in consequence of the speech of the King, his master. Was this truckling to France?

It was not, however, on account of Spain that the pledge of neutrality was withdrawn: it was withdrawn upon principles of general policy on the part of this country. It was withdrawn, because there was that in the King of France's speech, which appeared to carry the two countries (France and England) back to their position in older times, when France, as regarded the affairs of Spain, had been the successful rival of England. Under such circumstances, it behoved the English Ministers to be upon their guard. We *were* upon our guard. Could we prove our caution more than by withholding that assurance, which would at once have set France at ease? We *did* withhold that assurance. But it was one thing to withhold the declaration of neutrality, and another to vary the purpose.

Spain, then, I repeat, has never been misled by the British Government. But I fear, nevertheless, that a notion was in some way or other created at Madrid, that if Spain would but hold out resolutely, the Government of England would be forced, by the popular voice in this country, to take part in her favour. I infer no blame against any one; but I do firmly believe that such a notion was propagated in Spain, and that it had great share in producing the peremptory refusal of any modification of the Constitution of 1812. Regretting, as I do, the failure of our endeavours to adjust those disputes, which now threaten so much evil to the world, I am free at least from the self-reproach of having contributed to that delusion in the mind of the Spanish Government or nation, as to the eventual decision of England, which, if it existed in such a degree as to produce reliance upon our co-operation, must have added to the other calamities of her present situation, the bitterness of disappointment. This disappointment, Sir, was from the beginning, certain, inevitable: for the mistake of those who excited the hopes of Spain was not only as to the conduct of the British Government, but as to the sentiments of the British nation. No man, whatever his personal opinion or feeling may be, will pretend that the opinion of the country is not decidedly against war. No man will deny that, if Ministers

had plunged the country into a war for the sake of Spain, they would have come before Parliament with a heavier weight of responsibility than had ever lain upon the shoulders of any Government. I impute not to those who may thus have misled the Spanish Ministry, the intention either of thwarting (though such was the effect) the policy of their own Government, or of aggravating (though such must be the consequence) the difficulties of Spain. But for myself I declare, that even the responsibility of plunging this country into an unnecessary war, would have weighed less heavily upon my conscience, than that, which I thank God I have not incurred, of instigating Spain to the war, by exciting hopes of assistance which I had not the means of realizing.

I have thus far, Sir, taken the liberty of assuming that the late negotiations were properly directed to the preservation of peace; and have argued the merits of the negotiations, on that assumption. I am aware that it is still to be established, that peace, under all the circumstances of the times, *was* the proper course for this country. I address myself now to that branch of the subject.

I believe I may venture to take it as universally admitted, that any question of war involves not only a question of right, not only a question of justice, but also a question of expediency. I take it to be admitted on all hands, that before any government determines to go to war, it ought to be convinced not only that it has just cause of war, but that there is something which renders war its duty: a duty compounded of two considerations—the first, what the country may owe to others; the second, what she owes to herself. I do not know whether any gentleman on the other side of the House, has thought it worth while to examine and weigh these considerations; but Ministers had to weigh them well before they took their resolution. Ministers did weigh them well; wisely I hope; I am sure conscientiously and deliberately: and, if they came to the decision that peace was the policy prescribed to them, that decision was founded on a reference, first, to the situation of Spain; secondly, to the situation of France; thirdly, to the situation of Portugal; fourthly, to the situation of the Alliance; fifthly, to the peculiar situation of England; and lastly, to the general state of the world. And first, Sir, as to Spain.

The only gentleman, by whom (as it seems to me) this part of the question has been fairly and boldly met, is the honourable member for Westminster (Mr. Hobhouse;) who, in his speech of yesterday evening—(a speech which, however extravagant, as I may perhaps think, in its tone, was perfectly intelligible and straight-forward,) not only declared himself openly for war, but, aware that one of the chief sinews of war is money, did no less

than offer a subsidy to assist in carrying it on. He declared that his constituents were ready to contribute all their means to invigorate the hands of Government in the war; but he annexed, to be sure, the trifling condition, that the war was to be a war of people against kings. Now this, which, it must be owned, was no unimportant qualification of the honourable member's offer of assistance, is also one to which, I confess, I am not quite prepared to accede. I do not immediately remember any case in which such a principle of war has been professed by any government, except in the decree of the National Convention of the year 1793, which laid the foundation of the war between this country and France—the decree which offered assistance to all nations who would shake off the tyranny of their rulers.

Even the honourable member for Westminster, therefore, is after all but conditionally in favour of war: and, even in that conditional pledge he has been supported by so few members that I cannot help suspecting that if I were to proceed on the faith of his encouragement, I should find myself left with the honourable gentleman, pretty nearly in the situation of King James with his bishops. King James, we all remember, asked Bishop Neale if he might not take his subjects' money without the authority of Parliament? To which Bishop Neale replied, "God forbid, Sire, but you should; you are the breath of our nostrils." The King then turned to Bishop Andrews, and repeated the same question; when Bishop Andrews answered, "Sire, I think it is lawful for your Majesty to take my brother Neale's money, for he offers it." Now, if I were to appeal to the House, on the hint of the honourable gentleman, I should, indeed, on his own terms, have an undoubted right to the money of the honourable gentleman; but if the question were put, for instance, to the honourable member for Surrey (Mr. Holme Sumner,) *his* answer would probably be, "You may take my brother of Westminster's money, as he says his constituents have authorized him to offer it; but *my* constituents have certainly given me no such authority."

But however single, or however conditional, the voice of the honourable member for Westminster is still for war; and he does me the honour to tempt me to take the same course, by reminding me of a passage in my political life to which I shall ever look back with pride and satisfaction. I allude to that period when the bold spirit of Spain burst forth indignant against the oppression of Buonaparte. Then unworthily filling the same office which I have the honour to hold at the present moment, I discharged the glorious duty (if a portion of glory may attach to the humble instrument of a glorious cause) of recognizing without delay the rights of the Spanish nation, and of at once adopting that gallant people into the closest amity with England. It was indeed a stirring,

a kindling occasion: and no man who has a heart in his bosom, can think even now of the noble enthusiasm, the animated exertions, the undaunted courage, the unconquerable perseverance of the Spanish nation, in a cause apparently so desperate, finally so triumphant,—without feeling his blood glow and his pulses quicken with tumultous throbs of admiration. But I must remind the honourable gentleman of three circumstances, calculated to qualify a little the feelings of enthusiasm, and to suggest lessons of caution; I must remind him first of the state of this country,—secondly, of that of Spain—at that period, as compared with the present:—and thirdly, of the manner in which the enterprise in behalf of Spain was viewed by certain parties in this country. We are now at peace. In 1808, we were already at war—we were at war with Buonaparte, the invader of Spain. In 1808, we were, as now, the allies of Portugal, bound by treaty to defend her from aggression; but Portugal was at that time not only menaced by the power of France, but overrun by it; her Royal Family was actually driven into exile, and their kingdom occupied by the French. Bound by treaty to protect Portugal, how natural was it, under such circumstances, to extend our assistance to Spain!—Again. Spain was at that time, comparatively speaking, a united nation. I do not mean to say that there were no differences of opinion; I do not mean to deny that some few among the higher classes had been corrupted by the gold of France: but still the great bulk of the people were united in one cause; their loyalty to their Sovereign had survived his abdication; and though absent and a prisoner, the name of Ferdinand VII. was the rallying point of the nation. But let the House look at the situation in which England would be placed, should she, at the present moment, march her armies to the aid of Spain. As against France alone, her task might not be more difficult than before; but is it only with France that she would now have to contend? England could not strike in the cause of Spain against the invading foe alone. Fighting in Spanish ranks, should we not have to point our bayonets against Spanish bosoms? But this is not the whole of the difference between the present moment, and the year 1808. In 1808, we had a large army prepared for foreign service; a whole war establishment ready appointed; and the simple question was, in what quarter we could best apply its force against the common enemy of England, of Spain, of Portugal,—of Europe. This country had no hopes of peace: our abstinence from the Spanish war could in no way have accelerated the return of that blessing; and the Peninsula presented, plainly and obviously, the theatre of exertion in which we could contend with most advantage. Compare, then, I say, that period with the present; in which

none of the inducements, or incitements, which I have described as belonging to the opportunity of 1808, can be found.

But is the absence of inducement and incitement all? Is there no positive discouragement in the recollections of that time, to check too hasty a concurrence in the warlike views of the honourable member for Westminster? When England, in 1808, under all the circumstances which I have enumerated, did not hesitate to throw upon the banks of the Tagus, and to plunge into all the difficulties of the Peninsula war, an army destined to emerge in triumph through the Pyrenees,—was that course hailed with sympathy and exultation by all parties in the state? Were there no warnings against danger? no chastisements for extravagance? no doubts—no complaints—no charges of rashness and impolicy? I have heard of persons, Sir,—persons of high authority, too—who, in the very midst of the general exaltation of spirit throughout this country, declared that, "in order to warrant England in embarking in a military co-operation with Spain, something more was necessary to show that the Spanish cause was just." "It was not enough," said these enlightened monitors, "it was not enough that the attack of France upon the Spanish nation was unprincipled, perfidious, and cruel—that the resistance of Spain was dictated by every principle, and sanctioned by every motive, honourable to human nature—that it made every English heart burn with a holy zeal to lend its assistance against the oppressor: there were other considerations of a less brilliant and enthusiastic, but not less necessary and commanding nature, which should have preceded the determination of putting to hazard the most valuable interests of the country. It is not with nations as with individuals. Those heroic virtues which shed a lustre upon individual man, must, in their application to the conduct of nations, be chastened by reflections of a more cautious and calculating cast. That generous magnanimity and high-minded disinterestedness, proud distinctions of national virtue (and happy were the people whom they characterize,) which, when exercised at the risk of every personal interest, in the prospect of every danger, and at the sacrifice even of life itself, justly immortalize the hero, cannot and ought not to be considered justifiable motives of political action, because nations cannot afford to be chivalrous and romantic." History is philosophy teaching by example; and the words of the wise are treasured for ages that are to come.

"The age of chivalry," said Mr. Burke, "is gone; and an age of economists and calculators has succeeded." That an age of economists and calculators is come, we have indeed every night's experience. But what would be the surprise, and at the same time the gratification, of the mighty spirit of Burke, at finding his splendid lamentation so happily disproved!—at seeing that

chivalrous spirit, the total extinction of which he deplored, revive, *qua minime reris*, on the very benches of the economists and calculators themselves! But, in truth, Sir, it revives at a most inconvenient opportunity. It would be as ill-advised to follow a chivalrous impulse now, as it would in 1808 have been inexcusable to disobey it. Under the circumstances of 1808, I would again act as I then acted. But though inapplicable to the period to which it was applied, I confess I think the caution which I have just quoted does apply, with considerable force, to the present moment.

Having shown, then, that in reference to the state of Spain, war was not the course prescribed by any rational policy to England, let us next try the question in reference to France.

I do not stop here to refute and disclaim again the unworthy notion, which was early put forward, but has been since silently retracted and disowned, that it might have been advisable to try the chance of what might be effected by a *menace* of war, unsupported by any serious design of carrying that menace into execution. Those by whom this manœuvre was originally supposed to be recommended are, I understand, anxious to clear themselves from the suspicion of having intended to countenance it, and profess indeed to wonder by whom such an idea can have been entertained. Be it so: I will not press the point invidiously—it is not necessary for my argument. I have a right then to take it as admitted, that we could not have threatened war, without being thoroughly prepared for it; and that, in determining to threaten, we must virtually have determined (whatever the chances of escaping that ultimate result,) to go to war—that the determinations were in fact identical.

Neither will I discuss over again that other proposition, already sufficiently exhausted in former debates, of the applicability of a purely maritime war to a struggle in aid of Spain, in the campaign by which her fate is to be decided. I will not pause to consider what consolation it would have been to the Spanish nation—what source of animation, and what encouragement to perseverance in resisting their invader—to learn, that though we could not, as in the last war, march to their aid, and mingle our banners with theirs in battle, we were, nevertheless, scouring their coasts for prizes, and securing to ourselves an indemnification for our own expenses in the capture of Martinico.

To go to war therefore directly, unsparingly, vigorously against France, in behalf of Spain, in the way in which alone Spain could derive any essential benefit from our co-operation—to join her with heart and hand—or to wrap ourselves up in a real and *bona fide* neutrality—that was the true alternative.

Some gentlemen have blamed me for a want of enthusiasm

upon this occasion—some too, who formerly blamed me for an excess of that quality; but though I am charged with not being now sufficiently enthusiastic, I assure them that I do not contemplate the present contest with indifference. Far otherwise. I contemplate, I confess, with fearful anxiety, the peculiar character of the war in which France and Spain are engaged, and the peculiar direction which that character may possibly give to it. I was—I still am—an enthusiast for national independence; but I am not—I hope I never shall be—an enthusiast in favour of revolution. And yet how fearfully are those two considerations intermingled, in the present contest between France and Spain! This is no war for territory, or for commercial advantages. It is unhappily a war of principle. France has invaded Spain from enmity to her new institutions. Supposing the enterprise of France not to succeed, what is there to prevent Spain from invading France, in return, from hatred of the principle upon which her invasion has been justified? Looking upon both sides with an impartial eye, I may avow that I know no equity which should bar the Spaniards from taking such a revenge. But it becomes quite another question whether I should choose to place myself under the necessity of actively contributing to successes, which might inflict on France so terrible a retribution. If I admit that such a retribution by the party first attacked could scarcely be censured as unjust, still the punishment retorted upon the aggressor would be so dreadful, that nothing short of having received direct injury could justify any third power in taking part in it.

War between France and Spain (as the Duke of Wellington has said) must always, to a certain degree, partake of the character of a civil war; a character which palliates, if it does not justify, many acts that do not belong to a regular contest between two nations. But why should England voluntarily enter into a co-operation in which she must either take part in such acts, or be constantly rebuking and coercing her allies? If we were at war with France upon any question such as I must again take the liberty of describing by the term "external" question, we should not think ourselves—(I trust no government of this country would think itself)—justified in employing against France the arms of internal revolution. But what, I again ask, is there to restrain Spain from such means of defensive retaliation, in a struggle begun by France avowedly from enmity to the internal institutions of Spain? And is it in such a quarrel that we would mix ourselves? If one of two contending parties poisons the well-springs of national liberty, and the other employs against its adversary the venomed weapons of political fanaticism, shall we voluntarily and unnecessarily associate ourselves with either, and become responsible for the infliction upon either of such unusual

calamities? While I reject, therefore, with disdain a suggestion which I have somewhere heard, of the possibility of our engaging against the Spanish cause, still I do not feel myself called upon to join with Spain in hostilities of such peculiar character as those which she may possibly retaliate upon France. Not being bound to do so by any obligation, expressed or implied, I cannot consent to be a party to a war in which, if Spain should chance to be successful, the result to France, and, through France, to all Europe, might, in the case supposed, be such as no thinking man can contemplate without dismay; and such as I (for my own part) would not assist in producing, for all the advantages which England could reap from the most successful warfare.

I now come to the third consideration which we had to weigh —the situation of Portugal. It is perfectly true, as was stated by the honourable gentleman (Mr. Macdonald) who opened this debate, that we are bound by treaty to assist Portugal in case of her being attacked. It is perfectly true that this is an ancient and reciprocal obligation. It is perfectly true that Portugal has often been in jeopardy; and equally true that England has never failed to fly to her assistance. But much misconception has been exhibited during the last two nights, with respect to the real nature of the engagements between Portugal and this country; a misconception which has undoubtedly been, in part, created by the publication of some detached portions of diplomatic correspondence, at Lisbon. The truth is, that some time ago an application was made to this Government by Portugal to "guarantee the new political institutions" of that kingdom. I do not know that it has been the practice of this country to guarantee the political institutions of another. Perhaps something of the sort may be found in the history of our connexion with the united provinces of Holland, in virtue of which we interfered, in 1786, in the internal disputes of the authorities in that state. But that case was a special exception: the general rule is undoubtedly the other way. I declined therefore, on the part of Great Britain, to accede to this strange application; and I endeavoured to reconcile the Portuguese Government to our refusal, by showing that the demand was one which went directly to the infraction of that principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, which we professed for ourselves, and which it was obviously the interest of Portugal to see respected and maintained. Our obligations had been contracted with the old Portuguese monarchy. Our treaty bound us to consult the external safety of Portugal; and not to examine, to challenge, or to champion its internal institutions. If we examined their new institutions for the sake of deriving from them new motives for fulfilling our old engagements, with what propriety could we prohibit other powers from examining

them for the purpose of drawing any other conclusion? It was enough to say, that such internal changes no way affected our engagements with Portugal; that we felt ourselves as much bound to defend her, under her altered constitution, as under the ancient monarchy, with which our alliance had been contracted. More than this we could not say; and more than this it was not her interest to require.

And what is the obligation of this alliance?—To defend Portugal—to assist her, if necessary, with all our forces, in case of an unprovoked attack upon her territory. This, however, does not give to Portugal any right to call on us, if she were attacked in consequence of her voluntarily declaring war against another Power. By engaging in the cause of Spain, without any direct provocation from France, she would unquestionably lose all claim upon our assistance. The rendering that assistance would then become a question of policy, not of duty. Surely my honourable and learned friend (Sir James Mackintosh,) who has declaimed so loudly on this subject, knows as well as any man, that the course which we are bound to follow in any case affecting Portugal, is marked out in our treaties with that crown, with singular accuracy and circumspection. In case of the suspicion of any design being entertained against Portugal by another Power, our first duty is to call on such Power for explanation: in case of such interposition failing, we are to support Portugal by arms; first with a limited force, and afterwards with all our might. This treaty we have fulfilled to the letter, in the present instance. We long ago reminded France of our engagements with Portugal; and we have received repeated assurances that it is the determination of France rigidly to respect the independence of that kingdom. Portugal certainly did show some jealousy (as has been asserted) with respect to the Congress of Verona; and she applied to this Government to know whether her affairs had been brought before the Congress. I was half afraid of giving offence, when I said—"the name of Portugal was never mentioned."—"What, not mentioned? not a word about the new institutions?"—"No, not one. If mentioned at all, it was only with reference to the slave trade." In truth, from the beginning to the close of the proceedings of the Congress, not the most distant intimation was given of any unfriendly design against Portugal.

Now, before I quit the Peninsula, a single word more to the honourable member for Westminster and his constituents. Have they estimated the burdens of a Peninsular war?—God forbid that, if honour, or good faith, or national interest required it, we should decline the path of duty because it is encompassed with difficulties; but at least we ought to keep some consideration of these difficulties in our minds. We have experience to teach us,

with something like accuracy, what are the pecuniary demands of the contest for which we must be prepared, if we enter into a war in the Peninsula. To take only two years and a half of the last Peninsular war, of which I happen to have the accounts at hand, from the beginning of 1812, to the glorious conclusion of the campaign of 1814, the expense incurred in Spain and Portugal was about £33,000,000. Is that an expense to be incurred again, without some peremptory and unavoidable call of duty, of honour, or of interest?

Such a call we are at all times ready to answer, come—(to use the expression so much decried) come what may. But there is surely sufficient ground for pausing, before we acquiesce in the short and flippant deduction of a rash consequence from false premises, which has been so glibly echoed from one quarter to another, during the last four months. "O! we must go to war with France, for we are bound to go to war in defence of Portugal. Portugal will certainly join Spain against France; France will then attack Portugal; and then our defensive obligation comes into play." Sir, it does no such thing. If Portugal is attacked by France, or by any other Power, without provocation, Great Britain is indeed bound to defend her: but if Portugal wilfully seeks the hostility of France, by joining against France in a foreign quarrel, there is no such obligation on Great Britain. The letter of treaties* is as clear as the law of nations† is precise upon this point: and as I believe no British statesman ever lived, so I hope none ever will live, unwise enough to bind his country by so preposterous an obligation, as that she should go to war, not merely in defence of an ally, but at the will and beck of that ally, whenever

*(Extract of the treaty of defensive alliance, between Great Britain, Portugal, and the States General, signed at Lisbon, May 16, 1703.)

"Art. II. If ever it shall happen that the Kings of Spain and France, either the present or future, that both of them together, or either of them separately, shall make war, or give occasion to suspect that they intend to make war upon the kingdom of Portugal, either on the continent of Europe, or in its dominions beyond Seas; Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain, and the lords the States General shall use their friendly offices with the said Kings, or either of them, in order to persuade them to observe the terms of peace towards Portugal, and not to make war upon it.

"Art. III. But these good offices not proving successful, but altogether ineffectual, *so that war should be made by the aforesaid kings, or by either of them, upon Portugal;* the above mentioned Powers of Great Britain and Holland shall make war, with all their force, upon the aforesaid King or Kings, *who shall carry hostile arms into Portugal.*"

† "Sed et hic distinguendum est, an Fœderatus meus injuriam patiatur, an ipse inferat; si patiatur, promissa implebo; si inferat, non implebo;"——"Cum pacta aiant '*qui bello petitur*,' eorum alia interpretatio esse nequit quàm ei Fœderato auxilia præstitum iri, qui nullo jure lacessitur bello,—*qui ab hoste petitur, non qui hostem ipse petit.*"—*Bynkershoek, Lib.* I. *Cap.* IX. p. 72.

ambition, or false policy, or a predominant faction, may plunge that ally into wars of her own seeking and contriving.

On the other hand, would it have been advisable for us to precipitate Portugal into the war? Undoubtedly we might have done so. For by declaring war against France, on behalf of Spain, we should have invited France (and there was perhaps a party in Portugal ready enough to second the invitation) to extend her hostilities to the whole of the Peninsula. But was it an object of sound policy to bring a war upon our hands, of which it was clear that we must bear all the burden? And was not the situation of Portugal, then, so far from being a reason for war, that it added the third motive, and one of the greatest weight, to our preference for a pacific policy?

Fourthly.—As to our continental allies. There was surely nothing in their situation to induce Great Britain to take a part in the war. Their Ministers have indeed been withdrawn from Madrid; but no alarm has been excited, by that act, in Spain. No case has occurred which gives to France a right to call for the assistance of the allies. But had the British Government taken a decided part in support of the Spaniards, a material change might have been produced in the aspect of affairs. Spain, who has now to contend with France alone, might in that case have had to contend with other and more overwhelming forces. Without pushing these considerations farther, enough surely has been said, to indicate the expediency of adhering to that line of policy which we successfully pursued at Verona; and of endeavouring, by our example, as well as by our influence, to prevent the complication, and circumscribe the range of hostilities. Let it be considered, how much the duration and the disasters of a war may depend upon the multitude or the fewness of its elements; and how much the accession of any new party, or parties, to a war, must add to the difficulties of pacification.

I come next to consider the situation of this country. And first, as to our ability for the undertaking of a war. I have already said, that the country is yet rich enough in resources—in means—in strength—to engage in any contest to which national honour may call her; but I must at the same time be allowed to say, that her strength has very recently been strained to the utmost; that her means are at that precise stage of recovery, which makes it most desirable that the progress of that recovery should not be interrupted; that her resources, now in a course of rapid reproduction, would, by any sudden check, be thrown into a disorder more deep and difficult of cure. It is in reference to this particular condition of the country, that I said on a former evening, what the honourable member for Surrey (Mr. Holme Sumner) has since done me the honour to repeat, "If we are to be driven into

war, sooner or later, let it be later:" let it be after we have had time to turn, as it were, the corner of our difficulties—after we shall have retrieved a little more effectively our exhausted resources, and have assured ourselves of means and strength, not only to begin, but to keep up the conflict, if necessary, for an indefinite period of time.

For let no man flatter himself that a war now entered upon would be a short one. Have we so soon forgotten the course and progress of the last war? For my part, I remember well the anticipations with which it began. I remember hearing a man, who will be allowed to have been distinguished by as great sagacity as ever belonged to the most consummate statesman—I remember hearing Mr. Pitt, not in his place in Parliament (where it might have been his object and his duty to animate zeal and to encourage hope,) but in the privacy of his domestic circle, among the friends in whom he confided—I remember well hearing him say, in 1793, that he expected that war to be of very short duration. That duration ran out to a period beyond the life of him who made the prediction. It outlived his successor, and the successors of that successor, and at length came suddenly and unexpectedly to an end, through a combination of miraculous events, such as the most sanguine imagination could not have anticipated. With that example full in my recollection, I could not act upon the presumption that a new war, once begun, would be speedily ended. Let no such expectation induce us to enter a path, which, however plain and clear it may appear at the outset of the journey, we should presently see branching into intricacies, and becoming encumbered with obstructions—until we were involved in a labyrinth, from which not we ourselves only, but the generation to come, might in vain endeavour to find the means of extrication.

For the confirmation of these observations, I appeal to that which I have stated as the last of the considerations in reference to which the policy of the British Government was calculated—I mean, to the present state of the world. No man can witness with more delight than I do the widening diffusion of political liberty. Acknowledging all the blessings which we have long derived from liberty ourselves, I do not grudge to others a participation in them. I would not prohibit other nations from kindling their torches at the flame of British freedom. But let us not deceive ourselves. The general acquisition of free institutions is not necessarily a security for general peace. I am obliged to confess that its immediate tendency is the other way. Take an example from France herself. The Representative Chamber of France has undoubtedly been the source of those hostilities, which I should not have despaired of seeing averted through the pacific disposition of the French King. Look at the

democracies of the ancient world. Their existence, I may say, was in war. Look at the petty republics of Italy in more modern times. In truth, long intervals of profound peace are much more readily to be found under settlements of a monarchical form. Did the republic of Rome, in the whole career of her existence, enjoy an interval of peace of as long duration as that which this country enjoyed under the administration of Sir Robert Walpole?—and that interval, be it remembered, was broken short through the instigation of popular feeling. I am not saying that this is right or wrong—but that it is so. It is in the very nature of free governments—and more especially, perhaps, of governments newly free. The principle which for centuries has given ascendancy to Great Britain, is that she was the single free state in Europe. The spread of the representative system destroys that singularity, and must (however little we may like it) proportionably enfeeble our preponderating influence—unless we measure our steps cautiously, and accommodate our conduct to the times. Let it not be supposed that I would disparage the progress of freedom, that I wish checks to be applied to it, or that I am pleased at the sight of obstacles thrown in its way. Far, very far from it. I am only desiring it to be observed, that we cannot expect to enjoy at the same time incompatible advantages. Freedom must ever be the greatest of blessings; but it ceases to be a distinction, in proportion as other nations become free.

But, Sir, this is only a partial view of the subject; and one to which I have been led by the unreasonable expectations of those who, while they make loud complaints of the diplomacy of England, as less commanding than heretofore, unconsciously specify the very causes which necessarily diminish and counteract its efficacy.

There are, however, other considerations to which I beg leave to turn the attention of the House.

It is perfectly true, as has been argued by more than one honourable member in this debate, that there is a contest going on in the world, between the spirit of unlimited monarchy, and the spirit of unlimited democracy. Between these two spirits, it may be said, that strife is either openly in action, or covertly at work, throughout the greater portion of Europe. It is true, as has also been argued, that in no former period in history is there so close a resemblance to the present, as in that of the Reformation. So far my honourable and learned friend (Sir J. Mackintosh) and the honourable baronet (Sir F. Burdett) were justified in holding up Queen Elizabeth's reign as an example for our study. The honourable member for Westminster too, has observed, that in imitation of Queen Elizabeth's policy, the proper place for this country, in the present state of the world, is at the head of free na-

tions struggling against arbitrary power. Sir, undoubtedly there is, as I have admitted, a general resemblance between the two periods; forasmuch as in both we see a conflict of opinions, and in both a bond of union growing out of those opinions, which establishes, between parts and classes of different nations, a stricter communion than belongs to community of country. It is true—it is, I own I think, a formidable truth—that in this respect the two periods do resemble each other. But though there is this general similarity, there is one circumstance which mainly distinguishes the present time from the reign of Elizabeth; and which, though by no means unimportant in itself, has been overlooked by all those to whose arguments I am now referring. Elizabeth was herself amongst the revolters against the authority of the Church of Rome; but we are not amongst those who are engaged in a struggle against the spirit of unlimited monarchy. We have fought that fight. We have taken our station. We have long ago assumed a character differing altogether from that of those around us. It may have been the duty and the interest of Queen Elizabeth to make common cause with—to put herself at the head of—those who supported the Reformation: but can it be either our interest or our duty to ally ourselves with revolution? Let us be ready to afford refuge to the sufferers of either extreme party; but it is not surely our policy to become the associate of either. Our situation now is rather what that of Elizabeth *would have been*, if the Church of England had been, in her time, already completely established, in uncontested supremacy; acknowledged as a legitimate settlement, unassailed and unassailable by papal power. Does my honourable and learned friend believe that the policy of Elizabeth would in that case have been the same?

Now, our complex constitution is established with so happy a mixture of its elements—its tempered monarchy and its regulated freedom—that we have nothing to fear from foreign despotism—nothing at home but from capricious change. We have nothing to fear, unless, distasteful of the blessings which we have earned, and of the calm which we enjoy, we let loose again, with rash hand, the elements of our constitution, and set them once more to fight against each other. In this enviable situation, what have we in common with the struggles which are going on in other countries, for the attainment of objects of which we have been long in undisputed possession? We look down upon those struggles from the point to which we have happily attained, not with the cruel delight which is described by the poet, as arising from the contemplation of agitations in which the spectator is not exposed to share; but with an anxious desire to mitigate, to en-

lighten, to reconcile, to save—by our example in all cases—by our exertions where we can usefully interpose.

Our station, then, is essentially neutral: neutral not only between contending nations, but between conflicting principles. The object of the Government has been to preserve that station; and for the purpose of preserving it to maintain peace. By remaining at peace ourselves, we best secure Portugal; by remaining at peace, we take the best chance of circumscribing the range, and shortening the duration of the war, which we could not prevent from breaking out between France and Spain. By remaining at peace, we shall best enable ourselves to take an effectual and decisive part in any contest into which we may be hereafter forced against our will.

The papers on the table, the last paper at least (I mean the despatch of the 31st of March, in which is stated what we expect from France,) ought, I think, to have satisfied the honourable baronet, who said that, provided the Government was firm in purpose, he should not be disposed to find fault with their having acted *suaviter in modo.* In that despatch our neutrality is qualified with certain specified conditions. To those conditions France has given her consent. When we say in that despatch, we are "satisfied" that those conditions will be observed, is it not obvious that we use a language of courtesy, which is always most becomingly employed between independent powers? Who does not know that, in diplomatic correspondence, under that suavity of expression is implied an "or," which imports another alternative?

So far, then, as the interests and honour of Great Britain are concerned, those interests and that honour have been scrupulously maintained. Great Britain has come out of the negotiations, claiming all the respect that is due to her; and, in a tone not to be mistaken, enforcing all her rights. It is true that her policy has not been violent or precipitate. She has not sprung forth armed, from the impulse of a sudden indignation; she has looked before and after; she has reflected on all the circumstances which beset, and on all the consequences which may follow, so awful a decision as war; and instead of descending into the arena as party in a quarrel not her own, she has assumed the attitude and the attributes of justice, holding high the balance, and grasping, but not unsheathing the sword.

Sir, I will now trouble the House no further than to call its attention to the precise nature of the motion which it has to dispose of this night. Sir, the result of the negotiations, as I have before stated, rendered it unnecessary and irregular for the Government to call for the expression of a parliamentary opinion upon them. It was, however, competent for any honourable member

to suggest to the House the expression of such opinion; which, if expressed at all, it will readily be admitted ought to be expressed intelligibly. Now what is the Address which, after a fortnight's notice, and after the menaces with which it has been announced and ushered in, the House has been desired to adopt? The honourable gentleman's Address first proposes to "represent to His Majesty, that the disappointment of His Majesty's benevolent solicitude to preserve general peace, appears to this House to have, in a great measure, arisen from the failure of his Ministers to make the most earnest, vigorous, and solemn protest against the pretended right of the sovereigns assembled *at Verona*, to make war on Spain in order to compel alterations in her political institutions." I must take the liberty to say that this is not a true description. The war I have shown to be a *French* war, not arising from any thing done, *at Verona*. But to finish the sentence:—"as well as against the subsequent pretension of the French Government, that nations cannot lawfully enjoy any civil privileges but from the spontaneous grant of their kings." I must here again take the liberty to say that the averment is not correct. Whatever the misconduct of Government in these negotiations may have been, it is plain matter-of-fact, that they protested in the strongest manner against the pretension put forward in the speech of the King of France, that the liberties and franchises of a nation should be derived exclusively from the throne. It is on record, in this very Address, that the honourable gentlemen themselves could not have protested more strongly than the Government; since, in the next sentence to that which I have just read, in order to deliver themselves with the utmost force, they have condescended to borrow my words. For the Address goes on: "—— principles destructive of the rights of all independent states, which *strike at the root of the British Constitution*, and are subversive of His Majesty's legitimate title to the throne." Now by far the strongest expression in this sentence,—the metaphor (such as it is) about "striking at the root of the British Constitution,"—is mine. It is in my despatch to Sir Charles Stuart of the 4th of February. I claim it with the pride and fondness of an author; when I see it plagiarized by those who condemn *me* for not using sufficiently forcible language, and who yet in the very breath in which they pronounce that condemnation, are driven to borrow my very words to exemplify the omission which they impute.

So much for the justice of the Address; now for its usefulness and efficacy.

What is the full and sufficient declaration of the sense of the House on this most momentous crisis, which is contained in this monitory expostulation to the throne? It proceeds: "Further to

declare to His Majesty the surprise and sorrow with which this House has observed that His Majesty's Ministers should have advised the Spanish Government, while *so* unwarrantably menaced" —(this "so" must refer to something out of doors, for there is not a word in the previous part of this precious composition to which it can be grammatically applied;)—" to alter their constitution, in the hope of averting invasion; a concession which alone would have involved the total sacrifice of national independence, and which was not even palliated by an assurance from France, that on receiving so dishonourable a submission, she would desist from her unprovoked aggression." (I deny this statement, by the way; it is a complete misrepresentation.) " Finally to represent to His Majesty, that in the judgment of this House a tone of more dignified remonstrance *would have been* better calculated to preserve the peace of the Continent, and thereby to secure this nation more effectually from the hazard of being involved in the calamities of war." And there it ends!—with a mere conjecture of what "*would have been!*"

Is this an Address for a British Parliament, carrying up a complaint that the nation is on the eve of war, but conveying not a word of advice as to the course to be followed at such a moment? I, for my own part, beg the House not to agree to such an Address —for this reason, amongst others, that as it will be my duty to tender my humble advice to His Majesty as to the answer to be given to it, I am sure I shall not know what to advise his Majesty to say:—the only answer which occurs to me as suitable for the occasion is, " Indeed! I am very sorry for it."

This then is the upshot of a motion which was to show that the present Ministers are unfit to carry on war or to maintain peace; and, by implication, that there are those who know better how such matters should be managed. This is the upshot of the motion, which was to dislodge us from our seats, and to supply our places with the honourable gentleman opposite. It is affirmed that we are now on the eve of war, the peace which we have maintained being insecure. If we *are* on the eve of war, will not this be the first time that a British House of Parliament has approached the throne, on such an occasion, without even a conditional pledge of support? If war is a matter even of possible contemplation, it surely becomes this House either to concur in an Address for the removal of the Ministers, who have needlessly incurred that danger; or, as the amendment moved by the honourable member for Yorkshire proposes, to tender to His Majesty a cordial assurance that this House will stand by His Majesty in sustaining the dignity of his crown, and the rights and interests of his people. I trust, therefore, Sir, that by rejecting this most incorrect and inadequate Address—as unworthy of the House as it is of the oc-

casion; an Address contradictory in some parts to itself; in more, to the established facts of the case; and in all to the ascertained sense of the country; and by adopting, in its room, the amendment moved by the honourable member for Yorkshire, and seconded by the member for London, the House will stamp the policy which the King's Ministers have pursued—feebly perhaps—perhaps erroneously—but at all events from pure motives, in the sincerity of their hearts, and as conducive, in their judgment, to the tranquillity, welfare, and happiness, not of this country only, but of the world—with that highest of all sanctions, the deliberate approbation of the House of Commons.

The original Address was negatived without a division. On the amended Address the House divided. The numbers were,

For the Amendment - - - -	372
Against it - - - - - - -	20
Majority - -	352

THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY.

MAY 15th, 1823.

Mr. F. Buxton submitted the following Resolution:—

"That the state of Slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution, and of the Christian Religion; and that it ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British Colonies with as much expedition as may be found consistent with a due regard to the well being of the parties concerned."

Mr. Secretary Canning said:—Sir, the appeal to His Majesty's Ministers with which the honourable gentleman concluded his speech, makes me feel it my duty to address myself to the House at this early period of the debate, for the purpose of stating, without reserve, the opinions entertained by myself and my colleagues with respect to this most important, and, I must say, at the same time (notwithstanding what has fallen from the honourable gentleman,) this most fearful question. I never in my life proceeded to the discussion of any question under a stronger impression of its manifold difficulties; not indeed in reference to the principles on which my opinions are grounded, nor with respect to the practical conclusion to which I may think it expedient to come; but on account of the dangers, which, even after all that the honourable gentleman has said to the contrary, appear to me to attend a discussion, in which one rash word, perhaps even one too ardent expression, might raise a flame not easily to be extinguished.

I mention these circumstances, Sir, not for the purpose of imputing any blame to the honourable gentleman, or to those friends in conjunction with whom he has brought forward the resolution in your hands, nor for that of discouraging fair and free deliberation; but I take the liberty of throwing out a caution to those who, in a more advanced stage of the discussion, and when conflicting opinions may have produced a warmth which I do not feel, might be induced to colour more deeply the pictures which the honourable gentleman himself has sketched with no light hand; and who might thus excite feelings which it is not necessary to awaken for the accomplishment of any practical good, but which, if awakened, might either impede the attainment of that good, or expose it to gratuitous hazard.

And here the honourable gentleman must allow me to ask—what had the latter part of his speech to do with his present purpose? Why did he think it expedient to recur to the former delinquencies of this country, which, if capable of expiation, have been expiated? Why did he go back to a state of things in the

West Indies, to which, so far as they could be remedied, remedy has been applied? Why did he go out of his way to recal the horrors and cruelties connected with the now abolished Slave Trade, which were at former times brought under the notice of Parliament? Why, when he was stirring a question totally new —(and I mention that character of the question, not as matter of blame, but as matter of fact)—why did he mix it up with that other odious question, often, indeed, discussed, but long ago decided, with which, during an agitation of twenty years, it was never before placed in *juxta*-position, but for the purpose of being contrasted with, and separated from it? In all former discussions, in all former votes against the Slave Trade, it cannot surely be forgotten, that the ulterior purpose of emancipation was studiously disclaimed. I have myself frequently joined in that disclaimer on former occasions. In doing so, I certainly did not mean to advance so untenable a proposition as that it was intended to purchase the abolition of the Slave Trade by an indefinite continuance of slavery. Undoubtedly that was not my meaning; but what I at least did mean—what in all fairness any man who took the same distinction must be held to have meant—was, that the two questions should be kept separate, and argued on their separate grounds; that the odium of that which we were labouring to abolish should not be brought to bear with increased intensity on that of which we were compelled to allow the continuance. Slavery, not willingly, but necessarily, was allowed to continue. I do not say that it is therefore to continue indefinitely; I speak not of it as a system to be carefully preserved and cherished, but as one to be dealt with according to its own nature, and with reference to its inherent peculiarities. We must be considered as having tacitly, if not expressly, taken the engagement, not, on every subsequent discussion, to look back to atrocities which have ceased, not to revive animosities which have been extinguished, and to throw in the teeth of those whose interests are at hazard, cruelties with which they in fact had no concern. After such an implied pledge, it is somewhat hard in the honourable gentleman to revert to those past-gone topics, instead of confining himself to facts and arguments which properly belong to the motion which he has introduced.

I will not follow the honourable gentleman through the various matters of this kind which he has brought to his aid; but I will here take the liberty to dismiss the consideration of the Slave Trade, as of a thing forgotten and gone by: and will entreat the House to look at the present situation of the West Indies, not as at a population accumulated by a succession of crimes such as those which the honourable gentleman has detailed, but simply as it is.

The honourable gentleman has treated this subject rather with powerful declamation than with sober statement: for I must beg leave to consider as a figure of eloquence, rather than as a practical argument, the intimation that we must deal with this question, not as a matter of justice and judgment, but of impulse and feeling. That is not a ground on which Parliament can be called upon to act. The manner in which the black population of the West Indies has been collected, may indeed be the subject of reflection to the historian, or discussion to the moralist; but, in calling upon the legislature to adopt a measure of the greatest importance, and of the utmost difficulty, the honourable gentleman addresses himself not to the prudence, but to the feeling of the House. I confess it seems to me that he pursues the course least likely to lead to a satisfactory result.

Looking, then, at the present condition of the West Indies, I find there a numerous black population, with a comparatively small proportion of whites. The question to be decided is, how civil rights, moral improvement, and general happiness are to be communicated to this overpowering multitude of slaves, with safety to the lives, and security to the interests of the white population, our fellow subjects and fellow citizens. Is it possible that there can be a difference of opinion upon this question? Is it possible that those most nearly concerned in the present state of property in the West Indies, and those who contemplate the great subject with the eye of the philosopher and the moralist, should look at it in any other than one point of view? Is it possible for a member of Parliament, still more for a member of the Government, to say that he does not wish, so far as is consistent with other great considerations necessarily involved, to impart every improvement which may tend to raise in the scale of being the unfortunate creatures now in a state of servitude and ignorance? Undoubtedly, sacrifices ought to be made for the attainment of so great a good; but would I, on this account, strike at the root of the system—a system the growth of ages—and unhesitatingly and rashly level it at a blow? Are we not all aware that there are knots which cannot be suddenly disentangled, and must not be cut—difficulties which, if solved at all, must be solved by patient consideration and impartial attention, in order that we may not do the most flagrant injustice by aiming at justice itself?

The honourable gentleman begins his resolution with a recital which, I confess, greatly embarrasses me. He says, that "the state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution, and of the Christian religion." God forbid that he who ventures to object to this statement, should therefore be held to assert a contradiction to it. I do not say that the state of slavery

is consonant to the principles of the British Constitution; still less do I say that the state of slavery is consonant to the principles of the Christian religion. But though I do not advance these propositions myself, nevertheless, I must say, that in my opinion the propositions of the honourable gentleman are not practically true. If the honourable gentleman means that the British Constitution does not admit of slavery in that part of the British dominions where the Constitution is in full play, undoubtedly his statement is true; but it makes nothing for his object. If, however, the honourable member is to be understood to maintain that the British Constitution has not tolerated for years, nay more, for centuries, in the colonies, the existence of slavery—a state of society unknown in the mother country—that is a position which is altogether without foundation, and positively and practically untrue. In my opinion, when a proposition is submitted to this House for the purpose of inducing the House to act upon it, care should be taken not to confound, as I think is done in this Resolution, what is morally true with what is historically false. Undoubtedly the spirit of the British Constitution is, in its principle, hostile to any modification of slavery. But as undoubtedly the British Parliament has for ages tolerated, sanctioned, protected, and even encouraged a system of colonial establishment, of which it well knew slavery to be the foundation.

In the same way, God forbid that I should contend that the Christian religion is favourable to slavery. But I confess I feel a strong objection to the introduction of the name of Christianity, as it were bodily, into any parliamentary question. Religion ought to control the acts and to regulate the consciences of governments, as well as of individuals; but when it is put forward to serve a political purpose, however laudable, it is done, I think, after the example of ill times; and I cannot but remember the ill objects to which in those times such a practice was applied. Assuredly no Christian will deny that the spirit of the Christian religion is hostile to slavery, as it is to every abuse and misuse of power. It is hostile to all deviations from rectitude, morality, and justice. But if it be meant that in the Christian religion there is a special denunciation against slavery—that slavery and Christianity cannot exist together—I think the honourable gentleman himself must admit that the proposition is historically false; and again I must say, that I cannot consent to the confounding, for a political purpose, what is morally true with what is historically false. One peculiar characteristic of the Christian dispensation, if I must venture in this place upon such a theme, is, that it has accommodated itself to all states of society, rather than that it has selected any particular state of society for the peculiar exercise of its influence. If it has added lustre to the sceptre of

the sovereign, it has equally been the consolation of the slave. It applies to all ranks of life, to all conditions of men; and the sufferings of this world, even to those upon whom they press most heavily, are rendered comparatively indifferent by the prospect of compensation in the world, of which Christianity affords the assurance. True it certainly is, that Christianity generally tends to elevate, not to degrade, the character of man; but it is not true, in the specific sense conveyed in the honourable gentleman's Resolution; it is not true, that there is that in the Christian religion which makes it impossible that it should co-exist with slavery in the world. Slavery has been known in all times, and under all systems of religion, whether true or false. *Non meus hic sermo.* I speak but what others have written on this point; and I beg leave to read to the House a passage from Dr. Paley, which is directly applicable to the subject that we are discussing.

"Slavery was a part of the civil constitution of most countries when Christianity appeared; yet no passage is to be found in the Christian scriptures by which it is condemned and prohibited. This is true, for Christianity, soliciting admission into all nations of the world, abstained, as behoved it, from intermeddling with the civil institutions of any. But does it follow from the silence of scripture concerning them, that all the civil institutions which then prevailed were right, or that the bad should not be exchanged for better? Besides this, the discharging of all slaves from all obligation to obey their masters, which is the consequence of pronouncing slavery to be unlawful, would have no better effect than to let loose one half of mankind upon the other. Slaves would have been tempted to embrace a religion which asserted their right to freedom—masters would hardly have been persuaded to consent to claims founded upon such authority; the most calamitous of all consequences, a *bellum servile*, might probably have ensued, to the reproach, if not the extinction, of the Christian name. The truth is, the emancipation of slaves should be gradual, and be carried on by the provisions of law, and under the protection of civil government. Christianity can only operate as an alterative. By the mild diffusion of its light and influence, the minds of men are insensibly prepared to perceive and correct the enormities which folly, or wickedness, or accident, have introduced into their public establishments. In this way the Greek and Roman slavery, and, since these, the feudal tyranny, had declined before it. And we trust that, as the knowledge and authority of the same religion advance in the world, they will abolish what remains of this odious institution."

The honourable gentleman cannot wish more than I do, that, under this gradual operation, under this widening diffusion of light and liberality, the spirit of the Christian religion may effect

all the objects he has at heart. But it seems to me that it is not, for the practical attainment of his objects, desirable that that which may be the influencing spirit, should be put forward as the active agent. When Christianity was introduced into the world, it took its root amidst the galling slavery of the Roman empire; more galling in many respects (though not precisely of the same character) than that of which the honourable gentleman, in common, I may say, with every friend of humanity, complains. Slavery at that period gave to the master the power of life and death over his bondsman: this is undeniable—known to every body. "*Ita servus homo est!*" are the words put by Juvenal into the mouth of the fine lady who calls upon her husband to crucify his slave. If the evils of this dreadful system nevertheless gradually vanished before the gentle but certain influence of Christianity, and if the great author of the system trusted rather to this gradual operation of the principle than to any immediate or direct precept, I think Parliament would do more wisely rather to rely upon the like operation of the same principle, than to put forward the authority of Christianity in at least a questionable shape. The name of Christianity ought not to be thus used, unless we are prepared to act in a much more summary manner than the honourable gentleman himself proposes. If the existence of slavery be repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution and of the Christian religion, how can the honourable gentleman himself consent to pause even for an instant, or to allow any considerations of prudence to intervene between him and his object? How can he propose to divide slaves into two classes, one of which is to be made free directly, while he leaves the other to the gradual extinction of their state of suffering? But if, as I contend, the British Constitution does not, in its necessary operation, go to extinguish slavery in every colony, it is evident that the honourable gentleman's proposition is not to be understood in the precise sense which the honourable gentleman gives to it; and if the Christian religion does not require the instant and unqualified abolition of slavery, it is evident, I apprehend, that the honourable member has mis-stated in his Resolution the principle upon which he himself is satisfied to act. But while I contend against the literal sense and too positive language of the honourable gentleman's Resolutions, and while I declare my unwillingness to adopt them as the basis of our proceedings, let me not be misunderstood as quarrelling with their intention. I admit as fully as the honourable gentleman himself, that the spirit both of the British Constitution and of the Christian religion is in favour of a gradual extermination of this unquestioned evil; and I am ready to proceed with the honourable gentleman to all reasonable and practicable measures for that purpose.

On these principles I feel disposed to agree in much that the honourable gentleman has said. To many of his measures of detail I have not the slightest objection; without, however, admitting the solidity of all his ingenious illustrations, or subscribing to the correctness of all his arguments, I think the House will be of my opinion, that at this time of day we must consider property as the creature of law; and that, when law has sanctioned any particular species of property, we cannot legislate in this House as if we were legislating for a new world, the surface of which was totally clear from the obstruction of antecedent claims and obligations. If the honourable gentleman asks me, on the other hand, whether I maintain the inviolability of property, so far as to affirm the proposition that the children of slaves must continue to be slaves for ever—I answer, frankly, No. If, again, he asks me how I reconcile my notions of reverence for the sacredness of property with the degree of authority I am prepared to exercise for the attainment of my object; I answer, with equal frankness, in accomplishing a great national object, in doing an act of national justice, I do not think it right to do it at the exclusive expense of any one class of the community. I am disposed to go gradually to work, in order to diminish both the danger to be risked and the burden to be incurred. My opinion is also, and I am prepared to state it (the honourable gentleman having made his appeal to the Government on this question some weeks ago) as the opinion of my colleagues as well as my own—that in order that the object which we have all in view may be undertaken safely and effectually, it is better that it should be left in the hands of the Executive Government.

With that view I have taken the liberty of preparing certain Resolutions, which I shall propose to substitute for those of the honourable gentleman. Between the two sets of Resolutions, the substantial difference, it will be seen, is not very essential; but, from the difference of responsibility between the honourable gentleman and myself, I must of necessity lay down my principles with greater caution than he has done, and proceed more coolly and considerately, so as to avoid the liability to misrepresentation. Not that I wish to shrink from particulars, so far as it may be expedient to enter into them.

I may say, then, that there are two or three points referred to by the honourable gentleman, to which I cannot refuse my concurrence. For instance, he asks if the present mode of working —that which is described by the term, driving—the slaves, by means of a cart-whip in the hand of one who follows them, ought to be allowed? I reply, certainly not. But I go further; I tell the honourable gentleman, that in raising any class of persons from a servile to a civil condition, one of the first principles of improve-

ment is in the observance paid to the difference of sexes. I would therefore abolish, with respect to females, the use of the whip—not only as a stimulant to labour in the field—I would abolish it altogether as an instrument of punishment—thus saving the weaker sex from indecency and degradation. I should further be inclined to concur with the honourable gentleman as to the insufficiency of the time allowed to the negro for religious and moral instruction, so long as the cultivation of his provision-ground and his marketing occupy the greater part of the Sabbath. In this point I am anxious to introduce improvement into the present system.

These are points on which I have no hesitation in agreeing with the honourable gentleman; but there are some others requiring more mature consideration in practice, although, in principle, I feel bound to say that I agree with him. I agree with him in thinking that what is now considered, by custom, and, in point of fact, the property of the negro, ought to be secured to him by law. I agree with him in thinking that it would be beneficial if the liberty of bequest were assured to him: perhaps it might be made conditional upon marriage. I agree with him in thinking that it may perhaps be desirable to do something with regard to the admitting the evidence of negroes; but this I hold to be a much more difficult question, and one requiring more thorough deliberation than I have yet had time to give to it. It is a point of such extreme delicacy, and demands so much local and practical knowledge, that I hardly feel justified in pronouncing at this moment any decided opinion upon it. Thus far I concur, that it well merits favourable and patient investigation; and for myself, and those who act with me, I can say that we should commence that investigation with a leaning to the view of the subject taken by the honourable gentleman. More at present I will not say.

I agree further with the honourable gentleman in thinking, that (though great difficulties may be experienced, not from the moral but from the legal part of the question) the process of the writ of *venditioni exponas*, by which the slaves are sold separately from the estates, ought, if possible, to be abolished.

I have mentioned these particulars as those which have most immediately attracted the attention of His Majesty's servants. I can assure the honourable gentleman and the House, that they have looked at this subject with a sincere desire to render all possible assistance to the undertaking of the honourable gentleman, and to co-operate in every practicable measure for ameliorating the condition of the negroes.

I should ill discharge my duty this day, after the warning of the last few weeks, during which this great subject has been in discussion, if I were not to say, that, upon most of the particulars

which I have mentioned, if not upon all, there is every disposition among those who may be considered as representing the colonial interests in this House and in this country, to give them a fair, liberal, and candid consideration.

The immediate question before the House may therefore be narrowed to this point—whether it is better to enter upon this question in a temper of mind unembittered by the retrospect of past evils and atrocities, and with a chance of carrying with us a degree of consent on the part of those most interested and most exposed to the hazard of injury from any change; or, at the risk of angry discussions, which, however innoxious in this House, yet, if echoed in other places, might be attended with the most frightful consequences, to adopt at once the propositions of the honourable gentleman. The question is, whether, upon the declaration of principles now made to the House, the honourable gentleman and his friends will be contented with the Resolutions which I shall have the honour to propose, or will press his motion to a division, at all the hazards which I would rather leave to be imagined than describe.

There is, however, one point in the honourable gentleman's statement upon which I certainly entertain a difference of opinion: I mean, the proposal of fixing a period at which the children of slaves shall be free. I doubt—not from any peculiar knowledge that I have of the subject, but upon the general principles of human nature—whether the measure recommended by the honourable gentleman would produce the degree of satisfaction which he anticipates, and whether it might not produce feelings of an opposite nature. I doubt whether in its operation it would not prove at once the least efficient and the most hazardous mode of attaining his own object. But I throw out these observations with the same frankness and candour with which I have expressed myself in approval of those points of the honourable gentleman's propositions in which I have had the pleasure to concur. I desire not to be bound by these observations any more than I feel myself bound to carry into effect, at all risks, and at all hazards, those points upon which I have given a favourable opinion. I declare openly and sincerely my present impressions, formed after the best deliberation that there has been time to give to the consideration of the subject. I trust and believe that I have not spoken positively upon any thing upon which there is a probability of my having hereafter to retract what I have said. I speak doubtfully on some points, even where the bent of my opinion is very strong: but the one thing I am most anxious to avoid is, the declaration of any pledge of an abstract nature; the laying down any principle, the construction of which is to be left to those whose feelings, and prejudices, and passions must naturally be

awake to these discussions, and who, when they learn, by a declaration of this House, that "the continuance of slavery, and the principles of the Christian religion, are incompatible," might imagine they saw, in such a declaration, what, I say, in abstract reasoning I have, I think, shown they would be fairly entitled to see in it—their own immediate and unqualified emancipation. Lay down such principles, I say, and those persons would have a right to draw that conclusion, and when the House had once made such a declaration, the qualification would come too late.

I am therefore peculiarly desirous that the qualification should be embodied in the same vote which affirms the principle, and that nothing should be left to inference and construction: that even the hopes held out for the future should be qualified with the doubts, with the delays, and with the difficulties to be surmounted before they can possibly be realized.

I will now, with the leave of the House, read the resolutions which I propose to submit to the House for its consideration.

1st. "That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive measures for ameliorating the condition of the slave population in His Majesty's colonies.

2d. "That, through a determined and persevering, but at the same time judicious and temperate, enforcement of such measures, this House looks forward to a progressive improvement in the character of the slave population, such as may prepare them for a participation in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of His Majesty's subjects.

3d. "That this House is anxious for the accomplishment of this purpose, at the earliest period that shall be compatible with the well-being of the slaves themselves, with the safety of the colonies, and with a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of private property."

If the House should be inclined to adopt these Resolutions, I shall then follow them up with moving,

4th. "That the said Resolutions be laid before His Majesty by such members of this House as are of His Majesty's most honourable Privy Council."

There now remains but one point, which, after having so fully expressed my sentiments to the House, I am peculiarly anxious to impress upon its consideration: I mean the mode of execution, the manner in which the Executive Government would have to act in respect of these Resolutions, in the event of their adoption. The House is aware, that over certain of the colonies in the West Indies, the Crown exercises immediate power, without the intervention of any colonial legislature. In their case, the agency of the Crown, of course, will be more free and unfettered than in colonies having their own separate government. At the same

time, I must declare, that we have a right to expect from the colonial legislatures a full and fair co-operation. And, being as much averse by habit, as I am at this moment precluded by duty, from mooting imaginary points, and looking to the solution of extreme though not impossible questions, I must add, that any resistance which might be manifested to the express and declared wishes of Parliament, any resistance, I mean, which should partake, not of reason, but of contumacy, would create a case (a case, however, which I sincerely trust will never occur) upon which His Majesty's Government would not hesitate to come down to Parliament for counsel.

I will not prolong a discussion (which it has been my object to bring to a close) by any general reflections further than this, that giving every credit as I do to the motives which have actuated the honourable gentleman, I am sure he will feel that it is perfectly consistent with a complete sympathy with his moral feelings, and consistent equally with my duty, that I should look at this subject more practically, more cautiously, and more dispassionately, and (if the honourable gentleman will permit me to say so much) more prudently than the honourable gentleman; whose warmth, however, though I must not imitate, I do not mean harshly to blame.

And further, I would assure those whose interests are involved in this great question, that whatever may be the result of the present discussion, I and my colleagues are not more anxious, on the one hand, to redeem the character of the country, so far as it may have suffered by the state of slavery in the colonies; than we think ourselves bound, on the other, to guard and protect the just interests of those who, by no fault of their own—by inheritance, by accident, by the encouragement of repeated acts of the legislature—find their property vested in a concern exposed to innumerable hazards and difficulties, which do not belong to property of another character; such as, if they had their option (as their ancestors had,) they would, doubtless, in most cases, have preferred. If they have stood these hazards, if they have encountered these difficulties—and have to stand and encounter them still—we may not be able to secure them against the consequences of such a state of things; but at least we have no right to aggravate the hazards or the difficulties which we cannot relieve.

The original Resolution was then withdrawn; the Speaker next put the question upon Mr. Canning's amendment, which was carried *nem. con.;* and it was ordered, "That the Resolutions (proposed by the right honourable Secretary) should be laid before His Majesty, by such members of this House as are of His Majesty's most honourable Privy Council."

AMELIORATION OF THE CONDITION OF THE SLAVE POPULATION.

MARCH 16th, 1824.

MR. SECRETARY CANNING appeared at the bar with papers.

THE SPEAKER.—Mr. Secretary Canning, what have you got there?

MR. SECRETARY CANNING.—Papers, Sir, by command of His Majesty.

THE SPEAKER.—Please to bring them up.

Having been brought up, the Speaker put the question, "That the title of these papers be now read;" which having been carried, the clerk read the title. "Papers, in explanation of the measures adopted by His Majesty's Government for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Slave Population in His Majesty's dominions in the West Indies."

MR. SECRETARY CANNING proceeded to address the House as follows:—Sir, I rise to discharge my duty to the House, both as the mover of the Resolutions which were passed on the 16th of May last year, and as the organ, in this House, of the Government which undertook to carry the principles of those Resolutions into effect. With a review of the measures which have been adopted, and of the course which has been pursued by His Majesty's Government, in obedience to those Resolutions, it is my intention to combine another subject, kindred in its nature—I mean a proposition for the more effectual abolition of the odious trade which furnished to the West Indian colonies that population, the condition of which it is now our study to ameliorate. I shall postpone, however, to the conclusion of what I have to state to the House, the latter subject, on which I anticipate an entire concurrence; and shall address myself, in the first instance, to the contents of the papers which I have just laid upon the table.

I begin, Sir, with requesting that the Resolutions of the 16th of May, 1823, may be read.

The Clerk then read the following Resolutions.

"Resolved, *nemine contradicente*, "That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive measures for ameliorating the condition of the slave population in His Majesty's colonies.

"That, through a determined and persevering, but at the same time judicious and temperate, enforcement of such measures, this House looks forward to a progressive improvement in the character of the slave population, such as may prepare them for a participation in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of His Majesty's subjects.

"That this House is anxious for the accomplishment of this purpose at the earliest period that shall be compatible with the well-being of the slaves themselves, with the safety of the colonies, and with a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of private property."

Mr. Secretary Canning continued.—I am desirous, Sir, that the House should have present to its mind the text of these Resolutions: because it is by the spirit and meaning of them, that the conduct of His Majesty's Government has been guided. These Resolutions, therefore, and not any more sweeping principle, or any more wide-spread theory, constitute the criterion by which the conduct of the Government is to be judged.

Undoubtedly, Sir, if there be a question at which it is impossible for any person, the most careless, to look with indifference, but which any man, who approaches it as a subject of legislation, must view with the deepest awe, it is the question now before us. To speak of the difficulties which encompass it, as compared with almost any other question which has ever occupied the attention of Parliament, would be to draw but a faint and feeble picture of those difficulties: they are, indeed, apparent to the most casual observation; but he who has to probe and prove them, for the purpose of applying a remedy, finds them thickening around him at every step, and leaving him frequently nothing but a choice of evils. Formidable, however, as the question is, in its present shape, it is undoubtedly less so than it was last year, when first propounded to the House. At that time we had to steer our course amidst conflicting prejudices, and opposite extravagancies of principles; beset on the one hand with theories, which would not suffer fact or establishment to stand in their way; and on the other hand, with long established interests, and inveterate habits of thinking, sensitively jealous of any innovation or correction. These contradictory impulses were alike opposed to any practical step that could be taken to forward what all admitted to be expedient—the amelioration of the condition of the negro slave.

The concurrence of the House in the Resolutions of last year has considerably narrowed the ground of dispute. I hope I shall not be considered as misrepresenting the collective sense of Parliament, and the general feeling of the country, when I describe that sense and feeling to have been—an unequivocal abhorrence of slavery in the abstract; an acknowledgment of the almost hopeless difficulty of curing all its horrors, but a determination, nevertheless, to look the evil in the face, and to endeavour steadfastly to apply to it such remedies as might mitigate, if they were not powerful enough to extinguish it. But the repeated sanctions of the legislature, the settled rights of inheritance, and the various ramifications of property and of interest growing out of them, create impediments which the House are not prepared to sweep at once away, in order that we may have a clear stage for the exhibition of theoretical experiments. I hope, therefore, I do not misrepresent the sense of the House of Commons when I say that, in passing the Resolutions of last year there was no general

disposition to encourage any thing like a sudden emancipation of the negro; that the House looks forward to the termination of slavery as the result of a gradual and general improvement in the condition of the slaves, and not as the consequence of an instantaneous proclamation of general freedom. I hope I do not misapprehend the feelings of the House and of the country in taking their intention to be, that His Majesty's Ministers should consider not only what may be right in theory, but what will be wise in practice; not only how to do the greatest possible good, but how to do it with the least possible mischief. I hope I may add that, in the opinions of the House and of the country upon this subject, there is no mixture of hostility or of ill-will towards individuals whose lot is cast in those distant regions, in which the system of slavery exists; regions which, notwithstanding their separation, are subject to the protection of the British Crown, and entitled to the care of the British Parliament. While, with a deliberate purpose, and with a steady hand, we are carrying forward, in its due course, an amelioration of the condition of the slave, I hope and I believe, that we act in obedience to the feelings of the House and of the country in taking especial care not to drive the plough-share over the rights and possessions of our West Indian fellow subjects.

These, Sir, are the principles on which His Majesty's Government have acted; and by these principles, I say, they are desirous to be judged. If there are those who think that enough has not been done, or that more might have been done in the same time, they will now have an opportunity of laying before the House any schemes or propositions of their own. But I think I shall be able to show, that we wisely made the Resolutions of this House the rule of our conduct; and that, in the mode and in the degree which was contemplated by the House, we have done much for the welfare of the slave, with the least possible hazard to the interests of his employer.

Amongst all the embarrassments attending the discussion of this question, an obvious one is this, that not a phrase can be uttered upon it by a responsible adviser of the Crown, which is not liable to be seized by one or other of the conflicting parties, and wrested to their own purposes. Now, Sir, I declare in the outset, that, if I know myself, I have considered this question in all its bearings with the most scrupulous impartiality. If I have any partial feeling at all arising from the habits of my early life, it is one strongly favourable to the cause of general abolition. From the time at which I first was honoured with a seat in this House, I have been an humble, but a sincere and zealous labourer in that cause. But although I have always been friendly to the abolition of the Slave Trade, I, in common as I think with others, the most

zealous friends of that abolition, have always kept that question distinct from the one which is now introduced.

I do not mean to say that I should be guilty of any breach of faith, or that I or others who have been equally favourable to the abolition of the Slave Trade, would be obnoxious to a charge of inconsistency in now avowing the intention of abolishing slavery. But I must be permitted to say, that the most zealous advocates of the abolition of the trade, if they entertained this intention, studiously concealed it: nay, not only concealed, but denied any intention of aiming at an object which was indeed represented by their adversaries as the natural and necessary consequence of the success of abolition. I am sure that I have myself frequently denied in debate that I looked to emancipation as the necessary consequence of the abolition. Am I, therefore, an enemy to the gradual relaxation of the system of slavery? God forbid.—If I am asked, whether I am for the permanent existence of slavery in our colonies, I say, No. But if I am asked whether I am favourable to its immediate abolition, I say, No. And, if I am asked which I would prefer, permanent slavery, or immediate abolition, I do not know whether, under all the perplexing circumstances of the case, I must not say, I would prefer things remaining as they are: not, God knows! from any love of the existing state of things, but on account of the tremendous responsibility of attempting to mend it by a sudden change.

Happily, however, we are not driven to either of these extremes. Between the two, there is an open, debatable ground. By gradual measures, producing gradual improvement, not only may the individual slave be set free, but his very *status* may be ultimately abolished. Such has been the progress of improvement in nations of Europe, that once were most barbarous, and are now most polished. But such a consummation is not a measure of single enactment and of instant effect. Much is to be done, and much is to be forborne, before we can hope to arrive at it. The co-operation of adverse parties, and the concurrence of various circumstances are requisite for its accomplishment;—and after all, the measure will eventually make its way rather by the light of reason than by the coercion of authority.

The papers, Sir, which I have laid upon your table, consist, in part of reports received from some of the West India Colonies, and in part of explanations of the scheme which the Government has devised, for carrying into operation the views of the House as disclosed in the course of the last session.

Gentlemen are aware that the colonies are divided into two classes; one of which (the smaller number,) are governed by the Crown, without the intervention of local legislative assemblies; the other and larger class have legislative assemblies framed in

miniature after the model of those of the mother country. As such assemblies are not a little jealous of the rights and privileges, by the possession of which they resemble the institutions of the parent state, the colonies of the first class are much the more easily manageable. Experiments may therefore be tried with greater facility in the colonies wholly governed by the Crown; in Trinidad, for instance, in St. Lucie, or in Demerara. I name these colonies in the order in which I conceive the existing state of their laws to be favourable to such an experiment. Trinidad formerly belonged to the Spaniards, whose general slave laws are incomparably the mildest; St. Lucie, to the French, whose code is in the next degree favourable to the slave population; and Demerara, to the Dutch, whose treatment of their slaves is perhaps the least favourable of the three; but whose laws provide, nevertheless, some institutions for the care and government of the slave population, which may be employed and improved to advantage.

With respect to Trinidad, I cannot omit to observe, that, about twenty years ago, I in this House called the attention of Government to that colony, the possession of which was then recently confirmed to us by the peace; and submitted a motion, to the effect that Trinidad should not be placed on the same footing as our other colonies, by the grant of a legislative constitution; but should be reserved under the unfettered dominion of the Crown, for the purpose of experiments for the amelioration of the condition of the slaves. One part of my proposition was, indeed, that the importation of slaves into Trinidad should be entirely discontinued. In that object I did not succeed; but I cannot forbear to congratulate myself and the House, if that motion of mine, though not altogether successful, has had the effect of keeping Trinidad in a state, in which an example may be set there by the direction of the executive power uncontrollable by any legislative assembly.

The course intended to be pursued with respect to the island of Trinidad, will be shown by reference to an Order in Council, which is to be found among the papers laid on the table.

With the permission of the House, I will state to them shortly the different regulations which that Order in Council comprises. The House will have the goodness to compare what is there done with the statement which I made last session, of what ought to be done: and I think it will appear that none of the points upon which I dwelt, on that occasion, have been neglected.

In the first place, it is directed by this Order in Council, that the shocking and unseemly practice of the chastisement of females by the whip, shall be entirely abolished. Here, Sir, it is but justice to say, that the abolition of this punishment has also

been recommended by the resolutions of the West India body in this country, in the course of last year. It is also no more than justice to add, that some of the colonies have adopted, some even anticipated, the recommendation. To raise the weaker sex in self-respect, as well as in the esteem of the stronger, is the first step from barbarism to civilization.

The Order in Council next abolishes the use of the whip, when applied to males, as a stimulus to labour;—that wanton and degrading use of it, which places the negro slave on a footing with the cattle of the field. The whip is not to be carried into the field by the driver, nor is it to be borne as a symbol of authority. It is not in any case to be employed summarily; but it is not, as to males, to be laid aside as an instrument of punishment. The House will see that it is quite a different thing, when brandished as a symbol of authority, and applied to the brute nerves of the negro as an incitement to labour: or when used for the infliction of a punishment, of which the reasoning faculties of the slave can appreciate the justice. Even as to males, and as an instrument of punishment, the whip is to be employed only under certain regulations, both with respect to the amount of infliction, and to the time. Delay of punishment for some time after the commission of the offence is the best security against abuse from suddenness of passion. It is further provided that witnesses shall be present at the punishment of a slave; and that all punishments shall be accurately recorded. These alterations at once raise the mass of the negro population from the brute state to that of man.

To provide the means of religious instruction and worship is an object first indeed in importance, but necessarily subsequent in order to those which I have already mentioned; because it is not till the slave population are raised in the scale of nature that they can be capable of comprehending, or fitted to receive, the blessings of Christianity. It is intended to increase the amount, and widen the basis of the ecclesiastical establishment in the West Indies. That establishment was founded for the benefit of the white population alone. It was no more calculated for the negro than for the brute animal that shares his toils. I am not stating this as a matter of charge, but as a matter of fact. This establishment, though founded on the principles of the national church, will not exclude other denominations of Christians. The authority and the discipline of the national church will be lodged in bishops, to be resident in the colonies. With religious worship will be combined religious instruction. It is not my business on the present occasion to trouble the House with details: but here, again, I am bound to do justice to the West India body in this country, who have declared their anxiety for the institution of

religious instruction, and to more than one of the colonies which have already acted upon that declaration.

Sir, after religious worship and religious instruction, naturally come those charities of life, which religion promotes and sanctifies. The Order in Council enjoins the local Government of Trinidad to encourage marriage. This injunction, I am again bound to say, and I do so with much satisfaction, is in perfect consonance with the recommendation of the persons most interested in the colonies who reside in this country, and has also received a ready assent in many of the colonies. In consideration of marriage, and of the other charities of life, which grow out of that connexion, it is provided by the Order in Council, that in all future sales, I fear that I must still use that word, families shall not be separated. In transferring slaves from one property to another, care will be taken in future that husband and wife, or reputed husband and wife, and parent and child, shall not be severed from each other.

The influence of family ties will naturally beget in the mind of the slave an increased desire of property. The Order in Council gives the security of law to that possession of property which is at present respected by custom; and enjoins that measures shall be taken to secure to the slave the power of bequeathing it at his death. In aid of these provisions it has been thought advisable, (however singular it may appear, that a very late invention of a country far advanced in civilization, should be supposed capable of taking root in a rude society like that of the West Indies)—it has been thought advisable, I say, to institute a bank, in which the little savings of slaves may be accumulated. To the right of enjoyment, and to the power of bequest, secured by law, will be thus added the further security derived from the overwatching eye of public observation.

Sir, when, by measures of this kind, new ideas are infused into the mind of the negro, when he is lifted from a level with the beast of the field, when he has been allowed to take his stand amongst the human race—

"Cœlumque tueri
Jussus, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus;—"

when he has been taught to appreciate the endearments of family connexions, the ties of kindred, and the blessings of property,—when his nature, as well as his condition, has been thus improved,—then comes the fit opportunity for considering a subject which is surrounded by many practical difficulties—the admissibility of the evidence of slaves in courts of justice.

It would be as wild to say, that the evidence of slaves should be indiscriminately admitted in all cases, as it would be unjust to exclude it in all cases. In this country, a person in the situation

of a slave—I do not mean politically, but morally,—an infant, whose mind is not sufficiently expanded to be able to estimate the obligation of an oath, is not permitted to give evidence. It is first ascertained, by examination, that the mind of the infant is in fact so matured, as to be capable of comprehending that obligation. It would be improper to admit the evidence of blacks without a similar guard. It is proposed, therefore, that those persons who are to have the care of instructing the negroes should have power to certify, not with respect to a particular case in which the evidence of a slave may be wanted, but generally, that such and such slaves have made such advances in civilization as to be cognizant of the nature of an oath. It is proposed, that a register of such slaves shall be kept, constituting, as it were, a privileged class, and presenting (what is the spring of all human action,) something like an object of ambition to their fellow slaves. Under this arrangement the competency of a slave to give evidence will not be judged by subjecting him, at the moment, to an examination, probing his intellect to the quick, by questions which he may not be able to comprehend; but it will be known at once, when any individual slave is proposed as a witness on a trial, whether he is one of that class whose evidence has been certified to be admissible. It is just to state, that under certain qualifications, the evidence of slaves is already admitted in the courts of justice of Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent's, and I believe St. Christopher's, and Tobago.

A natural consequence of the determination to impart religious instruction to the slaves, will be the abolition of Sunday markets, and of Sunday labour. The Order in Council prescribes this abolition, so soon as the means of religious worship shall be established. It prescribes immediately a restriction of the Sunday market, within certain hours—ultimately, as I have said, its total abolition. In some of the colonies this regulation is already partially anticipated.

By this process, and by these degrees, may the slave be gradually fitted for the last grand consummation of benefit, the power of acquiring his freedom. Heretofore the restraints on granting manumissions were extremely numerous; but these are now considerably reduced; several taxes and imposts have been removed in different colonies; and in others a like disposition has been manifested. The Order in Council, however, goes beyond what has been hitherto at all generally practised in the colonies. It ordains that a negro, who has acquired sufficient property, shall, under certain guards and regulations, therein set forth, be entitled to purchase his own freedom, the freedom of his wife, or that of his children.

I have thus, Sir, stated to the House the provisions of the Or-

der in Council. I know, that, with respect to the last point, namely, the purchase of freedom, great prejudice, great dislike, great apprehension, prevail. I am far from saying that it is not a perplexing question: but the principle has been admitted to a certain extent in St. Kitts, and also in Trinidad. No principle can be considered as impracticable which has, even in a single instance, been voluntarily admitted in the West Indies. It is astonishing how much good might be done by merely collecting, and bringing to bear on one society, all the beneficial regulations which are scattered through the different colonies. I admit, on the one hand, that the existence of such beneficial regulations affords an answer to the general declamation which has been heard about the total neglect and abandonment of the negroes, by West Indian Governments and proprietors: but I must, on the other hand, contend, that the people of this country, who, on account of their distance from the colonies, are compelled to look at them through the eyes of others, are entitled to consider as good authority for any improvement of which they recommend the introduction, the fact, that what they wish to recommend has been by any one West Indian community already voluntarily adopted.

I will now recapitulate the improvements which Government propose to effect in the island of Trinidad:—First, abolition of the use of the whip with regard to females entirely;—discontinuance of the use of the whip as applied to males as a stimulus to labour;—restrictions on the infliction on males of punishment by the whip. Secondly, a religious establishment and religious instruction;—and, in order to give time for the acquirement of that instruction, the abolition of the markets and of slave labour on the Sunday. Thirdly, encouragement of marriage among the slaves;—the keeping together of families of slaves, in sales or transfers of estates; the securing to slaves the enjoyment of property, and the right to distribute it at their death. Fourthly, the admissibility of the evidence of slaves under certain regulations; and, lastly, a power to the slave to purchase his own freedom, or that of his wife or children. These are the chief objects of the Order in Council. Such is the example which the Government are disposed to set in the island of Trinidad; and it is hoped that other colonies will follow an example so set, without the apprehension of danger.

I am aware that whilst with respect to the last point alluded to in the Order in Council—the power to be given to slaves to purchase their own freedom, or that of their wives or children—Government has gone beyond the general assent of the West India body, they have fallen very short of the desires of some excellent and honourable persons. I know very well that the honourable gentleman (Mr. Buxton) opposite, last year stated that he

was disposed to go a shorter way to work, and to enact the emancipation of a particular generation of slaves. Sir, in the interval which has elapsed since the debate of last May, I have turned that matter in my mind with the most painful anxiety; and I feel bound to declare, that with the most sincere desire to come to the conclusion most favourable to the cause of humanity, I cannot concur in the honourable member's proposition. If it were carried into effect, it would in my opinion be productive of the greatest injury, not only to the white population, but also to the blacks themselves.—[Mr. Buxton here observed across the table, that he only proposed to emancipate the children of the existing slaves, not the slaves themselves.]

The honourable gentleman is not prepared to grant emancipation to the existing generation of slaves. Certainly not. To let in the full light of freedom on eyes scarcely unsealed, eyes from which the scales of bondage have not yet been purged away, would indeed be a perilous experiment. But would it not be scarcely less unwise to hold out the hope of emancipation to the next generation of negroes? The slave would view the freedom which was thus placed in prospect before him, as an infant views any object of desire, without the faculty of calculating the distance which separates him from it. To hold out the prospect for a future generation, might create dissatisfaction in the present race of slaves, and render their actual existence intolerable.

The course which the Government proposes to pursue, is to arrive at the liberation of the child through the instrumentality of the parent. Enable the negro to purchase his own freedom—enable him equally to purchase that of his offspring—whenever he shall have acquired the means of doing so;—and the option between himself and his child being left to his own feelings, how probable is it that those feelings may lead him to prefer the liberation of his child!—On the contrary, if we were to take the rising generation of slaves, or those hereafter to be born, under the special protection of the Legislature, as proposed by the honourable member, parents might perhaps be tempted to look upon their offspring, with feelings, I will not say of envy, but with feelings far other than those of unmixed satisfaction, with which a parent ought to contemplate the happiness and prosperity of his child.

Immediate emancipation to the negro himself, I am most happy to hear the honourable gentleman disclaim. It would indeed be a fatal gift. To be safely enjoyed it must be gradually and diligently earned. *Haud facilem esse viam voluit*, is the condition under which it has pleased Divine Providence that all the valuable objects of human aspiration should be attained. This condition is the legitimate stimulant of laudable industry, and the best corrective of ambitious desire. No effort of an individual, and no

enactment of a legislature, can relieve human nature from the operation of this condition. To attempt to shorten the road between desire and attainment, is nine times out of ten to go astray, and to miss the wished-for object altogether. I am fully persuaded that freedom, when acquired under the regulations prescribed by Government, will be a more delightful as well as a more safe and more stable possession than if it were bestowed by a sudden acclamation.

In dealing with the negro, Sir, we must remember that we are dealing with a being possessing the form and strength of a man, but the intellect only of a child. To turn him loose in the manhood of his physical strength, in the maturity of his physical passions, but in the infancy of his uninstructed reason, would be to raise up a creature resembling the splendid fiction of a recent romance; the hero of which constructs a human form, with all the corporeal capabilities of man, and with the thews and sinews of a giant; but being unable to impart to the work of his hands a perception of right and wrong, he finds too late that he has only created a more than mortal power of doing mischief, and himself recoils from the monster which he has made.

Such would be the effect of a sudden emancipation, before the negro was prepared for the enjoyment of well-regulated liberty. I, therefore, Sir, would proceed gradually, because I would proceed safely. I know that the impulse of enthusiasm would carry us much faster than I am prepared to go; I know it is objected that all this preparation will take time. Take time, Sir! To be sure it will; to be sure it should; to be sure it must!—Time, Sir? —why,—what is it we have to deal with? Is it with an evil of yesterday's origin? with a thing which is grown up in our time;—of which we have watched the growth—measured the extent, and which we have ascertained the means of correcting or controlling? No; we have to deal with an evil which is the growth of centuries, and of tens of centuries; which is almost coeval with the deluge; which has existed under different modifications since man was man. Do gentlemen, in their passion for legislation, think that after only thirty years' discussion, they can now at once manage as they will, the most unmanageable, perhaps, of all subjects? or, do we forget, Sir, that in fact not more than thirty years have elapsed since we first presumed to approach even the outworks of this great question!—Do we, in the ardour of our nascent reformation, forget that during the ages for which this system has existed, no preceding generation of legislators has ventured to touch it with a reforming hand? and have we the vanity to flatter ourselves that we can annihilate it at a blow?—No, Sir, no:—we must be contented to proceed, as I have already said, gradually and cautiously; and what I have now laid before

the House, is, I flatter myself, sufficient for the first step in a process which will widen, and strengthen as it goes.

It is the intention of the Government, Sir, after having established the system which I have explained, in Trinidad, to extend it to the other colonies in which the power of the Crown is unshackled. The same instructions which have been sent to Trinidad, are to be forwarded to St. Lucie; the only difference will be, that, as in Trinidad they are grafted on the Spanish law, in St. Lucie the machinery of the French law will be employed for carrying them into operation. It is intended also to extend the experiment to Demerara and its dependencies; where, indeed, it would have been first tried, but for the intervention of the unfortunate occurrences which have lately taken place in that colony.

I shall be asked what is likely to be the effect produced by the adoption of these measures in Trinidad, St. Lucie, and Demerara, upon the other West Indian colonies which have legislatures of their own, and by many of which the communication of the wishes and intentions of Parliament has certainly been received with a spirit any thing but conciliatory. I shall be asked what are the intentions of the Government, as to those colonies; by what means it is intended to bring them to reason, and to induce them to adopt the views and second the determinations of Parliament?

Sir, if it were possible for me, on a question involving so many important interests, so many perplexing considerations, and so many contingencies requiring to be calculated with the utmost coolness and deliberation; if it were possible to indulge, on such an occasion, any personal feeling of irritation at the manner in which His Majesty's Government, and among them, myself, as a member of that Government, have been treated by some of the West India Assemblies, I might be tempted to resort to measures of reprehension and coercion. But, Sir, I can assure the House that I am actuated by no such feeling; and that I am not inclined to resort to any such measures. On the contrary, I should consider it most unwise and most unbecoming to do so. In the ebullition of anger (for I will call it nothing more) observable in the proceedings of some of the legislative assemblies, I see much to blame, indeed—much to excuse—something to pity, but nothing to punish. Nothing I am aware would be easier than to put an end to the dispute at once, by overwhelming power; but I see no necessity, and I am sure I feel no inclination, for such a proceeding. If, indeed, there were any thing like an equality of strength between the legislature of this mighty kingdom, and the colonial assemblies, as was the case in a struggle in which this country was heretofore engaged with her colonies, then might Parliament, roused by insult as well as opposition to a feeling of exasperated

dignity, denounce vengeance against Jamaica. But as I do not mean the thing, I will not use the language.

There are three possible modes in which Parliament might deal with the people of Jamaica: first, as I have said, it might crush them by the application of direct force;—secondly, it might harass them by fiscal regulations, and enactments restraining their navigation; and, thirdly, it may pursue the slow and silent course of temperate, but authoritative admonition. Now, Mr. Speaker, if I am asked which course I would advise, I am for first trying that which I have last mentioned; I trust we shall never be driven to the second; and with respect to the first, I will only now say that no feeling of wounded pride, no motive of questionable expediency, nothing short of real and demonstrable necessity, shall induce me to moot the awful question of the transcendental power of Parliament over every dependency of the British Crown. That transcendental power is an *arcanum* of empire, which ought to be kept back within the *penetralia* of the constitution. It exists, but it should be veiled. It should not be produced upon trifling occasions, or in cases of petty refractoriness and temporary misconduct. It should be brought forward only in the utmost extremity of the state, where other remedies have failed to stay the raging of some moral or political pestilence. Undoubtedly, Sir, it would be easy to select passages from the Jamaica Gazettes, which, according to all legitimate inferences of reasoning, ought to put Parliament in a towering passion: but I must confess, that upon a moment's reflection, I find my indignation restrained by consideration of the powerlessness of the body from whom the offence comes, compared with the omnipotence of that to which it is offered. The consciousness of superior strength disarms the spirit of resentment. I could revenge, but I would much rather reclaim. I prefer that moral self-restraint so beautifully expressed by the poet, when he represents Neptune as allaying the wild waters, instead of rebuking the winds which had put them in a roar—

"*Quos ego—sed motos præstat componere fluctus.*"

If there be any gentleman in the Jamaica House of Assembly, who meditates the acquisition of fame and popularity by opposing what he pleases to call the encroachments of the mother country, and who is preparing himself for his contemplated career, by conning over the speeches of Cushing and Franklin, we shall act most judiciously, by taking from him all lofty grounds of quarrel; by disappointing his patriotic ardour of contentious topics of inflammation; and by leaving him to found his insurrection, if insurrection he will have, on an abstract admiration of the cart-whip, and on a resolute claim of his free-born right to use that instrument at his pleasure.

I am convinced, Sir, that unless Parliament should injudiciously supply fuel to the flame, this unprovoked ardour will gradually expire. When the patriots discover that no parliamentary commissioner is coming out to control them, that no army is on its way to subdue them, no navy to blockade their ports, they will have leisure and temper to reflect calmly on what has passed; and finding no just cause of offence and no plea for crying out against oppression, they will, I doubt not, at no distant time, be convinced of the reasonableness of the measures recommended to their adoption, and will prepare themselves to act, by their own power and discretion, consonantly to the wishes of this House.

Indeed, Sir, situated as Jamaica is between warnings and examples, having St. Domingo on the one side, and Columbia on the other, with Trinidad, St. Lucie, and Demerara almost in her view, I cannot believe that she will long hold out in her resistance. I cannot believe that much time will elapse before we shall learn that the planter of Jamaica is anxiously employed in emulating the endeavours of the Government in Trinidad, to improve the condition of his negroes.

In the full assurance that this will be the case, so far from entertaining any hostile feeling towards those who have been so liberal of their comments upon us, the Government is most anxious that Jamaica should participate to the fullest extent in all the advantages likely to result from the proposed regulations. One of the episcopal establishments is intended to be fixed at Jamaica; the other in the Leeward Islands.

For the support of these establishments it will not be necessary, for a time at least, that any demand should be made on the finances of the islands. I will not now enter into any detailed calculations upon this head, which do not indeed come properly within this general view of the question; but I will merely express my hope, that for the first two years the expenses of these episcopal establishments will not exceed the amount of the interest of that sum which my right honourable friend has proposed to appropriate to the erection of new churches in this country. Two years will probably elapse before any portion of that fund will be required for the purposes for which it is ultimately intended. There is another fund also which may hereafter, when gradually relieved of the burdens which now exist upon it, be applied to the purposes of the proposed establishment, I mean the four and a half per cent. or Leeward Island's fund. I am authorized to state the disposition of the Crown to refrain from granting any further pensions out of this fund, until the burdens now upon it shall have been so far reduced, as to set free a portion of it, applicable to the West Indian episcopal establishment.

Sir, I have now nearly done. Being desirous of putting the

House generally in possession of the principle and plan upon which the Government proposes to act, without exciting angry feelings on any side, I shall carefully and studiously abstain from all unnecessary reflections upon this important and painful subject; important from the extent of the interests which it embraces, and painful, inasmuch as it involves the consideration of the lot of so large a portion of our fellow-creatures, whose present state in society cannot be contemplated without the deepest feelings of commiseration. On the other hand, however, it is a question full of hope, seeing that the attention of Parliament and of the country has been directed to the subject; and seeing that there exists on all hands a wish and determination to apply remedies to the evil, not indeed with an indiscreet haste, which would rather injure than benefit those whose welfare we are anxious to promote, but with a temperate and well-considered zeal.

As one of the best modes of forwarding our object, I would most earnestly conjure those honourable gentlemen both on one side of the House and the other, who may take part in this discussion, whether from motives of personal interest, or from motives still more powerful than any considerations of interest, to refrain from exaggerated statements, from highly-coloured pictures of individual suffering, which can have no other effect than to exasperate discussion into animosity. I entreat gentlemen to reflect that any conflict on this subject in this House will not be merely a war of words. If this night's debate should be angry and intemperate, the inferences drawn from it elsewhere will be fatal to the peace of the colonies. False hopes will be excited among the slaves; a spirit of resistance will be engendered among the planters; improvement in the lot of the negro will thus be placed at a greater distance than ever; and the lives and properties of the white population of the colonies will be placed in hazard and jeopardy.

I entreat honourable gentlemen particularly to bear in mind, that in the discussion of this question in this place, we have, as if by tacit agreement, spoken generally of slavery and of a slave population, without adverting to one essential characteristic, which distinguishes the slavery of the West Indies from all others; I mean that physical alienation which arises from the indelible difference of colour. We who live not on the spot can conceive but a faint idea of the nature of this alienation. But let it not be forgotten that our debates are read with avidity in the colonies by the different classes, in which this principle is working with full force.

No gentleman comes into this House to take part in this question, who is not in some way or other, more or less, connected with individuals whose all is involved in the discussion. Let us

recollect what prodigious ruin one unguarded expression, dropt in the heat of debate, may occasion to those whom we would not willingly injure;—while it is at the same time clear that the most ardent and enthusiastic eloquence cannot hasten the enjoyment of freedom by those who are not yet in a fit state to receive the boon.

If we are to do good (which I earnestly hope and sincerely believe we may,) it is not to be done by sudden and violent measures;—but by efforts of a patient and comparatively tame character; by measures slow in their progress, but steady and sure in their operation; measures which must be carried into effect not by a few individuals of rare talents, and conspicuous zeal; but by the great body of those whom the advocates of the negro distrust and seem disposed to put aside.

Yes, Sir, if the condition of the slave is to be improved, that improvement must be introduced through the medium of his master. The masters are the instruments through whom, and by whom, you must act upon the slave population:—and if by any proceedings of ours we shall unhappily place between the slave and his master the barrier of insurmountable hostility, we shall at once put an end to the best chance of emancipation or even of amendment. Instead of diffusing gradually over those dark regions a pure and salutary light, we may at once kindle a flame only to be quenched in blood.

I am not aware, Sir, that it is necessary for me to detain the House by entering more into detail, nor will I be induced to sin against my own precept by diverging into general observations. I therefore here take my leave of the existing state of the negro population.

Connected, however, with that state from which we are endeavouring gradually to rescue so large a portion of our fellow-creatures, is, (as I have stated at the outset of my speech,) the consideration of the inhuman traffic by which they were brought into their present condition; and for the total abolition of which, so far as regards this country and her colonies, the friends of humanity are indebted to the exertions of my honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce) opposite. I am convinced that the Slave Trade is entirely and effectually abolished with respect to our colonies. I know that other persons entertain a different opinion; but after the most anxious inquiries on the subject, I feel perfectly confident that with respect to the British West India Islands, the prohibition against the introduction of slaves is sacredly observed. It is, nevertheless, true that the introduction of slaves in foreign colonies continues to an enormous extent. All the efforts of this country to procure the active co-operation of other powers to put down the traffic in slaves has been ineffectual. Among the plans

which have been suggested for that purpose, it has been frequently suggested that all persons guilty of slave-trading should be rendered obnoxious to capture, not only by the vessels of their own country, but by those of every other power,—in other words, that the Slave Trade should be declared piracy. A good deal of misapprehension, however, prevails upon this point.

It has been supposed by some persons that a Congress of Sovereigns—the Congress of Verona, for instance—might have taken upon itself to declare slave-trading a piratical offence, and thereby to make the individuals engaged in it amenable to an universal international law. This is a complete mistake. England must surely be the last country in the world to admit that any congress of sovereigns could constitute a law, universal in its operation on states not party to its enactment. The only way in which this desirable object could be obtained would be, that every nation should for itself declare slave-trading to be a piratical offence in its own subjects. We have in the law of England many statutable piracies. But, supposing such a law passed here in respect to the Slave Trade, the effect upon the foreign Slave Trade would be nothing, unless we could persuade other nations each to pass the like law, and all to co-operate for its general execution. Now, we have more than once proposed both to the Government of France and to that of the United States, to give reciprocally by treaty, a right of mutual visit and search in all cases of suspected slave-trading. When it is considered how many delicate points of national pride, of maritime law, and maritime right, are touched by such a proposition, the House will not be surprised that it has been by no means cordially received. By France it has been more than once rejected altogether. But it is with no small feeling of gratification that I am now enabled to state to the House that many days have not elapsed since a treaty was signed on the part of this country by my right honourable friend near me, the President of the Board of Trade, and a right honourable relation of mine, His Majesty's Minister to the United States of America, and on the part of the United States by the American Minister in London, by which treaty Great Britain and the Government of the United States concede mutually to each other, under certain regulations and restrictions, this long-sought right of visit.

This treaty authorizes the men-of-war of either nation to detain the merchant vessels of the other, if suspected of being engaged in slave-trading; provided, that both countries shall have previously adopted the same law respecting that crime, by constituting it by law a *piracy*. The House is probably aware that the Legislature of the United States has already passed a law to this effect. It is my intention to-night to propose, with the leave of the House, to bring in a bill for the like purpose. Should that

bill pass, the navies of Great Britain and of the United States will henceforth act in co-operation, to extirpate, so far as regards their two countries, this abominable traffic altogether.

The present is not the most convenient time for entering into a detail of the provisions of the treaty; but those who recollect the difficulties which have hitherto obstructed the completion of any such agreement, must rejoice to find that all these difficulties have been adjusted. There are, on both sides, points of dignity reserved: and care has been taken to preserve the general boundaries of maritime law: but upon the question of the Slave Trade, the powers reciprocally given are ample, and I trust will be found effectual. Each country reserves the administration of its own national law for the punishment of its own subjects: but the right of capture is common to both. For instance, if an American man-of-war should capture a British slave trader, (and God forbid she should not, if such an one could be found,) or, *vice versa*, a British man-of-war an American slave trader,—the captured vessel is to be remitted to the nearest ship-of-war of its own nation, or to its nearest native maritime port, for adjudication:—each country thus aiding the other in detecting the crime; but each judging its own subjects. I trust that the realization of this arrangement between the contracting parties will not be the limit of its beneficial operation: for when the two greatest maritime nations in the world,—the two nations, I mean, who, by the extent of their commercial navies, expose the widest surface to the operation of this new law,—so far compromise their maritime pride, and subdue their deeply-rooted prejudices, as to submit themselves to each other's vigilance and inquiry; it surely may be hoped that in any future discussions for the universal abolition of the Slave Trade, the joint representations of Great Britain and America may be employed with peculiar force, and grace, and consistency, to induce other nations to lay aside all feelings of repugnance which may stand in the way of their accession to so truly virtuous and beneficent a confederacy.

Sir, it only remains for me to thank the House for the patient indulgence with which they have listened to me; and to conclude with moving for leave to bring in a bill for the more effectual suppression of the African Slave Trade.

A very protracted discussion took place on the motion of the right honourable gentleman. To questions soliciting information from some honourable members,—and to objections to the course pursued by His Majesty's Government, from others,—Mr. Canning replied:—

Mr. Speaker,—Had I not been called upon in so direct a manner by some honourable gentlemen in the course of this de-

bate, it was not my intention to have offered myself again to your notice: and in addressing you at this late hour, Sir, and after so full a discussion, I am sure it will be agreeable to the House to hear that it is by no means my intention to trespass longer upon its time than may be necessary for replying to the questions which have been put to me.

And first, Sir, in reply to the question of the honourable member for Southwark (Sir R. Wilson.) The honourable gentleman wishes to know whether the Order in Council forwarded to Trinidad, is to be communicated to the other colonies which he has named? Communications have been made to the Cape of Good Hope, and other eastern settlements, but of the result of those communications I am yet without information. With regard to the other question respecting the use of the whip, and the number of lashes which a master is to be authorised to inflict on his slave as punishment for an offence; I have no hesitation in saying that my construction of the words "*at any time,*" which are to be found in that order, is, for any one offence.

I come next, Sir, to the more important questions put to me by my honourable friend the member for Bramber, and by the honourable member for Taunton. I confess it appears to me incorrect to call the Order in Council an *experiment.* The proper term to apply to it, is an *example;* and I trust, Sir, it is an example which the rest of the colonies will feel it both their interest and their duty to follow, without any interference on the part of the Government at home. With respect to such interference, however, I wish to be understood as reserving to myself the right of acting as circumstances may require. I have already described the different kinds and degrees of interference which might be employed towards the colonial legislatures, should such a course become necessary; but I must repeat that I deprecate any such interference, except by way of admonition and advice, unless as a last resource, or in an urgent extremity. The power exists:—but any practical application of it ought to be most cautiously avoided, until all other means shall have been tried and found unavailing.

The honourable member for Taunton, (Mr. Baring,) has charged the Government with delay, with want of decision, with agitating this great question, session after session, and still without any intelligible determination; with being, in short, like the honourable gentleman himself, as much on the one side as the other. This is the honourable gentleman's statement; now let us look at the facts. In the month of May, 1823, this question was moved for the first time by the honourable gentleman (Mr. Buxton) opposite. The Government then also, for the first time, declared its intention to take the question into its own hands. Only nine

short months have passed over since the question in its present shape was first agitated; and the Government now comes forward, and through me, its humble instrument, proposes a measure, which, whatever other gentlemen may think of it, seems to be so satisfactory to the honourable member for Taunton, that he carries his approbation of it even beyond those who propose it; he expects even more from it than the Government itself. Yet after having bestowed this extraordinary share of approbation on the measure proposed by the Government, the honourable gentleman assumes the lecturer's chair, and proceeds to censure us alike for what we have done, and what we have omitted, and to tell us what we ought and ought not to do. The honourable gentleman on this, as on some other occasions, reminds me, Sir, of certain members of this House, who were so well described by Mr. Burke forty years ago: "There are (said that eloquent statesman) a certain class of persons who when they rise in their places, no man living can divine, from any known adherence to parties, to opinions, or to principles, from any order or system in their politics, or from any sequel or connexion in their ideas, what part they are going to take in any debate. It is astonishing how much this uncertainty, especially at critical times, calls the attention of all parties on such men. All eyes are fixed on them; all ears are open to hear them; each party gapes and looks alternately for their vote almost to the end of their speeches. Whilst the House hangs in this uncertainty—now the *hear, hears!* rise from this side—now they are re-bellowed from the other, and that party to whom they at length fall, from their tremulous and dancing balance, always receive them in a tempest of applause." And now, Sir, just as forty years ago, there are gentlemen who get up late in the night, when the debate has reached a certain stage, and make a speech so nicely balanced this way, and that way, a piece of blame here, a piece of praise there, with censure and applause so beautifully blended and contrasted, that no man can venture to pronounce which ingredient predominates. To such gentlemen nothing certainly could be so disagreeable as to find the Government taking upon itself the part of mediator, and thus occupying the situation which they considered as exclusively their own, and which, it appears, on the present occasion, the honourable member for Taunton was particularly anxious to occupy. He would fain have had the Government assume a different course, and say to those who want all—you shall have nothing; and to those who wish to retain every thing—you shall give up all; in order that he might have had the opportunity of correcting the extravagance of the Government, and saying, "No, you must make one party concede this, and the opposing party, give up that; a government ought to avoid the excesses of a partisan." This, Sir,

is exactly what the Government has done. It has, as I have said, assumed the position of mediator; and the honourable gentleman appears to be exceedingly disappointed that the situation which he had marked out for himself is thus filled.

The post of mediator being thus occupied, the honourable gentleman is now all for extremes: "Why do you thus hesitate?" says the honourable gentleman; "why temporize with the question? why not decide it once for all and settle it for ever? If there be danger in decision, you ought to meet it manfully, and look it boldly in the face." This, Sir, is advice very easily given by those who are not responsible for the consequences of following it. But the honourable gentleman's advice and example are not in exact accordance with each other. If, like him, we had balanced between theory and practice, we should have done nothing. But keeping his wisdom for himself, to us he gives advice which would be sure to lead us into difficulties. "Look the dangere boldly in the face," says he. Allow me to ask what does the honourable gentleman mean by looking the danger boldly in the face? for I protest that I do not understand him. Does he mean that slavery shall continue as it is? or does he mean to recommend immediate emancipation? If the honourable gentleman counsels either of these extremes, and will have the goodness to say which of them he means to counsel, he will be at least intelligible, he will have recommended a decisive measure. The bold course of which he speaks would undoubtedly be to adopt one of these extremes; but in the most perfect sincerity, I declare I cannot make out which of the two is his favourite. The Government, however, has adopted a middle course; and this milder mode of proceeding is precisely that, which, if we had adopted either of his bold courses, the honourable member would have been delighted to have an opportunity of recommending.

The course now proposed by His Majesty's Government will, as we believe, effect every thing which, after mature deliberation, we believe can be safely attempted at this time. I know that there are persons connected with the West Indies, who wish to force the Government to say more on this subject; to extort from us a further declaration of the views which we entertain for the future. They wish us to give a pledge that no more shall ever be done than is now proposed. But I will not commit myself on this subject.

The honourable gentleman (Mr. Buxton) opposite, is not more vehement in his abhorrence of slavery in the abstract than I am. But I have a repugnance to abstract declarations. I am desirous of acting on this, as I would do on all other occasions, on the best information that I can obtain, with a view to practical benefit: I am desirous of taking moderation, equity, justice, and sound pol-

icy, for my guides. But I will not consent to be fettered by any engagements express, or implied. I will not be led by either side, or in either sense, to declarations from which it may be impossible to advance, and dangerous to retreat. If it would be improper to declare an intention of stopping here, it would be equally improper to hold out any pledge of ulterior and accelerated measures. The question is not—it cannot be made—a question of right, of humanity, of morality merely. It is a question which contemplates a change, great and difficult beyond example; one almost beyond the power of man to accomplish; a change in the condition and circumstances of an entire class of our fellow creatures, the recasting, as it were, of a whole generation of mankind. If this be not a question requiring deliberation, cautious and fearful deliberation, I know not what can be so. Sir, we must proceed in it with the extremest circumspection; we must watch the signs of the times, taking advantage of every favourable occurrence; but reserving a discretion and freedom of action, which it would be madness wantonly to throw away.

Whatever, therefore, may be the opinion of the honourable member for Taunton, I will not consent to depart from the course, which, after the most mature consideration, the Government has determined to adopt. I will cheerfully resign to him either of the extremes, between which alone he conceives the choice to lie: but I will not be shamed by any thing which the honourable gentleman can say, out of our moderate and middle course of policy, into one which, because we have not adopted it, he calls by the name of decision, but which, if we had been unadvised enough to engage in it, he would justly have characterized as rashness.

The question was then put, and leave was given to bring in a Bill for the more effectual suppression of the African Slave Trade.

STATE OF SLAVERY.

MAY 19th, 1826.

MR. BROUGHAM moved the following Resolution:—

"That this House has observed with deep regret that nothing effectual has been done by the Legislatures of His Majesty's Colonies in the West Indies, in compliance with the declared wishes of His Majesty's Government, and the Resolutions of this House of the 15th of May, 1823, touching the condition of the Slaves; and this House will, therefore, early in the next Session of Parliament, take into its most serious consideration such measures as may appear to be necessary for giving effect to the said Resolutions."

MR. CANNING rose, and addressed the House to the following effect:—The honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. Denman) who spoke last, Sir, has brought the question which is now before the House, precisely to that point at which I am desirous of meeting it.

The practical point to be decided is, whether the Resolution now proposed for its adoption, is likely to be useful, or otherwise, for the purposes for which I am bound to believe it is intended? That Resolution contains, indeed, some propositions, to which, as abstract propositions, I have no difficulty, (with certain modifications) in subscribing. But the questions for the House, on the present occasion, I take to be—not whether the Resolution be abstractedly true, but whether the passing of any such Resolution as this be either necessary or advisable? and if it be neither necessary nor advisable, whether it may not be rather detrimental than beneficial to the general object upon which the House has already expressed its determination.

In addressing myself to these questions, I must lay out of the account much—indeed the greater part—of the speech of one honourable and learned gentleman (Dr. Lushington;) because it has been already determined by the House, and by the Government, to proceed in this great measure, as far as possible, by means of conciliation and recommendation; but the whole of the honourable and learned gentleman's speech was directed rather to means of force and terror. That speech, therefore, I must pass by, as entirely dissonant from the whole tone and temper in which the discussion of this matter has been hitherto conducted; and especially from the laborious and temperate speech with which this Resolution has been introduced for our deliberation.

I must assume, Sir, that the Resolutions passed by this House, in May, 1823, constitute the rule which Parliament have agreed

to take for their guidance; and I must also assume (the position which I have just stated not being contradicted) that the several measures which the Government have founded on those Resolutions, are admitted to have been conceived in the spirit of those Resolutions, and to have been framed in accordance with that spirit.

If, Sir, there be those who think that a different course from that which the House of Commons has pursued, ought to have been adopted; if there be those who are even disposed to go back to the year 1807, and to contend that the abolition of slavery in the West Indies, ought to have been then enforced by the same Act of Parliament which abolished the trade in slaves, I have really only to say to them that they come too late into the field; that Parliament has already taken its determination, and formed its decision on that subject. I must remind them that Parliament has already declared, in a way not to be misunderstood, that it would not enact the emancipation of slaves in the West Indies; that it looks to that result only through a sober and gradual course of measures; that it will not be diverted from that course, except by a degree of resistance, amounting to contumacy on the part of the West Indian colonies, which it will not at present apprehend.

If there be those again who think that this important question, involving, as it confessedly does, the lives, the interests, and the property of our fellow subjects, is to be determined on the abstract proposition—"That man cannot be made the property of man," —I take the liberty of relegating them to the schools; and of telling them that they do not deal with this grave and complicated matter as members of the British Parliament, or as members of a society constituted like that in which we live, of long established interests, of conflicting claims to protection, of modifications and involutions of property, not to be changed and simplified by a sudden effort, and of usages which, however undesirable, if the question were as to their new institution, are too inveterately rooted to be destroyed at a single blow. I must tell them, Sir, that the practical adoption of their speculative notions would expose our West India possessions to ravage and desolation; which, I think, those honourable gentlemen themselves would be as little satisfied to behold, as I hope they are prepared, wilfully to produce them.

The learned civilian, referring to a former debate, has quoted a passage of a speech of mine, wherein I stated "that the spirit of the British Constitution was, in its principle, hostile to any modification of slavery." This reference compels me to set myself right with the House. The learned civilian has read the extract from the speech, but he has not given the context from which it

is torn. Sir, the honourable member for Weymouth had, on that occasion, prefaced his proposed Resolution with a declaration, that "the state of slavery was repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution, and of the Christian religion." Did I subscribe to that proposition? Can the sentence quoted by the learned civilian be fairly understood in that sense? In order that the House should rightly understand what I did say, I will read that part of my speech of that day to which the quoted sentence belongs.

"The honourable gentleman (it is the honourable member for Weymouth to whom I am alluding) begins his Resolution with a recital which I confess greatly embarrasses me. He says, that 'the state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution, and of the Christian religion.' God forbid that he who ventures to object to this statement should therefore be held to assert a contradiction to it! I do not say that the state of slavery is consonant to the principles of the British Constitution; still less do I say that the state of slavery is consonant to the principles of the Christian religion. But though I do not advance these propositions myself, nevertheless, I must say, that in my opinion the propositions of the honourable gentleman are not practically true. If the honourable gentleman means that the British Constitution does not admit of slavery in that part of the British dominions where the Constitution is in full play, undoubtedly his statement is true; but it makes nothing for his object. If, however, the honourable member is to be understood to maintain that the British Constitution has not *tolerated* for years, nay, more, for centuries, *in the colonies*, the existence of slavery—a state of society unknown in the mother country—that is a position which is altogether without foundation, and positively and practically untrue. In my opinion, when a proposition is submitted to this House, for the purpose of inducing the House to act upon it, care should be taken not to confound, as I think is done in this Resolution, what is morally true with what is historically false. Undoubtedly, the spirit of the British Constitution is, in its principle, hostile to any modification of slavery; but as undoubtedly, the British Parliament has for ages, tolerated, sanctioned, protected, and even encouraged a system of colonial establishment of which it well knew slavery to be the foundation."

Here I do not say that slavery is sanctioned by the spirit of the Christian religion; and as little do I say, that it is sanctioned by the principles of the British Constitution. But, although I do not advance any such proposition in opposition to that of the honourable member for Weymouth, still I do say, that his proposition is not practically true. If the honourable and learned gentleman meant to say, that the spirit of the British Constitution is adverse

to slavery, I admit the truth of his proposition; but it makes nothing for his argument. If he meant to say, that the British Constitution has not for years tolerated slavery in its colonies, then it is quite evident that his proposition is positively and practically untrue. I contended then, as I contend now, that care ought to be taken, in touching questions of this nature, not to mingle and confound what is morally true with what is historically false. I admitted, then, as I admit now, that the Constitution of this country is adverse to the practice or principle of slavery; but, I affirmed then, and I now repeat the affirmation, that the Parliament of this country has protected, fostered, and encouraged establishments, whose main support, it well knew, was derived from slavery. Guarded then, Sir, as my declaration on this subject was at the beginning, guarded as it was at the end, I think the learned gentleman did not do quite fairly,—did not act, in respect to my speech, as he would have acted professionally in the citation of any document in a court of justice,—when he separated a single sentence, or rather member of a sentence, from the rest, and presented it to the House, as a simple, direct, substantive, and unqualified proposition.

The learned gentleman seems, indeed, to think that he is at liberty to construe my speech of three years ago by comparison with something which passed the other day, in another place; of which, as stated by himself, I profess I do not see the practical bearing upon my argument (such as I have now shown that argument to have been;)—but of which I know absolutely nothing but what the assertion of the honourable and learned gentleman conveys to me. The distinction I now wish to press upon the attention of the House, is the same as I have always endeavoured to maintain. I have before said, that theoretically true as it may be, that the spirit of slavery is repugnant to the spirit of the British Constitution, yet this country, blessed though she has been with a free Constitution herself, has encouraged in her colonies the practice of slavery, however alien to her own domestic institutions; and this, too, be it remembered, at a time when her councils were guided by men, the acknowledged and boasted friends of liberty. I will not stop to enter into a disquisition whether, at the time to which I refer, the duties of governments, and the rights of man, as man, were as fully understood as in the age in which we have the happiness to live; whether the freedom of England had then attained that moral maturity which it now exhibits. Be that as it may, the simple fact is, that this country, notwithstanding her free Constitution, did found and maintain, nay, more, did foster and prescribe a system, of which, not only was slavery an ingredient, but which required an annual influx of

the black Stygian stream of slavery for its nutriment and sustentation.

But there was another part of the proposition put forth by the honourable member for Weymouth, on the occasion to which the learned civilian has alluded, viz.—that the state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the Christian religion. To this, Sir, I objected, not, certainly, meaning thereby to degrade the Christian religion by the imputatian that it was tolerant of slavery; but meaning to free this country from the necessity which would result from the adoption of the honourable gentleman's doctrine—the necessity of proceeding, without pause or hesitation, not merely to the immediate modification and gradual abolition of slavery in the colonies, but to its instant and total extirpation. What I meant to deny in the honourable member's proposition was, that the Christian religion and slavery could not be in existence together. I said that the reverse is the fact;—that they have co-existed from the very dawn of Christianity up to the present day. Neither, therefore, am I forced to admit that it is a principle of the Christian religion to sanction slavery. The course of the Christian religion has always been to adapt itself to the circumstances of the place and time in which it was seeking to make a progress; to accommodate itself to all stations of life, to all varieties of acting or of suffering; restraining the high, exalting the lowly, by precepts applicable to all diversities of situation: and alike contributing to the happiness of man, and providing for his welfare, whether connected with his highest destinies, or descending with him to his lowest degradation,—whether mounting the throne of the Cæsars, or comforting the captive in his cell.

But while Christianity has thus blessed and improved mankind, its operation has not been direct, precipitate, or violent. It has invaded no existing rights or relations, it has disturbed no established modes of government or law. It has rendered and recommended obedience to temporal power, even where that power was exercised with no light hand, and administered through no mild or uncorrupted institutions. While the doctrines of Christianity were preaching in the streets of Rome,—"*servi cruciantur*" continued to be the ordinary form of process in the FORUM, not for the punishment of the slave who had been convicted of a crime, but for extracting evidence from one produced as a witness.

Then, Sir, it is not true, that the Christian religion prescribes the extinction of slavery, with unsparing, uncompromising, indiscriminating haste. It is not true that Christianity ordains the extirpation of this great moral evil by other means than those which are consonant with the just spirit of the British Constitution,—means of equity and good faith, as well as of well-under-

stood humanity; measures moderate in their character, and progressive in their operation.

Is there any thing, then, Sir, in what I have laid down to inculpate the spirit of Christianity or the principles of the British Constitution? If the British Government, and the British Parliament, have for a long series of years fostered that system upon which we all now look with abhorrence, what is the fair inference?—Is it that we are to continue to foster and cherish it still? —No, Sir; that is not what I maintain: but I do maintain that we, having all concurred in the guilt of rearing and fostering the evil, are not to turn round upon the planters, and say, "*you* alone shall suffer all the penalty;—we determine to get rid of this moral pestilence, which infects our character as much as yours, which *we* have as much contributed to propagate as *you;* but *you*, as spotted lepers, shall be banished from our society, and cast to utter ruin, to expiate our common crime."

Sir, I propose that we proceed with more deliberate counsel, and a more even hand. The House has already resolved so to proceed; and the question for decision, therefore, this night is, whether the Resolution now offered for adoption is conceived in that even spirit, and bears the stamp of that temperate deliberation?

In order to decide this question, let us look where we now stand. The Resolutions of May, 1823, form the ground upon which we have hitherto proceeded:—Is there, then, reason to believe that the Government have acted upon those Resolutions otherwise than in the most perfect sincerity? and have not the Government avowed their determination, if the colonies should evince a contumacious resistance, to call upon Parliament for aid?

If we have acted with sincerity on the views sanctioned by Parliament, and if we have not departed from the declaration of our determination to come to Parliament for aid, if necessary,—wherefore now adopt a Resolution, which, if it is not necessary for the furtherance of the views of Government, must of necessity perplex them? We have already had, in the course of the session, two motions connected with this subject. Upon one of them, that relating to certain trials of slaves in the West Indies, I moved an amendment, expressive of the disgust naturally felt at some of the scenes brought under the notice of the House on that occasion; and declaring that we saw in those scenes only greater reason to adhere to the Resolutions of 1823. If, therefore, the Resolution proposed to us this night were no more than a renewal of our former declarations, it would amount to nothing—it would be powerless, it would be useless.

But it is no such thing. Let us examine what it is. In the first place, it expresses regret at the proceedings of the West In-

dian Legislatures. To this part of it I can have no objection, further than that it would be a waste of time to record over again what we have already recorded. But the second part of the Resolution pledges the House to follow up this declaration with measures, not defined, in the ensuing session. To that part I have a decided objection. I think that to pledge ourselves to such a declaration would be productive of positive mischief.

I, Sir, do not despair, that, in the course of the six or eight months which may intervene between the present and ensuing session, the West Indian Legislatures may adopt measures in the spirit of the recommendations sent out to them. I think their disposition to do this would be weakened by a pledge of the nature proposed. They would argue, that we knew not our own minds; that, dissatisfied with the course which we had already taken, we now stood pledged to resort to some other undefined mode of legislation; that whatever might have been, up to this period, the views of Government, the House of Commons had stepped in and changed them. In this way would the Jamaica Legislature have a right to argue. Would it, then, Sir, be prudent to abandon at once expectations which the West Indian Legislatures will not be so absurd and impolitic (to use no harsher epithet) as to disappoint, by signifying to them that we are not satisfied with our own course, and warning them thereby to wait and see what further steps we may be disposed to take, on another plan, and in a different direction?

An honourable friend of mine (Mr. C. Ellis,) Sir, who has done himself so much credit by his speech to-night, has asked me, whether he is to understand the Order in Council respecting Trinidad as comprising the whole of the system of the Government? My answer is, that so far as the Resolutions of this House prescribe to Government the course to be pursed, so far the Order in Council in question does comprise the intentions of Government. If the Colonial Legislatures act *bona fide* up to the spirit of that order, with a manifest desire not merely

> "To keep the word of promise to the ear,
> And break it to the hope;"

not by evasive or illusory enactments,—but with a full and fair intention to carry substantially into effect the ameliorations recommended to them, I am convinced that the views of Parliament will be accomplished. It is to the spirit of the proceedings of the West Indian Legislatures that we shall look; and the Govment, and, I believe, the Parliament, are disposed to look to it with confidence and candour.

My honourable friend has particularly adverted to the clause for compulsory manumission of slaves. It is undoubtedly the main cause of the whole. It is the only one that is *directly* ope-

rative. All the rest go to mitigate, to improve, to regulate the system of slavery; to render it more tolerable in its existence, and to prepare its gradual decay. *This* clause is the *way out of* that system,—the opening by which slavery itself may *escape*, gradually, and, as it were, imperceptibly, without the shock of a convulsion.

The great difference between the plans of His Majesty's Ministers and those of the honourable gentlemen who are desirous of a more rapid progress is this,—that those honourable gentlemen would risk great dangers—would risk even the frustration of their own object, for the hope of arriving at it immediately; whereas we would rather postpone a little the attainment of the object, in order that we may arrive at it with a greater assurance of safety.

I agree, Sir, in many particulars, with an honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. Bernal,) who has spoken with so much good sense; but I differ from him widely on the subject of compensation.

I think nothing could be more monstrous than to admit a claim of compensation into a system of measures which are purely measures of amelioration; and which all who look upon the moral improvement of the slave as beneficial to the interests of the master, must acknowledge to be calculated to create eventually an advance instead of a deterioration in the value of the master's property in his slaves. I admit, at the same time, that the principle of compulsory manumission, being one of force (though qualified so as to guard against danger,) *there* it is that the principle of compensation properly finds its place. The price which the manumitted slave will have to pay to his owner, —augmenting, as it naturally must do, in proportion to the improved value of the slave, is the medium through which that just compensation will be administered.

Sir, although the discussion upon this question has been long, and although many foreign topics have been introduced into it, I am not aware of any other practical points, beside those I have already touched upon, which call for answer or explanation. Nor would it be consistent with what I have said of the inopportuneness of these repeated discussions, to protract that of to-night beyond the limits of the question on which the vote of the House is to be taken.

I have endeavoured to show, that while I willingly admit that the dictates of humanity, the principles of the Christian religion, and the spirit of the British Constitution repudiate slavery, there is nothing in that admission which calls upon us to abolish the system, however odious, with a violence and precipitancy, the effect of which would be to bring down ruin upon so large a class

of our fellow subjects, and to exchange the evils of slavery for those of anarchy and bloodshed. I hope that I have also shown that the Government is sincere in its endeavour to carry into effect the wishes of Parliament, wisely, temperately, soberly, in the spirit in which those wishes were conceived. But I also hope that I shall have made it clear to those whose interests are more directly involved in this great question, and whose agency is necessary to the satisfactory solution of it, that what we profess to do with temperance and soberness, we are, at the same time, determined to do, or to see done. I trust it will be understood, that it is only because we do not like any thing which has the appearance of menace, that I have not to-night distinctly repeated the declaration, that if, contrary to our hope, we should be met by the colonies with contumacious opposition, we shall come to Parliament for aid—an aid which Parliament will not hesitate in granting, to carry into execution its own wholesome and holy determination.

The House divided:—

For Mr. Brougham's Resolution . .	38
Against it	100
Majority	62

THE KING'S MESSAGE.

DECEMBER 12th, 1826.

"GEORGE R.

"His Majesty acquaints the House of Commons that His Majesty has received an earnest application from the Princess Regent of Portugal, claiming, in virtue of the ancient obligations of alliance and amity between His Majesty and the Crown of Portugal, His Majesty's aid against an hostile aggression from Spain.

"His Majesty has exerted himself for some time past, in conjunction with His Majesty's ally, the King of France, to prevent such an aggression: and repeated assurances have been given by the Court of Madrid of the determination of His Catholic Majesty neither to commit, nor allow to be committed from His Catholic Majesty's territory, any aggression against Portugal; but His Majesty has learned, with deep concern, that notwithstanding these assurances, hostile inroads into the territory of Portugal have been concerted in Spain, and have been executed under the eyes of Spanish authorities by Portuguese regiments, which had deserted into Spain, and which the Spanish Government had repeatedly and solemnly engaged to disarm and to disperse.

"His Majesty leaves no effort unexhausted to awaken the Spanish Government to the dangerous consequences of this apparent connivance.

"His Majesty makes this communication to the House of Commons with the full and entire confidence, that his faithful Commons will afford to His Majesty their cordial concurrence and support in maintaining the faith of treaties, and in securing against foreign hostility the safety and independence of the kingdom of Portugal, the oldest ally of Great Britain.

"G. R."

MR. SECRETARY CANNING moved the Order of the Day, for taking into consideration His Majesty's gracious Message.

The Message was then read.*

---

*At the time of the publication of the corrected report of this speech, it was asserted that it differed materially from the speech, as originally spoken by Mr. Canning. The Editor of this work happens to have in his possession the original proof copy, submitted for correction, with Mr Canning's alterations; and though it cannot be denied that many alterations were made in it, yet they are alterations rather of style and language than of sentiment. As a fair test by which to determine the accuracy of this observation, the Editor would refer to the *latter half* of the first speech of Mr. Canning on the affairs of Portugal, which Count Chateaubriand, in the French Chamber of Peers, quoted as the most objectionable passage in the speech. The report from which the noble Peer quoted it was that which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, in which journal the passage was reported by a gentleman who has brought the very useful accomplishment of short-hand writing to the utmost degree of perfection of which it is susceptible. On a comparison of this part of the speech in the original and corrected reports, there will not be found a single omission or alteration, except, as has been already remarked, an *alteration of style and language*.—LONDON EDITOR.

Mr. Secretary Canning.—Mr. Speaker,—In proposing to the House of Commons to acknowledge, by an humble and dutiful Address, His Majesty's most gracious message, and to reply to it in terms which will be, in effect, an echo of the sentiments, and a fulfilment of the anticipations of that message, I feel that, however confident I may be in the justice, and however clear as to the policy of the measures therein announced, it becomes me, as a British Minister, recommending to Parliament any step which may approximate this country even to the hazard of a war, while I explain the grounds of that proposal, to accompany my explanation with expressions of regret.

I can assure the House, that there is not within its walls any set of men more deeply convinced than His Majesty's Ministers —nor any individual more intimately persuaded than he who has now the honour of addressing you—of the vital importance of the continuance of peace, to this country and to the world. So strongly am I impressed with this opinion—and for reasons of which I will put the House more fully in possession before I sit down—that, I declare, there is no question of doubtful or controverted policy —no opportunity of present national advantage—no precaution against remote difficulty—which I would not gladly compromise, pass over, or adjourn, rather than call on Parliament to sanction, at this moment, any measure which had a tendency to involve the country in war. But, at the same time, Sir, I feel that which has been felt, in the best times of English history, by the best statesmen of this country, and by the Parliaments by whom those statesmen were supported—I feel that there are two causes, and but two causes, which cannot be either compromised, passed over, or adjourned. These causes are, adherence to the national faith, and regard for the national honour.

Sir, if I did not consider both these causes as involved in the proposition which I have this day to make to you, I should not address the House, as I now do, in the full and entire confidence that the gracious communication of His Majesty will be met by the House with the concurrence of which His Majesty has declared his expectation.

In order to bring the matter which I have to submit to you under the cognizance of the House in the shortest and clearest manner, I beg leave to state it, in the first instance, divested of any collateral considerations. It is a case of law and of fact:—of national law on the one hand, and of notorious fact on the other; such as it must be, in my opinion, as impossible for Parliament as it was for the Government, to regard in any but one light; or to come to any but one conclusion upon it.

Among the alliances by which, at different periods of our history, this country has been connected with the other nations of

Europe, none is so ancient in origin, and so precise in obligation —none has continued so long and been observed so faithfully— of none is the memory so intimately interwoven with the most brilliant records of our triumphs, as that by which Great Britain is connected with Portugal. It dates back to distant centuries; it has survived an endless variety of fortunes. Anterior in existence to the accession of the House of Braganza to the throne of Portugal—it derived, however, fresh vigour from that event; and never, from that epoch to the present hour, has the independent monarchy of Portugal ceased to be nurtured by the friendship of Great Britain. This alliance has never been seriously interrupted: but it has been renewed by repeated sanctions. It has been maintained under difficulties by which the fidelity of other alliances were shaken, and has been vindicated in fields of blood and of glory.

That the alliance with Portugal has been always unqualifiedly advantageous to this country—that it has not been sometimes inconvenient and sometimes burdensome—I am not bound nor prepared to maintain. But no British statesman, so far as I know, has ever suggested the expediency of shaking it off: and it is assuredly not at a moment of need, that honour, and what I may be allowed to call national sympathy, would permit us to weigh, with an over-scrupulous exactness, the amount of difficulties and dangers attendant upon its faithful and steadfast observance. What feelings of national honour would forbid, is forbidden alike by the plain dictates of national faith.

It is not at distant periods of history, and in by-gone ages only, that the traces of the union between Great Britain and Portugal are to be found. In the last compact of modern Europe, the compact which forms the basis of its present international law—I mean the Treaty of Vienna of 1815—this country, with its eyes open to the possible inconveniences of the connexion, but with a memory awake to its past benefits—solemnly renewed the previously existing obligations of alliance and amity with Portugal. I will take leave to read to the House the third article of the Treaty concluded at Vienna in 1815, between Great Britain on the one hand, and Portugal on the other. It is couched in the following terms:—"The Treaty of Alliance concluded at Rio de Janeiro, on the 19th of February, 1810, being founded on circumstances of a temporary nature, which have happily ceased to exist, the said treaty is hereby declared to be void in all its parts, and of no effect; *without prejudice, however, to the ancient treaties of alliance, friendship, and guarantee, which have so long and so happily subsisted between the two Crowns, and which are hereby renewed by the high contracting parties, and acknowledged to be of full force and effect.*"

In order to appreciate the force of this stipulation,—recent in point of time, recent also in the sanction of Parliament,—the House will perhaps allow me to explain shortly the circumstances in reference to which it was contracted. In the year 1807, when, upon the declaration of Buonaparte, that the House of Braganza had ceased to reign, the King of Portugal, by the advice of Great Britain, was induced to set sail for the Brazils; almost at the very moment of His Most Faithful Majesty's embarkation, a secret convention was signed between His Majesty and the King of Portugal, stipulating that, in the event of His Most Faithful Majesty's establishing the seat of his Government in Brazil, Great Britain would never acknowledge any other dynasty than that of the House of Braganza on the throne of Portugal. That convention, I say, was contemporaneous with the migration to the Brazils; a step of great importance at the time, as removing from the grasp of Buonaparte the sovereign family of Braganza. Afterwards, in the year 1810, when the seat of the King of Portugal's Government was established at Rio de Janeiro, and when it seemed probable, in the then apparently hopeless condition of the affairs of Europe, that it was likely long to continue there, the secret convention of 1807, of which the main object was accomplished by the fact of the emigration to Brazil, was abrogated, and a new and public treaty was concluded, into which was transferred the stipulation of 1807, binding Great Britain, so long as His Faithful Majesty should be compelled to reside in Brazil, not to acknowledge any other sovereign of Portugal than a member of the House of Braganza. That stipulation which had hitherto been *secret*, thus became *patent*, and part of the known law of nations.

In the year 1814, in consequence of the happy conclusion of the war, the option was afforded to the King of Portugal of returning to his European dominions. It was then felt that, as the necessity of His Most Faithful Majesty's absence from Portugal had ceased, the ground for the obligation originally contracted in the secret convention of 1807, and afterwards transferred to the patent Treaty of 1810, was removed. The Treaty of 1810 was therefore annulled at the Congress of Vienna; and in lieu of the stipulation not to acknowledge any other sovereign of Portugal than a member of the House of Braganza, was substituted that which I have just read to the House.

Annulling the Treaty of 1810, the Treaty of Vienna renews and confirms, (as the House will have seen,) all *former* treaties between Great Britain and Portugal, describing them as "ancient treaties of alliance, friendship, and guarantee;" as having "long and happily subsisted between the two crowns;" and as being al-

lowed, by the two high contracting parties, to remain "in full force and effect."

What then is the force—what is the effect of those ancient treaties? I am prepared to show to the House what it is. But before I do so, I must say, that if all the treaties to which this article of the Treaty of Vienna refers had perished by some convulsion of nature, or had by some extraordinary accident been consigned to total oblivion, still it would be impossible not to admit, as an incontestible inference from this article of the Treaty of Vienna alone, that in a moral point of view, there is incumbent on Great Britain, a decided obligation to act as the effectual defender of Portugal. If I could not show the letter of a single antecedent stipulation, I should still contend that a solemn admission, only ten years old, of the existence at that time of "treaties of alliance, friendship, and guarantee," held Great Britain to the discharge of the obligations which that very description implies. But fortunately there is no such difficulty in specifying the nature of those obligations. All of the preceding treaties exist—all of them are of easy reference—all of them are known to this country, to Spain, to every nation of the civilized world. They are so numerous, and their general result is so uniform, that it may be sufficient to select only two of them to show the nature of all.

The first to which I shall advert is the Treaty of 1661, which was concluded at the time of the marriage of Charles the Second with the Infanta of Portugal. After reciting the marriage, and making over to Great Britain, in consequence of that marriage, first, a considerable sum of money, and secondly, several important places, some of which, as Tangier, we no longer possess; but others of which, as Bombay, still belong to this country, the Treaty runs thus:—"In consideration of all which grants, so much to the benefit of the King of Great Britain and his subjects in general, and of the delivery of those important places to his said Majesty and his heirs for ever, &c., the King of Great Britain does profess and declare, with the consent and advice of his Council, that he will take the interest of Portugal and all its dominions to heart, defending the same with his utmost power by sea and land, *even as England itself;*" and it then proceeds to specify the succours to be sent, and the manner of sending them.

I come next to the Treaty of 1703, a treaty of alliance contemporaneous with the Methuen Treaty, which has regulated, for upwards of a century, the commercial relations of the two countries. The Treaty of 1703 was a tripartite engagement between the States-General of Holland, England, and Portugal. The second article of that Treaty sets forth, that "If ever it shall happen that the Kings of Spain and France, either the present or the future, that both of them together, or either of them separately, shall

make war, or give occasion to suspect that they intend to make war upon the kingdom of Portugal, either on the continent of Europe, or on its dominions beyond the seas; Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain, and the Lords the States-General shall use their friendly offices with the said Kings, or either of them, in order to persuade them to observe the terms of peace towards Portugal, and not to make war upon it." The third article declares, that in the event of these good offices not proving successful, but altogether ineffectual, so that war should be made by the aforesaid kings, or by either of them upon Portugal, the above-mentioned powers of Great Britain and Holland shall make war with all their force upon the aforesaid Kings or King who shall carry hostile arms into Portugal; and towards that war which shall be carried on in Europe, they shall supply 12,000 men, whom they shall arm and pay, as well when in quarters as in action; and the said high allies shall be obliged to keep that number of men complete, by recruiting it from time to time at their own expense."

I am aware, indeed, that with respect to either of the treaties which I have quoted, it is possible to raise a question—whether, variation of circumstances or change of times may not have somewhat relaxed its obligations. The Treaty of 1661, it might be said, was so loose and prodigal in the wording—it is so unreasonable, so wholly out of nature, that any one country should be expected to defend another, "*even as itself;*" such stipulations are of so exaggerated a character, as to resemble effusions of feeling, rather than enunciations of deliberate compact. Again, with respect to the Treaty of 1703, if the case rested on that treaty alone, a question might be raised, whether or not, when one of the contracting parties—Holland—had since so changed her relations with Portugal, as to consider her obligations under the Treaty of 1703 as obsolete—whether or not, I say, under such circumstances, the obligation on the remaining party be not likewise void. I should not hesitate to answer both these objections in the negative. But without entering into such a controversy, it is sufficient for me to say, that the time and place for taking such objections, was at the Congress at Vienna. Then and there it was, that if you indeed considered these treaties as obsolete, you ought frankly and fearlessly to have declared them to be so. But then and there, with your eyes open, and in the face of all modern Europe, you proclaimed anew the ancient treaties of alliance, friendship, and guarantee, "so long subsisting between the crowns of Great Britain and Portugal," as still "acknowledged by Great Britain," and still "of full force and effect." It is not, however, on specific articles alone—it is not so much, perhaps, on either of these ancient treaties, taken separately, as it is on the spirit and understanding of the whole body of treaties, of which the es-

sence is concentrated and preserved in the Treaty of Vienna, that we acknowledge in Portugal a right to look to Great Britain as her ally and defender.

This, Sir, being the state, morally and politically, of our obligations towards Portugal, it is obvious that when Portugal, in apprehension of the coming storm, called on Great Britain for assistance, the only hesitation on our part could be—not whether that assistance was due, supposing the occasion for demanding it to arise, but simply, whether that occasion—in other words, whether the *casus fœderis* had arisen.

I understand, indeed, that in some quarters, it has been imputed to His Majesty's Ministers, that an extraordinary delay intervened between the taking of the determination to give assistance to Portugal, and the carrying of that determination into effect. But how stands the fact? On Sunday, the 3d of this month, we received from the Portuguese Ambassador a direct and formal demand of assistance against a hostile aggression from Spain. Our answer was—that although rumours had reached us through France, His Majesty's Government had not that accurate information—that official and precise intelligence of facts—on which they could properly found an application to Parliament. It was only on last Friday night that this precise information arrived. On Saturday His Majesty's confidential servants came to a decision. On Sunday that decision received the sanction of His Majesty. On Monday it was communicated to both Houses of Parliament —and this day, Sir, at the hour in which I have the honour of addressing you—the troops are on their march for embarkation.

I trust, then, Sir, that no unseemly delay is imputable to Government. But, undoubtedly, on the other hand, when the claim of Portugal for assistance—a claim, clear indeed in justice, but at the same time fearfully spreading in its possible consequences, came before us, it was the duty of His Majesty's Government to do nothing on hearsay. The eventual force of the claim was admitted; but a thorough knowledge of facts was necessary before the compliance with that claim could be granted. The Government here laboured under some disadvantage. The rumours which reached us through Madrid were obviously distorted, to answer partial political purposes; and the intelligence through the press of France, though substantially correct, was, in particulars, vague and contradictory. A measure of grave and serious moment could never be founded on such authority; nor could the Ministers come down to Parliament until they had a confident assurance that the case which they had to lay before the Legislature was true in all its parts.

But there was another reason which induced a necessary caution. In former instances, when Portugal applied to this country

for assistance, the whole power of the state in Portugal was vested in the person of the monarch. The expression of his wish, the manifestation of his desire, the putting forth of his claim, was sufficient ground for immediate and decisive action on the part of Great Britain, supposing the *casus fœderis* to be made out. But, on this occasion, inquiry was in the first place to be made whether, according to the new Constitution of Portugal, the call upon Great Britain was made with the consent of all the powers and authorities competent to make it, so as to carry with it an assurance of that reception in Portugal for our army, which the army of a friend and ally had a right to expect. Before a British soldier should put his foot on Portuguese ground, nay, before he should leave the shores of England, it was our duty to ascertain that the step taken by the Regency of Portugal was taken with the cordial concurrence of the Legislature of that country. It was but this morning that we received intelligence of the proceedings of the Chambers at Lisbon, which establishes the fact of such concurrence. This intelligence is contained in a despatch from Sir W. A'Court, dated 29th of November, of which I will read an extract to the House. "The day after the news arrived of the entry of the rebels into Portugal, the Ministers demanded from the Chambers an extension of power for the Executive Government; and the permission to apply for foreign succours, in virtue of ancient treaties, in the event of their being deemed necessary. The Deputies gave the requisite authority by acclamation; and an equally good spirit was manifested by the peers, who granted every power that the Ministers could possibly require. They even went further, and rising in a body from their seats, declared their devotion to their country, and their readiness to give their personal services, if necessary, to repel any hostile invasion. The Duke de Cadaval, President of the Chamber, was the first to make this declaration: and the Minister who described this proceeding to me, said it was a movement worthy of the good days of Portugal!"

I have thus incidentally disposed of the supposed imputation of delay in complying with the requisition of the Portuguese Government. The main question, however, is this—Was it obligatory upon us to comply with that requisition? In other words, had the *casus fœderis* arisen? In our opinion it had. Bands of Portuguese rebels, armed, equipped, and trained in Spain, had crossed the Spanish frontier, carrying terror and devastation into their own country, and proclaiming sometimes the brother of the reigning sovereign of Portugal, sometimes a Spanish Princess, and sometimes even Ferdinand of Spain, as the rightful occupant of the Portuguese throne. These rebels crossed the frontier, not at one point only, but at several points: for it is remarkable that

the aggression, on which the original application to Great Britain for succour was founded, is not the aggression with reference to which that application has been complied with.

The attack announced by the French newspapers was on the north of Portugal, in the province of Tras-os-Montes; an official account of which has been received by His Majesty's Government only this day. But on Friday an account was received of an invasion in the south of Portugal, and of the capture of Villa Viciosa, a town lying on the road from the southern frontier to Lisbon. This new fact established even more satisfactorily than a mere confirmation of the attack first complained of would have done, the systematic nature of the aggression of Spain against Portugal. One hostile irruption might have been made by some single corps escaping from their quarters,—by some body of stragglers, who might have evaded the vigilance of Spanish authorities; and one such accidental and unconnected act of violence might not have been conclusive evidence of cognizance and design on the part of those authorities; but when a series of attacks are made along the whole line of a frontier, it is difficult to deny that such multiplied instances of hostility are evidence of concerted aggression.

If a single company of *Spanish* soldiers had crossed the frontier in hostile array, there could not, it is presumed, be a doubt as to the character of that invasion. Shall bodies of men, armed, clothed, and regimented by Spain, carry fire and sword into the bosom of her unoffending neighbour, and shall it be pretended that no attack, no invasion has taken place, because, forsooth, these outrages are committed against Portugal by men to whom Portugal had given birth and nurture? What petty quibbling would it be to say, that an invasion of Portugal from Spain was not a *Spanish* invasion, because Spain did not employ her own troops, but hired mercenaries to effect her purpose? And what difference is it, except as aggravation, that the mercenaries in this instance were natives of Portugal?

I have already stated, and I now repeat, that it never has been the wish or the pretension of the British Government to interfere in the internal concerns of the Portuguese nation. Questions of that kind the Portuguese nation must settle among themselves. But if we were to admit that hordes of traitorous refugees from Portugal, with Spanish arms—or arms furnished or restored to them by Spanish authorities—in their hands, might put off their country for one purpose, and put it on again for another—put it off for the purpose of attack, and put it on again for the purpose of impunity—if, I say, we were to admit this juggle, and either pretend to be deceived by it ourselves, or attempt to deceive Portugal, into a belief that there was nothing of external attack, no-

thing of foreign hostility, in such a system of aggression—such pretence and attempt would perhaps be only ridiculous and contemptible; if they did not require a much more serious character from being employed as an excuse for infidelity to ancient friendship, and as a pretext for getting rid of the positive stipulations of treaties.

This, then, is the case which I lay before the House of Commons. Here is, on the one hand, an undoubted pledge of national faith—not taken in a corner—not kept secret between the parties—but publicly recorded amongst the annals of history, in the face of the world. Here are, on the other hand, undeniable acts of foreign aggression, perpetrated, indeed, principally through the instrumentality of domestic traitors; but supported with foreign means, instigated by foreign councils, and directed to foreign ends. Putting these facts and this pledge together, it is impossible that His Majesty should refuse the call that has been made upon him; nor can Parliament, I am convinced, refuse to enable His Majesty to fulfil his undoubted obligations. I am willing to rest the whole question of to-night, and to call for the vote of the House of Commons upon this simple case, divested altogether of collateral circumstances; from which I especially wish to separate it, in the minds of those who hear me, and also in the minds of others, to whom what I now say will find its way. If I were to sit down this moment, without adding another word, I have no doubt but that I should have the concurrence of the House in the Address which I mean to propose.

When I state this, it will be obvious to the House, that the vote for which I am about to call upon them, is a vote for the defence of Portugal, not a vote for war against Spain. I beg the House to keep these two points entirely distinct in their consideration. For the former I think I have said enough. If, in what I have now farther to say, I should bear hard upon the Spanish Government, I beg that it may be observed, that, unjustifiable as I shall show their conduct to have been—contrary to the law of nations, contrary to the law of good neighbourhood, contrary, I might say, to the laws of God and man—with respect to Portugal—still I do not mean to preclude a *locus pœnitentiæ*, a possibility of redress and reparation. It is our duty to fly to the defence of Portugal—be the assailant who he may. And, be it remembered, that, in thus fulfilling the stipulation of ancient treaties, of the existence and obligation of which all the world are aware, we, according to the universally admitted construction of the law of nations, neither make war upon that assailant, nor give to that assailant, much less to any other power, just cause of war against ourselves.

Sir, the present situation of Portugal is so anomalous, and the

recent years of her history are crowded with events so unusual, that the House will, perhaps, not think that I am unprofitably wasting its time, if I take the liberty of calling its attention shortly and succinctly to those events, and to their influence on the political relations of Europe. It is known that the consequence of the residence of the King of Portugal in Brazil, was to raise the latter country from a colonial to a metropolitan condition; and that from the time when the King began to contemplate his return to Portugal, there grew up in Brazil a desire of independence that threatened dissension, if not something like civil contest, between the European and American dominions of the House of Braganza. It is known also that Great Britain undertook a mediation between Portugal and Brazil, and induced the King to consent to a separation of the two Crowns—confirming that of Brazil on the head of his eldest son. The ink with which this agreement was written was scarcely dry, when the unexpected death of the King of Portugal produced a new state of things, which reunited on the same head the two Crowns which it had been the policy of England, as well as of Portugal and of Brazil to separate. On that occasion, Great Britain, and another European Court closely connected with Brazil, tendered advice to the Emperor of Brazil, now become King of Portugal, which advice it cannot be accurately said that His Imperial Majesty followed, because he had decided for himself before it reached Rio de Janeiro; but in conformity with which advice, though not in consequence of it, His Imperial Majesty determined to abdicate the Crown of Portugal in favour of his eldest daughter. But the Emperor of Brazil had done more. What had not been foreseen—what would have been beyond the province of any foreign power to advise—His Imperial Majesty had accompanied his abdication of the Crown of Portugal with the grant of a free constitutional charter for that kingdom.

It has been surmised that this measure, as well as the abdication which it accompanied, was the offspring of our advice. No such thing—Great Britain did not suggest this measure. It is not her duty nor her practice to offer suggestions for the internal regulation of foreign states. She neither approved nor disapproved of the grant of a constitutional charter to Portugal: her opinion upon that grant was never required. True it is, that the instrument of the constitutional charter was brought to Europe by a gentleman of high trust in the service of the British Government. Sir C. Stuart had gone to Brazil to negotiate the separation between that country and Portugal. In addition to his character of Plenipotentiary of Great Britain, as the mediating power, he had also been invested by the King of Portugal with the character of His Most Faithful Majesty's Plenipotentiary for the negotiation with

Brazil. That negotiation had been brought to a happy conclusion; and therewith the British part of Sir C. Stuart's commission had terminated. But Sir C. Stuart was still resident at Rio de Janeiro, as the Plenipotentiary of the King of Portugal, for negotiating commercial arrangements between Portugal and Brazil. In this latter character it was, that Sir C. Stuart, on his return to Europe, was requested by the Emperor of Brazil to be the bearer to Portugal of the new constitutional charter. His Majesty's Government found no fault with Sir C. Stuart for executing this commission: but it was immediately felt, that if Sir C. Stuart were allowed to remain at Lisbon, it might appear, in the eyes of Europe, that England was the contriver and imposer of the Portuguese Constitution. Sir C. Stuart was, therefore, directed to return home forthwith: in order that the Constitution, if carried into effect there, might plainly appear to be adopted by the Portuguese nation itself, not forced upon them by English interference.

As to the merits, Sir, of the new Constitution of Portugal, I have neither the intention, nor the right to offer any opinion. Personally, I may have formed one; but as an English Minister, all I have to say is,—"May God prosper this attempt at the establishment of constitutional liberty in Portugal! and may that nation be found as fit to enjoy and to cherish its new-born privileges, as it has often proved itself capable of discharging its duties amongst the nations of the world!"

I, Sir, am neither the champion nor the critic of the Portuguese Constitution. But it is admitted on all hands to have proceeded from a legitimate source—a consideration which has mainly reconciled continental Europe to its establishment: and to us, as Englishmen, it is recommended, by the ready acceptance which it has met with from all orders of the Portuguese people. To that Constitution, therefore, thus unquestioned in its origin, even by those who are most jealous of new institutions—to that Constitution, thus sanctioned in its outset by the glad and grateful acclamations of those who are destined to live under it—to that Constitution, founded on principles in a great degree similar to those of our own, though differently modified—it is impossible that Englishmen should not wish well. But it would not be for us to force that Constitution on the people of Portugal, if they were unwilling to receive it, or if any schism should exist amongst the Portuguese themselves, as to its fitness and congeniality to the wants and wishes of the nation. It is no business of ours to fight its battles. We go to Portugal in the discharge of a sacred obligation, contracted under ancient and modern treaties. When there, nothing shall be done by us to enforce the establishment of the Constitution;—but we must take care that nothing shall be done by others to prevent it from being fairly carried into effect.

Internally, let the Portuguese settle their own affairs; but with respect to external force, while Great Britain has an arm to raise, it must be raised against the efforts of any Power that should attempt forcibly to control the choice, and fetter the independence of Portugal.

Has such been the intention of Spain? Whether the proceedings which have lately been practised or permitted in Spain, were acts of a Government exercising the usual power of prudence and foresight, (without which, a Government is, for the good of the people which live under it, no Government at all,) or whether they were the acts of some secret illegitimate Power—of some furious fanatical faction, over-riding the counsels of the ostensible Government, defying it in the capital, and disobeying it on the frontiers—I will not stop to inquire. It is indifferent to Portugal, smarting under her wrongs—it is indifferent to England, who is called upon to avenge them—whether the present state of things be the result of the intrigues of a faction, over which, if the Spanish Government has no control, it ought to assume one as soon as possible—or of local authorities, over whom it has control, and for whose acts it must, therefore, be held responsible. It matters not, I say, from which of these sources the evil has arisen, In either case, Portugal must be protected; and from England that protection is due.

It would be unjust, however, to the Spanish Government, to say, that it is only amongst the members of that Government that an unconquerable hatred of liberal institutions exists in Spain. However incredible the phenomenon may appear in this couutry, I am persuaded that a vast majority of the Spanish nation entertain a decided attachment to arbitrary power, and a predilection for absolute government. The more liberal institutions of countries in the neighbourhood have not yet extended their influence into Spain, nor awakened any sympathy in the mass of the Spanish people. Whether the public authorities of Spain did or did not partake of the national sentiment, there would almost necessarily grow up between Portugal and Spain, under present circumstances, an opposition of feelings, which it would not require the authority or the suggestions of the Government to excite and stimulate into action. Without blame, therefore, to the Government of Spain,—out of the natural antipathy between the two neighbouring nations—the one prizing its recent freedom, the other hugging its traditionary servitude—there might arise mutual provocations, and reciprocal injuries which, perhaps, even the most active and vigilant ministry could not altogether restrain. I am inclined to believe that such has been, in part at least, the origin of the differences between Spain and Portugal. That in their progress they have been adopted, matured, methodized, combined,

and brought into more perfect action, by some authority more united and more efficient than the mere feeling disseminated through the mass of the community, is certain; but I do believe their origin to have been as much in the real sentiment of the Spanish population, as in the opinion or contrivance of the Government itself.

Whether this be or be not the case, is precisely the question between us and Spain. If, though partaking in the general feelings of the Spanish nation, the Spanish Government has, nevertheless, done nothing to embody those feelings, and to direct them hostilely against Portugal; if all that has occurred on the frontiers, has occurred only because the vigilance of the Spanish Government has been surprised, its confidence betrayed, and its orders neglected—if its engagements have been repeatedly and shamefully violated, not by its own good will, but against its recommendation and desire—let us see some symptoms of disapprobation, some signs of repentance, some measures indicative of sorrow for the past, and of sincerity for the future. In that case, His Majesty's Message, to which I propose this night to return an answer of concurrence, will retain the character which I have ascribed to it,—that of a measure of defence for Portugal, not a measure of resentment against Spain.

With these explanations and qualifications, let us now proceed to the review of facts. Great desertions took place from the Portuguese army into Spain, and some desertions took place from the Spanish army into Portugal. In the first instance, the Portuguese authorities were taken by surprise; but, in every subsequent instance, where they had an opportunity of exercising a discretion, it is but just to say, that they uniformly discouraged the desertions of the Spanish soldiery.—There exists between Spain and Portugal specific treaties, stipulating the mutual surrender of deserters. Portugal had, therefore, a right to claim of Spain that every Portuguese deserter should be forthwith sent back. I hardly know whether from its own impulse, or in consequence of our advice, the Portuguese Government waved its right under those treaties; very wisely reflecting, that it would be highly inconvenient to be placed by the return of their deserters, in the difficult alternative of either granting a dangerous amnesty, or ordering numerous executions. The Portuguese Government, therefore, signified to Spain that it would be entirely satisfied if, instead of surrendering the deserters, Spain would restore their arms, horses, and equipments; and, separating the men from their officers, would remove both from the frontiers into the interior of Spain. Solemn engagements were entered into by the Spanish Government to this effect—first with Portugal, next with France, and afterwards with England. Those engagements, concluded one

day, were violated the next. The deserters, instead of being disarmed and dispersed, were allowed to remain congregated together near the frontiers of Portugal; where they were enrolled, trained, and disciplined, for the expedition which they have since undertaken. It is plain that in these proceedings, there was perfidy somewhere. It rests with the Spanish Government to show, that it was not with them. It rests with the Spanish Government to prove, that if its engagements have not been fulfilled—if its intentions have been eluded and unexecuted, the fault has not been with the Government; and that it is ready to make every reparation in its power.

I have said that these promises were made to France and to Great Britain, as well as to Portugal. I should do a great injustice to France if I were not to add, that the representations of that Government upon this point with the Cabinet of Madrid, have been as urgent, and, alas! as fruitless, as those of Great Britain. Upon the first irruption into the Portuguese territory, the French Government testified its displeasure by instantly recalling its Ambassador; and it further directed its Charge d'Affaires to signify to His Catholic Majesty, that Spain was not to look for any support from France against the consequences of this aggression upon Portugal. I am bound, I repeat, in justice to the French Government, to state, that it has exerted itself to the utmost, in urging Spain to retrace the steps which she has so unfortunately taken. It is not for me to say whether any more efficient course might have been adopted to give effect to their exhortations: but as to the sincerity and good faith of the exertions made by the Government of France, to press Spain to the execution of her engagements, I have not the shadow of a doubt:—and I confidently reckon upon their continuance.

It will be for Spain, upon knowledge of the step now taken by His Majesty, to consider in what way she will meet it. The earnest hope and wish of His Majesty's Government is, that she may meet it in such a manner as to avert any ill consequences to herself, from the measure into which we have been driven by the unjust attack upon Portugal.

Sir, I set out with saying, that there were reasons which entirely satisfied my judgment that nothing short of a point of national faith or national honour, would justify at the present moment, any voluntary approximation to the possibility of war. Let me be understood, however, distinctly, as not meaning to say that I dread war in a good cause, (and in no other may it be the lot of this country ever to engage!) from a distrust of the strength of the country to commence it, or of her resources to maintain it. I dread it, indeed—but upon far other grounds: I dread it from an apprehension of the tremendous consequences which

might arise from any hostilities in which we might now be engaged. Some years ago, in the discussion of the negotiations respecting the French war against Spain, I took the liberty of adverting to this topic. I then stated that the position of this country in the present state of the world, was one of neutrality, not only between contending nations, but between conflicting principles; and that it was by neutrality alone that we could maintain that balance, the preservation of which, I believed to be essential to the welfare of mankind. I then said, that I feared that the next war which should be kindled in Europe, would be a war not so much of armies, as of opinions. Not four years have elapsed, and behold my apprehension realized! It is, to be sure, within narrow limits that this war of opinion is at present confined: but it *is* a war of opinion, that Spain, (whether as Government or as nation) is now waging against Portugal; it is a war which has commenced in hatred of the new institutions of Portugal. How long is it reasonable to expect that Portugal will abstain from retaliation? If into that war this country shall be compelled to enter, we shall enter into it, with a sincere and anxious desire to mitigate rather than exasperate—and to mingle only in the conflict of arms, not in the more fatal conflict of opinions. But I much fear that this country, (however earnestly she may endeavour to avoid it,) could not, in such case, avoid seeing ranked under her banners all the restless and dissatisfied of any nation with which she might come in conflict. It is the contemplation of this new *power* in any future war, which excites my most anxious apprehension. It is one thing to have a giant's strength, but it would be another to use it like a giant. The consciousness of such strength is, undoubtedly a source of confidence and security; but in the situation in which this country stands, our business is not to seek opportunities of displaying it, but to content ourselves with letting the professors of violent and exaggerated doctrines on both sides feel, that it is not their interest to convert an umpire into an adversary. The situation of England, amidst the struggle of political opinions which agitates more or less sensibly different countries of the world, may be compared to that of the Ruler of the Winds, as described by the poet:—

> —— "Celsâ sedet Æolus arce,
> Sceptra tenens; mollitque animos et temperat iras;
> Ni faciat, maria ac terras cœlumque profundum
> Quippe ferant rapidi secum, verrantque per auras."

The consequence of letting loose the passions at present chained and confined, would be to produce a scene of desolation which no man can contemplate without horror; and I should not sleep easy on my couch, if I were conscious that I had contributed to precipitate it by a single moment.

This, then, is the reason—a reason very different from fear—the reverse of a consciousness of disability—why I dread the recurrence of hostilities in any part of Europe; why I would bear much, and would forbear long; why I would (as I have said) put up with almost any thing that did not touch national faith and national honour;—rather than let slip the furies of war, the leash of which we hold in our hands—not knowing whom they may reach, or how far their ravages may be carried. Such is the love of peace which the British Government acknowledges; and such the necessity for peace which the circumstances of the world inculcate. I will push these topics no farther.

I return, in conclusion, to the object of the Address. Let us fly to the aid of Portugal, by whomsoever attacked; because it is our duty to do so: and let us cease our interference where that duty ends. We go to Portugal not to rule, not to dictate, not to prescribe constitutions—but to defend and to preserve the independence of an ally. We go to plant the standard of England on the well-known heights of Lisbon. Where that standard is planted, foreign dominion shall not come.

The SPEAKER read the Address, which was received with much applause, and put the question that it be adopted.

SIR ROBERT WILSON—No man was more fully persuaded than himself, that, on an occasion like the present, His Majesty was actuated by the just pride of a British King, conscious that he was ruling a people who esteemed the maintenance of good faith and national honour the brightest gem of his Crown. As, however, the King could only act by his confidential advisers, he (Sir R. W.) felt great anxiety upon this subject, and knowing, as he did, the unexampled treachery and continued aggressions by Spain upon Portugal, he had been unable to control his impatience, and had, therefore, given notice of a motion, the chief object of which was to obtain information. After the statement of to-night, proving at once the vigour, decision, and energy of Ministers, his anxiety only was, to see them carry their own purposes into execution, and thus save him the pain of an accusatory attack. At the same time, he thought Great Britain was bound to require of France that she should march her troops out of Spain, as a first step to the defence of Portugal. She had entered Spain merely to release the King, and to restore peace, and that object had long ago been accomplished.

MR. HUME opposed the Address, principally on the ground that this country was not in a situation to enter upon, and long maintain a war on a great scale. He further contended, that war should not be entered into, unless a strong case of necessity was made out. He had the admission of the right honourable gentleman for saying this, and it was highly inconsistent in him, who was the advocate of this doctrine in 1823, to precipitate the country into a war now, without either affording sufficient time for deliberation, or establishing a case of unavoidable necessity to enter into it. The honourable member moved an amendment, "that the House be called over this day week."

MR. WOOD, (of Preston,) seconded the amendment.

MR. BARING observed, that when the possibility of our being soon engaged in a war came to be considered, he had much dreaded the hazard of being plunged into a war on one day, which the country might have to lament on another; and he had been most anxious that some means of evasion could have

been found out, by which war might have been avoided. But, such a very strong case had been made out, that he was not surprised at the approbation with which the proposition of this night had been almost unanimously received. He asked what great nation had ever accomplished any valuable purpose by an over submissive and pusillanimous policy? They need not talk to him about a property tax, and bank restriction acts. The question was, whether our faith was bound? and if it was, then we must fulfil our obligations. If the House had the baseness to declare itself broken-hearted, and afraid of war, sure he was that such a resolution would be disgusting and revolting to the feelings of the country. But still he confessed he could not understand how we could fully discharge our duty to Portugal, and yet avoid committing aggressions on Spain. Suppose Government were to send out Mina with a train of artillery, would not that be an aggression on Spain? In addition to the general question, as one of public faith, there was another consideration important to this country. No doubt we were bound to Portugal by solemn engagements, from which, whether burthensome or not, it was impossible for us at this moment to release ourselves. But, if we were not, it would not the less be a great essential paramount act of policy on the part of this country to maintain and uphold the independence of Portugal. He had viewed, with the greatest possible jealousy and disgust, the state in which the Peninsula had been during the last four years. He could not help regretting that Government had looked so passively on the invasion of Spain in 1823. If, at that time, the same resolution had been shown in the case of Spain, as was at this time in the case of Portugal, Europe would have been saved from that calamity, into which, at some time or other, he firmly believed that invasion would draw it. The French Minister, it appeared, had left Madrid; all the forms had been duly gone through; the only question was, the sincerity of the French Government. He suspected there was a party behind, whether French or Russian, he knew not, telling the Spanish party, "Never mind what we say, we are really your friends and will back you." Whether France was sincere or not, it was the duty of the British Government to take the course that good faith marked out to it. The resources of the country had been alluded to; but that was a question which, on such an occasion as this, could never be raised while the country remained a power worth speaking of. When a case was fairly made out, involving our honour, it was impossible to suffer any consideration to be put in competition with it. But he could not view the possession of Spain by France, continued year after year, without feeling that it was extremely dangerous to this country. Spain was evidently just as far from getting rid of her subjection to France, as she was the first year of her occupation. If, then, this country suffered the invasion of Portugal, the whole coast of the Peninsula would fall under the influence of France; and thus Portugal, through Spain, and Spain through France, would be under subjection to that power from which England had the most dread. The friendly disposition of any country was but a bad security for the national interests of this. We had the assurance of France that that power would remain at peace; but that was what he would not be satisfied with. Could he trust to the family of Bourbon to refrain from effecting that which had constituted the highest object of the ambition of Louis XIV., and afterwards of Napoleon, and which at this time seemed almost secured to them by accident, perhaps, but he believed also in some degree by design? To what degree the war, once commenced, might spread, in point of expense and extent, there was no saying beforehand. He did not apprehend it would be of any very enormous description; and when the House bore in mind the taxes repealed since the conclusion of the war, he denied that the pressure at this time could be such as to render us incapable of bearing the burthens war would bring upon us. The right honourable gentleman, he was satisfied, had taken the only course that was open to him.

Mr. Bankes, senior, was of opinion that the House should be assured that *the war was quite indispensable*, before they rushed into it. Not all the eloquence of the right honourable Secretary had satisfied him *that that was the case*. The disturbances in Portugal were of a political character, and connected with its internal arrangements. He did not shrink from war because he despaired of the resources of the country, and, therefore, he would not support the amendment, but neither could he vote for the original motion.

Mr. Brougham supported the Address in an eloquent and impressive speech. Adverting to the ground on which the amendment was principally supported, he said, "The honourable members (Messrs. Hume and Wood) must recollect, and the House and the country must bear in mind, that the question is not at present whether, even at the expense of your character for good faith, you will consent to bear hereafter among mankind a stained reputation, and a forfeited honour. The question is not whether you will do so, and by so doing avert a war. I should say no, even if this choice were within your reach; but the question is, whether, for a little season of miserable, insecure, precarious, dishonourable, unbearable truce—I cannot call it peace, for it has nothing of the honour and the comfort which make the name of peace proverbially sweet—I say, the question is, whether for this wretched, precarious, disgusting, and intolerable postponement of hostilities, you will be content hereafter to have recourse to war, when war can no longer be avoided, and when its horrors will fall upon you—degraded and ruined in character in the eyes of all the nations of Europe, and, what is ten thousand times worse, degraded and ruined in your own. I say, Sir, degraded and ruined in reputation, and what may appear worse to those to whose minds such topics do not find so easy an access, the war will fall with tenfold weight upon our resources; for a small sum spent now in due time, may be the means of saving us an expenditure of ten times that amount, with interest—aye, and compound interest accumulated upon it. The risking of a thousand men, dreadful as the alternative is, may prevent the renewal of the horrors of war on a more extended scale; it may avert a war in which we may have to engage hereafter with crippled resources—a war of boundless expenditure, in which other powers, as well as Spain, may be prepared to take part; a war, of which it may indeed be said, that when it is once begun no man can pretend to prescribe its limits. I entirely agree in all that has been said of the hazards and difficulties inseparable from war, and I was certainly one of those who held, some years ago, that looking to the burthens under which this country laboured, we were under severe recognizances to keep the peace. I know the severity of these burthens; but if I feel their weight—if I feel apprehensive (as who must not?) of their effect, in case this most necessary measure—a measure which, upon all reasonable probabilities, must prove effectual—should unhappily fail, I cannot but rely on those sound, enlightened, liberal, and truly English principles—principles worthy of our best times, and of our most distinguished statesmen, which now govern the councils of this country in her foreign policy, and inspire the eloquence of the right honourable Secretary with a degree of fervour, energy, and effect, extraordinary and unprecedented in this House—unprecedented (I can give it no higher praise) even in the eloquence of the right honourable gentleman. I feel that in these principles, now adopted and avowed by the organs of our Government, we have a strong and impregnable bulwark, which will enable us not only to support our burthens, and, should the day of trial come upon us, to meet the combined world in arms, but which will afford the strongest practical security against future danger, and render it eminently improbable that we shall ever have that combined world to contend with, so long as those principles are maintained. Our burthens may remain, but our Government know that when the voice of the people is in their favour, they have a lever, if not within their hands, within their grasp. I will imitate the discretion of the Secretary, and

go no further. We know, because we have experienced, the extent of that power; our enemies that would be, but who, on this account, will not be so, know it, because they see its effect here, and dread its effect among themselves. If, however, that catastrophe, which His Majesty's Ministers have taken the best means to avert, and which, in all human probability, will be averted, should unhappily fall upon us, whatever may be our burthens, whatever may be the difficulties with which we may have to contend, let but His Majesty's Government act steadily up to the principles they have avowed, and let the country but remain true to itself, and I have no fear of the rest.

Mr. Bright contended that no act of aggression against Portugal had been avowed by Spain, and that consequently no *casus fœderis* existed, and we were not bound by the terms of the treaty to embark in hostilities. The occupation of Portugal by 5000 men would amount to nothing more than an armed neutrality. Now, by the terms of the treaty, we were only bound to assist Portugal in the event of actual hostilities having been commenced, and *then* we were bound to attack Spain with all our might.

MR. CANNING'S REPLY.

I rise, Sir, for the purpose of making a few observations, not so much in answer to any general arguments, as in reply to two or three particular objections which have been urged against the Address which I have had the honour to propose to the House.

In the first place, I frankly admit to my honourable friend (Mr. Bankes,) the member for Dorsetshire, that I have understated the case against Spain—I have done so designedly—I warned the House that I would do so—because I wished no further to impeach the conduct of Spain, than was necessary for establishing the *casus fœderis* on behalf of Portugal. To have gone further—to have made a full statement of the case against Spain—would have been to preclude the very object which I have in view; that of enabling Spain to preserve peace without dishonour.

The honourable gentleman (Mr. Bright) who spoke last, indeed, in his extreme love for peace, proposes expedients which, as it appears to me, would render war inevitable. He would avoid interference at this moment, when Spain may be yet hesitating as to the course which she shall adopt; and the language which he would hold to Spain is, in effect, this—"You have not yet done enough to implicate British faith, and to provoke British honour. You have not done enough, in merely enabling Portuguese rebels to invade Portugal, and to carry destruction into her cities; you have not done enough in combining knots of traitors, whom, after the most solemn engagements to disarm and to disperse them, you carefully reassembled, and equipped and sent back with Spanish arms, to be plunged into kindred Portuguese bosoms. I will not stir for all these things. Pledged though I am by the most solemn obligations of treaty to resent attack upon Portugal as inju-

rious to England, I love too dearly the peace of Europe to be goaded into activity by such trifles as these. No. But give us a good declaration of war, and then I'll come and fight you with all my heart."—This is the honourable gentleman's contrivance for keeping peace. The more clumsy contrivance of His Majesty's Government is this:—"We have seen enough to show to the world that Spain authorized, if she did not instigate, the invasion of Portugal;" and we say to Spain, "Beware, we will avenge the cause of our ally, if you break out into declared war; but, in the mean time, we will take effectual care to frustrate your concealed hostilities." I appeal to my honourable friend, the member for Dorsetshire, whether he does not prefer this course of His Majesty's Government, the object of which is to nip growing hostilities in the ear, to that of the gallant and chivalrous member for Bristol, who would let aggressions ripen into full maturity, in order that they may then be mowed down with the scythe of a magnificent war.

My honourable friend (Mr. Bankes) will now see why it is that no papers have been laid before the House. The facts which call for our interference in behalf of Portugal, are notorious as the noon-day sun. That interference is our whole present object. To prove more than is sufficient for that object, by papers laid upon the table of this House, would have been to preclude Spain from that *locus penitentiæ* which we are above all things desirous to preserve to her. It is difficult, perhaps, with the full knowledge which the Government must in such cases possess, to judge what exact portion of that knowledge should be meted out for our present purpose, without hazarding an exposure which might carry us too far. I know not how far I have succeeded in this respect; but I can assure the House, that if the time should unfortunately arrive when a further exposition shall become necessary, it will be found, that it was not for want of evidence that my statement of this day has been defective.

An amendment has been proposed, purporting a delay of a week, but in effect, intended to produce a total abandonment of the object of the Address; and that amendment has been justified by a reference to the conduct of the Government, and to the language used by me in this House, between three or four years ago. It is stated, and truly, that I did not then deny that cause for war had been given by France in the invasion of Spain, if we had then thought fit to enter into war on that account. But it seems to be forgotten that there is one main difference between that case and the present—which difference, however, is essential and all-sufficient. We were then *free* to go war, if we pleased, on grounds of political expediency. But we were not then *bound* to interfere, on behalf of Spain, as we now are bound to interfere on be-

half of Portugal, by the obligations of treaty. War might then have been our free choice, if we had deemed it politic: interference on behalf of Portugal is now our duty, unless we are prepared to abandon the principles of national faith and national honour.

It is a singular confusion of intellect which confounds two cases so precisely dissimilar. Far from objecting to the reference to 1823, I refer to that same occasion to show the consistency of the conduct of myself and my colleagues. We were then accused of truckling to France, from a pusillanimous dread of war. We pleaded guilty to the charge of wishing to avoid war. We described its inexpediency, its inconveniences, and its dangers—(dangers, especially of the same sort with those which I have hinted at to-day;) but we declared that, although we could not overlook those dangers, those inconveniences, and that inexpediency, in a case in which remote interest and doubtful policy were alone assigned as motives for war, we would cheerfully affront them all, in a case—if it should arrive—where national faith or national honour were concerned. Well, then, a case *has* now arisen, of which the essence is faith—of which the character is honour. And when we call upon Parliament, not for offensive war—which was proposed to us in 1823—but for defensive armament, we are referred to our abstinence in 1823, as disqualifying us for exertion at the present moment: and are told, that because we did not attack France on that occasion, we must not defend Portugal on this. I, Sir, like the proposers of the amendment, place the two cases of 1823 and 1826, side by side, and deduce from them, when taken together, the exposition and justification of our general policy. I appeal from the warlike preparations of to-day, to the forbearance of 1823, in proof of the pacific character of our counsels; I appeal from the imputed tameness of 1823, to the Message of to-night, in illustration of the nature of those motives, by which a Government, generally pacific, may nevertheless be justly roused into action.

Having thus disposed of the objections to the Address, I come next to the suggestions of some who profess themselves friendly to the purpose of it, but who would carry that purpose into effect by means which I certainly cannot approve. It has been suggested, Sir, that we should at once ship off the Spanish refugees now in this country, for Spain; and that we should, by the repeal of the Foreign Enlistment Act, let loose into the contest all the ardent and irregular spirits of this country. Sir, this is the very suggestion which I have anticipated with apprehension, in any war in which this country might be engaged, in the present unquiet state of the minds of men in Europe. These are the expedients, the tremendous character of which I ventured to adumbrate rather than to describe, in the speech with which I prefaced the present

motion. Such expedients I disclaim. I dread and deprecate the employment of them. So far, indeed, as Spain herself is concerned, the employment of such means would be strictly, I might say, epigrammatically just. The Foreign Enlistment Act was passed in the year 1819, if not at the direct request, for the especial benefit of Spain. What right, then, would Spain have to complain if we should repeal it now, for the especial benefit of Portugal?

The Spanish refugees have been harboured in this country, it is true; but on condition of abstaining from hostile expeditions against Spain; and more than once, when such expeditions have been planned, the British Government has interfered to suppress them. How is this tenderness for Spain rewarded? Spain not only harbours, and fosters, and sustains, but arms, equips, and marshals the traitorous refugees of Portugal, and pours them by thousands into the bosom of Great Britain's nearest ally. So far, then, as Spain is concerned, the advice of those who would send forth against Spain such dreadful elements of strife and destruction, is, as I have admitted, not unjust. But I repeat, again and again, that I disclaim all such expedients; and that I dread especially a war with Spain, because it is the war of all others in which, by the example and practice of Spain herself, such expedients are most likely to be adopted. Let us avoid that war if we can—that is, if Spain will permit us to do so. But in any case, let us endeavour to strip any war—if war we must have—of that formidable and disastrous character which the honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. Brougham) has so eloquently described; and which I was happy to hear him concur with me in deprecating, as the most fatal evil by which the world could be afflicted.

Sir, there is another suggestion with which I cannot agree, although brought forward by two honourable members (Sir R. Wilson and Mr. Baring,) who have, in the most handsome manner, stated their reasons for approving of the line of conduct now pursued by His Majesty's Government. Those honourable members insist that the French army in Spain has been, if not the cause, the encouragement, of the late attack by Spain against Portugal; that His Majesty's Government were highly culpable in allowing that army to enter Spain; that its stay there is highly injurious to British interests and honour; and that we ought instantly to call upon France to withdraw it.

There are, Sir, so many considerations connected with these propositions, that were I to enter into them all, they would carry me far beyond what is either necessary or expedient to be stated on the present occasion. Enough, perhaps, it is for me to say, that I do not see how the withdrawing of the French troops from Spain, could effect our present purpose. I believe, Sir, that the French

army in Spain is now a protection to that very party which it was originally called in to put down. Were the French army suddenly removed at this precise moment, I verily believe that the immediate effect of that removal would be, to give full scope to the unbridled rage of a fanatical faction, before which, in the whirlwind of intestine strife, the party least in numbers would be swept away.

So much for the *immediate* effect of the demand which it is proposed to us to make, if that demand were instantly successful. But when, with reference to the larger question of a military occupation of Spain by France, it is averred, that by that occupation the relative situation of Great Britain and France is altered; that France is thereby exalted and Great Britain lowered, in the eyes of Europe;—I must beg leave to say, that I dissent from that averment. The House knows—the country knows—that when the French army was on the point of entering Spain, His Majesty's Government did all in their power to prevent it; that we resisted it by all means, short of war. I have just now stated some of the reasons why we did not think the entry of that army into Spain, a sufficient ground for war; but there was, in addition to those which I have stated, this peculiar reason,—that whatever effect a war, commenced upon the mere ground of the entry of a French army into Spain, might have, it probably would not have had the effect of getting that army out of Spain. In a war against France at that time, as at any other, you might, perhaps, have acquired military glory; you might, perhaps, have extended your colonial possessions; you might even have achieved, at great cost of blood and treasure, an honourable peace; but as to getting the French out of Spain, *that* would have been the one object which you, almost certainly, would not have accomplished. How seldom, in the whole history of the wars of Europe, has any war between two great Powers ended, in the obtaining of the exact, the identical object, for which the war was begun!

Besides, Sir, I confess I think, that the effects of the French occupation of Spain have been infinitely exaggerated.

I do not blame those exaggerations; because I am aware that they are to be attributed to the recollections of some of the best times of our history; that they are the echoes of sentiments, which in the days of William and of Anne, animated the debates and dictated the votes of the British Parliament. No peace was in those days thought safe for this country while the crown of Spain continued on the head of a Bourbon. But were not the apprehensions of those days greatly overstated?—Has the power of Spain swallowed up the power of maritime England?—Or does England still remain, after the lapse of more than a century, during which the crown of Spain has been worn by a Bourbon,—niched

in a nook of that same Spain—Gibraltar; an occupation which was contemporaneous with the apprehensions that I have described, and which has happily survived them?

Again, Sir—is the Spain of the present day the Spain of which the statesmen of the times of William and Anne were so much afraid? Is it indeed the nation whose puissance was expected to shake England from her sphere? No, Sir, it was quite another Spain—it was the Spain, within the limits of whose empire the sun never set—it was Spain "*with the Indies*" that excited the jealousies and alarmed the imaginations of our ancestors.

But then, Sir, the balance of power!—The entry of the French army into Spain disturbed that balance, and we ought to have gone to war to restore it! I have already said, that when the French army entered Spain, we might, if we chose, have resisted or resented that measure by war. But were there no other means than war for restoring the balance of power?—Is the balance of power a fixed and unalterable standard? Or is it not a standard perpetually varying, as civilization advances, and as new nations spring up, and take their place among established political communities? The balance of power a century and a half ago was to be adjusted between France and Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, and England. Some years afterwards, Russia assumed her high station in European politics. Some years after that again, Prussia became not only a substantive, but a preponderating monarchy. —Thus, while the balance of power continued in principle the same, the means of adjusting it became more varied and enlarged. They became enlarged, in proportion to the increased number of considerable states—in proportion, I may say, to the number of weights which might be shifted into the one or other scale. To look to the policy of Europe, in the times of William and Anne, for the purpose of regulating the balance of power in Europe at the present day, is to disregard the progress of events, and to confuse dates and facts which throw a reciprocal light upon each other.

It would be disingenuous, indeed, not to admit that the entry of the French army into Spain was in a certain sense, a disparagement—an affront to the pride—a blow to the feelings of England:—and it can hardly be supposed that the Government did not sympathize, on that occasion, with the feelings of the people. But I deny that, questionable or censurable as the act might be, it was one which necessarily called for our direct and hostile opposition. Was nothing then to be done?—Was there no other mode of resistance, than by a direct attack upon France—or by a war to be undertaken on the soil of Spain? What, if the possession of Spain might be rendered harmless in rival hands—harmless as regarded us—and valueless to the possessors? Might not compensa-

tion for disparagement be obtained, and the policy of our ancestors vindicated, by means better adapted to the present time? If France occupied Spain, was it necessary, in order to avoid the consequences of that occupation—that we should blockade Cadiz? No. I looked another way—I sought materials of compensation in another hemisphere. Contemplating Spain, such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain "*with the Indies.*" I called the New World into existence, to redress the balance of the Old.

It is thus, Sir, that I answer the accusation brought against His Majesty's Government, of having allowed the French army to usurp and to retain the occupation of Spain. That occupation, I am quite confident, is an unpaid and unredeemed burden to France. It is a burden of which, I verily believe, France would be glad to rid herself. But they know little of the feelings of the French Government, and of the spirit of the French nation, who do not know, that, worthless or burdensome as that occupation may be, the way to rivet her in it would be, by angry or intemperate representations, to make the continuance of that occupation a point of honour.

I believe, Sir, there is no other subject upon which I need enter into defence or explanation. The support which the address has received, from all parties in the House, has been such as would make it both unseemly and ungrateful in me to trespass unnecessarily upon their patience. In conclusion, Sir, I shall only once more declare, that the object of the Address, which I propose to you, is not war:—its object is to take the last chance of peace. If you do not go forth, on this occasion, to the aid of Portugal, Portugal will be trampled down, to your irretrievable disgrace:—and then will come war in the train of national degradation. If, under circumstances like these, you wait till Spain has matured her secret machinations into open hostility, you will in a little while have the sort of war required by the pacificators:—and who shall say where that war shall end?

The Amendment was then put and negatived, there appearing only three or four supporters for Mr. Hume's proposition; and the original question was then put and carried, with only the same number of dissentients.

ELECTION AND DINNER SPEECHES.

SPEECH

AT LIVERPOOL AFTER HAVING BEEN CHAIRED, ON SATURDAY, THE 17TH OF OCTOBER, 1812.

GENTLEMEN,

I congratulate you on your final success; for it is your victory, and not mine. The contest has been a contest of principles, not of persons; although I should belie my own feelings if I were not to confess, that, to the latest hour of my life, I shall be proud that the battle has been fought in my person, and that my name has been associated with your exertions, and illustrated by your triumph. You, gentlemen, have done me the honour to select me, not, undoubtedly, for any individual merits of my own, (I know that I can pretend to none,) but in order that, by returning me to represent your opinions in Parliament, you might vindicate the freedom of your choice, the loyalty of your principles, and the consistency of your character.

Gentlemen, I wish that those theorists of reform, who think nothing right in the practice of our Constitution, could witness the scene which I have now the delight to survey: those who presume that every popular feeling must belong to themselves alone; who imagine that a zealous and ardent exercise of popular rights, and an enthusiastic expression of popular sentiments, are incompatible with an equally enthusiastic attachment to all the monarchical principles of the Constitution. When will such men learn, that what they call exclusively popular principles are not the principles of the people? Can they look this day at the peaceful triumph of Liverpool, as they have looked for the last three years at the glorious and bloody struggles of Spain, and yet doubt the possibility of a combination of all that is national in feeling, with all that is loyal in principle; of a spirit of democracy sufficient to give energy to a state, with a devotedness to monarchy sufficient to secure its conservation?

Gentlemen, some persons have endeavoured to persuade you, that in giving your suffrages to a man who has been the uniform supporter of a war, glorious in itself, but only glorious inasmuch as it is necessary and unavoidable, you are deferring the day of peace. Fortunately, for the clear understanding of such reasonings, they have sometimes been coupled with prophecy. Let us compare, where we have an opportunity, what has happened with

what was foretold; and then judge what weight is to be assigned to the same reasonings in future.

The honourable gentleman (Mr. Brougham) who left your hustings yesterday, (of whom, as an individual, I have spoken, and mean to speak with the utmost respect,) on or about the 16th of last June, proposed, in the House of Commons, a specific concession to America; and pledged himself, that if that concession were made, peace would be preserved or restored. By a singular coincidence, on or about the same day on which that motion was made, the declaration of war by America against Great Britain passed the Senate of the United States. O! but the concession was to heal all. The Ministers, whether swayed by the honourable gentleman's eloquence, or participating in his expectations, I know not, gave way; and the concession was made. Confident, from this triumph, as might naturally be expected, the honourable gentleman, the prophet of American reconciliation, presents himself (I ought rather to say, is presented, by some among you) to be chosen as your representative in Parliament. Yesterday he left your town, disappointed of this honourable object: and, by another singular coincidence, the defeat of the prophecy upon which his expectations were founded, is made known here on the very day of the defeat of those expectations. For, yesterday, the declaration, the tardy declaration of war by this country against America, arrives here; and tells us, in terms too plain to be misunderstood, that to seek peace through humiliation, is a course neither of honour nor of advantage.

It has been further attempted to deter you from the choice, which you have done me the honour to make, by saying that I had been in office, and am likely to be in office again. I have been in office. How soon, if ever I may be in office again, I neither know, nor do I very much care, for any other reason than as it might afford me greater opportunities of promoting the interests of the country, of which your interests constitute so essential a part.

But, gentlemen, what is meant by this imputation? Are they who urge it so little read in the principles, the democratical principles, of the British Constitution, as not to know that it is one of the peculiar boasts of this country, one of the prime fruits of its free Constitution, and one main security for its continuing free, that men as humble as myself, with no pretensions of wealth, or title, or high family, or wide-spreading connexions, may yet find their way into the Cabinet of their Sovereign, through the fair road of public service, and stand there upon a footing of equality with the proudest aristocracy of the land?

Is it from courtiers of the people, from admirers of republican virtue and republican energy, that we hear doctrines which would

tend to exclude from the management of public affairs all who are not illustrious by birth, or powerful from hereditary opulence? Why, gentlemen, in this limited monarchy, there are undoubtedly contests for office, contests which agitate the elements of the Constitution, and which keep them alive and active, without endangering the Constitution itself. A republic is nothing but one continual struggle for office in every department of the state.

Mad, indeed, and desperate would be the reform which should exclude from the House of Commons, as some ignorant theorists advise, every man who has possessed, or who possesses office: separating thereby the service of the Crown from that of the people; as if they were not identified in interests, and mutually dependant on each other.

Gentlemen, if I have held office, I hope I have held it honourably: I will never hold it again but on the same terms. It is not my fault that I must state facts, in my own defence, which might appear to be stated ostentatiously; but I mean them simply as defensive. It is entirely my own fault, gentlemen, that I am not now addressing you with the seals of Secretary of State in my pocket. Twice, in the course of the last six months, have the seals of the office of Secretary of State been tendered to my acceptance; and twice have I declined them. Is this like hankering after office? I declined them, not because I was unwilling to render any services of which my poor abilities were capable to my country; not because I did not acknowledge, with all due gratitude and humility, the gracious disposition of my Prince; not because I shrink from the difficulties of the times, to the encountering and overcoming of which I should feel myself, from the public situation in which I have had the honour to stand, bound to render whatever aid was in my power, if I could do so with effect, by doing so with credit. I declined office, gentlemen, because it was tendered to me on terms not consistent, as I thought, and as my immediate friends agreed in thinking, with my personal honour; because, if accepted on such terms, it would not have enabled me to serve the public with efficiency.

Gentlemen, I presume not to trouble you with any details upon this subject; but what I have stated, and what is before the world, is, I hope, sufficient to justify me against the accusation of hankering after office. Whether you will ever see me in office again, I cannot tell; but of this I can assure you, that it shall not be in a way dishonourable to myself or to you. I dare not, indeed, reckon upon the continuance of such unmerited partiality and affection as you now so kindly heap upon me; but this I can answer for, that neither in nor out of office, shall you have cause to be ashamed of me.

Gentlemen, I stated to you, two nights ago, my opinion of the

conduct of my adversary, Mr. Brougham, in determining, at that time, not to decline the contest. I told you, that I thought he could not do otherwise than act upon the opinions and persuasions of his friends; and that he had explained his motives with the utmost candour and fairness. I think so still. I myself know nothing to the contrary. But I have certainly heard, that speeches delivered in another place were very different, indeed, from those which were delivered at the hustings. And, while I beg not to be understood as intending to give any colour of my own to expressions which I did not hear, and cannot vouch for, there is one topic, which is represented as having made considerable impression, which I owe it to the Government of the country (however myself unconnected with it) not to suffer to pass unnoticed. The declaration of war against America has, as I am informed, been stated to have been delayed by the Government of this country for the sake of sweeping into the royal chest a large sum of the Droits of Admiralty, to be disposed of at the pleasure of Ministers, for purposes of prodigality and corruption. Gentlemen, I would fain believe that this assertion cannot have been made. An account of the distribution of the Droits of Admiralty has, as is well known, been submitted to the House of Commons, the last two years; and, surely, to attribute a measure of peace or war to a desire on the part of Government to disappoint our own captors, for the sake of getting possession of a sum, of which the disposal is, after all, to be made public, is to attribute motives not only altogether unworthy, but utterly inadequate and absurd.

I say this the rather, because I must fairly own, that differing as I do entirely as to the causes to which the delay is to be attributed, I am inclined to agree that the declaration of war against America has been delayed too long. When all hopes of preserving peace were vanished, nothing remained, in my opinion, for this Government but prompt and vigorous war. It was the only course becoming this great country. It would have afforded the best chance of bringing the American Government to their senses.

The opinions which I now express are in unison with those which I took the liberty of expressing in my place in Parliament, when that concession was agreed to by the Ministers, at Mr. Brougham's suggestion, upon the strength of which Mr. Brougham has been presented to your choice. I then ventured to state my doubts, whether that concession would propitiate America; whether it would not rather tend to confirm the hostile policy of that Government, and to enhance its pretensions. In fact, how is it that our concession has been met? By reciprocal concession, by abated pride, assuaged malice, and returning good-will? No such thing. They have risen in their terms, as unreasonable con-

cession will always induce and encourage an unreasonable enemy to do.

Gentlemen, you see that I speak to you as freely of the conduct and policy of our Government as of the conduct of those to whom I am politically opposed. To one man, while he lived, I was devoted with all my heart and with all my soul. Since the death of Mr. Pitt, I acknowledge no leader. My political allegiance lies buried in his grave. But I have, though not his immediate counsels to follow, his memory to cherish and revere. So far as I knew his opinions, on subjects which were, in his time, as well as now, of great public interest, I have adhered and shall adhere to those opinions as the guides of my public conduct. Where I can only reason from analogy on new questions which may arise, I shall endeavour to apply to those questions, whatever they may be, the principles which I imbibed and inherit from him; principles which, I well know, have alone recommended me to your choice this day.

Of the cause of good government, in whatever hands the administration of Government may be placed, even if in the hands of those to whom I have been politically opposed, I shall always be a faithful and steady supporter. But I do not pledge myself to you, I will never pledge myself to any man, to be the blind and subservient supporter of the Administration in any hands whatever. My general disposition is to support the Government. What I find amiss, however, I shall blame with freedom; though I will not do so with any intention to excite discontent, nor at the hazard of mischief to the country.

Gentlemen, if I did not retain the independence of my own judgment in the House of Commons, I should be but an unworthy representative of the independent and enlightened community which sends me thither. It may happen, that your judgment may occasionally come in conflict with my own. Men of independent minds may honestly differ on subjects which admit of a variety of views. In all such cases, I promise you, not indeed wholly to submit my judgment to yours; you would despise me if I made so extravagent a confession; but I promise you that any difference of opinion between us will always lead me to distrust my own views, carefully to examine, and, if erroneous, frankly to correct them. Gentlemen, our judgments may clash, but our interest never: no interests of mine shall ever come in competition with yours. I promise you further, that, hoping, as I earnestly do, that the connexion, of which the foundation is this day auspiciously laid, may last to the end of my political life—yet if, unfortunately, occasions should occur, (I cannot foresee or imagine any such,) on which there should arise between us, on points of serious importance, a radical and irreconcilable differ-

ence of opinion, I will not abuse my trust, but will give you the earliest opportunity of recalling or reconsidering your delegation of it.

Gentlemen, with the most heartfelt acknowledgment; with feelings of gratitude which words are too weak to convey, and of pride, which I dare not trust myself with expressing; with a sense of the honour which you have conferred upon me, less gratifying only than my sense of the kindness with which you have overwhelmed me; with sentiments such as till this day I never knew, but which I shall recollect with delight until the latest hour of my life, I take my leave of you for the present: praying that Providence may so direct my conduct as never to give you cause, in your better judgment, to look back with regret upon the choice which you have made.

SPEECH

ON MONDAY, THE 10TH OF JANUARY, 1814, AT THE LIVERPOOL ARMS HOTEL, AFTER HIS HEALTH HAD BEEN DRUNK.

GENTLEMEN,

As your guest, I thank you, from my heart, for the honourable and affectionate reception which you have given me. As the representative of Liverpool, I am most happy in meeting my constituents again, after a year's experience of each other, and a year's separation; a year, the most eventful in the annals of the world, and comprising, within itself, such a series of stupendous changes as might have filled the history of an age.

Gentlemen, you have been so good as to couple with my name the expression of your acknowledgments for the attention which I have paid to the interests of your town. You, gentlemen, I have no doubt, recollect the terms upon which I entered into your service; and you are aware, therefore, that I claim no particular acknowledgment at your hands for attention to the interests of Liverpool, implicated as they are with the general interests of the country. I trust, at the same time, that I have not been wanting to all or to any of you, in matters of local or individual concern. But I should not do fairly by you, if I were not to take this opportunity of saying, that a service (which certainly, I will not pretend to describe as without some burden in itself) has been made light to me, beyond all example, by that institution which your munificence and provident care have established: I mean, the office in London, through which your correspondence with your members is now carried on. I had no pretension, gentlemen, to this singular mark of your consideration: but neither will it, I hope, be thought presumptuous in me to confess, that I might not have been able to discharge the service which I owe you in a way which would have satisfied my own feelings as well as yours—that I might, in spite of all my endeavours, have been guilty of occasional omissions, if I had not been provided with some such medium of communication with my constituents. Of an absent and meritorious individual it is as pleasing as it is just to speak well: and I do no more than justice to the gentleman (Mr. John Backhouse) whom you have appointed to conduct the office in question, (with whom I had no previous acquaintance,) in bearing public testimony to his merit, and in assuring you, that it would be difficult to find any one who would surpass him in zeal, intelligence, and industry.

Having despatched what it was necessary for me to say on these points, I know, gentlemen, that it is your wish, and I feel it to be my duty, that I should now proceed to communicate to you my sentiments on the state of public affairs, with the same frankness which has hitherto distinguished all our intercourse with each other. That duty is one which it does not now require any effort of courage to perform. To exhort to sacrifices, to stimulate to exertion, to shame despondency, to divert from untimely concession, is a duty of a sterner sort, which you found me not backward to discharge, at a period when, from the shortness of our acquaintance, I was uncertain whether my freedom might not offend you. My task of to-day is one at which no man can take offence. It is to mingle my congratulations with your rejoicings on the events which have passed and are passing in the world.

If, in contemplating events so widely (I had almost said so tremendously) important, it be pardonable to turn one's view, for a moment, to local and partial considerations, I may be permitted to observe, that, while to Great Britain, while to all Europe, while to the world and to posterity, the events which have recently taken place are matter of unbounded and universal joy, there is no collection of individuals who are better entitled than the company now assembled in this room (in great part, I presume, identically the same, and altogether representing the same interests and feelings as that of which I took leave, in this room, about fourteen months ago) to exult in the present state of things, and to derive from it, in addition to their share of the general joy, a distinct and special satisfaction.

We cannot forget, gentlemen, the sinister omens and awful predictions under which we met and parted in October, 1812. The penalty denounced upon you for your election of me was, embarrassment to the rich, and famine to the poor. I was warned, that, when I should return to renew my acquaintance with my constituents, I should find the grass growing in your streets. In spite of that denunciation, you did me the honour to elect me; in spite of that warning, I venture to meet you here again. It must be fairly confessed, that this is not the season of the year to estimate correctly the amount of superfluous and unprofitable vegetation with which your streets may be teeming; but, without presuming to limit the power of productive nature, it is at least satisfactory to know, that the fields have not been starved to clothe your quays with verdure; that it is not by economizing in the scantiness of the harvest that nature has reserved her vigour for the pastures of your Exchange.

But, gentlemen, I am sure you feel with me, that these are topics which I treat with levity only because they are not, nor were, at the time when they were seriously urged, susceptible of

a serious argument; they did not furnish grounds on which any man would rest his appeal to your favour, or on which your choice of any man could be justified. If I have condescended to revert to them at all, it is because I would leave none of those recollections untouched which the comparison of our last meeting with the present, I know, suggests to your minds as well as to my own; and because I would, so far as in me lies, endeavour to banish from all future use, by exposing their absurdity, topics which are calculated only to mislead and to inflame. That the seasons would have run their appointed course, that the sun would have shone with as genial a warmth, and the showers would have fallen with as fertilizing a moisture, if you had not chosen me for your representative, is an admission which I make without much apprehension of the consequence. Nor do I wish you to believe, that your choice of any other than me would have delayed the return of your prosperity, or prevented the revival of your commerce.

I make these admissions without fear, so far as concerns the choice between individuals. But I do not admit, that it was equally indifferent upon what principles that choice should be determined. I do not admit, that, if the principles which it was then recommended to you to countenance had unfortunately prevailed in Parliament, and, through the authority of Parliament, had been introduced into the counsels of the country, they would not have interfered with fatal operation, not indeed to arrest the bounty of Providence, to turn back the course of the seasons, and to blast the fertility of the earth, but to stop that current of political events which, "taken at the flood," has placed England at the head of the world.

Gentlemen, if I had met you here again on this day in a state of public affairs as doubtful as that in which we took leave of each other; if confederated nations had been still arrayed against this country, and the balance of Europe still trembling in the scale, I should not have hesitated now, as I did not hesitate then, to declare my decided and unalterable opinion, that perseverance, under whatever difficulties, under whatever privations, afforded the only chance of prosperity to you, because the only chance of safety to your country; and the only chance of safety to the country, because the only chance of deliverance to Europe. Gentlemen, I should be ashamed to address you now in the tone of triumph, if I had not addressed you then in that of exhortation. I should be ashamed to appear before you shouting in the train of success, if I had not looked you in the face and encouraged you to patience under difficulties. It is because my acquaintance with you commenced in times of peril and embarrassment, and because I then neither flattered nor deceived you, that I now not only offer to you my congratulations, but put in my claim to yours, on the ex-

tinction of that peril, on the termination of that embarrassment, and on the glorious issue to which exertion and endurance have brought that great struggle in which our honour and our happiness were involved.

Gentlemen, during the course of a political life, nearly coeval with the commencement of the war, I have never given one vote, I have never uttered one sentiment, which had not for its object the consummation now happily within our view.

I am not ashamed, and it is not unpleasing or unprofitable, to look back upon the dangers which we have passed, and to compare them with the scene which now lies before us. We behold a country, inferior in population to most of her continental neighbours, but multiplying her faculties and resources by her own activity and enterprise, by the vigour of her constitution, and by the good sense of her people; we behold her, after standing up against a formidable foe, throughout a contest, in the course of which every one of her allies, and, at times, all of them together, have fainted and failed—nay, have been driven to combine with the enemy against her—we behold her, at this moment, rallying the nations of Europe to one point, and leading them to decisive victory.

If such a picture were merely the bright vision of speculative philosophy, if it were presented to us in the page of the history of ancient times, it would stir and warm the heart. But, gentlemen, this country is our own; and what must be the feelings which arise, on such a review, in the bosom of every son of that country? What must be the feelings of a community such as I am now addressing, which constitutes no insignificant part of the strength of the nation so described; which has suffered largely in her privations, and may hope to participate proportionably in her reward? What (I may be permitted to add) must be the feelings of one who is chosen to represent that community, and who finds himself in that honourable station at the moment of triumph, only because he discountenanced despair in the moment of despondency?

From the contemplation of a spectacle so mighty and magnificent as this, I should disdain to turn aside to the controversies of party. Of principles, however, it is impossible not to say something; because our triumph would be incomplete, and its blessings might be transient, if we could be led astray by any sophistry; if we could consent, in a sort of compromise of common joy, to forget or to misstate the causes from which that triumph has sprung. All of one mind, I trust and believe we are, in exulting at the success of our country; all of one mind, I trust, we now are throughout this land, in determining to persevere, if need be, in strenuous exertion to prosecute, and I hope, to perfect the great

work so happily in progress. But we know, that there are some of those who share most heartily in the public exultation, who yet ascribe effects, which happily cannot be disputed, to causes which may justly be denied. No tenderness for disappointed prophecies, gentlemen, ought to induce us thus to disconnect effect and cause. It would lead to errors which might be dangerous, if unwarily adopted and generally received.

We have heard, for instance, that the war has now been successful, because the principles on which the war was undertaken have been renounced; that we are, at length, blessed with victory, because we have thrown away the banner under which we entered into the contest; that the contest was commenced with one set of principles, but that the issue has been happily brought about by the adoption of another. Gentlemen, I know of no such change. If we have succeeded, it has not been by the renunciation, but by the prosecution of our principles: if we have succeeded, it has not been by adopting new maxims of policy, but by upholding, under all varieties of difficulty and discouragement, old, established, inviolable principles of conduct.

We are told, that this war has, of late, become *a war of the people*, and that, by the operation of that change alone, the power of imperial France has been baffled and overcome. Nations, it is said, have, at length, made common cause with their sovereigns, in a contest which, heretofore, had been a contest of sovereigns only. Gentlemen, the fact of the change might be admitted, without, therefore, admitting the argument. It does not follow, that the people were not at all times equally interested in the war, (as those who think as I do, have always contended that they were,) because it may be and must be admitted, that the people, in many countries, were for a time deluded. They who argue against us, say, that jarring interests have been reconciled. We say, that gross delusions have been removed. Both admit the fact, that sovereigns and their people *are* identified. But it is for them who contend that this has been effected by change of principles, to specify the change. What change of principles or of government has taken place among the nations of Europe? We are the best judges of ourselves—what change has taken place *here?* Is the Constitution other than it was, when we were told, (as we often were told in the bad times,) that it was a doubt whether it were worth defending? Is the Constitution other than it was, when we were warned that peace on any terms must be made, as the only hope of saving it from popular indignation and popular reform?

There is yet another question to be asked. By what power, in what part of the world, has that final blow been struck, which has smitten the tyrant to the ground? I suppose, by some enlight-

ened republic; by some recently regenerated government of pure philanthropy and uncorrupted virtue: I suppose, by some nation which, in the excess of popular freedom, considers even a representative system as defective, unless each individual interferes directly in the national concerns; some nation of enlightened patriots, every man of whom is a politician in the coffee-house, as well as in the senate: I suppose it is from some such government as this that the conqueror of autocrats, the sworn destroyer of monarchical England, has met his doom. I look through the European world, gentlemen, in vain: I find there no such august community. But in another hemisphere I do find such a one, which, no doubt, must be the political David by whom the Goliah of Europe has been brought down. What is the name of that glorious republic, to which the gratitude of Europe is eternally due—which, from its innate hatred to tyranny, has so perseveringly exerted itself to liberate the world, and, at last, has successfully closed the contest? Alas, gentlemen, such a republic I do indeed find; but I find it enlisted, and (God be thanked!) enlisted alone, under the banner of the despot. But where was the blow struck? Where? Alas for theory! In the wilds of despotic Russia. It was followed up on the plains of Leipsic—by Russian, Prussian, and Austrian arms.

But let me not be mistaken. Do I, therefore, mean to contend —do I, therefore, give to our antagonists in the argument the advantage of ascribing to us the base tenet, that an absolute monarchy is better than a free government? God forbid! What I mean is this, that, in appreciating the comparative excellence of political institutions, in estimating the force of national spirit, and the impulses of national feeling, it is idle—it is mere pedantry, to overlook the affections of nature. The order of nature could not subsist among mankind, if there were not an *instinctive* patriotism; I do not say unconnected with, but prior and paramount to, the desire of political amelioration. It may be very wrong that it should be so. I cannot help it. Our business is with fact. And, surely, it is not to be regretted, that tyrants and conquerors should have learned, from the lessons of experience, that the first consideration suggested to the inhabitant of any country, by a foreign invasion, is, not whether the political constitution of the state be faultlessly perfect or not; but, whether the altar at which he has worshipped—whether the home in which he has dwelt from his infancy—whether his wife and his children—whether the tombs of his forefathers—whether the place of the sovereign, under whom he was born, and to whom he therefore, owes (or, if it must be so stated, fancies that he, therefore, owes) allegiance, shall be abandoned to violence and profanation.

That, in the infancy of the French revolution, many nations in

Europe were, unfortunately, led to believe and to act upon a different persuasion, is undoubtedly true; that whole countries were overrun by reforming conquerors, and flattered themselves with being proselytes till they found themselves victims. Even in this country, as I have already said, there have been times when we have been called upon to consider, whether there was not something at home which must be mended, before we could hope to repel a foreign invader with success.

It is fortunate for the world, that this question should have been tried, if I may so say, to a disadvantage; that it should have been tried in countries where no man in his senses will say, that the frame of political society is such as, according to the most moderate principles of regulated freedom, it ought to be;—where, I will venture to say, without hazarding the imputation of being myself a visionary reformer, political society is not such as, after the successes of this war, and from the happy contagion of the example of Great Britain, it is sure gradually to become. It is fortunate for the world, that this question should have been tried on its own merits; that, after twenty years of controversy, we should be authorized, by undoubted results, to revert to nature and to truth, and to disentangle the genuine feelings of the heart from the obstructions which a cold, presumptuous, generalizing philosophy had wound around them.

One of the most delightful poets of this country, in describing the various proportions of natural blessings and advantages dispensed by Providence to the various nations of Europe, turns from the luxuriant plains and cloudless skies of Italy to the rugged mountains of Switzerland, and inquires whether there, also, in those barren and stormy regions, the "patriot passion" is found equally imprinted on the heart? He decides the question truly in the affirmative; and he says, of the inhabitant of those bleak wilds,

> "Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
> And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms;
> And, as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
> Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
> So the loud torrent and the whirlwind's roar
> But bind him to his native mountains more."

What Goldsmith thus beautifully applied to the physical varieties of soil and climate, has been found no less true with respect to political institutions. A sober desire of improvement, a rational endeavour to redress error, and to correct imperfection in the political frame of human society, are not only natural, but laudable in man. But it is well that it should have been shown, by irrefragable proof, that these sentiments, even where most strongly and most justly felt, supersede not that devotion to native soil which is the foundation of national independence. And

it is right that it should be understood and remembered, that the spirit of national independence alone, aroused where it had slumbered, enlightened where it had been deluded, and kindled into enthusiasm by the insults and outrages of an all-grasping invader, has been found sufficient, without internal changes and compromises of sovereigns or governments with their people—without relaxations of allegiance and abjurations of authority, to animate, as with one pervading soul, the different nations of the continent; to combine, as into one congenial mass, their various feelings, passions, prejudices; to direct these concentrated energies, with one impulse, against the common tyrant; and to shake (and, may we not hope? to overthrow) the *Babel* of his iniquitous power.

Gentlemen, there is another argument, more peculiarly relating to our own country, which has, at times, been interposed to discourage the prosecution of the war. That this country is sufficient to its own defence, sufficient to its own happiness, sufficient to its own independence; and that the complicated combinations of continental policy are always hazardous to our interests, as well as burdensome to our means, has been, at several periods of the war, a favourite doctrine, not only with those who, for other reasons, wished to embarrass the measures of the Government, but with men of the most enlightened minds, of the most benevolent views, and the most ardent zeal for the interests as well as the honour of their country. May we not flatter ourselves, that, upon this point also, experience has decided in favour of the course of policy which has been actually pursued?

Can any man now look back upon the trial which we have gone through, and maintain that, at any period during the last twenty years, the plan of insulated policy could have been adopted, without having, in the event, at this day, prostrated England at the foot of a conqueror? Great, indeed, has been the call upon our exertions; great, indeed, has been the drain upon our resources; long and wearisome has the struggle been; and late is the moment at which peace is brought within our reach. But, even though the difficulties of the contest may have been enhanced, and its duration protracted by it, yet is there any man who seriously doubts whether the having associated our destinies with the destinies of other nations be or be not that which, under the blessing of Providence, has eventually secured the safety of all?

It is at the moment when such a trial has come to its issue, that it is fair to ask of those who have suffered under the pressure of protracted exertion, (and of whom rather than of those who are assembled around me—for by whom have such privations been felt more sensibly?)—it is now, I say, the time to ask whether, at any former period of the contest, such a peace could have been made

as would at once have guarded the national interests, and corresponded with the national character? I address myself now to such persons only as think the character of a nation an essential part of its strength, and, consequently, of its safety. But if, among persons of that description, there be one who with all his zeal for the glory of his country, has yet, at times, been willing to abandon the contest in mere weariness and despair, of such a man I would ask, whether he can indicate the period at which he now wishes that such an abandonment had been consented to by the Government and the Parliament of Great Britain?

Is it when the continent was at peace—when, looking upon the map of Europe, you saw one mighty and connected system, one great luminary, with his attendant satellites circulating around him; at that period could this country have made peace, and have remained at peace for a twelvemonth? What is the answer? Why, that the experiment was tried. The result was the renewal of the war.

Was it at a later period, when the continental system had been established? When two-thirds of the ports of Europe were shut against you? When but a single link was wanting to bind the continent in a circling chain of iron, which should exclude you from intercourse with other nations? At that moment peace was most earnestly recommended to you. At that moment, gentlemen, I first came among you. At that moment I ventured to recommend to you perseverance, patient perseverance; and to express a hope that, by the mere strain of an unnatural effort, the massive bonds imposed upon the nations of the continent might, at no distant period, burst asunder. I was heard by you with indulgence—I know not whether with conviction. But is it now to be regretted, that we did not, at that moment, yield to the pressure of our wants, or of our fears? What has been the issue? The continental system was completed, with the sole exception of Russia, in the year 1812. In that year the pressure upon this country was undoubtedly painful. Had we yielded, the system would have been immortal. We persevered, and, before the conclusion of another year, the system was at an end: at an end, as all schemes of violence naturally terminate, not by a mild and gradual decay, such as waits upon a regular and well-spent life, but by sudden dissolution; at an end, like the breaking up of a winter's frost. But yesterday the whole continent, like a mighty plain covered with one mass of ice, presented to the view a drear expanse of barren uniformity: to-day, the breath of heaven unbinds the earth, the streams begin to flow again, and the intercourse of human kind revives.

Can we regret that we did not, like the fainting traveller, lie down to rest—but, indeed, to perish—under the severity of that

inclement season? Did we not more wisely, to bear up, and to wait the change?

Gentlemen, I have said that I should be ashamed, and in truth I should be so, to address you in the language of exultation, if it were merely for the indulgence, however legitimate, of an exuberant and ungovernable joy. But they who have suffered great privations have a claim not merely to consolation, but to something more. They are justly to be compensated for what they have undergone, or lost, or hazarded, by the contemplation of what they have gained.

We have gained, then, a rank and authority in Europe, such as, for the life of the longest liver of those who now hear me, must place this country upon an eminence which no probable reverses can shake. We have gained, or rather we have recovered, a splendour of military glory, which places us by the side of the greatest military nations in the world. At the beginning of this war, while there was not a British bosom that did not beat with rapture at the exploits of our navy, there were few who would not have been contented to compromise for that reputation alone; to claim the sea as exclusively our province, and to leave to France and the other continental powers the struggle for superiority by land. That fabled deity, whom I see pourtrayed upon the wall,* was considered as the exclusive patron of British prowess in battle; but, in seeming accordance with the beautiful fiction of ancient mythology, our Neptune, in the heat of contest, smote the earth with his trident, and up sprang the fiery war-horse, the emblem of military power.

Let Portugal, now led to the pursuit of her flying conquerors —let liberated Spain—let France, invaded in her turn by those whom she had overrun or menaced with invasion, attest the triumphs of the army of Great Britain, and the equality of her military with her naval fame. And let those who, even after the triumphs of the Peninsula had begun, while they admitted that we had indeed wounded the giant in the heel, still deemed the rest of his huge frame invulnerable—let them now behold him reeling under the blows of united nations, and acknowledge, at once, the might of British arms, and the force of British example.

I do not say that these are considerations with a view to which the war, if otherwise terminable, ought to have been purposely protracted; but I say that, upon the retrospect, we have good reason to rejoice, that the war was not closed ingloriously and insecurely, when the latter events of it have been such as have established our security by our glory.

I say we have reason to rejoice, that, during the period when

* A figure of Neptune.

the continent was prostrate before France—that, especially during the period when the continental system was in force, we did not shrink from the struggle; that we did not make peace for present and momentary ease, unmindful of the permanent safety and greatness of this country; that we did not leave unsolved the momentous questions, whether this country could maintain itself against France, unaided and alone; or with the continent divided; or with the continent combined against it; whether, when the wrath of the tyrant of the European world was kindled against us with sevenfold fury, we could or could not walk unharmed and unfettered through the flames?

I say we have reason to rejoice, that, throughout this more than *Punick* war, in which it has so often been the pride of our enemy to represent herself as the Rome, and England as the Carthage, of modern times, (with at least this colour for the comparison, that the utter destruction of the modern Carthage has uniformly been proclaimed to be indispensable to the greatness of her rival,)—we have, I say, reason to rejoice, that, unlike our assigned prototype, we have not been diverted by internal dissensions from the vigorous support of a vital struggle; that we have not suffered distress nor clamour to distract our counsels, or to check the exertions of our arms.

Gentlemen, for twenty years that I have sat in Parliament, I have been an advocate of the war. You knew this when you did me the honour to choose me as your representative. I then told you that I was the advocate of the war, because I was a lover of peace; but of a peace that should be the fruit of honourable exertion, a peace that should have a character of dignity, a peace that should be worth preserving, and should be likely to endure. I confess I was not sanguine enough, at that time, to hope that I should so soon have an opportunity of justifying my professions. But I know not why, six weeks hence, such a peace should not be made as England may not only be glad, but proud to ratify. Not such a peace, gentlemen, as that of Amiens—a short and feverish interval of unrefreshing repose. During that peace, which of you went or sent a son to Paris, who did not feel or learn that an Englishman appeared in France shorn of the dignity of his country; with the mien of a suppliant, and the conscious prostration of a man who had consented to purchase his gain or his ease by submission? But let a peace be made to-morrow, such as the allies have now the power to dictate, and the meanest of the subjects of this kingdom shall not walk the streets of Paris without being pointed out as the compatriot of Wellington; as one of that nation, whose firmness and perseverance have humbled France and rescued Europe.

Is there any man that has a heart in his bosom who does not

find, in the contemplation of this contrast alone, a recompense for the struggles and the sufferings of years?

But, gentlemen, the doing right is not only the most honourable course of action—it is also the most profitable in its result. At any former period of the war, the independence of almost all the other countries, our allies, would have been to be purchased with sacrifices profusely poured out from the lap of British victory. Not a throne to be re-established, not a province to be evacuated, not a garrison to be withdrawn, but this country would have had to make compensation, out of her conquests, for the concessions obtained from the enemy. Now, happily, this work is already done, either by our efforts or to our hands. The Peninsula free—the lawful commonwealth of European states already, in a great measure, restored, Great Britain may now appear in the congress of the world, rich in conquests, nobly and rightfully won, with little claim upon her faith or her justice, whatever may be the spontaneous impulse of her generosity or her moderation.

Such, gentlemen, is the situation and prospect of affairs at the moment at which I have the honour to address you. That you, gentlemen, may have your full share in the prosperity of your country, is my sincere and earnest wish. The courage with which you bore up in adverse circumstances, eminently entitles you to this reward.

For myself, gentlemen, while I rejoice in your returning prosperity, I rejoice also that our connexion began under auspices so much less favourable; that we had an opportunity of knowing each other's minds in times when the minds of men are brought to the proof—times of trial and difficulty. I had the satisfaction of avowing to you, and you the candour and magnanimity to approve, the principles and opinions by which my public conduct has uniformly been guided, at a period when the soundness of those opinions, and the application of those principles, was matter of doubt and controversy. I thought, and I said, at the time of our first meeting, that the cause of England and of civilized Europe must be ultimately triumphant, if we but preserved our spirit untainted, and our constancy unshaken. Such an assertion was, at that time, the object of ridicule with many persons: a single year has elapsed, and it is now the voice of the whole world.

Gentlemen, we may, therefore, confidently indulge the hope, that our opinions will continue in unison; that our concurrence will be as cordial as it has hitherto been, if, unhappily, any new occasion of difficulty or embarrassment should hereafter arise.

At the present moment, I am sure, we are equally desirous to bury the recollection of all our differences with others in that general feeling of exultation in which all opinions happily combine.

SPEECH

AT LIVERPOOL, AFTER HAVING BEEN CHAIRED, THE 12TH OF JUNE, 1816.

GENTLEMEN,

IF I could forget all the trouble and inconvenience which have been occasioned to you, and could contemplate the result of this day only as it affects myself, what reason should I not have to pour forth my gratitude to those men who have laboured against me with so vexatious an opposition! For, with whatever spirit and design they may have acted, I will venture to affirm, that never did the most anxious and active friendship procure for any individual such a triumph as their hostility has earned for me this day. They laboured to separate us from each other; and they have united us more closely than before. They hoped to efface the memory of that victory which crowned your former exertions in my favour: and they have, if not effaced, yet thrown it into the shade, by the transcendant splendour of this day's triumph, by the increased and overpowering demonstrations of your unwearied kindness and regard. Indebted to my opponents for the excitement which has called forth these demonstrations, what a heart must I have, gentlemen, if I did not bless their *beneficent* enmity!

But, gentlemen, proud as I naturally must be of what I have experienced this day, and exalted as I cannot but feel myself by the contemplation of the magnificent scene which is now before me, by the view of those countless multitudes, among which every eye is turned upon me with an expression of benignity; yet I do assure you, gentlemen, and there are those around me who can vouch for the truth of what I say, that I was most anxious—that it was my fixed purpose and determination, to entreat you to spare yourselves the trouble of this day's ceremony. I did not think that the occasion of returning your representative, on a re-election, called for any peculiar expression of triumph; nor did I think, that a victory over a non-existing, or non-appearing adversary, justified the same marks of exultation as when able, substantial antagonists had been driven from the field.

But, gentlemen, my mind was changed, and I yielded to the wishes of my friends, upon information which I have received today. The nature of that information I will state to you. I am assured from London, and upon testimony from which it is impossible for me to withhold my belief, that there were among our

antagonists some who reckoned upon intimidation as an instrument of success. In the first moments of transport, at the promising commencement of the riots, they communicated this hope to their friends in the metropolis. They fondly flattered themselves that you, gentlemen, could be scared from my side, and that I should be forced to retire. Intimidation! how little do they know either me or you! After this information, I felt that it would be a false delicacy to abstain from any expression of exultation, and that our conduct might be liable to misconstruction, if we abridged, by a single formality, the triumph of this day.

Gentlemen, with the election, let the local topics, the local enmities, the local disagreements of the election cease. But cease not with the election the principles upon which your choice has been founded, on whomever, at any time hereafter, your choice may fall, whether on myself or on a worthier object. For, gentlemen, I know how little I ought to consider myself as contributing to the glorious result of this contest. Much less important is it to whom, individually, you commit your representation in Parliament, than that you should fix steadily in your minds the standard by which that representative shall be tried. Let him be a man true to the principles of the constitution, not as understood in the new-fangled doctrines of the day, but as transmitted to us from older times, before the pure current of British freedom had been contaminated by the influx of foreign theories.

Gentlemen, we all know, that, on the former occasion, in 1812, the eyes of England were, in a great measure, fixed upon Liverpool, as the *arena* in which the contest between two sets of political principles was to be decided. But on that occasion, gentlemen, though you occupied a great space in the public attention, you could not completely monopolize it. There was then a general election. The interest excited, indeed, by the Liverpool contest, was pretty widely diffused, but the actual war was among ourselves; no stranger had leisure to mingle in our battle. Among other consequences of this state of things, one was, that we were tolerably free from imported calumny; and that, considering the vehemence of the contest, there was, so far as I know, little of personal malignity mixed with it. In the present instance, Liverpool alone has fixed the undistracted attention of both parties, and upon me, in particular, have the full phials of whiggish wrath been discharged.

Standing thus exposed, I have had what some would call the misfortune, but what I must now esteem the singular happiness, of being a mark for the attacks of every political enemy that I have in the world. I do Liverpool the justice to acknowledge, gentlemen, that the grossest and foulest calumnies are not of native produce, but have been rolled down, in one tide of filth,

from the fountain head of whiggish detraction in London. All the approved practices of the libellers of former periods have been resorted to: my private history ransacked for topics of abuse; every action, every inconsiderate word, of earlier life raked up, and recorded with malignant industry; and invention called in aid where research could find no theme of invective:—

——————"The lie, so oft o'erthrown,
Th' imputed trash and nonsense, not my own;"

—all, all has been exhausted: and what is the result? That here I stand.

Gentlemen, amongst other charges, one of fair hostility, but whimsically chosen, considering the quarter from which it comes, is that of my being about to act in public life with men from whom I have occasionally differed in opinion. Gentlemen, the charge is substantially unfounded. It is unfounded, because, though, on particular questions, I may have differed from many of my present colleagues (as what two men may not occasionally differ, if each has an opinion of his own?) yet, upon all the great outlines of our political system, and upon every main principle affecting the foreign policy of England, our opinions have generally concurred. Those opinions I have, to the best of my power, supported, in whatever hands the government of the country has been placed. I have supported them not less strenuously when myself out of office, than when I formed a part of the Administration.

Gentlemen, I am really alarmed at the state of pressure in which I see great part of the multitude below. Had I not better take leave of you, and entreat you to disperse?*

Perhaps, gentlemen, I was the more alive to the danger to which I apprehended you to be exposed, and the more anxious to dismiss you before any accident had happened, from recollecting, that one of the charges most frequently, of late, preferred against me is, my habit of addressing you. And yet, gentlemen, I am old enough to remember, when the great idol of whiggism himself† (of whom I mean to speak with all reverence and honour,) in the plenitude of his glory, and in the maturity of his mighty powers, did not disdain to mount various *rostra*, and to descant, not to his constituents only, but to whoever would come to hear him, upon oppression, grievance, tyranny, taxes, and war, and all other matters best calculated to rouse the passions of the populace. Nor are there wanting imitators in our days, who pursue the same course, whenever the people will listen to them.

* Mr. Canning retired for a few moments, until the pressure of the crowd had, in some measure, diminished; and then, being loudly and repeatedly called for, again came forward.

† The Right Honourable Charles James Fox.

But, gentlemen, the self-styled whigs have a most convenient, though somewhat arbitrary, mode of argument. To them every mode of political warfare is lawful; but to them only: the people are their property; and wo be to the unlicensed intruder who presumes to trespass upon the manor. Or is this the distinction to be taken against me? Am I vilified, not because I address the people, but because I address them on the side of tranquillity and good order? That, instead of seeking out every topic of delusion and inflammation, I am more solicitous to bring before them grounds for contentment, and motives of attachment to their country,—to inculcate their duties as well as their rights, and to hold them firm in their allegiance to the constitutional monarchy of England? Am I arraigned on an inverted construction of the rules of civilized warfare, not because I scatter arrows among the people, but because my arrows are not poisoned?

But, gentlemen, to recur to the point at which I was interrupted by my alarm for your safety. By the organ of what party is it that I am accused of inconsistency, for acting with men from whom I may have occasionally differed? Why, gentlemen, by the organ of a party whose birth and growth, whose essence and element, are coalition; a party which sprung from the coalition between Lord North and Mr. Fox, and which has been revived, within all our memories, by the coalition between Lord Grenville and Lord Grey; a party of which, in spite of all its coalitions, the members are, in reality, so little *coalescent*, that, but last year, on the greatest question which ever the Government of this country was called upon to decide and its Parliament to sanction—on the question of the renewal of the war against Buonaparte—they were divided half and half: and all that was of most weight or ornament in their party, fought the battle of the Ministers against the remainder. The remainder, indeed, true to their old creed, would have extended the doctrine of coalition to Buonaparte. But you, gentlemen, I know, have candour enough to do justice to public men, of whatever party, when they stand up fairly for their country; and you remember, with just acknowledgment, that the manly and consistent eloquence of Lord Grenville, the splendid enthusiasm of Grattan, and the commanding energy of Plunkett, were exerted, on that memorable occasion, in defence of that system of measures, by which, in defiance of the whig policy, this country and Europe have been preserved.

Gentlemen, there is yet a heavier charge than either of those which I have stated to you. It is, gentlemen, that I am an adventurer. To this charge, as I understand it, I am willing to plead guilty. A representative of the people, I am one of the people; and I present myself to those who choose me only with the

claims of character, (be they what they may,) unaccredited by patrician patronage or party recommendation. Nor is it in this free country, where, in every walk of life, the road of honourable success is open to every individual—I am sure it is not in this place, that I shall be expected to apologize for so presenting myself to your choice. I know there is a political creed, which assigns to a certain combination of great families a right to dictate to the sovereign and to influence the people; and that this doctrine of hereditary aptitude for administration is, singularly enough, most prevalent among those who find nothing more laughable than the principle of legitimacy in the Crown.

To this theory I have never subscribed. If to depend directly upon the people, as their representative in Parliament; if, as a servant of the Crown, to lean on no other support than that of public confidence—if that be to be an adventurer, I plead guilty to the charge, and I would not exchange that situation, to whatever taunts it may expose me, for all the advantages which might be derived from an ancestry of a hundred generations.

Gentlemen, I will not detain you longer. I have said, that I will not go back to any of the events of the election. Suffice it, that, whatever may be my opinion with respect to the opposition which has been made to your wishes in my favour, I can truly say for myself, that I carry no resentments away with me. Even were I disposed to entertain any such feelings, my heart would not, at this moment, have room for them, so full is it of the sense of your kindnesses, of acknowledgment, and of exultation.

SPEECH

AT THE PUBLIC DINNER AT LIVERPOOL, IN THE MUSIC HALL, ON MONDAY, THE 29TH OF JUNE, 1818, AFTER HIS HEALTH HAD BEEN DRUNK.

GENTLEMEN,

IT was at my suggestion, that your worthy chairman had the goodness to make a slight alteration in the order of the toasts as they stand on the printed card, and to propose, before my health, which you have just done me the honour to drink, the health of those persons by whose suffrages I have been elevated to the situation of your representative, and of those who, had their suffrages been wanted, would have contributed to that elevation. It is in the natural order of things, gentlemen, that cause should precede effect; and, before you expressed your rejoicing on my return, I was anxious that due acknowledgment should have been paid to those whose votes, or whose intentions to come forward,—intentions as notorious and as efficacious as their votes,—gave effect to the wishes of this great community in my favour.

Gentlemen, six years have elapsed since I was first placed in that envied situation. Search the records of history, where shall we find six years so fertile in events; and in events not only of such immense importance, but of such various character,—at one time so awful and appalling, at another so full of encouragement and of glory? We have, within this period of time, had war—peace—war again—and again a peace, which, I flatter myself, is now settling itself for a long duration.

In many of those changes, gentlemen, as they were taking place, and with respect to all of them while they were yet in doubtful futurity, the opinions which I hold with you, and by holding which with you I am alone worthy to represent you, have been controverted by predictions which, in prospect, it would have been presumptuous to dispute, but which, in retrospect, it is now pleasant to contemplate.

When I first, in obedience to your call, presented myself before you, it was at that period of a war, already of near twenty years' duration, in which the crisis of the fate of nations seemed to be arrived. It was at that period of the campaign, destined to be decisive of that war, in which the enemy appeared in his most gigantic dimensions, and had begun to run his most extravagant career. It would be little disparagement to the stoutest heart to say, that it shrunk from the contemplation of a might so over-

whelming; and it required, perhaps, as much courage as sagacity to derive, from the ill-compounded materials of the colossus, a hope or an expectation of its fall. We were, indeed, loudly told at that time, that resistance was altogether hopeless; and you, gentlemen, were encouraged to believe, that if, by rejecting me, whose politics were supposed to be identified with the prosecution of the war, and by returning to Parliament, as your representatives, those who then solicited your suffrages in opposition to me, you would mark your disapprobation of the continuance of so hopeless a contest, you would, by this demonstration of the opinion of so considerable a part of the British empire, infallibly produce a peace, with all its attendant blessings.

Against these fallacious but inviting assurances, with all the responsibility that belonged to the anticipation of brighter prospects in the midst of overwhelming gloom, and to the denial of associations familiar in the mouths and in the minds of men, I ventured to tell you that peace was not in your power, except through the road of victory; and I ventured to tell you further, that peace, if sought through any other path, would not be lasting; and that, come when it might, it would not come, in the first instance, with all the blessings of ordinary peace in its train..

At the end of the period which has elapsed, compare what I then said to you with what has actually taken place.

If, at the time of which I am speaking, in 1812, this great town had contributed its share towards forcing a change in the national councils, by rejecting the man whose political existence was identified with the success of the war, and by choosing others in his room whose reputation depended upon its failure; and if, gentlemen, you had had the misfortune to succeed in forcing such a change, I ask you whether you believe that England would have stood erect, as she has done, with her enemy prostrate at her feet, and with Europe saved by her assistance?

But, gentlemen, as if to defeat and discredit the professors of political prophecy, you have had also a trial of peace, not wholly corresponding with their anticipations. I told you, in 1812, that nothing was easier than to draw flattering views of distant prospects; but that there were circumstances to be taken into account in the estimate of war and peace which baffled calculation. I told you that THE WAR (not WAR generally, as has falsely been imputed, but THE WAR in which we were then engaged) was, from its peculiar character, one in which, though the common characteristics of peace—such as tranquillity and absence of bloodshed, and freedom from alarm, were necessarily suspended, yet the springs of enterpise were not cut off, nor the activity of commerce altogether paralyzed: nor would the restoration of peace necessarily

and at once restore the state of things which so long and so extraordinary a war had interrupted.

And why, gentlemen? Because I was desirous, as was, I say, falsely imputed to me, of dissociating the natural combinations of war and peace from their respective attributes?—of holding out war as, for its own sake desirable, and peace as, in itself, unlovely? No, gentlemen; but because I wished to represent to you things as they really were, or, at least, as, in my own honest judgment, I saw them; because I wished to dissipate the prejudices which were attempted to be raised against a war on the issue of which our national existence depended, by pressing into the service those common-place arguments against war which, however abstractedly true, were not true as to the war in question; and by holding out all those common-place inducements to peace, which, though also true in the abstract, could not have been true of any peace concluded on ignominous terms, and have not been found true of the first years of a peace succeeding to a war of such unexampled effort and protraction.

That the war had had the effect of opening unusual channels of commercial enterprise; that it had given a new and extraordinary stimulus to commercial activity and enterprise; that the war had created—I do not say a wholesome, I do not say a substantial, I do not say a permanent prosperity; but that it had created a prosperity peculiar to itself, and which atoned, in some measure, for its evils, and enabled the country, in some measure, to bear up against the difficulties incident to war; all these were matters of fact, which, as such, I stated to you—and stated them as affording, not motives, but consolations—not inducements to prolong, beyond necessity, a war which might be safely terminated at will, but reasons for bearing patiently evils to which it was not in our power to put an end. That this was a forced and unnatural state of things, neither I nor any man pretended to deny; but whether we alone could enjoy a sound and natural repose, in the forced and unnatural state of Europe—whether any peace which could be made by us, while all Europe remained under the control of our enemy, would be a peace worthy of the name; this was a question which might fairly be mooted, without depreciating the blessings of peace, or denying the general preferableness of peace to war. Our adversaries represented the war as uncompensated evil and voluntary self-infliction: peace, as unqualified prosperity, and as immediately within our grasp. My business—the business of truth—was to show, that THE WAR—though all war is full of evil—had yet mitigations, and, besides, would not cease at our bidding; that peace would not come at our call, and, besides, that when it came, it would bring with it its privations. The stimulus of the war withdrawn, manufacturing industry would necessarily

languish: the channels of commerce, forced open by the war, having closed, commercial enterprise must necessarily be checked till new channels were explored; and the mere cessation of the "trade of war" itself, in all its various branches, must both discontinue the occupation of a population which it had created, and throw additional crowds on occupations already overstocked. Here were causes sufficient for the inevitable privations and derangements of a first year of peace after any war, but much more after a war of such extraordinary magnitude and extension.

It required no great sagacity to forsee these things; but, in those who did forsee them, it would have been, at least, disingenuous to assert—or to suffer the assertions to go uncontroverted—that the war was our single and voluntary suffering, and that peace was not only attainable, but would be an instant and perfect cure.

Such, gentlemen, is the true account of that temporary stagnation of commercial industry and enterprise which has been insidiously imputed to national exhaustion; of the difficulty in providing employment for an exuberant population (the harvest of a long war) upon the sudden return of peace, and before the world had yet righted itself after all its convulsions.

Either our antagonists foresaw these immediate and necessary consequences of the discontinuance of war, or they did not. If they did forsee them, would it not have been fair to have shaded a little more carefully the bright prospects which they painted of the peace to come? If not, would it not be fair in them to acknowledge, that they had been too sanguine in their anticipations? But, what surely is not fair nor reasonable is, that no sooner was the peace which they had so long clamoured for obtained, than they proceeded with as much pathos as they had bestowed upon the evils of war, to deplore the sufferings of that moment which they had predicted as one of unqualified happiness.

They began their lamentations over languishing industry, and stinted commerce, and unemployed population; as if these evils were not the natural and necessary consequences of unavoidably operating causes; as if they were the creation of some malignant influence, which, whether in war or in peace, blighted the destinies of the country.

Is it intended to maintain this proposition, that, in order to produce the blessings with which peace ought to be accompanied, the war ought to have been concluded with defeat, and the peace to have been a peace of humiliation? If so, I can understand the arguments and acknowledge the consistency of those who pretend to have been disappointed at the tardy reappearance of the blessings which they promised us; for, undoubtedly, the war was concluded with triumphs, which must have deranged all the anticipa-

tions which were founded on the basis of unconditional surrender and submission.

But, gentlemen, labouring as I do under the imputation of being a great lover of war, I am almost afraid to say, that there are some things in the war which I regret, and some things in the peace which I like as little as even those privations of which we have been speaking, but which are, happily, in a course of daily diminution. The war divided the political parties of the country on one great question, which involved and absorbed all minor considerations. With war, party has not ceased; but our differences are of a sort more ignoble and more alarming. The line of demarcation during the war was—resistance or non-resistance to a foreign enemy: the line of demarcation now is—maintenance or subversion of our internal institutions.

Gentlemen, it does seem somewhat singular, and I conceive that the historian of future times will be at a loss to imagine how it should happen, that, at this particular period, at the close of a war of such unexampled brilliancy, in which this country had acted a part so much beyond its physical strength and its apparent resources, there should arise a sect of philosophers in this country, who begin to suspect something rotten in the British Constitution. The history of Europe for the last twenty-five years, is something like this. A power went forth, animated with the spirit of evil, to overturn every community of the civilized world. Before this dreadful assailant, empires, and monarchies, and republics bowed: some were crushed to the earth, and some bought their safety by compromise. In the midst of this wide-spread ruin, among tottering columns and falling edifices, one fabric alone stood erect and braved the storm; and not only provided for its own internal security, but sent forth, at every portal, assistance to its weaker neighbours. On this edifice floated that ensign, [pointing to the English ensign,] a signal of rallying to the combatant, and of shelter to the fallen.

To an impartial observer—I will not say to an inhabitant of this little fortress—to an impartial observer, in whatever part of the world, one should think something of this sort would have occurred. Here is a fabric constructed upon some principles not common to others in its neighbourhood; principles which enable it to stand erect while every thing is prostrate around it. In the construction of this fabric there must be some curious felicity, which the eye of the philosopher would be well employed in investigating, and which its neighbours may profit by adopting. This, I say, gentlemen, would have been an obvious inference. But what shall we think of their understandings who draw an inference directly the reverse? and who say to us—"You have stood when others have fallen; when others have crouched, you have

borne yourselves aloft; you alone have resisted the power which has shaken and swallowed up half the civilized world. We like not this auspicious peculiarity. There must be something wrong in your internal conformation." With this unhappy curiosity, and in the spirit of this perverse analysis, they proceed to dissect our Constitution. They find that, like other states, we have a monarch; that a nobility, though not organized like ours, is common to all the great empires of Europe; but that our distinction lies in a popular assembly, which gives life, and vigour, and strength to the whole frame of the Government. Here, therefore, they find the seat of our disease. Our peccant part is, undoubtedly, the House of Commons. Hence our presumptuous exemption from what was the common lot of all our neighbours: the anomaly ought forthwith to be corrected; and, therefore, the House of Commons must be reformed.

Gentlemen, it cannot but have struck you as somewhat extraordinary, that whereas, in speaking of foreign sovereigns, our reformers are never very sparing of uncourtly epithets; that whereas, in discussing the general principles of government, they seldom omit an opportunity of discrediting and deriding the privileged orders of society; yet, when they come to discuss the British Constitution, nothing can be more respectful than their language towards the Crown; nothing more forbearing than their treatment of the aristocracy. With the House of Commons alone they take the freedom of familiarity; upon it they pour out all the phials of their wrath, and exhaust their denunciations of amendment.

Gentlemen, this, though extraordinary, is not unintelligible. The reformers are wise in their generation. They know well enough—and have read plainly enough in our own history, that the prerogatives of the Crown and the privileges of the peerage would be but as dust in the balance against a preponderating democracy. They mean democracy, and nothing else. And, give them but a House of Commons constructed on their own principles—the peerage and the throne may exist for a day, but may be swept from the face of the earth by the first angry vote of such a House of Commons.

It is, therefore, utterly unnecessary for the reformers to declare hostility to the Crown; it is, therefore, utterly superfluous for them to make war against the peerage. They know that, let but their principles have full play, the Crown and the peerage would be to the Constitution which they assail, but as the baggage to the army—and the destruction of them but as the gleanings of the battle. They know that the battle is with the House of Commons, as at present constituted; and that, *that* once overthrown, and another popular assembly constructed on their principle, as the creature and depository of the people's power, and the unreason-

ing instrument of the people's will, there would be not only no chance, but (I will go further for them in avowal, though not in intention, than they go for themselves) there would not be a pretence for the existence of any other branch of the Constitution.

Gentlemen, the whole fallacy lies in this: the reformers reason from false premises, and, therefore, are driving on their unhappy adherents to false and dangerous conclusions. The Constitution of this country is a monarchy, controlled by two assemblies; the one hereditary, and independent alike of the Crown and the people; the other elected by and for the people, but elected for the purpose of controlling and not of administering the Government. The error of the reformers, if error it can be called, is, that they argue as if the Constitution of this country was a broad and level democracy, inlaid (for ornament sake) with a peerage, and topped (by sufferance) with a Crown.

If they say, that, for such a Constitution, that is, in effect, for an uncontrolled democracy, the present House of Commons is not sufficiently popular, they are right; but such a Constitution is not what we have or what we desire. We are born under a monarchy, which it is our duty, as much as it is for our happiness, to preserve; and which there cannot be a shadow of doubt that the reforms which are recommended to us would destroy.

I love the monarchy, gentlemen, because, limited and controlled as it is in our happy Constitution, I believe it to be not only the safest depository of power, but the surest guardian of liberty. I love the system of popular representation, gentlemen;—who can have more cause to value it highly than I feel at this moment—reflecting on the triumphs which it has earned for me, and addressing those who have been the means of achieving them? But of popular representation, I think, we have enough for every purpose of jealous, steady, corrective, efficient control over the acts of that monarchical power, which, for the safety and for the peace of the community, is lodged in one sacred family, and descendible from sire to son.

If any man tell me, that the popular principle in the House of Commons is not strong enough for effective control, nor diffused enough to ensure sympathy with the people, I appeal to the whole course of the transactions of the last war; I desire to have cited to me the instances in which the House of Commons has failed, either to express the matured and settled opinion of the nation, or to convey it to the Crown. But I warn those who may undertake to make the citation, that they do not (as, in fact, they almost always do) substitute their own for the national opinion, and then complain of its having been imperfectly echoed in the House of Commons.

If, on the other hand, it be only meant to say, that the House of

Commons is not the *whole government* of the country—which, if all power be not only *for* but *in* the people, the House of Commons ought to be, if the people were adequately represented —I answer, thank God it is not so!—God forbid it should ever aim at becoming so!

But they look far short of the ultimate effect of the doctrines of the present day, who do not see that their tendency is not to make a House of Commons such as, in theory, it has always been defined—a third branch of the legislature; but to absorb the legislative and executive powers into one; to create an immediate delegation of the whole authority of the people—to which, practically, nothing could, and, in reasoning, nothing ought to stand in opposition.

Gentlemen, it would be well if these doctrines were the ebullitions of the moment, and ended with the occasions which naturally give them their freest play; I mean, with the season of popular elections. But, unfortunately, disseminated as they are among all ranks of the community, they are doing permanent and incalculable mischief. How lamentably is experience lost on mankind! for when—in what age, in what country of the world—have doctrines of this sort been reduced to practice, without leading, through anarchy, to military despotism! The revolution of the seasons is not more certain than is this connexion of events in the course of moral nature.

Gentlemen, to theories like these you will do me the justice to remember that I have always opposed myself; not more since I have had the honour to represent this community, than when I was uncertain how far my opinions on such subjects might coincide with yours.

For opposing these theories, gentlemen, I have become an object of peculiar obloquy; but I have borne that obloquy with the consciousness of having discharged my duty; and with the consolation, that the time was not far distant when I should come here among you, (to whom alone I owe an account of my public conduct,)—when I should have an opportunity of hearing from you, whether I had (as I flattered myself) spoken the sense of the second commercial community in England; and when, if—unfortunately and contrary to my belief—I had separated myself in opinion from you, I should learn the grounds of that separation.

Gentlemen, my object, in political life, has always been, rather to reconcile the nation to the lot which has fallen to them (surely a most glorious and blessed lot among nations!) than to aggravate incurable imperfections, and to point out imaginary and unattainable excellencies for their admiration. I have done so, because, though I am aware that more splendidly popular systems of government might be devised than that which it is our happiness to

enjoy, it is, I believe in my conscience, impossible to devise one in which all the good qualities of human nature should be brought more beneficially into action—in which there should be as much order and as much liberty—in which property (the conservative principle of society) should operate so fairly, with a just but not overwhelming weight—in which industry should be so sure of its reward, talents of their due ascendancy, and virtue of the general esteem.

The theories of preternatural purity are founded on a notion of doing away with all these accustomed relations—of breaking all the ties by which society is held together. Property is to have no influence—talents no respect—virtue no honour, among their neighbourhood. Naked, abstract political rights are to be set up against the authorities of nature and of reason: and the result of suffrages, thus freed from all the ordinary influences which have operated upon mankind from the beginning of the world, is to be—the erection of some untried system of politics, of which it may be sufficient to say, that it could not last a day—that, if it rose with the mists of the morning, it would dissolve in the noontide sun.

Gentlemen, one ill consequence of these brilliant schemes, even where they are the visions of unsound imagination, rather than the suggestions of crafty mischief, is, that they tend to dissatisfy the minds of the uninformed with the actual Constitution of their country.

To maintain that Constitution has been the unvarying object of my political life: and the maintenance of it, in these latter days, has, as I have said, exposed me to obloquy and to hatred; to the hatred of those who believe either their own reputation for sagacity, or their own means of success, to be connected with a change in the present institutions of the country.

We have heard something of numbers in the course of the present election: and there is in numbers, I confess, a coincidence which gratifies and pleases me. The number of *three hundred* was that of the majority which assured my return. It is the number, I am informed, of those who are assembled here to greet me this day. The last time that I heard of the number *three hundred*, in a way at all interesting to myself, was in an intimation, publicly conveyed to me, that precisely that number of heroes had bound themselves, by oath to each other, to assassinate me. Gentlemen, against my three hundred assassins I put my three hundred friends, and I feel neither my life nor my popularity in danger.

Mr. Canning concluded by expressing his acknowledgments for the honour done him in drinking his health, and by proposing that of the worthy chairman.

SPEECH

AT THE PUBLIC DINNER AT LIVERPOOL, GIVEN IN HONOUR OF MR. CANNING'S RE-ELECTION, IN THE MUSIC HALL, ON SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 1820.

GENTLEMEN,

Short as the interval is since I last met you in this place on a similar occasion, the events which have filled up that interval have not been unimportant. The great moral disease which we then talked of as gaining ground on the community has, since that period, arrived at its most extravagant height; and, since that period, also, remedies have been applied to it, if not of permanent cure, at least of temporary mitigation.

Gentlemen, with respect to those remedies—I mean with respect to the transactions of the last short session of Parliament previous to the dissolution—I feel that it is my duty, as your representative, to render to you some account of the part which I took in that assembly to which you sent me; I feel it my duty also, as a member of the Government by which those measures were advised. Upon occasions of such trying exigency as those which we have lately experienced, I hold it to be of the very essence of our free and popular Constitution, that an unreserved interchange of sentiment should take place between the representative and his constituents; and if it accidentally happens, that he who addresses you as your representative, stands also in the situation of a responsible adviser of the Crown, I recognize in that more rare occurrence a not less striking or less valuable peculiarity of that Constitution under which we have the happiness to live, —by which a Minister of the Crown is brought into contact with the great body of the community; and the service of the King is shown to be a part of the service of the people.

Gentlemen, it has been one advantage of the transactions of the last session of Parliament, that while they were addressed to meet the evils which had grown out of charges heaped upon the House of Commons, they have also, in a great measure, falsified the charges themselves.

I would appeal to the recollection of every man who now hears me,—of any, the most careless estimator of public sentiment, or the most indifferent spectator of public events, whether any country, in any two epochs, however distant, of its history, ever presented such a contrast with itself as this country in November, 1819, and this country in February, 1820? Do I exaggerate when

I say, that there was not a man of property who did not tremble for his possessions?—that there was not a man of retired and peaceable habits who did not tremble for the tranquillity and security of his home?—that there was not a man of orderly and religious principles who did not fear that those principles were about to be cut from under the feet of succeeding generations? Was there any man who did not apprehend the Crown to be in danger? Was there any man, attached to the other branches of the Constitution, who did not contemplate with anxiety and dismay the rapid, and, apparently, irresistible diffusion of doctrines hostile to the very existence of Parliament as at present constituted, and calculated to excite, not hatred and contempt merely, but open and audacious force, especially against the House of Commons?—What is, in these respects, the situation of the country now? Is there a man of property who does not feel the tenure by which he holds his possessions to have been strengthened? Is there a man of peace who does not feel his domestic tranquillity to have been secured? Is there a man of moral and religious principles who does not look forward with better hope to see his children educated in those principles?—who does not hail, with renewed confidence, the revival and re-establishment of that moral and religious sense which had been attempted to be obliterated from the hearts of mankind?

Well, gentlemen, and what has intervened between the two periods? A calling of that degraded Parliament; a meeting of that scoffed-at and derided House of Commons; a concurrence of those three branches of an imperfect Constitution, not one of which, if we are to believe the radical reformers, lived in the hearts, or swayed the feelings, or commanded the respect of the nation; but which, despised as they were while in a state of separation and inaction, did, by a co-operation of four short weeks, restore order, confidence, a reverence for the laws, and a just sense of their own legitimate authority.

Another event, indeed, has intervened, in itself of a most painful nature, but powerful in aiding and confirming the impressions which the assembling and the proceedings of Parliament were calculated to produce. I mean the loss which the nation has sustained by the death of a Sovereign, with whose person all that is venerable in monarchy has been identified in the eyes of successive generations of his subjects; a Sovereign whose goodness, whose years, whose sorrows and sufferings, must have softened the hearts of the most ferocious enemies of kingly power; whose active virtues, and the memory of whose virtues, when it pleased Divine Providence that they should be active no more, have been the guide and guardian of his people through many a weary and many a stormy pilgrimage; scarce less a guide, and quite as much

a guardian, in the cloud of his evening darkness, as in the brightness of his meridian day.

That such a loss, and the recollections and reflections naturally arising from it, must have had a tendency to revive and refresh the attachment to monarchy, and to root that attachment deeper in the hearts of the people, might easily be shown by reasoning; but a feeling, truer than all reasoning, anticipates the result, and renders the process of argument unnecessary. So far, therefore, has this great calamity brought with it its own compensation, and conspired to the restoration of peace throughout the country with the measures adopted by Parliament.

And, gentlemen, what was the character of those measures?—The best eulogy of them I take to be this: it may be said of them, as has been said of some of the most consummate productions of literary art, that, though no man beforehand had exactly anticipated the scope and the details of them, no man, when they were laid before him, did not feel that they were precisely such as he would himself have suggested. So faithfully adapted to the case which they were framed to meet, so correctly adjusted to the degree and nature of the mischief they were intended to control, that, while we all feel that they have done their work, I think none will say there has been any thing in them of excess or supererogation.

We were loudly assured by the reformers, that the test, throughout the country, by which those who were ambitious of seats in the new Parliament would be tried, was to be—whether they had supported those measures. I have inquired, with as much diligence as was compatible with my duties here, after the proceedings of other elections; and, I protest I know no place yet, besides the hustings of Westminster and Southwark, at which that menaced test has been put to any candidates. To me, indeed, it was not put as a test, but objected as a charge. You know how that charge was answered: and the result is to me a majority of 1,300 out of 2,000 voters upon the poll.

But, gentlemen, though this question has not, as was threatened, been the watchword of popular elections, every other effort has, nevertheless, been industriously employed to persuade the people, that their liberties have been essentially abridged by the regulation of popular meetings. Against that one of the measures passed by Parliament, it is that the attacks of the radical reformers have been particularly directed. Gentlemen, the first answer to this averment is, that the act leaves untouched all the constitutional modes of assembly which have been known to the nation since it became free. We are fond of dating our freedom from the Revolution. I should be glad to know in what period, since the Revolution (up to a very late period indeed, which I will

specify)—in what period of those reigns growing out of the Revolution—I mean, of the first reigns of the House of Brunswick—did it enter into the head of man, that such meetings could be holden, or that the legislature would tolerate the holding of such meetings, as disgraced this kingdom for some months previous to the last session of Parliament? When, therefore, it is asserted, that such meetings were never before suppressed, the simple answer is—they were never before systematically attempted to be holden.

I verily believe, the first meeting of the kind that was ever attempted and tolerated (I know of none anterior to it) was that called by Lord George Gordon, in St. George's fields, in the year 1780, which led to the demolition of chapels and dwelling-houses, the breaking of prisons, and the conflagration of London. Was England never free till 1780? Did British liberty spring to light from the ashes of the metropolis? What! was there no freedom in the reign of George the Second? None in that of George the First? None in the reign of Queen Anne or of King William? Beyond the Revolution I will not go. But I have always heard, that British liberty was established long before the commencement of the late reign; nay, that in the late reign (according to popular politicians) it rather sunk and retrograded: and yet never till that reign was such an abuse of popular meetings dreamt of, much less erected into a right, not to be questioned by magistrates, and not to be controlled by Parliament.

Do I deny, then, the general right of the people to meet, to petition, or to deliberate upon their grievances? God forbid! But social right is not a simple, abstract, positive, unqualified term. Rights are, in the same individual, to be compared with his duties; and rights in one person are to be balanced with the rights of others. Let us take this right of meeting in its most extended construction and most absolute sense. The persons who called the meeting at Manchester tell you, that they had a right to collect together countless multitudes to discuss the question of parliamentary reform: to collect them when they would and where they would, without consent of magistrates, or concurrence of inhabitants, or reference to the comfort or convenience of the neighbourhood. May not the peaceable, the industrious inhabitant of Manchester say, on the other hand, "I have a right to quiet in my house; I have a right to carry on my manufactory, on which not my existence only and that of my children, but that of my workmen and their numerous families depends. I have a right to be protected in the exercise of this my lawful calling; I have a right to be protected, not against violence and plunder only, against fire and sword, but against the terror of these calamities, and against the risk of these inflictions; against the intimi-

dation or seduction of my workmen; or against the distraction of that attention and the interruption of that industry, without which neither they nor I can gain our livelihood. I call upon the laws to afford me that protection; and, if the laws in this country cannot afford it, depend upon it, I and my manufacturers must emigrate to some country where they can." Here is a conflict of rights, between which what is the decision? Which of the two claims is to give way? Can any reasonable being doubt? Can any honest man hesitate? Let private justice or public expediency decide, and can the decision by possibility be other, than that the peaceable and industrious shall be protected—the turbulent and mischievous put down?

But what similarity is there between tumults such as these, and an orderly meeting, recognised by the law for all legitimate purposes of discussion or petition? God forbid, that there should not be modes of assembly by which every class of this great nation may be brought together to deliberate on any matters connected with their interest and their freedom. It is, however, an inversion of the natural order of things, it is a disturbance of the settled course of society, to represent discussion as every thing, and the ordinary occupations of life as nothing. To protect the peaceable in their ordinary occupations, is as much the province of the laws, as to provide opportunities of discussion for every purpose to which it is necessary and properly applicable. The laws do both; but it is no part of the contrivance of the laws, that immense multitudes should wantonly be brought together, month after month, and day after day, in places where the very bringing together of a multitude is of itself the source of terror and of danger.

It is no part of the provision of the laws, nor is it in the spirit of them, that such multitudes should be brought together at the will of unauthorized and irresponsible individuals, changing the scene of meeting as may suit their caprice or convenience, and fixing it where they have neither property, nor domicil, nor connexion. The spirit of the law goes directly the other way. It is, if I may so express myself, eminently a spirit of corporation. Counties, parishes, townships, guilds, professions, trades, and callings, form so many local and political subdivisions, into which the people of England are distributed by the law: and the pervading principle of the whole is that of vicinage or neighbourhood; by which each man is held to act under the view of his neighbours; to lend his aid to them, to borrow theirs; to share their councils, their duties, and their burdens; and to bear with them his share of responsibility for the acts of any of the members of the community of which he forms a part.

Observe, I am not speaking here of the reviled and discredited

statute law only, but of that venerable common law to which our reformers are so fond of appealing on all occasions, against the statute law by which it is modified, explained, or enforced. Guided by the spirit of the one, no less than by the letter of the other, what man is there in this country who cannot point to the portion of society to which he belongs? If injury is sustained, upon whom is the injured person expressly entitled to come for redress? Upon the hundred, or the division in which he has sustained the injury. On what principle? On the principle, that as the individual is amenable to the division of the community to which he specially belongs, so neighbours are answerable for each other. Just laws, to be sure, and admirable equity, if a stranger is to collect a mob which is to set half Manchester on fire; and the burnt half is to come upon the other half for indemnity, while the stranger goes off, unquestioned, to excite the like tumult and produce the like danger elsewhere!

That such was the nature, such the tendency, nay, that such, in all human probability, might have been the result, of meetings like that of the 16th of August, who can deny? Who that weighs all the particulars of that day, comparing them with the rumours and the threats that preceded it, will dispute that such might have been the result of that very meeting, if that meeting, so very legally assembled, had not, by the happy decision of the magistrates, been so very illegally dispersed?

It is, therefore, not in consonance, but in contradiction to the spirit of the law, that such meetings have been holden. The law prescribes a corporate character. The callers of these meetings have always studiously avoided it. No summons of freeholders —none of freemen—none of the inhabitants of particular places or parishes—no acknowledgment of local or political classification. Just so at the beginning of the French Revolution: the first work of the reformers was to loosen every established political relation, every legal holding of man to man; to destroy every corporation, to dissolve every subsisting class of society, and to reduce the nation into individuals, in order, afterwards, to congregate them into mobs.

Let no person, therefore, run away with the notion, that these things were done without design. To bring together the inhabitants of a particular division, or men sharing a common franchise, is to bring together an assembly, of which the component parts act with some respect and awe of each other. Ancient habits, which the reformers would call prejudices; preconceived attachments, which they would call corruption; that mutual respect which makes the eye of a neighbour a security for each man's good conduct, but which the reformers would stigmatize as a confederacy among the few for dominion over their fellows;—all

these things make men difficult to be moved, on the sudden, to any extravagant and violent enterprize. But bring together a multitude of individuals, having no permanent relation to each other—no common tie, but what arises from their concurrence as members of that meeting, a tie dissolved as soon as the meeting is at an end; in such an aggregation of individuals there is no such mutual respect, no such check upon the proceedings of each man from the awe of his neighbour's disapprobation; and, if ever a multitudinous assembly can be wrought up to purposes of mischief, it will be an assembly so composed.

How monstrous is it to confound such meetings with the genuine and recognised modes of collecting the sense of the English people! Was it by meetings such as these that the Revolution was brought about, that grand event, to which our antagonists are so fond of referring? Was it by meetings in St. George's-fields? in Spa-fields? in Smithfield? Was it by untold multitudes collected in a village in the north? No! It was by the meeting of corporations, in their corporate capacity;—by the assembly of recognised bodies of the state; by the interchange of opinions among portions of the community known to each other, and capable of estimating each other's views and characters. Do we want a more striking mode of remedying grievances than this? Do we require a more animating example? And did it remain for the reformers of the present day to strike out the course by which alone Great Britain could make and keep herself free?

Gentlemen, all power is, or ought to be, accompanied by responsibility. Tyranny is irresponsible power. This definition is equally true, whether the power be lodged in one or many;—whether in a despot, exempted by the form of government from the control of the law; or in a mob, whose numbers put them beyond the reach of law. Idle, therefore, and absurd, to talk of freedom where a mob domineers! Idle, therefore, and absurd, to talk of liberty, when you hold your property, perhaps your life, not indeed, at the nod of a despot, but at the will of an inflamed, an infuriated populace! If, therefore, during the reign of terror at Manchester, or at Spa-fields, there were persons in this country who had a right to complain of tyranny, it was they who loved the Constitution, who loved the monarchy, but who dared not utter their opinions or their wishes until their houses were barricaded, and their children sent to a place of safety. That was tyranny! and, so far as the mobs were under the control of a leader, that was despotism! It was against that tyranny, it was against that despotism, that Parliament at length raised its arm.

All power, I say, is vicious that is not accompanied by proportionate responsibility. Personal responsibility prevents the abuse of individual power: responsibility of character is the security

against the abuse of collective power, when exercised by bodies of men whose existence is permanent and defined. But strip such bodies of these qualities, you degrade them into multitudes, and then what security have you against any thing that they may do or resolve, knowing that, from the moment at which the meeting is at an end, there is no human being responsible for their proceedings? The meeting at Manchester, the meeting at Birmingham, the meeting at Spa-fields or Smithfield, what pledge could they give to the nation of the soundness or sincerity of their designs? The local character of Manchester, the local character of Birmingham, was not pledged to any of the proceedings to which their names were appended. A certain number of ambulatory tribunes of the people, self-elected to that high function, assumed the name and authority of whatever place they thought proper to select for a place of meeting; their rostrum was pitched, sometimes here, sometimes there, according to the fancy of the mob, or the patience of the magistrates; but the proposition and the proposer were in all places nearly alike; and when, by a sort of political ventriloquism, the same voice had been made to issue from half a dozen different corners of the country, it was impudently assumed to be a concord of sweet sounds, composing the united voice of the people of England!

Now, gentlemen, let us estimate the mighty mischief that has been done to liberty by putting down meetings such as I have described. Let us ask, what lawful authority has been curtailed; let us ask, what respectable community has been defrauded of its franchise; let us ask, what municipal institutions have been violated by a law which fixes the migratory complaint to the spot whence it professes to originate, and desires to hear of the grievance from those by whom that grievance is felt;—which leaves to Manchester, as Manchester, to Birmingham, as Birmingham, to London, as London, all the free scope of utterance which they have at any time enjoyed for making known their wants, their feelings, their wishes, their remonstrances;—which leaves to each of these divisions its separate authority—to the union of all or of many of them the aggregate authority of such a consent and co-operation; but which denies to any itinerant hawker of grievances the power of stamping their names upon his wares; of pretending, because he may raise an outcry *at* Manchester or *at* Birmingham, that he therefore speaks the sense of the town which he disquiets and endangers; or, still more preposterously, that because he has disquieted and endangered half a dozen neighbourhoods in their turn, he is, therefore, the organ of them all, and, through them, of the whole British people.

Such are the stupid fallacies which the law of the last session

has extinguished! and such are the object and effect of the measures which British liberty is not to survive!

To remedy the dreadful wound thus inflicted upon British liberty,—to restore to the people what the people have not lost —to give a new impulse to that spirit of freedom which nothing has been done to embarrass or restrain, we are invited to alter the constitution of that assembly through which the people share in the legislature; in short, to make a radical reform in the House of Commons.

It has always struck me as extraordinary, that there should be persons prepared to entertain the question of a change in so important a member of the Constitution, without considering in what way that change must affect the situation of the other members, and the action of the Constitution itself.

I have, on former occasions, stated here, and I have stated elsewhere, questions on this subject, to which, as yet, I have never received an answer. "You who propose to reform the House of Commons, do you mean to restore that branch of the legislature to the same state in which it stood at some former period? or do you mean to re-construct it on new principles?"

Perhaps a moderate reformer or whig will answer, that he means only to restore the House of Commons to what it was at some former period. I then beg to ask him—and to that question, also, I have never yet received an answer—"At what period of our history was the House of Commons in the state to which you wish to restore it?"

The House of Commons must, for the purpose of clear argument, be considered in two views. First, with respect to its agency as a third part in the Constitution: secondly, with respect to its composition, in relation to its constituents. As to its agency as a part of the Constitution, I venture to say, without hazard, as I believe, of contradiction, that there is no period in the history of this country in which the House of Commons will be found to have occupied so large a share of the functions of Government as at present. Whatever else may be said of the House of Commons, this one point, at least, is indisputable, that from the earliest infancy of the Constitution, the power of the House of Commons has been growing, till it has almost, like the rod of Aaron, absorbed its fellows. I am not saying whether this is or is not as it ought to be. I am merely saying why I think that it cannot be intended to complain of the want of power, and of a due share in the Government, as the defect of the modern House of Commons.

I admit, however, very willingly, that the greater share of power the House of Commons exercises, the more jealous we ought to be of its composition; and I presume, therefore, that it is in this respect, and in relation to its constituents, that the state

of that House is contended to want revision. Well, then, at what period of our history was the composition of the history of the House of Commons materially different from what it is at present? Is there any period of our history in which the rights of election were not as various, in which the influence of property was not as direct, in which recommendations of candidates were not as efficient, and some boroughs as close as they are now? I ask for information; but that information, plain and simple as it is, and necessary, one should think, to a clear understanding, much more to a grave decision of the point at issue, I never, though soliciting it with all humility, have ever yet been able to obtain from any reformer, radical or whig.

The radical reformer, indeed, to do him justice, is not bound to furnish me with an answer to this question, because with *his* view of the matter, precedents (except one, which I shall mention presently) have nothing to do. The radical reformer would, probably, give to my first question an answer very different from that which I have supposed his moderate brother to give. He will tell me fairly, that he means not simply to bring the House of Commons back, either to the share of power which it formerly enjoyed, or to the modes of election by which it was formerly chosen; but to make it what, according to him, it ought to be—a direct, effectual representative of the people; representing them not as a delegate commissioned to take care of their interests, but as a deputy appointed to speak their will. Now to this view of the matter, I have no other objection than this:—that the British Constitution is a limited monarchy; that a limited monarchy is, in the nature of things, a mixed government; but that such a House of Commons as the radical reformer requires would, in effect, constitute a pure democracy; a power, as it appears to me, inconsistent with any monarchy, and unsesceptible of any limitation.

I may have great respect for the person who theoretically prefers a republic to a monarchy. But, even supposing me to agree with him in his preference, I should have a preliminary question to discuss, by which he, perhaps, may not feel himself embarrassed; which is this, whether I, born as I am (and as *I* think it is my good fortune to be) under a monarchy, am quite at liberty to consider myself as having a clear stage for political experiments; whether I should be authorized, if I were convinced of the expediency of such a change, to withdraw monarchy altogether from the British Constitution, and to substitute an unqualified democracy in its stead: or whether, whatever changes I may be desirous of introducing, I am not bound to consider the Constitution which I find as at least circumscribing the range, and, in some measure, prescribing the nature. of the improvement.

For my own part, I am, undoubtedly, prepared to uphold the ancient monarchy of the country, by arguments drawn from what I think the blessings which we have enjoyed under it; and by arguments of another sort, if arguments of another sort shall ever be brought against it. But all that I am now contending for is, that whatever reformation is proposed, should be considered with some reference to the established Constitution of the country. That point being conceded to me, I have no difficulty in saying, that I cannot conceive a Constitution of which one-third part shall be an assembly delegated by the people—not to consult for the good of the nation, but to speak, day by day, the people's will—which must not, in a few days' sitting, sweep away every other branch of the Constitution that might attempt to oppose or control it. I cannot conceive how, in fair reasoning, any other branch of the Constitution should pretend to stand against it. If Government be a matter of will, all that we have to do is to collect the will of the nation, and, having collected it by an adequate organ, that will is paramount and supreme. By what pretension could the House of Lords be maintained in equal authority and jurisdiction with the House of Commons, when once that House of Commons should become a direct deputation, speaking the people's will, and that will the rule of the Government? In one way or other the House of Lords must act, if it be to remain a concurrent branch of the legislature. Either it must uniformly affirm the measures which come from the House of Commons, or it must, occasionally, take the liberty to reject them. If it uniformly affirm, it is without the shadow of authority. But to presume to reject an act of the deputies of the whole nation!—by what assumption of right could three or four hundred great proprietors set themselves against the national will? Grant the reformers, then, what they ask, on the principles on which they ask it, and it is utterly impossible that, after such a reform, the Constitution should long consist of more than one body, and that one body a popular assembly.

Why, gentlemen, is this theory? or is it a theory of mine? If there be, among those who hear me, any man who has been (as in the generous enthusiasm of youth any man may blamelessly have been) bitten by the doctrines of reform, I implore him, before he goes forward in his progress to embrace those doctrines in their radical extent, to turn to the history of the transactions in this country in the year 1648, and to examine the bearings of those transactions on this very question of radical reform. He will find, gentlemen, that the House of Commons of that day passed the following resolution:—

"Resolved, that the people are, under God, the original of all just power."

Well!—can any sentiment be more just and reasonable? Is it not the foundation of all the liberties of mankind? Be it so. Let us proceed. The House of Commons followed up this resolution by a second, which runs in something like these terms:—

"Resolved, that the Commons of England, assembled in Parliament, being chosen by and representing the people, *have the supreme authority* of this nation."

In this resolution the leap is taken. Do the radical reformers deny the premises or the inference? or do they adopt the whole of the tempting precedent before them?

But the inference did not stop there. The House of Commons proceeded to deduce, from these propositions, an inference, the apparently logical dependence of which upon these propositions I wish I could see logically disproved.

"Resolved, (without one dissenting voice,) That whatsoever is enacted and declared law by the Commons of England, assembled in Parliament, hath the force of law, and all the people of this nation are included thereby, *although the consent and concurrence of the King and House of Peers be not had thereunto.*'"

Such was the theory: the practical inferences were not tardy in their arrival, after the theory. In a few weeks the House of Peers* was voted useless. We all know what became of the Crown.

Such, I say, were the radical doctrines of 1648, and such the consequences to which they naturally led. If we are induced to admit the same premises now, who is it, I should be glad to know, that is to guarantee us against similar conclusions?

These, then, are the reasons why I look with jealousy at schemes of parliamentary reform. I look at them with still more jealousy, because, in one of the two classes of men who co-operate in support of that question, I never yet found any two individuals who held the same doctrines: I never yet heard any intelligible theory of reform, except that of the radical reformers. Theirs, indeed, it is easy enough to understand. But as for theirs, I certainly am not yet fully prepared. I, for my part, will not consent to take one step, without knowing on what principle I am invited to take it, and (which is, perhaps, of more consequence,) without declaring on what principle, I will *not* consent that any step, however harmless, shall be taken.

What more harmless than to disfranchise a corrupt borough in Cornwall, which has exercised its franchise amiss, and brought shame on itself, and on the system of which it is a part?—Noth-

* "The same day (January 30, 1648-9) the Lords desired a conference with the Commons about settling the Government, and the administration of justice, the judges' commissions being determined by the death of the King. The Commons, without answering the messenger, voted the Lords to be useless and dangerous, and therefore to be abolished."—*Rapin, fo. vol. ii. p.* 574.

ing. I have no sort of objection to doing, as Parliament has often done in such cases, (supposing always the case to be proved,)—to disfranchising the borough, and rendering it incapable of abusing its franchise in future. But though I have no objection to doing this, I will *not* do it on the principle of speculative improvement. I do it on the principle of specific punishment for an offence. And I will take good care, that no inference shall be drawn from my consent in this specific case, as to any sweeping concurrence in a scheme of general alteration.

Nay, I should think it highly disingenuous to suffer the radical reformers to imagine that they had gained a single step towards the admission of their theory, by any such instance of particular animadversion on proved misconduct. I consent to such disfranchisement; but I do so, not with a view of furthering the radical system—rather of thwarting it. I am willing to wipe out any blot in the present system, because I mean the present system to stand. I will take away a franchise, because it has been practically abused; not because I am at all disposed to inquire into the origin or to discuss the utility of all such franchises, any more than I mean to inquire, gentlemen, into your titles to your estates. Disfranchising Grampound, (if that is to be so,) I mean to save Old Sarum.

Now, Sir, I think I deal fairly with the radical reformers; more fairly than those who would suffer it to be supposed by them, that the disfranchisement of Grampound is to be the beginning of a system of reform: while they know, and I hope mean as well as I do, *not* to reform (in the sense of change) but to preserve the Constitution. I would not delude the reformers, if I could; and it is quite useless to attempt a delusion upon persons quite as sagacious in their generation as any moderate reformers or anti-reformers of us all. They know full well, that the whigs have no more notion than I have of parting with the close boroughs. Not they, indeed! A large, and perhaps the larger, part of them are in their hands. Why, in the assembly to which you send me, gentlemen, some of those who sit on the same side with me represent, to be sure, less popular places, than Liverpool—but on the bench immediately over against me, I descry, amongst the most eminent of our rivals for power, scarce any other sort of representatives than members for close, or if you will, for rotten boroughs. To suppose, therefore, that our political opponents have any thoughts of getting rid of the close boroughs, would be a gross delusion; and, I have no doubt, they will be quite as fair and open with the reformers on this point as I am.

And why, gentlemen, is it that I am satisfied with a system which, it is said, no man can support who is not in love with corruption? Is it that I, more than any other man, am afraid to face

a popular election? To the last question you can give the answer. To the former, I will answer for myself. I do verily believe, as I have already said, that a complete and perfect democratical representation, such as the reformers aim at, cannot exist as part of a mixed government. It may exist, and for aught I know or care, may exist beneficially as a whole. But I am not sent to Parliament to inquire into the question, whether a democracy or a monarchy be the best. My lot is cast under the British monarchy. Under that I have lived—under that I have seen my country flourish—under that I have seen it enjoy as great a share of prosperity, of happiness, and of glory as I believe any modification of human society to be capable of bestowing; and I am not prepared to sacrifice or to hazard the fruit of centuries of experience, of centuries of struggles, and of more than one century of liberty, as perfect as ever blessed any country upon the earth, for visionary schemes of ideal perfectibility, or for doubtful experiments even of possible improvement.

I am, therefore, for the House of Commons as a part, and not as the whole, of the Government. And as a part of the Government, I hold it to be frantic to suppose, that from the election of members of Parliament you can altogether exclude, by any contrivance, even if it were desirable to do so, the influence of property, rank, talents, family connexion, and whatever else, in the radical language of the day, is considered as intimidation or corruption. I believe that if a reform, to the extent of that demanded by the radical reformers, were granted, you would, before an annual election came round, find that there were new connexions grown up which you must again destroy, new influence acquired which you must dispossess of its authority; and that in these fruitless attempts at unattainable purity, you were working against the natural current of human nature.

I believe, therefore, that, contrive how you will, some such human motives of action will find room to operate in the election of members of Parliament. I think that this must and ought to be so, unless you mean to exclude from the concerns of the nation all inert wealth, all inactive talent, the retired, the aged, and the infirm, all who cannot face popular assemblies or engage in busy life; in short, unless you have found some expedient for disarming property of influence, without (what I hope we are not yet ripe for) the abolition of property itself.

I would have by choice—if the choice were yet to be made—I would have in the House of Commons great variety of interests, and I would have them find their way there by a great variety of rights of election; satisfied that uniformity of election would produce any thing but a just representation of various interests. As to the close boroughs, I know that through them have found their

way into the House of Commons, men whose talents have been an honour to their kind, and whose names are interwoven with the brightest periods in the history of their country. I cannot think that system altogether vicious which has produced such fruits. Nor can I think that there should be but one road into that assembly, or that no man should be presumed fit for the deliberations of a senate, who has not had the nerves previously to face the storms of the hustings.

I need not say, Gentlemen, that I am one of the last men to disparage the utility and dignity of popular elections. I have good cause to speak of them in far different language. But, among numberless other considerations which endear to me the favours which I have received at your hands, I confess it is one, that, as your representative, I am enabled to speak my genuine sentiments on this (as I think it) vital question of parliamentary reform, without the imputation of shrinking from popular canvass, or of seeking shelter for myself in that species of representation which, as an element in the composition of Parliament, I never shall cease to defend.

In truth, Gentlemen, though the question of reform is made the pretext of those persons who have vexed the country for some months, I verily believe, that there are very few even of them who either give credit to their own exaggerations, or care much about the improvements which they recommend. Why, do we not see that the most violent of the reformers of the day are aiming at seats in that assembly, which, according to their own theories, they should have left to wallow in its own pollution, discountenanced and unredeemed? It is true, that if they found their way there, they might endeavour to bring us to a sense of our misdeeds, and to urge us to redeem our character by some self-condemning ordinance; but would not the authority of their names, as our associates, have more than counterbalanced the force of their eloquence as our reformers?

But, Gentlemen, I am for the whole Constitution. The liberty of the subject as much depends on the maintenance of the constitutional prerogatives of the Crown—on the acknowledgment of the legitimate power of the other House of Parliament, as it does in upholding that supreme power (for such is the power of the purse, in one sense of the word, though not in the sense of the resolution of 1648) which resides in the democratical branch of the Constitution. Whatever beyond its just proportion was gained by one part, would be gained at the expense of the whole; and the balance is now, perhaps, as nearly poised as human wisdom can adjust it. I fear to touch that balance, the disturbance of which must bring confusion on the nation.

Gentlemen, I trust there are few, very few, reasonable and en

lightened men ready to lend themselves to projects of confusion. But I confess I very much wish, that all who are not ready to do so would consider the ill effect of any countenance given, publicly or by apparent implication, to those whom, in their hearts and judgments, they despise. I remember that most excellent and able man, Mr. Wilberforce, once saying, in the House of Commons, that he "never believed an opposition really to wish mischief to the country; that they only wished just so much mischief as might drive their opponents out, and place themselves in their room." Now, Gentlemen, I cannot help thinking that there are some persons tampering with the question of reform something in the same spirit. They do not go so far as the reformers; they even state irreconcilabe differences of opinion; but to a certain extent they agree, and even co-operate with them. They co-operate with them in inflaming the public feeling not only against the Government, but against the support given by Parliament to that Government, in the hope, no doubt, of attracting to themselves the popularity which is lost to their opponents, and thus being enabled to correct and retrieve the errors of a displaced administration. Vain and hopeless task to raise such a spirit and then to govern it. They may stimulate the steeds into fury, till the chariot is hurried to the brink of a precipice; but do they flatter themselves that they can then leap in, and, hurling the incompetent driver from his seat, check the reins just in time to turn from the precipice and avoid the fall?—I fear they would attempt it in vain. The impulse, once given, may be too impetuous to be controlled; and, intending only to change the guidance of the machine, they may hurry it and themselves to irretrievable destruction.

May every man who has a stake in the country, whether from situation, from character, from wealth, from his family, and from the hopes of his children—may every man who has a sense of the blessings for which he is indebted to the form of Government under which he lives, see that the time is come, at which his decision must be taken, and, when once taken, steadfastly acted upon —for or against the institutions of the British monarchy! The time is come at which there is but that line of demarcation. On which side of that line we, Gentlemen, shall range ourselves, our choice has long ago been made. In acting upon that our common choice, with my best efforts and exertions, I shall at once faithfully represent your sentiments and satisfy my own judgment and conscience.

SPEECH

AT THE PUBLIC DINNER AT LIVERPOOL, IN THE LYCEUM ROOM, ON FRIDAY, THE 30TH OF AUGUST, 1822.

GENTLEMEN,

Often as I have had occasion to express my thanks to my constituents, I never rose under feelings so oppressive as those which I experience at the present moment. It is not that the manifestation of your kindness is new or strange, for it began with your first unsolicited selection of me, and has grown with the growth of our acquaintance; but the more than usual—the crowning kindness of this moment, when I come among you to return thanks for the past, and to terminate our connexion for the future, is really overcoming, and almost takes from me the faculty of expressing the excess of acknowledgment which it inspires.

Gentlemen, let those who doubt the practical excellence of the political institutions of Great Britain look at the scene which this assembly exhibits; and when they see how far an humble individual, without personal distinction or personal claims of any kind on the consideration or good-will of a great community, can earn their good opinion, and, I may venture to say, their affection, simply by the performance of his public duty as their representative, let them consider what gurantees there must be for the security of a country in which such connexions are formed, and for a Constitution under which such a public interchange of reciprocal esteem and reciprocal obligations is maintained. Never can such a country sink under the vainly apprehended danger of of despotism; never, I trust can such a Constitution be made the victim of that opposite and equally formidable danger—of anarchy, which would involve not only the ruin of all that is venerable in our establishments, but the extinction of all that is estimable in social life.

Gentlemen, there are, indeed, other roads to popularity. Power may, perhaps, be gained, and its continued tenure secured, by a subserviency without limit or heistation: and there is a cheap, but dazzling, popularity for those who will either invent a catalogue of imaginary evils, or, attributing to man the acts of Providence, will promise instant relief to sufferings arising out of inevitable necessity, and to calamities which endurance only can cure; who will challenge all existing institutions as misgovernment, and mount and ride in the whirlwind of reform. But, gentlemen, neither of these courses have I ever thought it consistent with honour or with

duty to pursue. He may, perhaps, he held a timid and unwise politician, who will not unscrupulously lend himself to objects which he cannot approve; and he may be sometimes an unpopular representative, who does not lay the foundation of his popularity in flattery of the passions of the people. For the people are open to flattery as well as kings; and that language is not more remote from truth which exalts prerogative beyond the bounds of reason, than that which speaks incessantly of popular rights, without reference to corresponding duties. But, gentlemen, no such sacrifices of truth have been necessary to obtain and retain your good-will. I have found in this enlightened community,—comprehending, as it necessarily does, conflicting opinions, as well as, in a certain degree, conflicting interests—I have found a singular temperance in your differences of political opinion. I have found generally prevalent among you a warm but reasoning loyalty, consistent with perfect independence of thought; and an ardent love of liberty, combined with a determined hostility to all the excesses of faction. It is in sympathizing with these your feelings, and participating in these your sentiments, that I have acquired the share which I have the happiness to hold in your good opinion: though sure I am, that, with all my endeavours to earn it, I cannot have succeeded in deserving that excess of it which you have been pleased to manifest to me on this occasion.

Gentlemen, on former occasions, when I have had the honour to address meetings like the present, the task has been much more easy. The topics on which I then had to dilate belonged to the feelings of the moment. We have, on those occasions, had great struggles to animate us, we have had great victories to celebrate; and we all know, that, in the celebration of these municipal victories, some exaggeration of triumph is not only permitted, but is freely and frankly allowed by one party to the other. But on the present occasion, warmly as I feel all that my immediate friends and supporters have done for me and expressed towards me, I stand peculiarly circumstanced; a peculiarity glorious, I think, to the town as well as to myself;—I stand in the peculiar circumstance of not knowing that I have among you, at this moment, even a political enemy. I have, gentlemen, in the course of this day—pardon the boast, for the cause of it lies, as it well may, very near to my breast—I have received this morning, from the associated commercial bodies of the town, an address, acknowledging, in terms far beyond the merit of any services which I have laboured to perform, my conduct as representative from Liverpool. Among the signatures to that address, representing, as those signatures do, all the various classes into which this extensive commercial community is divided—among these signatures, I say, every second name is the name of some individual

who has taken an active part against me in some, if not in every election. That I have deserved this unexampled concurrence of approbation, I do not pretend; that I have received it, will be, to the latest hour of my life, a pride beyond what I should be warranted in expressing here; and a pride, gentlemen, which I shall transmit to my children.

Such a testimony as this disables me from referring, with any thing like an adverse feeling, to those whose political opinions we have combated, heretofore, with licensed animosity—an animosity, however, which never survived the contest which gave birth to it. While I maintain, unshaken, my own political opinions, and while I feel myself called upon to render to you, this day, an account of those opinions, I beg to be understood as saying nothing in hostility to any man who may differ from me, or who may have opposed me.

Gentlemen, it so happens that I can render this account with the greater impartiality, because, in addition to those general subjects upon which, retrospectively, we are all now tolerably well agreed—to the war in which the country was engaged when I first came amongst you, and of which, while the success was doubtful, the policy was naturally enough disputed, but with respect to which all memory of difference has been since nearly extinguished in acclamations at its final triumph; in addition, I say, to that great question, and to the questions which grew out of it, there were, when I came amongst you, and there are still, two great national questions, upon one of which I have the misfortune to differ from the great body of my most respectable friends and supporters in this town, almost as widely as, on the other, I differ with their adversaries: I allude, gentlemen, to the Catholic question as the first, and to the question of parliamentary reform as the second, of those national questions.

Gentlemen, on the first of these questions, you are well aware of my opinions; for, on one of the earliest occasions on which I had the honour to address the inhabitants of Liverpool, I told them fairly, that, in accepting my services, they accepted the services of one who, on that question, had taken his part; and who could not, in deference to their opinions or prejudices, call them which you will, abate a jot of his anxiety for its success. Accordingly, gentlemen, at the different periods and under the various modifications under which that question has come to be discussed, I have given it my most strenuous support. But I have, in all such cases, dealt honestly by you, gentlemen; for I have rarely, if ever, given my support to that measure in the House of Commons, without openly acknowledging, that, in so doing, I spoke against what I believed to be the prevailing sense of my constitu-

ents. I have not, therefore, misused the weight of your authority, nor compromised any opinion of yours adverse to my own.

Gentlemen, if I were remaining in this country, and continuing to take my part in Parliament, I should continue to walk in the same direction; but I think (and, as I may not elsewhere have an opportunity of expressing this opinion, I am desirous of expressing it here)—I think that, after the experience of a fruitless struggle of more than ten years, I should, as an individual (speaking for none but myself, and not knowing whether I carry any other person's opinion with me,) be induced, from henceforth, or, perhaps, after one more general trial, to seek upon that question a liberal compromise, rather than persevere in fighting, perhaps ten years more, in vain for unqualified concession.

I might have had some hesitation, under other circumstances, in making this avowal, knowing that it is generally an easier, as well as a prouder, course to persevere, even in what is hopeless, than fairly to avow a disposition to compromise. But, in what I say on this occasion, I can have no other object than to declare a sincere opinion. I alluded, in recent debates, in the House of Commons, to the policy of accepting partial concessions, and to my regret that I had once been myself a party to the refusal of them. I have since revolved the subject much in my mind: and I confess, that, next to the immediate success of the whole measure, which I have as much as ever at heart, I should wish, as well for the benefit of those most immediately concerned, as for the general peace of the kingdom, to see such an arrangement as should remove all practical cause of complaint on the one side, without inciting vague and indefinite apprehensions on the other; referring to a more favourable opportunity, and to the progress of public opinion, that complete and final settlement, of which I shall never cease to maintain the expediency as well as the justice.

I turn now, Gentlemen, to the second question, with which, as much as with the former, my name has been connected in popular observation, and often in popular obloquy. I am mistaken, Gentlemen,—I mean, I am mis-represented, my purpose is mistaken, if it is supposed that I impute to those who support the question of parliamentary reform a distinct apprehension of the consequences to which, I think, their doctrines lead, and a design to promote those consequences. It is with their doctrines that I quarrel, and not with their motives; and it has been my desire always to discuss the question argumentatively rather than angrily, with those who are opposed to me in opinion. I wish them to state to me—to me? I wish them to state to themselves, distinctly, the object which they have in view, and the means they think they have to attain it. Why, Gentlemen, what are the general arguments by which we are urged to admit a change in the constitution of the

House of Commons? These arguments are derived from expensive wars, from heavy taxes, and from severe enactments, constituting, as is affirmed, so many outrageous inroads upon the Constitution. Granted, for argument's sake, that all these charges are true. Granted that all the proceedings of Parliament, for many years past, have been reprehensible. But were they the proceedings of the House of Commons alone? Does the British Constitution act by a single organ? Has there been no concurrence in the maintenance of those wars, no consent to the imposition of those taxes, no co-operation in the passing of those enactments? Is there no other assembly in existence which partook of the opinions on which the House of Commons has proceeded, and which would make therefore, the reform of the House of Commons nugatory for the professed purposes, unless the co-ordinate authority was also reformed? If you reform the House of Commons, on the grounds of past misconduct, what will you do with the House of Lords? If the House of Commons is to be reformed, because it sanctioned the war with America; if it is to be reformed, because it maintained the war with France—(sinking, for a moment, the undoubted fact, that the war with America was a favourite measure with the people of this country as much as with the Government; sinking, for a moment, the undoubted fact, that the war with France was emphatically the war of the nation;)—if the House of Commons, I ask, is to be reformed, because it approved and supported those wars; if it is to be reformed, because it passed laws for the suppression of internal disturbance, is the House of Lords to go free, which consented to those wars, and of those acts consented to all, while some of them, and those not the least severe, it originated? If no such reform is to be applied to the House of Lords, what is the supposed effect upon that House of a reform of the House of Commons? Let us fairly speak out: —Is the unreformed House of Lords to continue in full vigour, to counteract the will of the reformed House of Commons? Where, then, is the use of the reform? Or, is the reformed House of Commons to act upon the House of Lords by intimidation and compulsion? Aye!—That, to be sure, is what must be meant, if there be truth in the argument; but that is what no man will say.

My quarrel, then, with this course of argument is—not that it aims at an alteration—at an improvement, if you please, in the House of Commons; but—that it aims at quite another thing than the House of Commons as a part of a legislature. The legislative authority of the state, according to the Constitution as it stands, is shared between two houses of Parliament;—the suggested reform goes to provide a single instrument, which shall not only do its own work, but inevitably control the working of the other; which, if the object of the reform is obtained, must act so powerfully,

that it must, in the very nature of things, reject any co-ordinate power, and speedily act alone.

I have never stated it as a beauty of the Constitution, that Old Sarum should have but as many voters as representatives. Let it have two thousand, with all my heart. I have never stated it as a beauty and perfection of the Constitution, that this or that great peer should be able to return persons of his choice as the representatives of the people in Parliament. I have never said, that detected corruption should not be punished. In God's name, disfranchise other corrupt boroughs as you disfranchised Grampound. But I have said, and I repeat, that I see no way of counteracting the influence of property, and that I can imagine no process of amputation of close boroughs—on the ground, not of practical punishment, but of speculative improvement, and on the principle that the House of Commons ought to speak the direct sense of the people—which does not lead, by inevitable inference, to a total alteration of the functions of the House of Commons. If by "people" is meant the nation (and it is in the equivocal use of this word that much of the fallacy of the argument lies;)—if an assembly, "representing the people," is meant to be the undoubted, exclusive organ of national will—I ask, when the nation has once such an organ, what room is there for another legislative establishment? How can a second exist, and what is it to do?

Gentlemen, on a recent occasion, in a neighbouring county, a most respectable gentleman, respectable from family, respectable from private character and from talents, has done me the honour to refer to my opinions with some expressions of surprise. Mr. Fawkes (I name him with due honour, for what I believe to be his individual worth) expressed great surprise, that I, being the representative of the second commercial town in this great kingdom, should feel any anxiety for the fate of the close parts of the representation. Surprise for surprise. For I may, in my turn, be surprised, that a gentleman of Yorkshire, in which county the clamour for reform began, some years ago, on the ground of the inadequacy of its own particular representation, should seize the present moment, when that representation has just been doubled by Parliament, for agitating anew the question of parliamentary reform. I know no grievance, in the present constitution of Parliament, which has been so constantly dinned into my ears, from my very youth, as the destitute state of Yorkshire in being allowed to send only two of her sons to Parliament. She has been long, "like Niobe, all tears" on this account: but now the grievance is remedied; and, at the very moment when this is done, one of the most gifted of the sons of this unhappy matron comes forward, and, instead of returning thanks in behalf of his parent county, expatiates loudly, in her name, on the inadequate repre-

sentation of England! A Yorkshire-man might have been too well pleased with the recent attention to her long-neglected claims to be in a humour to find fault with Parliament just at this moment. But, Gentlemen, why am I, more than Mr. Fawkes, to confine my attention to my own particular share of the representation? So far from my situation, as representative of the second town in the empire, stifling my voice on this subject, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying, that if I were member for Old Sarum, I should, more probably, hold my tongue upon it. It is because I am a member for Liverpool; because I can have no shadow of personal interest in maintaining that more imperfect species of representation, which I do, nevertheless, conscientiously maintain;—it is because my opinion cannot be questioned, as influenced by motives of individual convenience, that I feel a confidence, which I otherwise might not feel, in exposing what I think the fallacy of those doctrines which push the principle of direct personal representation to an extent such as, if adopted, must change the Constitution.

Let any man say, that his views of reform go no farther than to the removal of blots, and I am with him. But it is because the arguments for reform tend much further;—it is because they tend not to remedy, but to destroy; not to correct what may be amiss in a system of representation which combines all species of property, admits all species of industry, opens the door to all species of talent;—it is because they appear to me to tend to a system to be founded exclusively on what is called the power of the people; a power which, if recognised in the sense in which they proclaim it, must act, not in concert with other powers, not by a conflict and compromise of different interests; but by its own uncontrolled authority, supreme and alone; it is for this reason that I think it right to oppose, *in limine*, projects of parliamentary reform.

Gentleman, it is said, however, that, besides the faulty composition of the House of Commons, there is an influence of the Crown which perverts and parylzes all its functions. My first answer to this proposition is the same which I have made to the proposition for alteration in the House of Commons. How rarely does the House of Lords differ from the other House in its decisions!—How much more rarely does it differ in a more popular sense! Is it the influence of the Crown which predominates in the House of Lords too? If it is—do you mean to leave the House of Lords still subject to the same influence, and still with an equal voice in the decision of every national question? If not —is not the project still, though upon another pretext, to erect an instrument which will make the operation of the House of Lords completely nugatory; to place in a new, an untried organ, the whole practical energy of the Constitution?

I do verily and sincerely believe, that there is no proposition more false, than that the influence of the Crown, any more than its direct power, has increased comparatively with the increasing strength, wealth, and population of the country. To these, if the Crown be good for any thing at all in the Constitution, it is necessary that its power and influence should bear some reasonable proportion. I deny that, in the House of Commons—I deny that, in the House of Lords, such an increase can be shown; but further I contend, that, in speculating upon the practical play of our Constitution, we narrow our view of its efficient principles, of its progress, and of the state in which it now stands, if we do not take into account other powers, extrinsic to the two Houses of Parliament, which are at work in the moral and political world, and which require to be balanced and counterpoised in their operation.

What should we think of that philosopher, who, in writing, at the present day, a treatise upon naval architecture and the theory of navigation, should omit wholly from his calculation that new and mighty power—new, at least, in the application of its might—which walks the water like a giant rejoicing in his course;—stemming alike the tempest and the tide;—accelerating intercourse, shortening distances;—creating, as it were, unexpected neighbourhoods, and new combinations of social and commercial relation;—and giving to the fickleness of winds and the faithlessness of waves the certainty and steadiness of a highway upon the land? Such a writer, though he might describe a ship correctly, though he might show from what quarters the winds of heaven blow, would be surely an incurious and an idle spectator of the progress of nautical science, who did not see in the power of STEAM a corrective of all former calculations. So, in political science, he who, speculating on the British Constitution, should content himself with marking the distribution of acknowledged technical powers between the House of Lords, the House of Commons, and the Crown, and assigning to each their separate provinces—to the Lords their legislative authority—to the Crown its *veto* (how often used?)—to the House of Commons its power of stopping supplies (how often, in fact, necessary to be resorted to?)—and should think that he had thus described the British Constitution as it acts and as it is influenced in its action; but should omit from his enumeration that mighty power of public opinion, embodied in a free press, which pervades, and checks, and, perhaps, in the last resort, nearly governs the whole;—such a man would, surely, give but an imperfect view of the Government of England as it is now modified, and would greatly underrate the counteracting influences against which that of the executive power has to contend.

Gentlemen, there is one plain test, which I think it wholesome to apply to all speculative projects of political improvement. I consider, first, not how they might operate for the general benefit of mankind:—that is a wide consideration, indeed, and fit to be deeply studied at leisure; but is not, as it appears to me, the immediate business of the British statesman, providing for British interests: and, I confess, that as, in private life, I generally look with caution on that diffusive benevolence which neglects the circle immediately around it; so I look with some little suspicion to that spirit of general improvement which is ready to sacrifice, to a general principle, the immediate and particular safety of one's own country. I inquire, rather, how such projects are likely to operate on the British Constitution; which I find to be a monarchy—a monarchy qualified, indeed, with establishments, which limit, which restrain, which control it—but, fundamentally and essentially, a monarchy. I do not think myself bound to enter the lists to show why the British Constitution *should be* a monarchy. I am not called upon to demonstrate, *a priori*, that it was necessary that the British Constitution should be a monarchy, any more than that Great Britain should be an island. It is quite sufficient for me that I find these things so; it is quite sufficient for me to know that Providence has ordained the one, and that the acts of our ancestors, from immemorial time, acquiesced in and confirmed by a long succession of generations, have clearly ascertained the other; and have thus, although without any individual vote or consent, imposed upon me the duty of allegiance to the monarchy under which I have been born.

I know how tame, and servile, and abject this sort of reasoning sounds, in an age when it is so much more the fashion to appeal to theory than to fact; to try every existing establishment by some abstract model of excellence. But, Gentlemen, against a popular assembly, constituted on the principles on which parliamentary reform is alleged to be necessary (the effective consequence of which principles does, I willingly admit, go beyond either the avowal, or, I dare say, the intention of those who profess them)—I say, against a popular assembly, so constituted, no monarchy could stand. Such a government must be, practically, whatever it be in name, a republic. I do not think myself at liberty to discuss the question, whether that be a better kind of Government. I feel myself, I confess, circumscribed within the limits of the existing Constitution.

"Spartam nactus es, hanc exorna."

Improve, as you can, the Constitution which has fallen to your lot. The attempt to alter by force that Constitution, is one which

the law has branded in disagreeable terms. I agree with the law, and would endeavour to prevent that from being done through inadvertence, which, undoubtedly, there is no danger of any one's attempting to do by design. In short, in all improvements we must conform to the nature of the country to which we belong. Like the King of Bohemia, who had an extreme desire to be a naval power, but whose laudable ambition was checked by this only impediment, that there was no sea-port in his kingdom.

So much, Gentlemen, as to the principles of parliamentary reform; and as to the principles of my resistance to it, as a general proposition. Let me now call your attention, for a short time, to the practical uses to which parliamentary reform is by its advocates proposed to be applied. Five or six years ago there was great suffering among the labouring classes. Provisions were at such a price, as to be almost unattainable by the poorest order of the people. The grievance in which these sufferings originated, was alleged to be the corn bill. The corn bill was passed by the influence of the landholders. The remedy was in some change which would put that influence down; and we all remember what a clamour was then raised for parliamentary reform. Well! —times come round; there is now such a plenty, such a glut of provisions, that the humblest classes of society are enjoying comparative affluence. In the manufacturing districts, there is constant and steady employment; at wages somewhat reduced, it is true, but sufficient, in general, for comfortable maintenance. And these blessings are further felt in a reduction of the poor-rates, and, God be thanked, in a remarkable diminution of crime. I do not know, Gentlemen, whether all these particulars constitute a flourishing state of the community; but I do know, that the absence of them was considered as constituting a state of things too bad to bear; and I cannot but think, that whatever partial evils accompany these blessings, those who, five or six years ago, thought the Parliament good for nought, because the landholders had passed a corn bill, and because the poor-rates were augmented, and because the calendars were swelled with crime, must now consent to sympathise with prosperity which grows out of the reverse of the evils of which they complained. But, gentlemen, while the labouring classes of the people are in this state of enjoyment, while work is plenty, while the poor-rates and crimes are diminishing, the growers of corn are suffering. And what is the remedy? Parliamentary reform! So that, in the year 1817, when you suffered under high prices, Parliamentary reform was the cure for that calamity; and now, when the landholders are suffering under cheapness, parliamentary reform is necessary the other way! And for what purpose? To restore, I suppose, the good old times of 1817. Let me not be understood as underrating the pressure of

either of these evils; in both states of things there is much to lament, and in that which now exists there is much which I wish to God I could see the way to cure. But as to Parliamentary reform, as the remedy for either—much more as the remedy for both—I will ask any man, whether there is common sense in such a proposition—whether the double clamour for it be not a presumption rather in favour of the impartiality with which Parliament has acted in both these painful extremes?

But parliamentary reform is the panacea for every evil. I read, a few days ago, (I cannot immediately recollect where,) a story of an artist who had attained great eminence in painting, but who had directed his art chiefly to one favourite object. That object happened to be a *red lion.* His first employment was at a public house, where the landlord allowed him to follow his fancy. Of course the artist recommended a *red lion.* A gentleman in the neighborhood, having a new dining-room to ornament, applied to the artist for his assistance; and, in order that he might have full scope for his talents, left to him the choice of a subject for the principal compartment of the room. The painter took due time to deliberate; and then, with the utmost gravity and earnestness —"Don't you think," said he to his employer, "that a handsome *red lion* would have a fine effect in this situation?" The gentleman was not entirely convinced, perhaps; however, he let the painter have his way in this instance; determined, nevertheless, that in his library, to which he next conducted the artist, he would have something of more exquisite device and ornament. He showed him a small panel over his chimney-piece. "Here," says he, I must have something striking. The space, you see, is but small, the workmanship must be proportionably delicate." "What think you," says the painter, after appearing to dive deep into his imagination for the suggestion, "what think you of a *small red lion?*" Just so it is with parliamentary reform. Whatever may be the evil, the remedy is a parliamentary reform; and the utmost variety that you can extort from those that call themselves "moderate reformers" is, that they will be contented with a *small* red lion!

Gentlemen, I wish that these theories were only entertaining; but they have mischief in them; and I wish that against them the country should be on its guard. I confess I am against even the *smallest* of these *red lions;* I object not to the size, but to the species. I fear the smallest would be but the precursor of the whole menagerie; and that, if once, propitiated by his smallness, you open the door for his admission, you will find, when you wanted him to turn out again, that he had been pampered to a formidable size in his cage.

Gentlemen, in the times in which we live, there is (disguise it

how we may) a struggle going on,—in some countries an open, and in some a tacit struggle, between the principles of monarchy and democracy. God be praised, that in that struggle we have not any part to take. God be praised, that we have long ago arrived at all the blessings that are to be derived from that which alone can end such a struggle beneficially,—a compromise and intermixture of those conflicting principles. It is not, as it appears to me, the duty of this country to side either with the assailants, where they aim at too much, nor with those who stand on the defensive, when they will grant nothing. England has only to maintain herself on the basis of her own solid and settled Constitution, firm, unshaken,—a spectatress interested in the contest only by her sympathies:—not a partisan on either side, but, for the sake of both, a model, and ultimately, perhaps, an umpire. Should we be led, by any false impulse of chivalrous benevolence, to participate in the struggle itself, we commit, and thereby impair, our authority; we abandon the position in which we might hereafter do most good, and may bring the danger of a foreign struggle home to our own hearths and to our own institutions.

Gentlemen, with an audience less enlightened than that which I have had the honor to address, I should have avoided topics of such general interest, and confined myself to the particulars of our local connexion. But, gentlemen, our connexion is one of principle; it had its foundation in principle; on that it has been raised and cemented. Gentlemen, whatever may be my future destination, it will be a comfort unspeakable to me to have laid, in that connexion, the foundation, I trust, of mutual and lasting regard, which has cheered every stage of our intercourse, and will long survive our separation.

Gentlemen, it may, perhaps, be expected of me, especially after the speech of my worthy friend, your president, that I should say a few words to you on the topics to which he has alluded. I have doubted much and long whether I should refer to those topics at all, or should persevere in the silence which I have hitherto prescribed to myself upon them; whether I should incur the risk, on the one hand, of being supposed not to have dealt openly with you; or, on the other hand, the risk of that misconstruction, of various sorts, to which a public man, who speaks of himself, must expect to be exposed. On full reflection, I have determined to brave the latter danger rather than the former. I prefer submitting to any misconstruction, to any inconvenience, rather than that it should ever be thought that I had repaid your unbounded confidence with any thing like concealment or distrust. Gentlemen, after this preface, you will, perhaps, be, in one sense, disappointed to hear, that all that I have to say is, that, upon my honour, I have nothing to tell. But it is as necessary for me to make that con-

fession, as it would have been to make a communication, had I any to make. I do assure you, that I know as little as any man that now listens to me, of any arrangements likely to grow out of the present state of things. I cannot pretend ignorance, indeed, of rumours which are in every one's mouth; but I assure you, that, upon my honour, at the moment at which I am speaking to you, I have nothing either to tell or to conceal.

Gentlemen, you will not expect that I shall enter into any explanation as to what might be the decision which I might think it right to take upon any such occurrence as these rumors have in contemplation. This only, gentlemen, I can frankly declare to you, that, in any such case, my decision would be founded upon an honest and impartial view of public considerations alone, and that it would be determined, not by a calculation of interests, but by a balance and comparison of duties.

Enough, gentlemen, on a topic to which I doubt whether I should, even now, have alluded, but for the most unexpected, although amicable provocation of my worthy friend in the chair; and I have only now to hope, that having been, as I learn, misconstrued on account of my silence in another place, I shall not be misconstrued in an opposite direction on account of what I have said here. From my silence then, it has been inferred, that I intended ostentatiously to declare a determination to refuse office at home, if it should be proposed to me. I beg I may not be misconstrued now in an opposite sense, as intending to express, or as feeling, in the slightest degree, any anxiety, any expectation, or desire for such a proposal. My only anxiety, I most solemnly declare, is to state the truth to those who have a right to know it, inasmuch as their kindness and attachment to me give them an interest in whatever concerns me.

Gentlemen, wherever my lot may be cast, may this great community continue to flourish in the prosperity now happily beginning to be restored to it, after the fluctuations of war and peace;—in the principles from which it has never swerved, since I have had the honour to be acquainted with it; in the honourable and liberal spirit which pervades all classes of its society, and which marks even its political divisions;—and in that cordial union which binds all its members together, without distinction of party, in any thing which relates to the interest of your town, or to the benefit of the humbler part of its population. May it flourish, an image of splendid commercial greatness, unalloyed by the besetting vices which sometimes grow to such greatness; an image of those princely merchants whose history one of your own body has illustrated; mixing, like them, with the pursuits of trade, the cultivation of liberal science; decorating your town with the works of art, as much as it is enriched by enterprise and industry;

and placing it, by the variety of its useful, and the munificence of its charitable establishments, among the most celebrated cities of the world. May you flourish in the happiness and renown to which these qualities entitle you; and, when you look for another individual to occupy the station which I have, for ten years, filled, may you find one more competent to the task than I have been: —one more devoted to your interests, more anxious for your prosperity, or more thankful for your kindness, I am sure you cannot find.

SPEECH

AT A PUBLIC DINNER IN THE TOWN-HALL IN 1823, ON THE OCCASION OF PROPOSING THE HEALTH OF MR. HUGHES, THE REPRESENTATIVE OF AMERICA, AT THE COURT OF SWEDEN.

Mr. Canning said, that, with the kind permission of the chair, he rose to propose a toast, which, he felt confident, would be received by the company with the most sincere and cordial satisfaction. He alluded to the health of the distinguished stranger then near him, who was on his way to Sweden, as the representative of his country, the United States of America. He was most happy to avail himself of this opportunity, amidst so large an assemblage of some of the first merchants of England, of congratulating that gentleman on the full and uninterrupted intercourse which now existed between his country and our own; an intercourse, of which the value could be nowhere so well understood as in this great town, which was, both in point of local situation and of spirit and enterprize, so pre-eminently qualified to derive from that intercourse every possible advantage. On such an occasion he might be permitted to express the gratification which he felt, in common with the great mass of the intelligent and liberal men of both countries, to see the animosities necessarily attendant on a state of hostility so rapidly wearing away, and giving place to feelings so much more consonant to the true interests of two nations united by a common language, a common spirit of commercial enterprize, and a common regard for well-regulated liberty. It appeared to him, that of two such states the relative position was not wholly unlike that which occasionally occurred in families; where a child having, perhaps, displeased a parent—a daughter, for instance, in contracting a connexion offensive to that parent's feelings, some estrangement would for a while necessarily ensue; but, after a lapse of time, the irritation is forgotten, the force of blood again prevails, and the daughter and the mother stand together against the world. That all causes of dissension may have now ceased forever between two countries so strongly bound to each other, and with so clear a community of interests, he most sincerely hoped; and he trusted, that, in whatever part of the world Mr. Hughes might represent his country, he would feel, that in no part of it could that country's merits be more truly appreciated than in this.

SPEECH

ON THE 16TH OF APRIL, 1816, AT A DINNER GIVEN TO MR. CANNING BY THE BRITISH MERCHANTS RESIDENT AT LISBON.

I AM deeply sensible, gentlemen, of the honour done me by this meeting, and I am highly flattered by the sentiments with which you have been pleased to couple my name.

To have been a disciple of Mr. Pitt, and to have been a sharer in those councils, in which originated the struggle for the salvation of Portugal, are the two circumstances in my political life, on which, if on any, I look back with pride and gratification.

It is a pride to me to have imbibed the principles of Mr. Pitt, and a gratification to receive your testimony of the just application of those principles to the measures by which this country was saved: principles of which the characteristic was to cherish order and industry at home, as the true sources of commercial opulence and national strength abroad; to consider the peace, and power, and safety of Great Britain, as bound up with the security and independence of other nations. From this system of internal and external policy, Great Britain derived the means, and imposed upon herself the duty, of sustaining the long contest with France, which preceded the war of the Peninsula.

In pursuance of that policy, those who had the direction of the British councils, at the moment when the grasping hand of France was extended to seize the crown and liberties of Portugal, did not hesitate to fly to her assistance.

The good sense, the feeling, and the generosity of the British nation, went with their Government in the undertaking. But sanguine and visionary enthusiasts, I well remember, were they deemed to be, who thought that from the struggle for Portugal, might issue the deliverance of Europe. Such an enthusiast I was, and always avowed myself to be.

I made this avowal, even in times when the contest was most doubtful, and by many held to be desperate.

True it was, that clouds and darkness occassionally gathered on the horizon: but even through those clouds and through that darkness, I saw, or fondly fancied I saw, a ray of light which promised to pierce the gloom, and which might hereafter lighten the nations.

It is not at this time of day, not in this spot that I am called upon to justify these hopes against the imputation of extravagance.

Whether as a just and natural consequence of perseverance in a good cause, or whether by the special favour of Providence, true it is, in fact, that from this nook of Europe proceeded the impulse

by which its mightiest kingdoms have been set free. True it is, that in this sterile and unpromising soil was deposited the seed of that security, whose branches now overshadow mankind.

From these recollections and associations, the land in which we are assembled, derives an animating and classic interest, even in the eyes of the most indifferent observer.

For my own part, I cannot view this city, in which for so many months of horror and anxiety, amidst a condensed and suffering, but unmurmuring population, the hopes of Europe lay trembling for their doom;—I could not traverse those mighty fastnesses of nature, which fence this capital, those bulwarks, behind which Victory herself retired, to new-plume her wings for a flight more soaring and more sustained;—I could not contemplate those holy ruins, amongst which I have lately been wandering, where an awful curiosity pauses to inquire, whether the surrounding destruction has been wrought by ancient convulsions of nature, or by the sportive sacrilege and barbarous malignity of the foe?—I cannot behold the traces of desolation in this country, and of suffering among the people, without rendering a just homage to the character of a nation, which by all that it has done, and still more by all that it has endured, has raised itself to a pitch of moral eminence, so far beyond the porportion of its territory, population, or power.

I cannot consider all these things without blessing that wise and benificent policy, which brought England with timely speed, to the aid of such a nation; to call forth its energies, to marshal its resources, to support and invigorate its unyielding constancy, and after its own deliverance was achieved, to lead it forth in pursuit of its oppressor.

To have fought together in such a cause, to have mingled banners, and to have mingled blood in battles for such interests, and leading to such results, must, undoubtedly, cement an eternal union between the British and Portuguese nations.

You will observe, gentlemen, that I am anxious to state the principle of our connexion, and of our claims upon each other, in terms not of comparison, but of equality.

I do so with sincerity, because I believe that statement to be just; I might do so from policy, even if I doubted of its justness. Portugal would not have been saved without England, it is true: but Portugal was to England a main instrument for the mightier task which England had to perform.

We brought hither councils and arms, and British discipline, and British valour; we found here willing hearts and active hands, a confiding Government, a people brave and enduring, docile in instruction, faithful in following, patient under privations, not to be subdued by disaster, and not to be intoxicated by success.

The arm of England was the lever that wrenched the power of Buonaparte from its basis—Portugal was the *fulcrum* on which that lever moved—England fanned and fed the sacred fire, but Portugal had already reared the altar on which that fire was kindled, and from which it mounted, brightening and widening, until the world was illumined with its blaze.

I have said, that even from motives of policy, I would state as nearly equal as possible, the balance between Portugal and England. There is a principle of disunion in unequal connections. Active beneficence is a virtue of easier practice than forbearance after having conferred, or than thankfulness after having received, a benefit.

I know not, indeed, whether it be a greater and more difficult exercise of magnanimity for the one party, to act as if he had forgotten, or for the other, as if he constantly remembered the obligation.

On the part of Great Britain, let us bear in mind that the feelings to which we addressed ourselves in Portugal, were those of national pride and independence. If those feelings we found equal to the occasion, what wonder, or what regret that they should have survived it? It is naturally to be expected that, having accomplished the overthrow of its enemies, the genius of the nation should carry itself with somewhat of a bolder and freer port, even towards its friends. We have no right to feel this sorely. It would be neither just nor becoming in us so to do. We should respect, even in its excess, an independence which we have vindicated, and should pardon even the waywardness of a spirit which we have raised.

To Portugal, on the other hand, I would say, that there is no humiliation in the sentiment of national gratitude;—that a grateful mind is at once indebted and discharged, and recovers its level by a just acknowledgement, that there is no room for either commercial or political jealousy between Great Britain and Portugal; —that the world is large enough both for Portuguese and British Commerce;—and that Great Britain, while she has never been wanting to her ally in time of need, seeks no other reward for all her exertions, and all her sacrifices, than mutual confidence and common prosperity.

I am sure that I shall be rightly understood by all those in whose presence I speak, not only as to my meaning, but as to my motives.

The delicacy and difficulty of the situation in which the local Government of this kingdom is placed; the weight of their responsibility, and the anxiety which (as I have witnessed) necessarily attends it, entitle them to peculiar consideration. I have no fear of their disavowing the assurance which I give you of

their friendly disposition towards this meeting, and I venture, therefore, to propose to you, Gentlemen, in the condfience that you will receive it cordially, and that your cordiality will be duly estimated and returned, "The health of their Excellencies the Governors of the Kingdom."

SPEECH

AT PLYMOUTH, IN THE YEAR 1823, UPON THE OCCASION OF BEING PRESENTED WITH THE FREEDOM OF THAT TOWN.

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

I accept with thankfulness, and with greater satisfaction than I can express, this flattering testimony of your good opinion and goodwill. I must add, that the value of the gift itself has been greatly enhanced by the manner in which your worthy and honourable Recorder has developed the motives which suggested it, and the sentiments which it is intended to convey.

Gentlemen, your Recorder has said very truly, that whoever, in this free and enlightened state, aims at political eminence, and discharges political duties, must expect to have his conduct scrutinized, and every action of his public life sifted with no ordinary jealousy, and with no sparing criticism; and such may have been my lot as much as that of other public men. But, gentlemen, unmerited obloquy seldom fails of an adequate, though perhaps tardy, compensation. I must think myself, as my honourable friend has said, eminently fortunate, if such compensation as he describes, has fallen to me at an earlier period than to many others; if I dare flatter myself (as his partiality has flattered me,) that the sentiments that you are kind enough to entertain for me, are in unison with those of the country; if, in addition to the justice done me by my friends, I may, as he has assured me, rely upon a candid construction, even from political opponents.

But, gentlemen, the secret of such a result does not lie deep. It consists only in an honest and undeviating pursuit of what one conscientiously believes to be one's public duty—a pursuit which, steadily continued, will, however detached and separate parts of a man's conduct may be viewed under the influence of partialities or prejudices, obtain for it, when considered as a whole, the approbation of all honest and honourable minds. Any man may occasionally be mistaken as to the means most conducive to the end which he has in view; but if the end be just and praise-worthy, it is by that he will be ultimately judged, either by his contemporaries or by posterity.

Gentlemen, the end which I confess I have always had in view, and which appears to me the legitimate object of pursuit to a British statesman, I can describe in one word. The language of modern philosophy is wisely and diffusely benevolent; it professes the perfection of our species, and the amelioration of the

lot of all mankind. Gentlemen, I hope that my heart beats as high for the general interest of humanity—I hope that I have as friendly a disposition towards other nations of the earth, as any one who vaunts his philanthropy most highly; but I am contented to confess, that in the conduct of political affairs, the grand object of my contemplation is the interest of England.

Not, gentlemen, that the interest of England is an interest which stands isolated and alone. The situation which she holds forbids an exclusive selfishness; her prosperity must contribute to the prosperity of other nations, and her stability to the safety of the world. But, intimately connected as we are with the system of Europe, it does not follow that we are therefore called upon to mix ourselves on every occasion, with a restless and meddling activity, in the concerns of the nations which surround us. It is upon a just balance of conflicting duties, and of rival, but sometimes incompatible, advantages, that a government must judge when to put forth its strength, and when to husband it for occasions yet to come.

Our ultimate object must be the peace of the world. That object may sometimes be best attained by prompt exertions—sometimes by abstinence from interposition in contests which we cannot prevent. It is upon these principles that, as has been most truly observed by my worthy friend, it did not appear to the Government of this country to be necessary that Great Britain should mingle in the recent contest between France and Spain.

Your worthy Recorder has accurately classed the persons who would have driven us into that contest. There were undoubtedly among them those who desired to plunge this country into the difficulties of war, partly from the hope that those difficulties would overwhelm the Administration; but it would be most unjust not to admit that there were others who were actuated by nobler principles and more generous feelings, who would have rushed forward at once from the sense of indignation at aggression, and who deemed that no act of injustice could be perpetrated from one end of the universe to the other, but that the sword of Great Britain should leap from its scabbard to avenge it. But as it is the province of law to control the excess even of laudable passions and propensities in individuals, so it is the duty of Government to restrain within due bounds the ebullition of national sentiment, and to regulate the course and direction of impulses which it cannot blame. Is there any one among the latter class of persons described by my honourable friend (for to the former I have nothing to say,) who continues to doubt whether the Government did wisely in declining to obey the precipitate enthusiasm which prevailed at the commencement of the contest in Spain? Is there any body who does not now think, that it was the office of

Government to examine more closely all the various bearings of so complicated a question, to consider whether they were called upon to assist a united nation, or to plunge themselves into the internal feuds by which that nation was divided—to aid in repelling a foreign invader, or, to take part in a civil war. Is there any man that does not now see what would have been the extent of burdens that would have been cast upon this country? Is there any one who does not acknowledge that, under such circumstances the enterprise would have been one to be characterized only by a term borrowed from that part of the Spanish literature with which we are most familiar,—Quixotic; an enterprise, romantic in its origin, and thankless in the end?

But while we thus control even our feelings by our duty, let it not be said that we cultivate peace, either because we fear, or because we are unprepared for, war; on the contrary, if eight months ago the Government did not hesitate to proclaim that the country was prepared for war, if war should be unfortunately necessary, every month of peace that has since passed, has but made us so much the more capable of exertion. The resources created by peace are means of war. In cherishing those resources, we but accumulate those means. *Our present repose is no more a proof of inability to act, than the state of inertness and inactivity in which I have seen those mighty masses that float in the waters above your town, is a proof that they are devoid of strength, and incapable of being fitted out for action. You well know, gentlemen, how soon one of those stupendous masses, now reposing on their shadows in perfect stillness,—how soon, upon any call of patriotism, or of necessity, it would assume the likeness of an animated thing, instinct with life and motion—how soon it would ruffle, as it were, its swelling plumage—how quickly it would put forth all its beauty and its bravery, collect its scattered elements of strength, and awaken its dormant thunder. Such as is one of these magnificent machines when springing from inaction into a display of its might—such is England herself, while apparently passive and motionless she silently concentrates the power to be put forth on an adequate occasion.* But God forbid that that occasion should arise. After a war sustained for near a quarter of a century—sometimes single-handed, and with all Europe arranged at times against her or at her side, England needs a period of tranquillity, and may enjoy it without fear of misconstruction. Long may we be enabled, gentlemen, to improve the blessings of our present situation, to cultivate the arts of peace, to give to commerce, now reviving, greater extension and new spheres of employment, and to confirm the prosperity now generally diffused throughout this island. Of the blessing of peace, gentlemen, I

trust that this borough, with which I have now the honour and happiness of being associated, will receive an ample share. I trust the time is not far distant, when that noble structure of which, as I learn from your Recorder, the box with which you have honoured me, through his hands, formed a part, that gigantic barrier against the fury of the waves that roll into your harbour, will protect a commercial marine not less considerable in its kind, than the warlike marine of which your port has been long so distinguished an asylum, when the town of Plymouth will participate in the commercial prosperity as largely as it has hitherto done in the naval glories of England.

SPEECH

AT THE DINNER GIVEN BY THE DIRECTORS OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY, TO SIR JOHN MALCOLM, ON HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE PRESIDENCY OF BOMBAY, ON THE 13TH OF JUNE, 1827.

After the Chairman had proposed the health of the Right Honourable George Canning and His Majesty's Ministers, which he prefaced, by expressing his hope, that their eminent talents, unwearied zeal, and assiduity, would earn for them the highest reward—public gratitude—to which their services to the country could entitle them, Mr. Canning rose, amidst loud cheers, which lasted for some minutes, and spoke nearly as follows:—*

Mr. Chairman, and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my colleagues and myself, whom you have associated in the toast now drank, allow me to thank this company for the manner in which it has been received. We neither can deserve any support, nor do we claim any, but on the condition coupled by the worthy Chairman, with the expression of his and your kind disposition towards us, that to the best of our ability, we consult and promote the general welfare and happiness of the people. Gentlemen, there is no body of men in the country, from whom such a compliment as that you have now bestowed, could come to us with greater welcome.

I believe there is no example in the history of the world, on the one hand, of the existence of an imperial corporation, such as your Chairman represents, or on the other of the concurrence of two co-ordinate authorities, for so long a series of years, in conducting without shock or conflict, the administration of the wonderful, I had almost said the tremendous, empire, over which the East-India Company and the Crown jointly preside.

Gentlemen, the construction and maintenance of that vast empire are, indeed, as fearful as extraordinary. It is a disproof of the common adage, that little wisdom is required for governing mankind, to consider how such a machine has been gradually formed —how a varied population of nearly 100,000,000 of souls is kept together under a government so anomalous—and distant thousands of miles—with so much comparative happiness, and so little of internal confusion. But, gentlemen, the greatness of the con-

* This was the last speech pronounced on any public occasion (out of Parliament) by Mr. Canning. It is now published for the first time, in a corrected form.

cern to be administered has had its natural effect: it has produced a race of men adequate to its administration. I venture to say, that there cannot be found in Europe any monarchy, which within a given time has produced so many men of the first talents, in civil and military life, as India has within the same period, first reared for her own use, and then given to their native country.

Gentlemen, if the compliment paid by you to His Majesty's Ministers be pleasing from the East India Company, it is doubly so on an occasion like the present, when that Company, with the concurrence, and full approbation of His Majesty's Government, is sending back to India a man whom you have brought home for a time, that he might rest in the career of his honourable labors, and whom you now restore to an enlarged sphere of activity, alike for the advantage of your service and the completion of his own reputation. It is perfectly true, as the gallant officer has himself stated, that, seven or eight years ago,—being then connected with the department of the Government whose duty it is to watch over your affairs,—I recommended Sir John Malcolm to your notice, I believe, for the very post to which he is now destined. I recommended him as one of three individuals then in your service, whose respective merits, all eminent in an extraordinary degree, were so equally balanced, that it became a task of difficulty to choose between them—I speak of Mr. Elphinstone, Sir Thomas Munro, and the gallant officer whose appointment we are now met to celebrate. The selection then made was one rather of circumstances, than of preference. Sir John Malcolm, I well remember, acquiesced, with a generous promptitude, in the advancement of his competitors, so worthy of him; and if he has in consequence been for a while thrown behind them in opportunity of serving you, and still further distinguishing himself, I have no doubt that he will speedily overtake them both in deeds and in renown.

APPENDIX.

SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF MR. CANNING.

THE SLAVERY OF GREECE.

Unrivall'd Greece! thou ever-honour'd name,
Thou nurse of heroes dear to deathless fame!
Though now to worth, to honour all unknown,
Thy lustre faded, and thy glories flown,
Yet still shall memory with reverted eye
Trace thy past worth, and view thee with a sigh.

Thee Freedom cherish'd once with fostering hand,
And breathed undaunted valour through the land.
Here the stern spirit of the Spartan soil
The child of poverty inured to toil.
Here, loved by Pallas and the sacred nine,
Once did fair Athens' towery glories shine.
To bend the bow, or the bright falchion wield,
To lift the bulwark of the brazen shield,
To toss the terror of the whizzing spear,
The conquering standard's glittering glories rear,
And join the maddening battle's loud career,
How skill'd the Greeks; confess what Persians slain
Were strew'd on Marathon's ensanguined plain;
When heaps on heaps the routed squadrons fell,
And with their gaudy myriads peopled hell.
What millions bold Leonidas withstood,
And seal'd the Grecian freedom with his blood;
Witness Thermopylæ! how fierce he trod,
How spoke a hero, and how moved a god.
The rush of nations could alone sustain,
While half the ravaged globe was arm'd in vain.
Let Leuctra say, let Mantinea tell,
How great Epaminondas fought and fell!

Nor war's vast art alone adorn'd thy fame
"But mild philosophy endear'd thy name."
Who knows not, sees not, with admiring eye,
How Plato thought, how Socrates could die?

To bend the arch, to bid the column rise,
And the tall pile aspiring pierce the skies,
The awful fane, magnificently great,
With pictured pomp to grace, and sculptured state,
This Science taught; on Greece each science shone,
Here the bold statue started from the stone;

Here warm with life the swelling canvas glow'd;
Here big with thought the poet's raptures flow'd;
Here Homer's lip was touch'd with sacred fire,
And wanton Sappho tuned her amorous lyre;
Here bold Tyrtæus roused the enervate throng,
Awaked to glory by the aspiring song;
Here Pindar soar'd a nobler, loftier way,
And brave Alcæus scorn'd a tyrant's sway;
Here gorgeous Tragedy, with great control,
Touch'd every feeling of th' impassion'd soul;
While in soft measure tripping to the song
Her comic sister lightly danced along.—

This was thy state! but oh! how changed thy fame,
And all thy glories fading into shame!
What! that thy bold, thy freedom-breathing land
Should crouch beneath a tyrant's stern command!
That servitude should bind in galling chain,
Whom Asia's millions once opposed in vain;
Who could have thought? who sees without a groan
Thy cities mouldering, and thy walls o'erthrown.
That where once tower'd the stately solemn fane,
Now moss-grown ruins strew the ravaged plain,
And unobserved but by the traveller's eye,
Proud, vaulted domes in fretted fragments lie,
And the fallen column on the dusky ground
Pale ivy throws its sluggish arms around.

Thy sons (sad change!) in abject bondage sigh;
Unpitied toil, and unlamented die:
Groan at the labours of the galling oar,
Or the dark caverns of the mine explore.
The glittering tyranny of Othman's sons,
The pomp of horror which surrounds their thrones,
Has awed their servile spirits into fear,
Spurned by the foot they tremble and revere.
The day of labour, night's sad sleepless hour,
The inflictive scourge of arbitrary power
The bloody terror of the pointed steel,
The murderous stake, the agonizing wheel,
And (dreadful choice!) the bowstring, or the bowl,
Damps their faint vigour and unmans the soul.
Disastrous fate! still tears will fill the eye,
Still recollection prompt the mortal sigh;
When to the mind recurs thy former fame,
And all the horrors of thy present shame.

Some tall rock, whose bare, broad bosom high
Towers from the earth, and braves the inclement sky;
On whose black top the blackening deluge pours,
At whose wide base the thundering ocean roars;
In conscious pride its huge gigantic form
Surveys imperious and defies the storm.
Till worn by age, and mouldering to decay,
The insidious waters wash its base away,
It falls, and falling cleaves the trembling ground,
And spreads the tempest of destruction round.

FROM THE MICROCOSM—1808.

Jurare—et fallere Numen.—*Virgil.*
To swear and forswear.

Nec sine ulla mehercule ironia loquor.—*Cicero.*
To speak ironically.

"HAVING, in my former paper, fully, and I hope satisfactorily, explained the nature and tendency of this work, and as far as I could foresee them, answered, if not obviated, all the objections most likely to be started against an undertaking of the kind, I shall forbear detaining my readers by any farther prefatory observations, and proceed immediately in the execution of my plan; premising only, that should it appear to the elder part of my readers, that the subject now before them is too lightly treated, I would not have them conclude from thence, that I am not well aware of its intrinsic weight and importance. Let them however be sensible, that Gregory Griffin does not, with the self-assumed arrogance of an universal censurer, commit to the public these his lucubrations as dictatorial lectures on morality, but as the reflections of an impartial observer of all transactions, principally indeed those of this lesser world, of which he boasts himself a citizen. These, as they afforded both entertainment and instruction to him in their formation, he presumes to hope may be the source of the one or the other to some of his readers. In this character I would wish them to consider me in the following paper, and withal to keep in their minds a maxim, indisputable perhaps from the weight of its authority,

——————Ridiculum acri
Fortius ac melius magnas plerumque secat res.
——————Where moral precepts fail,
The sneer of ridicule will oft prevail.

"It has often occurred as a matter of surprise to me and a few friends, who like myself, can find pleasure in such speculations as arise more immediately from common occurrences, that among the crowds of pretenders who profess to teach every accomplishment, necessary or unnecessary, to form the character of a complete gentleman, no one has as yet attempted to give instructions in a science, the use of which is more generally adopted, by all ranks of people, than perhaps any other under the sun. The reader will probably guess that I allude to the noble art of swearing.

"So universally, indeed, does this practice prevail, that it pervades all stations and degrees of men, from the peer to the porter, from the minister to the mechanic. It is the bond of faith, the seal of protestations (the oaths of lovers, indeed, are a theme too trite to need discussion here), and the universal succedaneum for logical or even rational demonstration. And here I cannot forbear reflecting on the infinite improvements made by moderns in the method of elucidating and confirming all matters of opinion. A man now-a-days has need but to acquire one quality, impudence, and to get rid of a troublesome companion, conscience, to establish whatever maxims he may take in his head. Let him but confirm with an oath the most improbable conjectures, and if any one calls his honour in question, the manner of settling all such disputes is too obvious to need explanation. And by these means how much unnecessary trouble does he save the rational talents of his auditors! what a world of useless investigation! Who can help lamenting that this method of arguing was not long ago adopted? We should then probably have escaped being pestered by the eternal disputations of that useless set of creatures called philosophers; as any tolerable swordsman might have settled the universal system according to his own plan, and made the planets move by what regulations he pleased, provided he was ready, in the Newgate phrase, 'to swear through thick and thin.'

'But this is a small part only of the advantages attendant on the extensive practice of this art. In the councils of the cabinet, and the wranglings of the bar, it adds weight to the most striking arguments, and by its authority enforces conviction.

"It is an old proverbial expression, that 'there go two words to a bargain;' now I should not a little admire the ingenuity of that calculator who could define, to any tolerable degree of exactness, how many oaths go to one in these days; for I am confident that there is no business carried on, from the wealthiest bargains of the exchange to the sixpenny chafferings of a St. Giles's huckster, in which swearing has not a considerable share. And almost every tradesman, 'meek and much a liar,' will, if his veracity be called in question, coolly consign to Satan some portion of himself, payable on demand, in case his goods be not found answerable to his description of their quality.

"I remember to have heard of a person of great talents for inquiry, who, to inform himself whether the land or the water bore the greater proportion in the globe, contrived to cut out with extreme nicety from a map the different portions of each, and by weighing them together decided it, in favour of which it is not now material. Could this experiment be made with regard to the proportion which oaths bear to the rest of our modern conversation, I own I am not without my suspicions, that the former scale would in some cases preponderate; nay, certain I am, that these harmless expletives constitute considerably the weightiest part in the discourse of those who either by their own ignorant vanity, or the contemptuous mock-admiration of others, have been dignified with the title of bucks. And this indeed, as well in that smaller circle which falls more immediately under my observation, as in the more enlarged society of men; among whom, to a buck who has the honour to serve his majesty, a habit of swearing is an appendage as absolutely essential as a cockade or a commission: and many a one there is among this order who will sit down with equal ardour and self-complacency to devise the cut of a coat, or the form of an execration.

"Nay, even the female sex have, to their no small credit, caught the happy contagion; and there is scarce a mercer's wife in the kingdom but has her innocent unmeaning imprecations, her little oaths 'softened into nonsense,' and, with squeaking treble, mincing blasphemy into odsbodikins, slitterkins, and such like, will 'swear you like a sucking dove, ay, an it were any nightingale.'

"That it is one of the accomplishments of boys is more than sufficiently obvious, when there is scarce one, though he be but five years old, that does not lisp out the oaths he has heard drop from the mouths of his elders; while the happy parent congratulates himself on the early improvement of his offspring, and smiles to discover the promising seeds of manly wit in the sprightly sallies of puerile execration. On which topic I remember to have heard an honest Hibernian divine, whose zeal for morality would sometimes hurry him a little beyond the limits of good grammar or good sense, in the height of declamation declare, that 'the little children that could neither speak nor walk run about the streets blaspheming.'

"Thus, then, through all ranks and stages of life, is swearing the very hinge of conversation! It is the conclusive supplement to argument, the apology for wit, the universal medium through which every thought is conveyed; and as to the violent passions, it is (to use the words of the poet) 'the very midwife of the mind;' and is equally serviceable in bringing forth the sensations of anger or kindness, hope or fear; the ecstacies of extravagant delight, or the agonies of comfortless despair. What mortal among us is there, that when any misfortune comes on him unexpectedly, does not find himself wonderfully lightened of the load of his sorrow, by pouring out the abundance of his vexation in showers of curses on the author of his calamity? What gamester, who has reduced himself from opulence to beggary, by the intemperate indulgence of a mad infatuation, does not, after sitting down and

venting his execrations for half an hour against his ill fortune and his folly, get up again greatly relieved by so happy an expedient?

"Since, then, the advantages arising from an early initiation into the practice of swearing must so evidently appear to every person unprejudiced against it by notions (now indeed almost out of date) of religion and morality, I cannot but be surprised, that no one has yet attempted to reduce to system, and teach the theory of an art, the practical part of which is so universally known and adopted. An undertaking of this kind could not surely fail of success; especially in an age like this, when attempts of a much more arduous nature are every day presented to our notice; when pigs are brought to exercise all the functions of rationality; and Hibernians profess to teach the true pronunciation of the English tongue.

"It is not so very far removed, but that some of my readers must recollect the time when the noble art of boxing was, by the ever-memorable Figg and Broughton, reduced to a complete and perfect system; and the nobility and gentry were taught, theoretically as well as practically, to bruise the bodies, and (to use a technical term) darken the day-lights of each other with the vigour of a Hercules, tempered with the grace of an Apollo. And it is but a little time since a celebrated foreigner actually instructed some persons of no inconsiderable rank of both sexes in the art of eating soup with ease and dexterity, (though, in my humble opinion, few people could need a preceptor to show them the way to their mouths.) Of much more utility, and surely not less successful, would be the plan I recommend. Many there were, who from tenderness of age, or delicacy of constitution, were precluded from the diversion of boxing: to many the science of soup-eating was useless and impracticable—merely from having none to eat; but all have their oaths in their own power, and of them, neither emptiness of pocket, nor corporeal or mental imbecility, prevents the free and uncontrolled use; and almost everybody, however niggardly he may be in parting with any other of his possessions, scatters these with the most liberal profusion.

"Thus then, if fostered by the hand of a skilful linguist, this science might perhaps in time come nearer than any other to realize the extravagant idea of the ingenious but romantic Bishop Wilkins, of an universal language. At present, indeed, there are some slight inconveniences attending the project, among which no small one is, that according to their present general usage, oaths, like Yorick's French friseur, by expressing too much, generally mean nothing; insomuch that I now make it a rule to lessen my belief to every assertion, in proportion to the number of needless corroborative oaths by which it is supported. Nor am I indeed unreasonable in this; and in most cases how can I do otherwise? Is it in human nature to suppose, that when one of my friends declares his joy at seeing me, and his kind concern for my health, by intimating a hearty wish of my eternal perdition, that he really means what he says?

"It has been observed by some ancient philosopher, or poet, or moralist, (no matter which,) that nothing could be more pernicious to mankind than the fulfilling of their own wishes. And in truth I am inclined to be of his opinion: for many a friend of mine, many a fellow-citizen of this lesser world, would, had his own heedless imprecations on himself taken effect, long ere this have groaned under the complication of almost every calamity capable of entering a human imagination. And with regard to the world at large, were this to be the case, I doubt whether there would be at this present time a leg or limb of any kind whole in his majesty's service. So habitual indeed was this custom become to an officer of my acquaintance, that though he had lost one of his eyes in the defence of his country, he could not forego his favourite execration, but still used to vent his curses on them both, with the same ease and indifference as when they were both in his possession: so blind was he rendered to his own defects by the continued practice of this—amusement;

for in no other light than as an amusement or a polite accomplishment can it be considered by those who practise it. Did they consider it as a vice, they could not, I am sure, persevere in the indulgence of one which has not even the common excuse of having for its aim the pursuit of pleasure or the gratification of a darling appetite. I cannot believe they would so disinterestedly damn themselves, and vent in public company such imprecations as in darkness and solitude they would tremble to conceive.

"As an accomplishment, therefore, and as an agreeable indication of youthful gayety, it must no doubt be considered; and should any one take the hint here offered him, and commence instructer in this noble science, I need not, I believe, caution him against being an Englishman; or (should he have the misfortune to be born in this country) remind him of the easy transformation of our commonest homespun names into the more fashionable French or more musical Italian; as, for instance, that of Peters into Pedro, Nichols into Nicolini, or Gerard into Geradot, and so on. Having thus un-Englished himself, let him get his advertisement drawn up in the Grahamic style, if not by the doctor himself, professing that,—

"Having added to the early advantages of a Billingsgate education, the deepest researches, and most indefatigable industry, &c. &c. he now stands forth as an apt and accomplished teacher of the never-to-be-sufficiently-extolled, the all-expressive, all-comprehensive, &c. &c. art of Swearing. Ladies and gentlemen instructed in the most fashionable and elegant oaths; the most peculiarly adapted to their several ages, manners, and professions, &c. &c. He has now ready for the press a book entitled 'The Complete Oath Register, or Every Man his own Swearer,' containing oaths and imprecations for all times, seasons, purposes, and occasions. Also 'Sentimental Oaths for the Ladies.' Likewise, 'Execrations for the year 1786.'

"Let him I say do this, and he may, I believe, assure himself of no little encouragement among the world at large; though far be it from me to presume to promise him any extraordinary countenance in that smaller circle which comes more immediately under the inspection of the Microcosmopolitan."

FROM THE ANTI-JACOBIN EXAMINER.

NEW MORALITY.

From mental mists to purge a nation's eyes;
To animate the weak, unite the wise;
To trace the deep infection that pervades
The crowded town, and taints the rural shades;
To mark how wide extends the mighty waste
O'er the fair realms of science, learning, taste;
To drive and scatter all the brood of lies,
And chase the varying falsehood as it flies;
The long arrears of ridicule to pay,
To drag reluctant Dulness back to day;
Much yet remains.—To you these themes belong,
Ye favour'd sons of virtue and of song!

Say, is the field too narrow? Are the times
Barren of folly, and devoid of crimes?

Yet, venial vices, in a milder age,
Could rouse the warmth of Pope's satiric rage;
The doting miser, and the lavish heir,
The follies and the foibles of the fair,

Sir Job, Sir Balaam, and old Euclio's thrift,
And Sappho's diamonds with her dirty shift,
Blunt, Charteris, Hopkins,—meaner subjects fired
The keen-eyed poet; while the muse inspired
Her ardent child,—entwining, as he sate,
His laurelled chaplet with the thorns of hate.

But say,—indignant does the muse retire,
Her shrine deserted, and extinct its fire?
No pious hand to feed the sacred flame,
No raptured soul a poet's charge to claim?

Bethink thee, Gifford; when some future age
Shall trace the promise of thy playful page;—
"The hand which brush'd a swarm of fools away*
Should rouse to grasp a more reluctant prey!'
Think then, will pleaded indolence excuse
The tame secession of thy languid Muse?

Ah! where is now that promise? why so long
Sleep the keen shafts of satire and of song?
Oh! come, with Taste and Virtue at thy side,
With ardent zeal inflamed, and patriot pride;
With keen poetic glance direct the blow,
And empty all thy quiver on the foe:—
No pause—no rest—till weltering on the ground
The poisonous hydra lies, and pierced with many a wound.

Thou too!—the nameless bard,† whose honest zeal
For law, for morals, for the public weal,
Pours down impetuous on thy country's foes
The stream of verse, and many-languaged prose;
Thou too!—though oft thy ill-advised dislike
The guiltless head with random censure strike,—
Though quaint allusions, vague and undefined,
Play faintly round the ear, but mock the mind;
Through the mix'd mass yet truth and learning shine,
And manly vigour stamps the nervous line:
And patriot warmth the generous rage inspires,
And wakes and points the desultory fires!

Yet more remain unknown: for who can tell
What bashful genius, in some rural cell,
As year to year, and day succeeds to day,
In joyless leisure wastes his life away?
In him the flame of early fancy shone;
His genuine worth his old companions own;
In childhood and in youth their chief confess'd,
His master's pride, his pattern to the rest.
Now, far aloof retiring from the strife
Of busy talents, and of active life,
As, from the loop-holes of retreat, he views
Our stage, verse, pamphlets, politics, and news,

---

* See the motto prefixed to "The Baviad," a satirical poem, by W. Gifford, Esq.; unquestionably the best of its kind, since the days of Pope.

———Nunc in ovilia
Mox in reluctantes dracones.

† The author of "The Pursuits of Literature."

He loathes the world,—or with reflection sad
Concludes it irrecoverably mad;
Of taste, of learning, morals, all bereft,
No hope, no prospect to redeem it left.

Awake! for shame; or ere thy noble sense
Sink in the oblivious pool of indolence!
Must wit be found alone on falsehood's side,
Unknown to truth, to virtue unallied?
Arise! nor scorn thy country's just alarms;
Wield in her cause thy long neglected arms;
Of lofty satire pour th' indignant strain,
Leagued with her friends, and ardent to maintain
'Gainst learning's, virtue's, truth's, religion's foes,
A kingdom's safety, and the world's repose.

If vice appal thee,—if thou view with awe
Insults that brave, and crimes that 'scape the law;
Yet may the specious bastard brood, which claim
A spurious homage under virtue's name,
Sprung from that parent of ten thousand crimes,
The New Philosophy of modern times,
Yet these may rouse thee! With unsparing hand
Oh lash the vile impostures from the land!

First, stern Philanthropy:—not she who dries
The orphan's tears, and wipes the widow's eyes;
Not she, who, sainted Charity her guide,
Of British bounty pours the annual tide:—
But French Philanthropy;—whose boundless mind
Glows with the general love of all mankind;
Philanthropy,—beneath whose baneful sway
Each patriot passion sinks and dies away.

Taught in her school t' imbibe thy mawkish strain,
Condorcet, filter'd through the dregs of Paine,
Each pert adept disowns a Briton's part,
And plucks the name of England from his heart.

What! shall a name, a word, a sound control
Th' aspiring thought, and cramp th' expansive soul?
Shall one half-peopled island's rocky roun
A love that glows for all creation bound?
And social charities contract the plan
Framed for thy freedom, universal man?
No—through th' extended globe his feelings run,
As broad and general as th' unbounded sun!
No narrow bigot he; his reason'd view
Thy interests, England, ranks with thine, Peru!
France at our doors, he sees no danger nigh,
But heaves for Turkey's woes th' impartial sigh;
A steady patriot of the world alone,
The friend of every country—but his own.

Next comes a gentler virtue.—Ah! beware
Lest the harsh verse her shrinking softness scare.
Visit her not too roughly;—the warm sigh
Breathes on her lips;—the tear-drop gems her eye.

Sweet Sensibility, who dwells enshrined
In the fine foldings of the feeling mind;
With delicate mimosa's sense endued,
Who shrinks instinctive from a hand too rude;
Or like the anagallis, prescient flower,
Shuts her soft petals at th' approaching shower.

Sweet child of sickly Fancy!—Her of yore
From her loved France Rousseau to exile bore;
And, while midst lakes and mountains wild he ran,
Full of himself, and shunn'd the haunts of man,
Taught her o'er each lone vale and Alpine steep
To lisp the story of his wrongs, and weep;
Taught her to cherish still, in either eye,
Of tender tears a plentiful supply,
And pour them in the brooks that babbled by;
Taught by nice scale to mete her feelings strong,
False by degrees, and exquisitely wrong;
For the crush'd beetle, first, the widow'd dove,
And all the warbled sorrows of the grove;
Next for poor suffering guilt; and, last of all,
For parents, friends, a king and country's fall.

Mark her fair votaries, prodigal of grief,
With cureless pangs, and woes that mock relief,
Droop in soft sorrow o'er a faded flower;
O'er a dead jack-ass pour the pearly shower:
But hear, unmoved, of Loire's ensanguined flood,
Choked up with slain; of Lyons drench'd in blood;
Of crimes that blot the age, the world, with shame,
Foul crimes, but sicklied o'er with Freedom's name;
Altars and thrones subverted, social life
Trampled to earth,—the husband from the wife,
Parent from child, with ruthless fury torn,—
Of talents, honour, virtue, wit, forlorn,
In friendless exile,—of the wise and good
Staining the daily scaffold with their blood,
Of savage cruelties, that scare the mind,
The rage of madness with hell's lusts combined—
Of hearts torn reeking from the mangled breast,—
They hear—and hope that all is for the best.

Fond hope! but Justice sanctifies the prayer—
Justice!—Here, Satire, strike; 'twere sin to spare!
Not she in British courts that takes her stand,
The dawdling balance dangling in her hand,
Adjusting punishments to fraud and vice,
With scrupulous quirks, and disquisition nice:
But firm, erect, with keen reverted glance,
Th' avenging angel of regenerate France,
Who visits ancient sins on modern times,
And punishes the Pope for Cæsar's crimes.*

Such is the liberal Justice which presides
In these our days, and modern patriots guides;

* The manes of Vercengetorix are supposed to have been very much gratified by the invasion of Italy and the plunder of the Roman territory. The defeat of the Burgundians is to be revenged on the modern inhabitants of Switzerland. But the Swiss were a free people, defending their liberties against a tyrant. Moreover, they happened to be in alliance with

Justice, whose blood-stain'd book one sole decree,
One statute fills—"The people shall be free."
Free by what means? by folly, madness, guilt,
By boundless rapines, blood in oceans spilt;
By confiscation, in whose sweeping toils
The poor man's pittance with the rich man's spoils,
Mix'd in one common mass, are swept away,
To glut the short-lived tyrant of the day;—
By laws, religion, morals all o'erthrown:—
—Rouse then, ye sovereign people, claim your own;—
The license that enthrals, the truth that blinds,
The wealth that starves you, and the power that grinds.
—So Justice bids.—'Twas her enlighten'd doom,
Louis, thy holy head devoted to the tomb!
'Twas Justice claim'd, in that accursed hour,
The fatal forfeit of too lenient power.
—Mourn for the man we may;—but for the king,—
Freedom, oh! Freedom's such a charming thing!

"Much may be said on both sides."—Hark! I hear
A well-known voice that murmurs in my ear,—
The voice of Candour.—Hail! most solemn sage,
Thou driveling virtue of this moral age,
Candour, which softens party's headlong rage;
Candour,—which spares its foes;—nor e'er descends
With bigot zeal to combat for its friends.
Candour,—which loves in see-saw strain to tell
Of acting foolishly, but meaning well;
Too nice to praise by wholesale, or to blame
Convinced that all men's motives are the same;—
And finds, with keen discriminating sight,
Black's not so black; nor white so very white.

"Fox, to be sure, was vehement and wrong:
But then Pitt's words, you'll own, were rather strong.
Both must be blamed, both pardon'd;—'twas just so
With Fox and Pitt full forty years ago;
So Walpole, Pulteney;—factions in all times
Have had their follies, ministers their crimes."

Give me th' avow'd, the erect, the manly foe,
Bold I can meet,—perhaps may turn his blow;
But of all plagues, good Heaven, thy wrath can send,
Save, save, oh! save me from the candid friend!

"Barras loves plunder,—Merlin takes a bribe,—
What then?—Shall Candour these good men proscribe?
No! ere we join the loud-accusing throng,
Prove,—not the facts, but, that they thought them wrong.

"Why hang O'Quigley?—he, misguided man,
In sober thought his country's weal might plan,
And, while his deep-wrought treason sapped the throne,
Might act from taste in morals, all his own."

France at the time. No matter, Burgundy is since become a province of France, and the French have acquired a property in all the injuries and defeats which the people of that country may have sustained, together with a title to revenge and retaliation, to be exercised in the present, or any future centuries, as may be found most glorious and convenient.

Peace to such reasoners! let them have their way;
Shut their dull eyes against the blaze of day.
Priestley's a saint, and Stone a patriot still;
And La Fayette a hero, if they will.

I love the bold uncompromising mind,
Whose principles are fix'd, whose views defined:
Who scouts and scorns, in canting Candour's spite,
All taste in morals, innate sense of right,
And nature's impulse, all uncheck'd by art,
And feelings fine, that float about the heart:
Content, for good men's guidance, bad men's awe,
On moral truth to rest, and gospel law.
Who owns, when traitors feel th' avenging rod,
Just retribution, and the hand of God;
Who hears the groans through Olmutz' roofs that ring,
Of him who mock'd, misled, betray'd his king—
Hears unappall'd:—though faction's zealots preach—
Unmoved, unsoften'd by F*tzp*tr*ck's speech

That speech on which the melting commons hung,*
"While truths divine came mended from his tongue"—
How loving husband clings to duteous wife,—
How pure religion soothes the ills of life,—
How popish ladies trust their pious fears
And naughty actions in their chaplain's ears.
Half novel and half sermon, on it flow'd;
With pious zeal the opposition glow'd;
As o'er each the soft infection crept,
Sigh'd as he whined, and as he whimper'd wept;
E'en C**w*n dropt a sentimental tear,
And stout St. A*dr*w yelp'd a softer "hear!"

O! nurse of crimes and fashions! which in vain
Our colder servile spirits would attain,
How do we ape thee, France! but blundering still
Disgrace the pattern by our want of skill.
The borrow'd step our awkward gait reveals:
(As clumsy C**rtn*y† mars the verse he steals.)

---

* The speech of General F-tzp-tr-ck, on his motion for an address of the house of commons to the emperor of Germany, to demand the deliverance of M. La Fayette from the prison of Olmutz, was one of the most dainty pieces of oratory that ever drew tears from a crowded gallery, and the clerks at the table. It was really quite moving to hear the general talk of religion, conjugal fidelity, and "such branches of learning." There were a few who laughed indeed, but that was thought hard-hearted and immoral, and irreligious, and God knows what. Crying was the order of the day. Why will not the opposition try these topics again? La Fayette indeed (the more's the pity) is out. But why not a motion for a general jail-delivery of all state prisoners throughout Europe?

† See Anti-Jacobin, vol. i. p. 376, in the note, for a theft more shameless, and an application of the thing stolen more stupid, than any of those recorded of Irish story-tellers by Joe Miller.

The following is the note alluded to. It illustrates the words "Courtney's kidnapped rhymes," in a severe reply "to the author of the Epistle to the editors of the Anti-Jacobin,' which epistle appeared in the Morning Chronicle.

"This is a serious charge against an author, and ought to be well supported. To the proof, then!

How do we ape thee, France! nor claim alone
Thy arts, thy tastes, thy morals for our own,
But to thy worthies render homage due,
Their* "hair-breadth 'scapes" with anxious interest view;
Statesmen and heroines whom this age adores,
Though plainer times would call them rogues and whores.

See Louvet, patriot, pamphleteer, and sage,
Tempering with amorous fire his virtuous rage.
Form'd for all tasks, his various talents see,
The luscious novel, the severe decree.
Then mark him weltering in his nasty stye,
Bare his lewd transports to the public eye.
Not his the love in silent groves that strays,
Quits the rude world, and shuns the vulgar gaze.
In Lodoiska's full possession blest,
One craving void still aches within his breast;
Plunged in the filth and fondness of her arms,
Not to himself alone he stints her charms;
Clasp'd in each other's foul embrace they lie,
But know no joy unless the world stands by.
The fool of vanity, for her alone
He lives, loves, writes, and dies, but to be known.

His widow'd mourner flies to poison's aid,
Eager to join her Louvet's parted shade
In those bright realms where sainted lovers stray
But harsh emetics tear that hope away.†
Yet, hapless Louvet! where thy bones are laid,
The easy nymphs shall consecrate the shade.‡

"In an Ode of the late Lord Nugent's are the following spirited lines:—

'Though Cato lived—though Tully spoke—
Though Brutus dealt the godlike stroke,
Yet perish'd fated Rome!'

"The author above-mentioned saw these lines, and liked them—as well he might: and as he had a mind to write about Rome himself, he did not scruple to enlist them into his service; but he thought it right to make a small alteration in their appearance, which he managed thus:—Speaking of Rome, he says it is the place

'*Where* Cato lived.'

"A sober truth: which gets rid at once of all the poetry and spirit of the original, and reduces the sentiment from an example of manners, virtue, patriotism, from the *vitæ exempla dedit* of Lord Nugent, to a mere question of inhabitancy. *Ubi habitavit Cato*—where he was an inhabitant householder, paying scot and lot, and had a house on the right-hand side of the way, as you go down Esquiline Hill, just opposite to the poulterer's.—But to proceed—

'*Where* Cato lived; *where* Tully spoke,
Where Brutus dealt the godlike stroke—
——*By which his glory rose!!!*'

"The last line is not borrowed.

"We question whether the history of modern literature can produce an instance of a theft so shameless, and turned to so little advantage."

* See Récit de mes Perils, by Louvet. Memoires d'un Detenu, by Riouffe, &c. The avidity with which these productions were read, might, we should hope, be accounted for upon principles of mere curiosity, (as we read the Newgate Calendar and the History of the Buccaneers,) not from any interest in favour of a set of wretches infinitely more detestable than all the robbers and pirates that ever existed.

† Every lover of modern French literature, and admirer of modern French characters, must remember the rout which was made about Louvet's death and Lodoiska's poison. The attempt at self-slaughter, and the process of the recovery, the arsenic and the castor oil were served up in daily messes from the French papers, till the public absolutely sickened.

‡ Faciles Napeæ.

There, in the laughing morn of genial spring,
Unwedded pairs shall tender couplets sing;
Eringoes o'er the hallow'd spot shall bloom,
And flies of Spain buzz softly round the tomb.*

But hold! severer virtue claims the Muse—
Roland the just, with ribands in his shoes—†
And Roland's spouse, who paints with chaste delight
The doubtful conflict of her nuptial night;
Her virgin charms what fierce attacks assail'd,
And how the rigid minister‡ prevailed.

And ah! what verse can grace thy stately mien,
Guide of the world, Preferment's golden queen,
Neckar's fair daughter,—Stael the epicene!
Bright o'er whose flaming cheek and pumple§ nose
The bloom of young desire unceasing glows!
Fain would the muse—but ah! she dares no more;
A mournful voice from lone Guyana's shore‖
—Sad Quatremere—the bold presumption checks,
Forbid to question thy ambiguous sex.

To thee proud Barras bows; thy charms control
Rewbell's brute rage, and Merlin's subtle soul;
Raised by thy hands, and fashioned to thy will,
Thy power, thy guiding influence governs still,
Where at the blood-stain'd board expert he plies,
The lame artificer of fraud and lies;
He with the mitred head and cloven heel:
Doom'd the coarse edge of Rewbell's jests to feel;¶
To stand the playful buffet, and to hear
The frequent inkstand whizzing past his ear;
While all the five directors laugh to see
"The limping priest so deft at his new ministry."**

Last of th' anointed five behold, and least,
The directorial lama, sovereign priest,—
Lepaux:—whom atheists worship;—at whose nod
Bow their meek heads the men without a god.††

---

* See Anthologia passim.

† Such was the strictness of this minister's principles, that he positively refused to go to court in shoe-buckles.—See Dumourier's Memoirs.

‡ See Madame Roland's Memoirs—"Rigide Ministre," Brissot à ses Commetans.

§ The "pumple"-nosed attorney of Furnival's Inn.—Congreve's Way of the World.

‖ These lines contain the secret history of Quatremere's deportation. He presumed in the council of Five Hundred to arraign Madame de Stael's conduct, and even to hint a doubt of her sex. He was sent to Guyana. The transaction naturally brings to one's mind the dialogue between Falstaff and Hostess Quickly in Shakspeare's Henry the IVth.

"*Falstaff.* Thou art neither fish nor flesh—a man cannot tell where to have thee.

"*Quickly.* Thou art an unjust man for saying so—thou or any man knows where to have me."

¶ For instance, in the course of a political discussion, Rewbell observed to the ex-bishop—"that his understanding was as crooked as his legs"—"Vil emigré, tu n'as pas le sens plus droit que les pieds"—and therewith threw an inkstand at him. It whizzed along, as we have been informed, like the fragment of a rock from the hand of one of Ossian's heroes; but the wily apostate shrunk beneath the table, and the weapon passed over him, innocuous and guiltless of his blood or brains.

** See Homer's description of Vulcan, first Iliad:

Inextinguibilis vero exoriebatur risus beatis numinibus
Ut viderunt Vulcanum per domos *ministrantem*.

†† The men without a god—one of the new sects.—Their religion is intended to consist in the adoration of a great book, in which all the virtuous actions of the society are to be

Ere long, perhaps, to this astonish'd isle,
Fresh from the shores of subjugated Nile,
Shall Bonaparte's victor fleet protect
The genuine theo-philanthropic sect,—
The sect of Marat, Mirabeau, Voltaire,—
Led by their pontiff, good La Reveillere.
Rejoiced our clubs shall greet him, and install
The holy hunchback in thy dome, St. Paul!
While countless votaries thronging in his train
Wave their red caps, and hymn this jocund strain:

"Couriers and Stars, sedition's evening host,
Thou Morning Chronicle, and Morning Post!
Whether ye make the rights of man your theme,
Your country libel, and your God blaspheme,
Or dirt on private worth and virtue throw,
Still blasphemous or blackguard, praise Lepaux.

"And ye five other wandering bards that move
In sweet accord of harmony and love,
C*****dge and S**th*y, L***d, and L**b and Co.
Tune all your mystic harps to praise Lepaux!

"Pr***tl*y and W***f**ld, humble holy men,
Give praises to his name with tongue and pen!

"Th*lw*l, and ye that lecture as ye go,
And for your pains get pelted, praise Lepaux!

"Praise him, each jacobin, or fool, or knave,
And your cropped heads in sign of worship wave!

"All creeping creatures, venomous and low,
Paine, W*ll**ms, G*dw*n, H*lcr*ft—praise Lepaux!

"And thou leviathan! on ocean's brim
Hugest of living things that sleep and swim;
Thou in whose nose by Burke's gigantic hand
The hook was fix'd to drag thee to the land;
With ———, ———, and ———* in thy train,
And ——— wallowing in the yeasty main—†
Still as ye snort, and puff, and spout, and blow,
In puffing and in spouting, praise Lepaux!"

———

Britain, beware; nor let th' insidious foe,
Of force despairing, aim a deadier blow.

---

entered and registered. "In times of civil commotion they are to come forward, to exhort the citizens to unanimity, and to read them a chapter out of the great book. When oppressed or proscribed, they are to retire to a burying ground, to wrap themselves up in their great coats, and wait the approach of death," &c.

* The reader is at liberty to fill up the blanks according to his own opinion, and after the chances and changes of the times. It would be highly unfair to hand down to posterity, as followers of leviathan, the names of men who may, and probably will soon, grow ashamed of their leader.

† Though the yeasty sea
Consume and swallow navigation up.
MACBETH.

Thy peace, thy strength, with devilish wiles assail,
And when her arms are vain, by arts prevail.
True, thou art rich, art powerful!—through thine isle
Industrious Skill, contented Labour, smile;
Far seas are studded with thy countless sails;
What wind but wafts them, and what shore but hails?
True, thou art brave!—o'er all the busy land
In patriot ranks embattled myriads stand;
Thy foes behold with impotent amaze,
And drop the lifted weapon as they gaze!

But what avails to guard each outward part,
If subtlest poison, circling at thy heart,
Spite of thy courage, of thy power, and wealth,
Mine the sound fabric of thy vital health?

So thine own oak, by some fair streamlet's side,
Waves its broad arms, and spreads its leafy pride,
Towers from the earth, and rearing to the skies
Its conscious strength, the tempest's wrath defies.
Its ample branches shield the fowls of air,
To its cool shade the panting herds repair.—
The treacherous current works its noiseless way,—
The fibres loosen, and the roots decay;
Prostrate the beauteous ruin lies; and all
That shared its shelter, perish in its fall.

O thou!—lamented sage!—whose prescient scan
Pierced through foul anarchy's gigantic plan,
Prompt to incredulous hearers to disclose
The guilt of France, and Europe's world of woes;—
Thou, on whose name posterity shall gaze,
The mighty sea-mark of these troubled days!
O large of soul, of genius unconfined,
Born to delight, instruct, and mend mankind!—
Burke! in whose breast a Roman ardour glow'd
Whose copious tongue with Grecian richness flow'd;
Well hast thou found (if such thy country's doom)
A timely refuge in the sheltering tomb!

As, in far realms, where eastern kings are laid,
In pomp of death, beneath the cypress shade,
The perfumed lamp with unextinguish'd light
Flames through the vault, and cheers the gloom of night:—
So, mighty Burke! in thy sepulchral urn,
To fancy's view, the lamp of truth shall burn.
Thither late times shall turn their reverent eyes,
Led by thy light, and by thy wisdom wise.

There are, to whom (their taste such pleasures cloy)
No light thy wisdom yields, thy wit no joy.
Peace to their heavy heads, and callous hearts,
Peace—such as sloth, as ignorance imparts!—
Pleased may they live to plan their country's good,
And crop with calm content their flowery food!

What though thy venturous spirit loved to urge
The labouring theme to reason's utmost verge,

Kindling and mounting from th' enraptured sight;—
Till anxious Wonder watch'd thy daring flight!
While vulgar souls, with mean malignant stare,
Gazed up, the triumph of thy fall to share.
Poor triumph! price of that extorted praise,
Which still to daring genius envy pays.

Oh! for thy playful smile,—thy potent frown,
T' abash bold vice, and laugh pert folly down
So should the muse, in humour's happiest vein,
With verse that flow'd in metaphoric strain,
And apt allusions to the rural trade,
Tell, of what wood young jacobins are made;
How the skill'd gardener grafts, with nicest rule,
The slip of coxcomb on the stock of fool;—
Forth in bright blossom bursts the tender sprig,
A thing to wonder at—perhaps* a whig.—
Should tell, how wise each half-fledged pedant prates
Of weightiest matters, grave distinctions states—
That rules of policy, and public good,
In Saxon times were rightly understood;
That kings are proper, may be useful things,
But then some gentlemen object to kings;
That in all times the minister's to blame;
That British liberty's an empty name,
Till each fair burgh, numerically free,
Shall choose its members by the rule of three.

So should the Muse, with verse in thunder clothed,
Proclaim the crimes by God and nature loathed,
Which—when fell poison revels in the veins—
(That poison fell which frantic Gallia drains
From the crude fruit of freedom's blasted tree)
Blot the fair records of humanity.

To feebler nations let proud France afford
Her damning choice,—the chalice or the sword,—
To drink or die;—oh fraud! oh specious lie!
Delusive choice! for if they drink, they die.

The sword we dread not:—of ourselves secure,
Firm were our strength, our peace and freedom sure.—
Let all the world confederate all its powers,
"Be they not back'd by those that should be ours,"
High on his rock shall Britain's genius stand,
Scatter the crowded hosts, and vindicate the land.

Guard we but our own hearts: with constant view,
To ancient morals, ancient manners true,
True to the manlier virtues, such as nerved
Our father's breasts, and this proud isle preserved
For many a rugged age:—and scorn the while,—
Each philosophic atheist's specious guile,—

* *i. e.* Perhaps a member of the Whig Club—a society that has presumed to monopolize to itself a title to which it never had any claim, but from the character of those who have now withdrawn themselves from it.—"Perhaps, signifies that even the Whig Club sometimes rejects a candidate, whose principles (*risum teneatis!*) it affects to disapprove

The soft seductions, the refinements nice,
Of gay morality, and easy vice:—
So shall we brave the storm;—our 'stablish'd power
Thy refuge, Europe, in some happier hour.—
But, French in heart—though victory crown our brow,
Low at our feet though prostrate nations bow,
Wealth gild our cities, commerce crowd our shore,—
London may shine, but England is no more.

THE FRIEND OF HUMANITY AND THE KNIFE-GRINDER.

Friend of Humanity.

"Needy knife-grinder! whither are you going?
Rough is the road, your wheel is out of order—
Bleak blows the blast;—your hat has got a hole in't,
So have your breeches!

"Weary knife-grinder! little think the proud ones,
Who in their coaches roll along the turnpike-
Road, what hard work 'tis crying all day, 'Knives and
Scissars to grind O!'

"Tell me, knife-grinder, how came you to grind knives?
Did some rich man tyrannically use you;
Was it the squire? or parson of the parish?
Or the attorney?

"Was it the squire for killing of his game? or
Covetous parson, for his tithes distraining?
Or roguish lawyer, made you lose your little
All in a lawsuit?

"(Have you not read the Rights of Man, by Tom Paine?)
Drops of compassion tremble on my eyelids,
Ready to fall, as soon as you have told your
Pitiful story."

Knife-Grinder.

"Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir,
Only last night a drinking at the Chequers,
This poor old hat and breeches, as you see, were
Torn in a scuffle.

"Constables came up for to take me into
Custody; they took me before the justice;
Justice Oldmixon put me in the parish-
stocks for a vagrant.

"I should be glad to drink your honour's health in
A pot of beer, if you will give me sixpence;
But for my part, I never love to meddle
With politics, sir.

Friend of Humanity.

"*I* give thee sixpence! I will see thee damn'd first—
Wretch! whom no sense of wrongs can rouse to vengeance—
Sordid, unfeeling, reprobate, degraded,
Spiritless outcast!"

Kicks the Knife-grinder, overturns his wheel, and exit in a transport of republican enthusiasm and universal philanthropy.

OCCASIONAL COMPOSITIONS.

Mr. Addington was designated the doctor, because his father kept a private madhouse in Berkshire. Mr. Hiley Addington is the brother of the premier, for whom, during his administration, he had provided the situation of paymaster.

THE GRAND CONSULTATION.

Ambubaiarum Collegia Pharmacopolæ.—HORACE.

If the health and strength, and the pure vital breath
Of old England, at last, must be *doctor'd* to death
Oh! why must we die of one doctor alone?
And why must that doctor be just such a one
As Doctor Henry Addington?

Oh! where is the great Doctor Dominicetti,
With his stews and his flues, and his vapours to sweat ye?
O! where is that Prince of all Mountebank fame,
With his baths of hot earth, and his beds of hot name?
Oh! where is Doctor Graham?

Where are Somnambule Mesmer's convulsions magnetic?
Where is Myersbach, renown'd for his pills diuretic?
Where is Perkins, with tractors of magical skill?
Where is the anodyne necklace of Basil Burchell?
Oh! where is the great Van Butchell?

Where's Sangrado Rush, so notorious for *bleedings?*
Where's Rumford, so famed for his writings and readings;
Where's that Count of the Kettle, that friend to the belly,
So renown'd for transforming old bones into jelly?
Where, too, is the great Doctor Kelly?

While Sam Solomon's lotion the public absterges,
He gives them his gold* as well as his purges;
But *our* frugal doctor this practice to shun,
Gives his *pills* to the public, the *Pells* to his *Son.*
Oh! fie! fie! Doctor Addington!
Oh! where is Doctor Solomon?

Where are all the great doctors? No longer we want
This farrago of cowardice, cunning and cant;
These braggarts! that one moment know not what fear is,
And the next moment, trembling, no longer know where is—
Lord Hawkesbury's† march to Paris?

Then for Hobart and Sullivan, Hawkey and Hervey,
For Wallace and Castlereagh, Bleke and Glenbervie,
For Sergeant, Vansittart, Monkhouse, and Lee,
Give us Velno and Anderson, Locke, Spilsbury,
Doctor Ball, Doctors Brodum, and Bree.

And instead of the jack-pudding bluster of Sherry,
With his "dagger of lath," and his speeches so merry!‡

* Vide daily papers: Doctor Solomon's Charitable Subscriptions and Abstergent Lotion.
† Now Lord Liverpool.
‡ See Mr. Gilray's admirable Caricature, entitled "Dramatic Loyalty; or the Patriotic ourage of Sherry Andrew."

Let us bring to the field—every foe to appal—
Aldini's galvanic *deceptions*—and all
The *sleight-of-hand tricks* of Conjuror Val.

So shall Golding and Bond, the Doctor's tall yeomen,
Dame Hiley, Dame Bragge, and the other *old Women*,
For new mountebanks changed, their old tricks bid farewell to,
And the famed d'Ivernois his arithmetic sell to
The wonderful wonder, the great Katterfelto!

So shall England, escaped from her "*safe* politicians,"
Such an army array of her quacks and physicians,
Such lotions and potions, pills, lancets, and leeches,
That Massena shall tremble our coast when he reaches,
And the Consul himself ———

THE PILOT THAT WEATHER'D THE STORM.

If hush'd the loud whirlwind that ruffled the deep;
The sky, if no longer dark tempests deform;
When our perils are past, shall our gratitude sleep?
No!—Here's to the Pilot that weather'd the storm!

At the footstool of Power let Flattery fawn,
Let Faction her idols extol to the skies;
To Virtue, in humble resentment withdrawn,
Unblamed may the merits of gratitude rise.

And shall not his memory to Britain be dear,
Whose example with envy all nations behold
A statesman unbiass'd by interest or fear,
By power uncorrupted, untainted by gold?

Who, when terror and doubt through the universe reign'd,
While rapine and treason their standards unfurl'd,
The heart and the hopes of his country maintain'd,
And one kingdom preserved 'midst the wreck of the world.

Unheeding, unthankful, we bask in the blaze,
While the beams of the sun in full majesty shine;
When he sinks into twilight, with fondness we gaze,
And mark the mild lustre that gilds his decline.

Lo! Pitt, when the course of thy greatness is o'er,
Thy talents, thy virtues, we fondly recall!
Now justly we prize thee, when lost we deplore;
Admired in thy zenith, but loved in thy fall!

O! take, then—for dangers by wisdom repell'd,
For evils, by courage and constancy braved—
O take! for a throne by thy counsels upheld,
The thanks of a people thy firmness has saved!

And O! if again the rude whirlwind should rise!
The dawnings of peace should fresh darkness deform,
The regrets of the good, and the fears of the wise,
Shall turn to the Pilot that weather'd the storm!

ODE TO THE "DOCTOR."

How blest, how firm the statesman stands,
(Him no low intrigue e'er shall move,)
Circled by faithful *kindred* bands,
And propp'd by fond *fraternal* love.

When his speeches hobble vilely,
What "*Hear hims*" burst from brother Hiley;
When the faltering periods lag,
Hark to the cheers of brother Bragge.

When the faltering periods lag,
Or his yawning audience flag,
When his speeches hobble vilely,
Or the house receives him dryly,
Cheer, O! cheer him, brother Bragge!
Cheer, O! cheer him, brother Hiley!

Each a gentleman at large,
Lodged and fed at public charge,
Paying (with a grace to charm ye)
This the fleet, and that the army.

Brother Bragge and brother Hiley,
Cheer him! when he speaks so vilely
Cheer him! when his audience flag,
Brother Hiley, brother Bragge.

MODERATE MEN AND MODERATE MEASURES.

Praise to placeless proud ability,
Let the prudent muse disclaim;
And sing the Statesman—all civility—
Whom *moderate talents* raise to fame.
He, no random projects urging,
Makes us wild alarms to feel;
With *moderate measures*, gently *purging*
Ills that prey on Britain's weal.

CHORUS.

Gently *purging*,
Gently *purging*,
Gently *purging* Britain's weal.*

Addington, with measured *motion*,
Keep the tenor of thy way;
To glory yield no rash devotion,
Led by luring lights astray;
Splendid talents are deceiving;
Tend to councils much too bold;
Moderate men we prize, believing
All that glisters is not gold.

GRAND CHORUS.

All that *glisters*,
All that *glisters*,
All that *glisters* is not gold.†

---

* Ere human statute purged the general weal.—SHAKSPEARE.
† Nor all that *glisters* gold.—GRAY.

EXTRACTS FROM THE SPEECHES OF MR. CANNING.

ON THE ARMY ESTIMATES.—DEC. 8, 1802.

But if I am pushed to the wall, and forced to speak my opinion, I have no disguise nor reservation; I do think that this is a time when the administration of the government ought to be in the ablest and fittest hands; I do not think the hands in which it is now placed answer to that description; I do not pretend to conceal in what quarter I think that fitness most eminently resides; I do not subscribe to the doctrines which have been advanced, that in times like the present the fitness of individuals for their political situation is no part of the consideration to which a member of parliament may fairly turn his attention. I know not a more solemn or important duty that a member of parliament can have to discharge, than by giving, at fit seasons, a free opinion upon the character and qualities of public men. Away with the cant of "measures, not men!" the idle supposition that it is the harness and not the horses that draw the chariot along! No, sir, if the comparison must be made, if the distinction must be taken, men are every thing, measures comparatively nothing. I speak, sir, of times of difficulty and danger; of times when systems are shaken, when precedents and general rules of conduct fail. Then it is, that not to this or that measure, however prudently devised, however blameless in execution, but to the energy and character of individuals, a state must be indebted for its salvation. Then it is that kingdoms rise or fall in proportion as they are upheld, not by well-meant endeavours, (laudable though they may be,) but by commanding, overawing talents; by able men. And what is the nature of the times in which we live? Look at France, and see what we have to cope with, and consider what has made her what she is? A man. You will tell me that she was great, and powerful, and formidable, before the days of Bonaparte's government; that he found in her great physical and moral resources; that he had but to turn them to account. True, and he did so. Compare the situation in which he found France with that to which he has raised her. I am no panegyrist of Bonaparte; but I cannot shut my eyes to the superiority of his talents, to the amazing ascendant of his genius. Tell me not of his measures and his policy. It is his genius, his character, that keeps the world in awe. Sir, to meet, to check, to curb, to stand up against him, we want arms of the same kind. I am far from objecting to the large military establishments which are proposed to you. I vote for them with all my heart. But for the purpose of coping with Bonaparte, one great commanding spirit is worth them all. This is my undisguised opinion.

ON THE STATE OF THE EMPIRE.—JUNE 24, 1808.

America, sir, is the next subject of the honourable gentleman's speech which I shall notice. Of nearly all that has passed between the two countries, the house and the public have been put in possession by the publications of the American government. I presume that the honourable gentleman does not intend to blame his majesty's ministers for not having made similar communications to parliament; for if he had thought such communications necessary, he would doubtless have moved for them. Without censuring their production by the American government, his majesty's ministers have felt that the transaction being pending, any appeal from government to parliament would look as if it were concluded. I shall only state, that in the whole conduct of the British government, with respect to the affair of the Chesa-

peake, we have endeavoured to keep in view the principle upon which we set out: namely, to make ample reparation for that which was a decidedly wrong act; but to make that reparation under a firm determination not to surrender a right which the great majority of the country has ever considered as essential to its dearest interests. Sir, I may boldly appeal to the country to determine whether, from the correspondence on the table of the house, any such disposition on the part of his majesty's ministers has appeared through the whole transaction. That the rupture of the negotiation on this subject was not attended with any hostile feeling on either side is an incontrovertible truth. The reparation was not accepted by America, because America would not fulfil the condition on which alone it was tendered; namely, the revocation of that proclamation by which British ships were not allowed to enter the harbours of America, while those of the enemy visited them at pleasure. But, sir, the manner in which the British reparation was tendered to America by a special mission, was, to all the feelings of nice honour, an effective reparation; and so, in fact, we have every reason to believe that it was considered by the American government. With respect, sir, to the embargo, and to the probable effects of the orders in council in producing its abandonment, the honourable gentleman has mis-stated my right honourable friend's propositions. The honourable gentleman declares my right honourable friend to have predicted that the orders in council would do away the embargo; whereas my right honourable friend only argued, in opposition to the honourable gentleman on the other side, that the orders in council did not produce the embargo; that they were not substantively known in America when the embargo took place; and that they were not included in the complaint made by the American government to congress, on which complaint the embargo was founded. Nor, sir, do I think that the orders in council themselves could have produced any irritation in America. If I were not disposed on this occasion to avoid making any observations that might be suspected of a party feeling, I would say, that I do think the irritation in America may have been produced by the echo of the discussions in this house. Sir, since the return of Mr. Rose, no communication has been made by the American government, in the form of complaint, or remonstrance, or irritation, or of any description whatever. I mention this particularly, because it is notorious that there have been several arrivals from America supposed to be of great importance, and that several special messengers have reached this country from thence, after having touched at France. But, sir, if the honourable gentleman, in the execution of his public duty, had thought fit to move for any communications that had been made by the American government since the departure of Mr. Rose, my answer must have been, not that his majesty's government were disinclined to make them, but that absolutely there were none to make. If it be asked why? I am unable satisfactorily to reply. I can only conjecture that America has entered into negotiations with France, which are expected to lead to some result, and that the communications of America to this country are to be contingent on that result. This, sir, is conjecture alone; but it is founded on the extraordinary circumstance of so many arrivals without any communication. It cannot be expected of me, that I should state prospectively what are the views of his majesty's government on this subject. The principle by which they have hitherto been guided, they will continue invariably to pursue. They attach as much value to the restoration, and to the continuance of cordiality, and perfect good understanding with America, as any men can do; they are ready to purchase that advantage by every justifiable conciliation; they have proved that readiness by the act of the present session, in which the trade of America has been placed on the most favourable footing; but, sir, they are not ready to purchase that advantage, great as they acknowledge it to be, at the price of the surrender of those rights, on which the naval power and preponderance of Great Britain are immutably fixed.

ON THE STATE OF THE NATION.

It appears to be a measure of party to run down the fame of Mr. Pitt. I could not answer it to my conscience or to my feelings if I had suffered repeated provocations to pass without notice. Mr. Pitt, it seems, was not a great man. Is it then that we live in such heroic times—that the present is a race of such gigantic talents and qualities as to render those of Mr. Pitt, in the comparison, ordinary and contemptible? Who, then, is the man now living—is there any man now sitting in this House, who by taking the measure of his own mind, or of that of any of his contemporaries, can feel himself justified in pronouncing that Mr. Pitt was not a great man? I admire as much as any man the abilities and ingenuity of the honourable and learned gentleman who promulgated this opinion. I do not deny to him many of the qualities which go to constitute the character which he has described. But I think I may defy all his ingenuity to frame any definition of that character which shall not apply to Mr. Pitt—to trace any circle of greatness from which Mr. Pitt shall be excluded.

I have no manner of objection to see placed on the same pedestal with Mr. Pitt, for the admiration of the present age and of posterity, other distinguished men, and amongst them his great rival, whose memory is, I have no doubt, as dear to the honourable gentlemen opposite, as that of Mr. Pitt is to those who loved him living, and who revere him dead. But why should the admiration of one be incompatible with justice to the other? Why cannot we cherish the remembrance of the respective objects of our veneration, leaving to each other a similar freedom? For my own part, I disclaim such a spirit of intolerance. Be it the boast and the characteristic of the school of Pitt, that, however provoked by illiberal and unjust attacks upon his memory, whether in speeches in this House, or in calumnies out of it, they will never so far forget the respect due to him or to themselves, as to be betrayed into reciprocal illiberality and unjustice—that they disdain to retaliate upon the memory of Mr. Pitt's great rival.

INDEMNITY BILL.—MARCH 11, 1818.

How often have we heard in this House heart-rending declamations about the cruelty of despotism, and the selfishness of warriors, which sacrificed myriads at the altar of ambition. Nay, sometimes even, though rarely, gentlemen on the other side of the House, have expressed their indignation at Bonaparte himself, who considered the inhabitants of a great empire as mere raw materials for working out his own false glory. All this is certainly bad enough: but what can be said of those, who even without the apology of this motive, which, pernicious as it is, has yet its dazzling charms for weak human nature, what shall be said of those who, with cold calculation, enter the cottage of poverty, not to sympathize with the condition of the wretched inhabitant and his starving family, and to relieve it, but calmly to guage his misery, that they may ascertain his capacity for mischief; not to rescue him from ruin, but in hopes that they may find him fitted to be an agent to assist in the ruin of his country? These are the men against whom the crime of violating the constitution is chargeable; these are the men against whom the suspension of the habeas corpus was aimed; and yet these are the men who are to be put in the judgment seat, while ministers are to be tried on their accusation, and condemned by their evidence. And this is recommended to the House as the due course of retributive justice!

But the honourable baronet (Sir F. Burdett) has made, it seems, a most ingenious discovery; he has found out, that as the whole nation were determined on parliamentary reform, ministers had no other means of saving themselves from the consequences of that mighty change, than by inventing plots,

and fomenting conspiracies. Does the honourable baronet imagine that he can persuade any one that this is the real state of the case? Does he imagine, that by any mode of division or multiplication, which he may adopt for his reform petitions, whether he presents them in tens, signed by thousands, or in thousands, signed by tens, does he really flatter himself that he can persuade the House, or himself, that parliamentary reform is a favourite measure with the people of England? Does he suppose that the great body of the nation cares one jot about his wild plans of annual parliaments, and universal suffrage? Nay, can he reconcile to himself the justice or consistency of his plan of universal suffrage, as it is called? How can he excuse the omission of females, and of the insane, from the classes of electors and representatives? Oh! calumniated females! Oh! calumniated insane! Is it from dread of the power of the female sex—or from jealousy of the wisdom of insanity? For my part, I feel assured, that whatever measure of exclusion may be dealt to the women, the insane portion of the community have been excluded from the petitions hitherto presented, only that they may come forward hereafter, with more weight and effect, in a petition, subscribed exclusively by themselves; and that the day is not far distant, when the honourable baronet shall present a petition for reform from the inhabitants of the receptacle near Kennington, vouching for the respectful tenor of its language, and pledging himself for the constitutional temperance of its argument.

But, sir, if this would be consistent in the honourable baronet, what shall be said of the honourable and learned gentleman who has just sat down, (Mr. Brougham,) who, in his heart, laughs at all these schemes of reform, and looks with the profoundest scorn on all who entertain them:—of him, who knows that every petition on this subject comes either from deluders or deluded; yet, under a pretence that he is a friend to something like a reform, will, every now and then, support such petitions for the mere purpose of popularity. That honourable and learned gentleman has apologized for pronouncing an eloquent panegyric on the constitution, which he apprehends to have been brought into danger by the acts of this House. If the constitution was in danger, sure, very sure am I, that it was a danger of a very different sort from any which could be cured by inflaming and maddening the people. Who are the best friends of the people? those who are always ringing in their ears the extent and imprescriptibility of their rights, or those who, while they tell them of their rights, tell them they have duties also? I would say to the real friends of the people, instruct, enlighten them, and then there will be no danger; but do not teach them to nourish an envious jealousy of wealth, a hatred of rank, and a general malignity at all superiority. It is, indeed, the proud boast of our glorious constitution, that the poorest peasant may emerge from the meanest hut, and himself, or in his descendants, rise to the highest rank of the state. But let there at least remain high ranks for them to rise to. To level ranks would not be to equalize, but to destroy, to confound the elements of society, and to produce universal degradation. But I ask whether every man who hears me does not know that either in his own immediate neighbourhood, or in districts of which he has knowledge, a sedulous and wicked activity has been employed in disseminating the doctrines of discontent, and exasperating suffering into malignity? I ask whether hatred to government, as government, not merely to particular individuals, (a tax which those who fill ostensible situations in the state must make up their minds to bear as they may,) but to government by whomsoever administered, to eminence as eminence, to rank as rank, have not been industriously inculcated? Whether the crown and its ministers have not been proscribed as the natural enemies of the people? And this House held up to peculiar detestation and horror, as the tyrants of the commons, whom they are especially bound to protect? The starving artizan is told, by his mischievous seducer, that all his distress arises from an imperfect representation in parliament. If this

assertion means any thing, it must mean this—that parliament, as at present constituted, encourages unnecessary wars; that unnecessary wars produce extravagant expenditure; that extravagant expenditure produces exorbitant taxation; and that exorbitant taxation produces overwhelming misery. Now what is the inference of the parliamentary reformers? Is it that parliament, more popularized, more democratically constituted, would be less inclined to war? I appeal to all history, ancient or modern, whether democratic states have not always been fondest of war. Look at Athens, look at Rome, look at the petty republics of more modern times. Was not the appetite for war in all these governments perpetually excited and perpetually indulged? Would the case be different among ourselves? Is it not notorious that the humblest peasants in this country have been used to sympathize with the victories of its warriors, and to feel themselves partakers in their honour? True it is that of late a chill philosophy has been busy in numbing even this, the natural enthusiasm of a brave people; in sophisticating their feelings and bewildering their reason; in rendering them dead to the glories of Waterloo, but tremblingly alive to the imperfections of Old Sarum. But it will not do; and I must say that I distrust the sense of any man who can build a hope of discomfiture to ministers on the popularity of parliamentary reform.

It is not against parliamentary reform, but against the frantic follies circulated under that pretext, and the mischiefs attempted to be perpetrated under the shadow of its name, that government appealed to parliament, and that parliament had recourse to the Suspension Act. That act is happily at an end. I am not disposed to undervalue the evil of its enactment, whether in itself or whether considered as a precedent for other times. But they surely read but ill the signs of the present times, who think that in or out of parliament there is a leaning against popular rights and feelings. How strangely do topics survive the occasions which produce them. Not more idle was it in the rhetoricians of imperial Rome to make declamations in favour of Brutus, ages after the extinction of Roman liberty, than it is in the patriots of these days to pretend an apprehension of arbitrary power, and to rail against enslaved parliaments and an usurping crown.

The dangers which now threaten society are of a different kind, and come in an opposite direction; and it is the duty of parliament to provide with equal watchfulness not only against the blast of the lightning from above, but against the destructive explosion from below.

But let us hope that these dangers are for the present passed away. If, in the hour of peril, the statue of liberty has been veiled for a moment, let it be confessed in justice that the hands whose painful duty it was to spread that veil, have not been the least prompt to remove it. If the palladium of the constitution has for a moment trembled in its shrine, let it be acknowledged that through the vigilance and constancy of those whose duty it was to see that the fabric took no harm, the shrine itself has been preserved from profanation, and the temple stands firm and unimpaired.

ON THE CATHOLIC CLAIMS.—JUNE 22, 1812.

We read, sir, in the history of ancient Rome, that when one of the armies of the republic had fallen into the power of the enemy, and was surrounded by the Samnites at the Caudine Forks, the victorious general, desirous to make the most of the advantage which he had obtained, despatched a message to his father, a senator celebrated for his wisdom, to counsel him as to the most expedient mode of disposing of his captives.—"Dismiss them unransomed and unmolested," was the answer of the aged senator. This was a strain of generosity too high for the comprehension of the son. He re-despatched his messenger to consult his oracle again. The answer then was, "Exterminate them to the last man." This advice was so unlike the former,

that it excited a suspicion that the old man's intellects were deranged: he was brought to the camp to explain the discordancy of his counsel. "By my first advice," said he, "which was the best, I recommended to you to ensure the everlasting gratitude of a powerful people; by my second, which was the worst, I pointed out to you the policy of getting rid of a dangerous enemy. There is no third way. *Tertium nullum consilium.*" When asked, what if a middle course should be taken, what if they should be dismissed unhurt, but if at the same time harsh laws should be imposed upon them as a conquered enemy? "*Ista quidem sententia,*" said the old man, "*ea est, quæ neque amicos parat neque inimicos tollit.*" The son, however, unhappily for his country, thought himself wiser than his father; the middle course was adopted: he neither liberated the Romans, nor exterminated them; he passed their necks under the yoke, and sent them home.

Of the cruelties exercised against the first reformers by the ancient church, then struggling for the maintenance of its authority, history speaks with just horror and indignation. But can any man now entertain a serious apprehension that it is necessary to be on our guard against their recurrence? Good God, sir, what should we say if the early violences of the reformation itself were to be arrayed against Protestants as a lasting and inexpiable reproach? If the outrages and extravagancies of the Anabaptists of Munster—the tyrannical caprices of Henry VIII.—the severities of the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth—the burning of Servetus, by Calvin, at Geneva—the coarse and sacrilegious fury of John Knox and his followers in Scotland—nay, and the oath taken by King William himself—were to be alleged as evidence that the several descriptions of reformed religion are necessarily and eternally of a violent and sanguinary character? We should object to such an inference as absurd and unjustifiable; and may not the Catholics of the present day protest in like manner against conclusions being drawn against them, from the crimes and cruelties, the perfidies and atrocities, of those who held the same faith two hundred years ago?

I have been shocked at seeing exposed to sale, in the shop-windows of this metropolis, an address to the worst passions of the vulgar, entitled "An Awful Warning, or the Massacre of St. Bartholomew." Who the writer is I know not. It is not right to attribute bad motives to any man, but I am at a loss to conceive a good one for such a publication as this which I hold in my hand. Why publish such a narrative at the present moment? What purpose, what legitimate feeling can it be intended to gratify? What have the public now to do with Charles the Ninth and Admiral Coligny? By what sentiment can any one feel himself called upon at this time of day to narrate that the Guises sprinkled themselves with the blood of their unfortunate victim, and that the Duke d'Angouleme viewed his butchered corpse with emotions of delight? Why represent these horrid scenes to the eyes of the populace? What good can it do to recall the memory of them? If the torch of religious animosity could be rekindled at the present moment, what would the effect be but to risk the safety of the British empire? This mischievous publication is illustrated by plates, to heighten the horrors of the narrative. In one is exhibited the assassination of Coligny, in another the Duke d'Angouleme dipping his handkerchief in his blood. Does not this mode of illustration clearly show to what description of readers the publication is peculiarly addressed? upon what class of understandings it is intended to operate?

But neither are there wanting other indications of the same purpose; among these is the dedication. It is dedicated to the memory of that eminent and virtuous man whose loss in this house we are still deploring, and who, had he been alive, warm as he was in his resistance to the question now before the house, would assuredly have disdained and discountenanced such a mode of resisting it. The dedication is as follows:—"Sacred to the memory of the Right Honourable Spencer Perceval, prime minister of these realms, whose

relative situation in respect of the established religion of the united kingdom, was similar to that of De Coligny in France." What does this mean? How was Mr. Perceval's situation, with respect to the established religion of this kingdom, similar to that of De Coligny with respect to the established religion of France? So much for the accuracy of the fact. This circumstance is one which also clearly shows for what scale of intellect this writer calculated his publication. On human beings, capable of investigation and discussion, he knew that he should make no impression; he therefore directed his efforts to infuriate the mob—not, I hope, in this day, to be infuriated by such unhallowed means. The dedication proceeds, after this comparison between the situation of Mr. Perceval and that of the Admiral De Coligny, to say that Mr. Perceval "fell *like him*, a martyr to his duty to his king, to his country, and to his God." History, we know, is sufficiently liable to misrepresentation and perversion; but so shameless an attempt as this, within one short month after the transaction to which it refers, I should think is not to be found in the records of historical falsification.

If, sir, with a deep sense of a dispensation so awful and afflicting as that with which we have recently been visited, it may yet be permitted to us to render thanks to Providence for having intermixed some qualification of mercy in its wrath, that gratitude is justly due, when we imagine to our minds the mischiefs that might have been occasioned, had the desperate wretch who committed this detested deed been either a Catholic or an Irishman. It is very possible that he might have been either, or both, and yet not have been influenced by any motive of religious fanaticism. But I appeal to the common sense of the house, whether, if by accident, the assassin of Mr. Perceval had been born in the sister island, if by accident he had been a Roman Catholic, (as, in the paragraph I have just read to them, it is not asserted indeed, but, with jesuitical ambiguity, is more than insinuated;) whether, I say, the same blind zeal which is manifested in this publication, would not in all probability have availed itself of that circumstance to stir up a furious and fanatical spirit, which might have laid both countries in blood? * * *

The mention of the name of Mr. Burke, and of that of my late right honourable friend, naturally suggests the consideration of the authorities by which the view that I take of the great question now before us, has been supported or opposed. No man can deem more highly than I do of the sagacity, the integrity, the force of my late right honourable friend's understanding; of the purity of his mind, the charity of his temper, and the unaffected piety by which he was so eminently distinguished. But, considering this, as I must always do, as a great state question, I hope I may be excused if I cannot put his authority in competition with the united authorities of so many great men who have preceded him; with the authority, not of Mr. Burke alone, who, on this as well as on other subjects, outran with a prophetic celerity the progress of the public sentiment, and had arrived many years ago at that opinion in which I believe it may be said that the generality of the public are now agreed; not only of Mr. Fox, whose general love of liberty, and whose ardent and hardy and uncomprising spirit naturally inclined him to extend to the widest range the limits of freedom and toleration; not only, I say, with the authorities of these great men—men who, being of a warm and sanguine temperament, might be subjected to the accusation of adopting too eagerly every proposition which tended towards the liberty of mankind: but to these are to be added the name of Mr. Windham, whose mind was cast in a different mould, whose disposition, so far from being rash and sanguine, inclined him rather to view every approach to an enlargement of popular privilege with jealousy, and to suspect all general propositions of fallacy and danger. I must add also the great and venerable name of Mr. Pitt, whose generous philanthropy, whose attachment to civil and religious liberty, were as warm and sincere as those of any man that ever lived; but in whom these feelings were

tempered and disciplined by early habits of business and long practical experience, which had taught him to examine specious theories with distrust, and to build his plans for the public good on sure and solid foundations. If then the question were to rest upon authority, I could have no apprehension as to the decision.

But it is not the influence of the clergy alone that is an object of apprehension. The great body of Irish Catholics are, it is said, in the hands of agitators, who wish to keep their discontents alive; who care not for the professed object of Catholic desire, but look to ulterior purposes of mischief, to separation and revolution. If this be so, we can only defeat the evil intentions of such men in two ways: either by correcting their disposition, or by taking away their means. The former is beyond human power. Let us avail ourselves of the latter. Let us remove those circumstances which, operating upon the feelings of the Catholics, render them fit instruments in the hands of agitators for the promotion of such dangerous designs. I am inclined to believe that there *are* those who have ulterior views and objects. Of those who are the most clamorous for concession, there are some, I do believe, who would be most disappointed if that concession were granted. And next to the gratification which I should feel in tranquillizing a loyal and high-minded people, by the introduction of that equality of rights, without which there can be no reciprocal liking and confidence, is that of disappointing the guilty hopes of those who delight not in tranquillity and concord, but in grievances and remonstrance; who use their sincere and warm-hearted countrymen as screens to their own ambitious purposes; and who consider a state of turbulence and discontent as best suited to the ends which they have in view. That state it may be their wish to prolong, but so much the rather is it our interest and our duty to terminate it as speedily as possible.

ON FOREIGN TREATIES.—NOV. 17, 1813.

WITH reference, however, to the vote of this night, as far as it may be considered prospective, as to the exertions we are called upon in future to make, I must observe, that even if our hopes of peace should be postponed, or even disappointed, is it nothing to reflect upon the posture we are enabled to assume, by the achievements we have already performed? Is it nothing to look back upon the fallen, the crouching attitude of enslaved Europe, at a period not long distant, and compare it with the upright, free, undaunted posture in which she now stands? Living memory can recall no period when she was entitled to hold her head so high, and to bid such bold defiance to her enemy. What, let me ask, is the first and brightest fruit of the late successful conflict? First, that continuity of system, that instrument of not wholly ineffectual hostility against Great Britain, which, until lately, was supposed to be growing in strength and perfection, has been destroyed; that complex machine directed against our trade has received a blow which has shivered it to atoms! The enemy is doubly defeated; his arms and his artifices have failed: burdened as it was, still there is something in the incompressible nature of commerce which rises under the weight of the most powerful tyranny; his efforts have been exhausted; his monarchy was reduced to sink our commerce; but, rising with tenfold vigour, it has defied his puny efforts, never to be repeated. The next point that we have attained is, the destruction of his own darling system of confederation! I mean, that system by which he had formed all the states of continental Europe into satellites of the French empire, that moved only as it moved, and acted only by its influence. They are now emancipated; the yoke has been removed from their shoulders: the nations rise superior to themselves,

> "Free, and to none accountable, preferring
> Hard liberty, before the easy yoke
> Of servile pomp."

But, since all the events of war are precarious, is it impossible, that after retiring awhile, the tyrant of Europe (now no longer its tyrant) may again burst forward, and again, with desolation in his train, awhile victorious, attempt to collect the fragments of that system, and to reconstruct that mighty engine which we have shattered, but which once, guided by his hand, hurled destruction on his foes? It is impossible. After the defeats that he has sustained, all confidence between him and his vassal states must be annihilated. Admitting that they may be compelled again to act, can he rely upon their exertions, or can they depend upon his support? He may go forth like that foul idol, of which we heard so much in the last year, crushing his helpless victims beneath his chariot wheels; but he never again can yoke them to his car as willing instruments of destruction. Even if Austria, by base submission to the sacrifice of her honour, were to add the sacrifice of another daughter, and of another army of 30,000 men, that mutual confidence which existed at the commencement of the last campaign can never be restored.

So much for the present state of Europe: but has this country gained nothing by the glorious contest, even supposing peace should be far distant? Is it nothing to Great Britain, even purchased at the high price stated by the noble lord, that under all the severity of her sufferings, while her trade declined, her military character has been exalted? Is it no satisfaction, no compensation to her, to reflect that the splendid scenes displayed on the continent are owing to her efforts? that the victories of Germany are to be attributed to our victories in the peninsula? That spark, often feeble, sometimes so nearly extinguished as to excite despair in all hearts that were not above it, which we lighted in Portugal, which was fed and nourished there, has at length burst into a flame that has dazzled and illuminated Europe. Shall it then be said, that this struggle has had no effect upon the military character of Great Britain? At the commencement of this war, our empire rested upon one majestic column, our naval power. In the prosecution of the war, a hero has raised another stupendous pillar of strength to support our monarchy—our military pre-eminence. It is now that we may boast not only of superiority at sea, but on shore: the same energy and heroism exist in both the arms of Great Britain; they are rivals in strength, but inseparable in glory If, at a future period, by successes which we cannot foresee, and by aggressions which we cannot resist, war should again be threatened upon our own shores, what consolation will the reflection afford, that out of the calamities and the privations of war has arisen a principle of safety, that, superior to all attacks, shall survive through ages, to which even our posterity shall look forward! Compare the situation of England with her condition even at the beginning of the last campaign, much more with her condition at the renewal of the war. Were we not then threatened by the aggressions of an enemy even upon our own shores; were we not then trembling for the safety and sanctity even of our homes? Now contemplate Wellington encamped on the Bidassoa! I know that a sickly sensibility prevails abroad, which leads some to doubt whether the advance of Lord Wellington was not rash and precipitate. Of the political expediency of that advance I can entertain but one opinion: I cannot enter into that refinement which induces those who affect to know much, to hesitate upon the subject; I cannot look with regret at a British army encamped upon the fertile plains of France: I cannot believe that any new grounds for apprehension are raised by an additional excitement being afforded to the irritability of the French people: I foresee no disadvantage resulting from entering the territories of our enemy, not as the conquered but the conquerors: I cannot believe that there are any so weak as to imagine that England wishes to maintain a position within the heart of the enemy's country, or that Spain will attempt to extend her dominion beyond that vast chain of impregnable mountains that seem to form her natural boundary. What is the fact? The Portuguese are now looking upon the

walls of Bayonne, "that circles in those wolves" which would have devastated their capital; the Portuguese now behold, planted on the towers of Bayonne, that standard which their enemy would have made to float upon the walls of Lisbon. I cannot think it a matter of regret that Spaniards are now recovering, from the grasp of an enemy on his own shores, that diadem which was stripped from the brow of the Bourbons, to be pocketed by an usurper. I cannot think it a matter of regret that England, formerly threatened with invasion, is now the invader—that France, instead of England, is the scene of conflict:

"——Ultro Inachias venisset ad urbes
Dardanus, et versis lugeret Græcia fatis."

I cannot think all this matter of regret; and of those who believe that the nation or myself are blinded by our successes, I entreat that they will leave me to my delusion, and keep their philosophy to themselves. There are other observations, growing not only out of the proceedings of the last year, but since the commencement of the war, that to my mind are highly consoling. It is a fact acknowledged by all, that our enemy, who has enslaved the press, and made it contribute so importantly to his own purposes of ambition, at various periods, during the hostilities, has endeavoured to impress upon all those who are likely to be our allies, a notion, that Great Britain only fought to secure her own interest, that her views were completely selfish. That illusion is now destroyed, and the designs of this country are vindicated by recent events. We call on all the powers with whom we are at war, to do us justice in this respect: above all, we claim it of America, with which, as much as any man, I wish for reconciliation. If she were now hesitating and wavering, which of the two great contending parties she should join, would not the conduct of England now decide the doubt? I ask her to review her own, and the policy of this country, and to acknowledge that we are deserving, not only of her confidence, but of the support of mankind. Now she can behold Bonaparte in his naked deformity, stripped of the false glory which success had cast around him—the spell of his invincibility is now dissolved—she can now look at him without that awe which an uninterrupted series of victories had created. Were she now to survey him as he is, what would be the result? She would trace him by the desolation of empires, and the dismemberment of states; she would see him pursuing his course over the ruins of men and of things: slavery to the people, and destruction to commerce—hostility to literature, to light, and life, were the principles on which he acted. His object was, to extinguish patriotism, and to confound allegiance—to darken as well as to enslave—to roll back the tide of civilization—to barbarize, as well as to desolate mankind. Then let America turn from this disgusting picture, these scenes of bloodshed and horror, and compare with them the effect of British interference! She will see that wherever this country has exerted herself, it has been to raise the fallen and to support the falling—to raise, not to degrade the national character—to rouse the sentiments of patriotism which tyranny had silenced—to enlighten, to reanimate, to liberate. Great Britain has resuscitated Spain, and recreated Portugal. Germany is now a nation as well as a name, and all these glorious effects have been produced by the efforts and by the example of our country. If to be the deliverers of Europe; if to have raised our own national character, not upon the ruins of other kingdoms; if to meet dangers without shrinking, and to possess courage rising with difficulties be admirable, surely we may not unreasonably hope for the applause of the world. If we have founded our strength upon a rock, and possess the implicit confidence of those allies we have succoured when they seemed beyond relief, then, I say, that our exertions during the last year, all our efforts during the war, are cheaply purchased. If we have burdened ourselves, we have relieved others, and we

have the inward, the soul-felt, the proud satisfaction of knowing that a selfish charge is that which, with the faintest shadow of justice, cannot be brought against us.

NEGOTIATION RELATIVE TO SPAIN.—APRIL 14, 1824.

WITH regard to the independence of the Spanish colonies in America, he also wished to say a few words by way of explanation. Undoubtedly it would have been much more agreeable to him not to be called upon to give an explanation upon an event which might only be contingent. Unfortunately, however, no choice was left him at the present moment. As long as peace prevailed on the continent, and Spain had no enemy in Europe to contend with, so long it was a matter of discretion with the British government, whether it would or would not call the attention of Spain to the undeniable fact, that she had lost all her influence in her American provinces—that all her efforts to regain it have been, and still were, useless and ineffectual; and that her wisest policy was to enter, as soon as possible, into an accommodation with them—an accommodation founded, indeed, upon the basis of recognising their independence, but qualified with any advantages which the mother country might think proper to stipulate, and the colonies in return to grant. Indeed, advice to that effect had already been given to her by this country. We had told her that we should ask of her colonies no commercial advantages, as we conceived the superiority should be reserved to her as the mother country; and all that we were inclined to demand was, that we should be placed in the same situation with other favoured nations. More than once it had been hinted to us, that our good offices between Spain and her colonies would be favourably received by the mother country. The answer which had been invariably returned to such applications was, that we were willing to interfere with our good offices, if our recognition of the independence of the colonies were not to be made determinable on the issue of the negotiations. At present, however, the case was entirely changed. As Spain had now an active and powerful European enemy, it became necessary for England to declare in what light she looked upon the struggling provinces of South America: for as Spain still retained the dominion *de jure* over them, though she had lost the dominion *de facto;* as France might send forth her fleets and armies to seize and conquer them; and as, at the conclusion of the war, arrangements might be made between the two nations regarding the conquest or the cession of them, the British government had felt itself called upon to state, that it considered the separation of the colonies from Spain to have been effected to such a degree, that it would not tolerate for an instant any cession which Spain might make of colonies over which she did not exercise a direct and positive influence. To such a declaration the British government had at last been forced. Without staying to examine whether it had been made prematurely or not, he would once more repeat, that to such a declaration we had at length, by necessity, been driven, and that the justice and propriety of it had not yet been disputed by either party.

FOREIGN ENLISTMENT BILL.—APRIL 16, 1823.

GOOD God! is it to become a maxim with this country that she is ever to be a belligerant? Is she never, under any possible state of circumstances, to remain neutral? If this proposition be good for any thing, it must run to this extent—that our position, insulated as it is from all the rest of the world, moves us so far from the scene of continental warfare, that we ought always to be belligerant—that we are bound to counteract the designs of Providence, to reject the advantages of nature, and to render futile and erroneous the description of the poet, who has said to our honour that we were less prone to war and tumult, on account of our happy situa-

tion, than the neighbouring nations that lie conterminous with one another. But wherefore this dread of a neutrality? If gentlemen look to the page of history, they will find that for centuries past, whenever there has been a war in Europe, we have almost always been belligerant. The fact is undoubtedly so; but I am not prepared to lay it down as a principle, that if, at the beginning of a war, we should happen to maintain a species of neutrality, it was an unnatural thing that we should do so. Gentlemen say, that we must be drawn into a war, sooner or later. Why, then, I answer, let it be later. I say, if we are to be drawn into a war, let us be drawn into it on grounds clearly British. I do not say—God forbid I should—that it is no part of the duty of Great Britain to protect what is termed the balance of power, and to aid the weak against the insults of the strong. I say, on the contrary, that to do so is her bounden duty; but I affirm also, that we must take care to do our duty to ourselves. The first condition of engaging in any war—the *sine quâ non* of every such undertaking—is, that the war must be just; the second, that being just in itself, we can also with justice engage in it; and the third, that being just in its nature, and it being possible for us justly to embark in it, we can so interfere without detriment or prejudice to ourselves. I contend that he is a visionary politician who leaves this last condition out of the question; and I say further, that though the glorious abandonment of it may sound well in the generous speech of an irresponsible orator—with the safety of a nation upon his lips, and none of the responsibility upon his shoulders—it is matter deeply to be considered; and that the minister who should lay it out of his view, in calling on the country to undertake a war, would well deserve that universal censure and reprobation with which the noble lord opposite has this night menaced me. If it be wise for a government, though it cannot prevent an actual explosion, to endeavour to circumscribe the limits, and to lessen the duration of a war, then I say that the position we have taken in the present instance is of more probable efficacy than that in which we should have stood had we suffered ourselves to be drawn into a participation in the contest. Participation, did I say? Sir! is there any man who hears me—is there any man acquainted with the history of the country for the last twenty years, who does not know the way in which Great Britain has been accustomed to participate in a war? Do not gentlemen know that if we now enter into a war, we must take the whole burden of it upon ourselves, and conduct the whole force and exertions of the peninsula? But, supposing such to be our course, how different must be our situation, as compared with former periods. When we last became the defenders of Spain, we fought for and with a united people. What would be the case at present? Any interference on our parts in favour of Spain, must commence with an attempt to unite contending factions, and to stimulate men of opposite interests and opposite feelings, to one grand and simultaneous effort. Now, I do not hesitate to say, that the man who would undertake to do this under present circumstances, must either be possessed of supernatural means of information, or of a hardihood which I may envy, but shall not attempt to imitate. I say that those men will not consult the true dignity of the country, who, finding fault with the part we have adopted, wish to indemnify themselves by endeavouring to make us perform that part amiss. Our course is neutrality—strict neutrality; and, in the name of God, let us adhere to it. If you dislike that course—if you think it injurious to the honour or interests of the country—drive from their places those neutral ministers who have adopted it; but until you are prepared to declare war, you are bound to adhere to and to act upon the system which ministers have laid down.

I stated a few evenings ago that we could have no difficulty in the course which we had to pursue, in observance of a strict neutrality. We have spent much time in teaching other powers the nature of a strict neutrality; and generally speaking, we found them most reluctant scholars. All I now call upon the house to do, is to adopt the same course which it has recommended

to neutral powers upon former occasions. If I wished for a guide in a system of neutrality, I should take that laid down by America, in the days of the presidency of Washington, and the secretaryship of Jefferson.

ADDRESS ON THE KING'S SPEECH.—1824.

He knew that it was maintained by some, that England ought to set herself up as a barrier for all Europe, against principles of a despotic tendency; but he could not be persuaded that it was the policy of England to do lightly any act which might plunge herself and all Europe into a bloody and unceasing war. Of all the wars—and unhappily we had experienced but too many varieties of them—of all the wars which we had seen, and which had brought desolation in their train, the wars of opinion had been decidedly the most fatal; and a single spark, flashing unhappily from the hasty zeal of England, might light up a conflagration on the continent, which no after exertions could extinguish—might lead to a contest of opinions and principles which would divide all the nations of Europe, and only terminate, probably, with the total destruction of one of the contending factions. Was this, then, an object for England to aim at? Was this to be laid down as the intent by which ministers were to regulate their conduct? Or, might they be allowed to say, that their object was peace, be the component parts of that peace more or less perfect?—to see England moving steadily on in her own orbit, without looking too nicely to the conduct of the powers in alliance with her—to see her content with her own glory, and by that glory exciting other nations to arrive at the same advantages which her peculiar system had bestowed upon her; but not, by a wild crusade or endeavour, to force those advantages upon free countries, converting blessings into curses as respected them, and courting danger and difficulty as regarded herself? It was this course which he took to be the true policy of England. It was with this view to peace, while peace might be maintained, that his majesty's government had acted, and were prepared to act. But it did not follow, because they forbore to seek for difference, that when it came, it would not find them on the alert; or that the strength which had slumbered would be the less effective when called into action.

ON THE KING'S SPEECH.—FEB. 15, 1825.

I now turn to that other part of the honourable and learned gentleman's speech, in which he acknowledges his acquiescence in the passages of the address echoing the satisfaction felt at the success of the liberal commercial principles adopted by this country, and at the steps taken for recognising the new states of America. It does happen, however, that the honourable and learned gentlemen being not unfrequently a speaker in this house, nor very concise in his speeches, and touching occasionally, as he proceeds, on almost every subject within the range of his imagination, as well as making some observations on the matter in hand—and having, at different periods proposed and supported every innovation of which the law or constitution of the country is susceptible—it is impossible to innovate, without appearing to borrow from him. Either, therefore, we must remain for ever absolutely locked up as in a northern winter, or we must break our way out by some mode already suggested by the honourable and learned gentleman, and then he cries out, "Ah, I was there before you! That is what I told you to do; but, as you would not do it then, you have no right to do it now." In Queen Anne's reign there lived a very sage and able critic, named Dennis, who, in his old age, was the prey of a strange fancy, that he had himself written all the good things in all the good plays that were acted. Every good passage he met with in any author, he insisted was his own. "It is none of his," Dennis

would always say; "no, it's mine!" He went one day to see a new tragedy. Nothing particularly good to his taste occurred, till a scene in which a great storm was represented. As soon as he heard the thunder rolling over head, he exclaimed, "That's my thunder!" So it is with the honourable and learned gentleman; it's all his thunder. It will henceforth be impossible to confer any boon, or make any innovation, but he will claim it as his thunder. But it is due to him to acknowledge that he does not claim every thing; he will be content with the exclusive merit of the liberal measures relating to trade and commerce. Not desirous of violating his own principles, by claiming a monopoly of foresight and wisdom, he kindly throws overboard to my honourable and learned friend (Sir J. Mackintosh) near him, the praise of South America. I should like to know whether, in some degree, this also is not his thunder. He thinks it right itself; but lest we should be too proud, if he approved our conduct *in toto*, he thinks it wrong in point of time. I differ from him essentially; for if I pique myself on any thing in this affair, it is the time. That, at some time or other, states which had separated themselves from the mother country, should or should not be admitted to the rank of independent nations, is a proposition to which no possible dissent could be given. The whole question was one of time and mode. There were two modes: one a reckless and headlong course, by which we might have reached our object at once, but at the expense of drawing upon us consequences not highly to be estimated; the other was more strictly guarded in point of principle; so that, while we pursued our own interests, we took care to give no just cause of offence to other powers.

ON UNLAWFUL SOCIETIES IN IRELAND.—FEB. 15, 1825.

In the next place, are we prepared to say that these and other acts of the Catholic Association have no tendency to excite and inflame animosities? I affirm, without hesitation, that they have directly that tendency; and in support of this affirmation I must beg leave to recur, however solemnly warned against the recurrence, to an expression which I was the first to bring to the notice of the house, but which has been since the subject of repeated animadversion; I mean the adjuration "by the hate you bear to Orangemen," which was used by the association in their address to the Catholics of Ireland.

Various and not unamusing have been the attempts of gentlemen who take the part of the association, to get rid of this most unlucky phrase, or at least to dilute and attenuate its obvious and undeniable meaning. It is said to be unfair to select one insulated expression as indicating the general spirit of the proceedings of any public body. Granted;—if the expression had escaped in the heat of debate, if it had been struck out by the collision of argument, if it had been thrown forth in haste, and had been upon reflection recalled: but if the words are found in a document which was prepared with care and considered with deliberation—if it is notorious that they were pointed out as objectionable when they were first proposed by the framers of the address, but were nevertheless upon argument retained—surely we are not only justified in receiving them as an indication at least of the *animus* of those who used them; but we should be rejecting the best evidence of that *animus*, if we passed over so well weighed a manifestation of it.

Were not this felt by honourable gentlemen on the other side to be true, we should not have seen them so anxious to put forced and fanciful constructions on a phrase which is as plain in its meaning as any which the hand of man ever wrote or the eye of man ever saw. The first defence of this phrase was by an honourable member from Ireland, who told us that the words do not convey the same meaning in the Irish language, which we in England naturally attach to them. I do not pretend to be conversant with the Irish language; and must therefore leave that apology to stand, for what it may be

worth, on the honourable gentleman's erudition and authority. I will not follow every other gentleman who has strained his faculties to explain away this unfortunate expression; but will come at once to my honourable and learned friend, (Sir James Mackintosh,) the member for Knaresborough, to whom the palm in this contest of ingenuity must be conceded by all his competitors. My honourable friend has expended abundant research and subtilty upon this inquiry, and having resolved the phrase into its elements in the crucible of his philosophical mind, has produced it to us purified and refined to a degree that must command the admiration of all who take delight in metaphysical alchemy. My honourable and learned friend began by telling us, that, after all, *hatred* is no bad thing in itself. "I hate a tory," says my honourable friend—"and another man hates a cat; but it does not follow that he would hunt down the cat, or I the tory." Nay, so far from it—hatred, if it be properly managed, is, according to my honourable friend's theory, no bad preface to a rational esteem and affection. It prepares its votaries for a reconciliation of differences—for lying down with their most inveterate enemies, like the leopard and the kid, in the vision of the prophet.

This dogma is a little startling, but it is not altogether without precedent. It is borrowed from a character in a play which is, I dare say, as great a favourite with my learned friend as it is with me—I mean the comedy of *The Rivals;*—in which *Mrs. Malaprop*, giving a lecture on the subject of marriage to her niece, (who is unreasonable enough to talk of liking as a necessary preliminary to such a union,) says, "What have you to do with your likings and your preferences, child? depend upon it, it is safest to begin with a little aversion. I am sure I hated your poor dear uncle like a blackamoor before we were married; and yet you know, my dear, what a good wife I made him." Such is my learned friend's argument to a hair.

But finding that this doctrine did not appear to go down with the house so glibly as he had expected, my honourable and learned friend presently changed his tack; and put forward a theory, which, whether for novelty or for beauty, I pronounce to be incomparable; and, in short, as wanting nothing to recommend it but a slight foundation in truth. "True philosophy," says my honourable friend, "will always contrive to lead men to virtue by the instrumentality of their conflicting vices. The virtues, where more than one exist, may live harmoniously together; but the vices bear mortal antipathy to one another, and therefore furnish to the moral engineer the power by which he can make each keep the other under control." Admirable!—but, upon this doctrine, the poor man who has but one single vice must be in a very bad way. No *fulcrum*, no moral power for effecting *his* cure. Whereas his more fortunate neighbour, who has two or more vices in his composition, is in a fair way of becoming a very virtuous member of society. I wonder how my learned friend would like to have this doctrine introduced into his domestic establishment. For instance, suppose that I discharge a servant because he is addicted to liquor, I could not venture to recommend him to my honourable and learned friend; it might be the poor man's *only* fault, and therefore clearly incorrigible; but if I had the good fortune to find out that he was also addicted to stealing, might I not, with a safe conscience, send him to my learned friend with a very strong recommendation, saying—I send you a man whom I know to be a drunkard: but I am happy to assure you he is also a thief: you cannot do better than employ him: you will make his drunkenness counteract his thievery, and no doubt you will bring him out of the conflict a very moral personage. My honourable and learned friend, however, not content with laying down these new rules for reformation, thought it right to exemplify them in his own person, and like Pope's *Longinus*, to be "himself the great sublime he drew." My learned friend tells us that Dr. Johnson was what he (Dr. Johnson himself) called *a good hater;* and that among the qualities which he hated most were two which my honourable friend unites in

his own person—that of Whig and that of Scotchman. "So that," says my honourable friend, "if Dr. Johnson were alive, and were to meet me at the club, of which he was a founder, and of which I am now an unworthy member, he would probably break up the meeting rather than sit it out in such society."—No, sir, not so. My honourable and learned friend forgets his own theory. If he had been only a Whig, or only a Scotchman, Dr. Johnson might have treated him as he apprehends; but being both, the great moralist would have said to my honourable friend, "Sir, you are too much of a Whig to be a good Scotchman; and, sir, you are too much of a Scotchman to be a good Whig." It is no doubt from the collision of these two vices in my learned friend's person, that he has become what I, and all who have the happiness of meeting him at the club, find him—an entirely faultless character.

For my own part, however, I must say, that I cannot see any hope of obtaining the great moral victory which my learned friend has anticipated—of winning men to the practice of virtue by adjurations addressed to their peculiar vices. I believe, after all these ratiocinations and refinements, we must come back to the plain truth, which is felt even while it is denied—that the phrase, "by the hate you bear to Orangemen," is an indefensible phrase; that it is at least—what alone I am contending that it is—incontestable evidence of the allegation that the Catholic Association does excite animosities in Ireland. It is an expression calculated to offend, provoke, and exasperate the Orangemen; however palatable to those whose hatred of Orangemen it predicates, and, to say the least, does not disapprove.

ON THE STATE OF THE SILK TRADE.—FEB. 24, 1826.

It cannot be denied, sir, that under cover of the measure which the honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. Ellice) has thought proper to bring forward—and that he has brought it forward in the sincerity of his heart, and with the view solely to the relief of the sufferers whose cause he advocated, the house must feel convinced—but it cannot be denied that, under cover of that motion, an opportunity has been taken, not by the honourable member, but by others, to attack the commercial regulations now in progress; measures more seriously deliberated upon, and introduced with the more universal consent of all those whose judgments were likely to be best enlightened on such matters, than any other acts of our public policy within my recollection.

The honourable gentleman who introduced the motion was of opinion, that it was advisable to adopt a sound and settled system of commercial policy. But the honourable and learned gentleman who seconded the motion, (Mr. J. Williams,) addressed you with a very different feeling, and in a very different spirit. That honourable and learned member, departing from those professional topics, in descanting upon which he had so often arrested the attention of the house, disported himself upon this, to him novel subject, certainly with all the confidence of a novice, but at the same time in a manner which evinced a total incapability of using his weapons, as he was wont to do in his more practised exhibitions. The honourable and learned member has not disdained to call to his aid, in the course of his address, all the vulgar topics of ribald invective with which my right honourable friend has been assailed elsewhere; and in the spirit of these attacks has attributed to him feelings unknown to his heart, and sentiments utterly alien from his nature. And why, I ask, has my right honourable friend been subjected to these attacks? Because, sir, with an industry and intelligence never exceeded, and rarely equalled, he has devoted his daily labour and his nightly toil to the improvement of the commercial system of his country. Sir, when this attack was made, the house felt, as one man, the injustice done to my right honourable friend; and if, in addition to the conscious rectitude of his own mind, and to the gratifying acknowledgment by this house, of his splendid exertions, he

wished for another gratification, he had it in the universal feeling of indignation at the attempt so wantonly made to lower him and his measures in the public opinion. And then, forsooth, came the assertion that nothing personal was meant. Nothing personal, sir! Did we not hear mention made of hard-hearted metaphysics, and of the malignity of *the devil?* Nothing personal! certainly nothing personal to *the devil*—who, by the way—and it is a curious coincidence—is, according to an old proverb, the patron saint of the city (Lincoln) which the honourable and learned gentleman represents. But could any one fail to understand that the fiend-like malignity, the coldness of heart, the apathy of feeling, that all these abstract qualities, which the learned gentleman had described as distinguishing *features* of those who indulged in abstract speculations, were intended by the learned gentleman to be embodied in the person of my right honourable friend; qualities especially calculated to render a man contemptible in the performance of his public duties, and odious in the eyes of his fellow-citizens, for whose benefit those duties are discharged? These topics, sir, are as vulgar as they are unjust. Why is it to be supposed that the application of philosophy—(for I will use that odious word)—why was it to be supposed that to apply the refinement of philosophy to the affairs of common life, indicates obduracy of feeling or obtuseness of sensibility? We must deal with the affairs of men on abstract principles, modified, however, of course according to times and circumstances. Is it not the doctrine and the spirit which now animate those who persecute my right honourable friend, the same which, in former times, stirred up persecution against the best benefactors of mankind? Is it not the same doctrine and spirit which imbittered the life of Turgot? Is it not a doctrine and a spirit such as this, which consigned Galileo to the dungeons of the inquisition? Is it not a doctrine and a spirit such as these which have, at all times, been at work to stay public advancement, and to roll back the tide of civilization? A doctrine and a spirit actuating the little minds of men, who, incapable of reaching the heights from which alone extended views of human nature can be taken, console and revenge themselves by calumniating and misrepresenting those who have toiled to those heights for the advantage of mankind.

Sir, I am not to learn that there is a faction in the country—I mean not a political faction—I should, perhaps, rather have said a sect, small in numbers and powerless in might, who think that all advances towards improvement are retrogradations towards Jacobinism. These persons seem to imagine that, under no possible circumstances, can an honest man endeavour to keep his country upon a line with the progress of political knowledge, and to adapt its course to the varying circumstances of the world. Such an attempt is branded as an indication of mischievous intentions, as evidence of a design to sap the foundations of the greatness of the country.

Sir, I consider it to be the duty of a British statesman, in internal as well as external affairs, to hold a middle course between extremes; avoiding alike extravagances of despotism, or the licentiousness of unbridled freedom—reconciling power with liberty; not adopting hasty or ill-advised experiments, or pursuing any airy and unsubstantial theories; but not rejecting, nevertheless, the application of sound and wholesome knowledge to practical affairs, and pressing, with sobriety and caution, into the service of his country any generous and liberal principles, whose excess, indeed, may be dangerous, but whose foundation is in truth. This, sir, in my mind, is the true conduct of a British statesman; but they who resist indiscriminately all improvement as innovation, may find themselves compelled at last to submit to innovations although they are not improvements.

My right honourable friend has been actuated by the spirit which I have endeavoured to describe. Convinced in his own mind of the justice and expediency of the measure which he has proposed for the improvement of our

commercial system, he has persuaded the house to legislate in that sense; and, as the fruits of that legislation, I anticipate increasing prosperity and growing strength to the country.

Two objections have been stated to the course which his majesty's ministers are pursuing under the guidance of my right honourable friend: we are charged with having abandoned the principles of Mr. Pitt, and of having borrowed a leaf from the book of Whig policy. If the latter accusation refers to the useful and honourable support which we have received on questions of commerce from some of those who are habitually our antagonists in politics, I have only to admit the fact, and to declare the satisfaction which I derive from it. God forbid, sir, that I should withhold due praise from those who, forgetting political animosities and the vulgar divisions of party, have concurred with us in attempting to do public good.

But if it is meant to say that the commercial policy which we recommend to the country is founded on the principles of Whiggism, history proves that proposition to be untrue: I mean neither praise nor blame of Whig or Tory, in adverting to matters which passed long before the political existence of the present generation; but, historically speaking, I must say, that freedom of commerce has, in former times, been the doctrine rather of Tories than of Whigs. If I look back, for instance, to the transactions between this country and France, the only commercial treaty which I can find, besides that which was signed by me and my right honourable friend, but the other day, since the peace of Utrecht, is the convention of 1786. With respect to the treaty, the house need not be afraid that I am now going to discuss the principles of the treaty of Utrecht. But, by whom was the convention of 1786 proposed and supported? By Mr. Pitt. By whom was it opposed? By Mr. Fox. I will not go into the arguments which might be used on either side. I enter not into the question, who was right or wrong. I mention the circumstance only to show how easily facts are perverted for particular purposes of vituperation. It is an old adage, that when a man wishes to beat a dog he has no difficulty in finding a stick; but the stick, in the present instance, has been unfortunately chosen.

Equally false are the grounds of the charge brought against us, of having deviated from the principles of our great master. Sir, I deny that we have departed from the general principles of Mr. Pitt. It is true, indeed, that no man, who has observed the signs of the times, can have failed to discover in the arguments of our opponents, upon this occasion, a secret wish to renew the bank restriction; and it is upon that point, and with respect to measures leading in our apprehension to that point, that we are accused, and not unjustly, in differing from those who accuse us. We are charged with a deviation from the principles of Mr. Pitt, because we declared our determination not to renew an expedient which, though it was forced upon Mr. Pitt by the particular circumstances of the times, is one that ought not to be dragged into a precedent. It never surely can be quoted as a spontaneous act of deliberate policy; and it was an act, be it remembered, of which Mr. Pitt did not live to witness those consequences which effectually deter his successors from the repetition of it. But it is singular to remark how ready some people are to admire in a great man the exception rather than the rule of his conduct. Such perverse worship is like the idolatry of barbarous nations, who can see the noonday splendour of the sun without emotion; but who, when he is in eclipse, come forward with hymns and cymbals to adore him. Thus there are those who venerate Mr. Pitt less in the brightness of his meridian glory, than under his partial obscurations, and who gaze on him with the fondest admiration when he has accidentally ceased to shine.

My admiration "on this side only of idolatry" of that great man, is called forth by the glorious course which he ran, and for the illumination which he shed over his country. But I do not think it the duty of a most zealous wor-

shipper to adopt even the accidental faults of the illustrious model whom we vainly endeavour to imitate. I do not think it a part of fealty to him to adopt, without necessity, measures which necessity alone forced upon him. Treading, with unequal pace, in his steps, I do not think it our duty to select, by preference, those footmarks in which, for a moment, and from the slipperiness of the times, he may have trodden awry.

COPY OF A NOTE,

Addressed by the RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING, *his Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to the* CHEVALIER DE LOS RIOS, *Minister Plenipotentiary of his most* CATHOLIC MAJESTY.

Foreign-Office, March 25.

THE undersigned, his majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs, is commanded by his sovereign to deliver to the Chevalier De Los Rios, for the purpose of being transmitted to his court, the following reply to the official note addressed by his excellency M. Zea to his majesty's chargé d'affaires at Madrid, on the 21st of January.

So large a portion of the official note of M. Zea was founded upon a denial of the facts which had been reported to the British government, with respect to the state of the several countries of Spanish America, and upon an anticipation of events expected by the court of Spain to take place in those countries, by which the credibility of the reports transmitted to the British government would be effectually disproved, that it has been thought advisable to await the issue of the expected events in Spanish America rather than to confront evidence with evidence, and to discuss probabilities and conjectures. Of that decisive issue, as it appears to be, the undersigned is directed to say, that it is a great satisfaction to the British government that it had actually taken place before the intentions of the British government towards Spanish America were announced. Those intentions, therefore, cannot possibly have had the slightest influence upon the result of the war in Peru.

With this single observation the undersigned is directed to pass over all that part of M. Zea's note which turns upon the supposed incorrectness of the information on which the decision of the British government was founded.

The questions which remain to be examined are, whether in treating with *de facto* governments, now established beyond the danger of any external assailment, Great Britain has violated either any general principle of international law, or any positive obligation of treaty.

To begin with the latter, as the most specific accusation.

M. Zea brings forward repeatedly the general charge of violated treaties; but as he specifies only *two*—that of 1809 and that of 1814—it may be presumed that he relies on them alone to substantiate his charge.

First as to the treaty of 1809.

That treaty was made at the beginning of the Spanish struggle against France, and was directed wholly, and in terms not to be misapprehended, to the circumstances of the moment at which it was made. It was a treaty of peace putting an end to the war in which we had been since 1804 engaged with Spain. It is expressly described in the first article as a treaty of "alliance during the war," in which we were engaged jointly with Spain against France. All the stipulations of the treaty had evident reference to the declared determination of the then ruler of France to uphold a branch of his own family upon the throne of Spain and of the Indies; and they undoubtedly pledged us to Spain not to lay down our arms until that design should be defeated in Spain, and the pretension altogether abandoned as to America—a pledge which it is

not and cannot be denied that Great Britain amply redeemed. But those objects once accomplished, the stipulations of the treaty were fulfilled, and its obligations necessarily expired, together with the matter to which they related.

In effect, at the happy conclusion of the war in the Peninsula, and after the restoration, by British assistance, of his Catholic majesty to the throne of his ancestors, the treaty of 1809 was replaced by the treaty of 1814. And what does that treaty contain? First, the expression of an earnest wish on the part of his majesty, that Spanish America may be reunited to the Spanish monarchy; and, secondly, an engagement to prohibit British subjects from supplying the Spanish Americans with munitions of war. This engagement was instantly carried into effect by an order in council of 1814. And in furtherance of the like object, beyond the obligation of the treaty, an act of parliament was passed in 1819, prohibiting the service of British subjects in the ranks of the resisting colonies.

That the wish expressed in this treaty was sincere, the proof is to be found not only in the measures above mentioned, but in the repeated offers of Great Britain to mediate between Spain and her colonies. Nor were these offers of mediation, as M. de Zea alleges, uniformly founded on the single basis of the admission by Spain of the independence of the Spanish provinces.

Years had elapsed, and many opportunities had been missed of negotiating on better terms for Spain, before that basis was assumed to be the only one on which negotiation could be successfully opened.

It was not assumed in 1812, when our mediation was offered to the Cortes.

It was not assumed in 1815, when Spain asked our mediation, but refused to state the terms to which she was willing to agree.

It was not assumed in 1818, in the conferences at Aix-la-Chapelle, in which conferences the question of an arrangement between Spain and her Americas was for the first and last time discussed between the great powers of Europe.

After the silence, indeed, which Spain observed as to the opinion of the powers assisting at those conferences, when laid before her, two things became perfectly clear; the first, that Spain had at that time no serious intention of offering any terms such as the Spanish American provinces were likely to accept; the second, that any subsequent reference of the subject to a congress must be wholly fruitless and unsatisfactory. From that time forth, Great Britain abstained from stirring the subject of negotiation with the colonies, till, in the month of May, 1822, Spain spontaneously announced to Great Britain that she had measures in contemplation for the pacification of her Americas on a basis entirely new,—which basis, however, was not explicitly described.

In answer to that notification, Spain was exhorted by Great Britain to hasten, as much as possible, her negotiation with the colonies, as the course of events was evidently so rapid as not to admit of a much longer delay; but no suggestion was even then brought forward by Great Britain as to the adoption of the basis of independence.

The first suggestion of that basis came, in fact, from the government of Spain itself, in the month of November, 1822, when the British minister at Madrid received an intimation that the Cortes meditated opening negotiations with the colonies on the basis of colonial independence; negotiations which were in fact subsequently opened, and carried to a successful termination, with Buenos Ayres, though they were afterwards disavowed by his Catholic majesty.

It was not till after this last-mentioned communication from the Spanish government that Great Britain expressed the opinion which she entertained as to the hopelessness of negotiating upon any other basis than that then first suggested by the Spanish government.

This opinion, stated (as has been said) in the first instance confidentially to Spain, was nearly a twelvemonth afterwards—that is to say, in the month of

October, 1823—mentioned by the undersigned in a conference with the French ambassador in London, the substance of which conference was communicated to Spain and to the other powers. It was repeated and enforced in the despatch from the undersigned to Sir William A'Court, in January, 1824.

Nothing, therefore, can be less exact than the supposition that Britain has uniformly put forward the basis of independence as the *sine quâ non* condition of her counsel and assistance to Spain in negotiating with her colonies.

To come now to the second charge against Great Britain—the alleged violation of general international law. Has it ever been admitted as an axiom, or ever been observed by any nation or government as a practical maxim, that no circumstances and no time should entitle a *de facto* government to recognition? or should entitle third powers, who may have a deep interest in defining and establishing their relations with a *de facto* government, to do so?

Such a proceeding on the part of third powers undoubtedly does not decide the question of right against the mother country.

The Netherlands had thrown off the supremacy of Spain long before the end of the 16th century; but that supremacy was not formally renounced by Spain till the treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Portugal declared in 1640 her independence of the Spanish monarchy; but it was not till 1668 that Spain by treaty acknowledged that independence.

During each of these intervals the abstract rights of Spain may be said to have remained unextinguished. But third powers did not in either of these instances wait the slow conviction of Spain, before they thought themselves warranted to establish direct relations, and even to contract intimate alliances with the republic of the United Netherlands, as well as with the new monarchy of the house of Braganza.

The separation of the Spanish colonies from Spain has been neither our work nor our wish. Events, in which the British government had no participation, decided that separation—a separation which we are still of opinion might have been averted if our counsels had been listened to in time. But out of that separation grew a state of things, to which it was the duty of the British government (in proportion as it became the plain and legitimate interest of the nation whose welfare is committed to its charge) to conform its measures, as well as its language, not hastily and precipitately, but with due deliberation and circumspection.

To continue to call that a possession of Spain, in which all Spanish occupation and power had been actually extinguished and effaced, could render no practical service to the mother country; but it would have risked the peace of the world. For all political communities are responsible to other political communities for their conduct—that is, they are bound to perform the ordinary international duties, and to afford redress for any violation of the rights of others by their citizens or subjects.

Now either the mother country must have continued responsible for acts over which it could no longer exercise the shadow of a control, or the inhabitants of those countries, whose independent political existence was, in fact, established, but to whom the acknowledgment of that independence was denied, must have been placed in a situation in which they were either wholly responsible for all their actions, or were to be visited for such of those actions as might furnish ground of complaint to other nations with the punishment due to pirates and outlaws.

If the former of these alternatives—the total irresponsibility of unrecognised states—be too absurd to be maintained, and if the latter, the treatment of their inhabitants as pirates and outlaws, be too monstrous to be applied for an indefinite length of time to a large portion of the habitable globe, no other chance remained for Great Britain, or for any country having intercourse with Spanish American provinces, but to recognise, in due time, their immediate existence as states, and thus to bring them within the pale of those rights and

duties which civilized nations are bound mutually to respect, and are entitled reciprocally to claim from each other.

The example of the late revolution in France, and of the ultimate happy restoration of his majesty Louis 18th, is pleaded by M. Zea in illustration of the principle of unextinguishable right in a legitimate sovereign; and of the respect to which that right is entitled from all foreign powers; and he calls upon Great Britain, in justice to her own consistency, to act with the same reserve towards the new states of Spanish America, which she employed so much to her honour towards revolutionary France.

But can M. Zea need to be reminded that every power in Europe, and specifically Spain amongst the foremost, not only acknowledged the several successive governments *de facto* by which the house of Bourbon was first expelled from the throne of France, and afterwards kept for near a quarter of a century out of possession of it, but contracted intimate alliances with them all; and above all, with that which M. Zea justly describes as the strongest of *de facto* governments, the government of Bonaparte; against whom, not any principle of respect for the rights of legitimate monarchy, but his own ungovernable ambition, finally brought combined Europe into the field?

There is no use in endeavouring to give a specious colouring to facts which are now the property of history.

The undersigned is therefore compelled to add, that Great Britain herself cannot justly accept the praise which M. Zea is willing to ascribe to her in this respect, nor can she claim to be altogether exempted from the general charge of having treated with the powers of the French revolution.

It is true, indeed, that up to the year 1796, she abstained from treating with revolutionary France, long after other powers of Europe had set her the example. But the reasons alleged in parliament and in state papers for that abstinence was the unsettled state of the French government. And it cannot be denied that both in 1796 and 1797 Great Britain opened a negotiation for peace with the directory of France—a negotiation, the favourable conclusion of which would have implied a recognition of that form of government; that in 1801 she made peace with the consulate; that if in 1806 she did not conclude a treaty with Bonaparte, emperor of France, the negotiation was broken off merely on a question of terms; and that if from 1808 to 1814, she steadily refused to listen to any overtures from France, she did so declaredly and notoriously on account of Spain alone, whom Bonaparte pertinaciously refused to admit as party to the negotiation.

Nay, further, it cannot be denied that even in 1814, the year in which the Bourbon dynasty was eventually restored, peace would have been made by Great Britain with Bonaparte if he had not been unreasonable in his demands; and Spain cannot be ignorant that even after Bonaparte was set aside, there was question among the allies of the possible expediency of placing some other than a Bourbon on the throne of France.

The appeal, therefore, to the conduct of the powers of Europe and even to that of Great Britain herself, with respect to the French revolution, does but recall abundant instances of the recognition of *de facto* governments by Great Britain, perhaps later and more reluctantly than by others, but by Great Britain herself, however, reluctant, after the example set to her by the other powers of Europe, and especially by Spain.

There are two other points in M. Zea's note which appear to call for particular attention.

M. Zea declares that the king of Spain will never recognise the new states of South America, and that his majesty will never cease to employ the force of arms against his rebellious subjects in that part of the world.

We have neither the pretension nor the desire to control his Catholic majesty's conduct; but this declaration of M. Zea comprises a complete justification of our conduct in having taken the opportunity, which to us seemed

ripe, for placing our relations with the new states of America on a definite footing. For this declaration plainly shows that the complaint against us is not merely as to the mode or the time of our advances towards those states; it shows that the dispute between us and Spain is not merely as to the question of fact, whether the internal condition of any of those states be such as to justify the entering into definite relations with them; that it was not merely a reasonable delay for the purpose of verifying contradictory reports, and of affording opportunity for friendly negotiation that was required of us: it shows that no extent of forbearance on our part would have satisfied Spain, and that, defer our advances towards the new states as long as we might, we should still have had to make them without the consent of Spain; for that Spain is determined against all compromise, under any circumstances, and at any time, and is resolved upon interminable war with her late colonies in America.

M. Zea concludes with declaring that his Catholic majesty will protest, in the most solemn manner, against the measures announced by the British government as violating existing treaties, and the imprescriptible rights of the throne of Spain.

Against what will Spain protest?

It has been proved that no treaties are violated by us; and we admit that no question of right is decided by our recognition of the new states of America.

But if the argument on which this declaration is founded be true, it is eternal; and the offence of which we are guilty in placing our intercourse with those countries under the protection of treaties is one of which no time and circumstance could, in the view of Spain, have mitigated the character.

Having thus entered with great pain and unwillingness into the several topics of M. Zea's note, the undersigned is directed, in conclusion, to express the anxious hope of his government that a discussion, now wholly without object, may be allowed here to close. The undersigned is directed to declare to the Spanish minister, that no feeling of ill-will or even of indifference to the interests of his Catholic majesty has prompted the steps which his majesty's government has taken—that his majesty still cherishes an anxious wish for the welfare of Spain—and that his majesty still retains the disposition, and commands the undersigned again to renew to his Catholic majesty's government the offer, to employ his majesty's good offices for the bringing about of any amicable arrangements which may yet be practicable between his Catholic majesty and the countries of America which have separated themselves from Spain.

(Signed) GEO. CANNING.

THE END.

4152